High School Teachers' Perceptions and Application of Robert Stahl's Decision-Making Materials in the Social Studies Classroom

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HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND APPLICATION OF ROBERT STAHL’S DECISION-MAKING MATERIALS IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Regarding my research and focus on cognitive phases, it is only fitting to take an opportunity to reflect upon this project and acknowledge the individuals that have become pillars of my success. First, I recognize the strength and endurance my Lord, Jesus Christ, granted me. Without Him, none of this would have been possible. I would like to give special thanks to my family, whose support was unwavering. My parents always advocated the importance of education and pursuing my dreams. My dad passed before this project could reach completion, but his memory continued to be a driving force. He believed I could when I doubted myself. To my sister, who continued to be my cheerleader while fighting her own battles of cancer and international relocation. Amy, you are the one that helped me find my niche in the world of academia; I needed that push.

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ABSTRACT


This study investigated high school social studies teachers’ perceptions of Robert Stahl’s decision-making materials within their content area and the relevance of curricular implementation. The primary questions addressed in this study focused on high school social studies teachers’ perception of current instructional practices, inquiry-based learning, state standards, and national frameworks regarding content and classroom instruction.

The participants included seven rural high school social studies teachers selected through two-stage random sampling. Participant selection was reduced to rural areas due to the overwhelmingly disproportionate number of rural districts in the state of study. However, to gain a diverse perspective from across the state, 84% of districts that identified as rural were sampled using two-stage random sampling. A qualitative case study method, utilizing semi-structured interviews, investigated four research questions: (a) What are high school teachers' perceptions regarding classroom instruction? (b) What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding Stahl's approach toward the four decision-making phases? (c) What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding the integration of decision-making materials in the classroom? (d) What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding decision-making materials in relation to NCSS C3 Framework and Tennessee State Standards?

Four themes were identified from the data provided by high school social studies teachers that participated in this study: a) decision-making materials, developed by Robert Stahl, are valued as a pedagogical approach towards learning; b) standards-based curriculum and accountability hinder student inquiry; c) rural participants perceived social studies education to
be placed on a back burner; and d) The National Council for the Social Studies’ College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework’s influence is largely unknown and unrealistic among rural social studies teachers. These themes correspond with current research that postulate concurrent themes in social studies education (Hamilton et al., 2013; Groen, 2012; McArdle, 2014; New et al., 2021; Senent et al., 2018).
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Chapter One

Introduction

This research investigated high school teachers' perceptions and application of Robert Stahl's decision-making materials in the social studies classroom. By conducting this research study within high school social studies classrooms, the researcher explored the following: a) teachers' perceptions of Robert Stahl's decision-making materials and b) the relevance of a decision-making educational approach.

For more than 150 years, historians and social scientists have struggled to find the best way to deliver social studies instruction within the classroom. The debate endures today with some educators favoring district-approved textbook-based curricula like those provided by companies such as McGraw Hill, Macmillan, or Cengage Learning, while others prefer a more progressive influence of personally created values-based lessons (Popham, 2006). Throughout the 20th century, social studies progressed through several periods: (a) The Early Years and the Emergence of Social Studies: 1900-1920; (b) The Progressive influence on Social Studies Education: 1920-1940; (c) Social Studies' Evolutionary Development: 1940-1960; (d) The New Social Studies: 1960-1972; (e) The Era of Social Studies Accountability, Transformation, and Self-Evaluation: 1972-1989; (f) Issue-Centered Learning: 1990-2000; (g) High Stakes Testing and the Era of Accountability: 2000-Present. These categories mark influential eras within the progression of social studies education, foreshadowing the introduction and significance of Robert Stahl’s decision-based education in the United States.

By the early 1900s, education had begun an ideological and pedagogical shift requiring students to attend school houses with curriculum and attendance requirements. At the turn of the century, the American Historical Association (AHA) was considered the leading authority and
governing organization for history education in America. The AHA established the groundwork for secondary education requirements early in the 20th century; they reasoned that history was the culmination of ideals required to establish democratic citizenship in America's youth, thus the initial appeal toward “citizenship education.” The AHA Committee of Seven is noted as the most influential assembly of historians as they are credited with establishing the four blocks of high school history as required by states for graduation (Barr et al., 19). Prior to the establishment of the AHA, history was taught mainly through myths and stories, which were believed to be the foundations of erecting and maintaining a free republic; however, the changes to education, primarily made by the Committee of Seven, helped replace the history-centered curriculum and pave the way for developments such as the National Council for the Social Studies (Cremin, 1980). The Committee would also lay the groundwork for independent content disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, and geography. The 1900s offered the opportunity to transition with a new increased emphasis on historical facts and a focus on the importance of teaching students about their duty as citizens. This idea became known as citizenship education and was taught primarily through rote memorization. This emphasis on rote memorization as a pedagogical approach proved to dominate for the next 60-years.

In the early 1900s, the AHA created the Committee of Five in 1905 and the Committee of Eight in 1907 to advocate for social studies curriculum within the nation's schools. Social sciences masked in the shadow of history began to emerge and create their disciplines and discipline-specific associations to represent their content. The consensus for introducing these disciplines utilized a "top-down" approach where courses would be offered at the university level, secondary, and eventually elementary levels. Social scientists began lobbying for
representation in their specific disciplines; the reasoning was precise—social sciences emphasized current issues that were believed to be pertinent to social education goals (Bar et al., 1977).

In 1916, the National Education Association (NEA) Committee on the Social Studies held an emergency meeting to address the increased interest of individual content disciplines in creating content-specific curricula. This was an apparent shift from teaching history through myths and stories to now creating a "thoroughly efficient member" of society (Barr et al., 1977, p.25). As the NEA held its special committee meeting to address the integration of social science disciplines within social studies, a new and influential progressive educational ideology challenged the traditional view of learning. Progressive influences sought to teach students through inquiry using decision-making materials. At the same time, more traditional history-centered approaches, favored by the AHA, focused on using direct instruction and rote-memorization as the dominant method of pedagogy. Such contrasting and ideologically divergent pedagogical approaches furthered the charge for innovative curricula and methods.

In 1927, progressive educator Harold Rugg addressed issues following the 1916 NEA decision, explaining that a more unified social science curriculum would address the target goal of citizenship education that many school districts and educators had neglected.

Is it not clear [he asked] that the vast majority of our people rarely deliberate? Is it not equally clear that critical judgment, instead of impulse, must be the basis upon which our social and political decisions are made?... Our children need not one, but many years of practice…Only those who are trained through five, ten, twelve years of practice in deliberation will tend to use critical judgment about a contemporary problem (Rugg, 1927).

Rugg (1927) supported an intentional shift from the direct instruction and memorization associated with traditional teaching methods and encouraged critical thinking skills. He pushed for content to reflect students' mental struggles as necessary for the knowledge construction process. Rugg (1927) felt confident that this process would occur through current and pertinent
material if the student were allowed to reflect on and question different American culture areas. Rugg (1927) believed historians and social scientists were to blame for the lack of successful citizenship education. Rugg purported that the separation of the social studies into individual social sciences was not the answer; instead, he supported the need for complete curriculum reconstruction, which was not well-received (Nelson, 1988). Rugg developed a foundational springboard for his curriculum, which he called issue-centered learning. This pedagogical approach to learning allowed students to address current social issues through a learning lens and promoted independent decision-making within the classroom.

According to Barr et al. (1977), for the first time, academia was interested in creating a learning environment and curriculum of practical learning that would encompass a broad knowledge of social studies education that would ultimately create knowledgeable and informed citizens. With the focus on the public classroom, Rugg was propelled to the frontlines as the first to develop a unified social studies curriculum (Nelson, 1988). With a background as an engineer and statistician, he was adamant that if social studies were to succeed as a stand-alone content area, it required a thoughtful and carefully planned design. To him, the content was to be functional for American life (Nelson, 1988).

While Rugg led a progressive curriculum reform, scholars opposing the progressive-centered approach of critical inquiry argued that it was inadequate for educating America's youth. According to prominent conservative voices such as Augustin Rudd (1927), Arthur Bestor (1927), and Milo McDonald (1924), the social studies curriculum was best taught through direct sequential instruction of content as memory work. In their opinion, the rote-memorization of essential social studies principles constituted knowledge construction and good citizenship.
As social studies curriculum and pedagogical strategies continued to develop and expand, the battle for progressive and conservative influence concerning pedagogy ensued. During the 1930s, with the rise of fascism and expansionism, growing calls for an increased emphasis on patriotism and civics ran counterintuitive to Rugg's student-derived issues-centered curriculum. Such findings suggested that the educational system, specifically the social studies, was to blame for students’ lack of patriotism. Prominent newspapers, businesses, and politicians suggested the departure from fact-centered curriculum and rote-centered learning were plausible attributes for such instability within the content of social studies and lack of patriotism in America’s youth. According to Hartman (2008), the direct correlation between educational reform, social expectations, and the current political climate became more evident with each passing era. Progressives realized their education reform vision through issue-centered inquiry would not come to fruition.

According to Altenbaugh (2003), as the 1930s waned, a newly elected Republican Congress used education as a platform to combat the spread of fascism and expansionism. Public education came under attack from anti-communist organizations such as the National Council for American Education (NCAE), citing "progressive educational philosophy and practices [were] undermining national interests" and insisted on replacing them with traditional means of direct instruction. Historian, Arthur Bestor (1936), declared progressive education reform a major contributing factor to the declined state of the nation's schools, saying, "[it] de-emphasized intellectual value" (Hartman, 2018). In response to the above concerns and attacks, progressives began to support a progressive-based new curriculum that advocated life adjustments for American students in the years that followed WWII. The goal of the Life Adjustment curriculum was to provide students with a type of education that spoke to their current experiences and
would benefit them. In 1947, The United States Department of Education (USDOE) created a Commission on Life Adjustment. Unlike the perceived radical influences of previous progressive scholars, the progressive scholars of the late 1940s were interested in providing foundational support for practical skills in America's youth after the war. Problems that could be addressed within the Life Adjustment curriculum would range from appropriate hygiene to issues of right and wrong and how to respond accordingly. With the introduction of this Life Adjustment curriculum alongside the passing of the Truman Doctrine (a containment campaign to combat any semblance of communism in the U.S. and abroad) in 1947 and the anti-communist propaganda campaign, the new social agenda was to secure "loyalty and educational unity" against the Soviet Union and communism as a renewed interest in direct instruction and rote- memorization ensued (Conner and Bohan, 2014).

President Eisenhower continued to press for educational reform throughout the 1950s, carefully regarding progressive ideals that led to free thinking and inquisition of American traditions as attributes of communism. He stressed the severity of the state of affairs in the United States by implying the Cold War could persist for 40 more years if no changes were made for America’s future. This threat led politicians and scholars alike to fear that American youth would be vulnerable and fall prey to communist ideals. The response was to create an educational initiative to support traditional American values. Eisenhower supported a science initiative granting the National Science Foundation (NSF) an opportunity to create a national curriculum intended to surpass Soviet intelligence and protect the future of the United States; however, in 1957, the Soviets launched the Sputnik satellite into space, which solidified public concern for the nation's world status and the state of the American education system (Hartman, 2008). The NSF and the American attempt to extol the sciences did not stall the Russians from
sending their artificial satellite into space. Progressive education claimed that the life adjustment curriculum was to blame for the lack of science advancements and the current state of affairs as the curriculum had not prioritized academic intellectuality.

Furthermore, the Purdue Opinion Poll of 1957 highlighted gross inadequacies within civics education. According to Barr et al. (1977), a group of historians and social scientists disgusted with the state of the social studies would springboard a massive reform in the 1960s known as the New Social Studies (NSS). A significant influence on the NSS movement was a gathering held at Endicott House in June 1962. The meeting was organized with the sole purpose of undergoing a comprehensive curriculum overhaul in social studies. From its inception, tension arose between those in favor of a history-laden curriculum versus those in favor of a more integrated approach. While the Endicott House gathering did not produce the initially intended results, the meeting created a broad focus for the future of the social studies curriculum reform. It recognized the progressive method of inquiry as necessary for student learning. Following the Endicott House gathering, the USDOE announced the start of Project Social Studies. This project was an opportunity to transition from what had been known as social studies education to what would come to be known as social science education. Social science education "focuses on teaching the concepts, generalizations, theories, and problems of the social sciences and the methods of inquiry" observed by experts in their respective fields (Barr et al., 1977). The 1960s produced some of the most creative materials that social studies had ever created under what history would call the New Social Studies (NSS). Multiple projects under a plethora of disciplines were produced. In 1965, Social Education published a "Report on Project Social Studies" (Hartman, 2008) explaining the standard criteria found in most NSS projects.
Examples of selected project contributions include a variety of cross-disciplined content. Curricular projects include the High School Geography Project, the Anthropology project: Man, A Course of Study, and the Harvard Social Studies Project. Many, if not all, projects addressed learning within the affective domain, which in its simplest form concerns one's interests, attitudes, and even character development. The New Social Studies projects addressed this and the brand new idea of values-based clarification within the classroom. Each project created content within its specific discipline directly; however, there are a few critical factors that each project had in common: (a) emphasis on structure, (b) inductive teaching, (c) emphasis on discipline, (d) emphasis on sequential learning, (e) new types of materials, and (f) new subject emphasis. The goal of the new social studies projects was to introduce a new progressive approach toward education focusing on psychological understanding and comprehension. The creative contributions of the NSS would not evade the reality reported by the National Assessment of Citizenship Education in the late 1960s. New revolutionary pedagogical strategies such as case studies, film, games and simulations, inquiry, and values dilemmas were implemented into the NSS curriculum; however, according to the survey by Educational Testing Inc., the social studies had "remained largely unchanged" amidst the massive overhaul to curriculum reform (Barr et al., 1977).

In 1969, the Educational Testing Services revealed that the New Social Studies projects of the 1960s had little effect on the social studies content retention for America's youth. This revelation was the beginning of a gradual shift away from progressive curriculum reform and toward a more conservative, traditional form of teaching. The political climate of the early 1970s also influenced the change in attitude toward curriculum reform. Many conservative groups such as the New Right advocated for more control in the classroom and censorship over materials,
preferring the ideals of creationism and Christian doctrine over inquiry and discovery. For this reason, the American educational system focused on a transition back to basic instruction. The sole focus of this "back to the basics" approach would encapsulate basic facts, knowledge, and understanding for students while teaching virtue and patriotism. While it was a noted goal of the movement to ban progressive curricula named New Math, New Science, and New Social Studies, some alternative schools still employed the foundations of these projects. Alternative schools advocated for inquiry, decision-making, and experimentation within the classroom as a necessary part of student learning within the Back to the Basics movement.

This remnant of progressive education ideology paved the way for educational psychologist Robert Stahl’s rise to prominence in the educational realm. He introduced a values-based educational approach using decision-making materials that he believed would support learning at a cognitive level, thus supporting long-term retention of material. Stahl sought to reintroduce the progressive thought of inquiry into the classroom through specific materials that supported students' reasoning ability. According to Stahl (1976), "schools cannot escape from teaching values, whether overtly or part of a hidden curriculum. For most of American history [within the school system], the primary way schools have dealt with their values education has been through…indoctrination" (p.24). Stahl framed his theory of values-based education by expressing that student behavior results from values or lack of values. He clarified that his cognitive approach to values or moral education proves that individuals "clarify their values and moral beliefs, make decisions and judgments and comprehend and apply data by thinking about and considering information, problems, situations, judgments, and dilemmas in certain specific ways" (Stahl, 1979, pg.5).
Stahl proposed that teaching students to make decisions would result in an intellectual process of choosing, prizing, and behaving, allowing them to arrive at a conclusion that would reflect each student's values. Stahl identified eight categories of behavior that influenced values: (a) goals/purpose; (b) attitudes; (c) feelings; (d) worries/problems/obstacles; (e) aspirations; (f) interests; (h) beliefs/convictions; and (i) activities. By creating a synthesis model for values/moral education, Stahl hoped to interconnect values clarification, values analysis, and moral development practically for practical classroom use through decision-making materials. In the latter part of the 1970s, Stahl partnered with J. Doyle Casteel, a professor of social studies education, to modify his values-based educational approach. The two created a four-phase instructional model to represent the four major types of thinking required in the decision-making process. Casteel and Stahl labored to create a model for American education that would apply to non-values/moral-related learning activities. Their goal was to help teachers create subject-matter-related material that helped students acquire decision-making, valuing, and moral reasoning skills which are foundational to citizenship education (Stahl, 1979).

Regardless of the alternative, schools that were willing to continue with the progressive educational approaches toward learning, by the 1980s, conservative curriculum reform had manifested. The National Commission of Excellence in Education (NCEE) released a report titled: *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The report blamed schools across America for the nation's decline as an international competitor and for being responsible for jeopardizing the nation's future. The report assessed school culture, curriculum, content competency, and standards/expectations. While the report was forthcoming about the negative status of the nation's schools, it offered two significant recommendations for reform: (a) strengthen the graduation requirements; (b) improve standards and expectations for students.
Several more minor recommendations were made to help usher in the conservative curriculum overhaul; such suggestions included: (a) devoting more time to learning; (b) requiring more homework, (c) providing more rigorous textbooks and curriculum, and (d) lengthening the school day and school year.

Project Social Studies Priorities, Practices, and Needs (Project SPAN) was introduced as an initiative following the *Nation at Risk* report and assessed each content area within the public school system. The project set out to identify the deficits in content and curriculum. In the mid-1980s, Project SPAN identified six critical problems within social studies. First, it was found that social studies were not a popular subject as students could not connect between class curriculum and life outside school, resulting in a demonstrated lack of motivation and engagement in social studies education. Second, it was found that school culture did not promote social studies education.

Additionally, SPAN identified a lack of variety in teaching practices as the curriculum did not address necessary social development and critical thinking skills. Lastly, there were issues surrounding the teaching profession and a lack of public support for social studies. Project SPAN reported these issues as evidence that social studies had failed to secure a successful national discipline for public schools. Further, it supported the need for strict conservative curriculum reform as states across America passed legislation, adopted procedures and standards, and pursued policies that focused on an educational outcome rather than educational input (Cornbleth, 1971).

The educational reform of the 1990s focused on increasing academic standards and providing measures by which schools would be held accountable for student performance. It also provided an educational shift away from the back to basics movement of the 1970s and 1980s.
Social studies educators began to revive Harold Rugg's (1927) issue-centered learning characteristics. This approach offered students the opportunity to "develop well-reasoned responses based on disciplined inquiry, thoughtful, in-depth study, and move beyond relativistic notions of truth" (Evans & Saxe, 1996, p.2). The movement intended to promote decision-making to empower the learner to assess all pertinent and available information surrounding public issues to develop the ability to think critically and respond with well-informed reason. Evans & Saxe (1996) go on to write that "the power of issue-centered education [as advocated by early progressive thinkers like Harold Rugg] lies in the context of its social and intellectual traditions" (p.14). It is a fight against the "rigid formalism and codification" of traditional methods that seek to nullify the capacity for free thought and objectivity (p.26). The issue-centered education movement of the 1990s was not limited in scope to social studies; instead, it argued for an interdisciplinary approach to societal issues that relied on "curriculum fusion," which was a more comprehensive educational experience. Issue-centered learning is intended to revive the application of inquiry through decision-making materials in the classroom.

By 2000, the USDOE, having worked with states to create content standards and accountability measures, geared up for more legislation and policy changes. According to Educational Leadership, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), passed in 2001, reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was initially passed in 1965 (ESEA, 1965). The NCLB act provided funding to eligible schools that met specific proficiency standards. With the implementation of NCLB, a school was required to meet "proficiency targets on annual assessments." On the contrary, NCLB did not "set a national standard; rather each state set[s] its standards, and create[d] its assessments to measure achievement" (Groen, 2012, p.10). Both ESEA and NCLB primarily targeted math and literacy, lending little emphasis to science
and social studies. These "proficiency targets," also considered high-stakes testing, were the measure of accountability for both school districts and individual educators that focused less on pedagogy like Issue-Centered learning and decision-making and prioritized content and high-stakes testing.

In 2009, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) presented a uniform plan for standards implementation across the United States. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were introduced to unify content implementation nationwide and ensure student proficiency. Many states immediately adopted the standards for implementation. The adoption and implementation of new standards were concurrent with "many states receiving No Child waivers…launching new systems to evaluate teachers, which [will] incorporated some measures of student achievement, including, where available, scores from standardized tests" (McArdle, 2014, para 25).

The weight of accountability measures for educators has not changed. Student progress monitoring through the assessment of standards is still required and heavily relegates the teacher's pace of content coverage in the classroom. This inadvertently restricts the teacher's ability to present content in ways that benefit cognitive learning construction because of the strict relegation of time and content coverage. According to Groen (2012), NCLB legislation constituted the most significant impact on curriculum and pedagogy. With the most recent testing mandates, the classroom learning environment has become test-driven as many states base teacher evaluations on student performance and school and district funding directly tied to school achievements. "A pedagogical philosophy requires specific practices for teaching children a specific set of skills" (p. 9). While NCLB, CCSS, or TNSS do not clarify how educators instruct
their students concerning skills, it stands to reason that teaching students to take tests has become a modern pedagogy.

**Context of the Problem**

The rationale following the ESEA and NCLB legislation was an attempt by the USDOE to salvage the underperforming American school system. The nation's youth were underperforming, and many schools lacked the funds to better prepare America's youth for post-secondary life; however, the educational philosophy around NCLB, which intended to propel students to success and sought to ensure all children would be provided with equitable access to education with accountability for progress tied to test scores (that no child would be left behind), became tainted by administrative concerns with accountability linked directly to funding (Groen, 2012, p.6). This linkage proved consequential to both pedagogy and content.

At the national level, NCLB and the CCSS have relegated the topics and themes within content bands that need to be addressed in classrooms across America. While neither NCLB nor CCSS dictated the pedagogical approach toward the mandated standards, it did emphasize high-stakes testing, which pressured educators across the nation to prioritize tested material in their approach toward curriculum and pedagogy. For this reason, school districts across the nation have given extended class time to heavily tested subjects such as reading and math, while social studies, fine arts, and sciences are given less instruction time (and other programs canceled entirely—vocational programs, life-skills programs, etc.) to allow additional time to ‘teach to the test.’ Pedagogical approaches and the application of cognitive learning have been replaced with an obligatory focus on testing skills and tested content. James Popham (2006) asserted that a high-stakes testing approach required under the NCLB legislation had been unable to detect any
significant change in student proficiency or instructional improvement in all the years of employment.

**Statement of the Problem**

As a result of current educational legislation, teachers are continually provided with seminars and professional development training that are less favorable to educators and show no clear benefit to students. The focus on cognitive growth and inquiry has shifted into a concept of the past. Overall, many states and school districts do not emphasize constructing knowledge or the decision-making skills of future citizens. Instead, states and districts emphasize standardized testing to determine the school system's future in terms of operation and funding. In 2019, Tennessee addressed these issues and implemented the Tennessee Rural Acceleration and Innovation Network (TRAIN), which focused on deficits in rural school districts.

In 2019, TRAIN recognized 15 rural districts consisting of 23 high schools identified as high priority due to data that proved no proficiency in most of their standardized tested topics. TRAIN and the TDOE considered the rurality and sparseness in population as a factor in the data; rural counties have excessively less local funding to promote education. According to the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), "Rural Tennesseans have faced many challenges as those in larger, better-sourced communities. These school districts need support to help them be successful during this incredibly challenging time" (Pratt and Richard, 2019, p.1); the state continues to make great strides to create an atmosphere of inquiry within the classroom for subjects such as ELA, math, and STEM/STEAM; however, no changes were made to the field of social sciences. Since there has been no priority placed on inquiry and project-based learning activities across the state, a resurgence of Stahl's influence and pedagogical imprint may be influential and have a resurgence. Stahl's values-based decision-making education model can
be adapted to any content and allows teachers to adhere to state standards while employing inquiry and project-based learning activities concurrently. Although there is a large body of research in how reform has evolved, there still remains a need to identify teacher perceptions of current and past theories related to the social studies curriculum. An understanding of underlying teachers' perspectives can serve as a basis for relooking at Stahl’s educational model to improve student engagement and knowledge of this content area.

**Purpose of the Study**

The current study explored high school social studies teachers' perceptions of Robert Stahl's decision-making materials within their content area and the relevance of curricular implementation. This study offers exposed the possibility of an imbalance related to reforms and initiatives supporting content areas heavily tested. Social sciences seem to be omitted from pedagological advances because the standardized assessments do not hold the weight of accountability that other subjects such as ELA and math carry. According to Stahl (1978), thinking and learning are interconnected through the student's learning style and pedagogy. Therefore, this study illuminated teachers' concerns regarding the lack of inquiry-based learning and decision-making skills related to pedagogy, social studies content, and content retention in the social studies classroom and their perception concerning Robert Stahl's decision-making materials.

**Research Methods**

To determine teacher perceptions of Robert Stahl's decision-making material within their content area and its potential for future use, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Seven high school social studies teachers were sampled using two-stage random sampling from predominantly rural areas of a southeastern state. The investigation was qualitative and
incorporated a case study methodology. For theme identification, interview transcripts, field notes, and document analysis were triangulated.

**Research Questions**

1) What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding classroom instruction?

2) What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding Stahl's approach towards the four phases of decision-making?

3) What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding the integration of decision-making materials in the classroom?

4) What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding decision-making materials in relation to NCSS C3 Framework and Tennessee State Standards?

**Scope and Limitations**

During the study process, extensive efforts were made to ensure accuracy, reliability, and validity. However, the study presented several limitations. First, the interviews were carried out within the scheduling constraints of the participant and researcher’s school year. Teacher scheduling constraints and differences in time zones presented difficulties. The nature of qualitative interviewing combined with scheduling restrictions produced limited responses. Seven volunteer participants were difficult to secure due to the time of year in which scheduling was desired—many teachers were focused on End of Course (EOC) testing and responsibilities.

Second, teachers were unfamiliar with the National Council of the Social Studies C3 Framework; therefore, responses were limited.

An additional limitation dealt with the choice of Robert Stahl’s research for determining teachers’ perceptions of decision-making. Stahl’s work was chosen because his work is foundational to the concept of decision-making. The expectations of decision-making and
inquiry in the classroom align with the social studies state standards of the southeastern state wherein the study took place. This type of study regarding Stahl’s work has not been examined at the practitioner level with teachers.

**Definitions of Terms**

*Values/Morals-* beliefs about the goodness or worth of an entity, moral emotions, standards or criteria of worth, external ideals, implementation of justice and right, and behavioral activities (Stahl, 1976).

*Valuing/Moral Development-* the act of making value or moral judgments; the process of choosing, prizing, affirming, and acting (Stahl, 1976).

*Values/Moral Education-* individuals clarify their values and moral beliefs, make decisions and judgments, and comprehend and apply data by thinking about and considering information, problems, situations, and dilemmas in certain specific ways (Casteel and Stahl, 1975).
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to explore teacher perceptions of Robert Stahl's decision-making materials in middle school and high school United States History courses. A historical review of education in America focuses on progressive ideals in social studies education. The review begins with education reformation in the early twentieth century and progresses chronologically into the present-day high-stakes testing era of accountability. The research highlights the reforms in social studies education and the challenges in each era.

The Early Years and the Emergence of Social Studies: 1900-1920

The Dominance of Historians at the Turn of the Century

American education has made many changes in presentation and appearance since its Puritan beginnings in the 1600s. For more than 250 years, education in America was regarded as a social construct that elevated life experience and religion. Education was believed to be the responsibility of the church and community through involvement and apprenticeships (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p.10). The purpose of schooling children with church and community involvement was to ensure religious values and important familial truths were instilled in children. Families felt strongly that moral development was formed at home by foundationally grounded in biblical truths and national pride (1800-1860: Education: Overview).

The Cottage Industry

This concept came to fruition in the 1800s by implementing "cottage industry" schools. The socioeconomic barriers that limited education cultivated the term "cottage industry" school for several reasons. First, prior to the industrial revolution, skilled workers across America would labor and produce their goods from home with their equipment; this concept of working from
home with a labor force made up of relatives was known as a cottage industry. Likewise, "cottage industry" schools were similarly small, informally organized, and based outside the home, where relatives oversaw the learning process. Since our nation's founding, many prominent individuals, such as Thomas Jefferson, have advocated for public education for all children (Watson, 2008). The wealthy aristocratic classes supported this notion of public education and for many years promoted the learning of their children, resulting in a more private type of education. This private education was a counterintuitive concept to that which Jefferson originally proposed. It proved that education became a reality for the wealthy. In contrast, this concept was not of relative importance to lower classes and families in more rural areas dependent on child labor to support family survival from year to year (Curti, 1903). According to Bender (1978), the economic developments in the nineteenth century would change educational frontlines forever.

The Transition from the Cottage Industry to Universal Compulsory Education

The early 1800s welcomed commercial and industrial development, which began to change the cultural climate of the northeastern states. Many skilled laborers that worked out of their homes found it more efficient to become part of large-scale factory production. Even rural families became less dependent on family and child labor; most families opted to pay farm hands to do the work previously done by children. This economic transition caused a cascade effect within communities across the United States. Children that were once expected to assist in the wage support of their families were now free of that burden with more time to focus on other responsibilities. In the wake of this economic transition, Horace Mann, secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, advocated for mandatory public education for all children regardless of socioeconomic or cultural status (Mann, 1868). Research indicates that
Mann felt strongly, from an early age, that education was essential; as Senator and later secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, he advocated for education as a way to harness the unruly delinquency of America's youth (Cubberly, 1919; Groen, 2008). Horace Mann dedicated countless hours on the floor of Congress lobbying that this compulsory education should be financially supported by the states that housed the school system. Horace Mann "argued for carefully designed school buildings and state-supported normal schools to train professional teachers," which would help unify educators' teaching approaches (Origins of Public School-Encyclopedia; Groen, 2008; Harper, 1939). According to Horace Mann, following this procedure would ensure free unified public education for all youth. He noted that "the [common schools] are the only civil institutions capable of extending its beneficent arms to embrace and cultivate in all parts of its nature every child that comes into the world" (Bohan, 2003, p.10).

**Rise of the Social Studies**

By 1870 the idea of common schools and compulsory education was accepted by most individuals in the United States (Mann, 1852). Organizers of common schools, such as Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, felt that it was the responsibility of the schools to cultivate learning through reading, writing, and arithmetic. According to (Curti, 1935; Mann, 1855), organizers sought to cultivate learning to "equalize the condition of men" (pp. 57-58). Barnard and Mann, among others, felt that education was the gateway to power and equality. As common schools emerged, curriculum reform became apparent; creating a more unified school system required a more uniform education approach. Two factors that determined whether or not content would be taught in the classroom were mental discipline and classicism (Kaestle, 1983). According to Horace Mann, content areas should be designed to rigorously promote student learning and incorporate deep thinking through ancient texts (Mann, 1852). The mission of the common
school and its organizers is to prepare America's youth with moral instruction to bring equality to the nation. While secular subjects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic were required, students were also subject to and expected to adhere to a strict sense of morality which became less biblical-based as the decade waned (Mann, 1855).

**The Rise of Content Disciplines**

According to Bohan (2003), as a result of this growing school culture, national educational associations began to lobby for influence within public education. Associations such as the American Historical Association (AHA) and the National Educational Association (NEA) sought to direct the progress on the frontlines of public education. History was not an individually required content area; however, it was integrated within other courses such as reading and writing. Students would read and write on a topic related to a past event, which at this time constituted cross-curricular teaching. To this end, both the AHA and NEA sought to reform the school curriculum (Reese, 2007). Historians within the AHA believed mental discipline and classicism, both foundational concepts of Horace Mann's common schools, laid the groundwork for rigorous history courses. Therefore, they advocated for representation in the common school classroom.

Chara Bohan (2003) postulates that the National Education Association (NEA) was heavily involved in curriculum planning and implementation at the secondary level of education. The NEA commissioned the Committee of Ten to recommend a unified standard for multiple content areas within the secondary school curriculum. As cited in the *Committee of Eight Report* (1909), the Committee of Ten held nine conferences for the separate disciplines of 1) Latin, 2) Greek, 3) English, 4) Modern Languages, 5) Mathematics, 6) Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry, 7) Natural History, 8) History, Civil Government, and Political Economics, and 9) Geography. The
Committee of Ten utilized characteristics from both selected European educational systems juxtaposed to the American approach. These findings primarily influenced the committee's recommendation for a more focused history program within public schools. Committee members such as Albert Bushnell Hart, Charles Kendall Adams, and future United States President Woodrow Wilson contended that topics taught in history should be broadened to expose the student to more than just "military and political events" (78). These historians felt that the future of America depended on a holistic understanding of past events.

Among its recommendations, the Committee of Ten proposed two programs for history education to add history to the school subjects list. According to the Committee of Seven Report (1909), the first program recommended started in fifth grade requiring eight years of history. The second program was more flexible, starting at the school's leisure and requiring six years of history study. Committee members urged schools to incorporate history programs to "broaden and cultivate the mind" (Bohan, 2003, p. 80) and meet the requirements of mental discipline and classicism in education. The committee vehemently recommended their curriculum changes for both programs from fifth grade upward as it would "arous[e] interest and [convey] historical information at the age when ideas of time and place relations are only imperfectly developed, but when interest in individuals is keen and active" (Committee of Seven Report, 1909, p. 167). The Committee of Ten's recommendation was one of the first progressive thrusts into education.

Four years following the NEA Committee of Ten's report and recommendations for history education in the nation's public schools came to the development and formation of the American Historical Association (AHA) in 1884. This was an effort to promote the study of history and ensure the representation of history as a subject within America's schools. The NEA Committee of Ten's report focused on the lack of history being taught, but history was not the
sole, exclusive focus of the report. For this reason, the AHA formed the Committee of Seven, which intended to promote the study of history in public schools. The members of the Committee of Seven were historians from the American Historical Association. August F. Nightingale, chairman of NEA's Committee on College Entrance Requirements, asked historians to report on the status of history courses in schools across America (Bohan, 2003; Cremin, 1962; Reese, 2001). The committee set out to evaluate and create uniformity within history courses at the secondary school level. The committee used college entrance requirements to gauge and recommend a "four-year course of study that included Ancient History, Medieval and Modern History, English History, American History, and Civil Government" (Bohan, 2003, p. 84). It was also recommended that the time given to history courses within the school day be extended to allow more history instruction.

Members of the Committee of Seven included Andrew McLaughlin (chair), Herbert Adams, George Fox, Albert Hart (also part of the Committee of Ten), H. Stephens, Charles Haskins, and Lucy M. Salmon. All prominent historians, many of whom went on to chair other committees within the AHA or APA (American Political Science Association). The Committee of Seven initially surveyed American schools to observe content classroom activity. Following the survey of American schools, the committee explored teaching in "Germany, England, France, and Canada to compare practices, methods, curriculums, teacher preparation, and pedagogy with those in the United States" (Bohan, 2003, p.85). The committee sought international comparison to gauge the presentation of history in American schools with programs offered worldwide. The national and international findings would be foundational support for the curriculum reform proposed by the Committee of Seven (Bohan, 2001).
The Struggle for Representation

As the content of history progressed in the educational field, so too did many contents within social studies. Contents such as geography, political science, anthropology, etc., began to lobby for representation within the nation's public schools. Political scientists and sociologists established political science as a mainstay in secondary education.

Many content areas within the social studies began to create their organizations, such as the American Political Science Association (APA) and the American Sociological Association (ASA), similar to the historian's guild, American Historical Association. That same year the American Historical Association commissioned the Committee of Five to modify the recommendations made by the Committee of Seven for the teaching of history in secondary schools. In 1906 the newly formed American Political Science Association created a Committee of Five. Like previous committees, these political scientists would recommend the public school curriculum that would impact the integration of social sciences into the secondary classroom; by the early 1900s, many social scientists had secured college campus courses. They began to set their sights on public school systems hoping to replace history courses at the secondary level with social science courses (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 22). It became evident that social scientists desired to have their content regarded in the public school curriculum. The social scientists argued that an emphasis on current issues makes the content practical and functional for the public school classroom; however, this ideology ran counterintuitive to the historians lobbying for more time to study history. Historians felt new and current issues presented with the social sciences were shallow and not worth consideration.
**Historians versus Social Scientists**

As the push from social scientists intensified, historians pushed back, recognizing that with the changing social climate in America, they would need to make changes to the delivery of history within schools. James Harvey Robinson (1921), a historian, advocated for the functionality of history and claimed the study of history would, "reveal[ing] the origin of many of our current fundamental beliefs, will tend to free our minds so as to permit honest thinking. Also, that the historical facts which I propose to recall would if permitted to play a constant part in our thinking, automatically eliminate a very considerable portion of the gross stupidity and blindness which characterize our present thought and conduct in public affairs and would contribute greatly to developing the needed scientific attitude toward human concerns" (p12).

He goes on to write in a direct attack on the social sciences, "One cannot but feel a little queasy when he uses the expression "social science," because it seems as if we had not as yet got anywhere near a real science of man" (Robinson, 1921, p. 14). Historians such as James Robinson and Harry Barnes influenced this movement of historical functionality that swept through history forums of the 1900s; however, consequences came with the noble claims of change. According to Barr et al. (1977), the transition to a more functional presentation of history caused division within the organization; historians disagreed on the overall purpose of history courses in the public school. Many historians contended that mental discipline was the foundational purpose of history in the public school; however, within the ranks of the American Historical Association (AHA), some supported the learning of history for a specific purpose, while others, such as Henry Johnson, strongly supported the notion of studying history for the sake of learning history. Henry Johnson was strongly opposed to the claims of the "functionalist" historians such as James Robinson. Johnson claimed that the myth of historical functionality and its [in]ability to bridge the past and future was an irreparable mistake (p.24). However, one
constant remained among historians—history should be taught in schools as a separate subject and incorporate social science.

In 1909 educational philosopher and social scientist John Dewey published a book entitled *How We Think*. In his book, he explains the process of thinking and the intricate details surrounding the construction of thought patterns. For many educators in the early twentieth century, this text made a significant difference in their perception of content retention and pedagogy. It was also the first step toward the progressive education movement, which would change the many facets of education in the United States. This book and subsequent others written by John Dewey opened the flood gates for social studies. In his book, *How We Think*, Dewey stated that "[T]o confine, however, the conditioning influence of the educator, whether parent or teacher, to imitation, is to get a very superficial view of the intellectual influence of others. Imitation is but one case of a deeper principle—that of stimulus and response" (Dewey, 1910, p.48). He began to advocate for change in both curriculum and pedagogy in the public classroom. He later writes that "[T]he problem of education in a democratic society is to do away with the dualism and to construct a course of studies which makes thought a guide of free practice for all" (Dewey, 1916, Ch. 19). Dewey became a twentieth-century pioneer for education reform. He believed that all children could learn and be productive citizens within society. He advocated for democratic citizenship, which he believed could be attained through educational empowerment. However, being an advocate of child-centered learning, John Dewey felt that to achieve these ends, schools would need to become an entity of understanding and interest with a more social, inclusive curriculum to motivate students and encourage a new mode of thinking and learning.
1916 NEA Committee Recommendation

The enlightenment of John Dewey juxtaposed to the history education debate taking place in schools across the country prompted the National Education Association (NEA) to examine the structure of schools and the presentation and availability of curriculum in the United States. In 1916 the NEA appointed a Committee on the Social Studies. Unlike other committees set forth by the NEA or AHA, this committee comprised public school and university educators. This committee aimed to assess the goals of education and then evaluate the social studies to decide which of the social studies best contributed to the overall goal of education. The committee contented for the intention of public school to be the production of good citizenship. The committee also rejected tradition exemplifying skills over facts and described citizenship as social awareness. They believed the classroom afforded this opportunity as students and their peers created a school community to practice their social skills. Committee members also advocated for a more inquiry-based approach to learning, asking teachers to help students learn from their experiences, investigate, and make decisions based on their informed conclusions. The committee openly rejected the traditional methods of knowledge transmission through recitation and memorization.

The Progressive Influence on Social Studies Education: 1920-1940

Murry Nelson (1995) indicated that the desire of social scientists to envision their respective content areas represented in the secondary school system was coming to fruition. However, with no unified plan or pacing of curriculum, each school system decided which social studies content areas were taught. Educators concerned with the lack of unified representation of the social studies decided to form an organization modeled after the American Historical Association.
According to Nelson (1995), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) was inspired by an organization developed by Earle Rugg in 1919. Earle Rugg, a former high school teacher in Oak Park, Illinois, was concerned with the lack of citizenship education and social studies. As a result, Earle Rugg developed the Northeastern Illinois Social Science Roundtable, which consisted of social scientists, historians, and social studies teachers. Following his roundtable discussion for curriculum change in Northeastern Illinois, Earle decided to take graduate studies at Teachers College. As a graduate student at Teachers College, Columbia University, Earle Rugg studied under his famous brother, Harold Rugg. Earle and Harold Rugg formed a teacher organization similar to the Northeastern Illinois Science Roundtable. The National Council for the Social Studies sought the expertise of social scientists by the names of Daniel Knowlton, Roy Hatch, and J. Montgomery Gambrill. Such notable scholars in social studies would bring both representation and content legitimacy to social studies education.

Nelson (1995) notes that the NCSS became an important voice in the debate on school curriculum almost immediately after its inception. The council was organized in 1921. That same year, ten committees representing multiple fields of social studies such as civics, economics, and sociology worked on a specific curriculum and sought a seat within the NCSS. To present a more unified approach, NCSS worked to continually unify the separate organizations of social sciences and the American Historical Association (AHA). As the NCSS rose in popularity and legitimacy, the NCSS and the AHA attempted to unify history and the social sciences under one collective organization to create a national curriculum representation in elementary and secondary schools. The unification of subjects under the National Council for Social Studies created an outpouring of support from previously established social science associations.
Progressive Thinkers: Harold Rugg

One of the founders of the National Council for Social Studies, Harold Rugg desired to be a conduit for change concerning social studies education. Rugg believed the National Educator's Association's 1916 Report had caused a reshuffling of existing materials in courses. While this response was viewed as an attempt to seem compliant with a more modern, progressive vision, Harold Rugg advocated that the compliant reshuffling of material would not impact education reform. Harold Rugg sought to transform the pedagogical approach toward social studies education by integrating history, geography, and anthropology.

Ronald Evans (2007) stated that Harold Rugg's work at Teachers College offered him the opportunity to conduct extensive research on the psychological construct of knowledge, which influenced his vision for social studies and curriculum theory. As he created his framework for social studies education, he was motivated by the inability of previous curriculum committees to make progress toward a unified social studies curriculum. In 1921, Harold Rugg suggested the Committee of Eight had not taken an objective "scientific approach" toward their curriculum assessment in current schools. He believed recommendations for educational change were superficial; he continued his criticism of the Second Committee of Eight by stating by starting new and creating materials that align to specifications or expectations according to a "carefully thought-out hypotheses of selection…based upon the principle of social worth" (p.777). He continued to condemn the committee's report and the traditional pedagogical approaches, such as reciting isolated events and topics, which he felt were contrary to developing a sincere learning experience.
Supporters and Influences on the Progressive Movement

As Harold Rugg outlined his curricular framework for social studies education, his initial draft was associated with progressive views of education, influenced in part by scholars like John Dewey. The result was an "issue-centered" curriculum focused on solving historical and societal issues. Ronald Evans (2007) indicated Rugg's issues-centered curriculum was built based on the following characteristics 1) all work in the social studies curriculum was based on a problem-solving format, 2) the social studies curriculum was created and taught from first grade through twelfth grade, 3) there were specific criteria for identifying the compelling problem-solving topics at grade level, 4) students practiced analyzing, generalizing, and organizing information to investigate their given problems or issues, 5) a problem was presented then verified through a historical lens, 6) historical events were evaluated from multiple perspectives, 7) content grew in complexity.

Harold Rugg's issue-centered curriculum also utilized previous committee reports to restructure the administration of content area subject matter. Harold Rugg aimed to teach existing topics and themes in an issue-centered, inquiry-based approach. Harold Rugg, along with fellow progressives John Dewey and George Counts, supported the concept of problem-solving through the implementation of an issues-centered curriculum. Such curriculum incorporated various social studies content such as civics, government, and anthropology to explore issues or problems found historically or current. Evans (2006) writes that John Dewey was an influential proponent of Harold Rugg's progressive framework as Dewey viewed the school as the vehicle for moving society toward social change. In support of his early framework, Rugg writes,

"Not the learning of texts, but the solving of problems is what we need…For the pupil to think, he first must be mentally blocked and thwarted until he is obsessed with a desire
to clear up the matter; he must also have at hand data, the facts on all sides of the issue before he can think constructively on it; and there, he must be practiced in deliberations on situations that are somewhat similar" (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p.27)

Progressive educators like Harold Rugg endeavored to create a curriculum program that would promote citizenship education through individual reasoning and personal life experiences. To encourage students' active participation and incorporation of life experiences, Harold Rugg promoted the concept of active school. The active school encompassed learning through inquiry and discovery versus the passive curriculum, which transmitted data to students. According to Evans (2007), Harold Rugg's active school learning meant making the experience tangible whenever possible with observations or field excursions outside the classroom with student participation in active learning through his issue-centered approach.

Harold Rugg's proposal for issue-centered learning approached social studies education reform beyond anything proposed before (Evans 2004, 2007; Labaree, 2007; Kliebard, 1986). Rugg's curriculum broke the mold of tradition; it sought to measure student growth and knowledge by reflecting on issues and problems rather than memorizing a "textbook" answer. This approach did not follow the traditional transmission of memorizing facts and figures. Harold Rugg believed that learning from a situation required a student must be consumed with an issue, given the tools to deconstruct the situation, and the freedom to construct a response with the reason (Barr et al., 1977).

In 1922, Harold Rugg had secured nearly 4,000 orders for his new curriculum pamphlets. According to Evans (2007), Rugg set to work with his curriculum team consisting of Emma Schwegge, Earle Rugg, and Marie Gulbransen to produce a unified social studies curriculum to address the social concerns of the nation. Harold Rugg's social studies pamphlet series grew popular among school districts throughout the 1920s. The issued-centered curriculum aligned
with active schooling in which both teacher and students actively engaged in discussion and open-ended questions relating to societal issues and concerns. By the 1930s, Rugg's issue-centered curriculum was printed as easy-to-use pamphlets, and popularity and sales had skyrocketed. Evans (2007) suggests Ginn and Company, which marketed Rugg's issued-centered pamphlet series, indicted increased sales of Harold Rugg's materials to school systems throughout the county, which paired well with the growing progressive educational movement.

Lagemann (1992) divulges that George Counts was well-known and established as a leading scholar in the sociology of education. Among his influential roles, he served as a professor, and colleague of Harold Rugg, at Teachers College, Columbia University. As a member of the American Historical Association and editor of the progressive, left-leaning Social Frontier, George Counts believed that education had to be studied as a social science; this necessary view allowed educators to interpret current events through established social values and traditions. "In Count's view, social interpretation was what all educators, teachers no less than professors, should do when setting curriculum or participating in public affairs" (Lagemann, 1992, p.138).

In George Counts' publication, *The Social Foundations of Education*, he labeled history as the rationale for progressive social reform through the education system. He claimed that significant changes in social institutions such as family, religion, and the government would require an overhaul in the American public school system. As a progressive scholar, Counts believed that education was "required to provide educational leadership for the nation and assume general responsibility for formulating educational philosophies, policies, and programs" (Counts 1934, p.5). Harold Rugg embraced this progressive mindset as he labored to produce a
curriculum that would fuse the aspects of society and social education into one cohesive curriculum for classroom use.

Harold Rugg's personal experiences were also influential. These factors manifest a desire to partake in the progressive movement from his conservative, puritan raising through his time at Teachers College, Columbia University. Ronald Evans (2007) suggests that as a young man, Rugg remembered family economic hardship, which he recalled was a "constant struggle to scrape together a bare existence" (p.260)—having been exposed to such poor lower-middle-class living conditions, Rugg noted that judgment and want were two of life's greatest fears. This fear, Rugg indicated, created an inferiority complex, which later influenced his favor of a progressive, liberal movement that rebelled against the social order by which he felt oppressed.

After high school, Rugg worked in a textile mill for nearly two years. During this time, he was exposed to the unreasonable labor conditions within the factory and the unequal disbursement of wages. These concerns played an influential role in Harold Rugg's perspective. After leaving the textile mill, Rugg was accepted into Dartmouth in 1904. Throughout Rugg's college career, both undergraduate and graduate, his professors were influential in molding his perspective. The university provided an environment that granted liberty within his curiosity to research measurable aspects of intelligence and learning. At this point, Harold Rugg was subjugated to the relationship between society and education. The social factors that oppressed him as a youth provided fervor for his research. Upon completing his doctorate program, Rugg accepted a position at the University of Chicago to study with Charles H. Judd working on research and courses on the scientific study of education (Evans, 2007).

After a successful and short tenure at the University of Chicago, Harold Rugg moved to New York for a position at Lincoln School, Teachers College, Columbia University. Here, he
was introduced to various intellectuals, scholars, and artists. Harold Rugg's move to New York exposed him to editors of The Seven Arts journal, Waldo Frank, Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks. These writers and editors played an influential role in Harold Rugg's social criticism and social studies perception. They also introduced Harold Rugg to the bohemian culture of Greenwich Village. Both present and robust in Greenwich Village, the bohemian culture was considered a progressive counter-culture to the capitalist ideals of American society. Bohemia embraced an insouciant ideology; Malcolm Cowley (as cited in Evans, 2007) states that the bohemian culture found in Greenwich was "not only a place, a mood," but it was considered a way of life (1951, p.61). Intellectuals of bohemian culture embraced freedom against the oppressive social constructs of Christianity and capitalism. Under the influence of the bohemian movement of Greenwich Village, Rugg increased his appreciation for the arts and his receptivity to liberal ideology (Evans, 2007, 2006).

**Progressive View toward Education**

Based on Barr, Barth, and Shermis' (1977) research, the early twentieth century was a time of transition for academia. Educators, historians, and social scientists began to view social studies education as a conduit to integrate and unify disciplines within the curriculum to address citizenship education and social change. By 1929 many scholars that shared a progressive vision of citizenship education reform felt compelled to assess the condition of social studies education in American schools. Scholars and educators from various disciplines were represented in the Commission on the Social Studies. The eight-year collaborative result was known as the 1929 American Historical Association (AHA) study. The committee report was a compromise between historians and social scientists to introduce a framework for integrating history and social studies into courses in high school. The AHA 1929 report was a significant influence in
Harold Rugg's textbooks of the early 1930s. Harold Rugg embraced the opportunity to capitalize on the results of the 1929 AHA study by taking the recommendations of the committee and creating a curriculum that he felt would encapsulate the concepts of both historians and social scientists.

According to Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977), the American Historical Association launched an Eight-Year Study concerning social studies teaching in American classrooms; several independent sub-committees conducted teacher surveys on students' lack of civic knowledge. Avis Carlson (1937) stated that between World War I and World War II, many curriculum reforms were recommended by multiple committees from either the American Historical Association or National Education Association, which resulted in academic chaos in social studies. While scholars like Harold Rugg sought to bridge the content and pedagogical gap between history and social studies, the damage was done. Carlson (1937) posits that the "chaotic mess" amidst the social studies curriculum sparked researchers' investigations, resulting in Harold Rugg's introduction of an issue-centered social studies curriculum.

**Sociopolitical Climate of the 1930s**

The stock market crash of 1929, which fostered the Great Depression of the 1930s, permitted progressive curriculum an opportunity to evaluate, critique, and discuss socioeconomic issues in the classroom. Students' collective examination of socioeconomic issues invoked fear and criticism from American industry and conservative voices. The rift of criticism marked the beginning of controversy for the progressive educational movement.

Barr et al. (1977) indicated that New York Regents conducted an inquiry in 1935 to investigate the status of the social studies curriculum. The final report released in 1938 revealed three significant areas of concern across New York. First, students did not appear to relate social
studies coursework with real-life social situations. Second, students seemed not to be influenced or affected by their social studies program. Third, overall, students showed no civic competencies such as the democratic process and citizenship knowledge. According to Allan Nevins (1942), a staunch historian, the "social slush" considered the integration of social studies the culprit. He indicated, "the fact is our educational requirements in American History and government have been and are deplorably haphazard, chaotic, and ineffective… a little American history is injected into a course of social studies confusedly half-heartedly… in others, it is ignored" (p.6). Historians, such as Nevins, believed that introducing the idea of a social studies curriculum into the elementary and secondary school agenda was the foundational issue for students' lack of citizenship education; however, according to Evans (2007), this accusation by frustrated historians was fueled by the success of the progressive movement and the inroads created by the National Council for the Social Studies.

Throughout the 1930s, foreign and domestic political movements caused a surge of conservatism. Research by Riley and Stern (2004) indicated a rising fear following the war that Bolshevism would infiltrate and replace Americanism. In an attempt to salvage the nation, parents, community members, and even businesses began attacking the current educational system with claims of a left-leaning, liberal agenda to brainwash the youth of America and disregard patriotism and nationalism. Evans (2007) reports that the Hearst newspapers printed numerous stories following controversy in American education. In response to the progressive changes, especially in education, that were moving through the nation, the Hearst papers led the "1935 red-baiting campaign" (Seldes, 1938, p.231 as cited in Evans, 2007, p.237).
That same year, 1935, Harold Rugg's textbooks came under scrutiny as communist propaganda. Two years prior, in 1933, during a conference sponsored by the New York Herald-Tribune, Rugg praised the accomplishments of the Russian educational system and their structured approach to teaching and learning. It was no secret that the organization of the Russian educational system had been long admired and favored by progressive thinkers such as Rugg, Dewey, and Counts. However, according to Evans (2007), Rugg's speech to the New York Herald-Tribune was reprinted by a newspaper representing the Communist Party of America which led to Rugg, alongside other progressive colleagues, being red-listed as an anti-American supporter of communism. Also, in 1935, to confront potential communist teachers in the classroom, Congress required all teachers in Washington, DC, to take a loyalty oath stating that they had not "taught or advocated Communism" (p.274). As a result, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) teachers union was attacked as being infiltrated by communists. In 1935, the New York City division of the American Federation of Teachers was disbanded and expelled from the national union with accusations of communist infiltration (Feffer, 2005). American's suspicions grew with the ever-present fear of a communist coup; for this reason, individuals such as Augustin G. Rudd partnered with the American Legion to attempt to eradicate communist influence from public schools. One of his campaign promises was to eliminate the Rugg textbook series.

Spearheading the anti-communist surge, Harold Rugg and his colleague, George Counts, continued to advocate for social change through social reconstruction. In his 1932 speech, "Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?", Counts edified his colleagues that the schools should be
"[cast] as a lever in the transforming of society" (Counts, 1932, p. 9). Counts' vision for the restructuring of society through education flowed within the same vein of thought that carried Harold Rugg's issue-centered learning approach. As described in (Evans 2007; Lebaree, 2007), social reconstructionists like Counts and Rugg lobbied for educators to lead roles in creating social change. Since social studies directly correlated with social concerns within society, it was believed that they should take the lead in this crusade for change.

The need for change promoted by social reconstructionists such as John Dewey, George Counts, and Harold Rugg created an atmosphere ripe to revolutionize his social vision through education. Carbone (1977) suggested that Rugg believed Americans could make a better society through a social and economic overhaul possible with education reformation. Harold Rugg felt that citizens, namely students, must be aware of the world they lived in and the social issues that prevailed. While still focused on school reform, this mentality moved beyond the scope of education. According to Evans (2007), Harold Rugg desired to "reconstruct the social order" of America using education as the vehicle of progress (p.207).

Critics of Rugg's social reconstruction, such as Sidney Hook, alleged that Rugg's change concepts only reflected a primarily unrealistic expectation in American society. Hook claimed that Rugg neglected to address issues of class and dissenting social philosophy, which must be addressed in social change within society (Evans, 2007). Another criticism was Rugg's inability to objectively critique his influences and ideology on his thinking. To the demise of his vision of social reconstruction, Harold Rugg neglected to foresee the problems that could follow any attempt to materialize this concept. Ronald Evans (2007) attested that the problems included school board politics, funding issues, professional development, and teacher training problems.
The Social Studies' Evolutionary Development: 1940-1960

The Wartime Social Studies Movement

While the 1920s offered the progressives the opportunity to introduce curriculum reform that could inspire intellectual thought and social awareness, the 1930s met progressive educators with criticism surrounding social studies, progressive textbooks, and pedagogy. Harold Rugg, Carl L. Becker, and David Saville Muzzy's social studies textbooks and pedagogical influences in social studies education continued to draw fire and criticism from conservative-based organizations into the 1940s. Social groups such as the Daughter of the American Revolution (DAR), The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), and The American Legion spearheaded attacks on what was perceived as un-American textbooks within classrooms across the United States. The Daughters of the American Revolution and The American Legion labeled educational organizations such as the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) and National Education Administration (NEA) as supporters of subversion in public schools. Social groups claimed these organizations intentionally supported the critical analysis of the deficits in American government and politics. Both groups felt that undermining foundational American values in the classroom would indoctrinate students with socialistic ideologies. (Reese, 2001).

The potential threat of subversion within the American classroom through progressive educational textbooks and pedagogy justified continual attacks from conservative organizations. By 1942, The Department of Education responded with the Education Wartime Commission, headed by Dr. John Studebaker, formed as focused control over policies and programs that preserved democracy (Conner and Bohan, 2014). The Educational Wartime Commission was created in response to the war effort in economics and education. The Commission's goal was to unify educational efforts during the tumultuous war years (Fine, 1942). The Commission forced
the face of social studies to change from the progressive inquiry and critical analysis of social issues to the indoctrination of democracy, patriotism, and nationalism that society and the conservative right felt necessary at a time of war in America.

The Commission on Wartime Policy, established by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), was created to set guidelines for social studies education during WWII (Evans, 2004). The NCSS used this opportunity to debunk claims of association with communist organizations made by the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion in a 1943 report. In the 1943 NCSS report, *The Social Studies Mobilize for Victory*, the NCSS ardently defended democracy and the war through the development and use of curriculum reform to support the war effort and promote democracy within the social studies classroom. (Commission on wartime policy of NCSS, 1943). In his 1942 presidential address to members of the National Council for the Social Studies, Roy A. Price confirmed the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) stance toward citizenship education, clarifying "the basic faith and vision of democracy, for which this country has once more gone to war, must be clarified and strengthened in all existing social studies courses" (Conner and Bohan, 2014, pg. 10). According to Price (1947), the war left no room for progressive critical inquiry in the social studies classroom.

Between the textbook controversy, which flourished throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and wartime curriculum adjustment, the frustrations with progressive educational thought and practice were revealed to the public due to progressive education's perceived image of remaining counterintuitive toward a traditional sense and understanding of patriotism toward American democracy. This public resentment prompted historian, Allan Nevins, to question the effectiveness of US History courses offered to students. Nevins (1942) purported that historical
content was watered down by the infusion of progressive educational reform, which many Americans feared undermined Americanism's fundamental principles and values. To bolster such bold claims, Nevins partnered with Hugh Fraser from the United States Office of Education, and Benjamin Fine, from the New York Times to create a survey for first-year college students to measure the effects of progressive educational theory and practice in the social studies classroom.

Caroline Conner and Chara Bohan (2014) disclosed the 1943 published survey results in the New York Times titled Ignorance of US History Shown in College Freshmen. Benjamin Fine reported that secondary schools had not adequately prepared American youth for life after high school. The survey results revealed that students were not equipped with any citizenship or civics education to support them as active participants in American society. Results also supported Nevins' claim that the progressive thrust to integrate social studies into the classroom had done little more than sabotage America's youth with watered-down history courses. Ronald Evans (2004) states that the growing criticisms from Allan Nevins, Benjamin Fine, and Hugh Fraser ultimately labeled progressive educational efforts as a "menacing conspiracy" to undermine America (p. 91).

Post-War Chaos: Juvenile Delinquency and School Resources

As public outcry and perceived un-patriotic pedagogy led to both the criticism and descent of progressive practices within the social studies, post-war American society sought to return to normalcy. Whether overlooked or ignored during the war, society and educational issues were now confronted in post-war America. During wartime, issues such as juvenile delinquency had become a concern that grew progressively worse. A report by Thorsten Sellin (1946) posits that the draft during World War Two (WWII) removed the dominant male figure
from home, whether father or older brother, that would have maintained structure. The absence, according to Thorsten, allowed teenagers freedom that had not previously been granted. He also wrote that it was common for stay-at-home mothers to take positions within factories to support the war effort. This left many American youths alone and unsupervised for many hours of the day and night.

The United States Department of Labor issued a report titled *A Community Program for the Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency in Wartime*. Cited in the report were statistics from J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI, claiming arrests in minor boys and men decreased by 10%, whereas arrests in minor girls rose by 55.7%. The same report revealed that 64.8% of girls aged 21 and under were arrested for prostitution in 1942, one full year after America's integration into the war (*Youth on the Loose*, 1943). Many local newspapers and magazines, such as *The Sunday Oregonian*, reprinted this report under the different titles, such as *Youth on the Loose*, for distribution across the United States.

Another influence for growing juvenile delinquency stemmed from population shifts from urban areas for employment during and after the war—the ability of youth to work and receive a wage increased juvenile delinquency. A report in the Defense Council Records (1943) reveals that youth were enticed by the pay placing "younger boys and girls in places where liquor is sold, in dance halls, in honkytonks, in juke joints, on the streets" (p. 17). The responsibility of employment and earning wages gave empowerment to naïve youth. This entitlement caused many American youths to drop out of school to pursue full-time wage-earning positions. According to Jaworski (2014), these factors led to a sharp drop in school enrollment from 1940-1943.
In response to this issue of juvenile delinquency, Allan Zoll, a conservative and president of the National Council for American Education, led an assault on this ideology with claims that juvenile delinquency was nothing more than progressive propaganda to manipulate a fearful and recovering society further. Hartman (2008) shares Allan Zoll's publication *Progressive Education Increases Delinquency*. Zoll claimed that delinquency issues were nothing more than teenagers facing the difficulty of growing up in a difficult time. Zoll also postulates in this publication that the reported issues of delinquency, at best, were the result of immature and ill-prepared youth due to the progressive, subversive educational curriculum of the 1920s and 1930s.

Post-War America also faced an educational crisis amidst a nationwide teacher shortage partially due to the anti-communist crusade led by conservatives which debated the morality of allowing teachers with perceived communist ties to work in a public school setting. The 1930s had already given way to destabilization within the ranks of educators at the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Union, and was attacked under the suspicion of harboring communists. According to Andrew Hartman (2008), the repression of the Teachers Union continued into the 1940s. It is estimated that nearly 330,000 teachers left the field of education to either join the military or accept higher-paying jobs.

Sidney Hook, a conservative intellectual who participated in the campaign to remove the progressive textbooks of Harold Rugg in the 1930s, joined the anti-communist defensive. By 1947, conservatives and liberal politicians were concerned about communist subversion in the American classroom. Educators were relentlessly questioned and charged with acts of subversion. Andrew Hartman (2008) reveals that educators from both the University of Washington and the University of Chicago were placed on trial as part of the anti-communist,
anti-subversion campaign. Thousands of teachers were removed from the classroom under the assumption of communist sympathizing, while others lost their licenses. Sidney Hook's outspoken stance garnered support from organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA) and the Educational Policies Commission (EPC).

In his book, Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School, Andrew Hartman claimed a significant shift in the political climate occurred in 1947. Until this time, schools had addressed anti-communism by supporting democracy and nationalism with fervor in the curriculum across schools in America; however, the anti-communism campaign changed to the offensive with the enactment of the Truman Doctrine. The United States Education Commission, led by John Studebaker, provided unrelenting support to the Truman administration and advocated that American classrooms have a zero-tolerance policy for teaching or sympathizing with communism or the Soviet Union.

As a result of the support garnered by Sidney Hook and the legislation of the Truman administration, the United States Education Commission officially adopted a resolution to prevent communist teachers from teaching in public school classrooms. Following this decision, in 1949, New York passed the Feinberg law, which required the State Board of Regents to identify all "subversive organizations" and those associated with such Any affiliation would be automatic grounds for termination (Hartman, 2008, pp 82). While conservative and liberal voices argued about the legitimacy of the Feinberg Law, it was upheld 6-3 by the Supreme court in 1953, stating that the teacher is the head of a sensitive environment, teaching naïve young minds.

Landon Storrs (2015) indicates that another major contributing factor to the post-war teacher shortage was a result of anti-communist propaganda campaigns directed by the Truman Administration. Teachers were targeted on suspicions of communist sympathies and dismissed.
from their positions, some losing their licenses. As fear spread around anti-communist propaganda, the government required loyalty screenings resulting in thousands of background checks and interrogations. In addition to anti-communist campaigns designed to eliminate teachers from the post-war classroom, many American schools experienced budgetary reductions and a lack of schools to educate students properly. While curriculum and textbooks remained a hot topic, the increase in school attendance and the overcrowding of buildings had been overlooked until the post-war years.

**Post-War Life Adjustment Education**

In response to the attacks on the progressive thrust for critical inquiry in the classroom, which became viewed as the enemy of wartime America, progressive educators introduced a new curriculum in the post-war years known as life adjustment education. As American public schools struggled with economic and social issues plaguing the advancement of post-war education, educational associations embraced concepts of fostering and supporting individual development. The progressive answer was an educational adjustment. In theory, pedagogues addressed the tumult of educational decay by what seemed to be reversing John Dewey's tenets of education. The concern in post-war America was that part of returning the nation to normalcy was to help students adjust to American society. So, "rather than adjusting the society to the child, in the hopes of creating a socialist society, the child was to be mentally adjusted to the decidedly un-socialist society already in existence" (Hartman, 2008, p. 55).

In the spirit of progressiveness, Life Adjustment supporters embraced educational curriculum reform and claimed that it would be the gateway to rectifying the social chaos of American society. Life Adjusters believed that Life Adjustment education was not merely an academic curriculum or vocational training. It was designed to address every facet of student life
to address social and personal issues such as coping with puberty, heterosexual relationships, personal goal setting, and socially acceptable etiquette. Life Adjustment was the middle ground between college and vocation that supporters felt that most students fell. Life adjustment education was designed for the individual learner to provide the guidance students needed to meet their personal goals.

As a result of this progressive thrust, The American Vocational Association met in St. Louis in 1945. It addressed students who were not equipped in public schools with either college preparatory courses or vocational training to enter the workforce. From this meeting, chief advocate Charles Prosser, Education Commissioner John Studebaker, and other Life Adjustment supporters adopted the Prosser resolution, which set forth the foundational expectations for the progressive life adjustment curriculum (Schurr, 1946). The resolution was an educational manifesto for Life Adjustment Education, and according to the Prosser resolution, schools should be proactive in students' future. It claims that the most appropriate way to address the future of American youth is for schools to adopt a 20-60-20 split. The Life Adjustment manifesto contended that only 20% of school-aged youth were eligible for college, 60% were not eligible for vocational training, and only 20% were eligible for vocational training. The assumption that 80% of America's youth were unfit for college was not a statistic that set well for American society (Hartman, 2008).

However, for most of the late 1940s, the Life adjustment Education movement became widely accepted as "designed to equip all American youth to live democratically with satisfaction to themselves and profit society, as home members, workers, and citizens" (Schurr, 1946, p. 2) and for a time was viewed as an opportunity for progressive educators to redeem themselves from the poor public and policy images encountered in the 1930s and 1940s.
Dr. Benjamin Spock

With the rising popularity of life adjustment education, well-known child psychologist, Dr. Benjamin Spock, became the leading voice on student growth. Dr. Spock published his book, *The Common Sense Book of Child Care*, in 1946. He was able to capitalize on society's growing concerns as the past twenty years had been marked with economic disparity, social and educational instability, and the ever-present threat of communist control. To this end, Dr. Spock believed the post-war world was unstable; and such an environment bred instability in American youth. Like life adjustment education, Dr. Spock's approach to child-rearing was to let the child be the guide. He intended to empower parents by raising children that could resist authoritarian manipulation. Dr. Spock claimed that the appropriate way to ensure this character trait was manifested in a child was for parents to avoid aggressive and controlling behaviors toward their children. Instead, according to Dr. Spock, parents should "gently and benevolently coerce their children into maturity" (Hartman, 2008, p.58). A Washington Post editorial supporting Dr. Spock's theory wrote that a child reared in this manner would become an advocate for change, a social vigilante.

For this reason, Dr. Spock and John W. Studebaker sought to address problems and issues as individual cases with each student; they stated that life adjustment is "not education that follows the convention for its sake or holds any aspect of the school as an end in itself" (Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, 1948, p. 5). Dr. Spock advocated that stern, harsh discipline was the enemy of happy, healthy children (Graebner, 1980). Dr. Spock's approach toward child development became widely accepted in society alongside the life adjustment education curriculum integrated into public schools. However, this approach to progressive child-centered ideology was counterintuitive to the more traditional subjects such as math,
science, and history. In this obvious contrast, life adjustment advocated achieving desired outcomes in terms of character and behavior [by recognizing] the dignity of human personality” (Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, 1948, pg. 5).

**Dr. John Dewey's Response to Life Adjustment Education**

Educators and parents who ascribed to the cultural life adjustment movement felt empowered and ascribed the life adjustment curriculum as an extension of Deweyan philosophy. Schumann (2010) confirms that the life adjustment approach was "initially meant to implement John Dewey's concept of democracy in action" (p. 12). On the contrary, John Dewey dismissed life adjustment education, stating that his focus for an educational inquiry was never on specific problems and issues but on a systematic approach toward issues that allowed students to be productive citizens within society. Overall, the life adjustment movement manipulated the progressive education reform and vision of John Dewey (Hartman, 2008).

**Conservative Criticism and Backlash**

Furthermore, conservative educators like Arthur Bestor, Robert Hutchins, and James Conant attacked life adjustment education, citing its "fundamental aimlessness and futility." Critics argued that the objective of the life adjustment curriculum was absolutely "anti-American, anti-intellectual, and antidemocratic" (Filene, 1970, p.30). In his book, Wastelands (1953), Arthur Bestor contended that Life Adjustment education devalued the importance of core content disciplines in place of vocational or behavioral training. Bestor posits that the addition of such training did not negate the necessity for foundational instruction in subjects such as math, science, English, or history. This claim frustrated an already wary American public seeking to return to normalcy after the war. This attack led by Bestor and other conservative educators paved the way for further criticism from the Life Adjustment movement opponents.
Life Adjustment Education was just one of the perceived failures of the progressive educational movement. According to those like Sidney Hook, Arthur Bestor, and Robert Hutchins, the progressive movement had been nothing more than a ploy to weaken and manipulate American society by questioning and undermining the government and choices of its leaders. Russel Kirk, a conservative and intellectual, lashed out at progressive theorists for their "uncritical and sloppy usage of terms such as 'education' and 'democracy'" (Hartman, 2008, p.96). Kirk and fellow conservatives agreed that progressives had manipulated these terms to create a social organization that provided recreation and supervision for eight hours of the day and in no way resembled traditional education. This frustration was the driving force behind the conservative disdain for the progressive movement and the Life Adjustment Education Movement. The thought that progressive education gave way to communist subversion infiltrated the minds of conservatives and led to proactive attacks to dismantle the progressive educational movement.

The American public viewed the conservative right, the progressive left, and the Life Adjustment movement as educational afterthoughts with the growing economic, social, and political threats of communism. Shortly after the conservative attacks on progressive education, propelled by advocates such as Bestor, the public grew dissatisfied with the Life Adjustment approach. By 1955, two years after Arthur Bestor published *Wastelands* warning Americans against the deficits of the Life Adjustment Education, the Soviets launched Sputnik I. News of this solidified the national rejection of the Life Adjustment curriculum. The threat of communist dominance thrust the nation into a new direction focused on traditional subjects, predominantly the sciences (Cremin, 1961; Filene, 1970; Kliebard, 2004).
Areas of Conflict: Three Social Studies Traditions

As a result of the turmoil surrounding social studies education in the 1920s and 1930s, alongside the socioeconomic chaos that compounded the concern of education in the 1940s, the 1950s began a time of reflection on social studies. The controversy surrounding the Korean war, the closed areas of society, and the Purdue opinion poll caused social scientists and progressive educators to assess the attempts of social studies to bring issues of government and society into the classroom. Scholars began to review the publications on social studies from all "scholarly societies and teacher associations in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth" (Barr et al., 1977, p.58). Educational scholars suggest that patterns emerged which disclosed a shared vision of citizenship within the term "social studies education"; however, differing methodologies to reach that shared vision were revealed in their pedagogical approaches. The result of differing ideology and pedagogy led to a chasm within the social studies resulting in the emergence of three distinct traditions; Social Studies Taught as Citizenship Transmission, Social Studies Taught as Social Science, and Social Studies Taught Reflective Inquiry.

Social Studies Taught as Citizenship Transmission

Social Studies taught as Citizenship Transmission was developed to transfer knowledge and assumptions of teachers directly to students. Barr et al. (1977) suggest that this tradition proved the oldest and most widely supported tradition in education. The purpose of Citizenship Transmission was that the desirable attributes of citizenship, as defined by the teacher, be learned and accepted by students. The teacher has a plethora of preconceived knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs, which Barr et al. (1977) claimed teachers treated as "self-evident truths" (p.60) that students should accept to become successful participants in society through decision-making.
In an attempt to reach this goal of citizenship, the teacher used particular methods in the classroom. Most often used in conjunction with Citizenship Transmission was an approach of persuasion to transmit specific, often biased or partisan, beliefs about society and culture. Overall, the method of persuasion attempted to create student loyalties by transmitting core values, mostly mainstream knowledge and acceptance of political and economic decisions through techniques such as lecture, recitation, textbook referral, and structured problem-solving exercises. The content selected is often anything the teacher assumes to be beneficial when transmitting desired beliefs or attitudes to students (Barr et al., 1977).

*Social Studies Taught as Social Science*

As with Citizenship Transmission, Social Studies taught as a Social Science sought to obtain citizenship education by addressing social issues as social scientists. Teachers helped students develop critical thinking skills similar to those of social scientists. Educators believed students could think and reason as mature inquirers within this tradition of teaching social studies. These teachers intended to use specific social problems and topics to guide inquiry.

Within the social science tradition, separate disciplines (i.e., anthropology, sociology, political science) were taught individually. Doing so was twofold; first, each discipline's unique approach toward discovery was analyzed. Second, through the study of individual social sciences, students identified controversial issues unique to the disciplines themselves. Barr et al. (1977) shared an example of this with the discipline of history. The example revealed, "historians are the ones who ask, for instance: What happened? How? Why? To answer these questions, historians have developed a body of intellectual tools which enables them to… shed[s] light on important events" (p.62). Each social science discipline had a structured method for
decision-making. Therefore, the Social Science tradition sought to enhance the student experience with citizenship education by teaching the processes of social scientists.

**Social Studies Taught as Reflective Inquiry**

Social Studies taught as Reflective Inquiry was the third tradition that emerged. In this traditional approach, citizenship was often synonymous with decision-making in a social or political sense. Reflective inquiry postulated decision-making as a necessary and inescapable portion of a democratic society. Reflective inquiry recognized that events and issues that affect students would arise from many topics, such as racism, capitalism, and socialism, represented by differing social sciences (i.e., sociology, anthropology, economics).

Reflective inquiry addressed all issues regardless of the social science affiliation. The purpose of Reflective Inquiry was to promote citizenship through a process of inquiry that allowed students to gain necessary knowledge by making decisions and solving problems. According to Barr et al. (1970), "the requirement for Reflective Inquiry was that the problem [students] select does-or may or could-concern them" (p.64). Students identified a problem or value and systematically searched for a plausible explanation to make decisions. Reflective inquiry allowed for the analysis of personal values, which would then reveal the concerns and interests of a student. These interests became the foundation for the issues a student would be interested in researching and then aid in the reflection for decision-making. Supporting Reflective Inquiry in the classroom included values clarification and group discussion.

**Closed Areas in Society**

According to Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977), Reflective Inquiry was first introduced into education through the NEA Committee on Social Studies in 1916. Throughout the decades, the concept of Reflective Inquiry was modified and incorporated to expose students to the
decision-making process. In 1955, in their groundbreaking and controversial article *Taboo Topics*, scholars Maurice Hunt and Lawrence Metcalf incorporated the concept of Reflective Inquiry as they examined the concept of "closed areas." The concept of "closed areas" suggested, according to Hunt and Metcalf, that society had closed them off from public discussion because they are assumed to be "widely accepted without discussion or critical thought and normally saturated with prejudice and taboo" (Lange, 1975, p.66).

However, Hunt and Metcalf advocated that students should discuss and critically analyze these "closed areas." They felt that students should be involved in conversations and debates that directly address society's "closed areas" such as racism, homosexuality, and teen pregnancy. These topics affected everyday life, and according to Hunt and Metcalf, such issues as these should be the foundation of a student's belief system and decision-making ability. They advocated for a teacher-facilitated approach toward these taboo and controversial topics, contrasting the traditional educational approach toward citizenship education.

Traditional methods toward citizenship education addressed the deficit of American knowledge by identifying any misconceptions and attempting to expel those misunderstandings. Therefore, the goal of conventional education was to transmit patriotism and nationalism to students who were believed to lack loyalty and commitment to their county. This was typically achieved by transferring knowledge from teacher to student, often as lectures or direct readings. According to Hunt and Metcalf, this traditional method was ineffective (Lange, 1975).

J.V. D'Cruz and M. S. Williams (1970) share that both Metcalf and Hunt held firm that teachers should be both the "upholder and challenger" of culturally held truths (p.66). In a democratic society, there is no one standard ideology; thus, Hunt and Metcalf claimed there was an "urgent task of education in a democracy to help members of society find consensus in their
central values" (p.66). Both scholars felt that the chief role of education in a democratic society was to critically examine these taboo areas of culture, which expose individual beliefs that support both individuality and incompatibilities.

The Korean War

The Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953, became influential in realizing that American youth were not equipped for active participation in society. It exposed some Americans' lack of remorse for their fellow man and a general lack of understanding surrounding American society and government. The Korean war spotlighted the controversial split of social studies regarding the social struggles of soldiers as revealed through the behavior of prisoners of war. Riley (2006) posits that social studies were blamed for this deficit since the basis of social studies education had been to address social issues in the classroom, including civil liberties, governments, and societal events. It had failed after newspapers reported that 21 prisoners of war had voluntarily defected after it was over. It was reported that Chinese communists who had taken prisoners of war realized the soldiers' lack of knowledge of the American government, citing that "the prisoners showed little compassion or courage toward their fellow soldiers" (Bonner, 1958, p. 181).

These findings were also influential in the argument led by Hunt and Metcalf concerning the split of social studies traditions and the appropriate approach toward citizenship education. The Korean war, especially the breaking news of the defecting prisoners of war, exposed a lack of understanding of America's political, social, and economic systems. Carruthers (1998) suggests that the willingness of POWs to defect during the Korean War created an opportunity for American self-criticism and increased demand for a complete transformation of social studies education.
The media coverage surrounding the Korean war and the voluntary decision by 21 Americans to embrace communist culture after the war led to increased concern among Americans as to what civic values youth in America understood and embraced, if any. Bonner (1958, as cited in Byford & Lennon, 2008) revealed that most soldiers had an elementary understanding of democratic principles and American policies. Social studies were blamed for failing to provide students with citizenship education to prepare them for active participation in a democratic society. It was recognized that attempts had been made by scholars like Harold Rugg and Carl Becker, as well as government agencies such as the National Education Association and the National Council for the Social Studies in the 1930s and 1940s to address growing concerns of the lack of civics education and general knowledge about social and political events. However, the 1950s solidified the need to re-examine the effectiveness of citizenship education with the Korean war situation and the unavoidable split within the social studies.

During this era, Herman Remmer from Purdue University was well known for socio-political polls across the United States. Remmers (1945) stated that America's youth should be assessed regularly because these young people would be tasked with carrying the proverbial political, economic, and social torch of American society. It was, in his opinion, the responsibility of America, especially educators, to use the poll results as a way to evaluate the state of education, particularly the social studies, and to provide guidance and planning. Students from across the United States were polled within three different components of social studies to gauge their knowledge and attitude toward civics and the effectiveness of schools when transmitting democratic values to students. In the poll, survey questions were asked about Constitutional knowledge, democratic principles, and economic principles.
One of the reasons for the study was to gauge the current consensus of youth in America towards the government, education, economics, and American culture. Hermann Remmers concluded that the knowledge and attitude of American youth would reflect their understanding of social roles and relationships. Students were polled on their understanding and attitude toward freedom of speech, religious freedom, habeas corpus, and self-incrementation regarding constitutional knowledge. These concepts are a vital part of citizenship education, a growing concern in the United States. To be an active participant in American society, students must possess the knowledge and understanding of their rights as an individual and the responsibilities that accompany those rights.

Hermann Remmers (1958) reported that a preliminary sample of findings suggested that students often had a distorted understanding of the terminology used in the constitution and often misinterpreted the meaning. Nearly 30% of seniors felt that police should be allowed to search an individual's home without a warrant. For almost 65% of students in their senior year, police were in their right to hold a person in jail without informing them of formal charges against them. Lastly, Remmers indicated that nearly 40% of seniors believed that the police could, on occasion, use the "third degree" to make someone give up information (p.8). This same sample result revealed that nearly 20% of seniors supported government ownership of banks and credit unions (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). The 1957 Purdue Public Opinion Poll was a necessary assessment of attitudes and knowledge toward social studies, especially economics and government. The findings from the poll provided the springboard needed for an overall re-examination of social studies education which allowed for discussion at the district, state, and national levels.
Evans (2018) disclosed that the launch of Sputnik propelled the growth of research and development for curriculum reform in the late 1950 and early 1960s. At first, it aimed at math and science; by 1958, legislation was in motion to incorporate English and social studies into the movement. At the National Science Foundation (NSF), the "crisis in education and the intense interest following Sputnik increase the [NSF’s] role in secondary reform" (p.27). The National Science Foundation and the United States Office of Education began funding curricular projects to infuse new concepts from psychology into the educational curriculum.

The discussion for the re-examination of American education and curriculum led to a gathering of leaders, including biologists, mathematicians, physicists, psychologists, and historians at Woods Hole on Cape Cod, MA. In the effort to reimagine the education structure in America, this meeting of academic scholars became known as the Woods Hole Conference. The ten-day conference purposed to assess the educational failures of the 1950s and resulted in carefully formulated tenets to guide curriculum reform across all disciplines. Well-known and respected psychologist, Jerome Bruner from Harvard University, attended.

This curriculum reform movement aimed to address the deficits in education influenced by the Cold War and years of progressive education by developing a cross-curricular consensus on learning theory. The conference was, at large, "[directly] fueled by Sputnik and complaints [involving education] fueled by Vice Admiral Rickover, with a consensus to use education to enforce national security" (Evans, 2018, p. 28). Regardless, attendees, such as Bruner, contended that the reports and recommendations from this meeting could improve classroom pedagogy and advance the types and uses of materials in the classrooms across America.
Endicott House

While the Woods Hole conference merged educators from math and science for a general educational consensus, it did not address specific curriculum reform or improvement for individual disciplines. However, several meetings among separate disciplines to ensure English and social studies were included in the curriculum reform objectives of the United States Office of Education (USOE) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). The Endicott House conference was the first attempt at a comprehensive survey of social studies and an objective approach toward improvement and curriculum reform.

The conference was scheduled for June 1962. Historians and social scientists gathered to define and clarify the meaning, goals, and objectives for history and social studies education. What emerged was the realization that a method for teaching these disciplines needed to be clearly defined and based on the process used by professionals of that discipline (i.e., historians, sociologists, anthropologists). The approach to inquiry that emerged encouraged students to apply the thought processes of a social scientist or historian as an instructional guide for learning as compared to traditional delivery methods of lecture and class discussion. During these planning sessions, the concept of an interdisciplinary curriculum began to emerge. Social scientists saw an opportunity to merge their disciplines which provided students access to various social science disciplines and approaches in any given curricular unit.

The conference was divided into four working groups from this curricular breakthrough, with representatives from various disciplines. The groups were charged with creating as many curriculum proposals as they could implement. At the end of the conference, groups presented curriculum proposals. One group, identified as Group A, provided a proposed framework that provided an initial outline for the conference. Group A proposed a curriculum: 1) devoid of
textbooks, 2) incorporate alternative assessments, 3) contain new pedagogy and resource materials. This cross-curricular outline served as the foundation for creating projects of the 1960s, as well.

Group A developed a six-unit series entitled "The Human Past" for elementary school, which supported their proposed framework. The unit consisted of lessons on primate life, primary source documents of the excavation of human remains in China, simulations, and games designed to allow the students to experience survival elements within nonverbal cultures. Upper-grade lessons within the unit explored the rise of ancient civilizations and the establishment of governments and social order. Each lesson supported the use of primary source documents, films, and games that provided juxtaposing views of history, social science, and the modern world. While the goal of creating a new scope and sequence for all grade bands in the social studies fell short, after the Endicott House conference, social scientists recognized the potential benefits of educational reform and curricular opportunities for individual content disciplines. Both historians and social scientists incorporated the findings from the Endicott House conference into their curriculum projects throughout the 1960s to improve the social studies curriculum in American schools.

**Project Social Studies (New Social Studies)**

The United States Office of Education (USOE) released a notice in the October 1962 issue of *Social Education*. The article titled "Announcement for Project Social Studies" introduced a national initiative designed to improve "research, instruction, teacher education and the dissemination of information in this field" (Evans, 2004, p.127). As a direct product of advancements explored at the Endicott House Conference, government agencies such as the
National Science Foundation (NSF) and private stakeholders like Ford and Carnegie provided funds for research projects, conferences, seminars, and curriculum study centers.

John White (2010) reveals that Project Social Studies, also known as the New Social Studies movement, was an extension of the NSF and USOE's attempt to reorganize American education amidst the sociopolitical controversies of the 1950s, such as the Cold war and the Korean war. The National Defense Education Act passed in 1958 relegated funding for curriculum and instruction reform in science, mathematics, and foreign languages; however, the government extended funding to English and social studies following the Woods Hole Conference. The invitation to participate in the "New" educational reform movement allowed social studies to formulate proposals for a more structured curriculum and attempt to unify history and social studies for citizenship education.

By 1963, the United States Office of Education (USOE) reported that eleven curriculum projects had been approved and funded. In 1964, four more projects were added, and by 1965, more than twenty-four projects were underway (Evans, 2004). While both Woods Hole and Endicott House provided the opportunity for integrated curriculum reform, what emerged from the New Social Studies were projects sponsored by professional academic associations that focused on their academic field of study rather than the integrated model of social studies. According to White (2010), each project sought to develop content-specific materials that would explore the nature of a field of study using methods of inquiry designed for the discipline. For example, The Anthropology Curriculum Study Project, The High School Geography Project, and The Sociological Resources for Secondary Schools were developed to emphasize their discipline within the social studies curriculum.
April 1965, a report titled "Report on Project Social Studies" was printed in the Social Education journal. The article outlined various projects and divulged instructional methods, materials, and goals for each project. The journal noted six shared concepts among a majority of projects: 1) emphasized structure reflecting social science disciplines; 2) abandoned traditional, expository methods of instruction for a discovery method or inductive teaching approach; 3) organized curriculum using the processes and methods of social scientists; 4) focused on the sequential and cumulative learning experience by starting with simple ideas and progressing in complexity; 5) consisted of a plethora of material types such as textbooks, pamphlets, readers, films, and games; 6) emphasized knowledge and methods of the social sciences such as anthropology, economics, and political science.

The meeting at Endicott House in 1962 was a key attribute toward unification in social studies. The curriculum units proposed by Endicott House provided a springboard for groups of social scientists to address topics in unison; however, it did not clarify or identify exactly what made up the subject of social studies. Barr et al. (1977) wrote that the confusion surrounding social studies and its pedagogy was apparent in "those who write textbooks, prepare curriculum materials, teach educational methodology, and philosophy, and certify the professional preparation of social studies teachers" (p.2).

The inability to determine a clear definition of what constitutes social studies was incredibly taxing in the classroom. Overall, teacher preparation courses in post-secondary education were based predominantly on the study of history, social sciences, and the corresponding methods. However, according to Barr et al. (1977), these experiences were not aligned with the elementary and secondary definition of social studies education and therefore proved to be an incoherent experience for the teacher. The diverging perspectives and
expectations of social studies education led to confusion within the profession. "Teachers do not know whether they should be teaching social science concepts, stimulating reflective inquiry, developing "good citizens" or attempting to do them all" (p.4).

With the introduction of discipline-specific curriculum projects, teachers were often introduced to new and sometimes confusing pedagogical concepts. Barr et al. (1977) revealed that teachers were met with overwhelming confusion about the appropriate pedagogy and methods for their social studies classrooms. Several concepts such as decision-making, ethnic studies, particular interest areas, social science, and moral development regarding the appropriate transmission of social studies education emerged during the 1960s, and each competed for representation in the American classroom.

**Emphasis on Decision Making**

Scholars postulated that social studies education reflected a predominant focus on decision making. Supporters of this ideology were professors of social studies methods classes, curriculum developers, and preservice teacher instructors. The foundational support for an emphasis on decision making derived from John Dewey's expressed position on social studies. He claimed that the purpose of social studies was to teach "the imperatives of a democratic, self-governing society, and [establish] the requirements of critical thought, problem-solving, and decision making" (Barr et al., 1977, p.4). This concept emphasized the need for students to learn decision-making skills related to social problems and issues of public controversy. The rationale behind this concept was derived from the understanding that social studies have always been concerned with citizenship education. Scholars such as Shirley Engle, that support this emphasis, claim, "the mark of a good citizen is the quality of decisions which [s]he reaches on public and private matters of social concern" (Shirley Engle, 1960, as cited in Barr et al., 1977, p. 4).
**Emphasis on Ethnic Studies**

An emphasis on ethnic studies encouraged teachers to focus on the cultures of minorities. This concept focused on cultural studies of "blacks, Spanish-speaking people, and other minorities" (Barr et al., 1977, p.5). The National Council of Social Studies created a pamphlet asking teachers to consider the following assignments to sensitize students to culture. 1) Teachers should compile a list of criteria to detect racism in people, institutions, and American culture. 2) Ask students to assess their classroom surroundings as an opportunity to detect racism and biases. 3) Teachers should create a list of criteria for identifying racism in the textbooks used in the classroom. The NCSS supported the integration of this emphasis in schools. The rationale behind this emphasis is derived from what Barr et al. (1977) claimed was "over a century [of] social studies texts hav[ing] glorified the Anglo-Saxon heritage…and treated minorities generally in an unflattering way" (p.5).

**Emphasis on Special Interest Areas**

Similar to the objectives within the concept of "emphasis on ethnic studies," an emphasis on particular interest areas focused on modifying the social studies curriculum to address special interest groups. Not only was it an interest of this emphasis to promote respect for law and law enforcement, but various groups lobbied for representation, such as "government agencies, steel manufacturers, coal mining organizations, labor unions, patriotic groups, pro-church groups, groups opposing church and state relationships, solid waste disposal organizations, and ecology" (Barr et al., 1977, pp.6-7). Examples abound of this concept suggesting these groups created legislation, curriculum, and a voice for their point of view. However, many interest groups vying to be represented in the social studies classroom often caused hostility from one group to
another. The commitment to ever-changing particular interest areas caused frustration and confusion for classroom teachers.

**Emphasis on Social Science**

The concept of social science offered students the opportunity to view the world and process information with the mindset of a social scientist. Educational scholars believed that the varying disciplines offered a reliable, concise way to construct knowledge for students that would remain beneficial throughout their lifetime. According to Barr et al. (1977), the goal of social studies with an emphasis on social science was an opportunity to build civic values in the classroom. However, unlike other concepts, the emphasis on social science was to support decision-making and citizenship through a democratic view of society upholding democratic principles that would, in the end, produce responsible citizens. This concept proved difficult to modify within the social studies curriculum due to the plethora of social sciences and the different associated processes among the disciplines. Moreover, the definition of a responsible citizen and the goal of citizenship has been known to have different meanings to diverse audiences. How then could social studies teachers begin to address social studies education with an emphasis on social science.

**Emphasis on Values and Moral Development**

Social studies education emphasizing values and moral development stressed that "social studies teachers should not teach—i.e., indoctrinate—values, but that they should teach students a process of identifying and clarifying values" (Barr et al., 1977, p.8). Within the concept of valuing, teachers found multiple approaches to value and differing roles for the teacher within the classroom. Some teachers supported this concept and felt students should not necessarily clarify their values but critically analyze value conflicts. Other teachers believed that the teachers
were responsible for remaining a neutral party and keeping the class as objective as possible. Scholars also recommended that teachers address values in a sequence of moral stages. While endless possibilities abounded, the discipline-specific curriculum ultimately left the social studies teacher overwhelmed concerning the most effective or appropriate approach to teaching social studies.

Project Social Studies initiated an era of extensive growth in the social studies curriculum. Both the Woods Hole and the Endicott House conference played an influential role in merging social science disciplines to create a more uniform social studies curriculum; however, the results at the classroom level were nearly catastrophic. The meetings resulted in curriculum planning that produced discipline-specific projects such as the Carnegie-Mellon University Social Studies Project, the Anthropology Project, and the High School Geography Project. However advanced the curriculum projects were, the various social science disciplines and concepts for emphasizing them became overwhelming for classroom teachers. Barr et al. (1977) stated that what resulted from Project Social Studies were social studies classrooms where teachers were expected to "select, interpret, and emphasize" mainstream ideologies that were the current representation of American culture and society (p.6).

**The Harvard Social Studies Project-The Interdisciplinary Approach**

The Harvard Social Studies Project (HSSP) was considered an interdisciplinary approach partially due to its broad nature. Designed to promote discussion on various topics, the Harvard Project focused on the discussion process and the persisting and public issues associated with historical events concerning current dilemmas. The curriculum project was initially developed by project directors Donald Oliver and James Shaver in 1956 under private funding; however, funding was also later received from the United States Office of Education as part of the Project
Social Studies initiative. Many projects developed under the Project Social Studies initiative focused on one specific social science discipline.

The Harvard Social Studies Project was considered a unique development as it was the only project that sought to integrate skills and concepts from all social studies disciplines. The project's design allowed students to analyze controversial issues through source stimulation, discussion, and arguments calling for an analysis of public controversy focused on citizenship education. The Harvard Social Studies Project clearly defined controversial or public issues as problems and dilemmas persisting throughout history and across cultures. Developers argued that this clearly defined approach toward public issues would allow students to learn skills that supported the ultimate goal of citizenship education.

According to Barr et al. (1977), by the late 1960s, developers realized the confusion that resulted from the different social science courses and the varying concepts of emphasis within the social studies classroom. Curriculum developers noticed the interrelationship between history and the social sciences and designed instructional material that integrated various disciplines. However, projects such as the Utah State Project and The Harvard University Social Studies Project were developed years earlier as an interdisciplinary curriculum for social studies. The Harvard University Social Studies Project was developed to teach students how to analyze and examine historical and current issues through analysis, discussion, and identifying and addressing persisting issues associated with a phenomenon. The project was designed to teach students to make and defend positions on public issues. The project clarifies that public issues did not represent current events; instead, it indicated issues that persisted throughout history and across cultures.
The Project materials consisted of 28 stapled, paper-covered pamphlets on public, controversial topics that could be discussed in the classroom. Each pamphlet was accompanied by a Teacher's manual that provided effective teaching strategies and assessments. The content topics were developed to aid in conflict analysis and included concepts and analytical methods used by social science disciplines. Concepts within the text included human dignity, separation of powers, and public issues and conflict. Issues within the project curriculum commensurate with the concepts suggested were "Science and Public Policy, Race and Education, Privacy and Status" (Social Education, 1972, p. 749). With Socratic discussion as a foundation, case study materials were essential. In the Harvard Social Studies Project, case study materials included stories, historical narratives, research data, text, and interpretive essays. Methods of instruction identified in the lessons included traditional lectures, reading cases aloud, writing analogy cases, Socratic seminars, games, films, writing position papers, and small group discussions. Each strategy used adhered to open-ended inquiry, which would allow students to rationalize and draw conclusions independently.

The Decline of the New Social Studies

While the 1960s provided curriculum developers the opportunity to participate in education reform, project developers of the New Social Studies could not avoid the troubles that accompanied the movement. In 1969, a survey by Educational Testing Incorporated revealed that while the content of social studies had been a significant part of the curriculum reform movement, nothing had changed in the classroom. Multiple studies purported that the social studies movement had not prepared students with any type of civics education, and regardless of the massive funding for curriculum, schools had not improved (Barr et al., 1977, p.48).
Author Geoffrey Sheurman (2018), in his text, *Evanescence, and Permanence*, disclosed six reasons for the decline of the New Social Studies movement. First, he stated, the social issues of the period, such as the Vietnam war, the Civil Rights movement, and the launching of Sputnik, cast an archaic shadow over the discovery-method and inquiry approach to teaching, which was a primary feature of NSS projects. Furthermore, Sheurman disclosed that the materials created for the New Social Studies Project lessons were often too sophisticated for students and teachers. This was believed to result from avoidance, corroborated by the project developers. In retrospect, the developers did not seek counsel or advice from the teachers or the schools. This resulted in a foreign curriculum for classroom teachers and was challenging to incorporate. Issues with New Social Studies Projects increased as teachers lacked the necessary training to understand the methods of instruction, and because the projects were singular with no unifying scope and sequence, schools were not willing to commit to project implementation.

However, the most severe blow for the New Social Studies resulted from the controversy surrounding the NSS Project, Man: A Course of Study (MACOS). According to Barr et al. (1977), what started as a textbook controversy in West Virginia became a case before the United States Congress. MACOS was attacked concerning the cultures studied in the unit and activities, and games students participated in. As a result, the Council for Basic Education spearheaded a "back to basics" movement, which admonished schools to return their focus to fundamental educational values of traditional disciplines. Associate director George Weber explained that the "back to basics" movement resulted from a decade of decline related to the "Vietnam War, Watergate, National Assessment, declining discipline in school children, and an excess of superficial innovations" (p.48). The New Social Studies had produced innovative projects;
however, they did not accomplish the intended interdisciplinary unified curriculum or growth in citizenship education.


**The Accountability Movement**

In 1964, President Johnson introduced his "Great Society" plan during a conference at Ohio University. In his plan, the President promised Title I and Title III funding to schools across the United States if they met specific criteria set forth by the government, including a new mandate for national standardized testing to assess curricular effectiveness and student knowledge. The plan also projected classroom diversity by integrating students of varying cognitive abilities into the traditional classroom setting. Research by Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) clarified the rationale for a more unified national approach toward curriculum and testing. "By more clearly defining the field of social studies [or education in general], and distinguishing more carefully between factions, it is hoped that teachers and scholars can develop more precise insights into their profession" (97).

To this end, The National Assessment of Educational Progress was created in 1964 as an assessment program to gauge students' knowledge of mathematics, civics and economics, reading and writing, science, and U.S. history. After its establishment, the American government issued a national assessment known as the "Nation's Report Card." All schools that received federal funds (i.e., Title I) were required to participate in standardized testing (Smilowitz, 2014). By the early 1970s, national assessment results of high school students enrolled in social studies courses suggested strategies incorporated in most New Social Studies projects failed to increase student content retention, critical thinking skills, and civics education. The assessment results
proved that the New Social Studies projects that had been underway in most schools across the nation had failed to prove an effective way to teach social studies goals.

As the "Nation's Report Card" revealed the inadequacies of the New Social Studies Projects, many districts and government agencies use this as an opportunity to attack speak out against the New Social Studies movement of the 1960s. Such outcry cast blame and failure onto the program's shortcomings and failures on educators and school systems. The New Social Studies were labeled as a "progressive," issue-centered approach that, as in the early 1930s, experienced a decline in educational retention in students. This inability to gain knowledge was blamed on the progressive experimentation and the drastically different ideas in content and pedagogy presented to teachers. Lawrence Senesh (1981) notes that many school districts adopted curriculum projects because they were easily adaptable and teacher-proof; however, he postulated that the project materials were right the opposite. He admits that the lessons required teacher training to be implemented with full impact; the inability of teachers to understand and present the content and materials effectively in the classroom was another reason it lacked usability and stability in public schools.

The New Social Studies projects sustained criticism of direct attacks in the mid-1970s by the "New Right" led by the Heritage Foundation. This Washington-based organization rallied for less direct government control in education. The New Right desired to initiate a literal attack on the project materials created under the New Social Studies Project. The organization laid out three ways to attain this goal: 1) search out and destroy any materials in social studies classrooms that promoted free inquiry through attacks on culture; 2) censor what educational materials were made available to the student through school libraries; 3) and integrating doctrines of the Christian Bible such as creationism into the classroom learning environment.
Back to the Basics: Social Studies

The "Back to the Basics" movement of the 1970s was fueled partly by the backlash directed toward the New Social Studies projects as both a perceived progressive attempt to thwart young minds and an attempt to dispel radically new curriculum strategies without proper teacher training and educational support. Such claims were the leading cause of misconceived thinking and lack of growth among American students. The result was a counter-movement to return to basic facts, knowledge, and understanding. According to Smilowitz (2014), nationalism played an influential part in the American educational system, especially in social studies. Just as the patriotism movement in the 1940s utilized social studies courses to transmit social, political, and economic influence in the classroom, the United States Department of Education, along with other educational organizations such as The National Council for the Social Studies and the National Education Foundation, supported a Back to the Basics movement to support the growth of pedagogy and increase standardized testing scores.

The task of rebranding social studies in the wake of the back to basics movement was arduous. Barr et al. (1977) indicated a logical approach to bridge perceived misunderstandings with social studies curriculum was to redefine the social studies with an emphasis on purpose, methods, and content to support increased efforts of accountability set forth by the federal government. The addition of purpose, methods, and content aligned with the existing social studies traditions of citizenship transmission, social science, and reflective inquiry increased teacher and content accountability and validity.

As social studies sought to redefine itself in the accountability movement, researcher and college professor Robert Stahl focused on the state of learning within social studies. Robert Stahl and colleagues such as J. Doyle Casteel and Ronald Vansickle believed the curriculum used
within schools' social studies classrooms across the United States was ineffective for learning in the classroom. Students were primarily subjected to content transmission, which limited the use of higher-order thinking skills associated with the construction of knowledge. Systematic use of low-level thinking skills and tasks led to the creation of a decision-based content-centered curriculum. The Decision-making curriculum, designed on popular attributes from public issues-based new social studies projects, provided a foundation for the critical values and decision-based analysis of content-specific curriculum.

Robert Stahl's Approach to Social Studies Learning

As a mental construct, Robert Stahl posited that cognition depended on a solid foundation of background knowledge and information. Therefore, he advocated that the decision-based content-centered curriculum could be added to any existing curriculum for maximum classroom growth. According to Stahl (1976), learning and knowledge retention require a higher level of thinking processes, supported by the decision-making materials; as a result, a content-centered curriculum created by J. Doyle Casteel and Robert Stahl offered classroom teachers the opportunity to "carefully plan for, develop, implement, monitor, and assess instructional activities" (p.7).

One unique characteristic of the content centered curriculum was the integration of cognitive psychology. Robert Stahl (1995) contended that "human knowledge, whether personal or associated with a field or discipline, is constructed internally within and by each human" (p.7); this foundation of learning was forged in cognitive psychology. Stahl claimed that authentic learning was a result of the construction of knowledge. The term construction denoted a process of building that supported the "perspective claim that individuals spend their lives constructing or inventing their meanings, ideas, views and conceptions of the actual and imagined worlds, and
interpretations of the phenomena they encounter" (p.14). As a result, students interpreted, analyzed, and enacted their values, allowing them to take ownership of the decision-making process.

In 1973, Robert Stahl and colleague J. Doyle Casteel began an in-depth analysis of values-decision-making activities and the decision-making phases students encountered as they developed a framework of understanding and reasoning. Coined content-centered learning activities focused on attaining value clarification or moral development goals. Stahl (1979) indicated that students must engage in four phases of thinking during values/moral classroom instruction: conceptual, relational, valuation, and reflective. Such steps embedded into unique decision-making strategies provided social studies teachers with subject matter-centered materials that enhanced content comprehension while aiding students in inquiring decision-making, valuing, and moral reasoning skills.

Casteel and Stahl (1997) maintained that students who encounter values-based activities encounter four distinct decision-making phases as they investigate and formulate which decisions are needed. Decision-making activities related to content-specific materials are designed to cultivate student use of conceptual, relational, moral-reasoning, and reflective thinking. The concept of asking students to analyze, evaluate, and derive a values-based conclusion is not new in social studies education. Moral/value dilemmas originated as early as the 1960s with the Harvard Social Studies Project, which intended to involve students as more than passive spectators, but more thinking, active participants in history and modern life. The Harvard Project did not provide predetermined, correct, or wrong answers to social and historical problems. Instead, it challenged students to develop their positions and resolve conflicting views faced in society (Levin, Newmann, & Oliver, 1969). Like other projects in the New Social
Studies era, the Harvard Project eventually faded from prominence; however, elements of project materials sparingly remained in isolated classrooms.

Expanding on a values-based curriculum derived from various New Social Studies projects, progressive social studies scholar Shirley Engle called for the social studies curriculum to incorporate and embrace decision-making to promote helpful citizenship. According to Engle (1960), "decision-making requires more than mere knowledge of facts, and principles; it requires a weighing and balance, a synthesizing of all available information and values" (p.301). Engle maintained that the purpose and quality of the social studies instruction were to educate for citizenship. Such education for citizenship involved students becoming active agents of change by studying significant problems and analyzing interpretations, difficulties, and modern implications of historical, social, and political issues facing society. Engle's rejection of traditional rote-memorization and trivial facts were discouraged. Instead, the teacher's role was to lead the student through the decision-making process and provide support as students apply their understanding of the issue or problem while going beyond the textbook and analyzing and debating multiple data sources firsthand. Although the 1970s ushered in a new outlook on traditional educational reforms, terms such as cooperative learning, values education, and decision-making remained famous buzz words, despite limited yet practical classroom resources.

Research by Byford and Milam (2021) revealed that the first stage of thinking and decision-making occurred at the conceptual level. The conceptual stage emphasized student comprehension as they addressed explanatory questions of who? Where? When? What? How much? and how many apply. When moral issues or problems were examined, and decisions were considered, there was a focus on moralization. Students are expected to employ descriptive language patterns during the conceptual phase. This indicated their understanding of the
situation, problem, or dilemma. Thus, they identified the nature of the problem or dilemma to include specific moral issues and substances. According to Stahl (1979), students engaged with conceptual thinking answer such questions: What does this mean? What is your interpretation of the situation or events? What data is known? Moreover, what are some relevant attributes, characteristics, or features discussed? Such questions aimed to assist in the early steps toward deciding on potential objects, situations, and problems examined.

The second stage of thinking and decision-making occurred at the relational level. This phase focused on methods and approaches; the classroom teacher may help students engage in moral reasoning behaviors within the subject matter's context and content. The relational phase emphasized applying and analyzing the activity and course material information. The application and analysis of data and material encouraged synthesis between the two elements, which resulted in conjoining learned material with new meanings and concepts (Casteel & Stahl, 1997; Stahl, 1995). Students attempted to connect their conceptualization of morality to the ideas, content, images, and understandings of the issue during the relational phase.

The moral-reasoning stage, or the third phase, occurs when students engage in moral reasoning. Students employed moral criteria to consider and select which consequences they desired to attain or protect. This included students considering which measures were used and how the requirements were applied, which policy was followed, which situations were considered moral, and which courses of action were implemented. Students utilized ethical criteria in potential decisions or judgments during the moral-reasoning phase. Students considered the consequences of moral judgment and the legitimacy of such effects. During this thinking phase, the students might enlighten their decision-making with questions such as, if
placed in this dilemma, what course of action would one take? What results should be expected if the first or second alternatives are selected?

The final reflective phase occurs when the other stages are presumed complete. The reflective phase is designed to enable students to examine the consistency of how they used moral criteria and how they made moral judgments through a declaration or public statement of the final decision and the rationales for having arrived at the situation. According to Casteel and Stahl (1997), "under optimum conditions, this phase of thinking also embraces [d] careful reconsideration and reprocessing of one's ideas, information, and beliefs" (p.18).

Amid the "Back to the Basics" educational reform movement, while traditionalists pushed for a more conservatively perceived approach toward curriculum and pedagogy, Robert Stahl introduced his psychology of education and values-based decision-making approach for the K-12 classroom. However, the rise of accountability during the 1970s provided national testing data that indicated a recurrent decline in student content knowledge. As with other eras in American history, many of the deficits in social, political, and economic fronts were attributed to a shortcoming in the American educational system. These ideologies were dismissed for new reform in the 1980s.

*The Nation at Risk*

During the 1970s, the nation's confidence in political, religious, and educational institutions waned. Research published by David Freemon (1998) revealed that from 1968 to 1978, national trust in politicians and government fell from 64 percent to 33 percent; the sharpest decline 'occurred between 1972 and 1974' (p.187). The nation had encountered economic concerns surrounding high inflation and equally high unemployment rates, which Americans
believed reflected the inability of the nation's high schools to prepare students for life after graduation.

The change in national leadership with the inauguration of President Reagan in 1981 reflected America's intent on economic, political, and educational change. President Reagan's Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell, promoted the creation of an educational commission for change. Bell sensed that a significant issue within American education and the economy was the essence of mediocrity. Society was satisfied with the contrite and mediocre, which stagnated growth and change across the nation. Bell created an educational commission, the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which he tasked with identifying and synthesizing data on current education trends, both domestic and international. The results, he anticipated, would reflect the quality of education in America, offer recommendations for improvement, and ultimately raise school-wide expectations through changes in state and district educational standards. Gerald Holton (1984) published the article *A Nation at Risk Revisited*. Holton shared that the National Commission on Excellence in Education released its education report nineteen months after the project's inception. The report, titled *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, highlighted an imbalance in the American education system—"testimony of educational researchers, employers, teachers, administrators, and students portrayed a system riddled with inadequacies" (p.6).

Based on the report's inflammatory introduction, 'Indicators of Risk,' the report made several key recommendations for change. In its first and central recommendation on 'Content,' the commission proposed strengthening graduation requirements by establishing a 'core' of studies as the 'Five New Basics' for the high school. The core included four years of English, three years of math, three years of science, three years of social studies, and one-half year of
computer science, all required for graduation. Two years of foreign language in high school were highly recommended. Health and physical education went unmentioned, and the arts were regulated to secondary status.

In the area of social studies, the report stated that the curriculum should: 1) enable students to fix their places and possibilities within the larger social and cultural structure; 2) understand the broad sweep of both ancient and contemporary ideas that have shaped our world; 3) understand the fundamentals of how our economic system works and our political system functions 4) grasp the difference between free and repressive societies. Understanding each of these was requisite to the informed and committed exercise of citizenship in a free society.

Though it said little, these were remarkably traditional aims for social studies, implying an emphasis on history, economics, and civics as the report asked students to 'fix their places and possibilities' (Nation at Risk Report, p. 9) which implied a social efficiency orientation, with emphasis on the ultimate goal of finding suitable employment.

**Six Problems for the Social Studies in the 1980s and Post-A Nation at Risk Report**

The Social Studies/Social Science Education: Priorities, Practices, and Needs, also known as Project SPAN, was commissioned by the United States Department of Education in the mid-1980s to investigate the individual disciplines embedded in the nation's curriculum. SPAN Consultants and staff examined the widespread criticisms of the state of education after A Nation at Risk was published. As with many other studies of American education, the focus of SPAN was on the shortcomings and the potential improvement of education. In a broad review of the state of social studies, Project SPAN indicated six general problems associated with social studies education during the 1980s. Much of a positive nature can be said about the schooling of Americans during this time. Schools reflected a high level of literacy, a high average number of
years of schooling, students showed a zest for growth in certain aspects of their lives, there were many excellent educational materials, there was a broad base of public support for education, and many creative and dedicated educational personnel at all levels of education.

Nevertheless, there was widespread criticism of the state of education in the United States—the part of the public and many educators and SPAN consultants and staff. The focus of SPAN, like other studies of American education, was on the shortcomings and potential for improvement in education. In its broad review of social studies states, Project SPAN identified six significant problems, focusing on its formulation of desired states and recommendations for social studies.

**Problem 1: Student Learning.** Many students leave school without the knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward essential and desirable outcomes of social studies programs. In addition, many students do not like or value social studies as much as other subjects. Social studies students' knowledge, skills, and values were inadequate, and there had been little or no improvement in recent years. With few exceptions, a comparison of NAEP scores from 1969 to 1976 and 1972 to 1976 and MAT (Metropolitan Achievement Test) scores from 1970 to 1978 revealed the following results for social studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes: little or no improvement for elementary students, no improvement and slight declines for junior high students, significant declines for high school students. Reference to a different database—review of research—leads to similarly discouraging news related to attitudes and values. Programs designed to improve students' political attitudes, value clarification abilities, and levels of moral reasoning have not demonstrated substantial success (*The Future of Social Studies*).

Finally, students did not like social studies very much and did not believe the subject was critical in their lives after school. While there were exceptions, most of the research evidence
from questionnaires and observations pointed to a widespread lack of student interest and motivation. Student lack of interest, indifference, and boredom seemed prevalent in social studies classes, especially at the secondary level. Lack of student interest and learning in social studies was a significant problem in the 1980s.

Problem 2: The Culture of the School. The culture and organization of schools, especially at the secondary level, focus much on the energy of teachers and administrators on matters of management and control rather than on the teaching and learning of social studies—particularly the teaching and learning of higher-level thinking skills, participation skills, and democratic values. This problem was not unique to social studies. The power, stability, and complexity of the school and classroom culture were underestimated and ignored by curriculum reformers in the 1960s and 1970s. This reality, however, pervaded influences and often hindered academic pursuits—particularly efforts to bring about change—in the elementary, junior, and senior high schools. Recent studies and analyses have confirmed this important conclusion from the classic studies of the last decade.

Schools, especially at the secondary level, were characterized by a high degree of specialization, hierarchy, transient relationships, work based on coercion or extrinsic rewards, and significant emphasis on institutional maintenance, which often conflicted with high-quality service for "clients." The school culture's central force was its commitment to socialization—preparing young people to be good students (to earn good grades) and good citizens in adult society, emphasizing existing norms and practices. Within the school, this meant teaching students to respond promptly to bells, respect school property, and obey school rules. Within the classroom, this included teaching students to pay attention to directions, be quiet during class
presentations, get assignments in on time, respect the rights of other students, and obey the teacher's rules.

Consistent with these efforts at socialization, teachers and administrators devoted considerable time and energy to maintaining order and discipline and managing groups of students. Often, the teaching of subject matter was either sacrificed—to take attendance, to issue late slips, or to stop a student from daydreaming—or it was used as a management device; for example, by using class time to have students write answers to the questions at the end of a chapter. In addition to such overt efforts at socialization, most aspects of the "hidden curriculum" conveyed similar messages—the physical setup of the classroom, the teacher's benevolent authoritarian posture, and the authoritarian structure of the school. Teacher-to-student interaction was the dominant mode of communication rather than a combination that included, for example, student-to-student or student-to-teacher interaction.

Many other aspects of the school culture that affected students did not necessarily enhance academic learning. These included the sheer size of many schools, fragmented time schedules, and the nature of tests and grading systems. While teachers, administrators, and community members may have shared a commitment to the adequate socialization of students and the maintenance of a benevolent authoritarian structure, their diverse positions in the system sometimes resulted in conflicts in immediate goals. In addition to the problems related to the organization of the school, many elements of the student subculture turned attention away from organized learning efforts—including friendships, sex, sports, and other extracurricular activities. The fragmentation of effort was intensified in larger schools where it was impossible to relate to and know everyone personally. Developing a good climate and sense of community in large schools may have been more challenging, thereby hindering identification with the
school, turning attention away from the central goal of schooling, and possibly encouraging vandalism and violence.

While all curricular areas felt the restrictions and demands of the school's culture, social studies were unique in the degree to which it found its learning objectives in conflict with the culture. Although social studies were charged with teaching the fundamentals of democracy, schools were authoritarian systems. Social studies' highest-level skill and value objectives called for students to become active, participating decision-makers—yet there was a little opportunity within the school setting for these skills to be practiced and evaluated. Consequently, while teachers of other subject areas may have found their teaching objectives limited by the school culture, social studies teachers provided their students the ever-present discrepancy between what they preached (democratic principles) and what they were required to practice.

**Problem 3: Teaching Practices.** Instruction in social studies is generally characterized by a lack of variety in teaching methods and evaluation practices, limited learning experiences, and inattention to the implications of educational research. The principal methods of instruction in social studies were lecture and discussion/recitation based on textbooks. In a typical social studies lesson, the teacher assigned students a section of the text to read, followed with a recitation based on the reading, informally lectured on the topic, engaged students in a discussion that involved students answering questions or had students complete written worksheets in class or as homework. While some of these materials included decision-making and valuing questions, little social studies instruction engaged students in using various materials or participating in active experiences such as role-plays, action projects, or inquiry activities, either in or out of the classroom. Most instruction in social studies occurred in large-group settings with little use of small-group or individual approaches.
The evaluation practices most commonly used in social studies classrooms tended to reinforce the dominant instructional practices. The effective evaluation procedures were objective and essay tests, assessment of participation in class discussion, and grading of student papers. Examining the kinds of tests, homework assignments, and class discussion tasks commonly used indicated that teachers evaluated students on only a very narrow range of variables, primarily low-level cognitive operations such as recalling information and applying concepts (The Future of Social Studies). Generally avoided in the evaluation were synthesis and evaluation, reasoning skills, and critical and creative thinking. Although paper-and-pencil tests could measure higher-level thinking operations, most teacher-made tests did not.

In recent years, there has been considerable research on learning and student development, but few social studies teachers were aware of or influenced by such research. While Shaver (1979) and others have compellingly pointed out the dangers of applying educational research results to classroom practice, some recent research syntheses suggested applicable principles for instructional improvement. One such example was an article by Peter Martorella (1979) that offered several research implications for instruction: "The use of questions organized in some logical sequence in teaching has a significantly positive effect on learning compared to alternative approaches… Also, increasing the amount of time given for students to respond to questions improves the quality of response." (pp.599-602).

Responsibility for having failed to use such research lay in part with researchers who did not effectively communicate the results and implications of their work to teachers, in part with teachers who were unreceptive to the work of "those people in ivory towers," and in part with the lack of opportunities for researchers and teachers to interact with each other. Whatever the
reasons, most instruction in social studies (and other areas) was not based on or responsive to student's cognitive and social developmental needs and abilities, as revealed by research.

There were many reasons for teachers' heavy reliance on textbooks, the lack of variety in their instructional practices, and inattention to new research. Although some teachers complained about the reading levels of texts, most teachers generally liked to use textbooks. Textbooks help teachers organize the various bodies of knowledge they teach, mainly if they must teach disciplines other than those with formal training. The text was a good, concrete resource for student learning in an era of concern about "back-to-basics" and proficiency testing. Many materials incorporating varied learning activities have emphasized practical ways to use these techniques. Teachers told case-study investigators that their resource people "largely did not know the realities of their classroom situations." (The Future of Social Studies, p.12).

Teachers who are predisposed to use a variety of instructional practices found it challenging to do so. Seldom did teachers have role models to emulate, having studied under college professors who primarily lecture. New teachers' models were generally restricted to other teachers on their school faculty, most of whom had a minimal repertoire of strategies. Difficulties are also posed because many of the instructional practices involving students in active learning require substantial preparation time. Teachers also expressed concerns about students' frustrations who cannot deal with the tasks involved in active learning.

Perhaps the most crucial reason for teachers' use of a limited range of activities is the fear that inquiry and action-oriented practices make the management and control of students too tricky. Teachers' tried to "center on classroom management and socialization—the matters that must be handled to survive each day and [to] gain and maintain respect in a social system made up of other teachers, administrators, parents, and students." In general, the strategies teachers use
are "those that are considered to be safe in the classroom, the school, and the community. The more innovative teachers seem to sense how far out they can go and do not cross that line." (The Future of Social Studies, p.12).

**Problem 4: The Curriculum.** The social studies curriculum—courses, materials, and content—was focused primarily on specific facts and broad conclusions from history and other social science disciplines rather than on critical-thinking skills, social science concepts, values and attitudes, and social participation. The curriculum, moreover, is not based on student developmental needs and does not emphasize critical societal issues and active participation in the social world. The content and organization of these courses were not likely to encompass ideas and skills focused on students and society's current and future needs. Instead, they focused on topics, facts, places, periods, and broad conclusions of history, giving little emphasis to science concepts, critical-thinking skills, and social participation. Perpetuating these curriculum characteristics were commercially published curriculum materials that presented information to fit traditional expectations. The traditional curriculum gave little recognition to students' developmental characteristics and needs. The subject matter was placed at various grade levels with little regard to children's cognitive and social development. Courses in world history or world geography, for example, were taught to seventh-graders, who were engaged in an intense period of self-discovery.

There were few incentives to change the curriculum pattern and many forces weighing against change from a practical standpoint. Laws in 41 states required that American and state history be taught at elementary levels, secondary levels, or both. Civics or government was required in 31 states at one or both levels. Perhaps the most persuasive force supporting the status quo was a tradition with a 60-year history behind it. The present curriculum pattern was
comforting to social studies teachers, administrators, and parents, most of whom experienced the pattern themselves as students.

Aware of existing laws, examinations, and traditions, publishers produced commercial materials that supported the status quo. Paul Goldstein (1979), who made a critical study of textbook development, wrote, "The surest, least costly way to succeed with new materials is to follow the patterns successfully established by materials already in use" (p. 84). The result was limited alternatives for teachers; they must write their material if they wished to break the curricular pattern. Then, what we have is not a nationally imposed curriculum, but "a locally accepted nationwide curriculum" (Shaver, 1979, p.24). Despite numerous calls to reorganize the social studies curriculum, few comprehensive K-12 curriculum organizational schemes have advanced, and none have been adopted widely.

**Problem 5: The Profession.** Parts of the social studies profession, in varying degrees, are characterized by considerable disagreement on the most critical goals and objectives of social studies and by a decided lack of direction, satisfaction, opportunities for professional growth, and constructive interaction among the various participants. Precollege teaching was an isolated activity. Teachers generally worked alone with their students; they rarely worked together in team teaching arrangements or on cooperative, education-related tasks. Although about half of the social studies teachers in the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) study felt the lack of articulation between teachers of different grade levels was a problem, few attempted to achieve coordination as reported in the case studies. There was also little interaction at teaching levels other than elementary and secondary. The relationship between teacher educators and other college professors was characterized by limited communication, distrust, and lack of mutual credibility; a similar relationship existed between college professors and precollege teachers.
Although publishers of social studies materials communicated with some teachers, most teachers never had an opportunity to work with curriculum developers. Nor did they contact educational researchers, except possibly as subjects in studies; seldom were they asked to consult on decisions about what questions to research—a consultation that might have improved research and made it more relevant to teachers' interests and needs and school realities.

A significant factor that contributed to the lack of constructive communication was the existence of isolated subcultures within the profession—groups of elementary teachers, secondary history teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum developers, to name a few. Interaction among the various subcultures was inhibited by differences in needs, values, and reference groups and the well-established pecking order among different levels of education, which placed graduate teaching at the top and elementary teaching at the bottom. Members of the various subcultures were most often brought together in settings that reinforced the "pecking order"; for example, precollege teachers took college classes to learn from college professors, while college professors seldom participated in classroom teachers' sessions professional meetings. The differences in interest and values among members of the various subcultures and the pecking order phenomenon undoubtedly overshadowed the common concern for adequate social studies education, dividing the profession into special-interest cliques.

For teachers, the lack of constructive interaction was aggravated by limited opportunities for personal growth, advancement, and renewal. The proliferation of articles in both professional and popular magazines concerning teacher frustration and "teacher burnout" pointed at the acuteness of this problem for all teachers. Another reason for burnout that emerged from the NSF case studies was the multiple demands placed on teachers to meet diverse student needs and burgeoning requirements to keep records and write reports. At all levels of the profession, there
continued to be confusion about the primary purpose of social studies, which was reflected in the
debate about what social studies should be. At the same time, pressures from the back-to-basics
movement and directives for accountability forced local educators to define their goals and
objectives for social studies.

**Problem 6: Public Support.** There is insufficient public support for and understanding
of social studies programs that are balanced, judicious in responding to special interests,
supportive of democratic values, scientifically and educationally sound, and relevant to students' present and future lives. Social studies suffered from a variety of conflicting attitudes and responses on the part of the public. On the one hand, there was strong public support for teaching specific social science and history subjects. On the other hand, there was evidence that social studies were not seen as very useful—for example, as being less useful for later life than English, mathematics, commercial courses, shop, and extracurricular activities. Still, another aspect of the public's low esteem for social studies was the decline in attention and support given to social studies in the elementary grades. Much of this neglect was attributable to public concern for reading and computation skills. Substantially less time was devoted to social studies than reading or math in the elementary grades, particularly K-3. Informal reports indicated that elementary social studies programs were fighting for their existence in some districts.

When a strong public interest in social studies was shown, it was often manifested by a small group focused on a particular topic or subject. Special-interest groups made intensive efforts to secure more space in the curriculum for particular topics or subjects and inject certain views—often without consideration for how those topics and views fit into the entire social studies curriculum. Some special-interest pressures on the curriculum were directed toward censorship. While sex education and evolution controversies have sometimes been directed
toward social studies instruction, censorship battles in social studies have been staged more commonly over values education, patriotism, and teaching about religion.

Thus, the social studies profession failed to effectively communicate the characteristics of a broad and balanced social studies program and why it was crucial at all levels of education. This failure resulted in many people's narrow views of social studies. Social studies professionals have seldom made clear to the public the importance of social studies in helping students examine political and social issues; understand the influence of such problems as classism, racism, and sexism on their lives; value diversity in an interdependent world; resolve personal problems; make rational decisions about their private and public lives. Thus, social studies retained public support for only a small portion of the program that most educators agreed was desirable.

**Recommendations for Change-The Rise of Social Roles in Social Studies Education**

Despite the problems and issues recognized within social studies education, the staff of Project SPAN contended that the research and studies that supported the project uncovered teachers and programs across the nation that were integrating rigorous social studies curriculum—to this end, they believed it was possible to garner even better results with changes to the social studies. According to the recommendations of Project SPAN, students were naturally enthusiastic about their interests; therefore, it was the responsibility of the social studies to facilitate that natural affinity toward social studies learning.

The project explained that the initial starting point for change and progress in social studies came from learning from the past experiences of previous reform efforts and addressing the goals and objectives of each party involved. This would hold each stakeholder accountable for progress and change within social studies. Project SPAN aligned the recommended changes
to the six significant problems identified to offer feasible and desirable options. The project claimed past reformation projects lacked continuity; SPAN rectified this shortcoming by giving specific recommendations to each stakeholder in the future of social studies education.

Like many other observers of the educational landscape, SPAN consultants and staff believed there was an excellent potential for improving education in general and social studies in particular. Despite the shortcomings of many schools and programs, many others were demonstrably better. There were compelling examples of outstanding teachers teaching creatively and effectively throughout the nation. Some model curriculum programs were designed to keep social studies vital and valuable. These programs were implemented to please teachers, students, and parents. Schools that found practical ways to decrease management and control functions that were scattered across the country to experience more flexible class and out-of-class learning. If some teachers and schools were accomplishing these goals, there was speculation that other schools could make comparable improvements.

Another recommendation was to revise the social studies curriculum, including its scope and sequence. Project SPAN claimed that the social studies curriculum should intentionally reflect neglected areas such as critical thinking, social issues, and active participation, which the project believed to support student learning. Project SPAN also recommended the integration of social roles into the social studies curriculum. The project emphasized social roles within society, such as citizen, family member, member of any social group, worker, friend, consumer, etc., as an opportunity for students to recognize their place and impact in the social world. The report claimed that an individual's social roles could be interrelated to the six problems within social studies and that each social role has a substantial impact on some part of society. The
publication addressed the impact of implementing the foundational structure of social roles in society and the effect on the existing social studies curriculum.

The consultants and staff of Project SPAN realized that public education still retained considerable public support. Admittedly the public, particularly officials, were more carefully scrutinizing public expenditures for education, and schools were held increasingly accountable. However, public support was still there. Finally, despite what initially appeared to be significant resistance to change, education was capable of change as an institution. This has required many accommodations in the operation of public schools. Students with academic or behavioral problems, who formerly dropped out, now stayed in school. Education moved from an institution for the elite to an institution for the masses helped allay fears that no change was possible. Progress in social studies education did not come in the rapid, dramatic manner in science and technology; however, the potential was as real.

**Issue-Centered Learning 1990-2000**

*Assessment of Progress*

In response to the in-depth analysis of public education by Project SPAN, the Carnegie Forum on Education released a report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century*. The Carnegie Forum addressed the six problems with the Project Span report by proposing solutions that aligned with the recommendations made within the Project Span report. The Carnegie Forum recommended that a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards be created to strengthen current educational requirements and make them more uniform. The United States Secretary of Education, William Bennet, pressed schools to show accountability for their teaching standards. Educational committees such as CED and ECS, alongside The
National Governors Association (NGA), supported the SOE demanding greater accountability from schools across the nation (Eakin, 1996).

In 1989, President George H. W. Bush met with governors across the nation at an educational summit to finalize the new reform. The federal and state governments recognized their responsibility to reform education to address the grievances identified by Project SPAN. On a national level, the federal government introduced its reform effort, *America 2000*. The official announcement for *America 2000*, later called *Goals 2000* when adopted by the Clinton administration in 1992, was released in 1990. One year later, Congress established the National Council on Educational Standards and Testing (NCEST) to promote the standards and testing accountability measures.

The National Education Goals Panel, a committee of the *Goals 2000* appointed to create objectives that correlated with the recommendations of Project SPAN and *A Nation at Risk*, released their finalized list of academic objectives in a seemingly unified effort to address the educational deficit in the United States. Under *Goals 2000*, President George H.W. Bush signed these goals as the Education America Act. The United States Department of Education declared the following goals and objectives in direct response to the reports of the 1980s:

- **By 2000, all children will start school ready to learn.**
- **By 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to 90 percent.**
- **By 2000, students in grades four, eight, and twelve will demonstrate mastery in English, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, etc. Every school in America will ensure that students learn to use their minds to be responsible citizens and productive employees in our nation's modern economy.**
- **By 2000, teachers will have access to professional development opportunities and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.**
• By 2000, American students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

• By 2000, every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Maris, 1999).

The educational reform of the 1990s, including Goals 2000, focused on increasing academic standards and provided measures through which schools were held accountable for student performance. Two decades of school reform focused on foundational basic education were trumped by a new wave of reform. The A Nation at Risk report and the revelation of Project SPAN had shocked the nation and rallied public support for action. Goals 2000 was the first step toward the restoration of education in America.

Alongside implementing accountability efforts through Goals 2000, organizations such as the Committee for Economic Development (CED) and the Education Commission of the States (ECS) advocated for higher educational standards to prepare America's youth. Under the new standards, goals, and objectives of Goals 2000, all content areas were affected by the alterations of performance-based standards. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2003), by 1995, forty-eight states were testing eighth-grade students in English, mathematics, history, and science; forty-three states were testing fourth-grade students in the four main content areas. Project SPAN recommended the new accountability through performance-based standards testing as an opportunity to gauge learning through measurable objectives. Goals 2000 was the first attempt at standards-based accountability in the 1990s.

**Issue Centered Education**

In the attempt to meet the recommendations set forth by Project SPAN and the growing trend for rigorous standards, the social studies did a collective reexamination of the definition of social studies and the goals of social studies education. As a result, social studies curriculum
developers and politicians followed the basic recommendations of Goals 2000. Established in 1990, Goals 2000 attempted to integrate an issues centered approach toward learning by creating the same predetermined structure for lessons across all grade bands and within all content areas:

1. All issues-centered lessons or units were built around investigating open-ended probing questions that posed a problem for students to solve.

2. Pre-defined structures for investigation and discussion of an issue were created but not approached rigidly. The integration was intended to be flexible, not linear. It was expected to transcend from hypothesizing and arguing over explanations to evaluating new evidence or similar cases back and forth. Conclusions were considered somewhat tentative.

3. An issues-centered approach was considered heavily dependent on the thoughtful discussion that incorporated multiple formats, including Socratic seminar, group work, role-playing, simulation, student research, and a variety of small and large group discussions.

4. The approach discouraged giving students extensive background information before a reflective analysis. Instead, the approach emphasized a sense of doubt and desire to find relevant information that helped resolve the question or issue.

5. The issues-centered approach emphasized the use of evidence to make judgments. It also relied on analogies to test the possible consequences of a particular course of action. It aimed at comprising a thoughtful examination of student beliefs and values as part of a more extensive social, emotional, and intellectual growth process.

Social studies professionals reinstated the ideals founded by Harold Rugg to meet such new standards and higher student achievement. Harold Rugg's issues-centered approach dictated that social studies afford students a decision-making curriculum that, in turn, provides the opportunity and teaches students the ability to think critically about various social, cultural, and historical issues. This approach offered students the opportunity to "develop well-reasoned responses based on disciplined inquiry, thoughtful, in-depth study, and move beyond relativistic notions of truth" (Evans & Saxe, 1996, p.2).
The 1990s focus on issues-centered learning within social studies often centered on cultural dilemmas and institutional obstacles garnered social improvement. Students were taught and expected to explore and investigate issues in-depth, followed by discussion based on examination and reflection underlying our social institutions and lifestyles. The intent was to investigate and lead what students to raise fundamental questions regarding society and historical concepts. The issues-centered approach sought to develop well-informed citizens, and could thoughtfully reflect on the evidence and possible project consequences, weigh values, and arrive at supportable and consistent beliefs.

Regarding curriculum reform, issues-centered learning provided educators an opportunity to allow students to interact with the content in a way that did not require direct information transmission. The four fundamental principles of issues-centered education advocated for student engagement in a constructive learning environment. First, issues-centered learning advocated that depth of knowledge be more highly regarded than breadth. This educational approach also supported a building block structure of themes within a content area to solidify the construction of knowledge. A deep investigation should be done in the thematic content area, and students must be active agents within the process. According to the issues-centered design, a teacher should serve as a facilitator and supporter within the process. Although issues-centered approaches gained some momentum in the 1990s, setting such lofty goals alongside new performance-based standards and state-mandated testing resulted in neither the Goals 2000 goals nor the state objectives for standards being achieved; state-mandated testing data revealed slight educational gains due to the reform movement.

According to Ross, Mathison, and Vinson (2014), the inability of the state governments or Goals 2000 to prove effective resulted from the massive standards-based reform itself. At both the
national and state level, the Department of Education advocated for higher standards and the accountability measures to assess those standards. Thus, high-stakes testing was created and directly linked to required educational standards. To incorporate the new standards-based reform meant a complete overhaul in some cases of curriculum and pedagogy. Popham (2008) wrote that one detrimental mistake of the high-stakes testing reform movement was the multiple sets of standards that proved challenging to align with the curriculum because there were too many goals and objectives that could be addressed in a single school year. Also, the 1990s reprisal of issue-centered education required students to gain an in-depth understanding of content. However, the issues centered educational approach of investigation and exploration proved counterintuitive to the high stakes accountability testing format.

**High-Stakes Testing and the Era of Accountability 2000-Present**

By 2000, the Department of Education, having worked with states to create content standards and accountability measures, geared up for more legislation and policy changes. According to Educational Leadership, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), passed in 2001, was a revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was initially passed in 1965 (Paul, 2016). No Child Left Behind provided funding to eligible schools. With the implementation of NCLB, a school was required to meet proficiency targets on annual assessments. However, NCLB did not "set a national standard; rather each state set[s] its standards, and create[d] its assessments to measure achievement" (Groen, 2012, p.10). Both ESEA and NCLB primarily targeted math and literacy, lending little emphasis on science and social studies. The target of math and literacy set over the social studies initiated a downward spiral for social studies education and its representation in the classroom.
These "proficiency targets," also considered high-stakes testing, were the measure of accountability for both school districts and individual educators that focused less on pedagogy like Issue-Centered learning and decision making and prioritized content and high-stakes testing. According to Ross et al. (2014), the No Child Left Behind legislation caused a massive reduction in time designated for social studies teaching in the classroom. This resulted from high-stakes testing because non-tested subjects, like social studies, did not warrant the same attention as tested subjects such as math and English.

As a result of the, No Child Left Behind legislation expiration in 2007, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) presented a uniform plan for standards implementation across the United States. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were introduced to unify content implementation nationwide and ensure student proficiency. Many states immediately adopted the standards for implementation. Tennessee adopted CCSS as early as 2010. The adoption and implementation of new standards were concurrent with "many states receiving No Child waivers…launching new systems to evaluate teachers, which incorporated some measures of student achievement, including, where available, scores from standardized tests" (McArdle, 2014, p.25). It was intended that Common Core State Standards (CCSS) work in tandem with the residual legislation supporting state-mandated testing for students. The Common Core State Standards universally dictated what would be taught in a content area and how it would be taught in the classroom. CCSS were written to align with high-stakes testing measures like other performance-based standard reforms. However, Ross et al. (2014) revealed that CCSS offered a more progressive approach toward learning instead of the fact transmission, testing preparation curriculum integrated under NCLB.
In 2010, amidst CCSS adoption, the National Council for the Social Studies began to outline the National Standards for the Preparation of Social Studies Teachers to address the need for qualified teachers in the classroom. According to the NCSS, this program promoted the "professionalization of the field of social studies teacher education by outlining the characteristics of quality preparation" (p. 7). The new framework was created to assist teachers in bringing high-quality social studies education to the classroom, which consisted of a framework for social studies state standards called C3. NCSS identified the following criteria for the C3 framework: 1) social studies prepare students for college, career, and civic life; 2) the foundation of social studies is inquiry; 3) social studies are to be seen as an interdisciplinary area; 4) social studies of holistic understanding and comprehension; 5) social studies education supports civic life.

In 2015, President Barack Obama signed the bipartisan legislation Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). According to Blad and Ujifusa (2019), ESSA, like No Child Left Behind, was an extension of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to keep state-mandated testing according to rigorous academic standards priority in American education. It also offered to relieve the federal government of its role concerning teacher evaluations and school improvement factors. The United States Department of Education described the provisions of ESSA, stating that changes were made to ESEA and NCLB to support and grow evidence-based interventions and methods for education as developed by educators and maintain accountability and action for positive change in American schools (Wang, 2019). The weight of accountability measures for educators had not changed, and students were still required to progress monitor through the assessment of standards which heavily relegated the teacher's pace of content coverage in the classroom. This has inadvertently restricted the teacher's ability to
present content in ways that benefit cognitive learning construction because of the strict relegation of time and content coverage.

According to Groen (2012), the No Child Left Behind legislation has had the most significant impact on social studies curriculum and pedagogy. The recent testing mandates revised through ESSA ensured the classroom atmosphere remained test-driven and motivated by "a pedagogical philosophy that required specific practices for teaching children a specific set of skills" (p. 9). These mandates, alongside the most recent updates to the C3 framework through NCSS, support a new vision for social studies in this era. According to NCSS (2019), each of the standards listed within the most current C3 framework debunks a linear approach to teaching social studies and acknowledges the need for skills, knowledge, and investigations as a foundation for social studies content. According to Jennifer Kilmore (2021), additional legislation within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) alongside the rigorous standards and elements from the C3 framework exist in tandem, returning more control to states while upholding specific accountability measures. The C3 framework through NCSS advocates for an inquiry-driven classroom "where students practice civic life." The C3 framework is the culmination of years of reforms in the name of progressive education. The framework incorporates thought-provoking discovery into the social studies classroom. Under the framework created by the National Council for the Social Studies, classrooms in America can welcome the opportunity to engage with the curriculum and construct a comprehensive understanding of the material aligned with the same rigorous standards and accountability testing required by ESSA.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH AND DESIGN METHODOLOGY

This research study aimed to investigate high school teachers' perceptions of Robert Stahl's decision-making materials in the social studies classroom. In 2020, The Ayers Foundation partnered in a Southeastern state in collaboration with the National Institute for Excellence (NIET), The Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning and Innovation, and the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) to create a rural acceleration and innovation network. The network was established to provide comprehensive plans for supporting the continuity and acceleration of student learning in rural communities. According to the 2010 census, the state reported 84% rural, where 80 of 95 counties had at least 50% of their residents living in rural communities. For this reason, rural areas experienced fewer service providers, resources for jobs, health care, and education (Gonzales, 2019). The rural acceleration and innovation network identified 15 rural districts, eight of which were exceptionally economically distressed due to socio and economic demographics within those communities.

Robert Stahl's decision-based content curriculum may benefit the teaching of social studies content by offering students opportunities to analyze, develop, and defend their beliefs through the decision-making process. Robert Stahl's content-centered or decision-making curriculum encourages students to thoroughly and critically examine the information and alternatives presented. Such critical examination through decision-making episodes creates opportunities for students to justify their actions. This springboard provides students with the ability to create knowledgeable responses to prompts within their curriculum (Stahl, 1979). This study attempted to explore the perceptions of high school social studies teachers regarding Stahl's decision-making materials and their effectiveness in the social studies classroom.
Research Methods

A qualitative case study methodology was used to conduct this study. Sharan Merriam (2009) recommended a case study methodology to "evaluate curriculum design and innovation" (p.8). Merriam (2015) revealed that a case study requires the researcher to explore participants' perspectives and the influence of socio-political and economic contexts on curriculum successes and failures and use case studies to evaluate educational programs through inquiry-based methods. This particular investigation lent itself to the use of case study methodology due to the inquisition of participant perspectives on their socio-economic status, experiences within the educational system, and perceived value of Robert Stahl's curriculum. Overall, a case study methodology provides an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon within its context to be understood from the participants' perspective (Merriam and Grenier, 2019; Stake, 2017; Yin, 2015). Among the various case studies identified by Merriam (2009), this study employed the collective case study. The study involved interviews with seven teachers, each from rural high school districts identified by the state’s education department.

Case studies can be used in studies with various sample sizes. In the current study, with a sample size of seven ($N = 7$), a collective case study (or multiple-case study) was used in which "the one issue or concern is again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue" (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). Creswell (2007) discussed the validity of a small number of cases within a case study because these small sample sizes allow ample opportunities for themes to be identified and representative cases to be compared. The case study methodology applies when researchers seek a holistic, detailed analysis of an issue through the selected cases. The case study approach fits the research parameters, specifically in selecting a single issue, namely high school U.S. history teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of Robert Stahl's
decision-making curriculum material, which should effectively illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2007). The case study utilized three methods: (a) semi-structured interviews, (b) field notes, and (c) document analysis of Robert Stahl's selected works and four decision-making phases.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the current study:

1. What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding classroom instruction?
2. What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding Stahl's approach towards the four phases of decision making?
3. What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding the integration of Decision Making Materials in the classroom?
4. What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding Decision Making Materials in relation to the NCSS C3 Framework and Tennessee State Standards?

Eight semi-structured interview questions were developed to capture participants' perceptions of the four research questions. Each research question has two sub-questions aligned to the research question while providing opportunities for participants' opinions. All four of Strauss, Schatzman, Butcher, & Sabshin's (1981) questioning categories were utilized to promote detailed responses from participants. Table 1 displays eight interview questions aligned with the research questions. Additionally, Table 2 displays the four stages of decision-making as defined by Robert Stahl (1979). Table 3 provides a synopsis of the six lessons provided to teachers for review within the study. Table 4 provides an overview of The NCSS C3 Framework, which guides the implementation of social studies standards in the secondary classroom. Table 5 reveals the demographic information of each school associated with the study.
Table 1

Research and Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding classroom instruction?</td>
<td>Some teachers and administrators might say to be an effective teacher, one needs to differentiate instruction to reach all learners? What would you say to them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding Stahl's approach towards the four phases of Decision Making?</td>
<td>What do you think is the ideal approach to presenting social studies content to students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding the integration of Decision-Making Materials in the classroom?</td>
<td>Some people might say that Stahl's four decision-making phases are not necessary to promote inquiry. What would you say to them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the perceptions of High School teachers regarding Decision Making Materials in relation to the NCSS C3 Framework and Tennessee State Standards?</td>
<td>Suppose you were asked by your administration to teach a topic that dealt with decision-making. What would it look like?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some people might say Robert Stahl's approach towards teaching decision-making in social studies is outdated. What would you say to them?

How do you think teachers should address decision-making in the classroom?

Suppose your district required you to explain how Robert Stahl's decision-making materials (any one of the lessons) related to the Tennessee State Standards? What would you say to them?

How would you explain the relationship between the NCSS C3 Framework, and the lessons by Robert Stahl, if any?
Table 2

Phases of Decision-Making

J. Doyle Casteel and Robert Stahl contend that students encounter four decision-making phases as they investigate situations and information for which a decision is required. Casteel and Stahl (1997) described that decision-making episodes concerning content-specific material are designed to foster student use of conceptual, relational, decisional, and reflective thinking. Students explore moral dilemmas associated with historical content and incorporate the five phases of thinking to formulate individual or group decisions (p.19). Clarification of values and moral beliefs, which occur through student decision episodes, is often unique to how each student or group identifies, comprehends, decides, and uses values and reasoning when considering a historical text (Casteel, 1978).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONCEPTUAL</td>
<td>The <em>conceptual phase</em> in the decision-making process focuses on student comprehension of the task at hand. Explanatory answers to questions of who? where? when? what? how much? and how many apply. Conceptual thinking focuses on the comprehension, description, and clarification of information provided to the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONAL</td>
<td>The <em>relational phase</em> stresses the formation, relevancy, and connection to content materials used in the classroom. The relationship between content material is combined through a lesson or activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECISIONAL</td>
<td>The <em>decisional phase</em> involves a student using categories of information that should calculate as a student considers all options before making decisions. Categories include given, likely, and possible choices, actions, policies, and probable short and long-term advantages and disadvantages of each option or plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTIVE</td>
<td>The final <em>reflective phase</em> occurs when the other stages are presumed complete. In the reflective aspect, a student must include a public statement of a final decision and the rationales used for having arrived at the situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

**Synopsis for Lessons by Robert Stahl**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Name</th>
<th>Lesson Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Points</td>
<td>This activity focuses the assumption that students are a member of the United States Senate. It is July 1919. President Woodrow Wilson has just returned from a triumphant trip to Europe that ended in the signing of the Treaty of Versailles; the Treaty that followed the Great World War. Students are to consider the details of the League of Nations (handout) or the rest of the Treaty of Versailles (handout), they must decide first to review the background to the present situation and know their decision will not come easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Question of Accountability</td>
<td>This activity focuses on the assumption that the students are a policeman observing traffic flow across a narrow bridge during a sudden and blinding thunderstorm. Traffic has slowed to a snail's pace, and visibility is near zero. With limited information from dispatch or the weather service, they must decide which vehicles can and/ or cannot cross. Students are asked to consider all information provided and make the final decision concerning which vehicle has priority and may cross. Students must justify their choices while recognizing the consequences of their choices. There is a decision sheet to help the student(s) keep up with this information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Them a Voice</td>
<td>This activity focuses on the assumption that students assume that they are a member of the board of directors of a large, well-known automobile company. They and fellow board members are discussing how large a voice if any, the workers should be given in determining such company policies as wages, working conditions, and production. Each member of the board of directors has been handed a list of nine possible ways that workers could be allowed to participate in company decisions. Each member, including the student, has been asked to rank order these possible policies from best to worst. Students are to rank order the choices from the one they believe is best (with a “1”) to the one they believe is worst (with a “9”). Each member of the board is asked to keep in mind the image of the company, the volume of company sales, profits, and the history of work stoppages engaged in by workers as she or he rank orders the possible ways in which workers could be given a more significant voice in economic policymaking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

*Synopsis for Lessons by Robert Stahl (continued)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Name</th>
<th>Lesson Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is All This Monkey Business About Anyways?</strong></td>
<td>This activity focuses on the assumption that students are a part of a group of officials from the State of Tennessee. The group is to consider the appeal of John Scopes, who is asking that his trial results be changed. He is not saying he is innocent of breaking the law; he argues that the law he broke is terrible and should be removed from the lawbooks. Students are to consider the facts of the first ‘Scopes Trial,’ then they reach a group decision about what should be done next. The student’s decision is expected to help the Appeals Court Judge make a final decision on the case. The facts and background for the case are presented for your review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Being an Important Person</strong></td>
<td>This activity focuses on the following assumption: The time is the first decade of the twentieth century. The &quot;progressive&quot; spirit is sweeping the United States. For purposes of this exercise, students are to assume they are living during this period. Every town meeting, religious gathering, and casual conversation they participate in eventually results in discussions of needed reforms in America. Everyone seems to believe that he or she is an authority on what is happening and what needs to be done. Everyone claims to know what and how Progressives think, believe, and feel. Students are asked to consider that they are an adherent of the Progressive philosophy. Because of their commitment to the necessity for reforms within certain sections of American society, they have become an activist in the movement. Their association with Progressives in your state has helped you to identify the significant characteristics of the progressive movement as they relate to their activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out of School</strong></td>
<td>This activity focuses on the United States' foreign policy following the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. President Teddy Roosevelt received the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the Treaty of Portsmouth that ended this war. The Taft-Katsura executive agreement of 1905 confirmed the United States’ recognition of Japanese sovereignty over Korea. Students are asked to consider that they are up for re-election next month. They are attending the regular school board meeting. In a surprise move, they are asked to vote on the adoption of proposed board policy. This system would order the segregation (separation) of Asian children from white children in public schools in San Francisco. If adopted, the policy is to take effect immediately. They request that the final vote is delayed for two weeks. This will give them time to investigate the matter and study all of the facts. They request defeated in a 4-1 vote.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
NCSS C3 Framework-Synopsis

The primary purpose of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards is to guide states on the concepts, skills, and disciplinary tools necessary to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. In doing so, the C3 Framework offers guidance and support for rigorous student learning. That guidance and support take form in an Inquiry Arc—a set of interlocking and mutually reinforcing ideas that feature the four Dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies: (a) Developing questions and planning inquiries; (b) Applying disciplinary concepts and tools; (c) Evaluating sources and using evidence; and (d) Communicating conclusions and taking informed action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civics</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Developing Claims and Using Evidence</td>
<td>Communication and Critiquing Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Informed Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sites of Research

Research for the study took place at five different rural high schools across the east, middle, and western regions of a Southeastern state of the United States. The five schools sampled were selected through two-stage random sampling, as shown in Table 5, and represent the majority population within the Southeastern state. Dr. Allen Pratt and Alan Richard (2019) reported that the Southeastern state has the nation's fifth-largest rural school student body, with more than 293,000 students attending public schools in rural communities. According to the
2020 census, 84% of the Southeastern state is rural, with 80 of the 95 counties meeting the state’s Academic Rurality Measure. Variable among the five schools selected through two-stage random sampling existed among rural schools. Likewise, considerable variation in teacher course assignments and school offerings existed among identified districts. Below, each of the sites is described in more detail.

**Table 5: School Site Enrollment Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Location Type</th>
<th>Enrollment: 2020/2021</th>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th># of Teachers Sampled</th>
<th>Small or Sparse Weight (TISA)</th>
<th>Graduation Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Rural/East</td>
<td>1,248</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sparse</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Rural/East</td>
<td>1,519</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sparse</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Rural/Middle</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sparse</td>
<td>98.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Rural/West</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sparse</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Rural/West</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sparse</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High School A.** High school A is a public high school located within a large rural county school district within the eastern region of the Southeastern state. In 2021, 1,248 students were enrolled in the school, of which 71.8% are Caucasian, 24.3% are Hispanic, and less than 5% are classified as other. Of the student body at High School A, 21.4% of students enrolled in this school are considered economically disadvantaged. The school currently receives Federal Title I funding. According to the Southeastern state’s Department of Education, High School A is considered a sparse district; a sparse district houses 25 students or less per square mile in the county. In 2021, the school’s graduation rate was 93.4%, with 48.5% of those graduates seeking post-secondary education while 34% pursued a career and technical (CTE) path. The school received a per-pupil annual expenditure of $11,572 (TDOE, 2022a). In 2021, High School A had a success rate of 26.7%. This data indicates that 26.7% of the student body in High School A are “on track” or “mastery.” According to the Department of Education, a classification of ‘on track’
or ‘mastery’ denotes a student’s proficiency within a subject. Of all content areas tested in 2021, High School A did not report Social Studies data. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Southeastern state waived the right of the state to collect data and rank schools during the 2020/2021 school year; however, schools that participated in state assessments and relinquished the data were given an ‘H’ or Held Harmless ranking. The Southeastern state gave High School A the ranking of ‘H,’ meaning they offered data to the state that corresponded with the 2020/2021 state assessment; however, according to the waiver, High School A is held harmless and will not lose state or federal funding due to data.

**High School B.** High school B is a public high school located within a mid-size rural county school district within the eastern region of the Southeastern state. In 2021, 1,519 students were enrolled in the school, of which 84.2% are Caucasian, 9.8% are Hispanic, and less than 5% are classified as other. Of the student body at High School B, 33.1% of students enrolled in this school are considered economically disadvantaged. The school currently does not receive Federal Title I funding. According to the Southeastern state’s Department of Education, High School B is considered a sparse district; a sparse district houses 25 students or less per square mile in the county. In 2021, the school’s graduation rate was 92.3%, with 54.2% of those graduates seeking post-secondary education while 57.8% pursued a career and technical (CTE) path. The school received a per-pupil annual expenditure of $10,630 (TDOE, 2022b). In 2021, High School B had a success rate of 28.7%. This data indicates that 28.6% of the student body in High School B are “on track” or “mastery.” According to the Department of Education, a classification of ‘on track’ or ‘mastery’ denotes a student’s proficiency within a subject. Of all content areas tested in 2021, High School B reported an ‘on track’ and ‘mastery’ rate of 32.2% on the Social Studies state assessment. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Southeastern state
waived the right of the state to collect data and rank schools during the 2020/2021 school year; however, schools that participated in state assessments and relinquished the data were given an ‘H’ or Held Harmless ranking. The Southeastern state gave High School B the ranking of ‘H’; this ranking means High School B offered data to the state that corresponded with the 2020/2021 state assessment; however, according to the waiver, High School B is held harmless and will not lose state or federal funding due to data.

**High School C.** High school C is a public high school located within a small rural county school district in the western region of the Southeastern state. In 2021, 641 students were enrolled in the school, of which 95% were Caucasian, 5% were Hispanic, and less than 5% were classified as other. Of the student body at High School C, 24.6% of students enrolled in this school are considered economically disadvantaged. The school currently receives Federal Title I funding. According to the Southeastern state’s Department of Education, High School C is considered a sparse district; a sparse district houses 25 students or less per square mile in the county. In 2021, the school’s graduation rate was 98.4%, with 61.8% of those graduates seeking post-secondary education while 60% pursued a career and technical (CTE) path. The school received a per-pupil annual expenditure of $9,947 (TDOE, 2022c). In 2021, High School C had a success rate of 25.2%. This data indicates that 25.2% of the student body in High School C are ‘on track’ or ‘mastery.’ According to the Department of Education, a classification of ‘on track’ or ‘mastery’ denotes a student’s proficiency within a subject. Of all content areas tested in 2021, High School C reported an ‘on track’ and ‘mastery’ rate of 44.5% on the Social Studies state assessment. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Southeastern state waived the right of the state to collect data and rank schools during the 2020/2021 school year; however, schools that participated in state assessments and relinquished the data were given an ‘H’ or Held Harmless
ranking. The Southeastern state gave High School C the ranking of ‘H’; this ranking means High School C offered data to the state that corresponded with the 2020/2021 state assessment; however, according to the waiver, High School C is held harmless and will not lose state or federal funding due to data.

**High School D.** High school D is a public high school located within a mid-size rural county school district in the western region of the Southeastern state. In 2021, 956 students were enrolled in the school, of which 84% are Caucasian, 12.1% are Black/African American, and less than 5% are classified as other. Of the student body at High School D, 36.1% of students enrolled in this school are considered economically disadvantaged. The school currently receives Federal Title I funding. According to the Southeastern state’s Department of Education, High School D is considered a sparse district; a sparse district houses 25 students or less per square mile in the county. In 2021, the school’s graduation rate was 95%, with 50.5% of those graduates seeking post-secondary education while 66.5% pursued a career and technical (CTE) path. The school received a per-pupil annual expenditure of $10.241 (TDOE, 2022d). In 2021, High School D had a success rate of 24.1%. This data indicates that 24.1% of the student body in High School D are ‘on track’ or ‘mastery.’ According to the Department of Education, a classification of ‘on track’ or ‘mastery’ denotes a student’s proficiency within a subject. Of all content areas tested in 2021, High School D had no reported data on the Social Studies state assessment. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Southeastern state waived the right of the state to collect data and rank schools during the 2020/2021 school year; however, schools that participated in state assessments and relinquished the data were given an ‘H’ or Held Harmless ranking. The Southeastern state gave High School D the ranking of ‘H’; this ranking means High School D offered data to the state that corresponded with the 2020/2021 state assessment;
however, according to the waiver, High School D is held harmless and will not lose state or federal funding due to data.

**High School E.** High school E is a public high school located within a small rural county school district in the western region of the Southeastern state. In 2021, 764 students were enrolled in the school, of which 41.8% are Caucasian, 54.8% are Black/African American, and less than 5% are classified as other. Of the student body at High School E, 44.4% of students enrolled in this school are considered economically disadvantaged. The school currently receives Federal Title I funding. According to the Southeastern state’s Department of Education, High School E is considered a sparse district; a sparse district houses 25 students or less per square mile in the county. In 2021, the school’s graduation rate was 97.1%, with 35.5% of those graduates seeking post-secondary education while 62.3% pursued a career and technical (CTE) path. The school received a per-pupil annual expenditure of $11,135 (TDOE, 2022e). In 2021, High School E had a success rate of 12.3%. This data indicates that 12.3% of the student body in High School E are ‘on track’ or ‘mastery.’ According to the Department of Education, a classification of ‘on track’ or ‘mastery’ denotes a student’s proficiency within a subject. Of all content areas tested in 2021, High School E had no reported data on the Social Studies state assessment. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Southeastern state waived the right of the state to collect data and rank schools during the 2020/2021 school year; however, schools that participated in state assessments and relinquished the data were given an ‘H’ or Held Harmless ranking. The Southeastern state gave High School E the ranking of ‘H’; this ranking means High School E offered data to the state that corresponded with the 2020/2021 state assessment; however, according to the waiver, High School E is held harmless and will not lose state or federal funding due to data.
Description of Teacher Participants

This qualitative case study utilized seven secondary social studies teachers from five rural public high schools. The seven participants are described within this section.

School A Participant

Rebecca (pseudonym) was in her 25th year of teaching during the research study. Rebecca stated that her first career choice was not education but business. She anticipated a career in human resources; however, she had found a passion for history by the midterms of her first year of college. She changed her major to history and added a minor in geography and education. She currently teaches State Dual Credit World History at the high school level. Rebecca shared that this was her first year teaching a high school social studies course; she previously taught seventh and eighth-grade social studies for 24 years. Since three of the social studies educators at this school also serve as part-time administrators, she admitted that there are few electives or courses offered in social studies outside those required by the state for graduation.

School B Participant(s)

During the interview, Ken (pseudonym) said that at 71 years old, he had been an educator for 17 years; however, teaching was his second career. Ken and his family owned a home hardware business in the county where he resides and is now a teacher. He managed the hardware store for many years until a more prominent company forced them into closure. He explained that he attended the only college that would accept his 30-year-old college credits. He shared that he was the youngest freshman at this college in 1968 and the oldest graduating senior in 2004. Ken teaches World History at a high school with a student body of over 1200.

R.J. (pseudonym) had been teaching for 14 years at her high school. She has a bachelor’s and master’s degree in education. R.J. also noted she has a few hours post-masters. She currently
teaches 11th grade U.S. History and an elective course she described as a college prep course.

R.J. described the current history courses offered at her school and proclaimed that she was drawn to teaching history because of her love for all things history. R.J. shared that she currently teaches in a county that neighbors her hometown by 15 minutes.

School C Participant

Lance (pseudonym) explained that he came into the educational profession later in life. I earned a bachelor’s degree in communications radio, TV, and film. When he realized that was not of interest, he took up construction work for a few years. At that point, he moved to a passion that he had always held, education. Lance said previously that he had been discouraged from pursuing education; however, he could get away from his desire to be an educator.

School D Participant

Laura (Pseudonym) is a 13-year social studies teacher and also a state park ranger. She is the department chair for the History department at her school and a co-sponsor of the Rho Kappa, Jr National Honor Society through the National Council for the Social Studies. She identifies as an inerrant educator considering her father, mother, and grandmother were also educators. She earned a Bachelor’s in History, a Master’s in education and curriculum, and recently received an Ed.S in leadership.

School E Participant

Austin (pseudonym) is a 5th-year Dual credit U.S. History teacher. He earned his Bachelor’s in History and recently graduated with his Master’s in education. Before teaching Dual credit U.S. History to eleventh-grade students, Austin taught World History to freshmen. He has also recently earned his Ed.S in leadership and is interested in pursuing a position in school administration.
Participant Selection

The Southeastern state where this study occurred identifies as 84% rural, with 80 out of 95 counties considered rurally small or sparse. The Southeastern state’s Academic Rurality Measure explains that a rural school district lies within a rural county and has a “population density less than 500 people per square mile and 90% of the county population is in rural areas” (Isserman, 2010, p.14). The Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning and Innovation, and the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), partnered in the Southeastern state to create a rural acceleration and innovation network. The network was established to provide comprehensive plans for supporting the continuity and acceleration of student learning in rural communities. For this reason, rural areas experience fewer service providers, resources for jobs, health care, and education (Gonzales, 2019). Therefore, rurality is a dominant characteristic within this state and was decided upon to guide the selection of participants to represent the majority of individuals within the state. Each location varies in geographical size, population, and distance to a metropolitan area.

According to the Southeastern state’s Department of Education (2022), the state is divided into three regions separated by geographical, political, and cultural boundaries. Twenty-five rural counties were identified in the Eastern region, thirty-five in the Middle region, and twenty in the western region. For sampling, each district is considered a stratum. The school district within each rural county is considered a sub-strata (Kant, 2022). The first stage of sampling involved choosing 15 random rural counties in each region. The rural counties chosen during the first sampling stage were selected by Simple Random Sampling Without Replacement (SRSWOR). The second sampling stage involved randomly selecting seven participants from those forty-five counties utilizing Excel’s random function to generate participants.
The seven teacher samples selected through two-stage random sampling represented considerable school characteristics variability (see Table 5). While most of the teachers in this study are employed in moderately-sized schools, one of the seven teachers is employed within a rural county with a population of 98,000, which houses three high schools. The state’s Academic Rurality Measure recognizes the sparseness of residents per square mile in highly populated communities, and due to the geographical size, this county is considered sparse and rural. The schools selected range from high performing to low performing across the state.

### Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

A collective case study approach was employed to gauge seven high school social studies teachers. Each teacher’s perception and experiences are considered separate from the various case studies (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The study involved interviews with seven teachers from rural high school districts. According to Creswell (2007), a collective case study (or multiple-case study) is when "one issue or concern is again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue" (p.74). A collective case study strengthens the validity of a small number of cases within a case study because these small sample sizes allow ample opportunities for themes to be identified and representative cases to be compared. This study interviewed high school social studies teachers regarding their perceptions and application of curriculum and pedagogy. Each of the seven interviews was conducted at the participants’ respective schools in the privacy of their classrooms. Interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. Interview transcriptions and field notes were coded to ensure anonymity. A professional service was employed for transcribing the interviews.

The researcher conducted a pilot study of one participant before beginning the research study interviews. The pilot study assisted in establishing the credibility of the interview.
and research questions. The pilot study also offered the researcher the opportunity to identify the fluidity of the questioning process and ensure that the interview and research questions were strongly aligned with the topic of the research study. Permission to conduct the interviews was granted through the University of Memphis International Review Board (Appendix A). Before the interviews, participants signed a release form (Appendix B).

In order to provide validity checks to a research study, methodical triangulation is employed. Conclusions deduced within the study are strengthened through the process of triangulation. Triangulation occurs when multiple sources of data and methods are evaluated to support the findings being identified (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Further research proposes that the analytical approach of methodological triangulation minimizes the misconceptions of opinionated conclusions (Yin, 2017). The current study relied on interviews, field notes, and document analysis to triangulate findings.

**Interviews**

Seven interviews and one pilot interview were conducted within two months, from April 2022 to May 2022. The interviews were conducted during convenient times for the participants; all interviews were conducted after school. The researcher chose a semi-structured interview structure for the recorded interviews. Before the interview, participants were given a document guide explaining Robert Stahl’s phases of decision-making, a brief synopsis of six decision-making lessons created by Robert Stahl, and a copy of the NCSS C3 Framework. The interview questions (Table 1) are derived from the study’s research questions. For each research question, two interview questions were created. The interview questions were based on the four categories of questions first identified by Strauss et al. (1981). The first question category, posing the ideal, requires the participant to explain their ideal situation or circumstance. The devil’s advocate’s
second question category requires the participant to address an alternative viewpoint. The third question category, offering interpretations, allows the participant to provide feedback from their perspective. The fourth question category, hypothetical questions, allows the participants to finish a question prompt giving insight into their thought process.

All of the participants were asked the following interview questions:

1. Some teachers and administrators might say to be an effective teacher; one needs to differentiate instruction to reach all learners. What would you say to them?
2. What do you think is the ideal approach to presenting social studies content to students?
3. Some people might say that Stahl's four decision-making phases are not necessary to promote inquiry. What would you say to them?
4. Suppose you were asked by your administration to teach a topic that dealt with decision-making. What would it look like?
5. Some people might say Robert Stahl's approach towards teaching decision-making in social studies is outdated. What would you say to them?
6. How do you think teachers should address decision-making in the classroom?
7. Suppose your district required you to explain how Robert Stahl's decision-making material s (any one of the lessons) related to the Tennessee State Standards? What would you say to them?
8. How would you explain the relationship between the NCSS C3 Framework, and the lessons by Robert Stahl, if any?

Field Notes

Field notes were utilized to enhance the interview experience and provide a rich narrative to support the interview process further. After the interview, detailed information was added, which richly enhanced the interview. Field notes captured the essence of the interview and what was seen but not heard. Johnny Saldana (2009) stated that field notes broaden the range of vision and provide data that should be utilized in future analysis within the study. Saldana (2018) goes on to say that field notes are both descriptive and reflective; in one sense, they offer a “word picture” to support a view of the setting, conversation, and action (p.3). Likewise, field notes also serve as a reflective view from which the researcher shares thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns derived from the interview and observation. Field notes were coded and reviewed after
each interview. Analytical memos were created on identified themes from the field notes; this serves as a triangulation source.

**Document Analysis**

Document analysis is the third aspect of triangulation with the study alongside semi-structured interviews and field notes. Merriam and Grenier (2019) suggested that a document analysis provides the opportunity to ground data within the research study. Document analysis will further aid in the triangulation of data from the interviews as identified themes can be compared with the documents to distinguish between curricular ideas within the NCSS’s C3 Framework and those articulated by Robert Stahl. Themes were collected from the three documents. Themes from interviews and field notes were compared to determine if teacher practices and perceptions were consistent with Robert Stahl’s decision-making phases, the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Framework, or both.

**Ethical and Political Considerations**

The researcher employed considerable care during this study to secure consent and confidentiality. In addition, careful consideration to adhere to the International Research Bureau (IRB) guidelines were taken. Neither vulnerable populations nor individuals under 18 were involved in this research study. The participants involved in this study volunteered their participation willingly and without recompense. They were offered the opportunity to withdraw from the interview process during the study. Participants and their ideas were protected during the process of data collection. Participants of the study were given pseudonyms to protect their identity further. These pseudonyms are incorporated within the transcription data and field notes to uphold anonymity. All transcripts and data were stored in a locked location during the study and will be destroyed upon the conclusion of the study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The investigation aimed to understand high school social studies teacher perceptions and the application of Robert Stahl's decision-making materials. In addition, the study sought to gain perspective on rural teachers' attitudes toward current classroom trends and how prepared teachers felt they were to incorporate decision-making in the classroom. Seven high school social studies teachers from five different high schools were selected to participate in the study. All five schools were identified as being in rural public districts; however, they were diverse in population, culture, and socioeconomic status. Two schools were located in the Western region, one in the Middle region, and two in the Eastern region of a Southeastern state. Two of the five high schools had a student body population of over 1200. According to the state report card, the schools range from high performing to low performing. The study incorporated a qualitative case study research design employing semi-structured interviews.

Eight semi-structured interview questions were developed to capture teachers' perceptions of the four research questions. Each research question has two sub-questions aligned to the research question while providing opportunities for participants' opinions. All four of Strauss, Schatzman, Butcher, & Sabshin's (1981) questioning categories were utilized to promote detailed responses from participants. The four questioning categories consisted of (a) hypothetical questions, (b) devil's advocate questions, (c) posing the ideal questions, and (d) interpretive questions. The hypothetical question asks a participant how they might respond to various situations. The devil's advocate question encourages a participant to engage with opposing viewpoints. The third type of question asks a participant to explain an ideal situation. The interpretive question requires the participant to offer ideas within their response.
The qualitative case study involved triangulation with three sources of data: (a) semi-structured interviews, (b) field notes, and (c) document analysis of six of Robert Stahl's decision-making lessons with the NCSS C3 Framework. Further, Merriam and Grenier (2019) suggested that triangulation strengthens the credibility of conclusions by requiring data evaluation from various perspectives. Stake (2017) clarified the importance of triangulation since data is less likely to be misconstrued if it is triangulated. Multiple data sources strengthened the reliability of the data.

During the interview, four research questions served as the foundational focus. Two supporting interview questions were asked as a way for participants to expound on their perspectives concerning the research questions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in April and May of 2022. Interview questions were structured based on the four categories of interview questions (Strauss et al., 1981) previously mentioned. Follow-up and clarifying questions were asked, as needed, to encourage rich responses. Seven teacher participants were asked the eight interview questions in the same order to maintain response consistency among participants. In addition to interviews being recorded and transcribed, field notes were also taken to capture the substance of the interviews. Field notes were recorded on an interview guide. This included all nonverbal communication such as body language and environmental cues which were recorded in the notes (Saldana, 2018). Observer comments, idea mapping, and theme identification were recorded during and after the interviews.

Along with interview data and field notes, the in-depth literature review outlining the history of social studies education, decision-making, and the present need for a decision-making curriculum contextualized participant responses. The scholarship on Robert Stahl and the decision-making curriculum was the basis of the interview questions. The literature in this study
aided in data triangulation by enabling a comparison of the themes from the interview data with data from the literature review.

Research Questions and Responses

Research Question One

Interview Question One. The first research question was, "What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding classroom instruction?" The first corresponding interview question was, "Some teachers and administrators might say to be an effective teacher; one needs to differentiate instruction to reach all learners? What would you say to them?"

All seven participants agreed that teachers should use differentiation to build knowledge within students effectively; however, six of seven teachers interviewed suggested that differentiation is a broad term and unanimously categorized differentiation as either addressing learning styles or accommodation to learning. Rebecca stretched her hands out into her lap and leaned forward with confidence. She passionately explained:

Um, I agree that differentiation is going to be necessary. Okay. So I think, I feel like there's a lot of different ways in which, um, we differentiate… one of the changes I've needed to make as I moved to high school is I have a lot more, um, English language learner students, mm-hmm, so differentiating lessons for the English language learners, um, has been an, an important area where I've needed to kind of grow my skills in that area. Um, so I would agree that differentiation is important to reach all learners.

Ken, a 71-year-old teacher, echoed the necessity of differentiation when teaching students. He said:

You know, if there's, so [something] that's [or] not resonating with the students; generally, you can look at their face. And say, Hey, you know, I'm not right here. I [need] to back up and simplify this just a little bit. Now, um, I didn't tell you the whole story, but, uh, I have a special ed license. That was my master's degree. So I taught special ed in an inclusion class the first three years I was here. And, uh, so, you know, I, I have a certain number of special ed students. I have a certain number of ESL students, and I know that you know, if I don't give a, you know [accommodation], if my assignments are not, you know, adjusted… I adjust, and that's a pretty big consideration right there.
Austin, who teaches 11th-grade dual enrollment courses at a high school that has a large high poverty minority population which directly contributes to his students learning, indicated:

I agree with them. I think, especially in a public education classroom, you've got learners that are on all different levels, so you have to be able to meet them where they're at. Um, so differentiation, I feel like you have to do it, uh, especially in a social studies classroom, when you cover such, uh, wide and, and dense topics. Sometimes you've got to really break it down for, for students, who may really be struggling. I think it's definitely a struggle, for rural communities, those that haven't had the chance to go out and experience, you know, other places, um, when, when you start speaking, you know, even of locations that are a state over for them, that's difficult to, to grasp and to comprehend, you know, if they've never left their, their hometown.

Five teachers felt that differentiation should address either student's learning styles or accommodations, but to attempt to address both within the classroom was overwhelming. R.J., a U.S. History teacher, smiled anxiously as she spoke:

Of course, we tailor and adjust to fit individual needs. So, I do think it's very important, but then I was also thinking on the flip side, you know, I'm a state-tested teacher, so we actually just got finished with our U.S. History, EOC. And I was thinking outside of, you know, special education accommodations, there's no differentiation on these tests. So these kids are getting it in the classroom, but maybe not the tests. But I do think it is important, um, to accommodate these kids as far as their own, you know, their own personal learning styles. Um, you know, that's our goal as an educator is to, you know, for the kids to learn. Um, and so they all learn differently. So, why not try to match 'em as best as we can, right?

Rebecca shared that she spent 23 years teaching eighth-grade social studies at the middle school level. The 2021-2022 school year was her first experience as a high school social studies teacher. She also indicated that differentiation is defined and practiced differently in the classroom by saying:

Okay. So I think, I feel like there's a lot of different ways in which, um, we differentiate. Um, I know that, for example, when I was probably an undergrad, we spent a lot of time talking about like different learning styles... That's not something that's focused on quite as much. Um, but, but I do still think that that's important to consider because, you know, we, I, I think people do genuinely have different ways that they learn better.
Tyler furrowed his brow and shifted in his chair as if intentionally squaring back his shoulders to declare his concern for differentiation in the classroom.

I think it's a big challenge because it's hard to get every single student differentiated, so to speak. Um, I think doing a, like two or three different, different ways of teaching can be acceptable, but we're trying to hit every single little nuance of every single student. I don't think that's a possibility at all. I think it's more of, um, where we're trying to try different styles of getting the information to hook into their head. I, I agree with my professor [from college]. I think that makes total sense because when he would come in every day, he would have a drawing on the board of some kind of cartoon regarding that day's lesson and then talk about it and then do something different. And even if I didn't hear exactly what he said, I still, what was going on? And I could remember it better from looking at that cartoon on the board or something like that.

Through their responses, teachers indicated that differentiation, while important, is only effective if it is incorporated appropriately within the classroom. Robert Stahl defined and addressed differentiation through learning styles by creating a curriculum that embedded accommodations for each type of learner. As an educational scholar, Robert Stahl advocated for the best approaches to build and support a genuine learning experience for students of all abilities. He advocated that this exposure to teaching and learning was the cornerstone of a diverse learning environment (Stahl, 1981; 1992; 1995; Casteel & Stahl, 1997).

**Interview Question Two.** The research question was, "What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding classroom instruction?" The second corresponding interview question was, "What do you think is the ideal approach to presenting social studies content to students?

Six of the seven teachers clearly emphasized the need for a mixture of methods when presenting social studies content. In contrast, all seven identified student engagement as a primary focus when presenting social studies content. Laura sat for a moment before waving her hands in a very animated fashion as she shared her version of the ideal way to deliver social studies content.
I know it would be a mix. Almost like, I know it would be a mix. I, I learned so much. I feel like what has clouded my view in a lot of ways is just having gone from high school to college, and all the degrees after that have just been almost strict lectures. You're writing the notes, you're learning, and my problem in that is, well, I was already bought in because I wanted to be in that class. I wanted to learn that. And so it's not been like, I've been one of the kids who sitting here, like, I hate this, you know? So, and so for so many years, it's been about, I have no book, I've got to provide them with this. So, basically, I can still remember telling a parent last year when they were like, well, how important is for them to have this notebook or whatever, have the binder. And I'm like, it's their book! It's their textbook pretty much, Ma'am- like, I have no other way for them to have something to study unless they have these notes. And so it's taken an adjustment in my brain because it's been kind of this is the only way I know how to give it to them where they have it versus what I want to do, which is the hands-on, um, being able to get like traveling trunks that I've gotten from the state museum, which have artifacts in them and have a lesson to go with 'em. But you know, like being able to cover the civil war and use them, they have a traveling trunk, that's about the civil war soldier. And so essentially, you know, I pick a kid, so I might have picked Zach and said, here Zach, let's weigh you real quick. When I tell you, [let's] weigh you real quick, and then let's start putting all this stuff on you. So you guys can understand what it was like to be a soldier. And so he's putting on the shoes, and he's putting on a shirt, he's putting on a jacket and a hat and got my little wooden gun over here. And I bring in a yoga mat. So you're like, here's your bedroll. And you know, and then you start packing all stuff as if you're the soldier. And it generally adds about 20 pounds, you know? And so it's like, it puts it there in their hand, they get to listen to the music that the soldiers were singing, you know, it's that kind of stuff. So it gives it a, I'm gonna say, a three-dimension to it. Yeah. Maybe it's just a third dimension to it rather than it's just like, oh, I'm hearing Ms. Webb speak again. And I'm writing this down. She sounds like the teacher and Charlie brown, but it's okay. Right, right. And so I feel like if I can get the hands-on stuff where they can handle artifacts, and they can analyze 'em, I'm helping those analytical skills. If they're doing things, um, where they're having to plan and think, and that kind of thing.

Echoing the need for student engagement in the social studies classroom, Ken suggested:

Well, you know, I just, I just like the interactive lecture where they can feel to blurt out anything that's on their mind. You know, I got, I got a PowerPoint that I've been building for years and, you know, there's certain things that I wanna cover and, you know, more of a conversational type thing. Uh, sometimes I'll go the whole 40 minutes and never get interrupted. Sometimes I can't get through two slides cause there's so much, you know, going back and forth, and I love those days.

The interactive lecture and opportunities for hands-on learning experiences recommended by Laura and Ken align with Robert Stahl's (1978) claimed thinking and learning are interconnected through a student's learning style. How a student thinks about information is
subjective to the teaching style within the classroom. This is where the active process of
cognitive psychology stands in stark contrast to the traditional passive method of knowledge
transmission.

While all seven teachers supported a student-centered focus for ideal social studies
instruction, three of the teachers specifically discussed decision-making opportunities in the
classroom as a necessary way to build knowledge in the social studies classroom. Laura, a social
studies department chair, shared that she descended from a long line of educators. Her mother
taught math, her father taught U.S. History and Geography, and her grandmother was a librarian.
Her eyes reflect a passion for education as she continues her explanation of ideal social studies
instruction:

So, for instance, last week, the kids traveled the Oregon Trail. They had to, and I gave
them their family, their occupation, how much money they had, they had to plan out what
they were gonna use, obtain horses, whatever they had to buy, the food, they had to make
choices. And so they're still talking about it, you know, how they did it. And so it's that
kind of thing that makes it more active for them because they should be partaking in their
learning more than just note-taking or worksheets or that kind of thing.

Similarly, R.J. suggested that actively engaging in decision-making through exploration was her
interpretation of ideal social studies instruction.

It would be so great if we could just have a year where it was like, listen, here, here are
the guidelines. Like you need to teach from here to here, and there may be some things
that you definitely need to hit, but have at it, you know, I feel like we could really do a lot
more, um, you know, even like allowing the kids to do their own sort of, you know,
exploration of some of these subjects and really getting to sort of the meat, the meat of
some of these topics, instead of just grazing over, you know, here's what the standard
says we need to talk about. So let's talk about this, but really getting into some of the
actual stories of the people that were in these situations or, or whatever. I would just love
that.

In her interview, Rebecca also highlighted the importance of active decision-making as part of
the ideal social studies instruction by stating:
When I'm planning, ideally, there's gonna be some lessons that are more or less a lecture, because I think there’s a, a place where the lecture is effective. Um, depending on what you're trying to present and why, you know, why you're trying to present it, but then you would also want to give them opportunities for like inquiry where they're looking at primary sources. Um, and also I would really like there to be again, ideally, um, some alternative ways that kids can, can show their mastery. So we tend to be very, you know, sort of multiple-choice test-oriented, but it's nice when you can offer them an alternative to that, some kind of project-based learning, um, to, to kind of let them show their mastery in different ways.

The mention of decision-making, exploratory learning, and inquiry from Laura, R.J., and Rebecca shows educators' inclination to employ cognitive-based learning techniques to engage their students within the social studies classroom. Also, having studied cognitive development in students, Robert Stahl (1995) writes, "human knowledge, whether personal or associated with a field or discipline, is constructed internally within and by each human" (p. 7). Overall, it is understood that authentic learning stems from the construction of knowledge. Construction denotes a process of building that supports the "perspective claim that individuals spend their lives constructing or inventing their meanings, ideas, views and conceptions of the actual and imagined worlds, and interpretations of the phenomena they encounter" (Stahl, 1995, p. 14). Robert Stahl felt that embracing cognitive psychology through decision-based content-centered learning was the key to knowledge retention and an engaging classroom experience.

**Research Question Two**

**Interview Question Three.** The second research question was, "What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding Stahl's approach towards the four phases of decision making?" Two interview questions were aligned to address this question. The first corresponding interview question was, "Some people might say that Stahl's four decision-making phases are not necessary to promote inquiry. What would you say to them?"
All seven teachers disagreed with the question as it was stated. They identified the process of inquiry as a natural function of building knowledge. The human brain naturally moved fluidly through the phases of decision-making as part of the inquiry process and stated that Robert Stahl's decision-making phases illuminated the process of inquiry. However, the educators were conflicted on the necessity of the fourth phase, reflection. Four teachers indicated that Stahl's four decision-making phases were necessary, implying that all four phases were necessary. Lance, a 12-year Geography and World History teacher stated:

With Stahl's phases, I went through and, and looked it over and, uh, pretty much it's, I think that's just a natural progression that we go through. Uh, people in general. So, I mean, I think it's just more common sense. Those are just common, common-sense steps that we go through [for inquiry]. So as far as it, um, not necessary, I don't know that there's a choice. I mean, that's just something people naturally do, so. Um, so I guess I'm disagreeing. I would say that it, it is necessary.

Austin, who recently earned his master's in education, shared in the necessity of Stahl's decision-making phases. He indicated:

I think I disagree, you know, as I was reviewing it, to me it just makes sense for me to teach something that way, so that the students are, are one in the conceptual phase, you know comprehending the content and then through the other three steps are taking that knowledge and applying on it and building it and, and finally kind of being reflective and then giving their definitive answer. Um, so I would disagree that it's, um, not necessary.

Two of the seven teachers specifically mentioned the fourth phase of Robert Stahl's decision-making process as the most crucial element within the inquiry process. Laura indicated in her response her attraction to the four phases of decision-making, specifically the reflective phase, through her explanation of ideal social studies content instruction. She connected her ideas of decision-making as related to inquiry in the classroom, which supported her concern that it is an important and overlooked aspect of social studies education.

But I, I think it's, I do think you have to reflect on [learning] because it, it, sometimes that reflection just to be as like, why do I have to know this? I mean, in one respect, like, why
is this important to me? Why should it be important to me? And so I do think you need to reflect; I think I call the reflection more of a 'look back over' kind of see what you know about, you know. I think of that as studying. But I do think that we don't do that enough. because we just kind of go through and quick, quick, boom, boom done. And I know I feel that way really, truly about the fact that I have to cover so much material in a year or before a test. And so, I don't spend enough time to reflect because a reflection, in some respects, the reflection should be the student saying, what do I know? And what do I not know? Right? I mean, as simple as being…an exit ticket, that's like, give me three things you learn today. Two things you wonder about one thing, you know, that kinda thing like a 3, 2, 1, or like, I have an exit ticket for this activity we did today, which I did not give them because I'm kind of sitting here, like I just hustled, like we just hustled through this in one respect. Do we, have you really taken this in? So, I refrained from giving them the exit ticket today because it's kind of like, well, I've got one more piece of something I want y'all to do. So, I will give you the exit ticket after we do that. Because I don't want it to be, I mean, the exit ticket kind of idea, that concept of reflection shouldn't be abrupt. So I'm, I'm absolutely in a reflection kind of attitude because there is, there is no way you can take in all of the stuff that history gives you. And remember it all, unless you think back over it. I, yeah, I'm, I'm absolutely about reflection.

R.J. shared Laura's view of Stahl's four phases and the importance of reflection. The 38-year-old educator adjusted her glasses and paused for a moment before she described her interests in Robert Stahl’s work.

I do think they (Stahl's four phases) are just based on what I see with my kids and in the past and stuff; I do think that there are a lot of times where kids they do that naturally like we just go through it naturally. Um, especially like with history where they- they'll, they'll see, we'll learn about something that happened, and then they will see the connection um, like for example, um, if I can say this, uh, so without it making sound like a political or anything, We deal a lot with current event issues. And so, of course, one of the biggest topics for the last couple months has been, you know, Ukraine and Russia and things like that. And so, you know, I was trying to explain to the kids, we were also going through the cold war learning about that. So we, you know, my kids were putting those things together like, oh, so that's what's going on, you know, so we kind of set that stage, and they were, they were starting to make those connections themselves. And I do think that we naturally do some of those things, but I also do think, you know, I was reading through his, uh, his, uh, steps, his guidelines today, and I thought, you know, those, it is important like as the teacher to just, we have to direct that sometimes as well, because, because they will… just outside of the whole, sometimes they're apathetic, and they're just tired and whatever, but I think sometimes too, you know, they haven't fully developed that critical thinking skills yet, too. So sometimes, you know, I have to kind of guide 'em into, well, what do you think about this? And you know, how do you think that came about? Or what about this person's perspective? You know, how did that play into this or whatever. So, um, I, you know, I, I was reading through there today. Just kind of
remind myself, like, am I doing these things? You know, if I'm making sure my kids are doing these things.

R.J. Expressed concern with the classroom climate by mentioning students' apathy toward social studies content and learning in the classroom. Five out of seven teachers identified apathy and self-efficacy as an obstacle when attempting to incorporate inquiry in the classroom. Prior to his current position, Tyler, who previously taught high school geography in a neighboring state, shared his thought about Robert Stahl's decision-making phases related to inquiry in the classroom.

I think, yeah. I, I can see that, um, being the general idea of what people do to make decisions and, and focus on. I think for the kids, though, the reflective, they probably don't care that much about that part, but it's, I can see them doing the other three steps to get the right answers and then move on.

Ken, a self-proclaimed history nerd, similarly described his students when he explained that deep thinking students would employ the four phases of decision-making when learning content; however, some of the more apathetic students would not take the decision-making process or inquiry seriously.

Uh, I think some students, uh, just want to have a copy of the study guide. And when they see the question on, say A, B, C, or D, and they do, they don't, they don't relate to any of this, you know? But I feel like some of your deeper thinking students, I think they certainly go through this and what you're talking about [whether] politics, uh, or once again, the economy, uh, you know, I think they, I think they don't consciously go through these steps, but I think that's actually what's happening.

**Interview Question Four.** The research question was, "What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding Stahl's approach towards the four phases of decision-making?" The second corresponding interview question was, "Suppose you were asked by your administration to teach a topic that dealt with decision-making. What would it look like?" Similar to the varying opinions concerning the ideal approach to presenting social studies content, all seven teachers
varied when describing how they would teach a decision-making topic. Lance indicated that he would stick to the phases of decision-making and use them to guide his teaching.

If I'm presenting a topic, um, I would basically, you know, I mean, it's pretty self-explanatory, I would go through those steps [decision-making phases]. Um, talk about, you know, obviously the facts, the concept and what are we talking about here? Uh, the connection, uh, making the decision and then the rationale and which is what we do in classroom anyway, you know, when you ask a kid a question, and they say, you know, I give you the answer, and you say, why? You want them to explain to you. I don't want kids just to say something off the top of their head without being able to, to, to make, you know, an [explanation], and that's what we do as human beings. Like we, we have opinions. We have; we make decisions in our lives based on what's at hand. So it would be very similar. It would be, you know, very much like the the material you gave me with the chart and that sort of thing, and we would walk through it.

Austin did not necessarily directly identify Stahl's four decision-making phases by name; however, like Lance, he did explain a recent lesson he taught in his U.S. History class that incorporated decision-making.

Uh, the first, well, actually a kinda specific lesson that we just finished up with comes to mind. We were discussing the end of World War II and Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb in Japan. And, you know, I always give students the task of put yourself in his shoes. You know, here's the concept that we've talked about. Here's what's going on, you know, think about it. What, what would you do? And I, I think that would put them in the decision, decision-making, uh, both cuz they've got to decide, well, do we drop the bomb? Do we not? You know, um, that to me giving them a choice and trying to make them, uh, fit in the proverbial shoes of someone else. So, and that's trying to help them understand, you know, we talk about these people in these events, like they were a million years ago, but they were real people, you know, they had feelings, they had thoughts, they had emotions. And so keeping that in mind, you know, is, is really important.

Similar to Austin, Laura described a recent experience in the classroom that she correlated with a decision-making topic.

Well, I'll give, I'll give you another one. Um, cause I still have more. Right. So the state of Tennessee requires a civics project. Um, so usually in a given year, I will pose it to the kids like, okay, you're starting your civics project. And I try to do at least a piece of it every few weeks, and it not be a, Hey, we're at the end of the year, we gotta get this done because I want it to have thought behind it. So in the first weeks, I pose the question to the kids of essentially, we start out with like putting a list on the board of, of areas of
responsibility essentially. Like where do we have roles? And so it's like classroom school community, like city county, state national and even world. I mean, like, so we put those levels in, and then we start to, and I say, okay, start to identify something that you see as a problem in one of those levels. So giving them that kind of ownership of what do you, what do you see as a problem? Cause we say it that way. It's a problem first, then it's a, what can be done to fix that problem? And so that would be like first nine weeks. I mean, it's not even, I mean, that's basically like just a day's worth of think about this. Let's write some things down and kind of work this out a little bit, and it can go one of two ways. I mean, depending on the group of kids, I might say, okay, well, we're gonna vote on one of your problems and whichever vote, whichever problem is identified as the worst problem. That's the one we're working on, or it's an individual. And so, I used a couple of years ago, like pre-Covid, um, a group of students, we sat down first nine weeks, they started naming out their problems. And then at Christmas, we kind of tackled and I'm gonna give you this example. So one of my group, one of my kids, and I'm, of course, playing devil's advocate the entire time. Um, like one group of kids were like, we just, we think the dress code, the school is outrageous, and we should change the dress code, and I'm like, okay, but I need you to understand that if you're gonna change the dress code, you got to prepare for whoever you're gonna talk to about it, to come back at you with these arguments, so you don't only need to think of it as a problem. And this is how we wanna fix it. How are you going to convince other people to change their mind? Kinda thing. So I showed them a video, which is a video of a kid that they did several, several, several years ago about like a kid wearing baggy pants, no belt shirt, untucked, and how many guns he basically pulls out. Wow. Okay. Uh, and then something like 20 guns, and the kids are sitting there like, oh wow. Yeah. And I'm like, okay. So look at it from the the educators in the building, the adults here - I'm going to say, listen, the dress code is in place because this is one of the things we think about. And so the kids actually, without me saying anything else, one of the girls goes so "Ms. Webb, if we go into whoever we have to talk to, and we say we'll wear belts and tuck our shirts in if you'll let us wear whatever color we want." So that's a good start. You're compromising; you're thinking about what the other side might want. And if you're willing to give, you might get, so that was one group.

Laura continued to describe another instance where she incorporated decision-making with a group of students.

The other group that I think of every time was a group of kids who wanted to change the lunch menu. And I printed out the lunch, like I said, here are the federal guidelines, and actually, you know what, never mind, there's the federal guidelines, but I got you one better. So I went up to Miss Janice, and I said, Ms. Janice, could you come out and talk to some students for just a few minutes? They, they want to interview you about lunch menu and that kind of thing. And so she came down, she probably talked to em for an hour, and I was kinda like Ms. Janice, I gotta send em to their next class. I'm sorry. So they talked to her, she went back to the cafeteria, talked to her boss, and essentially they turned around and were like, I mean, her boss calls me like, miss, what, what are you doing? And I'm like, Hey girl, you know, like I know her- I coached her girl, her daughter in
volleyball. I'm like, oh, they're willing to talk about the menu. And she goes, well, can I come talk to them? And I said, absolutely. So, the day before we get out for Christmas break, she comes out here and sits down. And literally, they talk for two hours. Like, I mean basically I was sitting here going to the other teachers, like, I'm sorry, they're interviewing. So and so, and of course, those teachers kinda like it's the day before Christmas, But from the kids talking to miss Janice to the kids talking to miss Jan, they agreed to order fresh food, fresh food in the second semester, they agreed to do Chinese food. And this was cuz the kids. Do you know? And so, you know, the kids are sitting here kind of going WOW. We got them to make changes. I was like, you have power. Almost was like, you know, with great power comes great responsibility. And so watching their faces light up, but I mean, I've had kids who are like, we wanna get rid of plastic drinking straws because they hurt the environment. We wanna recycle. We want this. And, and it's just kind of one of those, Hey, you have to go through the steps. So I love, love, love, love watching the decision-making that I get to do.

Akin to Laura and Austin, Rebecca shares details of how decision-making would look in her classroom; however, she takes a different approach in her explanation. Laura and Austin shared their decision-making description from a lessons perspective and how teachers and students interact with the topic and decision-making. In contrast, Rebecca explains the classroom climate and rules of engagement that are necessary for decision-making to occur.

Um, so I think the first kind of consideration would be, are we looking at decision-making that's very much tied to a historical topic, or are we looking at decision-making in something that is more like a contemporary issues class because those two lessons I think would get designed very differently? Generally speaking when, when kids are making some kind of, um, decision or evaluation, like evaluating Truman's decision to use the bomb. For example, when it's tied to historical topics, passions don't typically flare, and you don't, even if you held a debate, you don't usually get a lot of people who are sort of feeling personally attacked by debating the different aspects of the issue. But if you are dealing with more like contemporary issues types of lessons, then I think you have to spend even more time establishing like rules of conduct and in-classroom climate so that people can feel empowered to speak. Um, but not attacked if they speak. So that's, that's one thing you have to set up the classroom climate. You, you need good classroom management skills to kind of manage that. Um, and then it also, I think, really important that you couch that decision-making lesson so that students don't feel like they're being graded on making the right decision. Um, they are able to, you know, kind of freely express different opinions. So, like the other day, I had probably, probably 60% of my students, um, thought that Truman should have chosen an alternative to the atomic bomb in Japan. Um, and then, you know, 40% though that, he made the right call. So you wanna make sure that they understand they're not getting graded on picking the right choice that in, in, in my case, the grade was on, did they have enough historical evidence to support the conclusion that they drew or their, the opinion that they offered? Um, so
that's important. I would add to too, that not only do I think it's important for civics education, I think students really enjoy that, um, you know, teenagers they're, they're kind of figuring out their place in the world, and so they like to feel empowered that they're making a decision. Um, I think that engages a lot when, when they feel like, you know, they're, they're deciding an answer, and they're, um, you know, having that discussion or that discourse or that debate with a classmate. Um, so I think it helps us be better citizens, but I also think it just makes class more fun and interesting, and kids are more engaged when they're doing something like that.

**Research Question Three**

**Interview Question Five.** The third research question was, "What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding the integration of decision-making materials in the classroom?"

Two interview questions were aligned to address this question. The first corresponding interview question was, "Some people might say Robert Stahl's approach towards teaching decision-making in social studies is outdated. What would you say to them?"

The teachers were divided on this topic. Five out of seven teachers stated that Robert Stahl's approach to teaching decision-making in social studies was not outdated; however, two teachers were not as confident and hesitant in their response. During his interview, Ken, a World History teacher, previously shared he was not familiar with Robert Stahl or the concept of decision-making. Although, he did offer his opinion on whether or not he felt Stahl's approach to decision-making was outdated.

You know, I think it, I think it makes sense. Um, and I can't think of the name, you and the, where you are right now, you probably, uh, [know] the seven different types of learning. Uh, I have; I have wracked my brain trying to think of the guy's name that wrote that, you know, we have visual learners, audio learners… And, and so I was, I was on the internet the other day, trying to track this guy. Uh, he wrote a book and, uh, I think when I was working on my masters or something, I read his book, and I thought, you know, this makes a lot of sense. Well, since that time, which has been 12 or 13 years ago, people, uh, may have added or subtracted to this train of thought, you know, and is, is still relevant.

Through the course of the conversation, it was apparent that Ken was discussing an author that identified seven learning styles as making "a lot of sense" when instructional planning; he used
this comment to give an indirect answer toward his understanding of Robert Stahl's decision-making approaches. Implying that the phases of decision-making and lessons created by Robert Stahl in the 1970s have been modified by individuals to modernize them, but overall the concept is currently relevant. Likewise, Tyler explained: "honestly, when I was looking at those different lessons, I feel like some of 'em are still relevant." Tyler, a World History teacher, did not offer much clarification. His silence reflected an heir of unease about the topic. He stated earlier in the interview that he was unaware of Robert Stahl or decision-making in the classroom prior to the interview. When assessing the lessons of Stahl, Tyler continued his line of thought:

I could see us doing like the 14 points one. Um, when we're talking about World War I, I think that would be interesting. Um, oh, what was? I think it was giving them a voice as well. I like that one; uh, and the, on being an important person. Yeah. Being the progressive spirit thing. I really liked those. Yeah. And I think that, that I could still implement today. I don't think they're out of date. Um, if something works really well, I, I think it, it can stand the test of time. Yeah. Uh, it's just all in making sure you have the right technology and, and uh, the right way of presenting it, I guess.

While Ken and Tyler neither agreed nor disagreed with the question, five of the teachers interviewed asserted that Robert Stahl's approach was not outdated. Austin advocated for Robert Stahl's approach by saying:

I disagree with it [the question: is Robert Stahl's approach outdated], you know, even if we don't want to call it that I, I think it gives a deeper understanding, uh, of the content, and it shows a deeper level of knowledge for the student. Um, so I, I don't think it's outdated. I think, uh, I think just in our conversation here, I'm thinking to myself, maybe we don't call it that, but I think it's a concept that's still being used.

R.J. echoed Austin's thought:

I don't; I still think it's very relevant to that, you know, to that understanding, you know, the historical purpose and, you know, that was surrounding these major decisions. And even just understanding like that, the why is just as important as the what. And I think that his [Robert Stahl], like his methods of doing so I, I feel like really kind of guides you and they're pretty straightforward. They're not complicated, like guidelines on how to do that. And I, I thought, I think they're still pretty relevant as far as just guiding you to that point.
Tyler, Ken, R.J., and Austin all based their interpretation on their pedagogical understanding of instruction in the classroom. As social studies teachers, the standards within their state require students to analyze, compare and contrast and justify multiple topics. The teachers recognized that both required topics and objectives were part of Robert Stahl's approaches to decision-making. To this end, six of the teachers identified the lesson titled 14 Points by Robert Stahl as being very pertinent, up to date, and one they would be incorporating within their classroom in the coming school year. Tyler convinced himself as he declared: "I could see us doing like the 14 points one. Um, when we are talking about world war, I think that would be interesting… I could still implement today."

Furthermore, when asked if Robert Stahl's approach to decision-making was outdated, Laura passionately divulged:

I don't think it is because, in all honesty, I think the fact that we're not, we haven't been doing it is showing in where we are today in society. And that kinda thing. We've got people who are looking to someone else for the answers, and they can't make those decisions on their own. So I feel like we have; we should go back to that. I mean, I know it; I know society has changed, and kids are not the same. I can't attribute what I learned and how I grew up to the same. But I do think that I have, I have always had an ability because of the way I was taught both, you know, at home, uh, extended family and in school to make decisions and, and to have those projects and those extra things that were doing, um, that were hands-on that were go make your poster on your own…It was my, you know, those were all decisions I had to make. And I was supported in making those decisions by the teacher who would say, okay, that's a good decision. Okay. That one might be tough, but let's see you do it. There was an encouragement there and, and almost okay to fail if I did… I mean, I think that's my frustration with a lot of kids when they read something they're going, the answer's not here. I'm like, yes, it is. You just gotta think about it. You have to actually take the words that are written on the page and figure out what they're saying to get the answer. It's not going to be the answer is this, this, this, this exactly. It's not written out for you. So I don't think of it as outdated.

**Interview Question Six.** The third research question was, "What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding the integration of decision-making materials in the classroom?"
The second corresponding interview question was, "How do you think teachers should address decision-making in the classroom?"

According to Groen (2012), the No Child Left Behind legislation had the most significant impact on social studies curriculum and pedagogy. The recent testing mandates revised through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) ensured the classroom atmosphere remained test-driven and motivated by "a pedagogical philosophy that required specific practices for teaching children a specific set of skills" (p. 9). Teachers often wrestle with teaching to the standards versus teacher to the End of Course (EOC) tests. The teachers interviewed agreed that besides the struggle of covering over 95 social studies standards in a single semester was incorporating decision-making opportunities. Austin, a fifth-year teacher, conveyed his advice for integrating decision-making materials into the classroom.

I wouldn't make it, you know, this big, scary monster that you've, oh, got to incorporate this. I mean, just start small and be reflective on what you're already doing because, as we've just discussed, you might be doing it and not even really realize that you're already doing it. Um, just if, if you're not, start incrementally, you know, just work it into something don't totally change your script, but right.

According to Austin, decision-making is a natural process that he felt may presently be happening in the classroom. Whether it is or is not happening, he explains that it should not be overwhelming but instead incorporated into what a teacher already has planned. When speaking with Lance, it seemed as if he resonated with Austin's thoughts on current practices. Lance stated that decision-making could be incorporated through methods currently used in the classroom when he asserted:

I don't think the content really matters. I think whether it's math or whatever, you're still kind of going through that same process [of decision-making]. I mean, when you're doing a math problem, you get to a, to the, you know, that answer, but how did you get there? You know, you're still going through those same phases. But yeah, again, I, I think, uh,
it's, I think it's pretty much common thread throughout [contents], even if they don't even realize it. I think teachers go through those steps [Robert Stahl's decision-making phases].

Contrary to Lance and Austin, Laura, who has taught social studies content for 13 years, thought for a moment as she answered the question. She specifically articulated cross-curricular approaches as the best way to incorporate decision-making materials into the classroom.

I wish that we did a little bit more collaboration between our classes. Um, for instance, um, Ms. Hathcock and I several years ago, um, discussed when we were doing the, when we were having to do the constructed responses and doing that, writing practice. Ms. Hathcock and I had sat down at one point and [were] like, we ought to work together and use the same- Like if I'm working on say the American revolution, you're working on source material to write narratives or argument essays or whatever with my sources. So that maybe I'm exposing them to Paul Revier's bloody massacre on King Street, and you're showing them the same thing, and they're having to write to that. And so I'm giving them background, you're giving them the language skills they might need, and we're merging that together so that when they write that constructive response or we require an essay and I say, we because I grade it for the background knowledge. Show the knowledge you need in social studies, and you look for the mechanics. And, and so both of us are sitting here like, oh yeah, we're gonna do that. But, but no, we, we ask, you know, talking about doing that, and it's like, oh, you have your standards, what? You have your standard. And I'm like, but that's not no. And I made the argument and, and this is also, I taught nearly every subject except math. But my argument back before we adopted Wit Wisdom was we should be using materials that are from 1920 and older, and they're like, why? And I was like one; it's free because the copyrights have gone out on them two because it's free. It's more likely to show up on testing, and then I was like, three, if you guys will use materials that I'm teaching, it will assist both of us. So even then, like when we adopted Wit Wisdom, I mean like Ms. Hathcock, I know Ms. Hathcock did this in one of our meetings where she asked if you could teach, their books separately, like differently cause um, doing all quiet on the Western front while I'm teaching revolutionary war history just does a number on the kids. Well, they said, no, the Wit Wisdom is written this way. And so both of us are sitting here going, okay, but why can't we find a book that would actually fit better for us. In terms of I'm handling the background, like just the colonial book, you know, something that would fit with what's needed for that Wit wisdom unit but also fits from here. So I can support you, and you can support me. So I mean, that's one of the things that's bugged me the most is because I do feel like that within, within our school system, if we could start out with the decision making process on the teacher level, that would make things easier for the kids so that we could get more into, in-depth in things. So it's not like, I mean, for instance, again, All Quiet on the Western front, they're having to teach some background on who's on whose side, who are the allies who are the axis, this is this, and this is that. And it's kinda like; I could cover that if it was within mine, and then you could still be sitting here, like, okay, so here's some of the language issues we might run into.
During our interview, R.J., a native of her current school district, admitted that she had taken an unorthodox approach to this question. She asked her students how they felt a teacher, such as herself, should address topics dealing with decision-making and the best way of presenting that approach in the classroom. She professed that the answer she received mimicked her convictions. She remarked:

I actually asked my students this question today. I asked them this question because I was curious to see what they would say. And one of my students just spoke up, and he's just the sweetest guy. And he made the comment. And he said, "just give us the facts, just tell it to us, just give us the information." He's like, "that's what we need." He's like, "we need to make, we need that information." He's like, "we can't do anything until we have the information," and I thought, well, that makes sense. You know, give 'em the information, make sure they have plenty of it, make sure they have the perspectives, the evidence.

The weight of accountability measures restricts teachers' ability to address decision-making in the classroom. Student progress monitoring through the assessment of standards is still required and heavily relegates the teacher's pace of content coverage in the classroom. This inadvertently restricts the teacher's ability to present content through decision-making, which can benefit cognitive learning construction. The educational philosophy around NCLB, which was intended to propel students to success and sought to ensure all children would be provided with equitable access to education with accountability for progress tied to test scores (that no child would be left behind), became tainted by administrative concerns with accountability linked directly to funding (Groen, 2012, p.6). This linkage proved consequential to both pedagogy and content. School districts across the nation provide extended class time to heavily tested subjects such as reading and math, while social studies, fine arts, and sciences are given less instruction time (and other programs canceled entirely—vocational programs, life-skills programs, etc.) to allow additional instruction to 'teach to the test.' Pedagogical approaches and the application of cognitive learning approaches such as decision-making are replaced with an obligatory focus on testing skills and
tested content. James Popham (2006) asserts that a high-stakes testing approach required under the NCLB legislation has been unable to detect any significant change in student proficiency or instructional improvement in all the years of employment (p.82).

**Research Question Four**

**Interview Question Seven.** The fourth research question was, "What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding decision-making materials in relation to the NCSS C3 Framework and the State Standards?" Two interview questions were aligned to address this question. The first corresponding interview question was, "Suppose your district required you to explain how Robert Stahl's decision-making materials related to the state standards. What would you say to them?"

During the interview process, teachers established their attitudes toward decision-making materials. All of the teachers interviewed were interested in decision-making materials and other inquiry-based approaches that actively engaged students in the learning process. However, as previously mentioned, teachers also indicated constraints such as time and pacing as a significant hurdle when considering such activities. To address the issues with current state standards, the teachers were asked if they felt that the decision-making lessons written by Robert Stahl correlated with the current state standards. Five of the seven teachers concurred- the lessons addressed specific standards within their state. The two teachers who disagreed had not had an opportunity to review the lessons and, therefore, had no opinion regarding the question.

Tyler, who has been teaching for four years at his current high school, claimed he did not know how to expound on his answer. After thinking for a moment, he remarked:

Yeah. I, I could see, uh, a correlation, um, just because like, for example, again, the 14 points. We have to talk about World War. I, we have to explain all those different details that they want us to look at. [So] yeah, I, I can see it.
Austin, who is 36 years old and also sponsors Student Council at his current school, indicated:

So, I was looking, uh, I pulled the 14 Points Lesson. Um, I know I teach, um, Dual Credit, U.S. History, so my state standards are a little bit different than the regular U.S. History state standards, but it's still a content section that what, whatever standards you're going by, you're gonna discuss the 14 points. Um, and I would definitely pull that lesson and, and say, this is a great way to help students understand what is coming out of the end of, of World War I, you know, with the League of Nations, Treaty of Versailles um, I think it's an excellent example of meeting the standards.

Like Austin and Tyler, Lance explained an existing connection between U.S. History, World History, and state standards.

Um, some of the assignments had actual standard content in them. Uh, like the Scopes and Monkey Trial. Um, the 14 Points. Um, we, I, you know, in World History when I taught that in high school, that was, uh, definitely in the standards.

Of all the responses garnered by this interview question, two teachers were very thorough in their appraisal of the Stahl materials concerning the state standards with which they worked. R.J. shared:

I printed out the lesson, and so I was looking through, you know, looking through. And so I thought, well, um, if, if I had to explain how that, this, how his, uh, four phases related to this lesson, um, you know, I was thinking, you know, in the first phase, the conceptual phase, you know, you're looking at the base, like the background, like, who is it? Where are they, what's happening? What time is it? So they get that kind of that overall- here's the information. Um, and then on the relational phase, um, you know, I thought, well, this would be a great opportunity. That's where you provide them the materials hand, 'em give 'em the handouts, give 'em the, you know, give 'em a copy of the Treaty of Versailles, give 'em a copy of the 14 points, let 'em kind of break down and see what the differences are, give 'em a copy of the points of the League of Nations so that they can see, you know, here's what the actual proposal was. Um, and so let them start there, um, on the decisional phase, uh, cause I know part, part of this lesson is they have to go back they're the Senate, they have to figure out, are we going to vote favor of this or not? And, of course, we did; this is one of our standards. So we discussed this. Um, you know, so in that decisional phase, I think that'd be where it be great opportunity for kids to actually take the lesson and they start discussing, okay, if we're the Senate, you know, how does this fit into, you know, our government's role? What is the impact on America? If we decide to do this, what's the impact on America. If we decide not to do this, you know, how does that, you know, and then, and how the kids start figuring out, you know, what leads us to that? You know, how do they get to that conclusion? Um, and then on the reflective stage, you know, maybe go a little bit, um, maybe have the kids start justifying the rationale for how they voted. Did you vote in favor of it? Did you, did you
vote in favor of this, but not that, or how did you, and what was your purpose behind it, you know, based on your evidence, based on your information you've got, how did you get to that point? How did you decide that, and why?

Gleaning from R.J.’s response, Rebecca gave clarity to the connection between her state standards for the courses she teaches and the decision-making materials by Robert Stahl.

The two that I looked at most closely, um, I guess I should could say, first of all, this semester, I'm teaching the State Dual Credit World History. Okay. Um, so I looked at the 14 Points Plan lesson, and then I also looked at the one that's called Out of School, which deals with the kind of impact of the Russo-Japanese war. Cause those are both topics that are specified in the standards I'm teaching right now. Um, and so the 14 Points Plan lesson, I thought it was great. I made myself a little copy and dropped it into my World War I Google drive folder. So that I can use that with my students next semester. Um, like it was awesome because it, it gets it exactly what I need them to know about the 14 Points Plan while some Americans wanted to continue to be isolationist, how that, um, isolationist tendencies contributed to the United States not getting involved with events in Europe, like in the lead up to World War II. Um, [that lesson] talks a lot about kind of the different points of the Treaty of Versailles, which are so, um, punitive towards the Germans, which of course Hitler is reacting to. So like, I, I could probably find six or seven different places in my state dual credit standards that that lesson would definitely hit on, um, the Russo-Japanese war lesson. That one was a little bit more about sort of American reaction to that. So, it probably would fit better with the U.S. History standards, cuz it also, I thought, played a little bit into, uh, um, like the Roosevelt's order to detain Japanese citizens. I forget what the number is that is order nine, oh something, um, you know, where he detained Japanese citizens during world. It speaks to the history of discrimination, um that that was evident. So that one thing I could include it, um, because I do have to teach about Roosevelt's decision to intern Japanese Americans. And so this, that, that order's kind of setting the stage for, Hey, that, that doesn't just come out of nowhere. There's kind of a buildup of prejudice towards this ethnic group prior to this. Um, it's a little bit more of a stretch, but it definitely works. And, and I, and again, I thought those would be very engaging lessons for the students. So I thought that would make them, you know, useful in the classroom.

The educational reform of the 1990s focused on increasing academic standards and providing measures by which schools would be held accountable for student performance. It also provided an educational shift away from the back to the basics and accountability movements of the 1970s and 1980s. The reforms intended to promote decision-making to empower the learner to assess all pertinent and available information surrounding public issues to develop the ability
to think critically and respond with well-informed reason. Evans & Saxe (1996) expanded on the power of decision-making and inquiry saying explaining that it "lies in the context of its social and intellectual traditions" (p.14). It is a fight against the "rigid formalism and codification" of traditional methods that seek to nullify the capacity for free thought and objectivity (p.26). While decision-making is not limited in scope to social studies, it argues for an interdisciplinary approach to societal issues that relies on curriculum fusion and a more comprehensive educational experience. Decision-making materials are intended to revive the application of inquiry in the classroom. When teachers identify Robert Stahl's lessons as applicable to 2022 state standards, this becomes a tool to be utilized in the classroom.

**Interview Question Eight.** The fourth research question was, "What is the perception of high school teachers regarding decision-making materials in relation to the NCSS C3 Framework and the State Standards?" The second corresponding interview question was, "How would you explain the relationship between the NCSS C3 Framework and the lessons by Robert Stahl?"

Teachers did not expound on this topic due to unfamiliarity. Six of the seven teachers were unaware of the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Framework; however, five teachers reviewed the framework documents that I sent to them. They also used a Google search to identify critical points. to answer the interview question and identify a correlation, if any.

When asked, Austin appeared to be puzzled by the C3 concept. After a moment of thought, he said:

I was not familiar with it [NCSS C3 Framework] when I got the resources, I did do a quick Google search and was like, oh, you know, this, this is interesting. You know, I haven't heard of it. It seems like a good thing. There's so much else that we get bogged down in. Um, I do think specifically between, uh, Robert Stahl's lessons and, and that, uh, C3 framework to me, it, they both seem to kind of have steps that built on one another. And that to me, uh, was important, uh, as an educator, you know, we're, we're taking that content, we're applying it, you know, and, and moving down the line there, that was a connection that I saw.
Rebecca was the only teacher familiar with the C3 Framework. With her background knowledge of the framework, Rebecca seemed confident in her response as she shuffled the pile of notes she had made prior to our meeting. She identified similarities between the two.

Um, so I think the C3 framework and the Robert Stahl lessons are, they're both asking kids to dig beneath the surface. So, in the kind of general sense of what we mean by inquiry lessons with students, I think they're, they're both really asking them to do that.

Within the same vein of thought, Tyler identified some comparable traits of the Robert Stahl lessons provided by the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Framework. He claimed:

Yeah. There, I'm sure I could, I can definitely see where some of them [lessons] would require them [students] to look at like the, Give Them A Voice [lesson]; which one is that? No, the progressive [lesson] On Being An Important Person uh, having to focus in on what the ideas of being a progressive person, a progressive American are and then having to use those exploratory skills to try to explain their position on whatever that lesson was wanting them to do. Um, yeah, I can totally see that. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I can, I can see that.

Rebecca, who appeared to find value in decision-making materials in a supplemental capacity, provided a clear contrast to the C3 framework.

Um, the biggest difference is like, if you really follow through with the C3 framework, as I understand it, you are not just asking students to kind of learn some facts or draw a conclusion. They're actually supposed to frame their own questions, you know, they're supposed to start with like, here's what I want to know about this topic. Now I'm gonna identify the sources for learning. Now I'm actually going to learn about my topic, and now I'm going to present that. Um, and so which is, I don't know if you've ever done national history day. I do national history day. And that's exactly what national history day asks kids to do, like frame your own questions, find your sources, come to a conclusion based on those sources and then present that information. Um, and it's awesome. And there's a lot of learning that happens there, but it takes a long time, like one national history day project, you know; project is something that we work on an entire school year. Um, you know, and so with Stahl, he's also asking kids to make conclusions, look beneath the surface, make evaluations, but the questions are provided for them, right? So like all the lessons I looked at, sort of set out the scenario- you are this person, you are encountering these historical events. How are you going to react? Are, you know, are you gonna vote to the, keep Japanese kids from school are, you know, what, are you going to join the League of Nations or not? So, the kids aren't framing their own questions. And they're also not having to like go out and seek the sources. So, with the Stahl lessons, um, they, they aren't necessarily giving you primary sources, right. As
part of the lesson, um, you know, they're kind of setting it up with a scenario. So, that would give me the opportunity to either add in the primary sources as part of the lesson or to do this as like the introduction and then have the kids dive into primary sources to kind of find out, well, what, what, what was the decision? What did the San Francisco school board decide or, so let's talk about who supported the League of Nations and who was against it and that kind of thing? So it's a good opening activity. Um, and it also, again, cuz I'm worried about time; it fits into my time a little bit better than a a true C3 framework lesson does.

Through Rebecca's response, she contended that Robert Stahl's lessons meet some of the expectations of the C3 Framework, such as inquiry-based learning. On the contrary, the lessons supply much of the information that the C3 Framework requires the students to provide for themselves. When speaking with R.J., like Rebecca, she noted similarities and differences between the Robert Stahl materials and the C3 Framework; she also identified frustration as she, this self-professed history nerd, inhaled deeply and drew a correlation between the standards, C3 Framework, and the Stahl lessons.

That is a really great question. Um, I think it's one of those that it, it might look good on paper, but when you are teaching 95 standards and, and as a teacher, you, you will fully understand this. And you're also putting in all the interruptions that come with it, you know, the assembly days or the snow days or whatever. And then you have all these interruptions of, you know, like, um, I don't know how y'all do testing at your school, but we have one of the most jacked up testing schedules ever. <laugh> it's horrendous. So it just disrupts everything for like three weeks. But, um, but it, I mean, I, I was reading through some of these today, like reading through like what some of the things were for each of these dimensions [of the framework]. And I, you know, and I want to feel like I do a lot of these things just maybe just naturally as a history teacher, but I, I will admit some of these, I thought, oh, well, it would be nice if we could do some of these things. So, you know, you're trying to get all these [95 standards] taught by a certain time. It, you kind of, you kind of are gonna miss out on some of these things. Um, and I, and I know that some of these things after looking into 'em, you know, some of these things, you know, the idea of them is built a little bit into the standards, but not fully.

Later in our conversation, R.J. returned to the question about the correlation between Robert Stahl's decision-making lessons and the NCSS C3 Framework. She continued;

Um, I, I feel like he was, um, it, I think, I feel like according to the framework, I feel like maybe they were maybe pushing for maybe some more like more like evidence or
whatever, or more text evidence or things like that. But, um, I mean, as far as you know, the, um, you've got your, you've got your information, you've got your ability to explore, hang on. I'm flipping over to my pacing [guide] here so I can look at what I wrote now. <laugh> um, but you've got, um, I feel like, um, I think you've got these opportunities for critical thinking, by looking at what you've got, uh, the information from the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles, then the kids have to put it all together and decide, you know, you know, how do we proceed and, and, and making those connections to how's that gonna impact us later. Um, I, I feel like it probably lines up pretty well. Maybe the only difference in my opinion, and I might be very wrong on this, is that, uh, you know, maybe they [NCSS C3 Framework] go a little bit more into the specifics of what you need to have and maybe a little bit more specific, but I feel like he's, they're pretty, I feel like they were pretty aligned.

Overall, the teachers' perceptions within this interview question clearly demonstrated that the National Council of the Social Studies C3 Framework was unfamiliar to them and offered unrealistic requirements for their classroom. The chief complaint is time; a wealth of prior research supports the daunting task of the limitations of instructional times in social studies. Teachers struggle to cover the breadth of standards and incorporate the C3 framework dimensions as they are so extensive (Brophy, Alleman, & Knighton, 2009; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Friedman, 2006; Thacker, Lee & Friedman, 2017). However, the interview question asked teachers to draw a correlation between the decision-making lessons created by Robert Stahl and the C3 Framework. All the teachers that assessed the material and the framework conferred that the documents were aligned with inquiry-based learning and required similar steps to construct knowledge.

Robert Stahl's decision-making theory specifically addressed critical elements of cognitive psychology, affective domain, cooperative learning, and valuation, which align with another educational framework: *A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* (Bloom's Taxonomy). According to P. Armstrong of Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching (2010), the original Bloom's Taxonomy publishers in 1956 created a framework for categorizing
educational objectives. In 2001, cognitive psychologists, curriculum theorists, and instructional researchers published a revision to Bloom's Taxonomy and titled it, *A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* which placed knowledge at the foundation of all cognitive processes.

When the teachers within this study compared and contrasted decision-making lessons with the C3 framework, their answers reflected the taxonomy of teaching and learning. All the state standards are written within the taxonomy framework, and the use of action words reflects the expected cognitive processes students will experience. Therefore, the similarities between the lessons and the framework prove that Robert Stahl's decision-making lessons and the C3 Framework incorporate those cognitive processes required in the classroom.

According to the teachers interviewed, the significant difference between the decision-making lessons and the framework is the approach toward integration in the classroom. Teachers remarked, on different occasions, that the decision-making lessons felt more natural and seemed easier to post holes into their current lesson or unit. However, the C3 framework seemed to start with the highest taxonomy level in the first dimension. This created hesitation within the teacher about its application because of the different constraints within the classroom. Teachers repeated conditions such as the breadth and depth of standards with time in the classroom and the different levels of student learning present in the classroom with varying degrees of background knowledge. For Clarity, the chart below shows the phases of decision-making by Robert Stahl (the steps of decision-making lessons) and the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Framework to the most current publication of *A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment*.
Table 6

Comparison using A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

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<td>Remember</td>
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<td>Understand</td>
<td>Conceptual and Relational Phase</td>
<td>Dimension 1</td>
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<td>Apply</td>
<td>Relational Phase</td>
<td>Dimension 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>Analyze</td>
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<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Decisional Phase</td>
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<td>Create</td>
<td>Reflective Phase</td>
<td>Dimension 1 &amp; 4</td>
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According to Thacker et al. (2017), in a research study focused on teachers’ beliefs and practices on the C3 Framework, only eight of the 38 (21%) teachers surveyed were familiar with the National Council of the Social Studies: College, Career, and Civics Life (C3) Framework. “Twenty teachers (53%) indicated that they were not at all familiar, and ten teachers (26%) were not very familiar” (p. 95). The findings from the study by Thacker et al. (2017) correlate with the findings through the interviews within this study. Overall, teachers are unfamiliar with the C3 Framework. They contend that a framework is an in-depth approach to promoting inquiry in the classroom that works in theory but not in practice. The previous study concluded that (a) teachers’ understandings of the C3 Framework are very minimal, and (b) constraints reported by teachers stifle the opportunity to incorporate the dimensions of the C3 Framework.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate high school teachers’ perceptions and application of Robert Stahl’s decision-making materials in the social studies classroom. By conducting this research study within high school social studies classrooms, the researcher explored a) teachers’ perceptions of Robert Stahl’s decision-making materials and b) the relevance of a values-based inquiry as an educational approach in the classroom. The researcher examined existing literature and data from high school social studies teachers in explicitly rural districts across the state. Seven teachers were selected using two-stage random sampling from all the rural high schools within the state of the study. Data sources included semi-structured interviews, field notes, and document analysis. The researcher identified four themes among the seven teacher participants. This chapter discusses the identified themes from interview findings and the implications for the high school social studies classroom. Recommendations for future research are also addressed.

Findings

Four themes were identified from data provided by the high school social studies teachers that participated in this study: a) decision-making materials, developed by Robert Stahl, are valued as a pedagogical approach towards learning; b) standards-based curriculum and accountability hinder student inquiry; c) rural participants perceived social studies education to be placed on a back burner; d) The National Council for the Social Studies’ College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework’s influence is largely unknown and unrealistic among rural social studies teachers. The first theme is directly related to Robert Stahl. Stahl’s phases of decision-making are a foundational concept in most of his publications which were used during theme identification: The Domain of Cognition: An Alternative to Bloom’s Cognitive Domain within the

Theme 1: Decision-Making Materials are Important

The first theme identified through data analysis was that “decision-making materials, developed by Robert Stahl, are valued as a pedagogical approach towards learning.” All seven of the teacher participants interviewed demonstrated support for inquiry-based learning. Five out of seven teachers directly identified Robert Stahl’s decision-making materials as an effective way to integrate inquiry into the social studies classroom. Decision-making inquiry-based education is rooted in Harold Rugg’s issues-centered approach (1927). Rugg’s approach dictated that social studies afforded students a decision-making curriculum that, in turn, provided the opportunities to teach students the ability to think critically about various social, cultural, and historical issues. This approach offers students the opportunity to “develop well-reasoned responses based on disciplined inquiry, thoughtful, in-depth study, and move beyond relativistic notions of truth” (Evans & Saxe, 1996, p.2). Influenced by Rugg’s ideology, Robert Stahl created a framework for decision-making lessons based on cognitive phases that he purported the human mind maneuvered through during the construction of knowledge. Additionally, teacher participants were asked about the cognitive phases of decision-making concerning their effectiveness in the classroom.

When asked about their ideal approach to teaching social studies content, teachers identified multiple inquiry applications, all of which are synonymous with decision-making, as
the most desirable method. Also, teachers were favorable toward self-identifying decision-making phases as a natural and necessary component of knowledge construction. All seven teachers reported their desire to use this approach and incorporate it more often. Teachers’ desire for students to self-identify with scenarios and content materials during the decision-making phases of learning mirrors research by Thomas Conklin and Artemis Boulamatsi (2020), which indicates that decision-making exercises can be applied to a variety of disciplines. Their case study analyzed three 75-minute classes and concluded that decision-makers focus on the content and context of the decision regarding a positive or negative consequence. The researchers continue to explain valuing and decision-making as natural, cognitive processes revealed in the steps of creating, evaluating, analyzing, and responding. Laura, an experienced U.S. History teacher, shared how she incorporates decision-making inquiry into her classroom.

I think the fact that we’re not, we haven’t been doing it [decision-making] is showing in where we are today in society. We’ve got people who are looking for someone else for the answers, and they can’t make those decisions on their own. So, for instance, last week, the kids traveled the Oregon Trail. They had to. I gave them their family, their occupation, how much money they had, they had to plan out what they were gonna use, pack, horses, whatever. They had to buy the food; they had to make the choices. And so they are still talking about it, you know, how they did it. And so it’s that kind of thing that makes it more active for them because they should be partaking in their learning more than just note-taking or worksheets or that kind of thing.

Teachers repeatedly expressed the desire for students to have more student-centered opportunities in the classroom to experience inquiry-based decision-making. This desire to facilitate opportunities for decision-making concerning reaching all learners is aligned with Robert Stahl’s foundational concept of the four phases of decision-making (Stahl, 1995). As a cognitive approach, Robert Stahl advocated that cognitive psychology was necessary for teaching and learning. Cognitive approaches in instruction support the theory that no one is born with previous knowledge and understanding, yet they acquire knowledge based on observation
of their surroundings. Further research by Pooja Agarwal and Henry Roediger (2019) focused on the complex processes within the brain during the cognitive stimulation of knowledge construction. Their research in both the laboratory and secondary classroom identified cognitive learning effects. Agarwal and Roediger (2019) propose, concurrent with Stahl that cognitive psychology informs classroom practice and can be applied across grade bands and subject areas for positive learning outcomes. Stahl (1995) writes, “human knowledge, whether personal or associated with a field or discipline, is constructed internally within and by each human” (p. 7). Overall, it is understood that authentic learning stems from the construction of knowledge.

Construction denotes a process of building that supports the “perspective claim that individuals spend their lives constructing or inventing their meanings, ideas, views and conceptions of the actual and imagined worlds, and interpretations of the phenomena they encounter” (Stahl, 1995, p. 14). It is from the phenomena that students encounter that a process of learning can occur.

R.J. and Lance, both from different regions within the state of study, identified Stahl’s four phases of decision making as an integral part of learning. R.J. recognized the phases immediately in her students when she was introduced to the concept. “I do think they are just based on what I see with my kids. I think that there are many times when kids do that naturally.” Lance concurred, stating that the cognitive approach of Robert Stahl “[is] just a natural progression that we go through as people in general. Teachers connected the natural process of constructing knowledge and the phases of decision-making identified by Robert Stahl. R.J. continued her thought, incorporating a direct connection between the cognitive phases of decision-making and social studies content. She continued:

So, without making it sound political or anything, we deal a lot with current events and issues [in history]. One of the biggest topics for the last couple of months has been, you know, Ukraine and Russia. And I was reading through his steps [decision-making phases], and I thought, those are important [to the teacher] to direct lesson because
sometimes they [students] are apathetic, tired, or haven’t developed critical thinking skills, yet.

Teachers referenced the state of current societal issues with the lack of inquiry-based decision-making opportunities. Seven out of seven teachers identified different concerns within the present society, addressing the lack of a decision-making curriculum as a primary factor. In this vein of thought, Rebecca, a 24-year teacher with only one year of experience in high school social studies, shared:

I think that’s important [decision-making materials] also because, you know, education is very politicized right now. You know, there’s all this talk about like what content is in the textbooks, and we’re gonna, you know, ban these books from libraries, and people want this sort of, total control for their own political agendas. I would like to think at some point; we are going to get a generation of human beings who can move beyond this kind of attack culture that we see in politics. And, so that’s another reason that I want people to feel empowered to express their opinions in a way where they’re respected by others to move to more productive discourse.

Similar to the claim of educators today, Rugg (1927) emphasized a lack of successful citizenship education in classrooms due mainly to a lack of current issue-centered decision-making opportunities. When first introducing issues-centered decision-making as inquiry, Rugg supported an intentional shift from the direct instruction and memorization associated with traditional teaching methods and encouraged critical thinking skills. He pushed for content to reflect students’ mental struggles as necessary for the knowledge construction process. Rugg (1927) felt confident that this process would occur through current and pertinent material if students were allowed to reflect on and question different American culture areas. This pedagogical approach to learning allowed students to address current social issues through a learning lens and promoted independent decision-making within the classroom.

According to Barr et al. (1977), this pedagogical influence over the learning environment and curriculum of practical learning would encompass a broad knowledge of social studies.
education that would ultimately create knowledgeable and informed citizens. Current research, “Who Cares?: Young Adolescents’ Perceived Barriers to Civic Action, by Michelle Bauml, Victoria Smith, and Brooke Blevins (2022), assessed the current state of social studies education and key obstacles toward decision-making activities in social studies classrooms. The authors admit that “despite the NCSS’s stated goal of cultivation [in] knowledge, thinking, and active citizenship, classrooms are rarely spaces where students explore collective action and civic knowledge” (p. 23). Bauml et al. (2022) emphasized, as did teacher participants in this study, that decision-making and civic knowledge skills could help address the “root causes of systematic social problems” (p. 23).

**Theme 2: The Hindrance of Standards and Accountability**

The second theme identified within the data analysis was that “standards-based curriculum and accountability hinder student inquiry.” The second theme directly addressed the research question, “What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding the integration of decision-making materials in the classroom?” The question was posed to obtain the preference of approaches and methods when integrating decision-making into the classroom. However, within the responses, a consistent thematic ideology was identified. Five out of seven teachers regarded a standards-based curriculum requirement and accountability measures as the primary hindrance when planning to incorporate and implement decision-making and inquiry-based activities. Jack Schneider and Andrew Saultz (2020) researched standards-based accountability. They identified a correlation between standards-based accountability and perceived authority and control in the American classroom. In their research, *Authority and Control: The Tension at the Heart of Standards-Based Accountability*, Schneider and Saultz (2020) refer to the tension between curricular freedom and state standards-based accountability as pardonable where the state
department of education is “unable to relinquish control” back to the local districts without “abdicating [their] authority” to dictate a standards-based requirement and require some measure of accountability (p. 419). Without a measure of accountability and standards framework, their research concludes that governing bodies allege there is no basis for free and equitable education (Schneider & Saultz, 2020). On the contrary, teachers like Laura desire freedom from a standards-based curriculum and the consequences of high-stakes testing.

One of the things that bugged me the most is because I do feel that within our school system if we could start out with the decision-making process on the teacher level, that would make things easier for the kids. So that we could get more in-depth in things, for instance, All Quiet on the Western Front, they’re having to teach background information on who’s on whose side, who are the allies, who are the axis, this is this, and that is that. And it’s kinda like; social studies could cover that if it was in line with mine, and then you could be sitting here like here are some language issues we might run into.

Laura referred to the misalignment of state standards across contents. One hindrance highlighted was the inability of teachers to work in a cross-curricular fashion because of the progression standards in her state. Laura shared that English and social studies teachers should have an opportunity to support one another within their content by sharing literacy and historical content coverage by realigning the standards. As state policy currently stands, an English teacher may teach an American Frontier-type novel in August, but social studies' supporting curriculum and topics might not be covered until later in the semester. Another common hindrance expressed among participants is End of Course testing pressures. Teachers cannot realign the standards across contents because of the pressure to cover specific topics by benchmark dates to cover all standards in preparation for assessments. Ken taught World History and expressed his elation for being a non-tested content.

I pretty much get free reign here. There’s no scripted lesson plan or anything like that now; if I were teaching an EOC (End of Course Assessment) class, like uh, U.S. History, that might be a different story.
While Ken is not restricted as much by standards-based accountability, he showed awareness that tested subjects are less likely to find the opportunity to incorporate inquiry due to the standards-based assessment, like EOCs. Rebecca, who resides in another state, expressed her concerns about the hindrance incurred by standards-based accountability measures.

In my perfect classroom world, I would not have to cover so many topics. So, I know people say this all the time, but the standards, you know, tend to be like a mile wide and an inch deep. I would like it if there were fewer things that I had to teach, and I could teach each topic in more depth. I would also like to give more opportunities for like inquiry where they’re looking at primary sources. So, we tend to be very multiple-choice test-oriented, but it’s nice when you can offer them an alternative to that, some kind of project-based learning…Since education is so politicized right now, maybe you don’t have tenure yet, [younger teachers] who aren’t quite as established, they feel much more intimidated to do anything that they feel will not be in walk step with like a curriculum guide kind of thing. So, I think that makes decision-making [inquiry] kind of difficult.

Senent, Kelly, and Abo-Zena (2021) suggest that teachers are often “pressured into narrow, skill-based curricular approaches and accompanying standards and measures of accountability,” which prove to hinder the opportunities for curiosity and creativity in the classroom (p.1247).

When asked about integrating decision-making and inquiry into the classroom, R.J. admitted that she was openly opinionated about the topic.

Well, I have a lot of opinions as I’m sure you do. So, I’ll try to be professional about it. I remember one year, a couple of years ago. See, I just can’t be still when I’m in class, and I teach on a block schedule, so I’m doing instruction, and then there’s an activity. Regardless of whether they are a special education student or not like, I’m usually just walking around the room and double-checking with them and things like that. And I started the closer we got to EOC; I started kind of like tapering off, you know, going and checking and doing some different things, and I had one student actually get mad at me. And I had to explain. I said listen, I understand, but I won’t be there to help you for EOC. I can’t do these things for the EOC… I always tell myself, and this might not even be, this is probably not the most professional thing to say, but I always just tell myself, you know, listen, it’s the game we have to play.

R.J. expressed frustration with limitations to her students because of the nature of upcoming End of Course testing. She continued:
In [our state], the U.S. History standards, we have 95 standards, and each one of those standards are pretty comprehensive. So, you know, some of those standards might have ten or eleven things listed, but we are just talking about how it would be nice if we could just, you know, spend time on a subject, especially subjects that the kids really love… It would be great if we could just have a year where it was like here; here are the guidelines. I feel like we could really do a lot more, um, you know, even like allowing the kids to do their own sort of, you know, exploration of some of these subjects and really getting into the meat, the meat of some of these topics instead of just grazing over, you know, here’s what the standard says we need to talk about. [Inquiry and C3] might look good on paper, but when you are teaching 95 standards and when you have so many standards, and you’re a tested subject. You know, you are trying to get all these [standards] taught by a certain time. It, you kind of are gonna miss out on some things, you know.

Research conducted by Virtue, Buchanan, and Vogler (2012) recognized that due to standards-based accountability, social studies teachers struggle to find time and chance to incorporate creativity and inquiry; however, they postulate that teachers should take the time after the high-stakes accountability testing to select topics worth “digging postholes” into the remainder of their lessons. Digging postholes is an expression that refers to the opportunity for a teacher to incorporate or implement an activity within a lesson or unit. While the researcher believes that this approach may work in an elementary and middle school setting where students receive content instruction throughout the entire year, this is hardly feasible for the high school teachers working on a block schedule. Laura commented regarding the struggle of teaching a post-holed curriculum. She spoke about a plethora of ideas and areas where she could see inquiry and decision-making opportunities arise in her classroom only to be stifled by a ‘standards and assessment mindset’.

And that’s one of the things that does drive me a little bit crazy of the idea of the way that the standards have been written, we continue to take away the separate class and make it a topic that you have embedded in another [standard], and I think that’s to the detriment of the kid. We did different things [in social studies], and you can’t do that in a social studies class when you’ve gotta cover 98 standards, 75 standards or whatever that embedded in there is geography and so, it’s like even our [state] standards are built into this U.S. History standards now. The state has it written in such a way that if the high school doesn’t off the state history class, then it should be written into the U.S. History
standards [so] teachers should add some stuff about the state in, but I don’t have time for that. And so, it gets to the point of, if you aren’t gonna ask the question on the test, why should I teach it?

In their research study, *Standards-Based Accountability in the United States: Lessons Learned and Future Directions*, Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan (2013), identified the following challenges present in the current classroom: a) when assessments are considered high stakes, standards may take a back seat, b) current assessment measures do not adequately measure all standards, and c) when strong sanctions are attached to measurable outcomes and assessments, teaching practices to become distorted.

Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan (2013) expose the undercurrent of tensions in American classrooms as standards-based curriculum and accountability work against one another and the teacher concerning a constructive learning experience, which the researcher upholds as the basis of the educational experience. Their research reveals that classroom content, instruction, and approaches are all centered on a test due to test-driven responses. Standards-based accountability did not focus on standard-based content but instead on tested material and tested formats regarding content that falls somewhere on the spectrum of state standards. The researchers conclude that teachers modify their content and approach to obtain successful scores due to test material and format predictability. They also address the possibility that autonomy and alignment may become competing goals in the future of education. With the support of research and current teacher participant interviews, the researcher posits that this concern has become a reality.

Teachers have reached the precipice of decision-making in their classrooms. If they are to incorporate inquiry in the classroom, they must choose between the autonomy to do so or the alignment of a standards-based accountability curriculum.
Theme 3: Social Studies on the Back Burner

The third theme identified within the data analysis was that “rural teacher participants perceived social studies to be placed on a back burner.” The third theme directly addressed the research question, “What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding classroom instruction?” Since the high school teachers selected taught within the social studies department at their high school, their answers were related to social studies instruction and their perception of the treatment of social studies within the high school, school district, and the state department of education. According to Neil Houser (1994), the term “back burner” is a hypothetical reference, in this study, toward the social studies which have been undervalued and underrepresented. His research, Social Studies “on the Backburner”: Views from the Field, revealed teachers’ perceptions that social studies content has been “tacked onto the end [and has become] the first thing you cut” (p.17). He writes, “it seems like social studies is one of the things you put on the backburner—everything else has to be brought first… it is what we do when we have time left over” (p.17).

Teacher participants in this study concur with Neil Houser’s research. Six out of seven teachers remarked on the perceived second-rate status of social studies among curricular contents. Working in a predominantly rural area, Lance’s high school is unique. It is comprised of less than 700 students in grades 7-12. Lance is the 7th-grade social studies teacher; however, this is considered high school in his district. He expresses disdain for his experience as a social studies teacher: "I have always said since I’ve been teaching for 12 years now that social studies is the redheaded stepchild.” He continued to target the reasons he had come to this conclusion:

I mean, because in every school I’ve been at, you know, they’ve spent all this money for math materials and English ELA materials and even science materials and then, you know, we’re [social studies] tested, too, but like when I got to this school, the only textbook they had was 12 years old, and it was a sixth-grade textbook. It had some
correlation, and I’m like, ‘what am I supposed to do with this?’ So, what I ended up doing is basically the old curriculum at my old school. My buddy that still worked there basically had illegally scanned and put it in a Google Doc. So, he gave me all that. Then that’s what I’ve been using for two years. I mean, just basically coming up with my own stuff and then just pulling stuff off teachers pay teachers. So, we still really don’t have a textbook per se for social studies.

Lance is not the only teacher without resources for his classroom. Laura, also from a small, rural community, shared her frustration with a lack of resources and materials.

It’s frustrating because to not have had a book for as long as I’ve had. I was thinking this year; I have had to spend so much of my time providing the students with information or notes to be able to study that, a lot of times, we may not get to the primary sources or the secondary sources that I like them to have to practice the skills they need. There are a lot of times I don’t feel like I have a chance to get to that breakdown because we haven’t had books. So, basically, I remember telling a parent last year when they were like, “well, how important is this binder for them to have this notebook or whatever?” And I’m like, “It’s their book!” It was their textbook, and I had no other way for them to have something to read or study unless they had those notes.

Within their study regarding the status of social studies across their respective state, Lintner (2006) and VanFossen (2005) share that a lack of teaching materials and resources directly correlates with content efficacy. Teachers and students struggle with finding the importance of maintaining fidelity within social studies instruction under such circumstances. As Lance discusses his frustration with a lack of materials, he mentions his disdain for what he refers to as a misappropriation of funds. Lance suggests that the money appropriated for extensive intervention programs in math and ELA are at the forefront of school budgets. However, there should be appropriations set aside for social studies. He adds:

And they have all these computer programs, you know, here at our school. We do achieve 3000. We have the iReady that they do every day. Um, there’s nothing. I’ve never seen anything like that for social studies at any of the districts I’ve been at. And then they [state and local officials] wonder why the social studies scores are so terrible every year. Yeah, uh, compared to everybody else, and I’m like, common sense. You know, the kids are getting all this extra stuff in these other subjects.
While Lance’s position as a 7th-grade high school teacher is unique due to the rurality of his school, his experience as a social studies teacher has not been confined to his district, region, or state. Further research by Timothy Lintner (2006) and Phillip VanFossen (2005) recorded similar instances within Indiana and South Carolina. Both studies revealed that social studies education was becoming increasingly marginalized with other subject departments such as math and English. The studies shared that the Every Student Succeeds Act slightly changed the accountability spectrum in a post No Child Left Behind era. However, schools are consistently budgeting for more resources related to numeracy and literacy without regard to the literacy support offered by social studies. VanFossen (2005) stated in his research findings that teachers “noted a strain on social studies instruction because of tested subjects” (p.384). The focus has been and may remain on the superiority of tested subjects. On the contrary, teacher participants in the current study did not offer justification for the treatment of social studies.

As Lance spoke about his frustration with a lack of social studies resources, he mentioned his interest in geography and how the state in which he resides (where this study took place) not only places social studies on the back burner but has also removed courses such as geography and state history. The state incorporates geography and state history topics as a standard embedded into either U.S. History or World History courses. Lance shared his view:

When I taught World Geography my first two years, it was ninth grade. I was stunned at the number of students that came into high school, and I mean, they didn’t even know the continents. They didn’t know major oceans. I mean, they knew nothing, and it just blew my mind. And then for the state to devalue it, I mean, it is crazy because it is so important.

Tyler, like Lance, has a passion for social studies and an interest in geography. He commented on his experience in the social studies classroom:

I try to do a lot of maps to give them [students] some idea of the geography of the places we are talking about, but it’s, it’s not nearly enough. I don’t think. And I was so sad when
they combined geography with World History. I know geography is gonna get pushed back to the back.

While Tyler’s school is considered rural due to the size and sparseness of his county, it is much larger than either Lance or Laura’s school. However, even working within a high school with roughly 1500 students, Tyler is not above or beyond the hurdles of being a high school social studies teacher. As he spoke about the second-rate treatment of social studies in general, he commented on how he came to secure his current position.

I took a job after that second year [teaching] inclusion math. I stayed there for two years and did that until my position here at the high school opened up, and I technically have been teaching the last four years personal finance and World History. I’ve got three classes of personal finance and three classes of World History. So they [high school] are like if you want this job [World History teacher], you need to teach personal finance.”

Tyler never made a derogatory comment about this situation during the interview, but his body language and facial expressions revealed his attitude differed. It is evident that the school valued the position of personal finance (math) teacher and was not willing to hire Tyler solely as the World History teacher. Like Tyler, Laura, and Lance, R.J. explained how the struggle between the standards-based accountability and content instruction caused the essence of learning in the social studies classroom to be placed on the back burner.

The bad part is that when you get to part of the [lesson] that the students really, really like or are interested in, especially when it’s things like wars. They love wars for whatever reason, and the boys and the girls, like they all love wars, but when you get to those things, and they really wanna talk more about it, and you have to say like, “yeah, guys, I get it, but we gotta move on because we have, you know, our pacing guide says we really need to get through this.”

Previous research (Linter, 2006; Hartono & Ozturk, 2021; Heafner, Lipscomb, & Rock, 2006; Stecher & Chun, 2001; VanFossen, 2005) contends that the expressed concerns of teacher participants within this study are concurrent with those of educators across the United States. Social studies are often ranked in the lower quartile among core contents (Heafner, Lipscomb &
Rock, 2006). Heafner et al. (2006) uncovered that 2/3 of teachers in the state of North Carolina admitted that the amount of time spent covering topics that were found on state assessments became a “major barrier to providing adequate instruction in social studies” (p.3).

**Theme 4: C3: Either Unknown or Unrealistic**

The fourth theme identified within the data analysis was, “The National Council for the Social Studies’ College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework’s influence is largely unknown and unrealistic among rural social studies teachers.” The fourth theme directly addressed the research question, “What are the perceptions of high school teachers regarding decision-making materials concerning the NCSS C3 Framework and state standards?” The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), founded in 1921, is the largest professional organization to promote social studies education. The College, Career, and Civics Life (C3) framework was published by The National Council of the Social Studies in 2013. The framework was intended to guide states in updating their social studies standards. NCSS approved the framework guide to “inform the pedagogical approaches of social studies educators across the nation” (NCSS, 2013, p.6). However, this research study suggests that the influence of the C3 framework on state standards and classroom instruction in rural areas is primarily nonexistent.

In their action research study, *Integrating the C3 Framework in the social studies: An action research study*, Meghan Manfra and Jeffrey Greiner (2020) discuss the disconnect between the theory of inquiry as it is introduced through the C3 Framework and the practice of integrating the inquiry arcs and guidelines of the framework in the social studies classroom. In this study, teacher participants identify the correlation between Robert Stahl’s decision-making materials and the C3 Framework. Lance admitted that he had never heard of the framework in the 12 years he had been teaching.
Honestly, I had never seen this [NCSS C3 Framework] before I got it. The way I understood the framework [after looking at the C3 document], it was just very much promoting inquiry but very heavily wanting students to do a lot of the digging, researching, and relying on primary sources. It follows the four steps of Stahl’s phases. It [C3] just really sounds like a regurgitation; it’s almost like the same thing [same as Stahl’s phases]. We are just calling it something different, putting a new sticker on it.

Austin also concluded that Robert Stahl’s decision-making lessons and the C3 Framework were similar:

I do think specifically between Robert Stahl’s lessons and that, uh, C3 Framework to me, they both seem to kind of have steps that built on one another. And that to me, uh, was important as an educator. We’re taking that content, we’re applying it, you know, and moving down the line there, that was a connection that I saw.

Austin compared similarities between instruction within the C3 Framework and the six decision-making lessons provided to teachers for this study. While inquiry was familiar to Lance and Austin, the C3 Framework was new. Austin found that the steps outlined for inquiry by C3 and the decision-making phases by Stahl were very similar. Still, he added that while it was interesting, he had never heard of the NCSS C3 Framework prior to this study.

You know, I was not familiar with it [C3 Framework] when I got the resources. I did do a quick Google search and was like, oh, you know, this is interesting. I haven’t heard of it, but it seems like a good thing, but as you know, there’s so much else that we get bogged down with.

Austin’s comments revealed a sense of lethargy. He and other teacher participants revealed throughout their interviews that the workload and expectations of teachers were overwhelming. R.J., like Austin, was unfamiliar with the C3 Framework prior to this research study. She expressed an interest in the theory of framework as a guideline for incorporating inquiry but noted that in practice, it was unrealistic.

I was not familiar with the C3 Framework. Still, I think it’s [C3] one of those that, it might look good on paper, but when you are teaching 95 standards and, as a teacher, you will fully understand this, you’re also putting up with all the interruptions that comes with it, you know, the assembly days or the snow days or whatever. And then you have all these interruptions, of, you know, like testing schedules. It just disrupts everything for
like three weeks. I was reading through some of these today, like reading through what some of the things were for each of these dimensions [C3]. And I want to feel like I do some of these things naturally as a history teacher, but I will admit some of these things [in the C3 Framework], I thought, it would be nice if we could do some of these things.

R.J. and Austin are from opposing geographic locations within the state; they are unfamiliar with one another. In this regard, five teacher participants revealed they did not receive professional development training over the C3 Framework. Research findings by Thacker et al. (2018) indicated that teachers, while interested in the C3 framework, had to create their structured method of designing inquiries and approaches toward planning and implementing inquiry-based lessons. Participants indicated that the depth of knowledge expectation and time recommended for inquiry per the C3 Framework was not a realistic option for a secondary social studies teacher.

R.J. continued, “I thought it would be nice if we could do some of these things. You know how it is like you just make it [your standard-based curriculum] work, but yeah, you gotta cram it in there.” Her response reverberated current research and further statements of teacher participants within this study that the framework, in reality, is an unrealistic option for classroom teachers. Laura, while also interested in the possibilities offered by the C3 Framework, contended:

There are times when I’m like, “Framework? Framework? Nothing’s gonna work because I have to start from scratch.” I know conversations I [had] heard from other social studies teachers in this district was, well, they weren’t doing social studies at all in the elementary school. And I’m like, how are you not doing it at all in elementary school?

Laura continued to discuss limitations associated with the C3 Framework. With the local elementary schools avoiding social studies instruction, secondary social studies teachers find themselves covering additional topics to close the learning gap.

There are times I’ve looked at the framework and seen where it’s been built for an adult. So, I don’t see how a student would have any ability [to complete the inquiry arc] with
me. So, I think I pretty much stay away from it [C3 Framework] for the most part because it’s very deep-very deep. It’s what I like about it.

Her final statement revealed the conundrum facing teachers. A majority of teacher participants identified a need for inquiry in the classroom and an interest in the C3 Framework. Still, the guidelines of the C3 Framework assume that students understand the critical thinking skills necessary to engage in their version of inquiry-based learning. Research by New, Swan, Lee, and Grant (2021) assessed the impact of the C3 Framework by evaluating every state’s attempt to update its standards following the 2013 publication of The National Council of the Social Studies C3 Framework.

Research findings by New et al. (2021) revealed that eleven states did not report any affiliation or change in their standards, eight states noted they did not cite the framework as part of their social studies standards, 16 states cited, endorsed, or excerpted the framework, and 16 states framed, modeled, or adopted the framework in their social studies standards. The state in which this study took place is noted within this research as cited, endorsed, or excerpted from the C3 Framework in their social studies standards. Ironically, none of the teacher participants knew the C3 Framework or its proposed influence over the state social studies standards.

**Conclusions and Implications**

During this study, seven high school social studies teachers from five different rural schools described their perceptions and applications of Robert Stahl’s decision-making materials. All seven teachers identified inquiry-based learning as a necessary approach in social studies instruction. When reviewing Robert Stahl’s decision-making model (1995), teachers embraced his cognitive phases of learning and methods of inquiry. Standards-based accountability was identified as a hindrance when planning for inquiry-based learning opportunities. Lastly, teacher
participants offered insight into their perceived limitations and restrictions when incorporating inquiry-based instruction within the classroom.

Overall, the seven teacher participants incorporated limited use of inquiry-based learning in their social studies classroom. The versions implemented did not adhere to the depth of the C3 Framework; however, they did incorporate the student-centered discovery and exploration aspect, which is at the heart of inquiry-based learning (New et al., 2021). It is believed by the researcher that the teacher participants from this study desire to cultivate more opportunities to incorporate decision-making materials into their daily lessons. Six out of seven teachers specifically mentioned the future implementation of one or more research study documents. All six teachers mentioned their intention to incorporate decision-making lessons in the 2022-23 school year. Five of the seven teachers interviewed requested further reading by Robert Stahl (1997) to write their decision-making, inquiry-based activities.

The researcher believes that social studies teachers recognized the importance of the breadth and depth of their content; however, the teacher participants interviewed in this study unanimously felt an overall disregard from state and local officials for the social studies. Teacher opinions aligned with research by VanFossen (2005) and Lintner (2006), placing blame on school budgets, materials, and an emphasis on math and English/Language Arts (ELA). The current research suggests that a lack of funding, classroom resources, and high-stakes emphasis on mathematics and English Language Arts directly compete with social studies.

The current study suggests that the significance of inquiry-based decision-making materials is prevalent among educators within rural schools. The research revealed the multifaceted approach to planning and implementing inquiry. The study also exposed the teachers’ perceptions that high school social studies are often placed on the back burner without
regard for their usefulness. Lastly, the research revealed the teacher participants’ perspectives regarding state standards and the NCSS C3 Framework.

**Directions for Future Research**

Findings from this current study reveal the perceptions of high school social studies teachers at a micro-level. Findings from this study focused on high school social studies teachers from exclusively rural areas within the state where the research was conducted. While this was intentional, since the state of study is 84% rural, a future study could expand the qualitative interviews to include a higher number of teachers from urban and suburban school districts. Such a study could reveal whether or not the perspectives shared in this study reflect a more precise representation of high school social studies teachers. Future research could include all secondary social studies, which would incorporate middle-grade teachers into the participant pool. This can provide data regarding standards-based accountability and inquiry in the classroom.

The current study revealed the need for social studies advocacy. Teacher participants expressed disdain for the unfair treatment and disregard toward social studies education. Social studies standards have been condensed, topics have either been eliminated or rewritten into the required standards of other courses, and testing accountability measures remain the same. The findings of this study suggest the need to investigate teachers’ perceptions of the appropriate response for fair and equitable treatment of social studies. Students’ critical thinking skills, civic preparation, and even literacy skills are sharpened through social studies education (Bauml et al., 2022; Conklin & Boulamatsi, 2020; Schneider & Saultz, 2020).
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APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

April 18, 2022

PI Name: Alisha Milam
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Jeffrey Byford
Submission Type: Initial
Title: High School Teachers' Perceptions and Application of Robert Stahl's Decision-Making Materials in the Social Studies Classroom
IRB ID: #PRO-FY2022-409
Exempt Approval: April 18, 2022

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
3. When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
4. Human subjects training is required every 2 years and is to be kept current at citiprogram.org.

For any additional questions or concerns please contact us at irb@memphis.edu or 901.678.2705

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis
APPENDIX B
Consent to Participate in a Research Study:
High School Teachers’ Perceptions and Application of Robert Stahl’s Decision-Making Materials in the Social Studies Classroom

Who is conducting this research?
Lead Investigator, Alisha Milam of the University of Memphis, Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership is in charge of the study. Her faculty advisor is Dr. Jeffrey Byford. There may be other research team members assisting during the study.

Why is this research being done?
The purpose of this research is to gain insight into current high school teachers’ perceptions of decision-making materials. By doing this study, I hope to learn how teachers feel about the current state of curriculum and whether or not decision-making materials could effect student outcomes. You are being invited to participate because you were selected through two-stage random sampling to represent rural high school social studies teachers in the state of Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Education states that 95% of the state falls under the rural/sparse classification. For that reason, teachers from rural school districts were randomly chosen to participate in this study.

How long will I be in this research?
You will be asked to participate in a 30 minute interview conducted at your school in a private setting. The meeting will take between 20 to 30 minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer to participate will not exceed 1 hour over the next two weeks.

What happens if I agree to participate in this Research?
If you agree you will be asked to participate in a 30 minute interview. The interview will take place in a private room within your school. The interview will consist of eight interview questions related to social studies education and curriculum. During the interview, a digital recorder will be used and the entire interview will be transcribed by an independent transcription service. The seven participants will be contacted after transcription in order to review their own interview transcripts for conciseness and approval.

For research involving survey, questionnaires, and or interviews:
During the interview process you may skip any questions that make the participant feel uncomfortable. Also, the interviewer will discontinue questioning immediately upon the request of the participant.

The Lead Investigator, Alisha Milam, will recontact the participant after the interview in order to review the transcript created from your interview in an effort to ensure conciseness.

What happens to the information collected for this research?
Information collected for this research will be used to be used to complete this research study. Neither your name nor any other identifiable data will be used in any published reports or conference presentations. All of your identifying information will be kept confidential.
How will my privacy and data confidentiality be protected?
We promise to protect your privacy and security of your personal information as best we can. Although you need to know about some limits to this promise. Measures we will take include: Your interview will take place in a private setting and all data collected will be locked in a secure location for the entirety of the study. This data will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Your information will be combined with information from other participants of this study. When we write about the study, we will write about the culmination of information that was gathered. You will not be individually identified in these written publications. Your name and any other identifying information will be kept private.

No one on the research team will know the information that is associated with you. The study is anonymous.

Individuals and organization that monitor this research may be permitted access to inspect the research records. This monitoring may include access to your private information and data collected. These individual and organization include the University of Memphis Institutional Review Board and Government Regulatory agencies.

What are the benefits of participating in this research?
You may or may not benefit from participating in this research. What other choices do I have beside participating in this research?
If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

What if I want to stop participating in this research?
It is up to you to decide whether you want to volunteer for this study. It is also ok to decide to end your participation at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decided to withdraw your participation. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Memphis.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?
There are no costs associated with participation in this research study

Will I receive any compensation or reward for participating in this research?
You will not be compensated for taking part in this research

Who can answer my question about this research?
Before you decide to volunteer for this study, please ask any questions that might come to mind. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Alisha Milam at (731)-413-4799 or anwhite@memphis.edu, or advisor, Dr. Jeffrey Byford at (901)-678-4883 or jmbyford@memphis.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu. We will give you a signed copy of this consent to take with you.
STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this document. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions through the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this consent document. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, my legal representative or I may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Adult Participant</th>
<th>Signature of Adult Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Researcher Signature (To be completed at the time of Informed Consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understand the information described in this consent and freely consent to participate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Research Team Member</th>
<th>Signature of Research Team Member</th>
<th>Date</th>
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