

**OUT-OF-FIELD TEACHERS  
IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

by

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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT OF THESIS**

### **OUT-OF-FIELD TEACHERS IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

**BARBARA J. TAYLOR**

A significant number of teachers who teach social studies in Manitoba are out-of-field teachers. A review of literature discusses the ways in which subject specialization enhances the teaching of social studies. Interviews were conducted with five out-of-field teachers in order to gain direct insights into their experiences as social studies teachers. The focus therein is upon how they prepared for their courses, the resources they used, how they were assisted, their areas of ease and difficulty, their attitudes towards social studies, and how they handled controversial issues.

It was found that many of the teachers lacked a general overview of the discipline in terms of content and objectives. This has implications for the types of lessons they design and the materials they select to use in their classes. Recommendations were made as to how teachers such as these might best be assisted when they are assigned to social studies teaching duties. These recommendations focus on the roles of school administrators, department heads, team leaders, the Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association, school divisions, Manitoba Education and Training and social studies specialists.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

A significant number of teachers who teach social studies\* in Manitoba are out-of-field teachers. It is important to study their experiences because their involvement impacts not only upon the students of this province but upon the discipline of social studies and the teachers who are specialists in that field. A case study involving five out-of-field teachers was undertaken in order to gain direct insights into their experiences. It was hoped that this would provide an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, the difficulties they encountered, the supports they require and the overall impact that their instruction can have upon the endeavour of teaching social studies.

In Manitoba the involvement of out-of-field teachers in social studies is extensive. In 1989 Manitoba Education and Training conducted an assessment<sup>1</sup> of social studies at the grade 4, 8 and 10 levels. It included a survey of teachers that revealed that at the grade 4 level approximately 75% of teachers had less than a university minor in geography or history and that at the grade 8 and 10 levels roughly 50% of teachers had less than a university minor in geography or history. It is reasonable to assume given these results that students in Manitoba on average stand about a 50:50 chance of

\* The term "social studies" is applied fairly broadly in Manitoba to refer to courses that contain content that is derived primarily from the disciplines of anthropology, geography and history. The same application is used herein.

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<sup>1</sup> Manitoba Education and Training, Manitoba Social Studies Assessment 1989, (Winnipeg: Publisher not cited, 1989), 7, 19, 29.

receiving social studies instruction from a teacher who is a social studies specialist. This situation exists because in Manitoba teachers are certified for all grade levels - a situation unlike that in Ontario where teachers are certified according to their subject specialties. The merits of this situation have been debated in the past and certainly steps were taken at various points in this century to insist upon greater subject competency on the part of teachers. A dichotomy existed for many years between rural and urban schools with the former having teachers involved in teaching a greater variety of courses simply because the schools there were smaller. Greater subject specialization existed in urban schools where the schools were generally larger. This led to the creation of regional schools where a larger number of courses could be offered and greater subject specialization on the part of teachers could occur<sup>2</sup>. It was felt that this would result in better instruction, and hence learning, for the province's students.

The debate about teachers as subject specialists and teachers as generalists continues today. The pattern that exists in Manitoba is that at the elementary level teachers are subject generalists engaged in teaching their students most or all of their subjects. At the junior high or middle school level the trend has been to grade "teams". This results in a greater emphasis upon subject specialization with most teachers teaching one or two subjects in the grade to which they are assigned. This pattern reflects the belief that it is important for a small number of teachers to work with students thus enabling them to know the students better. This varies from school to school depending

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<sup>2</sup> Levin, Benjamin, "The Struggle Over Modernization in Manitoba Education: 1924-1960", In Issues in the History of Education in Manitoba, Rosa del C. Bruno-Jofre, (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 82-83.

upon the size of the school. The larger the school the more likely a teacher is to teach his or her subject specialty. In smaller schools teachers tend to teach a number of subjects sometimes across grade levels - even though they are attached to a particular grade "team." At the high school however, teachers are still subject specialists - as much as the timetable permits. They are generally organized into departments - sometimes labeled social studies, geography or history.

Recent developments in Manitoba have caused social studies to be taught more and more by out-of-field teachers. Fiscal constraints have restricted the hiring of new teachers and a greater emphasis upon science, mathematics, literacy and technology has eclipsed the relative importance of social studies as one of the four core subjects. Despite the numbers of out-of-field teachers involved in the teaching of social studies concern over this situation has not been voiced to any large extent.

Social studies is an essential component in the education of the children of Manitoba. It is important that it be taught well! Therefore, the issue of specialist teaching in social studies needs to be examined. A greater understanding of the impact of having out-of-field teachers involved in social studies instruction needs to be gained. There is a great deal of debate in regards to whether or not teachers need to be specialists or generalists. To this end a review of literature (Chapter Two) will examine this issue. But the greatest insights are to be acquired from the experiences of these out-of-field specialists. Hence, taped interviews were conducted with five teachers from the junior high and high school levels - the levels in Manitoba where the greatest subject specialization occurs. From these a number of insights were gained and



recommendations have been made (see Chapter Five) to assist personnel such as these in the worthy endeavour of social studies instruction.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Literature

A significant number of the teachers who teach social studies in Manitoba are out-of-field specialists. It is important to ascertain the impact that this has upon social studies for Manitoba's students. There is a body of research to suggest that an out-of-field teacher's lack of academic training in social studies can have an influence upon the way that he/she teaches social studies. Subject expertise does not guarantee excellent teaching. Most people can recall a teacher they had that was brilliant in their field but unable to transfer that knowledge to his or her students. Thus, given the high proportion of out-of-field teachers in Manitoba that teach social studies, it is important to understand the ways in which this lack of subject expertise may manifest itself in the classroom.

There is some literature that deals directly with out-of-field teachers in the social studies classroom. While it would be best to focus upon the Canadian literature a sheer lack of resources necessitated that a wider search - in particular to American literature, be undertaken. In fact, this issue was noted recently in the news media - not just in educational journals. Concern about poor social studies instruction due to out-of-field teachers was expressed in the July 10, 1995 issue of Newsweek. In "History Lessons - What Should We Teach Our Kids and How Should It Be Taught?" Lyn Nell Hancock stated that

. . . The general sense has been that "anyone could teach history," says John Pyne, West Milford's social-studies supervisor and head of the New Jersey Council for History Education. And, anyone has. A 1990 report prepared by UCLA's National Center for History in the Schools states that 13 percent of the teachers surveyed had never taken a college history course. Less than half had master's or even bachelor's degrees in history, or a major with some history in it. A separate study found that one in 12 history teachers is a gym

teacher first, a history teacher by default. Educators used to joke that "coach" was the first name of most history teachers. "You do have teachers," say Jean Fleet, a teacher adviser to the National world history standards project, "who are historically illiterate."

In many schools, history as a distinct discipline was swallowed by the rubric of social studies - a catchall department. Too often that left history as little more than a dash through the past, coupled with a dose of current events. About 10 years ago, in fact, high-school history teaching became an endangered species. But when the National Endowment for the Humanities reported in 1987 that two thirds of the seniors tested couldn't identify the correct half-century in which the Civil War was fought, alarms sounded. Many states, including New Jersey, added a mandatory third year of history (two U.S., one world) to graduation requirements. And textbook publishers scrambled to incorporate the latest academic scholarship. Educators, says Loewen, began to wake up to the fact that "if history is not taught well, we will have social stupidity."<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that part of the concern herein lies with a controversy in the United States having to do with whether its students should take social studies or history. However, the rest of the concern lies with having out-of-field specialists teaching history.

The focus herein is twofold. First, it is important to understand the context in which these issues exist. For much of this century education has come under criticism as examined, in the latter half of this century, by authors such as Goodlad and Cuban. Much of their critique derives from the activities that occur in classrooms and the teachers' methods of teaching. These are worthwhile to examine for they illuminate problems in general in teaching. Also, it is necessary to examine the criticisms that have been launched against social studies instruction over the years with studies by authors such as Neatby, Bestor and Hodgetts. Second, is an examination of more recent studies that examine social studies instruction and explore the possible ramifications of having

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<sup>3</sup> Lyn Nell Hancock, "History Lessons - What Should We Teach Our Kids and How Should It Be Taught?" Newsweek, July 10, 1995, 28-32.

out-of-field teachers engaged therein. Many of these studies lament the involvement of those teachers whose lack training and understanding of the discipline affect their ability to properly implement the content, purposes and methods of social studies.

#### Part A -Overview of Educational Contexts

In 1984 John I. Goodlad wrote A Place Called School. In his book Goodlad documented the state of American schools at that time. He noted that “American schools are in trouble. In fact, the problems of schooling are of such crippling proportions that many schools may not survive.”<sup>4</sup> However, Goodlad’s extensive study, which involved more than 1000 classrooms in 38 states, remained optimistic in tone. In the first part of the study - which had been made over eight years, he described a wide gamut of problems observed. Teachers, students and parents had been either observed or interviewed to gain a wide understanding of education and the perceptions therein. In the second part he attempted to provide possible ways to reform schools - which he believed should be done on a school by school basis. There are at least two highlights to the book; firstly, he believes that change must come from within schools, and secondly, the classroom and its environment are as important as the curriculum.

Goodlad’s comments on the classroom or learning environment are notable. He observed instruction that was teacher dominated with an adherence to the lecture method. While elementary teachers used small group instruction, the upper grades tended to be more teacher dominated with students involved in activity that he characterized as “marked by passivity - written work, listening, and preparing for

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<sup>4</sup> John I. Goodlad, A Place Called School, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), 1.

assignments.”<sup>5</sup> Goodlad commented on the “ambiance” of the classroom and noted four elements therein:

First, the vehicle for teaching and learning is the total group. Second, the teacher is the strategic, pivotal figure in this group. Third, the norms governing the group derive primarily from what is required to maintain the teacher’s strategic role. Fourth, the emotional tone is neither harsh and punitive nor warm and joyful; it might be described most accurately as flat.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of teachers, Goodlad observed that teachers tend to lead an isolated existence within the school day spending the majority of their time inside their classrooms and having little contact with other adults.

Goodlad briefly examined the issue of teacher competency. He noted that at the elementary level many teachers felt that they were inadequately prepared to teach certain disciplines. This concern declined with the grade levels with high school teachers having the most subject expertise and confidence that they were well prepared. At the elementary level, Goodlad recommended that “perhaps we should assure that each elementary school be staffed with an array of teachers each of whom teaches all or most subjects but each of whom also is prepared with such depth in one subject as to be able to serve as a consultant to the rest of the teaching staff.”<sup>7</sup> At the junior and senior high levels, he found teachers who were subject specialists. Ironically he noted that “no teacher of the social studies felt inadequately prepared in the subject, one not highly rated for liking or interest by students.”<sup>8</sup> But overall for these levels Goodlad noted that “in

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

general, then, the teachers of the subjects for which students expressed greatest liking and interest tended also to be the ones taught by teachers who viewed themselves as adequately prepared.”<sup>9</sup> The apparent contradiction in regards to social studies is puzzling and may reflect the fact that the teachers of social studies feel confident in their own ability but nonetheless do not inspire their students. No mention was made therein of out-of-field teachers.

Goodlad’s book is notable for its rich descriptions and the breadth and depth of study. His recommendations were wide-sweeping and contained suggestions too numerous and not relevant to examine herein. Ironically, in spite of all of the problems noted such as boredom and isolation, a sense of satisfaction still seemed to be present for most teachers.

Larry Cuban’s How Teachers Taught examines education and concludes that in spite of numerous attempts to reform schools, they have remained virtually the same for much of this century. Cuban employed numerous methods in his study - the most notable being a host of photographs which he used to observe such things as classroom organization, the amount of movement present in classrooms, and the general relationship of teachers to classes. His study, like Goodlad’s, notes the teacher-centredness of the classrooms of this century. This is not so much because teachers resist change but, as he concludes:

The act of teaching presses toward preserving what is. The first-year teacher, after a brief apprenticeship, is thrust into the classroom with the same responsibilities as a 20-year veteran. The private anguish of a sink-or-swim ordeal which usually consumes the first few years of the neophyte is

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

alleviated by occasional advice and sharing of folklore from experienced colleagues. From the very first day, facing the complicated process of establishing routines that will permit a group of students to behave in an orderly way while the subject matter is taught, the teacher is driven to use those practices that he or she remembered were used or take the counsel of veterans who advised their use. Experienced colleagues may help informally and, in doing so, entrants absorb through a subtle osmosis the norms and expectations of the school and what it takes to survive as a teacher. The folklore, occupational gimmicks, norms, and daily teaching reinforce what *is* rather than nourish skepticism, especially if one wishes to persist in the profession.<sup>10</sup>

Cuban noted that teachers throughout this century have adhered to certain norms.

Among these is the belief that

The role of the school is to develop the mind and instill social values; students learn best in well-managed, noiseless classrooms where limits are made plain, academic rigor is prized, and where rules are equitably enforced by the teacher; and the teacher's authority, rooted in institutional legitimacy and knowledge, must be paid respectful attention. These, and similar beliefs, are held by most teachers, especially in high schools. They account for the perseverance in such teaching practices as reliance upon textbooks, little student movement, and a concern for tranquil classrooms marked by the "hum of knowledge." The familiar dichotomy of teaching-children-a-subject or teaching-a-subject-to-children captures a substantial piece of these belief systems.<sup>11</sup>

Cuban briefly discusses teacher effectiveness. He notes a number of practices that seem to be connected with high student test scores. Most are general practices that are used in many classrooms and include such things as focusing upon academic goals, teachers focusing on instruction not socializing, the teacher presenting the lessons clearly with a lot of structure - explanation, review and wide coverage of subject material, the teacher selecting appropriate materials for students, quick feedback and classroom

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<sup>10</sup> Larry Cuban, How Teachers Taught, (New York: Longman Inc., 1984), 244.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

management practices that prevent disturbances and encourage cooperation.<sup>12</sup> Cuban noted, however, that there are a host of other factors that create effectiveness within the classroom that can be related to classroom contexts such as class size, the age of the students and the teachers themselves.

Like Goodlad, Cuban sees hope for education. He believes that teachers are often faced with constraints that limit what and how they are able to operate in the classroom. Thus he feels that it is important to encourage and provide supports for the good practices that teachers have been able to develop given the circumstances they face.

Arthur Bestor's Educational Wastelands is remarkable for a number of reasons. Not many books are reissued over thirty years after they were originally published; Bestor's book is one such case with it being issued in 1953 and rereleased in 1985. This speaks to its ability to identify perennial problems and perhaps provide ideas for their solutions that were still current in 1985. Bestor's dislike for educationalists is hardly subtle - he simply does not trust them and their bureaucracy. He stresses the need for a curriculum based upon the liberal arts and sees this as necessary for the attainment of intelligence - the basic purpose of education. What is relevant herein are his ideas for teacher training. He stressed the need for a broad liberal arts education for teachers that should continue, at best, to the graduate level. Bestor believed that "A wide range of accurate knowledge is his [the teacher's] most useful asset . . . The university ought to provide him an opportunity to continue that liberal education for as long as he is willing to pursue it."<sup>13</sup> He urged that universities set up training for teachers that correspond to

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Bestor, Educational Wastelands, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 139.



their subject area specialty. Bestor was not particularly interested in having education prepare people for jobs. He was more interested in them becoming well educated and well rounded individuals. Bestor abhorred the “anti-intellectualism that currently threatens the schools”<sup>14</sup> and stressed the need to return to intellectual pursuits for as he put it “Under a well-ordered plan, the gateway to teaching will be the gateway of learning itself.”<sup>15</sup>

Hilda Neatby’s So Little for the Mind was also published in 1953. Like Bestor, she wanted education to nourish the intellect of the student. She recognized that the schools of the twentieth century were being required to teach more and more topics to their students - a prospect that threatened to dilute the teaching of the core areas. She also noted the need to educate the student with “the intellectual, cultural and moral training which represents the best in a long and honourable tradition of western civilization.”<sup>16</sup> For the teacher, Neatby felt that they “should go out not as skilled conditioners trained to induce desirable attitudes but as evangelists with a genuine love of truth and with an urge to instruct and to inspire those whom they teach.”<sup>17</sup> Children should be taught facts until they were able to make judgments for themselves. The intellectual development of children should be the primary objective of education.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Hilda Neatby, So Little for the Mind, (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1953), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 328.

A.B. Hodgetts published What Culture? What Heritage? in 1968. Based upon a study of 951 elementary and secondary school classes in 10 provinces, this book's intent was "to hold the mirror up, to let us see ourselves and see *for* ourselves. The intent was not destructive but creative: to generate interest and concern, to encourage further exploration, to urge that the provinces work together in the mutual cause of national awareness and understanding."<sup>18</sup> This was a huge understatement for the contents therein were a biting indictment of civics education through social studies instruction in Canada.

His first finding detailed the "blandness" of history instruction. His concern was that "Canadian history in our schools is a shadowy, subdued, unrealistic version of what actually happened - a bland consensus story, told without the controversy that is an inherent part of history. . . . Canadian history becomes a too-nice, straightforward, linear, dry-as-dust account of uninterrupted political and economic progress."<sup>19</sup> The reliance on textbooks made history seem matter-of-fact and the lack of additional materials made the textbook seem to be the correct interpretation of history. Research, part of the craft of history, was not being employed in classes.

Hodgetts found the coverage of current events in history classes to be superficial often focusing upon high level interest items of only fleeting importance - certainly nothing that could be connected to historical perspective.

Hodgetts hoped to find social studies classrooms that:

Through the imaginative use of color, appropriate displays, pictures, fluid seating plans and the arrangement of functional equipment become warm,

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<sup>18</sup> A.B. Hodgetts, What Culture? What Heritage? (Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1968), Foreword.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

attractive and inviting. This factor is particularly important in the history or social studies classroom where a relaxed, informal, friendly atmosphere may help to stimulate good discussion and the easy exchange of ideas. It is obviously more difficult for even the best of teachers to conduct a class in a barren, sterile room than in one which radiates warmth and purpose from the moment the students enter it.<sup>20</sup>

This was not what he found. Half of the classrooms visited contained no displays - only desks, chalk and chalkboards. He concluded that this "tended to reflect a lack of interest and imagination on the part of the teachers using them."<sup>21</sup> The classrooms generally lacked libraries within them. He found this lamentable because it indicated that the students never read beyond the text. What magazines that were present were bland and included a high percentage of American publications; Hodgetts took issue with this! Maps were lacking or were in terrible condition and this was unacceptable for Hodgetts. He commented that ". . . if even a small portion of the attention and money that is now being devoted to technical, vocational and scientific classrooms could be found for Canadian studies, the quality of civic education in this country might be vastly improved."<sup>22</sup>

Teaching methods were dominated by the lecture method. This was buttressed by the textbook and related activities. Most students were given "assignments" that consisted of answering questions based solely upon their reading of the text. The questions were of a purely factual nature. Discussions that went on, in Hodgetts'

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 44.

opinion, tended to be aimless. The discussions seemed to have little purpose other than to engage in “chit-chat.”

Hodgetts found that students left their history classes having gotten very little out of them. Students were not encouraged to be critical thinkers. In fact in 22% of the classes “. . . the students could not acquire any learning skills whatsoever. These classes were so teacher-centered, so rigidly bound to the textbook-lecture or the assignment method that the students had no opportunity to work with evidence, to develop ideas, to express let alone discuss their own thoughts, or to experience materials other than a hasty and sometimes inaccurate summary of the textbook.”<sup>23</sup> What was learned tended to be cursory and fleeting - needed only for tests. Also lacking was a sense of pride in Canada on the part of students - which was purportedly a goal in many of the civics courses. Hodgetts also warned of the lack of understanding on the part of students of the “two solitudes” in Canada.

In terms of responsibility for this abysmal situation in social studies classrooms Hodgetts felt that part of the blame did lie with teachers. There seemed to be a sense that knowledge was unimportant. He commented that “the present emphasis on the changing nature of society, on the resulting doctrine that all knowledge is relative and that it does not matter what we teach, is one of the most damaging ideas in Canadian education today.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 92.

Hodgetts noted that “assuming that knowledge of subject matter is an important professional qualification, it should be observed that most of the Canadian studies teachers (or prospective teachers) simply have not had enough post secondary academic work to do a competent job.”<sup>25</sup> Even if they did have an academic background he noted that much university history is delivered in the same dull format that teachers then foist upon their students. Professors fail to examine the personalities of past, to show that the great events in Canadian history involved controversy and passion, that there were protests, and that far from being only political and economic, history involves such things as art, religion, and literature. Again, the primary mode of instruction in university was the lecture method. Hodgetts was puzzled by this because at the university level professors would be dealing with students who had above average skills - students that could handle more sophisticated lessons. Nonetheless, “. . . throughout their formal academic education in universities, the great majority of teachers have received no more intellectual foundation for their Canadianism, for whatever sense of identity they may have, than the very little they are able to pass on eventually to their own students in the classroom.”<sup>26</sup> If Hodgetts found the amount of subject knowledge on the part of social studies teachers to be lacking, the amount of subject knowledge of the out-of-field teacher would have been of huge concern for he and authors such as Bestor.

Hodgetts understood the realities of the teaching profession. Though his criticisms were extensive he noted that once in the classroom - often ill-prepared,

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 103.

the teacher's main concerns revolve around large classes, little preparation time, designing lessons, marking papers, preparing for a variety of courses - some of which may not be their subject specialty, and so on. There was also evidence to suggest that many of the teachers had difficulty completing courses with their students because there was simply too much to cover. So while Hodgetts does not place all the blame on the classroom teacher he does propose two solutions to all of the problems - which he believe explain the dismal state of affairs in Canadian social studies classrooms. He suggests that

First, much greater attention must be paid to the initial training of Canadian studies teachers by institutions of higher learning. And second, the average practicing teacher, having at present neither the time nor knowledge himself, needs expert assistance from the academic community in the preparation of much better instruction materials than are now available.<sup>27</sup>

Hodgetts did not let teachers off the hook, however. He stressed that "Through lack of drive, interest, professional pride and other factors, they are not setting high enough personal standards, nor are they fulfilling the reasonable expectations of society."<sup>28</sup>

Hodgetts' study was a landmark one for Canadian social studies. His criticisms were extensive and revealing about the quality of social studies instruction going on in Canada. But have things changed since Hodgetts?

#### Part B - The Out-of-Field Teacher in the Social Studies Classroom

Recent studies continue to examine the ways in which social studies is taught. Many of these comment on the out-of-field teacher in the social studies classroom. There

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 118.

is evidence to suggest that a teacher without training in social studies teaches differently than one with a background in the discipline.

Integral here is the notion that a generic approach - good pedagogy, does not alone produce good social studies instruction. A number of authors would assert that social studies is a unique field (Ochoa, Common, Giron/Harmon). In fact, Stanley comments that "in the move from the teacher effectiveness approach to the teacher content-knowledge approach and, finally, to the critical approach to competence, social studies is successively taken more seriously as an area of curriculum with unique attributes and goals."<sup>29</sup> It would follow that if someone is lacking a background in social studies they might have difficulty in pursuing these unique areas. Content knowledge is the foremost area of difficulty for the out-of-field teacher and there is research to indicate that this can affect the delivery of social studies in a number of ways.

In "Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform" Lee S. Shulman examined the factors that contribute to expertise in teaching in general. For him content knowledge forms the basis of good teaching. As he puts it,

A teacher knows something not understood by others, presumably the students. The teacher can transform understanding, performance skills, or desired attitudes or values into pedagogical representations and actions. These are ways of talking, showing, enacting or otherwise representing ideas so that the unknowing can come to know, those without understanding can comprehend and discern, and the unskilled can become adept. Thus, teaching necessarily begins with a teacher's understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> William B. Stanley, "Teacher Competence for Social Studies," Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning, James P. Shaver, (ed.) (Toronto: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 249.

<sup>30</sup> Lee S. Shulman, "Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform" Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 57, No. 1, February 1987, 7.

Teacher knowledge relevant to competence can be further subdivided, as done by Shulman, to include: a) content knowledge, b) general pedagogical knowledge, c) curriculum knowledge, d) pedagogical content knowledge, e) knowledge of learners and their characteristics, f) knowledge of educational contexts, and g) knowledge of educational ends.<sup>31</sup> William B. Stanley who examined Shulman's ideas in "Teacher Competence for Social Studies" seems to favour his findings and notes that "specifically, a teacher's knowledge of subject matter influences how he or she modifies the materials used and particular representations employed (e.g., metaphors, analogies, best examples) to teacher concepts and other forms of knowledge."<sup>32</sup> A teacher who has read widely and studied his or her subject area will be able to include interesting "tidbits" during instruction. Often it is these that pique the interest of students. They are also able to supply examples and anecdotes to support what they are teaching. It follows then that "the representations of content knowledge generated by less knowledgeable teachers tended to be more superficial and frequently inappropriate or inaccurate."<sup>33</sup> They simply lacked the additional knowledge to either extrapolate from textbooks or to better explain ideas to their students.

Wineburg and Wilson's "Models of Wisdom in the Teaching of History" demonstrates via two case studies how content knowledge influences social studies instruction. In their study they examined two classrooms where superb social studies

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>32</sup> William B. Stanley, "Teacher Competence for Social Studies," Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning, James P. Shaver, (ed.) (Toronto: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 253.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



teachers were at work. [The teachers in question were peer nominated as being outstanding social studies teachers.] Wineburg and Wilson began their discussion by acknowledging the “grim” reputation currently held by social studies. They quoted authors Ravitch and Finn who characterized a history classroom as one where students

‘Listen to the teacher explain the day’s lesson, use the textbook, and take tests. Occasionally they watch a movie. Sometimes they memorize information or read stories about events and people. They seldom work with other students, use original documents, write term papers, or discuss the significance of what they are studying.’<sup>34</sup>

Given this, Wineburg and Wilson decided to focus upon exemplary social studies teachers in order to learn what factors yield superior social studies instruction and learning.

The first teacher, Jensen, whom they characterize as the “invisible teacher”, runs a classroom that is student-centred and activity-based. The enthusiasm and depth of knowledge of her students is notable and impressive. Wineburg and Wilson note the extensive planning and extraordinary subject knowledge held by the teacher. Her course is not textbook based and in fact, the teacher begins the year with a unit on “human nature” which examined the ideas of Hume, Locke, Plato, Aristotle, Jefferson, Gandhi, Mao, Hitler and Mussolini. Wineburg and Wilson note that “above all else, Jensen’s [the teacher] debate rests on a vision of what it means to teach history, a vision that provides structure for classroom activities and infuses them with meaning.”<sup>35</sup> Jensen, the invisible teacher, means to demonstrate to students that history is a dynamic process involving the

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<sup>34</sup> Samuel S. Wineburg and Suzanne M. Wilson, “Models of Wisdom in the Teaching of History,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 70, No. 1, September 1988, 50.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.

acts and motives of individuals. Never does Jensen deliver “ready-made” information. Students must read original documents, search for sources of information or consult the teacher, who Wineburg and Wilson liken to a walking encyclopedia, card catalogue and archive rolled into one. The re-creation of history is clearly a dynamic process for Jensen’s students. This description fits closely with the desirable traits that Hodgetts expounded upon in What Culture? What Heritage?

The “visible teacher” employs an entirely different approach. The classroom is teacher-centred, indeed, dominated with whole group instruction centring around the teacher’s questions. But this expository style is very different from that cited in most research on social studies teaching. “No ordinary teacher, John Price is a master performer who has seized the collective imagination of 35 adolescents and has led them on an expedition into the past.”<sup>36</sup> He does not use a textbook exclusively but supplements his materials with a notebook filled with historical tidbits collected over his 17 years of classroom instruction. Price pushes his students to search for opinions and interpretations - starting with their own texts. Price brings historical figures to life and makes history “an anthology of stories, told by people with differing convictions and commitments, many of whom cannot even agree on a story line.”<sup>37</sup>

At first, the two exemplary teachers seem to be complete opposites, but there are some striking similarities. History for these teachers is open to interpretation and judgment. Textbooks were only one source of many employed by their students. A wide

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 56.

variety of activities were used to convey their subject matter: demonstrations, analogies, stories, re-enactments, debates and examples. Wineburg and Wilson feel that the two teachers have successfully bridged the gap between their own sophisticated historical knowledge and the novice understandings of their students. They call this an “act of pedagogical reasoning” wherein the teachers turn inward to define the knowledge needed and then outward to place themselves in their students’ positions to determine what methods will work best. They conclude by stating that “both teachers possess rich and deep understanding of many things, understandings that manifest themselves in the ability to draw from a broad range of possibilities. Indeed, it may be their very ability to alternate between different modes of teaching that earns each of them the designation ‘wise practitioner.’”<sup>38</sup>

Similar to the Wineburg and Wilson study, Stanley recognizes the ability of a subject specialist to choose the best way possible to teach his or her students the course content. He labels this “practical judgment” and recognizes this as the teacher’s ability to determine “the ends of social studies as a field of study and then to select the best means to achieve these ends in particular classroom situations.”<sup>39</sup> Stanley limits his discussion in this area but what Stanley ultimately concludes is that social studies competence requires a wide definition. He advises that social studies teachers use practical judgment to determine the ends of their instruction and the means by which they can be attained. Whether or not this is possible for out-of-field specialists he does not

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>39</sup> Stanley, 259.

say. He notes, however, that social studies suffers from an identity crisis in that the purpose of the domain is not adequately defined. The difficulties then that an out-of-field specialist would have in exercising practical judgment would be considerable. He concludes by saying

Too often proponents of teachers' effectiveness have reduced competence to technical expertise . . . but technical skill without the prior application of practical judgment is blind. It is also the case that practical competence without technical skill is empty . . . So, teacher competence for social studies education will require technical, practical, and critical expertise. That is much to ask of teachers but to ask less is to limit unduly their competence.<sup>40</sup>

Thornton's "Teacher as Curricular-Instructional Gatekeeper in Social Studies" does not deal as explicitly with teacher competence as does that of Stanley, but he has much to offer in terms of how the teacher affects the learning outcomes and attitudes of students towards social studies.

Thornton characterizes social studies teachers as "curricular-instructional gatekeepers" who make decisions about teaching goals and the experiences they will provide to their students. More specifically, gatekeeping involves: 1) beliefs about the meaning of social studies, 2) decisions about planning, and, 3) decisions concerning instructional strategy.<sup>41</sup> Thornton conducts a review of literature to explore research on gatekeeping, to identify themes in the literature and to suggest lines of future research (only parts of this are relevant herein.)

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen J. Thornton, "Teacher as Curricular-Instructional Gatekeeper in Social Studies," Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning, James P. Shaver, (ed), (Toronto: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 237-238.

Teacher beliefs about social studies affect their classroom practices. Thornton notes that elementary school teachers, who tend to be generalists in subject matter are often unclear about what is to be achieved in social studies. This can lead to the attitude that “Well, in the afternoon, if we have some time to kill, we might show a filmstrip or movie on some social studies topic. We’re supposed to teach it more often, but there are too many other things to do.”<sup>42</sup> At the secondary level this lack of time allocation is unlikely due to the individualized timetabling of students, but Thornton notes that a teacher’s own academic background does affect the selection of material and learning experiences. Thus, teachers’ beliefs about social studies “do influence what they plan to teach (the intended curriculum) and the curriculum that they actually provide in the classroom (the operational curriculum.) It appears that most teachers have a great deal of freedom to define social studies as they see fit, although they might not exercise that freedom or even be aware of it.”<sup>43</sup>

Most social studies teachers, according to Thornton, use expository instruction in their classrooms. Attempts to get teachers to promote critical thinking in their classrooms have met with only partial success. Teachers seem to feel pressure to cover curricular material and feel that the time required to do critical high-order thinking exercises interferes with their ability to cover curriculum. This seems to confirm the findings of Hodgetts in 1968 when he found teachers struggling to cover course material.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 244.

Thornton points out that teachers resist the use of new materials. They are also not interested in generated curriculum. In fact, they tend to see themselves in charge of instruction and outside authorities in charge of curriculum.

A number of studies cited by Thornton (Levstik, McCutcheon, and Hyland) indicate that teachers' concern with management may outweigh curricular decisions. This is not a new idea. Certainly Hodgetts had observed this. In social studies this may mean the routine use of textbooks as the mode of instruction. Thornton believes there are two explanations why, for many social studies teachers, the text equals the curriculum. These are: they believe in the authority of the text and as he puts it that "teachers rely on the textbook because their subject-matter knowledge is inadequate."<sup>44</sup> Thornton qualifies this latter explanation by stating that insufficient studies exist to define what it is that social studies teachers do know. Much of what Thornton discusses is inconclusive. He points out that expository instruction dominates classroom practice but that some expository instruction can be of an excellent nature (he cites the Wineburg/Wilson article.) He does not, however, adequately examine the consequences of textbook-based instruction. Students who are led to believe that one text can truly depict history may become passive social studies learners unlikely to question and critically evaluate different viewpoints. Nevertheless, Thornton does succeed in showing that teachers determine what curriculum is actually delivered in the social studies classroom so that "the lofty purposes propounded in social studies curricular guides will likely remain aspiration, rather than practice."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Another way in which out-of-field teachers teach social studies differently from subject specialists is in their treatment of controversial issues within course content. Carole Hahn's article focuses on the handling of controversial issues in social studies. She states that "the rationale for including controversial issues in social studies instruction rests on the necessity of preparing citizens to participate in the democratic decision-making processes within a pluralistic society."<sup>46</sup> Hahn stresses that teacher education should encourage the creation of "open" classroom climates to encourage students to express ideas freely and encourage democratic attitudes. A teacher who is unsure of his or her own abilities may be more hesitant to engage in activities that are freewheeling and unstructured - as opposed to the textbook approach which is for the most part risk-free.

Similar to Hahn's article is a study done by Marlow Ediger which examines the qualities needed for peace studies which, for some people, is a component of social studies. In "Peace Studies and the Social Studies" Ediger is very specific about which teachers should teach peace studies. First, however, he notes that "generally, the social studies tends to have low status in many high schools"<sup>47</sup> and that poor quality instruction therein is common. He disparages the use of "emergency certificates" which circumvent the minimum certification standards required by states for social studies teachers. Indeed, "to teach peace studies courses requires the cream of the crop in terms of quality

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<sup>46</sup> Carole Hahn, "Controversial Issues in Social Studies," Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning, James P. Shaver (ed.), (Toronto: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1991), 470.

<sup>47</sup> Marlow Ediger, "Peace Studies and the Social Studies," Viewpoints. June 23, 1989, 1.

instruction.”<sup>48</sup> He finds fault with the university training of pre-service teachers, saying that professors may be undemanding of their students resulting in teachers who are weak in their subject background. He advocates a wide background of training in the liberal arts and social sciences. He points out that students, too, may not be demanding of teachers as long as they are receiving good grades. He proposes a set of criteria for teaching peace studies in the curriculum. These include:

1. These teachers need to be well informed pertaining to the area being taught and the issues involved. . . .
2. Proposed solutions developed by the class with teacher guidance must be just to both sides. . . .
3. An attitude of problem solving needs to be emphasized in peace studies.
4. Helping opposing sides to communicate openly is important.
5. Open communication is necessary.
6. An attitude of careful listening needs to be in evidence.<sup>49</sup>

These criteria clearly exclude the out-of-field teacher from Ediger’s ideal profile of the peace studies teacher.

For out-of-field teachers the text may be crucial to their teaching social studies. It may be their personal source of information for the course and come to be their mode of instruction for their students. The textbook and lecture remain, as Hodgetts had earlier observed, the dominant modes of instruction in social studies. There is some literature that suggests that “out-of-field” social studies teachers rely to a greater extent upon the textbook in teaching social studies. Thornton felt that teachers believed in the authority of the text and if they were weak in social studies content knowledge tended to rely on a textbook to supplement or even constitute their knowledge base. Morrisett, Hawk and

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 14-15.



Superka in "Six Problems for Social Studies in the 1980's" go as far as to state that "textbooks help teachers organize the various bodies of knowledge they teach, particularly if they teach disciplines other than those in which they have formal training."<sup>50</sup>

Shaver, Davis and Helburn in "The Status of Social Studies Education: Impressions from Three NSF Studies" state that the consequences of textbook instruction are detrimental. Viewing the textbook as the source of knowledge interferes with the students gaining critical thinking skills. Students do not learn to criticize even their own textbooks. Tests emphasize book content rather than skill objectives. Shaver, Davis and Helburn noted that surprisingly, social studies teachers favour the "back to basics" movement. One would think that they would prefer their students to be active, questioning citizens. But instead they side with this movement "especially with its emphasis on reading - for reading is at the heart of textbook approach to instruction."<sup>51</sup> Most important, however, is the effect that textbook instruction has on student attitudes towards social studies. Shaver, David and Helburn note that "despite being perplexed by student apathy, teachers generally do not make the possible connection between the lack of motivation on their students' part and their own reliance on textbook/content based, teacher dominated instruction."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Irving Morrisett, Sharryl Hawke, and Douglas Superka, "Six Problems for Social Studies in the 1980's" Social Education, Vol. 44, No. 7, November/December 1980, 563.

<sup>51</sup> James P. Shaver, O.L. Davis, Jr., and Suzanne W. Helburn, "The Status of Social Studies Education: Impressions from Three NSF Studies," Social Education, Vol. 43, No. 1, January 1979, 152.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Another case study by Jack R. Fraenkel, "A Portrait of Four Social Studies Classes (With Special Attention Paid to the Identification of Teaching Techniques and Behaviors That Contribute to Student Learning)," attempts to isolate the factors that yield effective social studies instruction. His study was similar to that of Wineburg and Wilson in that he observed four teachers with diverse classroom styles but found distinct similarities between all four which he postulates are "some of the things that effective teachers do to help students learn, and possibilities for novices to try to see if they can increase their effectiveness."<sup>53</sup> His study was based upon observations, interviews with the teachers and interviews with their students. In the concluding section of his article he isolated a number of factors that he believed are related to competence in the social studies classroom. Clearly, many of the factors are related to good teaching in general but some are social studies-specific. He noted that the effective teachers of his study would

- : demonstrate a willingness to get to know their students as individuals
- : try to tailor-make at least some learning activities to fit their students/interests and abilities.
- : try to create a relaxed, but task-oriented, classroom
- : reveal their personal interests, biases, and opinions to students on occasion
- : demonstrate a considerable enthusiasm for teaching. All were visibly enthusiastic about some aspects of the subject matter almost every day.
- : convey the attitude that the subject matter of the course is important and that students will like and be able to learn it.
- : tell a joke (often a very corny one).
- : listen attentively to students' comments, answers and questions.
- : pay attention to verbal and non-verbal cues from students.
- : give prompt feedback.
- : assign homework every night.

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<sup>53</sup> Jack R. Fraenkel, "A Portrait of Four Social Studies Classes (With Special Attention Paid to the Identification of Teaching Techniques and Behaviors That Contribute to Student Learning)", Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (April 20-24, 1992), 36.

- : ask questions that make students think.
- : relate course content to daily happenings as reported in the media.
- : explain things clearly.
- : use of variety of modes of presentation, including verbal and written diagrams and schematics.<sup>54</sup>

Many of these characteristics are simply the qualities of good teachers in general. But Fraenkel stresses that “all four of the teachers have instructional goals that go considerably beyond the learning of subject matter alone. All see their course as having an important impact on the lives of their students - by helping them develop both intellectual and emotional skills applicable to their lives and by expanding their ‘world view’”<sup>55</sup> He believes that the status of social studies - which he assesses as being “low”, should be addressed by studies such as his that endeavor to evaluate good and bad techniques used by teachers in the field. In his view a little introspection would be a good thing for social studies at this point.

If out-of-field teachers are less proficient in content knowledge than their specialist counterparts, it is possible that their students are aware of this. This may, in turn, affect the teachers’ ability to teach social studies. Diane Common dubs social studies the “l’enfant terrible” of the school day. She sees teachers and curriculum as the source of trouble for social studies. Her article is a biting indictment of poor social studies teachers.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 39.

Common believes that “many teachers do not have and should not have the authority to teach social studies.”<sup>56</sup> Authority, according to Common, falls into two categories: “de jure” authority and “de facto” authority. “De jure” authority rests upon three conditions: “the policies and procedural rules that guide the governance of the schooling institution in general and individual schools in particular; the social and personal values that the school and teacher are to transmit; and the curriculum guide and its concomitant materials, pedagogical practices, and achievement tests.”<sup>57</sup> While the second condition may be somewhat ambiguous, it is these three conditions that give the teacher the right to teach social studies. “De facto” authority is that earned “in terms of his/her ability TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS WITHIN WHICH STUDENTS WILL CONSENT TO LEARN SOCIAL STUDIES.”<sup>58</sup> When teachers have this ability they are able to achieve their goals. A student consents to a teacher’s “de facto” authority in three ways: acceptance of the teacher’s “de jure” authority and his/her teaching plans; willingness to cooperate with the teaching plans; and, an understanding and valuing of the content and objectives of the lesson. “When these three states are reached by the student, then the teacher can said [sic] to have been effective, successful, or whatever other expression we choose to use to indicate that goals have been reached.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Diane Common, “Teacher Authority in the Social Studies Classroom: Erosion of a Barren Ground,” Theory and Research in Social Education, Vol. 12, No. 4, Winter 1985, 27.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 30. (Capitals in original.)

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

Common takes her authority argument further by stipulating that two of the essential goals in social studies are active citizenship and critical thought. The teacher must possess an epistemological understanding of social studies in order to undertake critical thinking and he or she must know what information is essential and what materials to select (i.e. content knowledge and practical judgment to use Stanley's terminology.) She concludes by stating that teachers who possess "de jure" and "de facto" authority "have classrooms that are home to critical thought and active citizenship. Those that do not must face the realization that there cannot be, nor should there be, any comforting excuses when our social studies students have not learned, or have learned that which is useless, silly, invalid, or immoral."<sup>60</sup>

A number of studies have examined student attitudes towards social studies (Evans, Girod/Harmon, Morrisett/Hawke/Superka, Shaver/Davis/Helburn and Schug/Todd/Beery). It may be that a number of factors examined previously - textbook reliance, little activity-based learning, uninspired teaching and so on lead or contribute to poor perceptions of social studies.

Schug, Todd and Beery conducted a study to find out "Why Kids Don't Like Social Studies." They interviewed 46 students from two schools in the Midwest. Twenty-three were grade 6 students and twenty-three were grade 12 students. Their findings were that the students often equated subject importance with future career choices. Students rated subjects highly if they contributed to skills need in the future. Only some high school students (13%) saw citizenship education as important. The

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 37.

authors felt that social studies teachers do not communicate the importance of social studies knowledge and skills. Hence, they recommend “more community-based, ‘real world’ experiences which can help students learn for themselves the importance of being an active citizen.”<sup>61</sup> One important finding of this study was that students become increasingly disenchanted with social studies as they proceed through the school system. Fraser’s study confirms this. Complaints from students ranged from boredom, repetition of matter, subject difficulty, and lack of variety in teaching methods. Thus, hope for improvement could lie with more variety and activity based instruction. These challenges would be more difficult for the out-of-field teacher.

Morrisette, Hawk and Superka similarly note the fact that students do not like social studies and find it irrelevant. This may harken back to what Hodgetts said about the activities done in classes that were done in isolation - the current events example, for instance. Likewise, the public is uncertain as to the importance of social studies.

Girod and Harmon feel that some steps can be taken in “Selling the Social Studies.” They suggest a number of strategies that teachers can use to change student attitudes towards it. One suggestion made that is relevant herein is that the teacher must demonstrate that he or she is a “competent professional.” They state that

Teachers who know the subject and can explain it with clarity and in an interesting style are more likely to have students who enjoy the social studies. A knowledgeable teacher facilitates a positive response by selecting curriculum that is essential to the student and comfortable to the teacher. It is reasonable to expect pupils to become interested in the social studies content when the teacher is a skillful instructor.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Mark Schug, Robert Todd and R. Beery, “Why Kids Don’t Like Social Studies,” Social Education, Vol 48, No. 5, May 1984, 384.

<sup>62</sup> Gerald R. Girod and Gerald R. Harmon, “Selling the Social Studies,” The Social Studies, July/August 1987, 156.

There is evidence to suggest that out-of-field teachers are less capable of promoting the goals of social studies as a discipline. Specifically, critical thinking and citizenship goals are cited most frequently.

Promoting critical thinking is a primary goal of social studies (not only in Canada, but in the U.S. and many western European countries) because it is believed that in a democratic society people should be able to act as informed citizens - capable of analyzing and comprehending social contexts. "Over time the social studies classroom has become in both lay and professional perception, the repository of citizenship education and, ipso facto, the center for teaching the skills of critical thinking."<sup>63</sup>

John E. McPeck has written extensively on critical thinking. He believes that in order to engage in critical thinking one should know their subject specialty thoroughly. Critical thinking skills should be taught through the use of subject content. In other words, critical thinking should not be done in isolation. This necessitates that the teacher be well versed in their discipline. He comments that

Happily, most teachers are already fairly knowledgeable in their parent disciplines, at least in secondary schools and beyond, so there really is no need for an entirely new specialty, or alien expertise, in order to improve critical thinking skills in their classes. It requires more of a shift in emphasis, or redesigning their material and tests to reflect this emphasis on independent thinking. I am not claiming that teachers are now capable of doing this effectively on their own, but I do suggest that with a little guidance and a few suggestions, teachers are already more than half-way there by virtue of their understanding of their discipline.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Gerald Unks, "Critical Thinking in the Social Studies Classroom. Do We Teach It?" Social Education, March 1985, 240.

<sup>64</sup> John E. McPeck, Teaching Critical Thinking, (New York: Routledge, 1990), 32.

Similarly, Stanley connects the goal of critical thinking with content knowledge because a student cannot problem-solve in isolation - they need information to manipulate. Hence, "competent social studies teachers will not be satisfied if students only learn content. They will include student practice with identifying and solving problems"<sup>65</sup> An important consequence of developing critical thinking skills - often cited but not necessarily substantiated, is that content must be learned in a more in-depth fashion which takes more time and thus limits the amount of curriculum that can be covered. As noted before, this places many teachers in a predicament. They must weigh the pursuit of more in-depth high level thinking activities against the pressures of completing course content. The latter is becoming a greater concern to teachers as more standardized testing is being implemented.

Gerald Unks' study on critical thinking is particularly notable for it focuses upon a typical social studies exercise which involves critical thought. He postulates that the ability to distinguish statements of fact from statements of opinion is a good test of critical thinking. He tested 346 social studies teachers (anyone teaching one or more social studies or history classes in grades 7-12) in 43 school systems in the United States. He noted that many teachers split their teaching load with other disciplines - especially at the junior high level, and he sought "not so much to measure the 'pure' social studies teacher as I did all of those persons who have any contact with students in the context of a social studies classroom."<sup>66</sup> His study revealed that only half of the teachers involved

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<sup>65</sup> Stanley, 255.

<sup>66</sup> Unks, 240.



could distinguish fact from opinion. Unks' concern was that if this is the case, are social studies teachers teaching opinion as fact? He also found those teachers who had majored in social studies subjects (history, political science, sociology, economics, anthropology, geography or social science) were significantly better at distinguishing fact from opinion than those who were trained in other areas. Similarly, he discovered that those teachers who teach social studies for most of their school day were better at this critical thinking test than those who spent the majority of their day teaching another subject. These are connected for it's likely that administrators will assign "out-of-field" teachers fewer classes of social studies than "in-field" teachers. Unks asks

Are we serving ourselves, our students or society by continuing to employ the out-of-field teacher to teach social studies? In doing so are we sending a message of dubious content to in-field social studies teachers about them and the value of the subject they teach? Answering these questions is the responsibility of local, state and national educational leaders, not ours.<sup>67</sup>

Unks suggests a few remedies. He favours an increased emphasis upon critical thinking in teacher training programs. Those potential social studies teachers who have difficulty in this area should be assisted to become more proficient. Pre-service teachers also need to understand the rationale for promoting critical thinking in the classroom. Unks suggests that "we can raise a more jaundiced eye than is our custom when 'just anybody' - but particularly those who sit on the coach's bench - are drafted as social studies teachers."<sup>68</sup> His study found that social studies teachers with a physical education major performed significantly more poorly on his critical thinking test. Finally, he

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

concluded that social studies classrooms are currently not providing the necessary preparation for informed citizenship. He blames teachers' lack of skills and calls upon social studies teachers to become proficient in the skill of critical thinking.

The other goal that out-of-field teachers seem to have difficulty with is citizenship education. This has long been a goal in Canadian education - actually, it dates back to New France, according to Tomkins. Likewise it is a focus in American schools where preparation for citizenship in a democracy is held to be a major goal of social studies. One should bear in mind, though that citizenship is not the same for Canadians as it is for Americans. Even within Canada, people's opinions about their citizenship vary. Alan Sears discusses this in his article, "Social Studies as Citizenship Education in English Canada: A Review of Research". He noted that "Over the years, the curriculum in citizenship education has moved away from the transmission of an essentially British culture to the recognition of the multicultural, pluralistic nature of Canada and a focus on the skills and attitudes necessary to develop active, participating citizens."<sup>69</sup> The latter facet - becoming active citizens, seems to be the area that is least attained in social studies classrooms.

Tomkins, too, notes that for Canada, the citizenship goal has broadened since the 1950's to reject "the inculcation of specific beliefs as incompatible with a pluralistic society. Instead, the stress is on attitudes and on the development of intellectual or inquiry skills. Again, this has been at least the theory but the formalism of Canadian

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<sup>69</sup> Alan Sears, "Social Studies as Citizenship Education in English Canada: A Review of Research," Theory and Research in Social Education, Winnter, 1994, Vol. 22, No. 1, 33.

classrooms and the rote learning of traditional content have attenuated such an approach."<sup>70</sup>

Citizenship, though regarded as a goal of social studies, is not discussed as a discrete topic in any of the Manitoba Education and Training curriculum guides. So while it is held to be important its definition is hazy. Ken Osborne in "Citizenship Education and Social Studies" defines it as

Citizenship, however, at least as the word is commonly used, describes more than a legal status. It is intensely value-laden, embodying a set of ideals that represent what citizens ought to be and how they ought to live in order to enjoy the rights of citizenship. This is especially the case when we speak of good citizens, by which we mean people who go beyond the minimal requirements of citizenship, who get involved in the affairs of their community, who work for the public good, who help others, and so on.<sup>71</sup>

We attempt to teach citizenship in a number of ways. Civics education explains how the political and legal structure of the country operate - the Senior One social studies course is notable here. This is likely the definition that many teachers would give to citizenship education. However, citizenship is more inclusive than that. It involves participation - active involvement in the community whether it be through clubs, unions, communities; and so on. Osborne notes that citizenship education is done both overtly - as in the case of civics education, and more subtly through the classroom - in its culture. He notes that

The teaching strategies, rules, and procedures that teachers employ can have direct consequences for citizenship. A classroom delivers a set of powerful messages about power, authority, work, and learning, and the research suggests that these messages usually convey a sit-down-and-do-as-you're-told version of citizenship. . . . Indirectly, they must realize that what they

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<sup>70</sup> George Tomkins, "The Social Studies in Canada," A Canadian Social Studies, Jim Parson, Geoff Milburn, Max van Manen (eds), (Edmonton: University of Alberta Printing Services, 1983), 18.

<sup>71</sup> Ken Osborne, "Citizenship Education and Social Studies," In Social Studies in Transition. Ian Wright and Alan Sears (eds.) (Vancouver: Pacific Press, in press), 1.

do in their classrooms often has clear implications for citizenship and constitutes a powerful form of citizenship education.<sup>72</sup>

How cognizant of these concepts most teachers are is questionable. However, since history or social studies is the most official receptacle of citizenship education it is important that its teachers understand the concept. Whether the out-of-field teacher understands this deserves further study.

Anna Ochoa stressed the importance of citizenship education - patriotically! She believes that a democracy needs citizens who not only vote but can make informed decisions about social issues. Active community involvement is desirable, citizens should be able to critique mass media and be concerned about their own individual actions. Ochoa believes that social studies teachers should model these qualities to their students. The issue of modeling citizenship skills by social studies teachers is examined by Leming. In "Teacher Characteristics and Social Studies Education" he examines these issues via a number of surveys conducted in the United States. He found that 98% of social studies teachers were registered and did vote regularly (as compared to 67% of the general public) and were more involved (5:1 ratio) than the general public in writing letters to officials, displaying campaign information, attending political meetings and writing letters of opinion.<sup>73</sup>

Ochoa stresses two issues in teaching citizenship skills for life in a democratic society: 1) excellence and equity and 2) content and process. She favours the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>73</sup>James S. Leming, "Teacher Characteristics and Social studies Education," In Handbook of Research on Social Studies, James P. Shaver (ed.) (Toronto: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1991), 230.

advancement of excellence and equity but notes that the two can conflict. Excellence is based upon the notion of meritocracy - advancement on the basis of merit. Equity stresses equal access for all. Democracy, according to Ochoa, adheres to the notions of both excellence and equity. She feels that social studies teachers need to be proficient in a pedagogy that promotes equity. She recommends the use of cooperative learning which allows students to work together and make friendships that cross racial and cultural lines (proponents of multicultural education also promote cooperative education.) She also feels that social studies teachers should be well versed in multicultural and sex equity education for this should be part of their repertoire of both content and pedagogy.

In terms of teacher training for social studies Ochoa stresses the need for balance between content and pedagogy. While content has recently been stressed in calls for better teacher preparation, Ochoa notes that "involvement in depth in academic work will provide a necessary knowledge base for future teachers, but will not ensure exciting, dynamic courses in which students are actively engaged in social, political, and historical conditions and issues."<sup>74</sup> Pedagogy must be a sort that approximates the behavior of active citizens. Teacher education should prepare teachers to provide such learning experiences. Ochoa believes that activities and assignments that engage students in analyzing and making decisions (critical thinking?) are important.

Classroom discourse must be rigorous and stimulating. Such teachers must also fully understand significant educational issues such as excellence and equity, and content and pedagogy. Democracy places great value on the reasoning individual. A democratic education must do no less.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Anna S. Ochoa, "Issues in Teacher Education Reform. Implications for the Preparation of Social Studies Teachers," The Social Studies, May/June 1988, 122.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

John Jarolimek, in "The Knowledge Base of Democratic Citizens" also sees merit in citizenship education and believes history and geography are subjects where this should be learned. National studies have indicated that American students are not knowledgeable in these areas. He does not believe that instructional time should be increased as recommended by the National Assessment of Educational Progress but feels "the problem has more to do with uninspired teaching than a shortage of time."<sup>76</sup> He stresses the need for a content base for citizenship education so that students will be able to make informed decisions as citizens. He specifies four subsystems necessary for citizenship knowledge: the political system, the economic system, the legal system and the social system.

The problem of having underqualified teachers engaged in social studies instruction has been dealt with in the United States. Dumas, Weible and Evans in "State Standards for the Licensure of Secondary Social Studies Teachers" note that a push in the 1980's resulted in more stringent requirements for social studies teachers. States require certain teacher training programs and in addition certify their teachers by discipline. Other requirements can include a basic skills test, a pedagogy test, a subject matter specialty test, and so on (three states even require finger prints!) While Canadian teachers qualify in a given discipline there is no guarantee that once in the public school system their administrator will assign them to their area of training. The Manitoba Assessment clearly confirms this.

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<sup>76</sup> John Jarolimek, "The Knowledge Base of Democratic Citizens," The Social Studies, September/October 1990, 195.

Subject knowledge (particularly in-depth) will enhance social studies instruction - though it does not guarantee excellence. A teacher thoroughly trained in a subject is more likely to have a "vision" of his or her discipline that informs the content, the materials and the modes of instruction selected. A social studies teacher needs to understand that certain values and skills should be communicated: openness in discussion, tolerance towards cultural and racial differences, questioning, and the willingness to tackle controversial issues. Superka, Hawke and Morrissett say it best: "the teacher is key."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Irving Morrissett, Sharryl Hawke, Douglas Superka, "Six Problems for Social Studies in the 1980's" *Social Education*, Vol. 44, No. 7, November/December 1980, 367.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

The research suggests that a lot of social studies teaching leaves much to be desired. A number of problems seem to be common: overreliance on textbooks, teachers who lecture rather than discuss, teachers who lack an understanding of the goals of social studies and therefore lack the ability to make informed decisions in regards to teaching materials and activities, teachers who are unable to handle controversial issues in classroom materials or discussion, teachers who lack credibility with their students because they know little about their subject, uninspired and unenthusiastic teaching, and little activity-based learning. These constitute a serious indictment of social studies instruction. The notion that subject specialists are more likely to deliver superior instruction though, is flawed. Too many studies indicate that social studies instruction in general suffers from many of the problems listed above. It is reasonable to assume however, that the out-of-field teacher may experience particular problems when they embark into the teaching of social studies. In Manitoba, such teachers constitute a significant portion of the social studies personnel.

The 1989 assessment of social studies conducted by Manitoba Education and Training included a survey of teachers that revealed that at the grade 4 level approximately 75% of teachers had less than a university minor in geography or history and that at the grade 8 and 10 levels roughly 50% of teachers had less than a university minor in geography or history. This is a significant number of teachers who are engaged



in the teaching of social studies. Given the problems that seem inherent to social studies instruction the experiences of these out-of-field teachers are worth examination.

A variety of methods could have been used to study the experiences of these teachers. Since specialization in subject areas is required in Manitoba from the junior high level and up a study involving teachers from these levels seemed the most valid. The possibility of a control/experimental group study seemed too unwieldy a prospect. Since the problems of social studies instruction are not the exclusive domain of out-of-field teachers the comparison would have been a difficult one to make. Likewise, classroom observation was not a possibility since the author herein is employed full-time as a classroom teacher. Process-product research is difficult and fraught with the problems of testing and its inherent difficulties. Besides the notion was not to indict these teachers but given their place in social studies classrooms in Manitoba to gain an understanding of their needs. The use of interviews seemed most appropriate since probing questions could be asked and discussions could be initiated into areas that were related to the Review of Literature findings. Thus a small case study involving five classroom teachers was undertaken. All five were out-of-field teachers who had been assigned to social studies instruction as a minor part of their teaching load. While no scientific extrapolation can be derived from such a study, insights nonetheless can be gained into the experiences, ideas, impressions and views of these teachers. From their replies it is not possible to evaluate their competency. It is possible however, to gain insight into their experiences and provide concrete suggestions as to how better to assist them in their social studies teaching endeavours.

A series of interviews were conducted with teachers who are or did teach social studies but are subject specialists in another area. All are experienced teachers who would be considered "competent teachers." Three are teachers at the high school level and two are junior high teachers. The interviews were based on the following questionnaire. Many of the questions were directly related to the research findings contained in Chapter Two.

### **Questionnaire for Teachers**

#### **Part A -- Teacher Background**

1. What is your subject area specialty?
2. How long have you taught social studies?
3. Were you always assigned the same course in social studies?
4. What portion of your teaching load is social studies?
5. Was social studies assigned to you or did you have a choice of subjects? How much notice were you given of your social studies teaching assignment?
6. Were you assigned S or G level classes (for high school teachers)? [S is the designation generally designed to those students in the academic stream - possibly destined for post secondary education while G is the "General" level.]
7. Is any of the reading done in your leisure time social studies related (current events, newspapers, National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, Manitoba History, Beaver, etc.)?
8. Do you subscribe to any social studies publications (MSSTA Journal, Canada Social Studies Review, etc.)? Were you aware of their existence?

9. Has anyone ever shared these publications with you?

Part B -- Teacher Assistance and Professional Development

10. When you were first assigned social studies were you assigned a mentor? To whom did you turn for advice and help?

11. Were you been encouraged to take any social studies courses or attend workshops in the area of social studies?

12. Have you attended the MSSTA (Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association) session at SAG (the annual Special Area Group Conference)? Was it useful? What did you learn?

13. What did your administrator (team leader, department head) do for you to ensure a smooth transition into the social studies field?

Part C -- Planning, Course, Curriculum

14. How did you learn the social studies course that you had to teach?

15. Have you read the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum overview document? Can you give me a brief overview of the K-12 social studies curriculum?

16. Do you use the text to help guide you through the course?

17. How often do your students use their text books? Daily? Weekly? Biweekly? Monthly? Not at all?

18. Do you use a resource-based learning approach to social studies? What use do you make of library in your social studies classes? What sources have you used other than the recommended text for the social studies course that you are teaching?

19. What methods of instruction do you use to teach social studies?

20. What do you feel are the “big” goals of social studies as a discipline?
21. Social studies can involve the examination of controversial topics. Have you embarked into any of these topics? How do you handle topics such as politics, racism and human rights? Do you avoid issues involving controversy?
22. The curriculum stipulates that 70% of time must be spent on the curriculum. What have you added to the curricular topics? Give examples.
23. How do you make the content of your course relevant to students?
24. Have you collected social studies display materials for your classroom?
25. Did you adapt materials to students with lower skills? How did you find materials for this purpose?

Part D -- Personal Impressions, Experiences

26. Do or did you enjoy teaching social studies? Why? Why not? What was easiest in teaching social studies? What was hardest?
27. Would you like to continue teaching social studies? Why? Why not?
28. How important do you believe social studies is for students to learn on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being unimportant, 10 being extremely important)? Do you convey your beliefs herein to your students? How?
29. Were you made to feel part of the “social studies team” within your school?
30. Were you given a budget for your social studies instruction?
31. What supports do you believe teachers such as yourself should be given to help them with the successful delivery of a social studies program? (preparation time, materials, prepared teaching units, mentoring, team teaching and so on)



Each of the five teachers was interviewed using a microcassette recorder. The results of these interviews were transcribed and placed in the Appendices. The results were presented and discussed in Chapter Four. The questionnaire was intended only as a guideline for discussion; any forays off specific topics but into areas germane to the overall endeavor were recorded and transcribed. The identities of the interviewees were and will be kept confidential - so information that would reveal their identities has been kept to a minimum. Approval for this research was obtained from the necessary authorities - both at the University of Manitoba and with those involved.

## Chapter Four

### Research Findings and Commentary

The five out-of-field teachers were interviewed between 1995 and 1996. Transcripts of these interviews are contained within the Appendices. The research findings are located within Part A of this chapter while commentary is provided in Part B.

#### Part A Research Findings

Between June 1995 and March 1996 five teachers were interviewed. All five are currently employed as teachers in the province of Manitoba. Two are female, three are male and all are seasoned teachers - most with more than ten years of classroom experience. Two are junior high teachers and three are high school teachers. The findings herein correspond in structure to the questionnaire that was included in Chapter Three (see pages 29 - 34).

#### Teacher Background

The teachers who were interviewed had various areas of specialty - business education, languages, English, physical education, biology, and science. One of the teachers does have a history minor but he was assigned to teach geography. What became immediately obvious was that their assignment to social studies was often sporadic - they could be assigned to teach it one year or semester and not the next. This had nothing to do with their ability to teach social studies. It seemed more to be a function of timetabling. If their subject area specialty did not have enough slots to fill their timetable they were assigned to another subject that needed a teacher. So social

studies, in their cases, happened to fit the bill. Teacher D taught social studies for a number of years and then not for six or seven. He has recently resumed teaching social studies again. Teacher E taught high school social studies during the teaching year 1993 to 1994. At the time of her interview in June of 1995 she was not teaching social studies but she is again teaching it in the 1995 -1996 school year. Her assignment has been to the same course, S3 Canadian history. She would like to continue teaching social studies as she feels she is starting to gain a good understanding of the course content devoted a fair amount of time in producing classroom materials and activities. For most of the teachers their assignment to social studies tended to be the same course - for instance, Teacher A has always been assigned Senior One social studies. Teacher B has been assigned to the Grade 8 and Senior One social studies courses - but these assignments were separated by a number of years. This "on again - off again" assignment to social studies seems common to these teachers' experiences. This is best demonstrated on the following chart:

Teacher	Jr. High or Sr. High	Teaching social studies at time of interview? Y/N	Teaching social studies now (spring of 1996)? Y/N	When teaching social studies, % of teaching load	Has taught social studies on and off during course of career? Y/N
A	Jr. High	Yes	Yes	40%	No
B	Jr. High	No	No	14-25%	Yes - at the junior high level only.
C	High School	Yes	No	25-70%	No
D	High School	Yes	Yes	Ranged from minor part of load to major part of load	Yes - at the high school level only.
E	High school	No	Yes	Less than half	Yes - at the elementary, junior high and high school levels.

For all of the teachers social studies was assigned to them by their administrator and they were not given a choice of subjects. Two of the teachers indicated that if they had been unhappy with their assignment to social studies they felt that their administrators would probably have switched them into another subject area. Teacher E, who has taught at the elementary, junior high and senior high levels indicated that

At the junior high level it was sort of negotiated in terms of what subjects you needed to take in order to teach. Languages and social studies often went well together because you could do a lot of interrelated activities in terms of language development, organization, and research skills. At the high school level it was basically assigned.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Teacher E, Interview by author, Tape Recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 26 June 1995. Appendix E.



All of the teachers received their timetable in late June and had the summer break to prepare for their social studies course. This is not unusual as school timetables are generally finalized in late June once enrollment figures are established. So this meant that the teachers had approximately a week while still in school to make contact with other teachers, to locate or borrow textual materials, curriculum guides and so on. Depending upon their summer plans they either had time to prepare or had to work very quickly before the summer break or shortly thereafter. As Teacher A put it, "I went about preparing it basically to the end of June and then I was away taking out canoe trips for two months and I came back a week early and prepared like crazy."<sup>79</sup> It is not clear just how much time all teachers spend preparing for their next year's teaching duties during the summer break so the time or lack thereof spent by these teachers may be misleading.

There seemed to be no pattern to the level of course (G or S) that these teachers were assigned. This is irrelevant at the junior high level where courses are all "G" level. Notably, though, Teacher E taught many different social studies courses - "Because I taught the immersion program there was often a shortage of teachers who could teach in the social studies area and who were willing to take on these subjects so I taught different social studies subjects almost every year that I was teaching."<sup>80</sup> This comment is perhaps indicative of a dynamic unique to immersion teaching - that immersion teachers find it difficult to prepare for social studies instruction in their language. A shortage of

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<sup>79</sup> Teacher A, Interview by author, Tape Recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 18 March 1996. Appendix E.

<sup>80</sup> Teacher E.

materials or difficulty in translation may be at work here. Nonetheless it may cause social studies instruction therein to be problematic.

At the high school level the teachers were assigned equally to the S and G level courses. Even for those who were assigned sporadically to social studies, they were generally given the same course that they had taught on previous occasions. So Teacher E returned to Senior Three Canadian history after a year's break from it. This was made easier by the fact that even if the level - S or G, is different the curriculum is basically the same and so the search for resources - books, texts, articles, videos, and so on pays off for both levels. (In other subjects such as math in Manitoba teachers are not so lucky since the S and G curricula are different.)

Many of the teachers are readers of social studies-related materials in their leisure time. Teacher B, who was assigned the Senior One course, commented that " I think all of that (reading magazines, newspapers etc.) for not only social studies but I think that's pretty typical for anyone with current events information, you can't live without it. Yes, the answer in short is yes, but it's much more than just for social studies - it's for understanding. I think we need that in our global village - you know it's really important."<sup>81</sup> Teacher C subscribes to National Geographic. Teacher D commented, "I am a fanatic about reading newspaper articles and magazine articles and subscribing to things, at one time, like Equinox and National Geographic and Time Magazine."<sup>82</sup> Teacher E stated,

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<sup>81</sup> Teacher B. Interview by author, Tape Recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 18 March 1996. Appendix E.

<sup>82</sup> Teacher D. Interview by author, Tape Recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 13 February 1996. Appendix D.

The newspaper. I like to read National Geographic. I found that when I was teaching social studies I became more aware of articles that were related to the things that we were studying - things that were happening on the radio and in the news, that were related to what we were studying in some way, shape or form. I was more aware of it when I was teaching it. When I'm not teaching social studies I still read those things but not with the same interest in finding material that might be good for the students.<sup>83</sup>

Teacher A, likewise tends to read National Geographic and Maclean's in her leisure time.

Only some of the teachers had been exposed to, had subscribed to or had even heard of some of the specific social studies publications such as the MSSTA Journal or the Canadian Social Studies. Teacher A had read the MSSTA Journal. Teacher B when asked, stated "I never even knew those existed. (Laughter) . . . Truthfully the only information I ever received in social studies - whether it was the history or the grade 9 current events was through my own investigation and digging. No one came to me. Ever."<sup>84</sup> No mention was made by either teacher of the Middle School Journal which can contain materials relevant to social studies from time to time. Teacher C had heard of the Canadian Social Studies but not about the MSSTA Journal. Teacher D indicated that he had heard of these publications and that some of his colleagues had shared them with him. Teacher E subscribed to the MSSTA Journal and found it quite helpful - "There were actually a number of good articles - particularly in regards to the General Strike, anniversary edition. In terms of reading the bibliographies . . . it was useful."<sup>85</sup> But she noted that she discovered these publications on her own - no one shared them with her.

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<sup>83</sup> Teacher E.

<sup>84</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>85</sup> Teacher E.

Ironically, it is these types of publications which generally contain the most examples of teaching units and ideas for the classroom - that might be most helpful to out-of-field teachers. The other publications - like National Geographic, for example, tend to be about content items rather than pedagogical strategies.

#### Teacher Assistance and Professional Development

None of the teachers was assigned a mentor to assist them in preparing for their social studies teaching assignment. Teacher A commented, "I wasn't assigned a mentor, a mentor came to me. And that was (teacher's name), who used to teach it. He is a major in the area. He gave me a lot of his notes and told me that if I had any questions to come and see him."<sup>86</sup> The same teacher is fortunate to have a husband who is qualified as a social studies teacher. This gives her someone to consult and from whom to seek ideas - indeed, he is her primary resource. Teacher B sought assistance from colleagues at the junior high at which he worked. However, at a subsequent school he received no help from colleagues - possibly because he was new at the school and knew of fewer sources of help. The teachers at that school would likely not have known that he was not customarily a social studies teacher. This is speculation, however. The point is that both junior high teachers were not assigned mentors and they sought assistance through colleagues or friends. No formal assistance was either arranged or suggested by the administration who had assigned them the task of teaching social studies - knowing full well that it was not their area of expertise. The three high school teachers likewise

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<sup>86</sup> Teacher A.

received no support from their administrators and tended to seek out members of the social studies department for ideas, materials and advice. Teacher D commented that

The people at the very top like your administrators are not going to be there for support. That for whatever reason the paperwork has increased, they've far too much on their plates, they're involved in dealing with angry and noisy kids, they're not there in any way, shape or form to support you. I'm not saying that if you don't go there and that they won't sit down and listen to you but they're not visibly there they're not at my door and saying . . . I guess . . . there was one administrator there the other week and he said, "I'm glad you're in this classroom and not me. I don't know whether I could handle these kids." So um, it would be nice to have someone who came and say, "We've been watching you and we've been talking with your department head and we've been talking with your colleagues and well you know there's some neat things going on here" but that I think I'm beginning to realize more and more the top down support is not going to be there so the support you're going to get is what you build and what you can build on so it'll lie, it'll be colleagues or libraries becoming much more of a focal point. So I look at it that way - a master teacher would be great . . .<sup>87</sup>

There is a clear difference between the experiences of the junior and senior high teachers that derives from the administrative structure of the schools in which they teach. Junior high schools - at least the ones connected to this study, are organized by grade teams of teachers and students. For example, there is a grade 7 team of teachers that works exclusively with the grade 7 students. Depending upon the size of the school - if it is large enough, these teachers may teach only the grade 7 students. Thus there is likely only one teacher teaching the social studies course for that grade. Similarly, there is a grade 8 social studies teacher and a grade 9 social studies teacher. Although the research literature indicates that teachers receive a lot of their ideas and support from colleagues these teachers were not, however, a "team" or a "department" and had no formal connections in terms of either regular meetings, professional development or curriculum

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<sup>87</sup> Teacher D.

planning. Moreover, they did not seem to have initiated meeting times on their own. In smaller schools where there may not be enough social studies classes to fill a teacher's timetable most teachers will also teach another subject or another grade level. This was the case for Teacher A who commented, "I'm on the grade nine team but I teach grade seven basic French. So they try to get you to teach two separate levels."<sup>88</sup> When asked whether a teacher might be assigned to teach social studies at the two levels she commented, "No, no. They try to switch it around so that you don't get bored with the subject area or whatever."<sup>89</sup> When asked if it would be helpful to teach more than one level of social studies in order to gain understanding of the overall social studies curriculum she replied, "I think that would be really helpful for that."<sup>90</sup>

Teacher B, the other junior high teacher, had similar experiences. The social studies teachers at his school did not collaborate in any formal sense. He commented that "There was, you know, a loose, very loose team. If anything, we were pulled together to say okay, how many books do you have?"<sup>91</sup>

Both junior high teachers discussed social studies topics with colleagues in a very informal sense. Teacher A was asked, "So never do you get a chance or a forum to sit down as social studies teachers and to talk out any issue . . .?"<sup>92</sup> She replied, "Never."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Teacher B

<sup>92</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

Upon clarification - “ ... or plan anything together or to combine classes . . . ?”<sup>94</sup> she commented, “No we’ll sometimes at lunch talk about stuff that we’re doing and some suggestions but that’s it.”<sup>95</sup> Much like Teacher B who alluded to a “loose team” Teacher A formed an informal “team” with another teacher - “But it’s just myself and the Grade 8 teacher. We share ideas and stuff like that and say we should meet sometime. And that’s about it. The grade 7 teacher, he sort of does his own thing.”<sup>96</sup>

In spite of belonging to grade level teams the junior high teachers herein did not experience any curricular focus within their teams; the teams functioned instead as administrative units (more about this later).

When asked if they had been encouraged to go to any social studies workshops or to take courses in social studies all but one of the teachers answered in the negative. This is not surprising. Other than the Special Area Group Conference held once a year there are very few social studies inservices available in Manitoba. This is born out by the results of the 1989 assessment which discovered that at the Grade 8 level “Seventy-one percent (71%) of teachers reported that they had attended two or fewer social studies inservices in the past two years.”<sup>97</sup> Similarly, at the Grade 10 level “in-service in geography is not a high priority; only 40% of teachers reported that they had attended three or more inservices in the last two years.”<sup>98</sup> Teacher A had been involved with

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Manitoba Education and Training, p. 19.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

divisional meetings and had represented her school at those meetings but in terms of being encouraged to learn more about social studies, the teachers generally were not informed about sessions or given the opportunity to participate in professional development for social studies. Teacher C noted that though he was not encouraged to take courses or attend workshops he did "because I've always attended workshops that have something to do with social studies because teaching economics and law there's a lot of overlap so I have attended ah, social studies inservices."<sup>99</sup> Teacher B attributed this lack of encouragement for professional development to "It's not your major - there's no emphasis and I think that whatever monies were allotted it was the 'short end of the stick.'"<sup>100</sup> When clarification was sought - "Okay so they looked at you teaching one out of seven (classes) and thought that the investment wasn't worthwhile given your involvement?"<sup>101</sup> he replied, "That might have been a false assessment but that's what I think."<sup>102</sup>

Four of the five teachers had attended the MSSTA Conference at the annual Special Area Group conferences in Manitoba - though none had been encouraged to do so. All found it helpful. When asked if they had been able to acquire any units or ideas for classroom use their responses varied. Teacher A found a keynote speaker interesting and learned in a general sense from that experience. Teacher D did not manage to acquire any teaching units or specific ideas to employ in his classroom. Teacher E,

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<sup>99</sup> Teacher C. Interview by author. Tape Recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 25 June 1995.

<sup>100</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



likewise commented that “Parts of it were useful. Some of the materials sort of handouts that you get were useful especially. Some were too philosophical and not concrete enough. They were interesting but didn’t really give me anything that I needed in teaching in class.”<sup>103</sup>

The teachers were asked what their administrator did to ensure them a smooth transition into the social studies area. Teacher A said that her administrator was supportive of her program - “Basically he allowed me to do whatever I want. Like I take the kids to the law courts. . . . He likes all of these outings.”<sup>104</sup> Teacher B commented, “Give me a break. . . . if you’re an experienced teacher I don’t think that an administrator comes into your program unless there’s a problem. If there’s not a problem then they don’t.”<sup>105</sup> The others received no assistance from their administrators.

The situation was different however, in terms of the team leaders and department heads. Teacher A commented that “name of team leader will help me in anything. (Laughter). In fact right now she’s showing Schindler’s List for me. She really goes above and beyond the call of duty. She’s terrific.”<sup>106</sup> Teacher B noted the problem discussed earlier wherein there was no team of social studies teachers from whom to receive assistance. His grade level team and team leader did not provide assistance to him in his social studies teaching assignment. Teacher C stated that “Well the

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<sup>103</sup> Teacher E.

<sup>104</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>105</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>106</sup> Teacher A.

department head was open to any questions and was free with his advice.”<sup>107</sup> Teacher D commented that “ From a department head point of view I was encouraged to ask for information, I was encouraged to ask questions and I think it was made - I know it was made quite clear right from the beginning that in the department you were not isolated and that either colleagues or the department head would assist you at any time and in any way that they could.”<sup>108</sup> Teacher E commented that

The department head? Was very supportive in terms of the types of clientele I had. Students were at varying levels of reading ability, varying levels of behaviour in the classroom. In that sense he was very supportive in terms of giving me ideas of things that I could do. In terms of materials for my actual units some of the other teachers were more helpful and a lot of it I just did on my own through going to the library and the textbook and that sort of thing.<sup>109</sup>

#### Planning, Course, Curriculum

The ways that the teachers went about preparing for their courses were similar. Most started with the textbook. Four of the teachers then progressed to the curriculum guide. Then they located any additional resources that their school had. Teacher C said, “It was a geography course and . . . learning the material I went through one of the textbooks, Continent of Contrast, and then after I went through that I just took out a North American geography book at random and read pieces of it. I must have gone through six or seven to become at ease with the material.”<sup>110</sup> Teacher D noted,

Well again my department head was very forthcoming with going over the outline of the courses even though I had never taught this particular

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<sup>107</sup> Teacher C.

<sup>108</sup> Teacher D.

<sup>109</sup> Teacher E.

<sup>110</sup> Teacher C.

geography class before. I was shown textbooks, I was given an idea of what was covered from the content of it and I was given all the different types of assignments and outlines to help me with each of the units. And on top of that we have a reasonable collection of videos and I was encouraged to use that . . . I was also encouraged to bring in videos from outside and information from outside and I just found a willingness to help me to meld the stuff that I had and to help me with the outline of all the courses.<sup>111</sup>

Teacher A who had had a colleague volunteer ideas, materials and assistance similarly “Went through the curriculum and figured out what I needed to know and I figured out the best way that I would like to teach it. And I do a lot of group work, I do a lot of media. So I would illegally tape things from CBC and stuff like that, the radio.”<sup>112</sup> It was not clear here whether Teacher A had used the curriculum guide or had used the text as the course outline.

The teachers were asked if they were familiar with the K-12 social studies curriculum document that outlines social studies for all grade levels. The purpose of asking this question was to determine if the teachers themselves had an overview of the social studies curriculum - its content, goals, and skills objectives in their minds. It would indicate if they were knowledgeable of their students’ previous learning and what knowledge and skills would benefit their students when they moved onto the next grade. None of the teachers was familiar with the document. They were then asked if they could give a brief overview of the K-12 curriculum and specifically if they were familiar with the content of the previous and subsequent grades’ curricula. Teacher A responded, “That’s a great question! (laughter) . . . You stumped me! No I couldn’t tell

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<sup>111</sup> Teacher D.

<sup>112</sup> Teacher A.

you.”<sup>113</sup> When asked if she was familiar with the content of the Grade 7 and 8 programs she replied in the affirmative - presumably this knowledge was fairly superficial since she had not taught either of the courses. Teacher B replied, “Haven’t a clue. . . . You have to remember though, that I was never a party to any discipline . . . you know, meetings, there was no inservicing. It was a matter of you’d better prepare for what you need and that’s it.”<sup>114</sup> Teacher C replied, “Not in the elementary school no. I don’t have any idea. In junior high I think it’s history in senior one, geography is in there somewhere either in grade 7 or in grade 8.”<sup>115</sup> Teacher D could not give an overview of social studies from K to 12 and pointed out that “No I think basically what I’ve looked at it just at the beginning that they should have geography of North America and that is about as much time as I’ve had to handle at this particular point.”<sup>116</sup> Teacher E was the exception - possibly because she has taught elementary, junior high and senior high during her career. She stated that

Well, in the lower elementary it primarily deals with yourself and the community, in grade 4. Grade 5 is more geography-based - Canada and the types of landforms you might have, latitude and longitude a little bit of that sort of thing. Grade 6 is all historical based, history of Canada. Grade 7 you get more into geography again and space, the planets. Grade 8 is history of the world. Grade 9 is Canadian history but with a more political slant - how the government works, how we as citizens fit into the country. Grade 10 is geography again and grade 11 is Canadian History. Grade 12 - I couldn’t tell you! (Laughter and pause). World Issues I believe!<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>115</sup> Teacher C.

<sup>116</sup> Teacher D.

<sup>117</sup> Teacher E.

Varying degrees of use were made of textbooks in the classroom. Teacher A said that "Yes, to help guide me through the course. I use Canada Today. But I don't . It's not my Bible."<sup>118</sup> Her students use the text three or four times a month. Depending upon the course - Grade 8 or Senior One Teacher B did or did not make use of the text. In

"8, I followed the text quite a bit because I think it was pretty logically laid out. . . . Grade 9, Canada Today, that's what I used . . . I found it archaic, I found it very stifling and I found it had really nothing to do with what I thought were the current events of the day. And for the Grade 9 I used a lot of resources that probably infringed on a lot of copyright - newspapers, radio, TV, magazines, anything that I could use I brought in. I photocopied. I taped. I did everything that was let's say a little bit on the grey side."<sup>119</sup>

Teacher C used the text not as a guide to the course but as a way to learn the course material. His students "Had the text there. It was always there to refer to. We'd always keep going back to it. It was used as sort of an anchor."<sup>120</sup> Teacher D did use the text to help guide him through the course and said that "On average we're using our text at least for 15 minutes every day."<sup>121</sup> Teacher E said, "I used the text to help me but I didn't use it as my sole resource. I found that depending on the level of the student I used a variety of texts as well as other materials. I usually planned out a unit and then worked the text around what I planned to do."<sup>122</sup> Three of the five teachers mentioned having used the curriculum guide to help them plan their course.

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<sup>118</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>119</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>120</sup> Teacher C.

<sup>121</sup> Teacher D.

<sup>122</sup> Teacher E.

Most of the teachers reported that they used a resource based learning approach in their classrooms. Some seemed hesitant in their replies herein; one asked for an explanation of the term, resource based learning. It is unclear whether the teachers understood the concept to mean anything more than the use of a variety of materials and approaches within classroom instruction. Teacher B noted that he used it in the Senior One program but not in the Grade 8 program for

There's a difference. I really found that there was a substantial difference between those two courses. One is like nuts and bolts historical and the other is "airy fairy" but you have to bring stuff in so that it's very topical for the kids to drive home the point and make it pertinent. Otherwise it's lost.<sup>123</sup>

All of the teachers had their students use the library for some of the projects and assignments they gave. This did not seem to be a habitual practice.

The methods of instruction used in their social studies classes varied. Teacher A used

Group work, um, lecture, I basically cover them all. This year I mostly lecture and notes because this group that we've got needs that - they need more structure. They're very talkative. And so I leave the group discussion until the end of the class. I do a lot of discussion actually. And we do mock trials.<sup>124</sup>

Teacher B used "A lot of 'chalk talk'. Introducing the topic, 'chalk talk', distribution of whatever we were working with, a lot of video, used a lot of that CBC News in Review.

. . . I did a lot of taping, not only television but radio . . ."<sup>125</sup> Teacher C used "A

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<sup>123</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>124</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>125</sup> Teacher B.

combination of ah, lecture for introducing a new topic, question sheets, and ah, group projects, group research projects. That's basically it."<sup>126</sup> Teacher D said that

I've found that my methods are changing. I start off usually with a lecture for about ten minutes in which I try to make sure that they're all at the same point and then I find that I'm much more involved in becoming an individual resource teacher for each one. Actually I try to get them to work in groups because I find that easier in the setup of my classroom. So I'm very much involved in student centred learning right now and I encourage them as they go about their tasks of the day.<sup>127</sup>

Teacher E "Usually tended to start the class with either a review of material that we had covered the day before or review. Then I tended to give some notes on the overhead. Then they would work either on an assignment or a project and sometimes we would throw a video in at the end."<sup>128</sup> In spite of their replies it should be noted that in the 1989 social studies assessment there was a discrepancy between the replies of the teachers and their students in terms of the methods used in class. For instance, "teachers report using a reasonable range of teaching strategies, though it seems that in roughly one-half of classrooms there is little scope for student involvement or activity."<sup>129</sup>

The teachers were asked to tell what the "big goals" of social studies were and they were fairly unanimous in singling out the citizenship goals of the discipline. Teacher A stated the "Big goal is to get kids excited about being Canadian - like for Senior One. To really feel proud, to understand their heritage, to see more, to want to experience more by traveling in this country and to really be a responsible citizen, to

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<sup>126</sup> Teacher C.

<sup>127</sup> Teacher D.

<sup>128</sup> Teacher E.

<sup>129</sup> Manitoba Education and Training, p. 19.

want to learn that voting is really important, that you can't really believe everything you hear."<sup>130</sup> Teacher B commented,

Oh that's a big question. To tell you the truth it's been said more than once - and it's got a lot of credence I think, that if we don't understand our past we have no future. To understand the reasons for whatever historical events occurred and when I talk about the reasons I mean the nuts and bolts, the, all of the facts, all the different things that occurred and try to put them together as a puzzle piece to figure out what really happened because at least for me when I look around today I see the same errors, the same mistakes, again and again, and nobody seems to learn.<sup>131</sup>

Teacher C saw the big goal of social studies was "to have an awareness and an appreciation of Canada and where it fits in the world."<sup>132</sup> Teacher D said

One of the goals has to be to that if you're going to be a citizen of the country it's to at least know the country and by knowing the geographical area, knowing about the people, settlement. I think that another goal is to bring understanding to different parts of the country. At the moment we have misunderstanding - whether it's in the east or in west, there seem to be a lot of misunderstandings. I think for me, too, the goals would be to know the country, to appreciate the country and to have a unique understanding to be good citizens and to be contributors to the country.<sup>133</sup>

Teacher E stated,

I think the big goals of social studies are for students to have a sense of our history. To know where we've come from even though they say sometimes, "Why do we have to learn this? It happened so long ago." It's important for them to know where Canada was and why some of the problems today exist. Hmm. I think it's important to develop tolerance in them towards other nationalities, towards other cultures and for them to develop some sense understanding and responsibility of what it is to be a citizen in this country, to not take for granted as much the privilege of voting, the privilege of living in a democratic society which many people have fought and died

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<sup>130</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>131</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>132</sup> Teacher C.

<sup>133</sup> Teacher D.



for. Students in our country tend to take that for granted and not, you know, really consider that to be important.<sup>134</sup>

Having taught social studies when events such as the Charlottetown Accord and the Quebec referendum occurred seemed to have impressed the teachers that citizenship was an important aspect of social studies instruction. The teachers' ideas of the "big goals" of social studies seemed to be directly related to the particular course that they had taught. The geography teachers were focused upon Canada and its place in the world. The Canadian history teacher was concerned with the historical origins of problems in Canada. Virtually no mention was made about critical thinking as being a primary goal of social studies. Other than knowing one's country and learning to be a good citizen no other goals were recognized by the teachers.

The teachers were asked if they embark into topics involving controversy when they teach social studies. Politics, human rights and racism were given as examples of such areas. Many of the teachers felt comfortable handling issues of controversy with their classes; some, in fact, embraced controversy. Teacher A commonly discusses politics with her classes and discussed racism and discrimination in many of the units in the Senior One program. When asked if she always maintained a neutral stance during discussions involving say politics she said,

I try not to. Whenever I say something I'll say, "That's just my opinion and I could be correct, it doesn't matter it's just how I feel about this issue, and that it's okay if you disagree with me" and a lot of them do (laughter). They love to have an opinion and it's great. I really stress that on everyone of my tests and in everything we do, "What do you think? What is your opinion on this?" And with regards to the racism we go through that with

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<sup>134</sup> Teacher E.

the Quebec issue. Also with regard to our nationalism and multiculturalism unit and especially in World War One and Two. Why wars start, etc.<sup>135</sup>

When asked if she avoided issues that were controversial she replied, "No, I love them. (Laughter). I think it's important."<sup>136</sup> Teacher B, likewise, was willing to embark into topics that were controversial and was cognizant of the dangers involved when discussing delicate issues. He commented, "Yeah, they (issues involving controversy) were tackled and the kids know me and they know how far they can go. I allow personal emotion into it because it's a very emotional discussion but they have to confine themselves to doing it in a very respectful fashion. Kids know as soon as they cross the line - whether they're, you know, calling natives or aboriginals something else that that's not acceptable."<sup>137</sup> He laid ground rules for discussion and always maintained neutrality in terms of political issues. When asked whether or not he had embarked into topics involving controversy such as politics, racism and human rights Teacher C replied, "I taught geography. There wasn't a lot of controversial topics unless the environment - which is controversial."<sup>138</sup> Teacher D like Teacher A embraced controversial issues in his social studies instruction. He commented,

I think the answer to that is very plainly I'm prepared to talk about any subject whether it's controversial or not. Again I think it just simply depends on your approach to it. Um. I think one of the things that we probably don't understand enough is where kids actually are on issues. And one of the things I try to do beforehand is to try to establish where they are and then look at the issues as they see them. So if the controversy is, for

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<sup>135</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>138</sup> Teacher C.

example, that there are too many immigrants in this country and they're taking up all of our jobs one of the things I do is to try to get the kids to explain to me what an immigrant is. Then how do you think these people arrived here and then we go, we make it more personal, and then we talk about they themselves - where are they, are they immigrants and it was kind of interesting that um, it gives kids a different view because all of a sudden their friend is an immigrant and what they're [sic] actually have heard about or started off by probably they would have said which was "Pack them all up and send them away" now includes their friends. And so now we have a different light on the subject. So now we can get into some kinds of discussion about what an immigrant is, how they come here, the contributions of immigration and what this country can do. And so we try to take controversial issues and not prolong the controversy but turn them into positive experiences so that people in the end are willing at least to look at the different sides rather than simply be one-sided and not interested in the other side of it.<sup>139</sup>

Teacher E was highly cognizant of the potential difficulties in tackling topics involving controversy in a social studies classroom. When asked if and how she embarked into such topics she replied,

Delicately!! (Laughter). I sort of hmm, I try to deal with it. I have sensed ... I have tried to discuss it and give sort of different points of view. I have sensed in the G level courses that a lot of the students come with a certain amount of racial baggage and you can almost feel that when you talk about certain issues. Sometimes you're sort of "tippy-toeing" along because you don't want it to start into a, some kind of a debate on racial issues that could turn into something ugly that you may not be able to control - particularly if you're not as comfortable with the material as you would be if you'd been teaching it for a number of years. But I did try to at least bring those topics up and get students to sort of empathize and look at other points of view even if they didn't agree - to get them to sort of consider it. I maybe didn't do as much discussion as I would have liked because of the fact that I feared how they might react, what sorts of things would come out of their mouths.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Teacher D.

<sup>140</sup> Tacher E.

The social studies curriculum stipulates that teachers are expected to spend 70% of the time on the curriculum and are allowed 30% of classroom time to be used for topics of their own discretion. When asked how they had used this discretionary time most of the teachers commented that they had used it to expand upon topics within the curriculum. Teacher A used this time in this fashion though she said that she tried to expand into topics involving third world countries because she thought that the curriculum in Senior Two dealt with that area. She felt that she would be providing her students with some background information preparatory to Senior Two. (The curriculum for Senior Two in fact is a geography of North America and while it does focus to some extent upon third world countries in Central America it is not the primary focus of the course. It is possible that Teacher A was confusing the Senior Two program with the Senior Four geography course.) Teachers B and C expanded upon content areas included in the curriculum. Teacher D had expanded into areas dealing with conflict resolution and tourism - topics that are an area of interest for him. Teacher E stuck to the curriculum.

The teachers were asked how they make their course relevant to the their students. Teacher A tried to focus on things that her students were interested in - such as movies. She uses these as a jumping off point for social studies discussions. She also allowed students a choice when it came to choosing topics for projects. Teacher B found that in the Senior One social studies program it was immediately obvious how the content was relevant to students. He discussed a lot of current events with his students. However, he had a more difficult time with the Grade 8 program. He commented that,

“The grade 8 course I didn’t do much of anything - like I said Grade 8 . . . the history is very nuts and bolts to me. I didn’t have an opportunity to expand as much as I did in the nine course.”<sup>141</sup> When asked if it was less obvious how to expand on topics in the Grade 8 program he replied,

Well I’m sure if I had a background in history, I’m sure that I could do that, but I’ve always been very keenly interested in current events so I, I found the Grade 9 course just a natural, I just loved it, I really loved it. It was a real gas because the kids could come in and it didn’t matter if it was in the newspaper or what I had some information about it because I was interested. It was fun.<sup>142</sup>

Teacher C felt that the relevance of geography was self evident and that really students had never indicated that they felt it was irrelevant. Teacher D found that he was continually pointing out the relevancy of geography to his students. He gave a number of examples of discussions wherein he had demonstrated this to his students. He noted that “So the relevancy was that they were seeing that you could use geography to explore, you could use geography for normal kinds of jobs that were available, you could also use geography to, um, price out what it was going to cost you if you wanted to move etc., etc. So I tried to start with them and try to get some idea of how we could make it relevant for them.”<sup>143</sup> Teacher E who taught the Canadian history course tried to

Relate it as much as possible to the issues that are happening today so that they could understand. For example, if we were discussing the history of Quebec we tried to look at why problems exist today - that they didn’t just spring up from nowhere. There were historical backgrounds. When we looked at matters of immigration, looking at the fact that immigrants have been coming for many years to this country and that some of the problems

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<sup>141</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Teacher D.

they had a hundred years ago are some of the same problems they have today. When we looked at unions - what their role was in the past and how they're similar or different to the workforce today. So I tried to relate it to what was going on today.<sup>144</sup>

Most of the teachers had no display materials for their social studies classes. Two of the teachers got around this by putting student work on the walls of their classrooms. For two of the teachers this was a difficult prospect because the classroom where they taught social studies was not "their" classroom where they spent the majority of their day. Hence, they did not put up displays for their social studies students.

All of the teachers attempted to adapt materials to students with lower skills. This was not easy to do when their familiarity with social studies materials was of a limited nature. Indeed some of the teachers had read only the text and a small number of other books so that they themselves could be familiar with the course material. One got around these difficulties by placing weak students with strong students when doing group work. Another allowed students to do extra assignments in order to raise their marks. One of the teachers found it frustrating that the administration made it clear that all students were supposed to pass - even if their difficulties were behavioural rather than academic. He felt that he was being asked to compromise on the content and that this should not have been necessary. Teacher E located a text that was written at a lower level and used that for students with fewer skills. She also increased the structure of the assignments and was very deliberate about giving detailed instructions so that students had a clear understanding of what it was that they were supposed to do. For the most part however, the teachers devised materials for students with lower skills themselves - there

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<sup>144</sup> Teacher E.

were no readily available materials nor any sources where they could find lists of suggested materials or ideas for adapting their courses.

### Personal Impressions, Experiences

Both of the junior high teachers thoroughly enjoyed teaching social studies. Teacher A commented that "It's an area that I truly love. I've got a lot of experiences . . . I've been all across Canada except for Newfoundland and um, I love Canada. I've traveled a lot of the world and so I have such a passion for our country. . . . so I'm a fanatic when it comes to the geography of the land."<sup>145</sup> Teacher B likewise commented, "The Grade 9 course especially. I loved it. Loved it. I probably would have enjoyed the 8 course if I had a bit more information and background to it."<sup>146</sup>

The high school teachers were not as enthusiastic as the junior high teachers but for the most part had found it a positive experience. Teacher C commented, "Enjoy - I thought it was a nice change. I didn't dislike it - it's not my major area. It had its moments."<sup>147</sup> Teacher D enjoys teaching social studies

Because I have four fabulous classes of kids (Laughter). And it's most enjoyable. I also find that it's very much like when you have a person come to visit you. You never know your city until somebody comes to visit and you're forced to go and visit all of the places that you've put off. . . . and it gave me a great deal of joy and excitement to discover some of the things that the students and I discovered together - shall I put it that way?<sup>148</sup>

Teacher E stated that,

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<sup>145</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>146</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>147</sup> Teacher C.

<sup>148</sup> Teacher D.

I have to say I did. I found it difficult at first not so much because of the materials but because of the types of students I had - to make it interesting, to get them to read because a lot of them were non-readers. To do a variety of things because what they like to do best, what they were most comfortable with was simply reading and answering questions. So trying to find a balance of doing that for my own sanity and doing other things that you know, would push them to be a bit more creative and look for things but I enjoyed the material. I enjoy the content and like learning about . . . I like learning. It's one of the most interesting subjects to teach.<sup>149</sup>

In terms of defining what was easiest in teaching social studies the teachers varied in their responses. Teacher A found that there were a lot of resources available for the teaching of social studies and so she was able to constantly try new things and vary what she did - boredom was never a danger. Teacher B enjoyed following current events and politics and found that his knowledge and interest therein enhanced his ability to teach the Senior One social studies program. It also made it an enjoyable experience for him. Teacher C said that the content for social studies is not hard to understand and so it was a relatively easy course to master. Teacher D commented that the material was not difficult to learn and that he found trying to get his students keen about social studies was the greatest challenge he faced. Teacher E did not specifically say what was easiest for her but noted that she enjoyed the content and found social studies one of the most interesting subjects to teach.

In terms of difficulty, again, the teachers varied in their responses. Teacher A found it difficult to keep up with politics so that she could stay well informed for her students. Teacher B found that "The hardest part for me is working sometimes with youngsters who really don't have a concept yet of place, a concept of self and they just

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<sup>149</sup> Teacher E.



don't, I guess, understand where they fit or how they fit even never mind Winnipeg, but Canada, and Manitoba and this kind of stuff. And I think my greatest frustration from the offset that I shouldn't, couldn't get some of these kids motivated to feel as if, I think, they were even nationalistic as a Canadian."<sup>150</sup> Teacher C did not find anything difficult about teaching social studies. Teacher D found that motivating the students was the most difficult aspect of teaching social studies - but he stipulated that this difficulty is encountered in other subjects as well and was not unique to social studies. Teacher E did not comment specifically here but had noted earlier in the interview that she had found motivating the students to do creative activities her greatest challenge. She had found that many students simply wanted to do questions and nothing else.

When asked whether they would like to teach social studies again the responses varied from the enthusiasm of Teacher A - who is currently plotting how to remain a social studies teacher, to the somewhat ambivalent feeling of Teacher C who replied, "Oh sure."<sup>151</sup> Teacher B, not surprisingly, said that he would choose the Senior One program over the Grade 8 program - because of his interest in politics and his lack of background in world history. Both Teacher D and E both indicated that they would enjoy teaching social studies again.

The teachers were asked to rate how important it is for their students to learn social studies on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least important and 10 being very important). The scores were 10, 10, 10, 10 and 7. (The score of 7 was given by Teacher E. While it

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<sup>150</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>151</sup> Teacher C.

contrasts with the glowing ratings of the other teachers it did not seem at the time that she was giving social studies a low rating.) This seemed to fit and perhaps correlates to their beliefs about the “big goals” of social studies. Most had pointed out the importance of social studies in terms of promoting good citizenship skills.

When asked how they convey their belief about the importance of social studies their responses varied. Teacher A noted

I am very passionate. And it's pretty obvious. When I get up in front of the class I'm pretty dramatic. Um, and I was just thinking about this the other day. I'm very particular about standing for Oh Canada. And I know some of the kids are kind of shocked when they come into my T.A. (Teacher Advisory - the junior high equivalent of a homeroom) because maybe some of the other teachers aren't. And I get quite upset at people. And I talk about some of the places I go. Kids know that I've traveled and I just keep saying, “You've got to have an opinion.” And I'm always telling them “Have an opinion. What do you think? You've got to stand on your own two feet.”<sup>152</sup>

Teacher B did not explain how he conveyed his belief that social studies was important but noted that his students just knew, that its importance was self-evident. Teacher C stated that his enthusiasm for the subject made its importance known. Teacher D stated that “I think I probably convey it without the title ‘social studies’. I think that, I would hope that, I would hope that I convey to my students the sheer joy and passion of being alive and of living in a country that has and allows the freedoms that we have and so I would say that I'm sure it comes through.”<sup>153</sup> Teacher E, who had given the rating of 7, commented that “I would say things, ‘hokey’ things like ‘Education is important, you should know where your roots are and where people come from, you should take

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<sup>152</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>153</sup> Teacher D.

responsibility'. They thought it was a bit goofy. But I think it makes them understand that what you're doing is important."<sup>154</sup>

Given the organizational structure present at their junior high schools neither Teacher A or B were part of a social studies team. Teachers C, D and E, the high school teachers, were made to feel part of the social studies department in their school. This was achieved through the exchange of ideas, materials, department meetings and camaraderie. In addition it should be noted that the high school teachers shared a "preparation" room and a book room and taught in close proximity to one another. This facilitated the exchanges of materials and ideas. It also allowed for modeling to take place. This type of situation did not exist for the junior high teachers.

In terms of a budget for their social studies instruction few had financial supports other than money for photocopying. Teacher A, it seems, was the exception here. She was able to purchase textbooks and videotapes - "I basically spent to the hilt the last two years."<sup>155</sup> Teacher E, however, found that she received much less than this - "Not really, I photocopied on my French budget and well there were things available in the area. But no. I wasn't made to feel that I would be able to order things for myself. I was to use what was already there."<sup>156</sup> This phenomenon seemed to indicate that there was a hierarchy in terms of spending power - with the out-of-field teachers having little input or

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<sup>154</sup> Teacher E.

<sup>155</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>156</sup> Teacher E.

entitlement to the budget. There was no shortage of funds for social studies instruction; the out-of-field teachers simply had no input into the allocation of those funds.

The teachers were asked to describe the supports they would have liked to have received. Teacher A's first need was to receive an adequate number of textbooks with which to teach her students. She had one book per three students and was frustrated when she tried to give the students homework. She resorted to using the photocopier to give her students chapters out of the textbook. She went on to describe the need for adequate preparation time - "It's such a broad topic that you need more time."<sup>157</sup> She would also have liked a mentor - someone to sit down with on a regular basis and discuss the course.

Teacher B described the need for packages of teaching materials - "You need sometimes a little bit of prepared packages. So you can understand especially if you're new in that discipline that you can understand what the emphasis is and where you know this is supposed to be going."<sup>158</sup> In particular he noted the difference in teaching materials between "stuff and neat stuff."<sup>159</sup> Presumably he was referring to teaching ideas that were interesting, novel and proven. He also stressed the need for "Time. Time so that you can whatever - meetings, organizations, resources put together so that you can better fulfill the job that you want to do in the classroom."<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Teacher A.

<sup>158</sup> Teacher B.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

Teacher C felt that the need for adequate preparation time was a “given.”<sup>161</sup> He also noted the desirability of having prepared teaching units - “For a new teacher teaching a course for the first time it’s very useful to have something to rely on and then the teacher can build on that which is what I did. I was happy to get materials to start off with and then basically I built on that.”<sup>162</sup> He was the one teacher who was not interested in the prospect of having a mentor but felt that the opportunity to team teach with a social studies specialist might have been “interesting.”<sup>163</sup>

Teacher D commented,

I think in an ideal situation that it would be great to have master teachers and by that I mean people who specialize in the area, are available in the area, who are knowledgeable, who are very knowledgeable about not only about the subject but also the resources, who make resources available. In an ideal situation it would be great if teachers had the time to be able to sort out the resources and look at them. And for example, there’s lots of videos. Nobody rates them. I mean surely just a little system like 1 to 5 . . . someone within the subject area could say, “This is great, I’ve used it, I’ve seen it, I’ve reviewed it, here’s a short summary of it, it’s ideal for this particular area.”<sup>164</sup>

Teacher E similarly commented,

Hmm. I think the idea of one person who has taught the curriculum in the past with whom you could work. I think it’s important to have someone like a mentor - a role model for you - not necessarily for the person to give you their whole unit but to give you outlines of materials, how they would tackle the material. I guess time to try and develop some units, ideas, feedback - not necessarily to have someone to come into the room and observe you but after you’ve done something to discuss it with somebody and see if they have other ideas and other suggestions. And I guess access

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<sup>161</sup> Teacher C.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Teacher D.

to libraries and research material without it being cumbersome - because that is part of social studies.<sup>165</sup>

Teacher E found that correspondence courses were a good resource because they gave her samples of activities for social studies classes. It allowed her to pick and choose ideas that could work in her classroom, with her students and fit her teaching style.

The teachers were given an opportunity at the end of their interview to add any relevant comments. Some of the replies were enlightening. Teacher A noted that she had always wanted to be a geography teacher because of her passion for travel and the outdoors. However, she was “Told in Phys. Ed. I probably shouldn’t take social studies because . . . social studies teachers, you know, when you come out there are so many people that can teach it and also that it’s probably not that hard to teach that you might as well take biology because it’s harder to teach. So that’s what I took. And I kept saying, ‘God, I wish I could take that course, or I’d love to take that course.’”<sup>166</sup> [She also discussed the fact that her ability to speak French had resulted in her being assigned to teach French - a course in which she had no formal training or background. She noted the time it had taken her to gain confidence and experience in order to accomplish that task.]

Teacher D who has taught social studies on and off for approximately eighteen years recently returned to it after a break of six or seven years. He noted a change from his past experiences that may be a sign of the times or simply the personalities with whom he now works. He noted,

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<sup>165</sup> Teacher E.

<sup>166</sup> Teacher A.

When I first came into teaching out of business what struck me very much was how teachers could stand in their classes and encourage kids to share things but I used to be in a prep room where every file was locked and it was quite obvious that sharing was not to be unless it was under sort of duress where you pushed hard enough. It kind of surprised me because one of the things I'd thought was why not share your experiences and again we don't have time to do that, we don't really get the opportunity, we don't get a time-out in which we could share experiences, we don't get a time to debrief so we don't share the good things but also debrief from some of the things that may go wrong. So over the years I've noticed though, whether it's younger teachers that are coming in - maybe it has something to do with it. But I do find that in the social studies now where I am there is far more sharing of information and that information is simply just a question of asking for and it's there. So that's one big thing that I've noticed over the years. I notice also and I've seen it happen and it's a terrible sight to see and that is teachers leaving teaching and the old saying used to be 'sink or swim' and I always thought that that was a very uncaring kind of attitude. I always thought that I needed to go look and see if there was a lifeboat that I could throw over and I saw it, I saw it happen and I saw a young woman who came and was destroyed by that - never taught again. One year and she never taught again. So I think that we have to understand that we're not isolated and of course the setup of our whole school suggests that we are because we go into the classroom and we close the door and we never see anybody if we don't want to see anybody. I think that's a lesson that we have to learn too and that is that shared things and that shared objectives and views and dreams and wishes add to the whole and not take away from it. . . . I do think that we need to be aware when people come into a department and are strangers to the school and all new teachers that we need to mentor them and we need to nurture them because there are some darned good teachers out there and we need to keep them.<sup>167</sup>

#### Part B Commentary

The overall impression given by these teachers was that they found the teaching of social studies to have been a positive experience. Their comments shed some light on what they did, how their classes went and a general impression of efficacy. It is impossible however, to assess their actual classroom performance as social studies teachers. Most were never subjected to third party evaluation while teaching social

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<sup>167</sup> Teacher D.

studies. Even so, an administrator's assessment might only have focused upon pedagogical strategies rather than their competency as social studies teachers. A glaring example that relates to this would be the Keegstra case in Alberta. Keegstra was an out-of-field social studies teacher and his teaching evaluations had been glowing because they had focused upon his ability to teach students - not on his expertise with the subject content. One suspects that out of a sense of fairness administrators will not evaluate a person when they are teaching something other than their subject specialty. One should bear in mind that administrators also have subject expertise. Only a prolonged study within the teachers' classes would determine how well they taught the discipline but this is not within the scope of this study. There are some responses within their interviews that do however, bear further examination.

Most of the teachers did reading in their leisure time that could be construed as social studies related, but this did not include geography or history publications that would be considered scholarly. There was a predominance of American publications read by the teachers and given the curriculum focus in courses such as Senior One and Senior Three more contact with books written from a Canadian perspective would have been desirable. It is questionable whether this background reading was anything more than this - most articles in magazines would have been only peripherally related to the curriculum. However, one should not ignore the positive attitudes towards social studies produced by exposure to these mainstream publications. Certainly, a keen interest can lead to more in-depth reading. In the case of these teachers though, this did not seem to



have occurred to any large degree. Nor was there a sense that this might be a professional obligation.

There was little indication that the teachers extended their own learning of the curricular areas beyond a "need to know" level. All read the text and often a number of other sources to provide understanding of a topic. None had really experienced much in the way of professional development opportunities. Only Teacher A had expressed an interest in taking geography courses in the future. It was clear from her interview however, that this had been a goal of hers for many years.

There seemed to be an apparent contradiction in the answers of some of the teachers who said that they had attended the Special Area Group Conference for social studies yet had never subscribed to or indeed heard of the M.S.S.T.A. Journal. Typically one acquires a subscription to the M.S.S.T.A. Journal by paying the registration fee at the social studies conference. It is possible that they were not interested in the contents of the journal and simply ignored it. In fairness, it is possible to pay only the conference fee. This does indicate however, that there must have been some lack of interest in acquiring the M.S.S.T.A. Journal. The fee is minimal but nonetheless must have been prohibitive - in terms of the priorities set by these teachers.

The teaching strategies used by the teachers seemed to have been diverse - according to them. The library had been used by a couple of the teachers but did not seem to be a regular or important focus for most of them. This would not bode well for the research objectives within the social studies curriculum. Most said that they used a resource based learning approach but a couple had to have the concept defined prior to

answering the question. In terms of controversial issues most seemed quite willing to tackle these in class. Only Teacher E seemed to be concerned about possible difficulties that could occur when classroom discussions centred around controversial issues. Teacher C saw very little within geography as containing controversy - with the possible exception of issues having to do with the environment. One of the teachers insisted upon the importance of staying neutral while another was willing to state her position to her students. Some seemed so willing and confident that it is necessary to question why there was not a touch of healthy fear present in their attitudes.

The junior high teachers were at a distinct disadvantage compared to the high school teachers. At the junior high level, teachers were organized into grade level teams. In small schools, teachers had to teach more than one subject. There were no attempts made to connect the social studies teachers - if indeed there were social studies teachers on staff. In fact, for the two out-of-field teachers in this study there was no discipline "team" or department. They had not teamed up with other social studies teachers in any comprehensive way to make curricular decisions, to share ideas or help one another out. There was some exchange of information but this was done informally at lunch in the staff room. No attempts had been made to stay after school or meet outside of school hours to further their cause as social studies teachers. In fairness, however, time was frequently cited as a problem. Preparation time is required to do a decent job of any teaching assignment and for the out-of-field teacher this requirement may be greater. The high school teachers on the other hand, had regular and direct contact with fellow social studies teachers because department meetings were a regular event. There was

some sense of collegiality as a department and as Teacher D pointed out a generous sharing of materials and ideas. There was also a greater likelihood of social studies specialists being present on the staff of a high school.

Another difference between the junior high and high school teachers was the sharing of facilities. The high school teachers shared preparation rooms and the junior high teachers were in their own classrooms. The frequent contact between high school teachers increased the likelihood of discussion and sharing of materials.

It is possible that less subject specialization may occur in schools as a whole in the near future. George Radwanski's "Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts" recommended that "students remain together in a stable heterogeneous class grouping for most of their common subjects each year, and that, if possible, the class teacher provide instruction in a minimum of two subjects to provide sustained teacher-student contact."<sup>168</sup> Such policies would likely necessitate, in many situations, that teachers engage in the teaching of social studies - as out-of-field teachers. So the trend being seen at the junior high level could possibly extend into the high school setting.

None of the teachers interviewed had sought training in social studies. This lack of commitment to social studies in terms of learning more and availing themselves of training opportunities is perhaps a reflection of the "minor" nature of their teaching assignment. In addition, these teachers often were not assigned to social studies for more than a semester at a time. Nonetheless this does shed light upon the apparent dedication

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<sup>168</sup> George Radwanski, "Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts," (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987), 200.

- or lack thereof, of these teachers to social studies. Another factor may be at work here, however. There are very few training opportunities for social studies teachers if they have not already taken social studies courses while in university. Other than Richard Harbeck's geography course at the University of Manitoba there are no courses that are geared specifically for classroom teaching or a particular course. A teacher would have to choose to do a Master's program to gain training in social studies.

The whole issue of how to promote citizenship within social studies deserves closer examination. Most of the teachers seemed to equate citizenship with loving Canada and voting. This is a rather simplistic definition of citizenship and ignores the whole notion of social responsibility, active citizenship and understanding of the global context. People can be "citizens" yet remain mostly passive. This is not what should be promoted in social studies. Students should have an understanding that in a democratic society free speech is desirable and that speaking out and acting against injustice is a duty. The ability to even understand, evaluate and then act upon such issues as racism should be taught within social studies. It is not sufficient to love one's country and vote. In addition, racism and human rights should not necessarily be seen as discreet units. They permeate social studies' content and the opportunity to teach skills related to these should occur when the need arises.

One area of concern should be the acquisition of all of the goals defined within the curriculum. Social studies does not focus solely upon knowledge and content objectives. It contains goals having to do with attitudes, thinking and research skills and social participation. Three of the teachers interviewed seemed primarily concerned with

the content and knowledge objectives. Perhaps this is related to their own level of functioning. Mastering course content is the first priority of an out-of-field teacher. Only after this has occurred might one start to consider the other objectives. The social participation objectives are arguably the most difficult to meet. This is confirmed by the 1989 assessment data that stated that "it seems that in roughly one-half of classrooms there is little scope for student involvement or activity."<sup>169</sup> Designing activities that would meet the social participation objectives would require some improvisation and experimentation on the part of the teacher. Given the sporadic nature of the teachers' assignment to social studies this is less likely to happen.

The out-of-field teachers are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to teaching social studies. Simply stating that this situation should not occur is unrealistic. The hiring of social studies teachers is not a priority in any division in Manitoba if one peruses the classified advertisements for teaching positions. The emphasis today seems to be upon science, mathematics and literacy. Technology is also in vogue. These developments coincide with a period of fiscal restraint wherein very few teachers are being hired. While no figures are available, the number of social studies teachers being hired seems to be minuscule. Thus the frequency of having out-of-field teachers in social studies classrooms is likely to increase in the upcoming years.

Concurrently there is a move, certainly in the middle years, to have students interact with fewer numbers of teachers. Thus the predominance of grade level teams over discipline teams. The student's social and personal development is paramount and

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<sup>169</sup> Manitoba Social Studies Assessment 1989. Summary Report. Curriculum Services Branch, Manitob Education and training, p. 19.

it is important for teachers to get to know their students. So, depending upon the size of the school, the teacher may have to teach more than one subject within their grade level team. Thus social studies is frequently staffed by out-of-field teachers. That no outcry has occurred signals that there is a widespread notion that social studies can be taught by anyone. There is no realization that subject specialization, especially within social studies, is beneficial or particularly desirable.

But the responses by the teacher interviewees do confirm the concerns voiced much of the research literature. The teachers did indicate that they lacked an overall conceptual framework of social studies. Few knew or understood the curriculum as a whole. The text was an important source of information for them though not necessarily the sole means of instruction. Lecturing was a frequent form of instruction. Isolation, a problem for teachers in general, meant that the out-of-field teachers experienced little in the way of role modeling by other social studies teachers. This left them to their own devices. While most did believe that citizenship was an important goal for social studies their own definitions therein were sketchy. Hodgetts' concern over the meaningless use of current events in the classroom may or may not have been confirmed herein. While some of the teachers indicated that the promotion of critical thinking was important, their descriptions of their own classes indicated that classroom discussion was curtailed by the behaviour of their students.

This does not bode well for the students of Manitoba. It is important that steps be taken to ensure that these teachers are assisted in as many ways possible.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions

Research suggests that within social studies instruction, there are factors that contribute to, or are, indicative of good teaching. By virtue of training, interest and experience, the teacher whose training is in the discipline is more likely to be a good social studies teacher. This is assuming, of course, that all other factors that contribute to good teaching per se are equal. The pattern that exists in Manitoba schools should be cause for concern. That 40% of the teachers teaching social studies at the junior and high school levels have little or no background in it casts doubt about the quality of experiences that students receive. The case study undertaken herein certainly found no lack of interest, sincerity or work ethic on the part of out-of-field teachers. They wanted to do a good job of teaching social studies, worked hard towards that end, and frequently found the material compelling and fun. There were a number of factors working against them, however. First of all, the sporadic nature of their assignment to teaching social studies meant that they did not get a chance to hone and perfect ideas that they implemented in their classes. This was a frustrating situation for the teachers. Teacher B's comments shed some light here: "The second year was much better. That was the Charlottetown stuff and the election and I really thought that I was having a lot of - not only fun with the kids, but making them understand themselves a little bit better and where they fit. And then I went back to math (laughter)."<sup>170</sup> It also meant that they never knew if they were going to be teaching social studies in the future. Hence, they were less

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<sup>170</sup> Teacher B.

likely to collect materials, build units, or generally prepare for courses because they were not sure if they would ever teach them again. In the interim they were focused on the courses they were then assigned. As Teacher E pointed out “When I’m not teaching social studies I still read those things but not with the same interest in finding material that might be good for the students.”<sup>171</sup> What seemed most obvious especially given the number of teachers involved was the lack of support and accountability accorded them.

In an ideal situation it would be desirable to have fully trained social studies teachers teaching the subject. But to propose such a thing today is unrealistic both economically and politically. Many teachers’ jobs contain social studies as a part of their teaching load. Perhaps what is more realistic is to propose ways in which out-of-field teachers could be assisted. First, however, a brief review of the qualities encompassed by good social studies instruction. These, after all will dictate a lot of the proposals herein.

Schulman cited content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of educational ends as contributors to teacher competence.<sup>172</sup> Diane Common’s definitions of “de facto” and “de jure” authority demonstrated how credibility is acquired by social studies teachers. Without credibility in the eyes of his or her students the teacher’s ability to teach their

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<sup>171</sup> Teacher E.

<sup>172</sup> William B. Stanley, “Teacher Competence for Social Studies,” Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning, James P. Shaver, (ed.) (Toronto: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 252.



subject is greatly diminished. The studies of exemplary social studies teachers showed that those with the deepest understanding of the discipline used the widest variety of resources and innovative methods of teaching, were able to provide interesting tidbits of information, exuded enthusiasm and taught their students the relevance and importance of social studies. Teachers with training in the discipline were more likely to touch upon controversial topics in their classroom and they had some notion about how to do this properly. Out-of-field teachers were more likely to lean on the textbook as a source of course material. In fact, for some the text equaled the course. This was not born out by this study. True, the majority started with the text as their first contact with the course they were about to teach and all used it to varying degrees. It was never, however, the only resource used. Critical thinking and citizenship were actively pursued by those with an understanding that these were "big goals" for the discipline. Finally, those with a clear sense of the "ends" of social studies were most likely to choose the best "means". In spite of all of these factors, social studies is taught by a large group of teachers who - according to the literature, are less likely to do the things listed above. There may however, be ways to assist them to become more competent at the job of teaching social studies. A variety of people and agencies can take part in this endeavor.

The school administrator is a key person in this situation. He or she is the one who assigns the out-of-field teacher to social studies instruction. From questions asked subsequent to their interviews many of the teachers examined herein were never evaluated on their social studies instruction. Nor was their social studies instruction ever followed up on or discussed. As Teacher B pointed out, "I don't think that an

administrator comes into your program unless there's a problem."<sup>173</sup> This is testimony perhaps to the confidence that these administrators have in their staff to do a good job. It may also reflect the workload they face within their jobs. However, it may also be indicative of lack of interest or the notion that social studies does not require specialized personnel. Certainly, the attitude that "anyone can teach social studies" does exist. The article in Newsweek in July of 1995 testifies to this. So school administrators need to have a better understanding of good teaching as it relates to social studies and this message should come from the Department of Education and Training especially since there are few social studies consultants in the school divisions of Manitoba. It is here that the greatest understanding of the social studies curriculum and its requirements should reside. Other institutions such as the universities have and should continue to take up this cause - certainly it lends credibility to their own program of pre-service teacher training. After all, education students must take courses that are specific to their area of specialty and why would this be done if there were not validity to the notion of subject specific training and therefore, competence in one's discipline?

Administrators need to carefully consider the personnel that they choose for social studies instruction. They need to find teachers who are willing to seek out a variety of sources and who have an interest in society - its politics, geography, its people, its issues. After all, it has been shown that enthusiasm for and a valuing of the discipline can enhance the credibility of the teacher and the subject with their students. An ideal candidate would be a person whose own personal interests blend well with the social

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<sup>173</sup> Teacher B.

studies curricula. Teacher A was an excellent choice to teach social studies because she had an innate interest in geography and history. Had she not followed the advice of personnel in the Physical Education Faculty at the University of Manitoba she would most likely have pursued geography as one of her “teachables.” That she has a passion in particular for geography and a keen interest in the environment makes her a good choice as an out-of-field social studies teacher. Her constant seeking out of new course material and ideas is encouraging as it indicates a willingness to improve as a social studies teacher.

Administrators need also to consider the ability of the teacher to handle matters that are controversial or “dicey”. A background in social studies usually includes some exposure to issues and attitudes having to do with racism, human rights and politics. Ideally a teacher should have had some training in a variety of areas that would enhance their background knowledge and sensitivity to such issues. An example here would be training in anti-racist education. But also important is the ability of the teacher to conduct a classroom discussion around such topics. Teacher E was keenly aware of this when she noted that

A lot of the students come with a certain amount of racial baggage and you can almost feel that when you talk about certain issues. Sometimes you’re sort of “tippy-toeing” along because you don’t want it to start into a some kind of a debate on racial issues that could turn into something ugly that you may not be able to control - particularly if you’re not as comfortable with the material as you would be if you’d been teaching it for an number of years.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Teacher E.

A teacher who is able to build a good rapport with students and who can initiate productive classroom discussion is critical. Discussion is not something that a social studies teacher should avoid - Hodgetts saw it as an integral part of instruction. There are social participation objectives stated in the curricula for social studies and so the ability and willingness to structure and implement activities involving discussion and social interaction is important.

Once the administrator selects a teacher he or she should be willing to provide assistance and supports to that teacher. While most teachers find colleagues to lean upon there is rarely any formalized process wherein this teaming up of staff is sanctioned and this should go beyond mere recognition of the fact. There should be time provided for staff to share ideas, to plan units, and to debrief from experiences. This time, in an ideal world, would be preparation time - recognized as such on the teacher's timetable and that of their mentor. However, this does not seem likely in today's circumstances - if anything teacher preparation time is being cut back in many locales. The only way to achieve this is to allow teachers to meet with one another during professional development time. This would mean allowing teachers the flexibility to design their own professional development and giving them time to meet. This could be done individually or during school or divisional professional development days. This is particularly necessary at the junior high level where grade teams seem to function rather than discipline teams.. Otherwise, teachers only discuss their ideas during the lunch hour and after school if they are able and willing to invest this time. Goodlad's idea about having a social studies specialist on staff might be useful at the junior high setting which is

becoming more like the elementary level as subject specialization is emphasized less and less. Another way to facilitate this could involve connecting junior high social studies teachers between schools and allowing for the flow of ideas. This would be particularly beneficial to the teachers who are working in small schools where the number of social studies teachers - especially those with a background in social studies might be quite limited.

Since the administrators are often the recipients of conference information they should have a heightened awareness of the need for inservicing on the part of the their out-of-field teachers. Money invested here would be well spent. Likewise, these teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops like the Special Area Group Conferences which meet annually in Winnipeg. Specific courses at the university are often designed to educate teachers about particular social studies courses. Richard Harbeck's Geography of North America course at the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba is notable here. This would be excellent training for an out-of-field social studies teacher. However, it costs money and time - usually during weekends and summer breaks. Somehow, there should be incentives provided to see that teachers avail themselves of this type of training.

At the high school level, where many schools are structured according to discipline teams, the role of the department head is crucial. He or she should be cognizant of the needs of out-of-field teachers and be there to provide guidance, materials, ideas and supports therein. They can also foster an air of collegiality wherein teachers within the department look out for the less experienced out-of-field teachers.

Teacher D's comments about locked filing cabinets are notable here. This also harkens back to Teacher B's need for "neat stuff"<sup>175</sup> - the teaching modules or ideas that have been developed by social studies teachers and that have proven to be successful. The out-of-field teacher is often not placed in social studies long enough to try out ideas and hone them into great classroom activities. Making "tried and true" ideas available to them could be very helpful.

The department head and team leader can also encourage professional development for out-of-field teachers. They too may be privy to inservice opportunities which should be made available. It may be possible to promote the exchange of ideas between colleagues within the department or grade level team.

The administrator, department head and team leader can help to ensure that the out-of-field teacher be assigned the same social studies course from year to year even if there are intervening years between social studies' duties. The assignment to social studies should be seen as a long term assignment - an additional area of expertise for that teacher.

That administrators do not communicate with the out-of-field teacher teaching social studies may incorrectly communicate that social studies is not important. It also indicates that accountability is absent - that whatever the teacher does short of causing difficulties is acceptable. It is wrong for a teacher to get the idea that social studies instruction is not important. The greatest danger potentially is that this attitude is communicated to the students.

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<sup>175</sup>Teacher B.

The Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association has a role to play here too. This group sponsors the yearly Special Area Group Conference in social studies. A heightened awareness about the plight of out-of-service teachers might lead to sessions designed specifically to help. Exchanges of teacher ideas would be helpful. Sessions where teachers walked away with prepared packages of materials would be well received. Any materials or ideas that had been classroom tested would be helpful for out-of-field teachers to acquire. After all, research shows that those with the clearest notion of the "ends" of social studies are best able to design the "means". This does not mean that out-of-field teachers cannot then take the same ideas and use them as successfully. Along the same lines, teachers could share their "tidbits" and teaching techniques - the things that they do that make a course fun and engaging for students - these need not be earth-shattering - just easy ideas.

The M.S.S.T.A. Journal is a useful document for Manitoba social studies teachers whether they have a background in it or not. It contains philosophical, topical and pedagogical ideas for teachers of social studies. Frequently there are units contained therein that can be photocopied and used in the classroom. There are few other publications that do this. Many social studies journals tend to be more philosophical and anecdotal and of necessity cannot include specific units for specific courses because their distribution range is much wider than just Manitoba. The M.S.S.T.A. Journal is produced for a membership that teaches the Manitoba curricula.

Leadership for social studies implementation could also be done by social studies consultants at the division level. However, it seems that there are a very few of these in

Manitoba (only Linda McDowell of Winnipeg #1 and Bruce Cooper of St. James School Division come to mind. It should be noted though, that their duties have been diminished in recent years to less than half time.) Social studies seems to lag way behind the three other "core" subjects in terms of the number of consultants hired. The reason for this is not immediately obvious but it must surely reflect the priority assigned to this curricular area.

Leadership can also come from the division level. Funds could be allocated to provide professional development time for social studies teachers. Many years ago River East School Division hired teachers in the summer to prepare sample social studies units. These were to be made available to first time social studies teachers. In light of the study herein this seems to have been a very apt form of assistance. Since time is scarce for teachers to get together supports for this could be provided through divisions. It is not uncommon for divisions to hire substitute teachers to allow for teachers to learn new ideas, to hear speakers or to design units. Surely the professional development of the teacher of one of the four core subjects warrants this type of dedication.

Manitoba Education and Training should bear some responsibility too. Their 1989 study documented the numbers of out-of-field teachers in the social studies area. This has not resulted in any changes or additional supports being put in place. The most extreme measure that could be taken would be to insist upon licensure for social studies teachers. This has been done in some areas of the United States. However, no precedent for this exists in Manitoba and certainly there has been no outcry in this regard. There are other measures - more cost-effective ones, that could be put in place.



The Department publishes a curriculum guide for each social studies course. This provides a basic outline of the topics and objectives to be covered in the course. It also gives time guidelines for the units. Most teachers use these to get an overview of what they are to teach. Certainly teachers involved in the study herein used curriculum guides. But perhaps the curriculum guide could be expanded to contain extra pieces of information. Teacher B expressed the “Need for some sort of easy guide. You know like the easy tax guide? An easy curriculum guide. That’s what I’d like.”<sup>176</sup>

The Department provides input in the publishing of the books that will be used as texts in Manitoba. Often a teacher’s manual is published along with the text. Many of these contain teaching ideas and activities. The Department should keep the out-of-field teacher in mind while these books and manuals are being prepared. Again, Teacher B’s need for “neat stuff”<sup>177</sup> comes to mind.

The teachers who were interviewed for the most part were unfamiliar with the overall direction of social studies from Kindergarten to Senior Four. This meant that they had little idea of the skills and knowledge that their students were bringing to their classroom experiences. This could be easily remedied by placing a brief overview in the curriculum document.

The curriculum guide tends to provide the curricular topics but not the activities that could be used to teach them - they lack “practical judgment.” This is the area where

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

out-of-field teachers have the greatest difficulty. As Teacher C said, “the material is not complex.”<sup>178</sup>

Since controversial topics are a potential area of difficulty for out-of-field teachers suggestions on how to handle these situations could be included in the curriculum document. Once such attempt was made in Winnipeg School Division #1 a number of years ago when a document, “Examining a Controversial Issue” was compiled for its teachers of social studies. Background information on anti-racist education, human rights and so on could be provided. Likewise, advice could be given on how to handle the “dicey” situations. For instance, the situations in which a teacher should remain neutral and a teacher should state their personal beliefs.

An extensive list of resources for each course should be provided in the curriculum document. The names of highly competent social studies teachers could also be made available to schools around the province to provide assistance to teachers. This too would require financial support to allow for time out of the classroom for such consulting duties.

The curriculum guide could also include a discussion of the “big goals” of social studies as a discipline. Too many of the out-of-field teachers teach with “blinders” - they only concentrate on the task at hand - Senior Two Geography, Grade 8 History, and so on. Thus, when they have used up the 70% time allocated to curricular topics they are at a loss as to what to add or to expand upon. The research literature indicated that these same teachers were more likely to expand into their own areas of expertise simply

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<sup>178</sup> Teacher C.

because they felt comfortable with that. It is understandable but does a disservice to the time allowed for teachers to venture into other topics. A better understanding of the discipline of social studies as a whole might assist teachers to make decisions about topics relevant to social studies. After all, an activity as simple as a quick discussion of current events - relevant to units being covered, at the beginning of each class could be considered "extra material." It need not be a discrete unit.

The Department of Education and Training is often involved in the publishing of the books that will be used as texts in social studies. Department personnel provide ideas to the writer and have extensive input into the book's content and emphasis. If a teacher's guide is also published then ideas for out-of-field teachers could be included therein. Given the importance of the text to these teachers consideration should be taken when it is written in terms of its content, layout, emphasis, activities, questions and so on.

Finally, there are the teachers with social studies training. They are the ones that out-of-field teachers most often consult. It seems that most are generous with their advice, assistance and sharing of materials. It is important that they see the endeavours of the out-of-field teachers as having an impact upon them. Social studies is an important subject for students to learn. The experiences of these students need to be positive. In fact students, staff and parents need to see social studies as a worthwhile endeavour. The efforts of all teachers toward this end are crucial.

## Chapter Six

### Reflections upon the Research

There are a number of ways in which the research could have been done differently to yield clearer results. The questionnaire was a good starting point. The teachers did provide a picture of what it is like to teach social studies as an out-of-field teacher. However, it was difficult to tell from the teachers' responses just how proficient they were at teaching social studies. While many exuded enthusiasm for their experiences it was impossible to tell if they actually did a good job of teaching social studies. Would their students have given them a glowing report? Similarly, most of the teachers had not been evaluated by their administrators while teaching social studies so there was no third party assessment of their abilities. This area could have been studied through classroom observation.

The teachers were questioned at length in regards to the curriculum as a whole. From this, it was learned that these teachers lacked an overview of the curriculum from kindergarten to senior four. It was assumed that they did understand the curriculum to which they were assigned but while the teachers exuded a fair degree of confidence, it is not entirely clear if they did have a firm grasp of the curriculum and its intent. There seemed to be emphasis placed upon topics that seemed peripheral to and perhaps unrelated to the curriculum. Why the teachers were pursuing these topics was unclear. One teacher described topics - to which she seemed to be devoting a significant amount of time and energy, that were not a part of the curriculum to which she was assigned. The focus of another teacher on current events was encouraging but it was not apparent

why he was concentrating so much upon this pursuit. So in hindsight, the teachers should have been asked to describe the curriculum to which they had been assigned.

There are some areas of research that were not pursued herein that bear further examination. The role of the administrator in this scenario is key. He or she is the person who assigns the out-of-field teacher to social studies. Administrators' views of the discipline need to be better understood. It is unclear if they have an understanding of the goals of social studies and the consequences of assigning out-of-field teachers to this subject. The apparent lack of support for out-of-field teachers by their administrators needs to be better understood.

The topic of subject specialization versus subject generalization needs to be examined. The research indicates that teachers need a deep understanding of the subjects to which they are assigned if they are to do a good job of teaching them to their students. However, today there is a perceived need to assign a smaller number of teachers to students so that the teachers get to know their students better. Certainly students with problems need teachers who, because of the amount of time spent in contact with them, have an understanding of their problems. This is not an easy tradeoff so it bears further examination.

The importance of social studies as a core subject seems to be fading. The increasing assignment of out-of-field teachers to the discipline is only one facet therein. There is evidence to suggest that less value is being placed on social studies. Recent moves, such as the attempt in Manitoba to eliminate Canadian history as a required course at the high school level, signal some kind of attitude change towards the subject.

The goals of citizenship and critical thinking, while often cited as desirable goals within education as a whole, do not seem to be necessarily connected to social studies. Similar moves in other Canadian provinces seem to confirm this attitude change. This topic definitely bears further research.

The goals pursued within social studies are worthy ones. It is important that Manitoba's children continue to be taught well within this discipline. Whether this simply requires a heightened awareness or measures as extreme as subject licensure is unclear. What is clear, though, is that social studies and its teaching should be a focus of concern within this province.

## Appendix A

### Interview with Teacher A

March 18, 1996

#### Part A -- Teacher Background

1. What is your subject area specialty?

Teacher A: Physical Education, Biology and Psychology.

2. How long have you taught social studies?

Teacher A: I've taught Social Studies for three years now.

3. Were you always assigned the same course in social studies or has it varied within those three years?

Teacher A: It's been Senior One for three years.

4. What portion of your teaching load is social studies?

Teacher A: I'd say 50%. Actually right now 40%.

5. Was social studies assigned to you or did you have a choice of subjects?

Teacher A: It was assigned to me.

Barb: How much notice were you given of your social studies teaching assignment?

Teacher A: I was notified on the 23rd of June - I was quite excited that I was taken out of Phys. Ed. I had requested - at that point I was teaching Phys. Ed and French - Basic French, and then they came to me and asked me if I would teach social studies.

Barb: So you had the summer to prepare then ?

Teacher A: Yes, I had the summer.

Barb: And how did you go about preparing for that?

Teacher A: Um, I went about preparing it basically to the end of June and then I was away taking out canoe trips for two months and I came back a week early and prepared like crazy. And I prepare for every unit.

Barb: Okey Doke.

6. Were you assigned S or G level classes (for high school teachers)? Note: question omitted because this teacher is teaching junior high.
7. Is any of the reading done in your leisure time social studies related (current events, newspapers, National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, Manitoba History, Beaver, etc.)?

Teacher A: Yes. Actually it's always been an interest of mine. I've got a very strong environmental concern. I was more interested in teaching science in some ways because I could get the environmental twist in there. I subscribe to Green Teacher and know what's happening in the environment for those units. I'm an avid fan of history with World Wars One and Two. So actually that summer I got a lot of books out of - what do you call it, the used books stores, on Hitler and so I studied in my extra time on the canoe trips. (Laughter.) Let's see what else? I read the paper, I watch the news faithfully, and um, my husband is a geography major - a social studies major, so before I go to school every day I sort of go through things with him and so if I have any questions in regards to politics, whatever, I ask him. He's my resource.

Barb: That's wonderful. You're lucky.



A: I am very lucky.

8. Do you subscribe to any specific social studies publications (MSSTA Bulletin, Canada Social Studies Review, etc.)?

Teacher A: Not the Canada Social Studies Review. The ah, I am I guess, I can't remember - it's for the, SAG. . .

Barb: MSSTA?

Teacher A: Yes, I read that. And um, the National Geographic - we're trying to cut down on the number of magazines we have - so whenever I can get my hands on that. Maclean's. I actually subscribe for the booklet for that.

9. Has anyone ever shared these publications with you? (omitted.)

### **Part B -- Teacher Assistance and Professional Development**

10. When you were first assigned social studies were you assigned a mentor?

Teacher A: I wasn't assigned a mentor, a mentor came to me. And that was (teacher's name), who used to teach it. He is a major in the area. He gave me a lot of his notes and told me that if I had any questions to come and see him.

Barb: So it was on his initiative. No one had prompted him?

Teacher A: No.

Barb: You were lucky!

Barb: So on a day-to-day basis who, then, do you turn to for advice and help?

Teacher A: My husband.

Barb: Within the Junior High do the social studies teachers tend to meet at all?

Teacher A: Not at all. And it's kind of frustrating. Actually I've been trying to work intergrade with Social with English. I've given a book to the English teacher in Senior One so that he could maybe run his units with the students at the same time that I'm doing world war. Then I wanted to try to get more in. But it's really hard for Senior One - if I was teaching Grade 8 I'd be more successful with cross-grade going on.

Barb: You're talking interdisciplinary?

Teacher A: Interdisciplinary, yes. But not social studies. We don't meet and it would be really nice if we did.

Barb: So never do you get a chance or a forum to sit down as social studies teachers and to talk out any issue . . .

Teacher A: Never.

Barb: . . . or plan anything together or to combine classes . . . ?

Teacher A: No we'll sometimes at lunch talk about stuff that we're doing and some suggestions but that's it.

11. Were you encouraged to take any social studies courses or attend workshops in the area of social studies?

Teacher A: Um, the workshops that we had last year with the department - not with the department, over here with the Board Office. Ah, I got involved with the newsletter that was going on next door at Name of a School and got involved with students with that. That's about it. On my own initiative I've gone to SAG

and I've even thought that eventually I'd like to go back and take some courses - cause I'd like to do that.

12. Have you attended the MSSTA (Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association) session at SAG (the annual Special Area Group Conference)?

Teacher A: Yes I have.

Barb: Did you find it useful?

Teacher A: Very.

Barb: What aspects did you find useful about it? What things do you like to walk away with? Reasons why you would want to go to that?

A: I got a lot out of the keynote speaker - in the afternoon I got a lot out of that.

Barb: The writer?

Teacher A: Yea, the writer. I saw that. It really gave me a feel for . . . I knew there was a lot of corruption in the government but it gave me a really, gave me a real feel for it - exactly for what the Tories did.

Barb: It was an eye opener.

Teacher A: Yeah, and you sort of wonder how much the Liberal party is doing . So yeah, it was really neat. It was good.

Barb: Have you found that any of the sessions at SAG allow you to walk away with say, a package of materials that you could just plug into you classroom. Have you "lucked out" in that way at all?

Teacher A: No. Unfortunately this year was the first year I was able to attend. The last few years I was in charge of Another Group Area Conference so I was tied in with those.

Barb: Would that be helpful if you found that sessions at SAG tended to maybe focus on a specific unit or gave ideas that say, you could plug right in?

Teacher A: That would be great.

13. What did your administrator do for you to ensure a smooth transition into the social studies field?

Teacher A: Um, basically he has allowed me to do whatever I want. Like I take the kids to the law courts. I like to - I'm pregnant right now, so next year on my year off I'd like to go to the Legislature because I haven't done that yet personally. I'd like to check it out, figure out how I'm going to do a tour, and then do that the next year, incorporate it into the program and I'm sure it won't be a problem. He likes all of these outings. I've been able to bring in inmates to talk to the students in the law units and they've allowed me to show Schindler's List.

Barb: I'd heard about that. Did your team leader help you out in any way?

Teacher A: Name of the Team Leader will help me in anything. (Laughter) In fact right now she's showing Schindler's List for me. She really goes above and beyond the call of duty. She's terrific.

Barb: I may have some stuff on that unit. I'll get back to you later.

### **Part C -- Planning, Course, Curriculum**

14. How did you go about learning the social studies course that you had to teach - the Senior One Social Studies curriculum? How did you go about learning that?

Teacher A: I went through the curriculum and figured out what I needed to know and I figured out the best way that I would like to teach it. And I do a lot of group work, I do a lot of media. So I would illegally tape things from CBC and stuff like that, the radio. I found the radio they weren't as interested in but they still got a lot out of it. But um, I do . . . What's the question again?

Barb: How did you learn the social studies course?

Teacher A: A lot of it - I liked biology that's why I took it as a minor but I need a lot of geography and took it all through high school. I am an avid paddler so I know topographic maps. I've traveled all across Canada, I've gone through such remote areas. So I've really got a feel for the people in Canada and the land and so that's one way that I knew all that stuff beforehand and I just watch a lot of TV, ask my husband, that's how I prepare myself. And reading a lot.

Barb: Great.

15. Have you read the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum overview document?

Teacher A: Overview document. . . .

Barb: It gives a brief synopsis of all the grades in social studies. Have you ever read that?

Teacher A: Not all of the grades.

Barb: Okay. Could you give me an overview of say how social studies goes from say K to 12? What the topic areas are along the way?

Teacher A: That's a great question! (Laughter)

Barb: Thank you.

Teacher A: You stumped me! No, I couldn't tell you.

Barb: You'd be familiar probably with the junior high years?

Teacher A: Yea.

Barb: That's normal.

16. Do you use the text to help guide you through the course?

Teacher A: Yes, to help guide me through the course. I use Canada and Today. But I don't. It's not my Bible.

17. How often do your students use it? Daily? Weekly? Biweekly? Monthly? Not at all?

Teacher A: I'd say at least three or four times a month.

18. Do you use a resource-based learning approach to social studies?

A: What do you mean . . . ?

Barb: A variety of different sources?

Teacher A: Yeah, yup.

Barb: What use do you make of the library in your social studies classes?

Teacher A: When it comes to projects I use it a fair amount. Like right now I just finished a project on World War One and Two. They have extra assignments that they can do and I make them research-based so a lot of them - they're 10%, so they have to work so hard to do it and a lot of them will go to the library to do that.

Barb: What sources have you used other than the recommended text for social studies?

Teacher A: Maclean's, um, oh God, Green Teacher, Borealis, National Geographic.

Times, when we're looking at the difference between Canada . . . we're critiquing the media and where it's coming from that you can only believe so much that you read and you hear. The CBC - we do a comparative study between CBC and the other networks . . Barb: Really?

Teacher A: Yeah, and then sort of comparing Canada and the U.S. in terms of the media, you know, how it's changing our perception of who we are as Canadians and um, some stuff I get is from French cause I do some comparison. Like it was great, when the referendum was going on I was right at that point in my unit - relations between the two, and I jumped right into that and it was fantastic and so I got a lot information - can't remember where I got it from but it was in French - being I'm almost bilingual, getting there.

Barb: Good, all right.

19. What methods - sorry, I may be going over some areas. . .

Teacher A: Project Wild is another one so I do some activities with that. Project Learning Tree - activity based. I teach subject area at the University so a lot of the stuff I've learned in other fields tends gets dragged into the social studies.

Barb: But it fits.

Teacher A: Yeah.

19. What methods of instruction do you use to teach social studies?

Teacher A: Group work, um, lecture, I basically cover them all. This year I mostly lecture and notes because this group that we've got needs that - they need more structure. They're very talkative. And so I leave the group discussion until the end of the class. I do a lot of discussion actually. And we do mock trials. Actually over the last three years, last year I felt most comfortable with it. We brought it in, practiced it into the band room and we picked a jury from seven, eight and nine - actually seven and eight and we had jury selections.

Barb: Wow.

Teacher A: Yea, it was great. And then they went in there and we had a jury and I invited some classes in to watch. It was so much fun that I decided that I wanted to do it again this year. The kids got so much out of it so I ordered for another one, another mock trial out in Alberta. So I have to go over and do that.

Barb: Excellent.

20. What do you feel are the "big" goals of social studies as a discipline?

Teacher A: Big goal is to get kids excited about being Canadian - like for the Senior One. To really feel proud, to understand their heritage, to see more, to want to experience more by traveling in this country and to really be a responsible citizen, to want to learn that voting is really important, that you can't really believe everything you hear.

21. Social studies can involve the examination of controversial topics. Have you embarked into any of these topics? How do you handle topics such as politics, racism and human rights?



Teacher A: Politics, I handle just before Christmas. I get them to vote in class. We have a voting station. And after we go through each of the different parties. Then we look at their platforms, et cetera and then you know, teach them how to vote and they vote. And we decide in this class you know, they voted and we also voted for the Yes and No in classes and I also accept opinions. If they vote Yes, great have an opinion. No, have an opinion. It's whatever you decide as long as you can back yourself up.

Barb: Are the kids aware of what your opinion is?

Teacher A: Um . . .

Barb: Or do you maintain a neutral stance?

Teacher A: I try not to. Whenever I say something I'll say, "That's just my opinion and I could be correct, it doesn't matter it's just how I feel about this issue, and that it's okay if you disagree with me" and a lot of them do.(Laughter) They love to have an opinion and it's great. I really stress that on everyone of my tests and in everything we do, "What do you think? What is your opinion on this?" And with regards to the racism we go through that with the Quebec issue. Also with regard to our nationalism and multiculturalism unit and especially in World War One and Two. Why wars start, etc.

And what was the third one?

Barb: Human rights.

Teacher A: Yeah, human rights that ties in totally.

Barb: Do you tend to avoid issues involving controversy?

Teacher A: No, I love them. (Laughter). I think it's important.

22. The curriculum stipulates that 70% of time must be spent on the curriculum. What have you added to the curricular topics? Give examples.

Teacher A: I've added. I know that in the curriculum it's Canada between the wars so I do Canada between the wars - one and two and I do Canada's role. Then I add in the Schindler's List part. And I think that's about it.

Barb: You expand on some of the things, go beyond what the curriculum is suggesting but basically sort of stay within the topics established by the curriculum?

Teacher A: Yeah, another one that I want to go a little bit more on - and I know they do in Senior Two, is third world countries in the courses. So this year I've added that in just right after spring break for about a month and so that's where I've put in Project Learning Tree and we'll do some activities and have a lot of fun.

23. How do you make the content of your course relevant to students?

Teacher A: I use things that they're interested in like I'll talk about shows if there's racism in there. I usually choose something that they would like as well, like for World War One and Two I introduced it and we had all kinds of notes, and we did discussions and now choose a topic and I bring in tons of books and you have a class to decide a topic, a class to work on it and then it's due so many days later.

Barb: So they have a choice?

Teacher A: A lot of choice.

24. Have you collected social studies display materials for your classroom?

Teacher A: Not yet, that's something I'm working on. I know I want to get a hold of agriculture. I know they have a really neat kit with regards to showing, you know, canola, all of the different seeds and everything. And I want to take them to Fort Whyte because I used to volunteer out there, and take them through all the different areas in the spring. But I know that we're only allowed so many field trips and I knew that I could do that one and there's a few others that I was thinking next year that I would phone around for that I could bring it into the classroom.

25. Did you adapt materials to students with lower skills? How did you find materials for this purpose?

Teacher A: Kids with lower skills I try to put them with kids with higher skills because and um, I expect a fair amount of writing in my class so that's where the lower skill are, I do a lot of explaining, I'm here Mondays and Wednesdays after school so you can come. I try to run it like a gen - not a general course, but an S course because I don't find it does any of the kids any service if they go into the high school and I've made it . . . um . .

Barb: Watered it down?

Teacher A: Yeah, I've watered it down. Because I've got a lot of failures right now in a couple of my classes but I just keep saying to them you've got two more you know , two more terms and you're allowed to work up to 10% extra on assignments each term, so . . .

Barb: Are you doing a cooperative learning approach then if you're pairing kids and so on?

Teacher A: Yea, yea, pairing kids up, yeah. So that sort of helps with that area. I find that we do a lot of discussion so it makes it more relevant for the kids who are having a harder time. Somebody like um. Like, uh, should I mention a name?

Barb: It doesn't matter.

Teacher A: We've got a student who's probably, she's working at a 65% and that is her tops. And she's just pushing herself. And it's great because I know that she is probably worth about - if she did sort of mediocre about 40% and there's other kids who are way beyond her who are working well below that. So it's just initiative on their part.

#### **Part D -- Personal Impressions, Experiences**

26. Do you like teaching social studies?

Teacher A: Love it.

Barb: Why?

Teacher A: I love it because it's an area that I truly love. I've got a lot of experiences - I'm an experiential learner, so I've been all across Canada except for Newfoundland and um, I love Canada. I've traveled a lot of the world and so I have such a passion for our country. I've got a good feel for the French language issue cause half of my family is French. I told you I'm a paddler, so I'm a fanatic when it comes to the geography of the land. Um, I don't know what else I can say, I just love it.

Barb: What did you find easiest about teaching social studies?

Teacher A: Easiest, is there's a lot of resources out there. It's constantly . . . like I'm a person who hates things to be the same - my notes are hardly ever the same. I think I used one assignment, Schindler's List - I've used this for three years. It's the only assignment that I've reused. I'm constantly changing everything. That's the type of person I am - because it's a constantly changing topic. That's why I really like it.

Barb: You don't get bored that way.

Teacher A: No, no.

Barb: What's the hardest thing about teaching social studies?

Teacher A: Is keeping up with the politics. I find that that's really hard.

27. Would you like to continue teaching social studies?

Teacher A: I'd love to. And I know teacher's name would love to get back into it for a year and so I'm trying to make sure that he doesn't. (Laughter)

28. How important do you believe social studies is for students to learn on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being unimportant, 10 being extremely important)?

Teacher A: I'd say 10.

Barb: Do you convey that belief to your students?

Teacher A: I believe so.

Barb: Okay, how do you do that?

Teacher A: I am very passionate. And it's pretty obvious. When I get up in front of the class I'm pretty dramatic. Um, and I was just thinking about this the other day.

I'm very particular about standing for Oh Canada. And I know some of the kids are kind of shocked when they come into my T.A. because maybe some of the other teachers aren't. And I get quite upset at people. And I talk about some of the places I go. Kids know that I've traveled and I just keep saying "You've got to have an opinion." And I'm always telling them "Have an opinion, what do you think, you've got to stand on your own two feet." So . . .

29. I don't know if I should ask you this question or not but you have a social studies team within your school but it sounds to me that you don't meet so I was going to ask you if you were made to feel a part of the team within.

Teacher A: Actually in a funny way yeah. But it's just myself and the Grade 8 teacher.

We share ideas and stuff like that and say we should meet sometime. And that's about it. The Grade 7 teacher, he sort of does his own thing.

30. Were you given a budget for your social studies instruction?

Teacher A: Yeah.

Barb: Yeah? And that was to buy textbooks?

Teacher A: Textbooks, extra resources, I basically spent to the hilt the last two years.

I've brought in a lot of videos into the school so I find them very useful.

Barb: Great.

31. What supports do you believe teachers such as yourself should be given to help them with the successful delivery of a social studies program? (preparation time, materials, prepared teaching units, mentoring, team teaching and so on)

Teacher A: More textbooks. I was basically given a class set. When I ordered them I was only allowed a class set.

Barb: For how many classes?

Teacher A: One class and I've got three classes. So It was really hard cause I had to share a book between three kids and then three kids are responsible for that one book. Yeah, it's crazy so I made them put all their names in it . A lot of time the books aren't there so what I end up doing is photocopying what I want the kids to read and I make up booklets and I number them and hand them out.

Barb: Let alone if you want them to take them home to do some work . . .

Teacher A: Yeah. Exactly. It's tough.

Barb: Do you have adequate prep time for preparing for social studies?

Teacher A: Um, I'd say no because it's such a broad topic that you need more time. I'm always sort of thinking social studies either at night or in the morning before I get here. You know, exactly what's happening, what should I be doing now.

Barb: Would it have been useful for you to have had a mentor?

Teacher A: Yup.

Barb: to sit down with you daily or weekly to review . . .

Teacher A: It would have been very useful.

32. Is there anything - this is the last question, are there any other comments and/or anecdotes that you would like to add to this discussion that you feel could shed light upon the experiences of teachers such as yourself?

Teacher A: Well.

Barb: You had said there were lots of things. This is your chance!

Teacher A: I think that it's very, very important I think now so more than before because of what's happening in Canada that we really need to find out exactly what we mean by "Canadians" other than just sort of like we feel proud - to really define and try to keep this country together cause we've really got a lot going for ourselves. And I just think that it's just, ah, I know it was really important at the time when the referendum came along but now it's sort of washed to the wayside that in social studies - like how I always sort of , they figured well I'm a paddler, you know I paddle all over the place I know the geography so, you know, Name of Teacher doesn't want to do social studies anymore she'd probably would like to. And I was glad that I was given the opportunity. But being told in Phys. Ed. I probably shouldn't take social studies because . . . social studies teachers, you know, when you come out there are so many people that can teach it and also that it's probably not that hard to teach that you might as well take biology because it's harder to teach so that's what I took. And I kept saying God, I wish I could take that course, or I'd love to take that course.

Barb: Were those the comments made to you at the Faculty of Education?

A: No in Phys. Ed.

Barb: Oh, at Phys. Ed., I see.

Teacher A: When we had to pick a minor. And then in Education. You know, it didn't, education just didn't seem to be very exciting for me. In my last year I took some really good courses, but not much. I didn't get a very good impression of



education in general from the Faculty of Education. I can't remember where social studies - if it was alone on that one.

Barb: Anything else you'd like to add?

Teacher A: Um, I'm amazed at how many people are sort of put in positions like basic French. I told them I could speak French, I could probably teach it but I've never taken any French training to teach it. I was thrown into it in my second year here. I've taught it for five years. I'm finally getting the feel for teaching basic French. And now I've decided that I really enjoy it - now that I feel like I'm doing it properly. But I still have a long way to go so I've taken some extra French courses this year and in the summer I'm going to be taking a course on how to teach basic French - after five years. You know like every year I get saying are they going to keep me in here maybe somebody else would teach basic French So now I'm really enjoying it but it's amazing how much that goes on.

Barb: Is there anybody within the school who teaches social studies at more than one grade level? Or is it kind of grade-specific?

Teacher A: It's sort of grade - specific. I know Name of Teacher, I think he might teach seven and eight.

Barb: Is that basically filling in for gaps in the timetable do you think?

Teacher A: Yeah, yeah.

Barb: It is eh? So in a relatively small school then, chances are, you are structured more according to your grade level rather than your subject - that the organization sort

of runs along grade levels rather than subjects lines like it would in the high school?

Teacher A: I think they try to do both cause I know I'm on the grade nine team but I teach grade seven basic French. So they try to get you to teach two separate levels.

Barb: Oh they do. Okay.

Teacher A: Yeah, yeah.

Barb: But it's not necessarily the same thing. You're not normally . . . you wouldn't do grade nine social and then grade seven social.

Teacher A: No, No. They try to switch it around so that you don't get bored with the subject area or whatever.

Barb: Would it be useful for you teach seven, eight and nine social to give you sort of an idea of where it was headed and the skills that you're trying to build from grade to grade?

Teacher A: I think it would be because of the grade nine curriculum would be really helpful to teach the grade 7 curriculum.

Barb: Um hum. You like geography.

Teacher A: Yeah, yeah. I think that would be really helpful for that.

Barb: Anything else?

Teacher A: I've enjoyed this.

Barb: Good.

Teacher A: And I'd really like to take some more geography courses.

Barb: Yeah, it sounds like it would be right up your alley.

Teacher A: Yeah. Actually maybe I should say more politics, I want to take some politics courses. I think that'd be great.

Barb: Good stuff. Well thank you very much. I really appreciate this.

Teacher A: Yeah, no problem.

## Appendix B

### Interview with Teacher B

March 18, 1996

#### Part A -- Teacher Background

1. What is your subject area specialty?

Teacher B: Science.

2. How long have you taught social studies?

Teacher B: I taught Grade 8 two years and Grade 9 one year. Never taught Grade 7 so that would make me three years, thereabouts.

(The next two questions were combined:)

3. Were you always assigned the same course in social studies?

4. What portion of your teaching load is social studies?

Teacher B: At name of the school grade 8 I had two classes. So . . .

Barb: About a quarter.

Teacher B: A quarter

Barb: You taught Social Studies at your other school too?

Teacher B: At name of school one class of Grade 9's. So just a single class.

Barb: So that would be one out of eight?

Teacher B: One out of seven.

5. Was social studies assigned to you or did you have a choice of subjects?

Teacher B: Well that's diplomatically put. The choice was social studies or . . . No there was some choice but uh, I selected the Grade 9 social studies because I liked the idea of the current events.

Barb: How much notice were you given of your social studies teaching assignment?

Teacher B: Well the interviews were in May and the finalization was in June.

Barb: So you basically had the summer to prepare?

Teacher B: Yes.

6. Were you assigned S or G level classes (for high school teachers)? (Omitted because the teacher is a junior high teacher.)

7. Is any of the reading done in your leisure time social studies related (current events, newspapers, National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, Manitoba History, Beaver, etc.)?

Teacher B: I think all of that for not only social studies but I think that's pretty typical for anyone with current events information, you can't live without it. Yes the answer in short is yes but it's much more than just for social studies it's for understanding. I think we need that in our global village - you know it's really important.

8. Did you subscribe to any social studies publications (MSSTA Journal, Canada Social Studies Review, etc.) at the time you were teaching social studies?

Teacher B: I never even knew those existed. (Laughter)

Barb: "Were you aware of their existence" was going to be the next question!  
(Laughter)

9. Did anybody ever share these publications with you?

Teacher B: The publications, periodicals?

Barb: Yeah.

Teacher B: Truthfully the only information I ever received in social studies - whether it was the history or the grade 9 current events was through my own investigation and digging. No one came to me. Ever.

Barb: Okay.

### **Part B -- Teacher Assistance and Professional Development**

10. When you were first assigned social studies were you assigned a mentor?

Teacher B: Uh no. No I wasn't.

Barb: So whom did you turn for advice and help if you weren't assigned someone?

Teacher B: Well, when I started at Name of School the first thing was I made sure that I certainly went to the curriculum and the curriculum guide and after the curriculum guide I did whatever research I could by asking - I don't know whether you were there at the time when I asked but I know that, I think Name of Teacher was there at the time and I spoke to him but that was way back when.

Barb: Okay, that's got to be years ago. So within teaching social studies at the junior high did the social studies teachers ever get together to plan ideas for classes or units, or . . . did they ever meet?

Teacher B: At Name of School I never part of any social studies team. And at Name of School, never.

11. Were you encouraged to take any social studies courses or attend workshops in the area of social studies?

Teacher B: No, one of the problems there Barb is because it was I guess you'd classify it as a minor teaching.

Barb: Right.

Teacher B: Do you know what I mean? It's not your major - there's no emphasis and I think that whatever moneys were allotted it was the short end of the stick.

Barb: Okay so they looked at you teaching one out of seven and thought that the investment wasn't worthwhile given your involvement?

Teacher B: That might have been a false assessment but that's what I think.

12. Have you attended the MSSTA (Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association) session at SAG (the annual Special Area Group Conference)?

Teacher B: No, I haven't.

13. What did your administrator do for you to ensure a smooth transition into the social studies field?

Teacher B: Butter on the floor? (Laughter) Give me a break. The administrators haven't done . . . administrators don't usually, I think . . . if you're an experienced teacher I don't think that an administrator comes into your program unless there's a problem. If there's not a problem then they don't.

Barb: What about your team leader?

Teacher B: Well when I consider Name of School there was no team that I was on there was never grade level. And there was never discipline meetings. At Name of

School it was team by grade and you never met by discipline. If you did it was by chance rather than by anything else. .

Barb: The administrative structure of the school dictated . . . or the consequence was that you never talked about your discipline?

Teacher B: You can't. You know what it's like - it's just a matter of time. Unfortunately I don't think that the priority was to meet as a team for a discipline - whether it was social studies or science. All of that. Like for instance, if I can just divert for science now we meet on a very informal basis like at lunch time chats and if you don't sit with the right crew, you don't sit with someone of that other discipline you don't have an opportunity to talk.

Barb: Right.

Teacher B: Time.

### **Part C -- Planning, Course, Curriculum**

14. How did you learn the social studies course that you had to teach?

Teacher B: Number one was I certainly read the text which is critical, I read the curriculum and then I certainly, depending upon the course whether it was grade 8 or grade 9 I used whatever resources were available. In the Grade 8 I didn't, I found the resources - cause it was historical so that was basically stuff that I'd take out of the library. But I really enjoyed the Grade 9 - and that's one thing that I enjoyed maybe you ask this later - I enjoyed the Grade 9, the current events - well it had, it certainly diverted from the text.

Barb: Uh hum.



Teacher B: Substantially.

Barb: I'm going to get into that later so I won't get into that now.

15. Have you read the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum overview document?

Teacher B: I don't know which . . . . I think I probably just looked at the Grade 8 curriculum and Grade 9 curriculum.

Barb: Okay. Could you give me a brief overview of the K-12 social studies curriculum?

Teacher B: Haven't a clue.

Barb: Okay. So you knew exactly what you had to teach in that particular year. Okay.

Teacher B: You have to remember though, that I was never a party to any discipline . . . you know, meetings, there was no inservicing. It was a matter of you'd better prepare for what you need and that's it.

Barb: Because the kids are walking in the door?

16. Do you use the text to help guide you through the course?

Teacher B: The 8 and 9 are two different things.

Barb: Can you speak about both of them?

Teacher B: 8, I followed the text quite a bit because I think it was pretty logically laid out.

Barb: Yes, yes.

Teacher B: Grade 9, actually Canada Today, that's what I used um, I found it archaic, I found it very stifling and I found it had really nothing to do with what I thought were the current events of the day. And for the Grade 9 I used a lot of resources that probably infringed on a lot of copyright - newspapers, radio, TV, magazines,

anything that I could use I brought in. I photocopied. I taped. I did everything that was let's say a little bit on the grey side.

Barb: But I think that most people are doing that.

Teacher B: That's the way it is.

17. How often do your students use their text books? Daily? Weekly? Biweekly?

Teacher B: Okay, for the Grade 8's pretty much all the time. It was the standard, it was the basic and we diverted off of that. For Canada Today, it formed part of the course but most of the course was kind of out there and we brought it in. It formed, it wasn't the foundation of the course.

Barb: Okay.

18. Do you use a resource-based learning approach to social studies?

Teacher B: Do you want to define that for me?

Barb: Yes. It's when you use a variety of resources, making use of the library . . .

Teacher B: Not for the Grade 8's.

Barb: Okay.

Teacher B: There's a difference. I really found that there was a substantial difference between those two courses. One is like nuts and bolts historical and the other is "airy fairy" but you have to bring stuff in so that it's very topical for the kids to drive home the point and make it pertinent. Otherwise it's lost.

Barb: Did you make use the library in your social studies classes?

Teacher B: Not by taking the kids down for projects, work like that.

Barb: I think you've already mentioned what sources have you used other than the text - things like magazines and newspapers, you name it, you used it.

Teacher B: That's it. We're talking basically 9 - because that's a course I really had a lot of fun with, I really had fun with the 9. The 8 was very traditional, you know what I mean?

Barb: Yes.

Teacher B: Very lock step, like you do the project thing, you do your Egypt, your Greece and whatever else. That's pretty lock step

Barb: Okay.

19. What methods of instruction do you use to teach social studies?

Teacher B: A large bat. (Laughter) Uh, the method, there was a lot of chalk talk. Introducing the topic, chalk talk, distribution of whatever we were working with, a lot of video, used a lot of that CBC News in Review. I didn't agree with a lot of the stuff that I showed, but I did my unbiased approach because there's a lot of stuff that I don't agree with that's coming down and I brought a lot, I did a lot of taping, not only television but radio, and I was really fortunate because during the time I taught there was the Charlottetown, uh stuff, there was a federal election . . . There was a lot.

Barb: Good timing eh?

Teacher B: Good timing.

20. What do you feel are the "big" goals of social studies as a discipline?

Teacher B: Oh, that's a big question. To tell you the truth it's been said more than once - and it's got a lot of credence I think that if we don't understand our past we have no future. To understand the reasons for whatever historical events occurred and when I talk about the reasons I mean the nuts and bolts, the, all of the facts, all the different things that occurred and try to put them together as a puzzle piece to figure out what really happened because at least for me when I look around today I see the same errors, the same mistakes, again and again, and nobody seems to learn.

Barb: Um hum.

Teacher B: That's my understanding of history.

21. Social studies can involve the examination of controversial topics. Have you embarked into any of these topics? How would you handle topics such as politics, racism and human rights?

Teacher B: Handled them all in that Grade 9 course. Now which? Pick one, cause I'm not too sure . . .

Barb: I guess all I what to know is did you try to avoid any issues that had controversy to them or did you tackle them?

Teacher B: Yeah, they were tackled and the kids know me and they know how far they can go. I allow personal emotion into it because it's a very emotional discussion but they have to confine themselves to doing it in a very respectful fashion. Kids know as soon as they cross the line - whether they're, you know, calling natives or aboriginals something else that that's not acceptable.

Barb: So you laid ground rules for discussion?

Teacher B: Yes.

Barb: So they understood how far they could go with it?

Teacher B: I made it very clear, very important because they have to understand one of the things that really “ticks” me is I try to even show Question Period. What a bunch of bozos, how can you teach kids to act in a reasonable fashion with the bozos on TV doing a lot of things that I don’t agree with?

Barb: Did you maintain your neutrality in terms of political issues?

Teacher B: Always, I would . . . always

22. The curriculum stipulates that 70% of time must be spent on the curriculum. Did you add to the curricular topics or just expand on them?

Teacher B: Certainly a lot of expansion that’s for sure. Addition, I guess you could always say that you expanded on something from Canada Today. However, if I added anything special I can’t answer that. C.B.C. News in Review . . . I don’t know if that’s innovative?

Barb: Yup.

Teacher B: A lot of things in there disturbed me but we certainly discussed them - so that may be innovative but it may be an expansion of something in that text.

23. How do you make the content of your course relevant to students?

A: That was fairly evident to them because if it was being talked about out there we talked about it in here. It was topical, it was current and we tried to expand on the issues so that they could see more than a single side. That kind of thing.

Barb: Was that tougher to do with the Grade 8 course?

Teacher B: The Grade 8 course I didn't do much of anything - like I said Grade 8 as far as, and I taught it two years - at least that I can remember (laughter) it was too, the history is very nuts and bolts to me I didn't have an opportunity to expand as much as I did in the nine course.

Barb: It is not readily, it's not as obvious how you do that?.

Teacher B: Well I'm sure if I had a background in history, I'm sure that I could do that, but I've always been very keenly interested in current events so I, I found the Grade 9 course just a natural, I just loved it, I really loved it. It was a real gas because the kids could come in and it didn't matter if it was in the newspaper or what I had some information about it because I was interested. It was fun.

24. Have you collected social studies display materials for your classroom?

Teacher B: What do you mean display?

Barb: Like posters or . . .

Teacher B: Well posters. As a matter of fact, I had the kids generate a lot of posters for me for class use so that there would always be class displays.

25. Did you adapt materials to students with lower skills?

Teacher B: Yes, and I had a few discussions with the administration on what should and should not be available. And some of the students who have behaviour problems and academic ability I reduced what would have been content and it became very annoying to me that much of that even though I tried for them to get a better understanding it didn't matter too much because the administration indicated that

it didn't matter what they did because they got through. It's very annoying because even though they may be challenged it doesn't mean they're inept - there's a difference.

Barb: Um hum.

Teacher B: And I'm really ticked., you know. (laughter)

**Part D – Personal Impressions, Experiences**

26. Do you enjoy teaching social studies?

Teacher B: The Grade 9 course especially. I loved it. Loved it. I probably would have enjoyed the 8 course if I had a bit more information and background to it.

Barb: Okay. What was easiest in teaching social studies? What was hardest?

Teacher B: Easiest part was talking to the kids in regards to current events and things that were very topical because by nature, I guess, I must have some sort of political instincts, in fact, because I enjoy it and I'm always interested in what is happening whether it's radio, TV news. For me that was the easiest part. The hardest part of the course?

Barb: Um hum.

Teacher B: Let me come back to that because that's hard.

Barb: Okay.

27. If you were given the opportunity again would you like to go on teaching social studies?

Teacher B: Yeah, if there was, I tell you what because I can tell now by the questions that you've taken me through that I would like a lot more assistance, a lot more

background, a lot more information and things that would be meaningful for me to use. The difference between stuff and neat stuff.

Barb: Right.

Teacher B: You know. You know what I don't know if you're going to be doing some sort committee formed or work here but I do think that there's a real need for some sort of easy guide. You know like the easy tax guide? An easy curriculum guide. That's what I'd like.

28. How important do you believe social studies is for students to learn on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being unimportant, 10 being extremely important)?

Teacher B: It's extremely important. I just don't have a question there - I don't have a question there I would say that it's a ten.

Barb: Did you convey your beliefs herein to your students? How?

Teacher B: I'm talking Grade 9 because Grade 8 it's important - matter of fact I enjoyed that but the Grade 9's yes they knew that was important.

Barb: Okay.

29. Were you made to feel part of the "social studies team" within your school or was there no social studies team?

Teacher B: No there was no social studies team. There was . .

Barb: Grade level team?

Teacher B: There was, you know, a loose, very loose team. If anything, we were pulled together to say okay, how many books do you have?

Barb: So it was inventory control?



Teacher B: Yeah.

30. Were you given a budget for your social studies instruction?

Teacher B: I probably was, I never spent anything. It's whoever was in charge of that. It was a textbook order. That was it.

Barb: So they didn't allow you to buy things like video tapes . .

Teacher B: Oh sure. I'm sure it was not . . . I was never long enough in any program that's the problem right? Because when you become a little bit ensconced you can sit around and say, "Hey I need this, I need that." Kind of dropped in, parachuted.

31. What supports do you believe teachers such as yourself should be given to help them with the successful delivery of a social studies program? (preparation time, materials, prepared teaching units, mentoring, team teaching and so on)

Teacher B: All that's good. It's great that I . . . I think that number one. is that you need depending on how many or how much of a load social studies is for you. Like for me it was one out of six one out of seven, whatever fraction. It's not enough I guess to be meaningful for the administration but I think you need easy packages - it doesn't matter if it's social studies, or science or math. You need sometimes a little bit of prepared packaging. so you can understand especially if you're new in that discipline that you can understand what the emphasis is and where you know this is supposed to be going

A: What other people might do in a class? To give you an idea?

Teacher B: Sure, oh sure. But all of those other things that you mentioned are very important. Packages of information I think is what you need - especially in eight. It's a little more substantial.- like just a package of maybe three or four days of work Or it could be a unit. That's really neat. So I think that's important.

Barb: Now I'm going to let you go back to that question. What was the hardest thing about teaching social studies.

Teacher B: Yeah. I've got to think. Hard . . .

Barb: Unless it wasn't hard . . . ?

Teacher B: Well no, I'm sure . . . I'm trying to think. Hard. well I guess when you say hard. It wasn't hard in what was to be covered, talking about Name of School, my most current recollection., The hardest part for me is working sometimes with youngsters who really don't have a concept yet of place, a concept of self and they just don't I guess understand where they fit or how they fit even never mind Winnipeg, but Canada, and Manitoba and this kind of stuff. And I think my greatest frustration from the offset that I shouldn't couldn't get some of these kids motivated to feel as if I think that they were even nationalistic as a Canadian. Some of them I hate to say this were just plain silly bozo's. You know, Grade 9's. You just can't get them motivated? And it ticked me royally. And I'm sure you've seen a few of those.

Barb: Yes.

32. This is the last question. Are there any other comments and/or anecdotes that you would like to add to this discussion that you feel could shed light upon the experiences of teachers such as yourself?

Teacher B: There's always a ton of things. But I think what it amounts to is that as a social studies teacher . . . It really doesn't matter whether you're social, science or math I think you need . . . somehow you need more time. time so that you can whatever meetings, organizations, resources put together so that you can better fulfill the job that you want to do in that classroom. Unfortunately the way I see it there's going to be less and less quality time and more and more frustration. That's the way I feel. You know?

Barb: Yup. Anything else?

Teacher B: It's been fun. I really enjoyed this. It was . . . you know Barb, I haven't thought about social studies now for quite some time. Really I haven't, and it's made me think back. that I did have a lot of neat times especially in the Name of School setting because I had an opportunity - actually two years I taught there, son of a gun, getting old, forgot. The second year was much better. That was the Charlottetown stuff and the election and I really thought that I was having a lot of - not only fun with the kids, but making them understand themselves a little bit better and where they fit. And then I went back to math. (Laughter) You know, nuts and bolts. But I think if I had an opportunity I would get back into at least the political side, the current events kind of thing. That's where I had my most fun. Okay?

Barb: Good. Thanks very much.

Teacher B: Oh I enjoyed it.

Barb: Good!

## Appendix C

### Interview with Teacher C

June 25, 1995

#### Part A – Teacher Background

1. What is your subject area specialty?

Teacher C: Business Education.

2. How long have you taught social studies?

Teacher C: Three years.

3. Were you always assigned the same course in social studies?

Teacher C: Yes.

4. What portion of your teaching load is social studies?

Teacher C: Right now?

Barb: Yes.

Teacher C: Ah. Right now, ah, it would be two-sevenths.

Barb: Is that about normal for the three years?

Teacher C: No. The first year it was the majority.

5. Was social studies assigned to you or did you have a choice of subjects?

Teacher C: Well, it was assigned. I might have had some choice because they might have found me something else if I didn't accept that.

Barb: Okay. How much notice were you given of your social studies teaching assignment?

Teacher C: A couple of months.

6. Were you assigned S or G level classes (for high school teachers)?

Teacher C: Both.

7. Is any of the reading done in your leisure time social studies related (current events, newspapers, National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, Manitoba History, Beaver, etc.)?

Teacher C: Yes. History and current events.

Barb: Anything along the lines of National Geographic?

Teacher C: Yes. I subscribe to National Geographic.

8. Do you subscribe to any social studies publications (MSSTA Journal, Canada Social Studies Review, etc.)?

Teacher C: No.

Barb: Were you aware of the existence of these magazines?.

Teacher C: The last one I've heard of.

9. Has anyone ever shared these publications with you?

Teacher C: No.

Barb: Okay, I'm going to go into Part B now which is about teacher assistance and professional development.

### **Part B – Teacher Assistance and Professional Development**

10. When you were first assigned social studies were you assigned a mentor?

Teacher C: Not not formally no.

Barb: To whom did you turn for advice and help?

Teacher C: The existing social studies teachers.

11. Were you encouraged to take any social studies courses or attend workshops in the area of social studies?

Teacher C: No. I've always attended workshops that have something to do with social studies because teaching economics and law there's a lot of overlap so I have attended ah, social studies inservices.

12. Have you attended the MSSTA (Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association) session at SAG (the annual Special Area Group Conference)?

Teacher C: Yes.

Barb: Was it useful?

Teacher C: Yes.

Barb: What did you learn?

Teacher C: Well I saw the displays of materials . That was interesting to know what was out there, some of the sessions were more interesting than useful. . . .

Barb: Okay.

Teacher C: (Continued) . . . : I guess if they're interesting they are useful.

13.: What did your administrator (team leader, department head) do for you to ensure a smooth transition into the social studies field?

Teacher C: Well the department head was open to any questions and was free with his advice.

Barb: I'm going to talk about planning and curriculum . . .

### **Part C – Planning, Course, Curriculum**

4. How did you learn the social studies course that you had to teach?

Teacher C: It was a geography course and . . . learning the material I went through one of the textbooks Continent of Contrast and then after I went through that I just took out a North American geography book at random and read pieces of it. I must have gone through six or seven to become at ease with the material.

15. Have you read the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum overview document?

Teacher C: I don't believe so. Well, ah, I've read a lot of papers on the course. I don't know if that was one of them.

Barb: Can you give me a brief overview of the K-12 social studies curriculum? Are you aware of the progression of grade levels and units?

Teacher C: Not in elementary school no. I don't have any idea. In junior high I think it's history in senior one, geography is in there somewhere either in grade 7 or in grade 8.

16. So you used the text to basically guide you through the course?

Teacher C: No.

Barb: No?

Teacher C: I used the text basically to learn the material myself.

17. How often do your students use their text books?

Teacher C: They had the text there. It was always there to refer to. We'd always keep going back to it. It was used as sort of an anchor.

Barb: I see.

18. Do you use a resource-based learning approach to social studies?



Teacher C: I would say so.

Barb: What use do you make of the library in your social studies classes?

Teacher C: I had them go into a session with the librarian so they understood how the library worked and how they could find information. There were assignments starting off with a small assignment so that they could familiarize themselves with the library and then a large research assignment where they would gather information and compare sources.

Barb: What sources have you used other than the recommended text for the social studies course that you are teaching? What specific books or materials did you find helpful?

Teacher C: There are several other texts and magazines A few articles in magazines.

Barb: So for the most part you found the materials within the building?

Teacher C: No I also found materials outside the building.

Barb: Okay.

19. What methods of instruction do you use to teach social studies?

Teacher C: A combination of ah, lecture for introducing a new topic, questions sheets, and ah, group projects, group research projects. That's basically it.

20. What do you feel are the "big" goals of social studies as a discipline?

Teacher C: To have an awareness and an appreciation of Canada and where it fits in in the world.

21. Social studies can involve the examination of controversial topics. Have you embarked into any of these topics? How do you handle topics such as politics, racism and human rights?

Teacher C: I taught geography. There wasn't a lot of controversial topics unless the environment - which is controversial.

22. The curriculum stipulates that 70% of time must be spent on the curriculum. What have you add in addition to the curriculum into your classes?

Teacher C: To tell you the truth after I read the curriculum then I , I started I, ah, don't really recall what was in the curriculum I ah, I might have, everything I did might have been in the curriculum or possibly . . . is the environment in the curriculum?

Barb: Yes.

Teacher C: Okay well.

Barb: So you sort of focused on the environment and so on as an area of interest?

23. How do you make the content of your course relevant to students?  
(Thinking . . . asked to shut off the tape player He said that really the relevance of geography had never come up in conversation and that its relevance seemed self-evident to his students.)

24. Have you collected social studies display materials for your classroom?

Teacher C: No.

25. Did you adapt materials to students with lower skills?

Teacher C: Yes.

Barb: How did you find materials for this purpose?

Teacher C: I made them up.

**Part D – Personal Impressions, Experiences**

26. Do you enjoy teaching social studies?

Teacher C: Enjoy - I thought it was a nice change. I didn't dislike it - it's not my major area. It had its moments.

Barb: What was the easiest part of teaching social studies?

Teacher C: Well the easiest part the material is not complex and when I was asked to teach it I think when I started off I was asked to teach three classes. I was ah teaching four, I was scheduled for four classes total with no preparation class and I was teaching a class I'd never taught before. The fact that the material was very easy was probably the easiest part.

Barb: What was the hardest part of teaching social studies?

Teacher C: There was no hard part.

27. Would you like to continue teaching social studies? Why? Why not?

Teacher C: Oh sure.

Barb: Why?

Teacher C: Um. Because I've invested a fair amount of time in it now.

28. How important do you believe social studies is for students to learn on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being unimportant, 10 being extremely important)?

Teacher C: Oh, it's extremely important. 10.

Barb: Do you convey your beliefs about that importance to your students?

Teacher C: Yea. I would say so.

Barb: How do you do that?

Teacher C: Just through an enthusiasm about the topic.

29. Were you made to feel part of the "social studies team" within your school?

Teacher C: (Laughter.) Sure. I'm not in this department. I'm was the business education department. But as much as I was in here, you know, I was.

30. Were you given a budget for your social studies instruction? Told that you could purchase materials if you wanted? Given the feeling that you could?

Teacher C: I was either told (at this point we had difficulties with the tape player - it started to whine and I banged it a couple of times. Turned it on and off. Then we continued on.) I was either told or given the impressions that if I found suitable materials I could propose to buy them.

31. What supports do you believe teachers such as yourself should be given to help you with the successful delivery of a social studies program? (preparation time, materials, prepared teaching units, mentoring, team teaching and so on)

Teacher C: Sharing of materials, sharing of resources, sharing of learning activities.

Barb: How about prep time?

Teacher C: Oh, of course. That's a given. You need time for any course that you do.

Barb: Would it be helpful to give teachers sort of prepared teaching units to you or would you prefer to do units for yourself?

Teacher C: For a new teacher teaching a course for the first time it's very useful to have something to rely on and then the teacher can build on that which is what I did. I was happy to get materials to start off with and then basically I built on that.

Barb: Would it have been helpful to have had a mentor?

Teacher C: Not particularly. No.

Barb: Would you have liked to have team taught with say a social studies specialist?

Teacher C: That might have been interesting.

Barb: Thank you very much. That's it.

## Appendix D

### Interview with Teacher D

February 13, 1996

#### Part A – Teacher Background

1. What is your subject area specialty?

Teacher D: History and English.

2. How long have you taught social studies?

Teacher D: On and off, I've been in the school for eighteen years so a combination in those eighteen years. Probably twelve of the eighteen.

3. Were you always assigned the same course in social studies?

Teacher D: No.

4. What portion of your teaching load is social studies at the present?

Teacher D: At the present time, three quarters.

Barb: In the past, what portion of your teaching load was it?

Teacher D: It's varied over the years. Sometimes it was a quarter and sometimes it was full time.

5. Was social studies assigned to you or did you have a choice of subjects?

Teacher D: Social studies was assigned to me.

Barb: Okay, how much notice were you given of your social studies teaching assignment?

Teacher D: My best recollection would be the first time probably no more than a week from the end of June.

Barb: Okay, and then you would have had the summer holidays to prepare?

Teacher D: Right.

6. Were you assigned S or G level classes?

Teacher D: If I can remember correctly, the first time would have been the S level.

Barb: And from there on in?

Teacher D: After that it's been a mixture.

7. Is any of the reading done in your leisure time social studies related (current events, newspapers, National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, Manitoba History, Beaver, etc.)?

Teacher D: I am a fanatic about reading newspaper articles and magazine articles and subscribing to things, at one time, like Equinox and National Geographic and Time Magazine etc.

8. Do you subscribe to any social studies publications (MSSTA Journal, Canada Social Studies Review, etc.)?

Teacher D: No I don't.

Barb: Were you aware of their existence?

Teacher D: I am because some of the magazines are in the library and when we take kids in for research that's one of my goals is always to find out what the library has.

9. Has anyone ever shared these publications with you?

Teacher D: A number of my colleagues have done that. They've given me a list. For example, I wanted to know about water and one of my colleagues gave me a

whole list probably eight or nine references and then with the help of the librarian I was able to locate those and students were able to use them.

**Part B – Teacher Assistance and Professional Development**

10. When you were first assigned social studies were you assigned a mentor?

Teacher D: No.

Barb: To whom did you turn for advice and help?

Teacher D: Usually, I've always had a good rapport with colleagues and I've always found that if you ask colleagues are quite willing to share what they have.

11. Were you encouraged to take any social studies courses or attend workshops in the area of social studies?

Teacher D: Not specifically.

12. Have you attended the MSSTA (Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association) session at SAG (the annual Special Area Group Conference)?

Teacher D: I have on occasion.

Barb: Was it useful? What did you learn from it?

Teacher D: My main interest has always been I think in what is new and so I've tended to go to sessions which are, that give a new slant on the teaching - you know, teaching techniques of social studies. So I've always found those kind of workshops to be useful.

Barb: Did you come away with any units that you could use in class?

Teacher D: Not very often. No because again because I think that part of that is due to the fact that most of these programs when we look at them, as a school we look



at them as a class sets you know and there is the expense of buying 40 class sets.

So very often what I've done is to take a portion of them.

13. What did your administrator or your department head do for you to ensure a smooth transition into the social studies field?

Teacher D: Well, I was in actually a unique position at that time because when I was asked to go into social studies because the department head at that time was going on a leave for the year and so they asked me if I would fill in for him so that they have a position available for him when he came back. So it was very much a situation where I could have said no but again I like the flexibility. But I said yes simply to help out the administration but there was nobody there to help out in that situation.

Barb: When you most recently returned to social studies did your administrator or department head do anything to ensure a smooth transition into that area of teaching again?

Teacher D: From an administration point no, my administration team did not. But from a department head point of view I was encouraged to ask for information, I was encouraged to ask questions and I think it was made - I know it was made quite clear right from the very beginning that in the department you were not isolated and that there were either colleagues or the department head would assist you at any time and in any way that they could.

### **Part C -- Planning, Course, Curriculum**

14. How did you learn the social studies course that you had to teach?

Teacher D: Well again my department head was very forthcoming with going over the outline of the courses even though I had never taught this particular geography class before. I was shown text books, I was given an idea of what was covered from the content of it and I was given all the different types of assignments and outlines to help me with each of the units. And on top of that we have a reasonable collection of videos and I was encouraged to use that - and I do anyway cause I think that kids are very visual and so I was encouraged to use those and the appropriate ones and I was also encouraged to bring in videos from outside and information from outside and I just found a willingness to help me to meld the stuff that I had and to help me with the outline of all the courses.

15. Have you read the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum overview document?

Teacher D: I have not read it word for word.

Barb: Can you give me a brief overview of the K-12 social studies curriculum?

Teacher D: Not off the top of my head I couldn't.

Barb: Could you start, say, at the junior high level and work your way up to the top?

Teacher D: No I think basically what I've looked at is just at the beginning that they should have geography of North America and that is about as much time as I've had to handle at this particular point.

Barb: Right!

Teacher D: Future reading though!

16. Do you use the text to help guide you through the course?

Teacher D: Yes I do.

17. Okay, how often do your students use their text books? Daily? Weekly? Biweekly? Monthly? Not at all?

Teacher D: I would say that on average we're using our text at least for 15 minutes every day.

18. Do you use a resource-based learning approach to social studies?

Teacher D: Yes.

Barb: What use do you make of the library in your social studies classes?

Teacher D: I make a fair amount of use of the library. I would say if you wanted a percentage of the course, I probably use the library for at least 20% of my course. And the other thing about our library of course, is, that because it has become automated we now have CD Roms. It's the part of technology that as a teacher I need to be immersed in and so I've found that it's very good for me to go into the library with the students and help them with their research. So I think right now I'm probably much more involved in research with my students than I have been in the past.

Barb: What sources have you used other than the recommended text for the social studies course that you are teaching? I think you've already mentioned this but if you were to add to that for the social studies course that you're now teaching.

Teacher D: Well I've used a number of videos from outside. Um, I've taken a look, as a matter of fact we did a study in which we used a video from the Western section and then we looked at a travel film and amazingly from a list of 29 things we found 27 were actually covered on the video - the advantage being was that it

showed all the beautiful parts of B.C. and the west coast and the Pacific right down to a little bit of Seattle and so my kids, students, really enjoyed that and so I brought that in. I use outside articles - I'm using on a regular basis articles out of the Free Press. Articles like yesterday there was an Indian settlement in B.C. after nearly, from, well 1913 to 1996 - nearly a hundred years. We'll be studying that for the next couple of days cause I expect the articles to increase and I been looking at the Manitoba native claims that are still outstanding. There was an article about that about two weeks ago. I use magazines. I brought in Maclean's magazines and used articles out of that. We've used stuff that, material that's been provided by the Canadian government on immigration, etc., etc. So I use as much of that as I can to supplement my class.

19. What methods of instruction do you use to teach social studies?

Teacher D: I've found that my methods are changing. I start off usually with a lecture for about ten minutes in which I try to make sure that they're all at the same point and then I find that I'm much more involved in becoming an individual resource teacher for each one. Actually I try to get them to work in groups because I find that easier in the setup of my classroom. So I'm very much involved in student centred learning right now and I encourage them as they go about their tasks of the day.

20. What do you feel are the "big" goals of social studies as a discipline?

Teacher D: Well if I look at the first semester and my students, it would be to let them know something about the place they live in. I found out that only 3 people had

traveled outside the province in one particular class and out of those three people nobody had traveled outside the country in terms of anywhere besides Grand Forks and I found that one of the exercises I had them do was to draw their map of Canada and then when I gave them a map of Canada, we, after a lot of laughter, they began to recognize that they didn't even know their own country. So I think one of the goals has to be to that if you're going to be a citizen of the country it's to at least know the country and by knowing the geographical area, knowing about the people, settlement. I think that another goal is bring understanding to different parts of the country. At the moment we have misunderstanding - whether it's in the east or in west, there seem to be a lot of misunderstandings. I think for me, too, the goals would be to know the country, to appreciate the country and to have a unique understanding, to be good citizens and to be contributors to the country.

21. Social studies can involve the examination of controversial topics. Have you embarked into any of these topics? How do you handle topics such as politics, racism and human rights? Do you tend avoid issues involving controversy?

Teacher D: I think the answer to that is very plainly I'm prepared to talk about any subject whether it's controversial or not. Again I think it just simply depends on your approach to it. Um. I think one of the things that we probably don't understand enough is where kids actually are on issues. And one of the things I try to do beforehand is to try to establish where they are and then look at the issues as they see them. So if the controversy is, for example, that there are too

many immigrants in this country and they're taking up all of our jobs one of the things I do is to try to get the kids to explain to me what an immigrant is. Then, how do you think these people arrived here and then we go, we make it more personal, and then we talk about they themselves- where are they, are they immigrants and it was kind of interesting that um, it gives kids a different view because all of a sudden their friend is an immigrant and what they're [sic] actually have heard about or started off by probably they would have said which was "Pack them all up and send them away" now includes their friends. And so now we have a different light on the subject. So now we can get into some kind of discussion about what an immigrant is, how they come here, the contributions of immigration and what this country can do. And so we try to take controversial issues and not prolong the controversy but turn them into positive experiences so that people in the end are willing at least to look at the different sides rather than simply be one-sided and not interested in the other side of it.

22. The curriculum stipulates that 70% of time must be spent on the curriculum. What have you added to the curricular topics? Give examples.

Teacher D: Well one of the things I added to the curriculum was how we would handle environmental issues in terms looking at them in terms of looking at them as conflict and how we acquire skills to deal with conflict. This is area that is growing very quickly and people need skills to be able to deal with that - even the issues locally. So what I have done is to look at skills in conflict. We did one today actually in terms of trying to convince someone else that you were right and

understanding that we have to negotiate rather than use force. So I try to add those kinds of things in. Another one which I was very interested in and looking at was to look at our country in terms of how another group looks at it. For example, how does a tourist look at our country. And so we've been looking at and we've been looking again at tourism as a subject and how do we present ourselves to people who are coming to visit us. So those two examples are what I hope to add and have added.

23. How do you make the content of your course relevant to students?

Teacher D: The \$64,000 question! [Laughter]. I guess, I um, I guess over the years one changes, but one aspect that doesn't change is knowing your class and knowing your students. [Interviewee sneezed.] Excuse me. One of the things I found is that um, I'm prepared to put questions to students and to receive questions from students to establish where they are so is it relevant. For example, when we're talking about population for us to talk about the job market. To talk about how mobile they are, to talk about um, whether there are better jobs in Alberta, whether there's a better life somewhere else and how do we do that. So what I've tried to do is to say to them is okay how do we relate this subject to what you're learning generally. And from their answers I've got things like what am I going to do when I'm finished, um, is it the whole idea of the perception of going on a holiday to a place and living in a place. I find out that one of the things of making it more relevant to kids is I've done on occasion is just a budget. Let's have a look at what it would cost you to live what it would cost you to

support yourself, what kinds of job you're likely to get, what your expenses are likely to be, a car etc., etc. And what I've found is that it makes it so relevant that a lot of kids turn around and say that they can't afford to leave home even though they start from the position that they would like to they end up saying, "Oh gee, I never thought about that and oh and I never thought about the telephone. You mean you don't get cable free and what was that about I have to run my car?" That was one of the things we did in the trip to Edmonton and some kids said well it that it only takes \$83 for gas there and \$83 back and then I said, "Well who pays for the oil changes and the wear on your car?" And by the time they finished it instead of \$168 they were now finding it was \$500. So the relevancy was that they were seeing that you could use geography to explore, you could use geography for normal kinds of jobs that were available, you could also use geography to, um, price out what it was going to cost you if you wanted to move etc., etc. So I tried to start with them and try to get some idea of how we could make it relevant for them.

24. Have you collected social studies display materials for your classroom?

Teacher D: Well it's very often what I've been doing is to get the kids to make display materials like . . . well we have a mountain building one up there and we have a plan of Yellowstone Park and so I've been encouraging that. I've got a volcano-black and vivid red, on one of my boards that my students have done.

25. Did you adapt materials to students with lower skills? How did you find materials for this purpose?



Teacher D: The first question is that yes I do often adapt. I find that there's very little available so I really use my own judgment in terms of how do I make this. Sometimes I'll ask the students - okay this is what I'm trying to do and tell me what is that you don't understand and when they explain it. Then maybe I'll change and say "why don't you do this and then we can work it." I tend to shy away from looking at a grade 10 student and saying, "You can't do this so give me a grade 7 book and I'll try and give you grade 7 work." What I try to do is say, "You're having difficulty at this particular point how can we look at this difficulty and then together how can we work it so that you can understand it and come up with something." Because again if you look at the areas that we have in the areas of writing and reading and speaking some people are good at them and some people aren't so I try to work toward their strengths rather than their weaknesses.

#### **Part D -- Personal Impressions, Experiences**

26. Do you enjoy teaching social studies?

Teacher D: Yes.

Barb: Why?

Teacher D: Because I have four fabulous classes of kids. [Laughter] And it's most enjoyable. I also find that it's very much like when you have a person come to visit you. You never know your city until somebody comes to visit and you're forced to go and visit all of the places that you've put off. So again, you know you find out that you've got a museum and an art gallery and a Ukrainian

museum. I think social studies is a bit like that. Having been away and teaching English for a number of years and then coming back to social studies , but one of the things that it did was it refreshed my interest in Canada as a place - I mean North America, and it gave me a great deal of joy and excitement to discover some of the things that the students and I discovered together - shall I put it that way?

Barb: What are some of the easiest aspects of teaching social studies and what are the hardest?

Teacher D: I think if you just go in to lecture the easiest way is giving out the information. I find that teaching generally regardless of the curriculum or regardless of the subject area the difficulty is trying to be effective with the changing population and depending on how involved you are at looking at the changes I find that that's the greatest challenge. It's not new material because you're used to reading and quickly summarizing and going through all of the reflecting et cetera so that's not the issue. The issue is the challenge is to look at the kids and to say, "What is it that I can do to inspire these kids to create a learning environment where kids run to my classroom rather than run away from it?" which they do in many classrooms. When the bell goes they're ready to get out. What makes them so eager to get? Or could we change that around and make them eager to get in?

27. Would you like to continue teaching social studies?

Teacher D: Yes, I'm really having a good time.

Barb: Good!

28. How important do you believe social studies is for students to learn on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being unimportant, 10 being extremely important)?

Teacher D: Without sounding kind of trite, I really think that it is very important. I would say it is 10..

Barb: Why do you say that?

Teacher D: Because one of the issues in terms of identity - and I'm sure we've have enough about crisis and identity with the Quebec question over the last few years and still continuing is that very often what seems to be happening is that we have a lack - and I'm not talking about nationalism and flag-waving. There does seem to be a lack of commitment to this place called Canada and time after time it keeps coming up in study after study after study that this is one of the best places in the world to live and I do think that kids need to know and appreciate where they live and they need to know why [interrupted by an announcement over the P.A. system] and they need to know why um, and again I think it's just so important and it almost seems that we as educators that we have an obligation at least to put out the commitment and say, "Take it and run with it. After all, you're going to be the next generation. Take and run with it." because if you don't we could end up in a situation which would be I believe the reverse of where we are today.

Q: You feel very strongly about this. Do you convey your beliefs about social studies to your students?

Teacher D: I think I probably convey it without the title social studies. I think that, I would hope that, I would hope that I convey to my students the sheer joy and passion of being alive and of living in a country that has and allows the freedoms that we have and so I would say that I'm sure it comes through.

Barb: Okay.

29. Were you made to feel part of the "social studies team" within your school?

Teacher D: Yes very much.

30. Were you given a budget for your social studies instruction?

Teacher D: An individual budget. Um well, a photocopying budget.

Barb: If there were supplies and so on that you needed would they be available would it be a problem to get anything?

Teacher D: It hasn't been a problem. No. So budget has never been an issue.

31. What supports do you believe teachers such as yourself should be given to help them with the successful delivery of a social studies program? (preparation time, materials, prepared teaching units, mentoring, team teaching and so on)

Teacher D: Pause.

Barb: In an ideal situation what do you think that people should get?

Teacher D: I think in an ideal situation that it would be great to have master teachers and by that I mean people who specialize in the area, are available in the area, who are knowledgeable, who are very knowledgeable about not only about the subject but also the resources, who make resources available. In an ideal situation it would be great if teachers had the time to be able to sort out the resources and

look at them. And, for example, there's lots of videos. Nobody rates them. I mean surely just a little system like 1 to 5 - 5 being very good, 1 being not very good at all and someone within the subject area could say this is great, I've used it, I've seen it, I've reviewed it, here's a short summary of it, it's ideal for this particular area. I think also we have to accept it's hard for me to accept coming out of a business world background and that is that the people at the very top like your administrators are not going to be there for support. That for whatever reason the paperwork has increased, they've far too much on their plates, they're involved in dealing with angry and noisy kids, they're not there in any way shape or form to support you. I'm not saying that if you don't go there and that they won't sit down and listen to you but they're not visibly there they're not at my door and saying . . . I guess . . . there was one administrator there the other week and he said, "I'm glad you're in this classroom and not me. I don't know whether I could handle these kids." So um, it would be nice to have someone who came and say, "We've been watching you and we've been talking with your department head and we've been talking with your colleagues and well you know there's some neat things going on here." but that I think I'm beginning to realize more and more the top down support is not going to be there so the support you're going to get is what you build and what you can build on so it'll lie, it'll be colleagues or libraries becoming much more of a focal point. So I look at it that way - a master teacher would be great and support which I already have again. The hard thing is that when you're used to it I guess when you don't have it's

easier to come up with them but when you do have it the support of colleagues which I find I just find generally that I'd like to see the support move from the colleague level a step up.

32. Are there any other comments and/or anecdotes that you would like to add to this discussion that you feel could shed light upon the experiences of teachers such as yourself?

Teacher D: It's kind of interesting how you've used change. When I first came into teaching out of business what struck me very much was how teachers could stand in their classes and encourage kids to share things but I used to be in a prep room where every file was locked and it was quite obvious that sharing was not to be unless it was under sort of duress where you pushed hard enough. It kind of surprised me because one of the things I'd thought was why not share your experiences and again we don't have time to do that, we don't really get the opportunity, we don't get a time-out in which we could share experiences, we don't get a time to debrief so we don't share the good things but also debrief from some of the things that may go wrong. So over the years I've noticed though, whether it's younger teachers that are coming in - maybe that has something to do with it. But I do find that in the social studies now where I am there is far more sharing of information and that information is simply just a question of asking for and it's there. So that's one big thing that I've noticed over the years. I notice also and I've seen it happen and it's a terrible sight to see and that is that teachers leaving teaching and the old saying used to be "sink or swim" and I

always thought that that was a very uncaring kind of attitude. I always thought that I needed to go look and see if there was a lifeboat that I could throw over and I saw it I saw it happen and I saw a young woman who came and was destroyed by that - never taught again. One year and she never taught again. So I think that we have to understand that we're not isolated and of course the setup of our whole school suggests that we are because we go into the classroom and we close the door and we never see anybody if we don't want to see anybody. I think that's a lesson that we have to learn too and that is that shared things and that shared objectives and views and dreams and wishes add to the whole and not take it away from it. It can be a very lonely existence for some teachers who find themselves in a situation that they come in at nine and go home at 3:30 and have no interaction with the staff generally. Now I've been here for 18 years and there are people that I've never seen in the staffroom for whatever reason and there's no interaction with that and I think that that for some people could be a very traumatic experience. Now over the years I mean I've been very lucky because I guess that part of my whole personality is that I'm a social person as well but I do think that we need to be aware when people come into a department and are strangers to the school and all new teachers that we need to mentor them and we need nurture them because there are some darned good teachers out there and we need to keep them.

Barb: Okay thank you very much.

## Appendix E

### Interview with Teacher E

June 26, 1995

#### Part A – Teacher Background

1. What is your subject area specialty?

Teacher E: Languages. This includes French but also German.

2. How long have you taught social studies?

Teacher E: I taught Social Studies - all the levels from Grade 6 to Grade 11 at varying points in my career. So about the last 9, 10 years.

3. Obviously you weren't always assigned the same social studies course. But from year to year did you find that you were assigned the same thing?

Teacher E: No. Because I taught the immersion program there was often a shortage of teachers who could teach in the social studies area and who were willing to take on these subjects so I taught different social studies subjects almost every year that I was teaching.

4. When you taught social studies most recently what portion of your teaching load was it?

Teacher E: It would have been 2/7ths of my teaching load.

5. Was social studies assigned to you or did you have a choice of subjects? How much notice were you given of your social studies teaching assignment?



Teacher E: Hmm. That's a good question. At the junior high level it was sort of negotiated in terms of what subjects you needed to take in order to teach. Languages and social studies often went well together because you could do a lot of interrelated activities in terms of language development, organization, and research skills. At the high school level it was basically assigned.

6. Were you assigned S or G level classes?

Teacher E: The G level class.

7. Is any of the reading done in your leisure time social-studies related (current events, newspapers, National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, Manitoba History, Beaver, etc.)?

Teacher E: Yes.

Q: For instance . . .

Teacher E: The newspaper. I like to read the National Geographic. I found that when I was teaching social studies I became more aware of articles that were related to the things that we were studying - things that were happening on the radio and in the news, that were related to what we were studying in some way, shape or form. I was more aware of it when I was teaching it. When I'm not teaching social studies I still read those things but not with the same interest in finding material that might be good for the students.

8. Do you subscribe to any social studies publications (MSSTA Bulletin, Canada Social Studies Review, etc.)?

Teacher E: I was actually subscribing to the MSSTA Bulletin. There were actually a number of good articles - particularly in regards to the General Strike, anniversary edition. In terms of reading the bibliographies. . . it was useful.

9. Has anyone ever shared these publications with you - particularly when you teaching social studies?

Teacher E: Publications? I wouldn't say so much. People would share some of their materials, outlines, articles, things that they'd found would be useful but not really publications. I sort of went on a search for those things myself.

### **Part B -- Teacher Assistance and Professional Development**

10. When you were first assigned social studies were you assigned a mentor?

Teacher E: No.

Q: To whom did you turn for advice and help?

Teacher E: Laughter. Hmm. When I started the department head gave me some guidelines as to what I should be covering, the types of materials to read. As the semester progressed I went to other teachers that I felt more fitted my teaching style and I could relate to in the types of things that they would in my class as well.

11. Were you encouraged to take any social studies courses or attend workshops in the area of social studies?

Teacher E: No. It was never really brought up at all.

12. Have you attended the MSSTA (Manitoba Social Science Teachers association) session at SAG (the annual Special Area Group Conference)?

Teacher E: Yes.

Q: Was it useful?

Teacher E: Hmm. Part of it. Parts of it were useful. Some of the materials sort of handouts that you get were useful especially . Some were too philosophical and not concrete enough. They were interesting but didn't really give me anything that I needed in teaching in class.

Barb: So you what you need out of sessions like that or what you hope to get especially when you're teaching something that's not your area would be sort of ready-made packages?

Teacher E: Yeah, yeah, some ideas for different things you can do for projects, for a different slant on a unit that you may not have thought of . That sort of thing as opposed to a philosophical discussion about issues such as the environment, historical events, the importance of history, the importance of dates. These things are important but for someone just starting you need more concrete types of material.

13. What did your administrator (team leader, department head) do for you to ensure a smooth transition into the social studies field?

Teacher E: The administrator? Nothing. The department head? Was very supportive in terms of the types of clientele I had. Students were at varying levels of reading ability, varying levels of behavior in the classroom. In that sense he was very supportive in terms of giving me ideas of things that I could do. In terms of materials for my actual units some of the other teachers were more helpful and a

lot of it I just did on my own through going to the library and the textbook and that sort of thing.

### **Part C -- Planning, Course, Curriculum**

14. How did you learn the social studies course that you had to teach?

Teacher E: (Laughter). I took the textbooks home and I read them. (We were interrupted at this point by a person from outside the room). Hmm. Mostly I took the textbooks home and I went through them. Some of it I remembered, of course, from my own years at school. Other details, that sort of thing - that's how I went through it to start with.

15. Have you read the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum overview document?

Teacher E: No.

Barb: Do you have an idea of where social studies goes from K to 12? Can you give me a brief overview of the K-12 social studies curriculum?

Teacher E: Well, in the lower elementary it primarily deals with yourself and the community, in grade 4. Grade 5 is more geography-based - Canada and the types of landforms you might have, latitude and longitude little bit of that sort of thing. Grade 6 is all historical based, history of Canada. Grade 7 you get more into geography again and space, the planets. Grade 8 is history of the world. Grade 9 is Canadian history but with a more political slant - how the government works, how we as citizens fit into the country. Grade 10 is geography again and grade 11 is Canadian History. Grade 12 - I couldn't tell you! (Laughter and pause.) World Issues I believe!

Barb: - You got it!

16. Did you use the text to help guide you through the course? Sort of chapter by chapter?

Teacher E: Yes. I used the text to help me but I didn't use it as as my sole resource. I found that depending on the level of the student I used a variety of texts as well as other materials. I usually planned out a unit and then worked the text around what I planned to do.

17. How often did your students use their text books? Daily? Weekly? Biweekly? Monthly? Not at all.

Teacher E : Hmm. (Thinking) I guess about half the time.

18. So from what you're telling me you used a resource-based learning approach to social studies?

Teacher E: Yes, I tried to.

Barb: So what use did you make of the library in your social studies classes?

Teacher E: Well at the time I used the social studies resource library and actually used it quite a bit. The G level students needed a fair bit of direction so we could get a fair number of resources and we would use those as opposed to going into the whole library and looking all over the place - at least we could focus them and I expected them to have a bibliography and use a variety of sources for part of their mark if it was a project

Barb: What sources have you used other than the recommended text for the social studies course that stood out in your memory as really good sources?

Teacher E: I liked those large books. What are they called?

Barb: Canadiana Scrapbooks?

Teacher E: Yes. The scrapbooks. I liked those a lot. The pictures made it a lot more vivid for the students. Ah . . . videos, I suppose. I tried to bring in some filmstrips here and there. Not as much of the modern technology as I would have liked - like the CD Roms and stuff. They just weren't available yet at our school.

19. What methods of instruction did you use to teach social studies?

Teacher E: Hmm. I usually tended to start the class with either a review of material that we had covered the day before or review. Then I tended to give some notes on the overhead. Then they would work either on an assignment or a project and sometimes we would throw a video in at the end. (Chuckle)

20. What do you feel are the "big" goals of social studies as a discipline?

Teacher E: Hmm. I think the big goals of social studies are for students to have a sense of our history. To know where we've come from even though they say sometimes, "Why do we have to learn this? It happened so long ago." It's important for them to know where Canada was and why some of the problems today exist. Hmm. I think it's important to develop tolerance in them towards other nationalities, towards other cultures and for them to develop some sense understanding and responsibility of what it is to be a citizen in this country, to not take for granted as much the privilege of voting, the privilege of living in a democratic society which many people have fought and died for. Students in our

country tend to take that for granted and not, you know, really consider that to be important.

21. Social studies can involve the examination of controversial topics. Have you embarked into any of these topics? How do you handle topics such as politics, racism and human rights?

Teacher E: Delicately!! (Laughter.) I sort of hmm, I try to deal with it. I have sensed . . . I have tried to discuss it and give sort of different points of view. I have sensed in the G level courses that a lot of the students come with a certain amount of racial baggage and you can almost feel that when you talk about certain issues. Sometimes you're sort of "tippy - toeing" along because you don't want it to start into a some kind of a debate on racial issues that could turn into something ugly that you may not be able to control - particularly if you're not as comfortable with the material as you would be if you'd been teaching it for an number of years. But I did try to at least bring those topics up and get students to sort of empathize and look at other points of view even if they didn't agree - to get them to sort of consider it. I maybe didn't do as much discussion as I would have liked because of the fact that I feared how they might react, what sorts of things would come out of their mouths

22. The curriculum stipulates that 70% of time must be spent on the curriculum. What have you added to the curricular topics? .

Teacher E: (Silence) Hmmm.

Barb: That would allow for the possibility of expanding within curricular topics as well .

Teacher E: Gee. I think I followed the curriculum for the most part. If I was to do it again I would have the opportunity to expand. I tried to follow the curriculum for the most part.

23. How do you make the content of your course relevant to students?

Teacher E: I tried to relate it as much as possible to the issues that are happening today so that they could understand. For example, if we were discussing the history of Quebec we tried to look at why problems exist today - that they didn't just spring up from nowhere. There were historical backgrounds. When we looked at matters of immigration, looking at the fact that immigrants have been coming for many years to this country and that some of the problems they had a hundred years ago are some of the same problems they have today. When we looked at unions - what their role was in the past and how they're similar or different to the workforce today. So I tried to relate it what was going on today.

24. Have you collected social studies display materials for your classroom?

Teacher E: Not really. Simply because I taught in a different room from my regular room. So I carted my binders and my overheads and that was about it. When we did projects we did put them up.

25. Did you adapt materials to students with lower skills? How did you find materials for this purpose?



Teacher E: Ah. The textbook I used was at a lower reading level to begin with. So that made it somewhat easier. I found that taking some of the materials and transforming it into notes or taking sections of materials and putting them together and photocopying it were ways that I tried to help them. When we did projects I tried to be as specific as possible as to what I wanted from them. I gave them an outline, often even gave the units where they should look for materials because they had a hard time finding things. Those were some of the things I did. I really worked on organization so they could find things on their own and then work on making an outlines and figuring out how your were gonna put your materials together.

Barb: So you were basically anticipating the common problems that they had and accommodating for them.

Teacher E: Yeah. Lots of oral review.

#### **Part D -- Personal Impressions, Experiences**

26. Did you enjoy teaching social studies?

Teacher E: Yeah, I did. I have to say I did. I found it difficult at first not so much because of the materials but because of the types of students I had - to make it interesting, to get them to read because a lot of them were non-readers. To do a variety of things because what they liked to best, what they were most comfortable with a was simply reading and answering questions. So trying to find a balance of doing that for my own sanity and doing other things that, you know, would push them to be a bit more creative and look for things but I enjoyed the

material. I enjoy the content and like learning about . . . I like learning. It's one of the most interesting subjects to teach.

27. Would you like to teach social studies again?

Teacher E: Yeah, I would like to teach it again.

28. How important do you believe social studies is for students to learn on a scale of 1 - 10 (1 being unimportant, 10 being extremely important)?

Teacher E: I would probably say it's about a 7.

Barb: Do you convey your beliefs about the importance of social studies to your students?

Teacher E: I tried to.

Barb: How did you do that?

Teacher E: Um. I would say things "hokey" things like education is important, you should know where your roots are and where people come from you should take responsibility. They thought it was a bit goofy. But I think it makes them understand that what you're doing is important.

29. Were you made to feel part of the "social studies team" within your school?

Teacher E: I think so. I think so. The majority of people were very warm and open.

30. Were you given a budget for your social studies instruction?

Teacher E: No.

Barb: Were you made to feel that if you needed something or wanted something it would be ordered. Or was the topic even brought up?

Teacher E: Not really, I photocopied on my French budget and well there were things available in the area. But no. I wasn't made to feel that I would be able to order things for myself. I was to use what was already there.

31. What supports do you believe teachers such as yourself should be given to help them with the successful delivery of a social studies program?

Teacher E: Hmm. I think the idea of one person who has taught the curriculum in the past with whom you could work. I think it's important to have someone like a mentor - a role model for you - not necessarily for the person to give you their whole unit but to give you outlines of materials, how they would tackle the material. I guess time to try and develop some units, ideas, feedback not necessarily to have someone to come into the room and observe you but after you've done something to discuss it with somebody and see if they have other ideas and and other suggestions. And I guess access to libraries and research material without it being cumbersome - because that is a part of social studies.

Q: If prepared social studies units were available would that be helpful?

Teacher E: Most definitely. Most definitely. I found that when I went through the correspondence course I found that was helpful because it had a lot of articles, pre-made questions, activities - so that you at least had something to work from. You didn't necessarily use them all but it at least gave you a base and that was helpful.

32. Are there any other comments and/or anecdotes that you would like to add to this discussion that you feel could shed light upon the experiences of teachers such as yourself?

Teacher E: No. I enjoyed teaching social studies. I like the content. I like looking at historical events. I think there's lots of room to do a large variety of activities which help to develop language skills and research skills and citizenship skills - very broad topics.

Appendix F

Faculty of Education - Ethics Approval Form



Faculty of Education  
ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

To be completed by the applicant:

Title of Study:

Teacher Competency in Social Studies

Name of Principal Investigator(s) (please print):

Barbara Taylor

Name of Thesis/Dissertation Advisor or Course Instructor (if Principal Investigator is a student) (please print):

Prof. John Seymour

I/We, the undersigned, agree to abide by the University of Manitoba's ethical standards and guidelines for research involving human subjects, and agree to carry out the study named above as described in the Ethics Review Application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Thesis/Dissertation Advisor or Course Instructor required)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature(s) of Principal Investigator(s)

To be completed by the Research and Ethics Committee:

This is to certify that the Faculty of Education Research and Ethics Committee has reviewed the proposed study named above and has concluded that it conforms with the University of Manitoba's ethical standards and guidelines for research involving human subjects.

Zana N. Lutfiyya June 7, 1995  
Name of Research and Ethics Committee Chairperson Date

[Signature]  
Signature of Research and Ethics Committee Chairperson

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