Reinventing Master’s Degree Study for Experienced Social Studies Teachers

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To improve social studies teaching and learning, teachers must engage in quality professional development experiences to deepen their pedagogical content knowledge. This article describes a Master of Education for Experienced Teachers (M.Ed.) program that reconceptualized graduate study for teachers, using Alan Tom’s (1999) markers for reform — ongoing self-improvement, a commitment to working together collegially, and a focus on student learning. We describe each of the markers and the experiences of the social studies cohort enrolled in this program. We hope that by sharing our efforts to revitalize graduate study for social studies teachers, we will stimulate continued, thoughtful reflection and discourse.

Introduction

In 1999 Alan Tom reported that Master’s degree programs for experienced teachers were in a “moribund” state. In his estimation, the course of study offered to teachers interested in an advanced degree lacked relevance to their professional lives and did little to change the nature of teachers’ work. Tom’s interest in improving graduate study for in-service teachers led to his development of three “markers” for reform: “They [the markers] entail a view of teaching as ongoing self-improvement, a commitment to working together collegially, and a focus on student learning” (p. 247). He called for more research on successful Master’s programs and argued, “The paucity of the research literature on innovative programs is a major barrier to the overall reform of Master’s degree study for experienced teachers” (p. 251).

Today there continues to be a lack of research on Master’s level teacher education programs. This seems amiss given the importance of pedagogical content knowledge for teaching (Shulman, 1987). According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), it is essential that teacher educators consider the unique nature of the content area. They advocate for professional development programs that nurture pedagogical content knowledge and assist teachers in better understanding student thinking in the content area.

The challenges facing social studies teacher educators today are many (Adler, 2004). In an era of high-stakes testing, authentic social studies teaching and learning have been displaced in favor of rote memorization of facts and concepts (Barton & Levstik, 2003). Teachers continue to teach in traditional ways despite the increasing availability of technology tools which could create authentic social studies experiences in the classroom (Friedman & Hicks, 2006; Mason et al., 2000; Milman & Heinecke, 1999). Added to this situation, teachers work with an increasingly diverse study body that represent a variety of ethnic and language backgrounds, learning styles, and talents (Gay, 2004).

In this article, we describe a Master of Education for Experienced Teachers (M.Ed.) program that sought to face these challenges and improve social studies teaching and learning by improving graduate study for teachers. We relate the experiences of the social studies cohort enrolled in this program.
and the ways in which their program of study challenged traditional teaching methods. Their experiences provided them with the pedagogical content knowledge and resources necessary to become change agents within their schools. We hope that by sharing our efforts we will stimulate continued, thoughtful reflection and discourse related to the improvement of graduate education for social studies teachers.

The M.Ed. Program: An Overview

The School of Education at our university began to dramatically revise its M.Ed. program in 1999. The organizational structure and program of studies was developed through collaborative efforts within the School of Education and with local teachers and administrators. While the degree had been offered at our university for many years, initial discussions among planning committee members led to the decision to completely redesign the M.Ed. program.

Designing a new program provided the opportunity first to reconceptualize coursework offered to experienced, working teachers and then to design a mechanism through which competent professionals could earn advanced licensure. In order to acknowledge the long-term commitment teachers have to their disciplines, while improving curriculum and instruction in local schools, the committee designed the program around content area specialties. To ensure the cohorts maintained their content focus, each cohort was assigned a faculty cohort leader whose academic interest aligned with the cohort’s specialty area.

Conceptual Framework: Tom’s Markers for Reform

The new program was designed with Alan Tom’s (1999) “markers” of reform in mind. Tom reviewed higher education programs for teachers at a variety of universities and colleges across the United States. While much of what he found proved to be stagnant or “moribund,” he identified features of a few progressive programs from which he developed his key markers for reform. According to Tom, “Our task in regenerating Master’s programming is not to copy these provocative reform models but rather to use these prototypes — particularly their tacit markers — to generate innovative approaches to Master’s programming for experienced teachers” (p. 251). He identified three programmatic markers as essential “ingredients” that “if present, help professional development be an effective and powerful intervention” (p. 247).

Tom’s first marker, referred to as “teaching as ongoing self-improvement,” favored the quality of teachers’ professional experience over number of years of service. According to Tom, “The key is what one does with this experience, how a teacher processes and learns from it, how, in short, reflection in and on experience can lead to the development of more informed and sophisticated forms of teaching practice” (p. 247). He argued that authentic professional development only occurred when teachers reflected on their current practices and sought to make changes where necessary. Effective graduate education for teachers motivates them to meet the needs of their students through continued and systematic study of their own methods.

The second marker, labeled “teaching as collegial work,” critiqued the philosophical and structural elements of traditional graduate programs for teachers. Tom (1999) argued that graduate study should provide the opportunity for the development of close-knit communities of teacher-learners by organizing teachers into cohorts that enter the program together and graduate together. According to Tom, the cohort structure recognized the social aspects of teaching and facilitated a communal sense of empowerment and growth for teachers.
The third and final marker, “A focus on student learning” improves teacher professional development by creating programs responsive to “teacher practicality”—the sense that what is learned will directly benefit one’s classroom. According to Tom, teachers crave graduate education that is relevant to their own experiences and daily demands of the classroom. He wrote, “Taking student learning seriously entails replacing generic graduate programming with programming attuned to individual schools and the teachers who work in them” (p. 250).

These three markers combined to form Tom’s plan to “reinvent” graduate study for experienced teachers. He felt these efforts would solve programmatic and organizational flaws of traditional programs. At our university, we took Tom’s call seriously and sought to reinvigorate graduate study for teachers using his three markers of reform: “teaching as on-going self-improvement,” “teaching as collegial work,” and teaching as a “focus on student learning.” In addition to these three markers, we included the infusion of technology as an additional “marker” of our programmatic and philosophical framework.

Technology was infused into the structure and philosophy of the program. It facilitated Tom’s other markers and enhanced the pedagogical content knowledge the social studies teachers gained over the course of the program. The integration of web-based technology also facilitated collegiality and expanded the pedagogical options of the program. Acknowledging the many hours of work teachers invest in their schools and the logistical difficulty in attending courses on campus, our program sought to provide more convenience and flexibility in graduate study by offering hybrid courses. Courses were offered through a combination of distance learning and traditional, face-to-face class meetings. Intensive face-to-face courses occurred in the summer months, while distance education was used more frequently during the academic year.

The first three cohorts of experienced teachers entered the revised M.Ed. program in January 2001. Since that time, we have started eleven cohorts and worked with over 250 teachers. Each cohort has had a specialty area focus. To date, the specialty area foci have been one of the following: K-12 literacy, K-8 language arts and social studies, K-8 mathematics education, K-8 science education, 6-12 social studies education, 9-12 mathematics education, K-12 education technology, and 6-8 mathematics education.

Below we describe the experiences of members of the social studies cohort. We used quotations gathered from samples of their work, including their final teacher research reports, a program exit essay, and one-on-one interviews to add texture to our description of the reconceptualized graduate program in which they were enrolled. We outline our description, using Tom’s markers of reform and our additional marker of the infusion of technology. We focused on the social studies cohort, not as a representative example of the experience of all students enrolled in the M.Ed. program but as one example of the outcomes of the reconceptualized M.Ed. program and its effect on social studies teachers.

**Tom’s First Marker:**

**Ongoing Self Improvement**

It has been said that “Teachers often leave a mark on their students, but they seldom leave a mark on their profession” (Wolfe, 1990). The M.Ed. coursework was designed to help teachers leave a mark on their students, their colleagues, and their profession. To support teacher engagement in ongoing self-improvement, opportunities for reflection and sharing were integrated throughout the program of studies.
Members of the social studies cohort participated in multiple opportunities to engage in reflection and classroom-based research. The social studies cohort began their studies with a course titled Contemporary Research for Social Studies Teaching in which they became familiar with the genre of scholarly research and analyzed its relevancy in their classrooms. This was followed by a core course, Ways of Knowing, in which the teachers examined their teaching practices and how they impacted student learning. A major assignment of the course was a classroom-based case study in which the teachers focused on struggling students. Zach, a middle school teacher, researched the role of images and artwork in the social studies classroom to enhance student understanding. Later, in the Teacher as Researcher course, he used political cartoons to help his weaker readers better understand and discuss current events. Reflecting on his experiences in the program Zach later wrote, “Every course has given me ideas and methods that have made me a better teacher and my students have benefited from this” (personal communication, August, 2005).

The Teacher as Researcher course offered the social studies teachers a more formal opportunity to engage in reflection and classroom-based research. The setting allowed teachers to learn about the action research cycle and complete projects on a variety of topics relevant to their interests and classroom contexts (see Appendix B). At the heart of action research is an emphasis on individual inquiry—teachers make decisions about their learning goals, structure relevant research projects in their own classroom, and think about ways to make change. This research is empowering; teachers study in detail what they consider to be the most critical issues in their classrooms (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Evident of the empowering nature of this work, Mary described her role with her middle school’s Site-Based Decision Making Commit-

...
issues they faced in their classrooms. Graduate study provided a structure to study issues of relevance in their classrooms and improve their practice. As a result of these uniquely personal research experiences, the social studies teachers grew in awareness of pedagogical issues and ways they could effect change in their classroom and school communities.

**Tom’s Second Marker: Commitment to Working Together Collegially**

For many teachers this change would not have been possible without the support of the cohort and a commitment to “teaching as collegial work” — Tom’s (1999) second marker for reform. Teacher education programs have traditionally promoted an individualistic, rather than a collegial, approach to teaching (Goodlad, 1990). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) stated that schools are currently structured for failure because “Working in isolation with few chances to update their skills, teachers are deprived of knowledge that would allow them to succeed at much higher levels” (p. 14). The social studies cohort broke with this trend - members belonged to a group of like-minded professionals that supported their work rather than working in isolation.

The cohort structure created a community of social studies teachers. The teachers entered into and graduated from the M.Ed. program as part of the middle and high school social studies cohort. Significant in shaping their relationships was the sheer amount of time the teachers spent together (Wenzlaff & Wieseman, 2004). By depending on their classmates for group projects, sharing ideas on controversial issues, and experiencing the stress and sense of accomplishment that is associated with graduate work, the social studies teachers developed a sense of mutual support and community identity. Paul expressed the following response: “The cohort has been the most satisfying part of the program” (personal communication, August 2005), and his sentiment was repeated by his classmates who referred to their cohort as “like a family” and an essential element to their success.

The emotional attachment that the social studies cohort members formed facilitated the growth of close professional bonds, as explained by Wenzlaff and Wieseman (2004), “Working in cohorts improves students’ abilities to develop multiple perspectives, do scholarly work, and improve academic performance and personal expectations” (p. 115). Within the social studies cohort, the teachers found colleagues with whom to share ideas and resources and to engage in intellectual and meaningful discussions. According to Mark, “I can safely posit that it was my classmates who helped me grow the most. I found that the more I worked with these amazing educators, the more I got out of the program” (personal communication, August 2005). In a similar vein, Evan introduced Erin to the text *From Rage to Hope* which she used to develop strategies for working with her minority students. Another cohort member convinced her to apply for National Board Certification and promised to read her essays and help her create a portfolio. Across the cohort, the teachers reported similar experiences; their bonds took on new meaning, beyond mere acquaintanceship, due to the shared experience of the intellectual tension requisite in graduate studies. Paul reiterated, “The cohort has provided a valuable support group” (personal communication, August 2005).

The cohort was led by a faculty cohort leader and teaching assistant. The responsibilities of the social studies faculty cohort leader included collaborating with colleagues in the College of Arts and Sciences and in the School of Education to design courses, working with the M.Ed. Program Coordinator to assist with the recruitment and admission of students and
general advising details, creating and supporting community among cohort members throughout the duration of program, and working to insure specialty-area content integration into core-courses. The cohort teaching assistant also shared the same specialty area background as the assigned cohort. The responsibilities of the assistant were to assist the faculty cohort leader with community building activities, teaching, and administrative duties. These two individuals were primarily responsible for insuring the development of pedagogical content knowledge among cohort members.

Tom’s Third Marker: Focus on Student Learning

The emphasis on collegiality, combined with on-going self improvement, contributed to the program’s aim to improve student learning in local schools — Tom’s (1999) third marker. As mentioned above, the curriculum repeatedly emphasized teacher reflection; this was carried out overtly through the teacher research course and more implicitly in other courses across the program. As they engaged in authentic reflection, the social studies teachers were repeatedly asked to reflect on the impact of their teaching strategies on student learning which was evident in Kate’s comment, “Being in this program has helped me reflect more on my personal practice and more effectively make changes that will benefit students” (personal communication, August, 2005). Like Kate, Zach described his teaching as “on cruise control” before he entered the social studies cohort as he explained, “Every course has given me ideas and methods that have made me a better teacher and my students have benefited from this” (personal communication, August, 2005). Kate and Zach’s experiences provided evidence of the relevancy of the M.Ed. experience as the teachers integrated what they learned into their practice as well as the effect it had on their students’ learning.

The M.Ed. curriculum for the social studies cohort included a set of core courses and specialty area courses related to teaching and learning themes in the social studies [see Appendix C]. The core curriculum was designed to challenge teachers’ preconceptions about pedagogy. Across the cohort, we found evidence of the teachers applying knowledge gained in these courses into practice. For instance, according to Jeanne, as a result of Teaching and Differentiation course, “I have applied several differentiation strategies designed to benefit both my special needs students and my ESL students, allowing them a more active role in class activities” (personal communication, January, 2006). The core courses directly influenced the way the social studies teachers approached student learning by improving their knowledge base and providing strategies. Susan also wrote about changes in her pedagogy as a result of these courses, “I am more aware of what I teach, how I present the information, and how I create the lesson” (personal communication, August, 2005).

Perhaps the teachers found it so easy to integrate what they learned into classroom instruction because pedagogical knowledge was blended with content knowledge across all of the courses (Shulman, 1987). Susan described how the course work within the program changed her understanding of social studies from one in which “good” instruction involved being “smart enough to remember all of the names and dates in U.S. history” (personal communication, August, 2005). Over the course of the program, her definition of effective social studies instruction evolved to value “a student-centered classroom.” She also wrote, “I am very grateful for all of the readings we have had to do throughout the program on the various theories of teaching….They helped me change my definition of a good
social studies teacher and helped me change
my teaching in order to become one” (personal
communication, August, 2005).

Courses designed specifically for the social
studies cohort included the latest scholarship in
social studies education. These five courses
focused on aspects of social studies pedagogi-
cal content knowledge. For example, the social
studies cohort took a course on globalization
and cultural relevancy that included instruc-
tional methods related to geography, history,
sociology, and the environment. According to
Anne, this course encouraged her to “include
more of a global perspective” in her social
studies classroom and to incorporate concepts
from the course text — Guns, Germs, and Steel
(Diamond, 1997) (personal communication,
January, 2006).

The specialty courses blended content
knowledge with teaching strategies to improve
student learning, and as a result, Kate became
more of a “facilitator” in her classroom and
created assignments for students in which they
“do history.” She wrote, “By using primary
sources to discover information on their own,
the students not only learn more but also feel a
more personal connection to the curriculum
beyond just using the Internet for research”
(personal communication, May, 2005). Like
Kate, the social studies teachers learned
myriad strategies to improve student learning
over the course of the program. The course
work, according to Paul, emphasized both
“theory and practice” in a way that improved
the teachers’ “understanding of how students
learn and how learning is influenced” (personal
communication, August, 2005).

Perhaps the most obvious indication of the
M.Ed. program’s success improving K-12
student learning was found in the teachers’
ready application of course content in their
own classrooms as explained by Dennis, who
asserted, “One of the real benefits of this
program for me was the renewal of the idea of
well thought out lesson plans” (personal
communication, August, 2005). Similarly,
Anne discussed how she “used the research
that I have done from my M.Ed. classes and
incorporated it into my lessons” (personal
communication, August, 2005). As Tom’s
(1999) markers for reform suggested, authentic
graduate study for teachers must focus on
improving student learning. This not only
makes the program more relevant for teachers
but also improves the enacted curriculum of
schools.

A New Marker: Infusion of Technology

The infusion of technology facilitated the
success of Tom’s (1999) three markers of
reform. While not originally a part of his
efforts to reconceptualize higher education for
teachers, we found that technology revitalized
philosophical and structural aspects of the
program. Technology enhanced their program
of studies and became a part of the pedagogical
content knowledge they gained.

Technology use in education continues to
increase, particularly given the mandates of
state and national standards, shrinking costs of
hardware, and increasing accessibility to the
Internet (ISTE, 2000; Kleiner & Farris, 2002).
As access to technology increases, many
educators argue that in order “to live, learn,
and work successfully in an increasingly
complex and information-rich society, students
must be able to use technology effectively”
(ISTE, 2000, p. 2). Given the national trends,
as well as recent research related to the poten-
tial of technology to improve student learning,
our M.Ed. program made technology integra-
tion an additional embedded marker. Technol-
ogy enabled the program to offer education at a
distance, promote collaborative learning, and
improve the technological efficacy of the
social studies cohort.

The M.Ed. program utilized a hybrid
course structure that alternatively offered face-
to-face and on-line, asynchronous courses.
This expanded the pedagogical options of the program while providing education at a distance. According to Pinheiro (1998), “Technology’s true potential is realized when it is employed in innovative ways which do not necessarily correspond to traditional classroom practices” (p. 118). Distance education strategies are typically aimed at reaching as many students as possible to increase revenue (Garrison, 1993). The M.Ed. program we worked with instead used distance learning strategies to maximize and enrich the teachers’ academic experiences and allow flexibility in pursuing a graduate degree.

Technology facilitated collegiality by expanding the possibilities for collaborative learning experiences throughout the program. Virtual communities improved collaboration, according to Rheingold (1993) who wrote, “The technology that makes virtual communities possible has the potential to bring enormous leverage…But the technology will not in itself fulfill that potential; this latent technical power must be used intelligently and deliberately by an informed population” (n.p.). By using on-line forums and discussion boards, the social studies teachers collaborated with each other at a distance.

Most of the courses used BlackBoard©, a web-based, virtual classroom to create on-line forums for collaboration. The virtual classroom provided an alternative to the traditional mode of course delivery, and instructors used it to create on-line assignments, post course materials, and create discussion forums on-line. Successful interactions were a plus according to Zach who said, “I enjoyed having face to face classes, but it is so nice to be able to use Blackboard© as a way of conducting class and having discussions when it is convenient and from my office and home” (personal communication, August, 2005). In addition to the convenience Zach described, BlackBoard© allowed quieter or more reserved students to participate while also encouraging thoughtful, written reflection on course objectives, as Mark reported, “Our use of the Blackboard online discussion forum is a perfect example of how technology can facilitate learning; we were able to lengthen and enrich our classroom discussions with additional reflections” (personal communication, August, 2005).

Technology integration went beyond BlackBoard© in an effort to stimulate improved practice in the social studies teachers’ classrooms and improve their technological pedagogical content knowledge (Mishra & Koheler, 2006). For example, the cohort members each created a Web Inquiry Project (WIP) using web-based primary sources. The teachers read and discussed research related to the use of technology in the social studies classroom as well as participated in a video conference with another graduate class of which Mark wrote, “The videoconference Dr. Bolick did with a class in Florida demonstrated the breadth of technology and its potential for middle and high school classroom uses. I imagined videoconferencing with middle school students around the world to teach world cultures to my seventh graders” (personal communication, August, 2005). As a result of their exposure to emerging technologies as students in the M.Ed. program, the members of the social studies cohort felt more comfortable with technology and considered new possibilities for their own social studies classrooms. According to Kate, “Also, the program has made me more committed to using technology with my students, not just for research but as a way to do and learn history” (personal communication, August, 2005). Kate’s remarks signaled her willingness to apply what she had learned. The program provided her and the rest of the cohort with a supportive structure in which they explored technology and its potential for integration in the social studies.
Conclusions

Tom’s (1999) three markers for reform and the infusion of technology provided a more relevant graduate program for the social studies teachers enrolled. Although the markers were discussed independently in this article, they were interwoven throughout the structure of the program and the scope and sequence of the curriculum. Far from the moribund programs Tom witnessed in the past, this program provided social studies teachers not only with opportunities to improve their skills but also with new determination to engage in innovative practices in their classroom and teaching communities. Due to its emphasis on ongoing professional development, cohort grouping, student learning, and the use of technology, this M.Ed. program responded to the unique circumstances of the social studies teachers that entered our program.

While our program differed greatly from traditional Master’s programs for teachers, we experienced some issues and barriers in our work with the social studies cohort that calls for additional research, discussion, and reflection. First, integrating social studies pedagogical content knowledge with the core courses was more difficult than originally expected. More often than not, the core course instructors taught the core courses without substantial input from the cohort leader. Second, while culturally relevant social studies instruction was threaded throughout the social studies course work, the program currently only has a one-hour course devoted entirely to diversity issues in the classroom. Changes are being made to make the role of diversity more prominent in the program.

The era of accountability and high-stakes testing is presenting severe challenges to authentic social studies teaching and learning. Vogler and Virtue (2007) called on teachers to rely upon their pedagogical content knowledge to “navigate the testing waters without destroying their integrity or damaging their sense of purpose…otherwise, the study of social studies will become nothing more than the ability to regurgitate a collection of facts listed in a state-mandated curriculum” (p. 7). Tom’s (1999) markers for reform provided a useful framework for which our institution helped social studies teachers “navigate the waters” and deal with tough issues related to social studies teaching and learning. According to Erin, “The program has provided me with a new confidence I did not have before entering it. I feel comfortable and self-assured in asserting my opinions on matters concerning the students and affairs at my school.” Our program helped Erin and the other members of the social studies cohort feel more confident in their pedagogical content knowledge and professionalism. Hopefully, Tom’s markers and the example of the social studies cohort will serve to spark continued dialogue and reform about the need for quality professional development to improve social studies instruction for students.

References


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Appendix A

Table 1. *The Teachers of the Social Studies Cohort*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names*</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
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<td>High school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>Ben</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>Kate</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>Susan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>Mark</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Zach</td>
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<td>Jeanne</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
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*Note: Pseudonyms replace teacher names.

Appendix B

Teacher Action Research Topics and Questions by Type

*Issues of culture in the classroom*

1. Low achieving African-American males

   “Why are African-American males generally low achievers in my social studies classroom?”

2. Differentiation and culturally relevant pedagogy

   “More directly, I hypothesize that implementing the tenets of culturally relevant teaching and differentiation will make learning real and tangible for students, leading to increased academic performance and a potential of ‘closing the gap.’”

3. Latino students in U.S. history

   “What if a few of the students in the class cannot speak English, or they have no prior life experiences in American culture? As a United States history teacher, where the content drives the course and new knowledge is built on prior experiences in the country, meeting the needs of Latino students in the classroom presents a unique dilemma.”
Questions specific to social studies teaching

4. Using a variety of historical sources to improve student engagement

“I wanted to know why [my students found history to be their most boring subject].” “Frankly, why can’t history be full of writing and self-expression, hands-on discovery, and gratifying experience?”

5. Using political cartoons in social studies classroom

“First of all, I wanted to determine how well my students could find and understand symbols that are used in political cartoons. Secondly, I hoped to find if my students were recognizing a cartoonist’s bias while examining cartoons. Lastly, I wanted to discover if the cartoons were helping my students make connections to news events that were headlines on the evening news.”


“So, for my action research project, I set out to discover a way to connect students to history through the computer. I assigned students the task of creating a documentary on an aspect of the Civil War.”

General pedagogical concerns

7. Cooperative learning

“…I decided to try both techniques [lecture and cooperative learning throughout several lessons in my European Focus world history classes to find out which technique works best in my classroom for my students and myself.”

8. Collaborative learning and inquiry-based learning

“In spite of success on the exam and their positive feedback, I wondered if altering my pedagogical methods [toward more student-centered] would improve the class and student performance. Would it deepen student interest, engagement, and understanding in history?”

9. Connection between perceived effort and success

“Do students make connections between effort and success on tests? What happens when students make strong connections between effort and success? What skills do students need to achieve effective effort and thereby improve their test scores?”

10. Plagiarism

“Since I continue to encounter plagiarized passages and papers, I decided that I needed to research methods to incorporate into my classroom that will prevent students from unintentionally plagiarizing.”
11. Improving communication between students and teacher

“Therefore, when given the opportunity to conduct research in my class, I knew right away that I wanted to find ways to enhance the communication between me and my students, so I could get their ideas, attitudes, and opinions about my teaching and their learning.”

12. Lessons based on multiple intelligences

“What happens to student learning in an AP class when I incorporate other subjects and lessons centered on the Multiple Intelligences to enhance student learning beyond the traditional lecture and daily discussion?”

13. Cooperative learning and student comprehension/understanding

“How is learning affected when students prepare chapter lessons in cooperative learning groups and then teach those to their peers?”

14. Modifications for exceptional children (EC) with Individual Education Plans (IEP)

“Which modifications are valid? Which ones, in my opinion, do not work and hinder student’s progress?”

Appendix C

Table 2. Social Studies Cohort Course Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course title and (number of credits)</th>
<th>Core course or specialty area course</th>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2003</td>
<td>Social studies and Humanities for Teaching and Learning (3)</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
<td>Reinventing Teaching (3)</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2003</td>
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