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An Historical Analysis of Thinking in Resources Published by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS): 1977 – 2006

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Ulku Serezli Karabulut entitled "An Historical Analysis of Thinking in Resources Published by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS): 1977 – 2006." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Thomas N. Turner, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Colleen P. Gilrane, Dorothy Hendricks, Norma Mertz

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THINKING IN RESOURCES PUBLISHED BY THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS): 1977 - 2006

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ulku Serezli Karabulut
August 2009

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to *OZAN* and *MURAT*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the faculty at the University of Tennessee who served on my doctoral committee and provided encouragement throughout this unbelievably painful, yet life-changing journey of mine. I cannot possibly thank Dr. Colleen Gilrane who took me under her wing and provided continuous friendship, support and motivation. I would also like to thank my committee chair Dr. Thomas Turner, for his patience, and bearing with me for all those years. I also wish to thank to Dr. Norma Mertz and Dr. Dorothy Hendricks not only for agreeing to take part in my committee but also for their patience, support, and guidance. I wish to extend my gratitude to Dr. Karl Jost, who recently retired and was not able to remain on my committee.

My son Ozan and my husband Murat deserve much more recognition that I can ever put on this acknowledgement. I will always remember the pain of separation, sacrifices, and missed opportunities. I also want to thank my sisters Esin and Seza, my parents E. Guler Serezli and A. Naci Serezli. For their unexpected hospitality and friendship, Banu, Lara, Yifan, and Sandy, thank you. Very special thanks to Ms. Patti who continuously helped me over the years. Finally, I want to thank University of Tennessee, Hodges Library Staff, especially to those who work for the Inter Library Loan (ILL) department.

I am very thankful and honored to know all these people to thank.

TESEKKURLER...

“If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost”

- Aristotle

“Democracy needs to be reborn in each generation, and education is its midwife.”

- John Dewey

“Every human being is called to one vocation – to be a good citizen and a thoughtful person”

- Mortimer Adler



*The concept of **SANKOFA** is derived from King Adinkera of the Akan people of West Africa. Although some other interpretations exist, symbolically Sankofa bird is "expressed as a mythic bird that flies forward while looking backward with an egg [symbolizing the future] in its mouth," states the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center.*

According to Derrick Alridge (2003), sankofa reminds historians "to think of history not as events frozen in time, but rather as occurrences that are one with the present and future" (p. 29).

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the various descriptions and perspectives concerning thinking in the social studies literature as expressed by social studies scholars in NCSS journals and publications across a thirty – year time frame, 1977 to 2006. A corollary purpose was to describe the various perspectives regarding methods of teaching thinking that prevailed in published NCSS resources on social studies education. The journals examined for this dissertation were Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning.

A total of two hundred twenty three (223) articles from the thirty-year period dealt with thinking in some way or another. One hundred thirty two (132) of them were used for the final analysis. Based on the previous literature reviews, the researcher identified words thinking, critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving as search keywords. The researcher examined each article critically and thoroughly, looked for the answers to the research questions she was pursuing and looked for meaningful patterns with regard to the definition of thinking.

The researcher concluded, based on her analysis that: 1- There is a problematic, persistent absence of a clear definition for thinking in the literature. However, social studies scholars preferred the term critical thinking by and large and conceptualized it as a combination of lower level and higher level skills, specifically analysis, evaluation, judgment, questioning and inquiring as well as certain dispositions and attitudes. 2- Scholars equated critical thinking with decision making and problem solving and related that to levels of understanding citizenship. 3- The ways scholars conceptualized thinking are related to their preferences regarding methods of

teaching thinking, 4- There was a strong correspondence between the characteristics of thinking emphasized by NCSS and those focused on by scholars.

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CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction

The primary purpose of public schooling in America is and has been the preparing of democratic and civic-minded citizens. It has been recognized that an individual does not naturally develop the qualities of a good citizen or necessary knowledge and behaviors of citizenship. Citizenship behaviors are learned behaviors and hence need to be nurtured, facilitated, and developed through education. If democracy and the democratic way of life are to survive, then educating each generation regarding knowledge, behaviors, and skills of democratic citizenship is considered essential and critical.

To facilitate necessary citizenship knowledge and behaviors, both social sciences and history were considered beneficial sources of knowledge. So, in both the elementary grades and at the secondary level the separate subjects that make up the social studies have been around for centuries. However social studies, as a field of study, is relatively new. As a school subject, social studies emerged and developed during the period of the late 19th and early 20th century. Some claimed that the term “social studies” as a school subject is usually credited as being first used by Thomas Jesse Jones in 1905 (Lyberger, 1983; Ross, 2001). The publication of the report of the Committee on Social Studies in 1916 is generally considered the point at which social studies education was officially established within the school curriculum.

Its establishment and development as a curricular area proved to be difficult because its emergence was marked by ongoing debates and confusion (Lybarger, 1991; Evans, 2004). Two distinct, yet intertwined aspects of social studies were part of the persisting confusion. Scholars were basically disagreeing over the nature and meaning of social studies.

Various definitions of social studies have existed over the last century. Many of the definitions have characterized social studies on the basis of content or subject matter (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977). Therefore, social studies scholars and practitioners were not clear whether social studies encompassed social sciences or history or a unique amalgamated subject created by combining both history and social sciences. Since the early 1900s, social studies in schools meant both history and social sciences (Shaver, 1967). Despite the social sciences and history orientations, numerous scholars argued for a single and unified or an interdisciplinary social studies course.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the major organization in the field, published the definition that is generally accepted today. In *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for the Social Studies* (1994), NCSS defined social studies as "...an integrated study of social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence" (p.9) and its contents as "coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences" (p.9).

On the other hand, controversy also stemmed from deciding an orientation to the purpose for teaching of both history and social sciences, or social studies in schools. Since the inception of social studies, its primary purpose and unique essence has been defined as citizenship (Hertzberg, 1981). The primary concern, articulated with its citizenship aim, has been equipping the young generations with necessary knowledge, skills, and values of democratic participatory citizenship (Ross, 2006).

However, over the years, defining the necessary characteristics of a good citizen and selecting appropriate knowledge to develop such a citizen were proven to be more controversial. Who was a good citizen – the one who knows necessary citizenship knowledge? or the one who acts? Is a good citizen the one who conforms? or the one who critiques? Is citizenship a skill or a process? What is the legitimate domain of knowledge for citizens of a democratic society?

The vagueness in defining social studies persisted and resulted in competing conceptualizations of citizenship orientations. Concomitantly, its curricular and instructional implications were not clear and were even contradictory. Thus, developing an orientation for citizenship as the primary goal of social studies has caused constant disputes and disagreements over the years.

When a good citizen is defined as the one who conforms, the purpose of social studies is transmission of cultural and moral norms of the society. This notion of citizenship is usually associated with indoctrination. On the other hand, scholars have argued that teaching students thinking skills and engaging them critical thinking on public or private matters has been considered essential for citizenship in democratic societies.

It has been argued that the primary reason for teaching thinking in social studies has been preparing civically competent citizens for democracy (Oliver & Shaver, 1974; Newmann, 1990). Other scholars claimed that this preparation is needed not only for preserving the democracy, but also for creating it. Therefore, it is generally held that quality citizenship education is necessary for the foundation and future of the democracy as a political system and a way of life.

Similarly, the National Council for The Social Studies (NCSS), the major organization in the field, posited that the purpose of social studies was

“to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decision for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (NCSS, 1994, p.9).

As Nickerson (1987) has argued, “good thinking is a prerequisite for good citizenship” (p.33).

Statement of the Problem

Social studies scholars and practitioners have long advocated the teaching of thinking or critical thinking skills in social studies classrooms. Research indicates that many of them also consider thinking as an essential part of the social studies curriculum (Krug, 1967; Hunt and Metcalf, 1968; Unks, 1985; Wilen, 1996; Wright, 1995). In fact, through the years, the significance of thinking has been well established and discussed extensively in the social studies literature.

However, despite the recognized importance of thinking in social studies classrooms, classroom practices have been criticized regularly. At the center of the criticisms is a continuous lack of attention to thinking objectives. As early as 1900, the Committee of Seven of the American Historical Association wrote:

“For some unaccountable reason, it has been held that boys and girls must not think about historical material or be taught to reason or be led to approach events with the historical spirit...” (Parker, 1991, p.345)

More recently, numerous scholars have indicated that absence of thinking in social studies classrooms has been a prevailing characteristic (Cornbleth, 1985; McKay and Gibson, 2004; Parker, 1991; Wilen, 1996).

The debate about thinking in the social studies has focused on two primary areas: the establishment of some agreed-upon definition of thinking and the development of effective methods of teaching thinking. Several authors have argued that there is a lack of any established definition of thinking in social studies (McKay and Gibson, 2004; Parker, 1991; Newmann, 1991; Wilen, 1996). In the absence of a consensus in the literature, an array of terms such as “critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, divergent and convergent thinking, metacognition, schema, domain specific and general thinking skills, dispositions, everyday reasoning, and higher order thinking” have been used to describe various kinds of thinking (Parker, 1991).

The second concern is that knowledge transmission has been the prevailing method of teaching in social studies classrooms. Numerous scholars have indicated that social studies teaching primarily focuses on transmission of content knowledge and that teaching has been exclusively based on teacher directed methods (Leming, 1998; Newmann, 1990). In fact, social studies instruction has been continuously criticized as being dominated by lecture and recitation (Cornbleth, 1985; O’Reilly, 1991; Wilen, 1996; Wright, 1995, Parker, 1991). When teaching is aimed at mere transmission of information, the objectives can relate only to a low cognitive focus and memorization, not higher levels of cognition.

Numerous scholars (e.g. Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977; Ross and Marker, 2005) have argued that persisting confusion concerning particularly these two issues endured and eventually defined what social studies is today.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the literature of the social studies from 1977 until 2006 in order to identify and describe prevailing perspectives and descriptions of thinking and methods of teaching thinking. Specifically the study concentrated on published NCSS sources and sought to trace the historical progression of the concept of thinking as expressed by social studies educators during in this period.

For the purpose of this dissertation, major NCSS journals, namely, Social Studies and the Young Learner, Social Education and its supplement, Middle Level Learning were examined. In order to provide sufficient depth to the examination, curriculum standards published by NCSS were also investigated.

In accordance with the previously stated research purpose, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How have the definitions of thinking, decision-making, and problem solving evolved in the social studies field between the years 1977-2006?
2. Is there a common definition of thinking in social studies field today and if so, how does it relate to decision-making and problem solving?
3. How, if at all, do the definitions of thinking, decision making, and problem solving influence the description of preferred methods of teaching thinking in social studies?
4. How do definitions and recommendations in the literature compare to the NCSS Standards related to thinking, decision-making, problem solving and methods of teaching in the Social Studies?

The Need for the Study

This study is needed for a number of reasons. First, throughout its historical progression, scholars and practitioners of social studies advocated the teaching of thinking skills in classrooms. However, it has been argued that not having an established definition for thinking in social studies resulted in a lack of understanding of its theory and practice. Thinking, teaching thinking, and critical thinking have often continued to be emphasized as buzzwords within social studies literature.

Despite the widespread attention to thinking as a major goal of social studies, conceptual confusion has persisted in terms of the meaning of thinking and methods of teaching it. Therefore, by specifically examining three decades of social studies literature, this study aims to describe the meaning of thinking, how it was conceptualized, and how numerous conceptualizations of thinking relate to instructional approaches employed in social studies classrooms.

Second, identifying the meaning of thinking from the works of numerous scholars and practitioners may ease the confusion both in the research and the practice of social studies. Because of the conceptual uncertainty, numerous scholars indicated that no cumulative knowledge base has been developed to serve as a basis for thinking and methods of teaching thinking and no definitive insight has been gained to guide future research. In other words, this variety of available definitions of thinking contributed to fragmentation of research focus and aim.

Through this study it is hoped that educators interested in social studies education will have a clearer understanding of the meaning of thinking as expressed in the literature. It is also

hoped that a coherent and comprehensive understanding of thinking will help practitioners of social studies to develop effective and appropriate teaching methodologies. This study also attempted to provide teachers a comprehensive resource for strategies for teaching thinking and for understanding how these strategies will help their students to achieve social studies standards.

The researcher also believed that a careful analysis of the literature related to nature of thinking, decision making, and problem solving in the social studies may be helpful in changing practice. It would consolidate knowledge of the changes in viewpoint and synthesize best teaching practices. Therefore, this study looked at the evolution of the meaning of thinking, decision making, and problem solving in social studies education and how that has changed over the years. Understanding and defining thinking from an historical standpoint can form a bridge between the progression of thought related to the history of teaching thinking in social studies and current social studies practices.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study is delimited and limited in several ways. The researcher has delimited resources primarily to NCSS publications including journals published in the period 1977 to 2006. NCSS as the major international organization of the social studies field represents total of 26,000 members both in the U.S. and 69 foreign countries. Therefore, NCSS, its membership and publications, represent the authorities in the social studies field. This means also excluding other organizational resources and many other authors who wrote specifically about thinking and teaching thinking in social studies regardless of how important they might be. The researcher also delimited the particular time period studied.

Specific limitations were that the articles that were published by NCSS between the years 1977- 2006 and authors, social studies researchers, and practitioners whose articles were published in the period of 1977 – 2006 included in this study. Therefore, this study is exclusively focused upon published articles of that period.

A second possible limitation is attached to definitions of thinking. The researcher intends primarily to focus on thinking, decision – making, and problem solving as defining the objectives of citizenship education. In order to obtain as much data as possible, an array of terms used to refer to thinking was investigated in NCSS database. However, it is likely that some publications dealing with thinking or related to teaching thinking are categorized in a different way that might not be retrieved during data gathering. Therefore, this study is limited by the viability of these search words in relation to all those articles.

Assumptions

Because the focus of this study was limited by journals, bulletins, position papers and curriculum standards published by NCSS, a number of assumptions were established. These assumptions were established beforehand and considered to be true throughout the data collection and interpretation stages of the study. These assumptions were:

1. It was assumed that the NCSS is the recognized authority and voice for the social studies.
2. It was assumed that the NCSS publications, particularly Social Education, are the best indicators of both the understanding social studies teachers have of thinking and of the best teaching practices for developing that thinking.

3. It was assumed that the authors who wrote for social education and other NCSS publications were the major leaders of the field of social studies education.
4. It was assumed that thinking could be taught.

Definition of Terms

The following terms appear throughout the dissertation. The definition for each term below is provided with the intention of providing the clarity to the study:

1. **Social Studies**: the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence (NCSS, 1993).
2. **NCSS**: the principal organization representing the interests of college professors, teachers, and curriculum specialists for the purpose of advancement of social studies education.
3. **Thinking**: A broad definition of thinking is employed in this study, which encompasses all the cognitive processes and strategies, attitudes and dispositions, as well as decision-making, problem solving, inquiry, and higher order thinking.
4. **Social Education**: the major journal of NCSS, which contains a balance of theoretical content and practical ideas for classroom use. Focus of the articles includes techniques for using teaching materials, information on the latest instructional technology, reviews of educational media, research on significant topics related to social studies, and lesson plans that can be applied to various disciplines. **Social Education** is published 7 times in a year, September through June (www.ncss.org/publications).

5. Social Studies and the Young Learner: offers new information and creative teaching activities particularly for K- 6 teachers and focusing on their needs. The provided teaching techniques are designed to stimulate the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Social Studies and the Young Learner is published quarterly, September through May (www.ncss.org/publications).
6. Middle Level Learning: aims particularly at teachers of the middle grades by bringing together lesson ideas and theoretical content for them. It is included as a supplement to Social Education and Young Learner, published 3 times in a year (www.ncss.org/publications).

CHAPTER TWO:

A Review of the Relevant Literature

The emergence of social studies was marked by continuous disagreements, conflicts, and competing viewpoints over two fundamental questions: the nature and meaning of social studies, and the proper ways to organize social studies content and instructional methods to attain its citizenship objective. Despite the general agreement over citizenship as the unique and primary purpose of social studies, various and often conflicting definitions of social studies resulted in diverse orientations for citizenship education. Among the numerous orientations of educating citizens, indoctrination prevailed as one of the most consistent yet controversial characteristics of social studies teaching.

On the other hand, a major change in social studies came in the 1960s and 1970s. In contrast to indoctrination, thinking and especially decision-making skills were regarded as having significant value in the attainment of citizenship objectives. In his highly influential and a very well known article, Shirley Engle (1960) posited that social studies education and its curriculum should be organized around and focused on development of decision-making skills among students.

After Engle's article appeared in *Social Education*, a fundamental shift came with the publication of Barr, Barth, and Shermis's book *Defining the Social Studies* (1977). In this seminal book Barr, Barth, and Shermis conceived thinking and decision making as primary objectives of citizenship, thus of social studies. In doing so, they opened up a new debate and increased emphasis upon the kind of thinking to be developed in social studies.

Recently, as a result of the drastically changing technological developments of the 21st century, the knowledge explosion, and their impact on inherently complex social and civic issues, social studies scholars refocused their attention on to the vital role of thinking or critical thinking for educating citizens.

Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to describe the various perspectives concerning thinking and methods of teaching thinking that prevailed in the social studies literature as expressed by scholars of the field in NCSS journals and publications across a thirty – year time frame, 1977 to 2006. Specifically, the purpose was to examine major NCSS journals, namely Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning and other publications including bulletins and curriculum standards, to trace the historical progression of thought regarding thinking and teaching methods as expressed by social studies educators in the period from 1977 to 2006.

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter two provides two sections of relevant literature review to contextualize the purpose of this study. The first section deals with the historical emergence and evolution of social studies education in the United States, specifically by exploring the surrounding conflicts and controversies regarding its definition and citizenship goal. The first section focuses on persisting confusion in defining social studies and its citizenship goal between the late 19th century and 1977, from the emergence of social studies until the publication of “*Defining the Social Studies*”. For the first section, the researcher mostly used secondary sources because primary sources were not available. An examination of recent literature related to thinking, its

varying definitions and conceptualizations in social studies specifically for K-12 comprises the second section of chapter two.

History of Social Studies in the United States

The first section of chapter two provides a chronological overview of social studies as a curricular area in the United States and citizenship education as its main purpose. This section is divided into five subsections: The Emergence of Social Studies: 1850s-1880s, The Formative Years of Social Studies: 1880s-1920s, Nationalization of Social Studies: 1920s-1950s, Change and Development in Social Studies: 1950s-1970s, and 21st Century Social Studies: 1980s until today respectively.

Since its early days, the field of social studies has evolved and progressed through continuous disagreements and controversies. The persisting conflicts and confusion stemmed from two separate yet intertwined controversies. First, various and even contrasting definitions of social studies have been suggested and argued since its establishment. Second, these varying definitions of social studies have been related to the emergence of diverse orientation toward the interpretations of citizenship. The fact remains that throughout its history these two recurring issues marked the center of confusion until today and defined what social studies is.

The Emergence of Social Studies: 1850s-1880s

Historically, the primary rationale for social studies, or the separate subjects which make up the social studies, has been embedded in the democratic ideal and preparing citizens for that ideal. In the early days of American Revolution, this view was supported by Thomas Jefferson and other prominent leaders of the time such as Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. According to Cogan (1999), it was Thomas Jefferson who recognized that behaviors of democratic

citizenship do not just occur naturally in people; rather, they should be developed deliberately through a common education system.

Therefore, particularly concerned with creating a new nation with a sense of patriotism and nationalistic values, leaders of the time supported the idea of a common educational system that provided “moral training, training for citizenship, the judgment and the imagination” (Hooper and Smith, 1993, p.14). To achieve that purpose, leaders of the era had considered geography, history, and political economy as necessary subjects (Smith, Palmer, and Correia, 1995). Consequently, a need for developing and nurturing patriotic citizen identity through a common education system facilitated the emergence of citizenship education, an earlier form of social studies in schools.

These earlier forms encompassed both history and the social sciences. However, no single definition of social studies was established at first. In fact, according to Hertzberg (1981) “social studies” and “social sciences” were used interchangeably in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Jarolimek (1981) argued that history, geography, and civic courses dominated the early American elementary and secondary curricula. However, the relationships among them for the purpose of citizenship were not clearly emphasized (Hertzberg, 1981).

History in particular was established as a unifying content area for teaching about social relations, enculturation of young generations and practicing of good citizenship in schools (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977). Considering the place of history in school curriculum, some scholars have argued that earlier citizenship education mainly consisted of and was dominated by historical content. Dougan (1988) argued that between 1875 and 1916, someone could accurately characterize social studies as history by just look at its content.

According to Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977), two perspectives guided the teaching of history and social sciences for the purpose of citizenship. On one hand, it was generally held that these subjects were necessary to transmit the cultural heritage of the society, its values, and morals to the future generations. This was largely because the development of good citizenship was believed to be a matter of inculcating right attitudes, behaviors and values. On the other hand, learning theories of the late 1800s supported the idea that human mind needed to be developed continuously through rigorous mental exercises, and the best means to develop a human mind was through “the classics” or the enduring great ideas of the past.

As the transmission of culture and values were the primary concern, some scholars argued that citizenship education in classrooms was characterized by uncritical acquisition of the necessary content and facts, primarily through drilling, repetition, and memorization. Many scholars associated these assumptions with indoctrination. In fact, according to some, indoctrination is one of the most controversial yet recurring issues in social studies instruction (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977; Ross and Marker, 2005).

By the late nineteenth century, social studies as a distinct term began to appear in the education literature. An array of scholars and educational writers including Edmund James, Thomas Jesse Jones, David Snedden, Charles McMurry, Henry Suzzalo, John Gillette, and Paul Hanus used it on various occasions between late 1890s and early 1900s (Saxe, 1992). Edmund James and Thomas Jesse Jones were generally considered as the first educators to use and describe social studies by relating it specifically to school subjects or a particular element in school curriculum (Hertzberg, 1981; Lybarger, 1983; Saxe, 1992; Ross & Marker, 2005).

Edmund James used “social studies” to refer to “a general term for sociologically based citizenship education” (Saxe, 1992, p. 268). Thomas Jesse Jones, on the other hand, concerned for the integration of African Americans and Native Americans into the broader society, and used the term “social studies” to encompass history, economics, political science, and civics (Lybarger, 1983). Despite their differences in focus, scholars generally agree that social forces of the era had an impact on the conceptualizations and development of social studies.

The closing decades of the nineteenth century and opening decades of twentieth century were a period of modernization for the United States. A variety of social forces, including the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, mass transportation, an influx of foreign immigrants, and unequal wealth distribution rapidly and abruptly transformed the society as a whole (Dyneson & Gross, 1999; Hertzberg, 1981). One social studies historian, Saxe (1992) contended that the idea of social studies education grew out of the 19th century progressive social welfare or social improvement movement and developed as a response to emerging social issues and problems of the time.

Hertzberg (1981) argued that the frequent appearances of the term “social studies” in education literature were the direct result of the social context and climate of the 1880s. According to Saxe (1992), the emergence of social studies coincided with the need to cultivate reflective citizens as a response to the social problems such as rapid urbanization, massive immigration, social unrest, and other political, economic, and cultural issues. The emerging social unrest catalyzed other interrelated forces as well; such as increase in the number of public schools, increase in number of universities, and connected to both the emergence of national reform agencies (Hertzberg, 1981).

The Formative Years of Social Studies: 1880s-1920s

Some scholars have argued that one of the most striking influences on the emergence of social studies was exerted by progressivism. Progressivism gained prominence in the late 19th century and supported a new understanding of citizenship and challenged the existing essentialists' ideas. Whereas essentialists primarily emphasized inculcating traditional morals and values, supporters of progressive thought stressed the importance of understanding “modern technological civilization and its accompanying problems” through the lens of multiple perspectives for students (Mraz, 2004, p.2). Therefore, democratic, student - centered inquiries into social issues and problems—capable of challenging traditional ways of thinking—were supported by this new line of thought (Nelson & Singleton, 1977; Queen, 1999).

Consequently, social turmoil marked the era, combined with the widening gap between the new developing society and liberal democratic ideals (Lybarger, 1991). Since public schools were perceived as unique institutions for transforming society and preparing its citizens, schools and school curriculum received considerable attention from numerous sources. Schools and their curricula were expected to make adjustments and necessary changes according to the emerging changes and immediate needs of the society. The direct result was establishment of variety of committees, all of which affected the field of social studies in numerous ways.

In the late nineteenth-century both the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Historical Association (AHA) sponsored a series of committees with the purpose of adjusting the education system and school curriculum to the changing social realities of the time. Among the committees established from 1880 – 1920 were the NEA Committee of Ten (1892), the AHA Committee of Seven (1899), the AHA Committee of Five (1905), AHA Committee of

Eight (1907), the Committee of Fifteen (1895), the Committee of Twelve (1897), and NEA Committee on the Social Studies (1916).

Three of these in particular, the NEA Committee of Ten (1892), the AHA Committee of Seven (1899), and especially the 1916 NEA Committee on Social Studies, were considered to have significant and long lasting influence on social studies. The Committee of Ten was formed in 1892 under the sponsorship of the National Education Association. The primary purpose of the committee was to create harmony between the existing high school programs and college entrance requirements (Hertzberg, 1981). From this committee's deliberations, the first national curriculum pattern for high school and a uniform sequence of history courses emerged (Lyberger, 1991). The report of Committee of Ten resulted in the assembly of the AHA Committee of Seven in 1899.

The Committee of Seven also developed a report, which was written in parallel lines to the report of the Committee of Ten (Hertzberg, 1981). This AHA Committee directed much of its attention to instructional methods. In fact, Hertzberg (1981) noted that the committee advocated "...what a later generation would call critical thinking; an end to rote memorization and rote recitation..." (p.15)

While these first two committees both contributed to the emergence and the development of social studies in different ways, the Committee on Social Studies in 1916 produced a report that was considered a turning point in the history of social studies. The publication of the Committee' report in 1916, entitled *The Social Studies in Secondary Education* (Dunn, 1916), was generally regarded as significant for at least four reasons.

First, the final report of the Committee on Social Studies was generally considered the official introduction of the curricular area of the social studies into the school curriculum. It set up a scope and sequence for secondary schools, which endured for a century (Lybarger, 1991). Second, the committee on Social Studies proposed to incorporate two noteworthy courses into the secondary education curriculum, specifically Community Civics and Problems of Democracy. Both of these courses were considered as indications of a radical shift in understanding citizenship. Citizenship was seen as more than the act of voting, to include the development of participatory citizenship in which the individual confronting issues and problems of everyday life was addressed (Cogan, 1999). Third, the report of the committee on Social Studies referred to social studies collectively as economics, history, political science, sociology, and civics (Tryon, 1934, p.21). Fourth, and most importantly, the report of the Committee on Social Studies introduced the official definition of social studies for the first time. In its final report in 1916, Saxe (1991) noted the term social studies officially defined in the following way:

“The social studies are understood to be those whose subject matter relate to the organization and development of human society, and to man as a member of social groups” (p. 204).

The Committee on Social Studies defined social studies as plural, referring to a group of subjects that encompassed both history and social sciences (Dougan, 1988). Even though the relationships among the subjects that make up social studies were not clearly established in the report, scholars contended that the committee in 1916 was lucid about its purpose. Based on the committee’s report Hertzberg (1981) indicated that the purpose of studying social studies in schools was “...defined as the cultivation of good citizenship” (p.26).

The Committee confirmed that the purpose of social studies was preparing good citizens, defined as loyal to the democratic values and national ideals, responsible, as well as participating in social life as thinking citizens. But the committee disagreed with the instructional methods that had dominated the classrooms. Instead of inculcating democratic values through lecturing, note taking, question-and-answer recitation, and memorization of factual information, the committee suggested a problem-centered or problems approach as a means to incorporate both historical and social sciences content to prepare responsible citizens (Alouf & Crockett, 1987; Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). While the indoctrination approach aimed to transfer moral, nationalistic, and social values of the society through basically historical facts and figures, the problems approach focused more on immediate social problems and the needs and interests of students as means to develop effective and critically thinking citizens (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). The problems approach was an integration of history, civics, and social sciences content intended to guide students to understand the challenges and conflicts of the social life.

It has been argued that social studies classrooms continued to be dominated by lecture, recitation, and memorization of facts and figures. Some claimed that earlier notions of social studies had been so entrenched in the public school curriculum that the new problems approach never found its way in (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977). Others posited that teachers themselves had never experienced a problem-centered or thinking-based social studies curriculum before. Therefore, they kept teaching the way they were prepared; more social sciences content, using lecture and books (Alouf & Crockett, 1987).

The three committees described above had a significant impact on social studies and provided an official definition for the time. Nevertheless, officially defining social studies and its

purpose didn't resolve the disagreements and controversies among its scholars and practitioners. Some attributed the cause of the confusion to the fact that social studies was associated with the intricate task of preparing citizens in a democracy (Hahn, 2001; Hertzberg, 1981; Lybarger, 1991). Others suggest that the confusion persisted because the Committee of Social Studies' report was not clear in defining the components of social studies and relationships of the constituent disciplines to the citizenship objective. For that reason, various meanings associated with social studies and citizenship have been disputed ever since (Engle, 1970; Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). Debates, competing perceptions, controversies and conflicts continued for nearly a century and marked the very nature of social studies (Lybarger, 1991; Evans, 2004; Ross & Marker, 2005).

Nationalization of Social Studies: 1920s-1950s

Shortly after the publication of the 1916 committee's report, social studies gained prominence as a school subject and as a curricular idea; concomitantly, it attracted many scholars as well as educational writers of the time (Saxe, 1992). After that, another significant event marked the era. On March 3, 1921, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) was established in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Earle Rugg, Harold Rugg, Daniel Knowlton, Roy Hatch, and J. Montgomery Gambrill were known to be the original founders of the organization (Nelson, 1995; Smith, Palmer, Correia, 1995), whose purpose was "to bring about the association and cooperation of teachers of social studies (history, government, economics, sociology, etc.) and of administrators, supervisors, teachers of education and others interested in obtaining the maximum results in education for citizenship through social studies" (National Council for the Social Studies, 1921, p. 144).

NCSS served as an official organization through which scholars and practitioners interested in the development of social studies and citizenship discussed and shared their ideas. In that sense, it might be argued that the establishment of NCSS created an impetus within the social studies field. In fact, according to Dougan (1988) during 1930s, the literature concerning instructional and organizational approaches to social studies grew sporadically.

The establishment of NCSS united scholars, practitioners, and others who were interested in the subject of social studies and its citizenship purpose. Nevertheless, conflicting viewpoints and confusion among them persisted. This was mostly because there was still no clear conception of what social studies was and whether social studies was a unified field or a group of subjects. As declared in its purpose statement, NCSS itself supported the idea of “social studies” as a unified field. It was generally understood as combination of history, the social sciences, and civics.

On the other hand, there were differing viewpoints concerning how to organize and instruct social studies content to achieve its citizenship purpose. According to Hertzberg (1981) in the early 20th century, a broad “social purpose” was the central concept in education and schooling. This, in turn, affected conceptualizing social studies as well. Along parallel lines, in 1920s and 1930s, social education was commonly defined as “almost any school subject ... somehow related to social purposes or social utility” (Hertzberg, 1981, p. 2).

The primary focus of the broad social purpose was to train individuals as competent members of a democratic society and help them function efficiently in it. Therefore, the literature emphasized the development of problem solving and reflecting thinking ability as basis for social

studies education, thus citizenship in a democratic society (Dougan, 1988). In fact, in his book *Democracy as a Way of Life*, Bode (1937) stated that

“Democratic education should accept the student’s ability to think – liberate his intelligence - and must not demand uniformity of belief” (p.113).

Others noted that developments and uncertainty in the modern life, and sporadically growing knowledge, made it impossible to know what knowledge students would need in the future (Rugg, 1939; Zeicherl & McCutchan, 1938). Therefore, according to these scholars the emphasis in teaching social studies should be on thinking skills, social participation, and most importantly on problem solving ability.

Throughout these years, some scholars continued using the terms “social studies” and “social sciences” interchangeably. One of the most well-known and widely accepted definitions of social studies was suggested in 1937, when Edgar B. Wesley defined social studies as “the social sciences simplified for pedagogical purposes” (p. 4). In this highly popularized definition of Wesley’s, the social sciences referred to political science, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology as well as history and “pedagogical purposes” as the needs of society and students (Hertzberg, 1981). Even though some scholars favored Wesley’s conception of social studies, others actively tried to clarify the distinction between social studies and social sciences for the purpose of citizenship.

For instance, between 1932 and 1941 the Committee on the Social Studies of the AHA published seventeen volumes on social studies, social sciences and problems of citizenship education, and recognized that educating citizens requires social sciences as well as ethics, philosophy, and religion (Alouf & Crockett, 1987). Similarly, Shirley Engle (1971) noted that a

notable historian of the time, Charles Beard, stated very plainly, “Insofar as social science is truly scientific, it is neutral; as taught in schools it is and must be ethical; it must make choices and emphasize values...” Although social sciences content was recognized as a necessary knowledge base for social studies, it was considered insufficient for its citizenship purpose.

Some scholars considered the lack of distinction between social studies and social sciences as problematic, as it both disregarded the inherent characteristics of each discipline (Alouf & Crockett, 1987) and resulted in unclear methods of teaching social studies for attaining its citizenship purpose. Numerous and even conflicting methods for organizing and teaching social studies content emerged. The most popular methods were “fusion”, “correlation”, and “problem-centered” approaches. Some scholars found the fusion method, in which subjects such as history, geography, and civics were organized around needs of the society and students by emphasizing natural relationships among subjects without disciplinary boundaries, the most promising one (Hertzberg, 1981). Others supported the correlation approach, with one subject being as the main focus “and problems set up to provide a large amount of correlation between that subject area and the other social sciences” (Dougan, 1988, p.17). A unified course, based on a problem-centered approach, was also regarded as beneficial for helping students to develop their thought process and to understand how society operates (Dougan, 1988).

This time period was also marked by the visible influence and impact of progressivism, as well as that of John Dewey’s thoughts and contributions on social studies and its practice. As opposed to indoctrinating citizens with right attitudes and values, progressivism emphasized the development of reflective thinking as the method of intelligent learning for educating future citizens. Themes such as active learning, thinking, and student participation emerged more

frequently in the literature, in effect, much of the literature focused on use of problem solving and reflective thinking in the school curriculum (Dougan, 1988).

Between 1920 and 1950, the belief that knowledge and attitudes of citizenship are learned behaviors and thus have to be taught to future generations was the major reason for teaching social studies in schools. To attain its citizenship purpose, scholars tried to develop more effective and practical ways to integrate the social sciences to the social studies curriculum (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977).

Change and Development in Social Studies: 1950s-1970s

By the 1950s, the literature on social studies was growing rapidly, even revealing some identifiable patterns and commonalities. One of these patterns was a general acceptance that the overriding purpose of studying social studies, or the combination of subjects that make up social studies, was citizenship. A second observable pattern was that scholars increasingly argued for instructional approaches for facilitating critical thinking or reflective thinking and problem solving in social studies classrooms (Dougan, 1988).

Even though the literature concerning social studies was growing, there was no single, agreed-upon definition of social studies. In that sense, a general vagueness prevailed both in theory and in practice of social studies education. Despite this haziness about definition, the real impetus for change in the field of social studies came in this period, in 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

Hunt and Metcalf (1955) made probably one of the first significant arguments. They argued that the primary purpose of social studies was to develop students' ability to make rational decisions concerning public issues. For that purpose, they identified that "closed areas" of society such as sex, morality, race, and patriotism were beneficial. They further clarified the

distinction between the social sciences and the social studies by arguing that the social sciences were a foundation of reliable knowledge, facts, and principles of social studies, which employed these facts and principles in the decision making process on public matters. So, Hunt and Metcalf posited that separate social sciences should not form the basis of social studies programs in schools. Regarding instructional approaches to social studies, they supported social studies instruction for focusing on reflective thinking.

A parallel argument was made by Shirley Engle (1960) in his highly influential article, “Decision Making: The Heart of Social Studies Instruction”. Engle argued that the primary concern of social studies instruction should be the development of decision-making skills. He also elaborated on the difference between the social sciences and social studies. He argued that social studies was concerned with “uniting, synthesizing, and applying” information and facts, which were provided by the social sciences. He further posited that every decision-making process also deals with values and values judgments. So, Engle (1960) claimed that unlike social sciences, social studies was moral, ethical, and value-laden.

Engle took up Dewey’s “reflective thinking” point of view. Engle (1960) maintained that quality of intellectual activities, decision making opportunities, and recognizing values in every decision making process should be the central focus of social studies instruction for the purpose of effective citizenship. According to Engle (1960), instructional approaches focusing on transmitting information to the students and having them memorize all the facts were not helpful for the attainment of citizenship objective.

Psychologist Jerome Bruner (1960) during the same period developed what he called “the new social studies”. This was a research orientation to teaching social studies. It was parallel to

Wesley's conceptualization of social studies as "social science". The new social studies movement emphasized the social sciences as basis for social studies but downplayed and ignored pedagogical purposes (Hertzberg, 1981). Bruner's approach, the new social studies, emphasized the conceptual structures of social sciences for social studies classrooms. The new social studies considered teaching concepts and research methods of social sciences to students as sufficient for the attainment of citizenship purposes. This new movement ignored the relationship among the social sciences as well.

Bruner's "new social studies" movement dominated the era and received considerable attention both in research and practice (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977). However, in the years that followed many social studies scholars continued to argue from a different standpoint. Proponents of this emergent point of view identified that social studies instruction aimed to develop and improve "rational citizenship", "reflective thinking", "ethical decision making", and the "ability to solve the problems of society" of future citizens (Dougan, 1988). Notable scholars such as Shirley Engle, James P. Shaver, Hunt, Metcalf, and others supported reflective thinking as well as the use of critical thinking and problem solving approach for achieving citizenship objective (Dougan, 1988).

All of these new developments altered how social studies was conceptualized and defined. Whereas social studies previously had been exclusively defined from the subject-centered or content point of view, with this new reflective thinking focus, some scholars started to move away from the more traditional conceptualization of social studies toward one reflecting more of its citizenship purpose (Dougan, 1988) Based on these new trends, the definition of social studies changed to include reflective thinking and decision-making.

In 1977, Barr, Barth, and Shermis interpreted these significant changes and defined social studies on the basis of its citizenship objective. In their seminal book, *Defining the Social Studies*, Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) defined social studies as "...an integration of experience and knowledge concerning human relations for the purpose of citizenship education" (p.69). Further, they proposed the term "reflective inquiry" and defined citizenship as "decision making in a socio-political context". In essence, they conceived of thinking and the achievement of citizenship goals differently. In doing so, these authors opened up a new debate with increased emphasis upon the kind of thinking to be developed in social studies.

After the publication of *Defining the Social Studies*, Dougan (1988) argued that "...the thrust for the 1980s is citizenship education structured primarily on a rational decision making model..." (p.25). Despite the increased attention to reflective thinking or decision making, Shaver, Davis Jr., and Helburn (1979) found that students were still expected to remember and know factual information. Along parallel lines, one of the major projects in social studies, SPAN, officially titled "Social Studies/Social Science Education: Priorities, Practices and Needs", revealed that social studies instruction was dominated by textbooks, teacher lecture, and student recitation (Hertzberg, 1981).

21st Century Social Studies: 1980s until today

The emphasis on decision-making has been altered by the rapid changes to the conceptualization and demand of citizenship in a democracy that occurred in the last quarter of the 20th century. At least two interrelated factors have figured in these changes. The first of these factors involves new technological developments and the concomitant information explosion. The second contributing factor relates to the accessibility of knowledge related to controversial

and value laden social and civic issues. In practical terms, this means that it is impossible to prepare citizens of the 21st century for social and civic problems of the future successfully unless we promote their thinking or decision making skills in social studies classrooms (Ross, 2006; Shiveley, 2004; VanFossen, 2004).

Change itself became the reality of the world. As this happened, it became increasingly difficult to predict the problems that citizens will face in the future and accordingly to teach students how to solve these problems. This had real meaning for social studies instruction. Instead of teaching students what they ought to know in social studies, equipping them with the skill and ability to solve their problems became important. Recent scholars have reiterated the argument made by the 1957 ad hoc committee of NCSS that "... we cannot indoctrinate, in the sense of teaching them specific answers to specific problems..." (Shaver, p. 13), claiming that the rapidly changing world is the primary reason behind the increasing demand for and emphasis on teaching thinking skills in social studies classrooms (Ross and Marker, 2005; Wilen, 1996).

As this historical perspective of social studies indicated, there has been an intellectual fragmentation concerning the nature, definition, and the purpose of the social studies. This fragmentation impacted on social studies throughout its historical emergence and development. In fact, this state of confusion and concerns literally defined social studies.

The next section of Chapter Two, "*Recent Research Associated with Thinking and Methods of Teaching Thinking in Social Studies*", examines the literature regarding teaching thinking in social studies literature.

Recent Research Associated With Thinking in Social Studies

The teaching of thinking has been a subject of considerable attention in the education literature in general and in the social studies literature in particular. Some philosophers considered the individual's ability to think as the essence of being human (Nickerson, 1987). Other philosophers considered it as a necessary condition for being educated (McPeck, 1981; Siegel, 1984). In relation to social studies, it is generally held that "good thinking is a prerequisite for good citizenship" (Nickerson, 1987, p.31). This established relationship between the ability to think and the quality of citizenship is and has been the essence of social studies education.

Scholars have long recognized critical thinking as a fundamental part of the social studies curriculum (Cornbleth, 1985; Krug, 1967; Hunt and Metcalf, 1968; McFarland, 1985; Wilen, 1996; Wright, 1995). The significance of thinking, especially of critical thinking, has been well established and discussed extensively in social studies literature. The primary purpose of critical thinking has been conceived of as the cultivation of democratic citizenship. In practice, though, an extensive body of literature attests to the absence of critical thinking instruction in social studies classrooms. Studies have persistently shown that in social studies classroom practices, critical thinking has rarely been central or even taught (Goodlad, 1984; McKee, 1988; Newmann, 1991; Onosko, 1991; Unks, 1985; Wright, 1995).

One researcher, McKee (1988), found that in the social studies classrooms studied, teachers spent only four percent of classroom time on activities aimed to facilitate reasoning. Goodlad's (1984) nationwide study of schooling revealed that lower intellectual processes dominated both social studies and science classrooms. McKay and Gibson (2004), probing the

recent literature, have concluded that critical thinking has been valued on paper, but not addressed adequately in social studies classrooms. Other scholars have reported that the absence of the teaching of critical thinking is the most prevailing characteristic in social studies classrooms (Martorella, 1991; Patrick, 1986; Olsen, 1995; White, 1999; Wilen, 1996; Wright, 1995).

Similarly, Cornbleth (1985) and Parker (1991) both did extensive reviews of the literature related to teaching thinking in social studies. They also concluded that thinking was generally neglected in social studies classrooms. Cornbleth (1985) reported that since the publication of 13th NCSS Yearbook in 1947 on teaching critical thinking in social studies, social studies instruction has remained the same with the absence of critical thought. Parker (1991) noted that thinking and decision-making objectives in social studies classrooms remained “more wish than practice” (p.354). This inconsistency is commonly recognized as the classic example of a gap between the theory and practice of social studies (Wilen, 1996).

Several scholars have attributed this inconsistency to the absence of a common definition of thinking in the field (Anderson, 1947; Beyer, 1985; McKay & Gibson, 2004; Newmann, 1991; Onosko, 1991; Taba, 1967; Wilen, 1996). Many of these authors have even claimed that the term “thinking” is one of the most extensively used yet confusing terms of the social studies literature. Even though social studies scholars have persistently indicated the necessity of clear and agreed-upon definitions of thinking, upon reviewing the literature Parker (1991) concluded no established consensus existed.

The very same concern was addressed in the 13th and the 37th yearbooks of NCSS as well. As the major organization of social studies educators, NCSS has shown considerable interest in

teaching thinking or critical thinking in social studies classrooms in various forms and occasions. Concerned for improving social studies teaching, NCSS started publishing its yearbooks in 1931. NCSS devoted two of these yearbooks, specifically the 13th and the 37th, exclusively to thinking and critical thinking. In both of these yearbooks, a number of authors explicitly indicated their concerns regarding vagueness of the definition of thinking and its negative impact on teaching thinking in social studies classrooms.

For instance, in the 13th Yearbook, Anderson (1942) pointed out that social studies teachers “have accepted critical thinking in principle without bothering to define the term precisely or to do much by way of direct instruction to see that this goal was achieved” (p. v). In 1967, Hilda Taba asserted that lack of clarity in relation to what is meant by thinking in the literature was one of the primary obstacles in achieving its objectives in social studies teaching and learning.

Related problems emerged in the social studies literature over the years, including the negative effects of this lack of clarity on research. Mills (1987) posited that poorly defined critical thinking in the social studies literature made it almost impossible to search and identify whether or not critical thinking is taught in the social studies classrooms. Similarly, McPeck (1981) has argued that without a clear distinction among definitions of thinking, understanding and interpreting the available literature would be impossible. Other scholars have claimed that research focus and aim were fragmented on the basis of variations in definitions and interpretation of thinking (Armento, 1986; Cornbleth, 1983; Newmann, 1990). Thus there is concern that no cumulative knowledge base has been formed regarding teaching thinking, and no

definitive insights have been gained to guide future research developments (Armento, 1986; Newman, 1990).

Another concern articulated about this ambiguity in defining thinking was that it hindered social studies teachers' understanding of critical thinking, thus inhibiting their teaching practices (Wright, 1995). According to Beyer (1985) and Wright (1995), social studies teachers lack the understanding of critical thinking needed to promote it effectively in their classrooms mostly because critical thinking has not been clearly defined. Patrick (1986) has pointed out that effective promotion of critical thinking depends on whether or not teachers are equipped to answer questions such as what critical thinking is and how to promote it in their classrooms. Bailin et al. (1999) wrote that teachers "promote or abet misconceived practices for teaching critical thinking" (p.269).

Other scholars pointed out their concern regarding usage of the term "critical thinking" interchangeably with "decision-making", "problem solving" and "inquiry." For example, Beyer (1985) observed that critical thinking was usually equated with inquiry, logical reasoning, problem solving or decision-making in the social studies literature. Wright's (1993) analysis of twenty-one elementary social studies textbooks revealed that inquiry, problem solving, and decision-making were cross-indexed and used interchangeably.

The ambiguity in the social studies textbooks was considered a problem particularly because it was directly linked to teachers' conceptions of thinking. Research indicated that pre-service social studies teachers relied on textbooks as their major source in social studies methods classes (Adler, 1991). Therefore, confusion in social studies textbooks might partially explain teachers' misconceptions or lack of understanding about thinking (Wright, 1993). Even though

numerous scholars such as Hullfish and Smith (1961), Massialas and Cox (1966) and Engle (1960) identified critical thinking as a common component of all inquiry, problem solving, reflective thinking, and decision-making curricula, distinctions among them have rarely been made (Wright, 1995).

The vast majority of social studies scholars are agreed on the fact that the absence of a common conception of critical thinking has negatively affected teaching thinking in social studies. As a partial solution, these scholars have long supported adopting a common and precise definition of critical thinking in social studies and argued that an agreed-upon conceptualization is definitely essential for helping students to learn those skills in social studies. Beyer (1985) expressed his concerns about the importance of adopting a definition in the following way: “Until we develop such a definition, teachers, curriculum builders, and instructional materials and test developers will be unable to help all youngsters learn this skill as well as they might” (p.270).

Arguments have been made above that not having an established definition of thinking in social studies resulted in a lack of understanding in its theory and practice. For the purpose of teaching thinking in social studies classrooms two factors are well documented and considered essential in the literature. First, it is believed that, both scholars and practitioners need to develop a clear understanding of thinking. Secondly, clarification of the similarities and the differences between inquiry, problem solving, decision-making, and critical thinking is strongly urged and supported.

Another aspect of the problematic nature of the relationship between advocacy and practice of thinking has to do with the methods of teaching thinking in social studies. The

primary obstacle to teaching students thinking in social studies classrooms has been the overstress on content acquisition that prevails in most views of how social studies is taught (Beyer, 1985; Leming, 1998; Newman, 1990; Onosko, 1991; Taba, 1967). O'Reilly has called this instructional pattern "the three T's" and explained it as "teachers and texts impart information to students, who passively memorize it to be regurgitated on tests" (O'Reilly, 1991, p.364)

This widespread instructional emphasis on content has been attributed to teachers' two common misconceptions. Social studies teachers generally assume that in order to successfully engage in any kind of thinking activity, students need to accumulate a sufficient body of content knowledge to think about it (Beyer, 1985; Cornbleth, 1985; Parker, 1991; Taba, 1967). Onosko (1989) has found that secondary social studies teachers who considered content acquisition as their instructional priority gave less attention to teaching thinking skills compared to teachers who perceived teaching thinking skills as an important educational objective.

On the other hand, teachers also assume that if students study a subject a certain amount of time, their thinking abilities will develop naturally as a by-product (Beyer, 1985; Cornbleth, 1985; Parker, 1991; Taba, 1967). However, several studies have shown that neither of the teachers' assumptions was correct nor substantiated.

For example, Glaser (1941) found that twelfth grade English students who were directly taught concepts of critical thinking gained more on the Watson – Glaser Test of Critical Thinking than students who weren't. Both Hiram (1957) and Henderson (1958) confirmed that direct critical thinking instruction was effective when students were specifically taught concepts related to critical thinking. Drawing on both general education and social studies literature,

Shaver (1962) and Parker (1991) concluded that students' thinking skills didn't improve naturally as a result of studying regular social studies content.

Though it is generally believed that content knowledge and thinking ability are essential to one another and facilitate each other, scholars have continuously pointed out that learning is a result of thinking (Dewey, 1910; Resnick, 1987). Scholars have posited that successful acquisition of knowledge in most subjects requires using, manipulating, and interpreting that knowledge (Glaser, 1984; McPeck, 1981; Newmann, 1990). In fact, both the Harvard (1966) and Taba (1964) projects emphasized teaching of thinking and decision-making skills specifically within social studies content (Harvard and Taba Projects are explained below).

Reporting from two significant research projects, Oliver and Shaver (1966) and Taba (1964) found that students' thinking skills and acquisition of content knowledge improved as a result of studying content specific thinking and problem solving. Parker (1991), further argued that content-specific thinking and decision making skills as emphasized by both the Harvard and Taba projects eventually caused a growing interest in in-depth examination of social studies content rather than superficial coverage.

In his study primarily concerned with identification of the characteristics of a thoughtful classroom, Newmann reported that an in-depth content treatment is an important factor. In his study on higher order thinking, Newmann (1988) found that an "examination of a few topics rather than a superficial coverage of many" (p.5) was among the minimal indicators of thoughtful classrooms. Onosko (1991) also observed that "broad and superficial content coverage" was one of the barriers to the effective teaching of critical thinking in social studies classrooms.

This means that there is an interdependence between acquisition of content specific knowledge and critical thinking ability. The two constantly reinforce each other and the many writers in the social studies recognize this interdependence. Despite the relationship that apparently exists between thinking and content learning, there is generally a lack on emphasis on higher order thinking related to social studies content (Brophy, 1990). In fact, social studies instruction has been dominated by mere transmission of information and focus on low-level cognitive practices and memorization of facts. Social studies instruction has been continuously criticized for these emphases (Goodlad, 1984; McKee, 1988; Shaver, Davis & Helburn, 1999; Mason, 1999).

Some scholars have even argued that lecture or recitation or mere transmission of information resulted in apathy and disinterest among students toward social studies. This disinterest consequently has led to social studies being characterized as “the least liked school subject” (Patrick, 1986; Shaver, Davis & Helburn, 1979; Stake & Easley, 1999; Weiss, 1999; Mason, 1999).

Researchers have tried to identify various teaching practices that possibly affect thinking instruction. For instance, Quillen and Hanna (1948) compared “chronological”, “topical”, and “problems” approaches in teaching critical thinking. Although the problems approach was found to be more effective, the study has been criticized because of the statistical analysis procedure applied (Parker, 1991; Shaver, 1962). Anderson, Marcham, and Dunn (1944) compared methods of “doing” and “telling” in teaching critical thinking, and found no significant differences between these two approaches.

Similarly, in the Harvard Project, Oliver and Shaver (1966) compared the “Socratic method” with “recitation” and also reported no significant differences between these two methods of teaching critical thinking. In fact, based on their finding, researchers further concluded that no teaching style was better than the other. However, some studies (Parker, McDaniel, & Valencia, 1991; Parker, Mueller, & Wendling, 1989) indicated that coaching and guidance from teachers could improve the reasoning abilities of students.

Arguments have been made above that teaching students thinking in social studies classrooms has been unsuccessful. Primarily, two main reasons have been articulated to explain this, the absence of a common definition of thinking and the prevailing transmission view of social studies teaching. Although these are considered to be major factors, they are not the only obstacles to teaching thinking in social studies classrooms. Some scholars have argued that teachers are the primary reasons for the unsuccessful teaching of thinking in social studies classrooms. One study revealed that secondary social studies teachers themselves lacked the ability to execute basic critical thinking skills to distinguish between statements of fact and opinion (Unks, 1985). Consequently, scholars have concluded that teachers are incapable of teaching critical thinking skills primarily because they can’t actually do critical thinking (Goodlad, 1984; Unks, 1985). However, there is really a scarcity of comparative studies dealing with teachers’ critical thinking ability.

Other scholars have conceptualized thinking in a more broad fashion and argued that the successful teaching of thinking depends on a combination of factors. To successfully deal with higher order challenges, students need to possess in-depth knowledge, intellectual skills, and attitudes or dispositions (Newmann, 1991b). Glaser (1941) described students’ ability to think as

a disposition. Characteristics such as a tendency toward dealing with problems in a thoughtful manner, fair-mindedness, respect for opinions of others that differ from one's own, and inquisitiveness are all considered important determinants of quality of thought (Sears and Parson, 1997; Walsh, 1988).

Arguing from the same line of thought, scholars such as Paul (1987), Lipman (1980), and Sears and Parson (1997) supported the community approach to teaching thinking in which certain foundational assumptions or "ethic of critical thinking" (Sears & Parson, 1997) would have to be accepted, endorsing principles such as knowledge is not fixed, multiple perspectives exist, different ways of knowing valued, any question can be asked, and textbooks or texts can be questioned.

In addition, frequently administered tests to determine students' learning, superficial content knowledge coverage, administrative and institutional factors, and parental concerns all have an impact on teachers' commitment to teaching critical thinking. Other writers have generally concluded that teachers primarily focus on covering the textbooks. Because of this focus, teachers don't have the time needed either to explore social studies content in depth or to offer activities for the teaching of critical thinking (Hursh, 1994; Thornton, 1988).

In summary, drawing on social studies literature, the importance of thinking or critical thinking has been discussed. Despite the established importance of thinking, literature indicates that a pervasive and confusing array of definitions and conceptions of thinking persists.

Definitions of Thinking

Social studies scholars and practitioners widely agree that the teaching of thinking has a distinct value and significance in preparing citizens. This is based on the assumption that there is

a relationship between individuals' thinking ability and the quality of their performance as citizens. Even though this relationship between ability to think and citizenship is well recognized, there has been a confusion and disagreement among both scholars and practitioners over the nature of thinking, its definitions, underlying assumptions, and thus teaching practices. In fact, many scholars have indicated that thinking is one of the most extensively used yet imprecise and confusing terms of the social studies literature (McKay and Gibson, 2004; Newmann, 1991; Parker, 1991; Wilen, 1996).

Parker (1991) conducted an extensive review of the literature in relation to thinking and decision making objectives in social studies. His examination revealed that an array of terms was used interchangeably with thinking in social studies literature. These include "critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, divergent and convergent thinking, meta-cognition, schema, domain-specific and general thinking skills, dispositions, everyday reasoning, and higher-order thinking" (Parker, 1991, p.345).

Confirming Parker's findings, Nickerson (1988) argued that there is a variety of connotations for thinking in the literature. Although these connotations are interrelated, Nickerson (1988) posited that they are distinct and self-contained. The basic problem that this causes is that the reader never knows for sure when one of these terms is used whether the writer is using it as a synonym for "thinking" or intending something more precise or specific.

Many scholars have suggested numerous definitions for thinking based on their own individual understandings of thinking and their particular research needs and interests. These definitions of thinking are very dissimilar and they differ widely in terms of their breadth or focus. For example, Wilen has proposed probably one of the most broad and comprehensive

conceptualizations of thinking. He defined thinking as “the search for understanding” (1996, p.113). While Wilen’s perspective on thinking is broad, other scholars have suggested alternative definitions, which focus on particular aspects or characteristics of thinking, such as the cognitive process or the ability to judge statements. After examining the social studies literature, the researcher categorized the various conceptualizations of thinking into seven distinctive patterns, as follows:

- 1- Critical thinking
 - a. Reflective thinking
 - b. Judgment
- 2- Cognitive or mental processes,
- 3- Cognitive or mental procedures,
- 4- A skill or skills,
- 5- Quality of the reasoning (Bailin, Case, Coombs, and Daniels, 1999)
- 6- Higher order thinking (Newmann, 1988, 1991b)
- 7- Dispositions or attitudes

Each of these conceptualizations will be discussed briefly in this section of the literature review.

1- Thinking as critical thinking

Many scholars have argued when the term “thinking” is used in the social studies literature, generally what is meant is “critical thinking.” Critical thinking certainly is the most widely used and probably the most popularized term in social studies literature (McKay and Gibson, 2004; Wilen, 1996). Numerous writers identified important distinctions among the

definitions of critical thinking and put forward diverse schemes to explain it. It has been defined as “the mental processes, strategies, and presentations people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts” (Sternberg, 1986, p. 2), as “a frame of mind” (McPeck, 1986), and as the epistemological skills or reasoning skills needed for evaluating the adequacy of knowledge and for focusing on the problem solving and decision making process (Cassidy & Bognar, 1992).

Patrick (1986) differentiated between a broad definition of critical thinking as “cognitive processes and strategies involved in decision-making, problem solving” (p.1) and a more narrow definition as being an “essential element of general cognitive processes, such as problem solving or decision making, but...not synonymous with them” (p.1). Although Madison (1977) observed that the treatment of critical thinking in social studies literature has been mostly generic, two aspects of critical thinking have been presented, reflective thinking and judgment.

Reflective thinking Scholars have traced the definition of critical thinking back to John Dewey, and associated it with Dewey’s notion of “reflective thinking” (Cornbleth, 1983; McKay and Gibson, 2004; Wilen, 1996) as an “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends” (Dewey, 1933, p.9). Some writers have emphasized the importance of the dynamic nature of critical thinking for social studies education, differentiating it from the passive accumulation of knowledge (Cornbleth, 1985; McKee, 1988).

Judgment Some scholars have contended that the basic notion of critical thinking is “judging or assessing statements based on established criteria” (Ennis, 1967; Feely, 1967; Oliver and Shaver, 1966), believing it especially important for the decision-making and problem solving

aspects of citizenship education, while not agreeing on the nature of the relationship. According to Ennis, critical thinking is “the correct assessing of statements” (1967, p.115). While Feely (1976) argued that the “correct” assessing of statements presumed “only one set of standards or criteria” (p.3). Feely (1976) proposed a different definition for critical thinking: “the judgment of statements based on acceptable standards” (Feely, 1976, p.3). Ennis later altered his definition to “reasonable and reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do” (p.45), similar to the definition put forward by Marzano and his colleagues (1988) that included analyzing arguments carefully, looking for valid evidence, and reaching sound conclusions for the purpose of guiding behavior.

Others have argued that Ennis’s or others’ notion of critical thinking is conceptualized simply and superficially compared to “reflective thinking” as defined by Dewey. The basis of their argument was that reflective thinking, as Dewey conceptualized it, connoted more than analyzing or evaluating statements or argument. Cornbleth (1985) argued that “reflective thinking” comprises both informed skepticism and questioning ideas, and embraced the notion of “being reflective” or “self-reflective”.

2- Thinking as cognitive or mental processes

Some scholars defined thinking as a type of cognitive or mental process, such as “any and all brain-related operations and events, which handle, treat, or involve information” (Stahl, 1995, p. 20) or “the intellectual functioning of the mind with regard to the learner’s ability to attend, acquire, represent, and recall information” (Wilen & Phillips, 1995). According to Turner (1999), “thinking skills refers to all of the mental processes used to obtain, make sense of, and

retain information, as well as process and use that information as a basis for solving problems” (p.160).

Despite the broad focus of these descriptions, the cognitive processes notion of thinking is generally considered akin to Benjamin Bloom’s (1956) cognitive taxonomy of educational objectives (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). The higher-level objectives than “comprehension” on Bloom’s taxonomy, namely analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, are considered related to this definition of thinking in particular (Sanders, 1966). According to this cognitive processes perspective, skillful thinkers are considered good at synthesizing, inferring, or evaluating information. In practice this means teachers who want to develop students’ thinking ability primarily focus on encouraging students to hypothesize, analyze, synthesize, infer, or evaluate with regard to content knowledge.

3- Thinking as cognitive or mental procedures

When thinking is described as a cognitive procedure, it is generally related to inquiry, problem solving, and decision-making (Wright, 1993; Bailin, et. al., 1999). Some scholars have focused on as many as eight general thinking procedures, including “concept formation, principal formation, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, research, composition, and oral discourse” (Marzano et al., 1988).

The concepts of thinking as cognitive processes and as cognitive procedures are inherently problematic. Since they represent mental processes or operations, they are unobservable behaviors; further, they present inadequate representations of thinking for citizenship purposes. For example, Parker (1991) and other like-minded scholars have carefully discriminated the cognitive aspect of thinking from that of decision-making. The focal point of

their argument is based on the fact that citizens of democratic societies continuously deal with social issues or problems, which by their nature are moral, political, and ethical (Parker, 1991; Wright, 1988).

4- Thinking or critical thinking as a skill

One of the popular conceptualization of thinking sees it as a skill or a group of sub-skills. Numerous scholars perceived of thinking as an identifiable generic skill, which others scholars find rather misleading (Bailin, et al. 1999). When thinking is conceived as a generic skill, it is assumed that it can be taught within any particular context, separate from any particular content knowledge, and once learned is transferable to other contexts or subject matters.

The skills approach to critical thinking is based on the possibility of dividing critical thinking into its sub-skills "...to analyze and reduce complex judgments to a manageable list of sub-tasks and, then, to apply established criteria as a basis for making decisions" (Feely, 1976, p.5). Because of its practicality in classrooms, some scholars have considered skill approach as promising development for teaching critical thinking, assuming that successive instruction on components of critical thinking and enough practice will make successful teaching of critical thinking a possibility. Beyer (1985) synthesized thirty years' worth of scholarly discussions and research findings and identified the following critical thinking skills as common among the studies:

- Distinguish between verifiable facts and value claims;
- Determine the reliability of a source;
- Determine the factual accuracy of a statement;
- Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, claims or reasons;

- Detect bias;
- Identify unstated assumptions;
- Identify ambiguous or equivocal claims or arguments;
- Recognize logical inconsistencies or fallacies in a line of reasoning;
- Distinguish between warranted or unwarranted claims;
- Determine the strength of an argument.

Other scholars argued that thinking is a complex and multifaceted activity, so its successful development depends on background knowledge and particulars of the context, as well as an individual's attitudes or dispositions. Cornbleth (1985) argued that the skills approach to teaching critical thinking "fragments rather than defines critical thinking by reducing it to a list of skills" (p.13).

5- Thinking as quality of reasoning

Numerous scholars argued that one of the basic characteristics of thinking is the "quality of reasoning" (O'Reilly, 1991; Bailin, et. all, 1991). Therefore, the important element in teaching thinking is helping students to understand the constituents of quality of reasoning. Therefore, instead of defining thinking in terms of mental processes or procedures, these scholars specifically focus on the things that make thinking activity productive.

6- Thinking as higher order thinking

Newmann (1991b) developed another popular conceptualization of thinking, using the term "higher order thinking" to reflect a broader conception of thinking than any other proposed. As opposed to lower order thinking, which according to Newmann (1991b) represents routine, mechanical application and limited use of the mind, higher order thinking represents "challenge

and expanded use of mind...that occurs when a person must interpret, analyze, or manipulate information, because a question to be answered or a problem to be solved cannot be resolved through the routine application of previously learned knowledge” (p.325). According to some, higher order thinking serves as a broad category for cognitive processes (Wilén, 1996).

7- Critical thinking as dispositions or attitudes

Numerous scholars have suggested that thinking demands an individual willingness and certain dispositions or attitudes (Paul, 1982), and requires the development of a certain inquiring mindset and personality. According to Sears and Parson (1991), this is possible only if “ethics of critical thinking” are promoted in classrooms. This requires an understanding of certain assumptions such as “knowledge is not fixed,” “any question can be asked,” “there are different ways of knowing,” and “an empathy for alternative worldviews,” which can be supported by envisioning the classroom as a community of inquiry (Lippman, 1980; Paul, 1987).

As this section of the literature review illustrated, various definitions of thinking persisted in the social studies literature over the years. Each different notion of thinking has its own underlying theoretical and methodological assumptions, resulting in fundamentally dissimilar and even conflicting implications for practices of teaching thinking in classrooms.

Summary

In Chapter Two, the researcher attempted to contextualize the purpose of this study by reviewing the relevant literature. In the review, the researcher explored persisting conflicts in defining the social studies and its citizenship goal and discussed numerous definitions of thinking available in the literature and differing implications of those definitions on methods of teaching thinking.

Social studies as a field of study emerged and developed through continuous conflict and disagreements. At the center of this prevailing dispute were two interconnected factors. Since its early days, numerous definitions of social studies emerged and each definition articulated different methods for achieving its citizenship objective. However, a new perspective concerning social studies and its citizenship purpose gained prominence in scholarly discussions around 1960s and 1970s. Numerous scholars argued from different standpoints and conceptualized social studies and its citizenship purpose differently.

These scholars identified teaching students reflective thinking, thinking or decision making skills as the most important goal of social studies education thus attainment of its citizenship purpose. Barr, Barth, and Shermis's (1977) seminal book *Defining the social studies* became a turning point in the history of social studies as it opened up a new debate concerning the role of thinking in social studies instruction. Since then, proponents of thinking skills have continuously emphasized the importance of thinking skills and need for teaching thinking skills in social studies classrooms at different times and with varying degrees of persuasion.

Despite the continuous advocacy for thinking, scholars repeatedly reported that teaching thinking or decision-making skills in social studies classrooms remained unsuccessful. Not having an established definition for thinking in social studies has been identified as one of the major reasons in the literature, having resulted in a lack of understanding in its theory and practice among social studies scholars and practitioners. At least three interrelated concerns have been articulated with respect to this.

First of all, scholars have posited that variations among the definitions and interpretations of thinking resulted in fragmentation of focus and divergence of aims of research.

Concomitantly, it might even be argued that contrary to the growing literature on the nature of thinking, the social studies field has not benefited from them effectively. Others have been concerned that no definitive insights have been gained to guide future research developments. Furthermore, some scholars have contended that inadequate conceptions of critical thinking lead to misconceived practices for teaching critical thinking.

The fact remains that each different notion of thinking has its own underlying assumptions regarding the nature of thinking, and thus methods for teaching thinking. Therefore, developing a common definition of thinking could ultimately help social studies teachers to develop an understanding of thinking. Teachers would further be able to answer questions such as, is thinking really a skill or a disposition? If it is a skill, is it context bound or more like a generic reasoning skill? If thinking is more like a generic reasoning skill, how likely is it to transfer across different content areas?

These are essential and imperative issues to tackle for promoting thinking and the teaching of thinking in social studies classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE:

Methodology

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine the definition of thinking as it has evolved in the social studies over the last thirty years, 1977 to 2006, through an historical analysis of publications of NCSS. A corollary purpose of the study was to examine and describe the various perspectives regarding methods of teaching thinking that were advocated in NCSS publications, specifically in Social Studies and the Young Learner, Social Education, and its supplement, Middle Level Learning. In essence, the researcher expected to trace the historical progression of how thinking has been defined and expressed by social studies educators by over the period 1977 to 2006.

To provide clarity and coherence to the research purpose, the following questions were examined across a thirty-year time frame:

1. How have the definitions of thinking, decision-making, and problem solving evolved in the social studies field between the years 1977-2006?
2. Is there a common definition of thinking in social studies field today and if so, how does it relate to decision-making and problem solving?
3. How, if at all, do the definitions of thinking, decision making, and problem solving influence the description of preferred methods of teaching thinking in social studies?
4. How do definitions and recommendations in the literature compare to the NCSS Standards related to thinking, decision-making, problem solving and methods of teaching in the Social Studies?

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter Three deals with the research methodology used in the study. In it, a rationale for the methodological choices of the present study is provided. It also deals with the research methods applied in the study and methods used in analyzing the data. The basic design of this study is historical. Specifically, the researcher used historical methods for collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data. Chapter Three focuses on the identification of sources for the methodology of the study and discusses the reasons behind the selection of the time – frame (1977 – 2006) and data sources used in the study.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this dissertation, the researcher used historical analysis as a research method to analyze articles in NCSS journals selected from a 30-year period. The historical method provides a unique way of looking at such a broad phenomenon. According to Tunchman (1994), historiography helps the researcher to grasp the meaning of a past event or occurrence that has continuing significance to the practices of present time. In general, historical work or historiography demands a perspective taking. Therefore, historians and historical studies may seem to be fragmented, making the historical method hard to explain.

Historical studies and therefore historical methodology are varied within themselves not only in their coverage of time periods and physical places, but also in their methodological orientations (Tosh, 2000). Tosh points out that political history, economic history, social history, and cultural history methods are the most popular. He further distinguishes cultural history from other forms of history because cultural history has only been developed recently.

Despite the differences among the various approaches to historiography, there are a number of commonalities, which may be seen as critical attributes of historiography itself. One of the most important among these is that historiography, or the writing of history, is a highly flexible approach. It allows the researcher great freedom in selecting, examining, and interpreting the historical sources to present representation of past events (Tucker, 1996). It is at the heart of the historical method, though, that a historian will “make judgments and establish causal relationship between facts; he must place them in some significant pattern in order and not simply be a reporter” (Canter & Schneider, 1967, p.19).

Numerous historians, such as Marius (2002), Shaffer (1980), and Storey (1999) indicated further commonalities in the historical method. These additional important elements are considered essential to definitive historical method. These include:

- 1- Being systematic in collecting, selecting, and analyzing primary and secondary sources,
- 2- Fundamental reliance on primary sources,
- 3- A utilization of secondary resources for corroboration,
- 4- Integrity in reporting, selecting, and using from these resources,
- 5- Conclusions with evidentiary basis,
- 6- Selectivity based on the relevant resources, the importance of resources, and the judged validity of resources,
- 7- Aim at analyzing change and continuity over time

The historical method seemed most applicable to answer the research questions of this study for number of reasons. The present study has dealt with an historical debate and

controversy which has continued over a long period of time. That debate is contained in a variety of articles from numerous authors. The debate constantly and continuously shaped theory and practice in social studies education. Using the historical method allowed the researcher to look at these various resources with a degree of freedom. She then could draw conclusions based on a variety of content in a variety of articles by a variety of authors. From these, the researcher attempted to determine the direction and importance of prevailing thought. Neither as complete nor as criterion based as content analysis, the historical method allows the researcher a range of freedom to form a perspective and draw a conclusion about phenomenal patterns. Therefore, historical methods seemed appropriate for understanding the development of social studies in the period 1977 – 2006.

The ongoing controversies over the meaning of social studies and citizenship as its primary purpose also have direct implications for the social studies curriculum and its classroom practices. Previous developments and occurrences in social studies have an impact on current social studies theory and practice. Exploring the developments from the historical perspective allows the researcher to explore “the ripple impact” caused by the publication of *Defining the Social Studies* in 1977. Controversies and confusions that have been shaping social studies did not cease in the past; these have implications for present day. Thus, in that sense, historiography allowed the researcher to interpret and describe a past event in such a way that “it speaks to present” (Tuchman, 1994, p.310).

This study is also about understanding the development of social studies from the perspectives of its scholars and practitioners. Gathering, collecting, and analyzing primary and secondary sources written directly by the scholars of the social studies themselves over the years

helped the researcher to understand their perspectives regarding social studies, its citizenship goal, means to achieve its goal, and changes in viewpoints over time. It was the intent of the researcher to describe and to trace the historical progression of how thinking has been conceived and expressed by social studies educators by over the period 1977 to 2006.

As an international scholar, I believe I can examine this historical phenomenon in social studies. I can provide a unique and more objective perspective. I felt that my descriptions and insights provided in this study might give a new, fresh, and most importantly an outside perspective to the social studies scholars and even those who have been involved in the teaching of social studies for a long time.

Historical research, like any other research, has a degree of subjectivity. It reflects, to some degree, the researcher's prior knowledge about the subject and his or her expectations. Also, historical research, by its nature, depends on historical facts and available evidences and sources. It is also important to note that there are many historians who researched the same historical topic and wrote about it with different points of views. Therefore, a historical research also depends on other historians or writers, their perspectives and their representations of the same historical occurrences (Storey, 1999).

To control subjectivity as much as possible, the researcher carefully considered the search process and followed systematic logical steps in selection of articles. The unit for analysis in the present study is identified as each article published in three major journals of NCSS between 1977 and 2006. To capture a wide range of meanings, emphasis, and patterns presented in the documents, the researcher tried to be as inclusive as possible throughout the search process in identifying articles. Although identification of a wide range of articles and inclusiveness were

the primary purposes, the researcher tried not to be exhaustive in this process she tried to keep her focus on the research questions in identifying and selecting articles to analyze.

A total of two hundred twenty-three (223) articles from the thirty-year period were identified as dealing with thinking in some way or another. 132 of them were used for the final analysis. Further descriptions of articles are provided in Chapter Four, Findings. In the following paragraphs, the researcher explicates the details of the data collection procedure in the examination of Social Studies, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning articles published between 1977 and 2006, the and data analysis process applied in the study.

Identification of Articles

The researcher started her inquiry by accessing back issues of the three journals of NCSS. The researcher accessed Social Education, one of three journals of NCSS, through the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Library Collections. These collections were limited to the issues of Social Education and contained issues published between 1977 and 1994 in microfilm and issues published between 1995 and 1996 in the library stacks. The University of Tennessee Library discontinued its subscription to this journal in 1996. Therefore, the researcher accessed subsequent issues of Social Education published between 1997 and 2006 through the NCSS' website, <http://members.ncss.org/se/>. As a member of the NCSS, the researcher was able to access archived issues of Social Education in text-only and PDF formats. So, the researcher was able to examine all issues of Social Education published between 1977 and 2006.

However, it was much more difficult for the researcher to access the other two publications of NCSS, namely Social Studies and the Young Learner and Middle Level

Learning. The University of Tennessee Library carries only volumes 3, 4, and 5 of Social Studies and the Young Learner in its stacks, volumes published in 1990, 1991, and 1992 respectively. Therefore, the researcher accessed subsequent issues of Social Studies and the Young Learner from the NCSS members' only website. The subsequent issues of Social Studies and the Young Learner, which was first published in 1988, were available through <http://members.ncss.org/yl/> both in text – only and PDF format. Additionally, the researcher located and obtained some of the articles through University of Tennessee Library, Inter Library Loan (ILL).

Because the University of Tennessee Library collection did not maintain a collection of Middle Level Learning, the researcher accessed the complete issues of the journal from the NCSS website, <http://members.ncss.org/ml/>. All of the volumes, beginning with volume 1, January / February 1998, through volume 18, December 2006, were available in PDF format in the NCSS members only archive.

The next thing the researcher did was to identify and select published articles in the three journals of NCSS for further analysis. To be able to answer the research questions and to provide objectivity as much as possible, the researcher identified and followed a consistent procedure. Based on the previous literature reviews (e.g., Cornbleth, 1985; Parker, 1991; McKay and Gibson, 2004) the researcher identified words “thinking”, “critical thinking”, “decision making”, and “problem solving” as search keywords.

First, the researcher looked for the each keyword within title of the each article published in Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning between 1977 and 2006. Then, the researcher examined each article, taking a critical look at the first couple of paragraphs and skimming the rest to determine whether the article contained any or

some of the keywords. If it did, the next thing the researcher did was to examine the article critically to identify whether or not its content was relevant to the research questions, thus for the purpose of the study.

After identifying articles from each journal, the researcher proceeded to obtain them. The researcher printed a copy of each identified article and wrote an assigned ID# in the upper right hand corner of the article. This ID# consisted of the last two digits of the year in which the article was published, and an abbreviation of SE, YL, or ML which stood for Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning respectively, and a chronologically assigned number (i.e., 77-YL-1).

It is important to note that the researcher was not able to analyze the journal articles published in Social Studies and the Young Learner and Middle Level Learning in the first decade. This was due to the fact that Social Education was the only journal published by NCSS between 1977 and 1986. For the years 1977 to 1986, the researcher analyzed a total of 25 published journal articles. For the following two decades, between 1987 and 1996 and between 1997 and 2006, the researcher analyzed a total of 37 and 70 published journal articles from the three journals respectively. In total, the researcher examined 132 articles from three major journals of NCSS. A complete list of selected articles is available at Appendix A.

Analysis of Articles

Having identified and obtained the articles, the researcher proceeded to examine and analyze each identified article through a uniform and rigorous procedure. To guide data analysis in a systematic manner, the first thing the researcher did was to read each published article thoroughly and carefully. As the researcher read and analyzed each article carefully, she looked

for the meaningful information, answers to the research questions she was pursuing and pertinent information was noted. Her main concern was to obtain reliable information and evidence regarding her research purpose and questions.

The information the researcher collected included bibliographical information of an article, available definition(s) of thinking, suggested methods of teaching thinking, as well as related patterns seen in the article, important ideas and points from the article, and quotes from the article. The researcher recorded each piece of information to Microsoft Excel and then obtained a print out of each Microsoft Excel sheet. Although the researcher's initial analysis of the data began during data collection and recording phase of the inquiry, the researcher began studying and interpreting the data deliberately right after the data recording process was completed and print out copies of each Microsoft Excell sheet obtained.

As the researcher searched for a definition for thinking, she identified over the years social studies scholars utilized numerous terms for thinking, such as critical thinking, decision making, higher level thinking, cognitive process, etc. In fact, this confusion in terminology was also highlighted in numerous literature reviews (e.g. Cornbleth, 1985; Parker, 1991).

Similarly, as the researcher examined data to identify teaching method for thinking, she found that when scholars described a teaching approach, they identified more than the teaching approach. Instead, scholars particularly explained the teaching method in detail on the basis of numerous characteristics. Therefore, the researcher and her doctoral committee discussed the initial findings and decided that scholars' use of terminology related to thinking and definitions of thinking needed to be distinguished and delineated. They also decided that in relation to teaching methods for thinking, scholars' perspectives concerning content, student behavior /

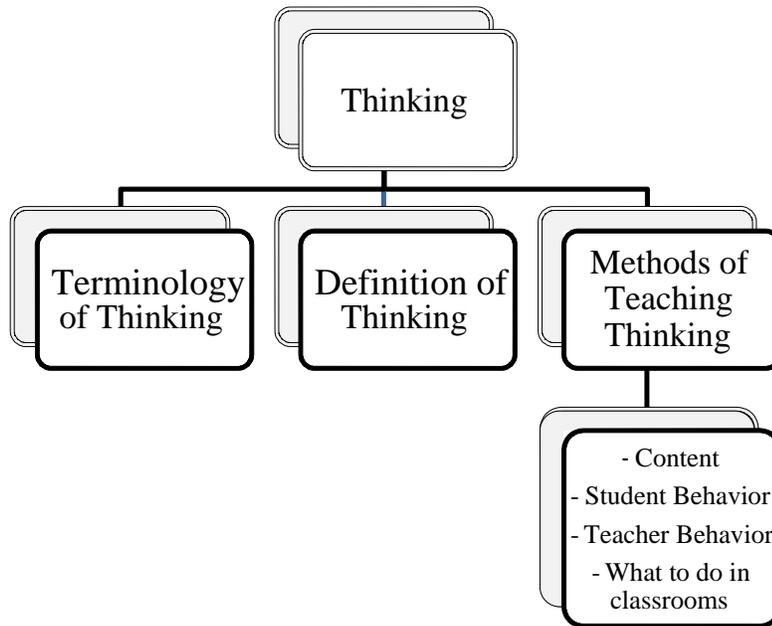
involvement, teacher behavior / involvement, and activities to do in classroom need to be identified.

To be able to do that, first, the researcher analyzed data on two levels. On one hand, the researcher looked for *terminology related to thinking* - what / which term(s) was used by social studies scholars in the examined articles. She also specifically looked for the *definition of thinking* - meaning of the thinking or used term within a given article. Therefore, the researcher specifically looked for meaningful patterns in scholars' use of terminology and definitions of thinking.

Second, throughout data analysis, the researcher paid particular attention to scholars' explanations of *social studies content, student behavior, teacher behavior*, as well as *classroom activities* in addition to and in relation to suggested *methods of teaching thinking*. Besides, collecting information about the teaching method as well as desired student behaviors, analyzing the teachers' role and classroom activities helped the researcher to gain more in-depth explanations concerning scholars' perspectives of teaching thinking.

Additionally, as indicated by historians Storey (1999) and Marius (2004), the researcher paid attention to regularities as well as irregularities reflected in the data source. In summary, the researcher analyzed each identified article based on terminology and definition of thinking, and methods of teaching thinking by specifically focusing on teaching method, content, student behavior, teacher behavior, and classroom activities as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Analysis of Articles.



Time Frame (1977 – 2006)

The time - frame for this analysis began with 1977. Earlier years could have been selected since a series of events were occurring in the 1960s and 1970s that signaled the beginning of change in the social studies. Most significantly, Shirley Engle, a former NCSS president, had published a highly influential article in 1960 entitled “Decision Making: The Heart of the Social Studies” which implied a much more central role for problem solving, decision making, and thinking than had been in the past.

However, in 1977, the publication of Barr, Barth, and Shermis’s (1977) book “*Defining the Social Studies*” challenged the way social studies educators had been looking at their field. Barr, Barth, and Shermis’s seminal book stimulated a wide range of discussion among the

scholarly community regarding the role of thinking and decision making in educating future citizens, thus in teaching social studies. An expectation for the current research was that the three decades of developments since then would result in a wide range of discussions concerning thinking and implications for teaching thinking in social studies classrooms. NCSS' mainstream publications, namely Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning, were the major arenas for these discussions.

Two other signal events occurred in the period covered in this dissertation. These events were the beginning of publication by NCSS of two new journals. Social Studies and the Young Learner was first published in 1988 in an attempt by the organization to provide a vehicle for members whose interest was in elementary grades. Middle Level Learning focused on middle school grades, also began publication in 1998. All of the three major publications of NCSS, Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning have had a single common purpose. That purpose has been to improve social studies instruction in schools by providing theoretical perspectives and practical teaching ideas to its scholarly community (Field & Burlbaw, 1995; Laughlin, 1995). Therefore, the researcher expected to come across articles containing both theoretical and practical information concerning thinking and its application in social studies classrooms.

The ending date of 2006 was chosen for two major reasons. In the first place and most importantly, it was the most recent year for which there was a complete year of NCSS publications available when this study began. Secondly, selecting this year enabled the researcher to look exactly three decades of development of thinking following the Barr, Barth, and Shermis book.

Data Sources

To examine the definition of thinking and to explore views related to thinking and methods of teaching thinking as identified by social studies scholars over the last thirty years, articles published in the major journals of NCSS, namely Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning were identified for analysis for this dissertation. Published articles in each of these journals were identified as an item for analysis for several reasons.

First, NCSS is the major national organization dealing with the social studies and it has been a forum for discussion of the nature and purposes of social studies since its inception in 1921. Secondly, NCSS publications are the major source for discussion of their field and teaching methodology for social studies teachers in this country and, to some extent, abroad. Though other publications such as *Educational Leadership*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, and the various other journals for curriculum supervisors and school administrators do deal with social studies curriculum from time to time, NCSS is generally acknowledged to have leadership in the field. Therefore, reading its journals is one of the ways that teachers are exposed to theory and research concerning thinking.

A third reason for this selection was that the three journals of NCSS are the only professional journals in the United States with the central purpose of improving social studies instruction in schools by providing both theoretical perspectives and practical teaching ideas to its scholarly community (Field & Burlbaw, 1995; Laughlin, 1995). Therefore, each NCSS member has an access to recent developments and information concerning theoretical content and practical ideas in social studies. For this reason, the researcher critically examined the

information regarding thinking and methods of teaching thinking that were published and disseminated by the three journals of NCSS.

After examining the 30-year period, a total of a total of two hundred twenty three (223) articles from the thirty-year period were initially identified as dealing with thinking in some way or another. Upon further evaluation as detailed above, a total of one hundred thirty three (132) of articles were found to be related to the focus of this dissertation, and used for further analysis.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter Three was to provide a detailed description of the research procedures used in this dissertation. The chapter was divided into two sections. In the first section, the researcher described a series of logical steps that she employed in identifying and analyzing articles obtained from the three NCSS journals. In the second section, the researcher described the reasons for selecting the time frame (1977 – 2006) and the various data sources, namely Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning, used in the study. The researcher dealt with a total of one hundred and thirty two (132) articles one way or another from three mainstream journals of NCSS. The patterns were found in the analysis of these articles are explained in Findings, in the next chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Findings

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine the various descriptions and perspectives concerning thinking in social studies as expressed by social studies scholars in NCSS journals and publications across a thirty – year time frame, 1977 to 2006. A corollary purpose was to trace the historical progression of how thinking has been conceived and expressed by social studies educators over the years and to describe the various perspectives regarding methods of teaching thinking that prevailed in published journal articles. The NCSS journals examined for this study are Social Studies and the Young Learner, Social Education, and its supplement, Middle Level Learning. To provide clarity and coherence to the research purpose, the following questions were examined.

1. How have the definitions of thinking, decision-making, and problem solving evolved in the social studies field between the years 1977-2006?
2. Is there a common definition of thinking in social studies field today and if so, how does it relate to decision-making and problem solving?
3. How, if at all, do the definitions of thinking, decision making, and problem solving influence the description of preferred methods of teaching thinking in social studies?
4. How do definitions and recommendations in the literature compare to the NCSS Standards related to thinking, decision-making, problem solving and methods of teaching in the Social Studies?

Organization of the Chapter

An explanation of social studies scholars' perspectives concerning meaning of thinking and methods of teaching thinking across the thirty - year time period is the subject for this Chapter Four. In the remainder of the chapter, the researcher provided detailed explanations of the findings arrived at by analyzing each journal article found in three major publications of NCSS regarding definition of thinking and methods of teaching thinking as well as their relevance to the above research questions on a decade – by – decade basis. Chapter Four is organized into four sections.

In the first section, the researcher examined both terminology of thinking and definitions of thinking as explored by social studies scholars. In the second section, the researcher described scholars' perspectives on methods of teaching thinking. In the third section, the researcher specifically addressed and discussed each research question. The final section, the Summary serves as overview of the findings.

Analysis of Articles Published in NCSS Journals Concerning Defining Thinking

The researcher's analysis of published articles in three NCSS journals confirmed that the term thinking or critical thinking in social studies literature is so amorphous that it creates confusion and uncertainty. The researcher examined this confusion on two levels. On one level the researcher explored the basic *terminology of thinking* – what / which term(s) is used by social studies scholars in examined articles. On the other level, she explored the *definition of thinking* - meaning of the used term within a given article.

Terms Related to the Teaching of Thinking

The researcher's analysis of articles published between the years of 1977 – 2006 revealed that scholars have used terms related to thinking with a variety of meanings. The various definitions leave readers confused. The researcher identified two patterns, in particular, related to this confusion. First, over the years social studies scholars used a variety of terms within the content of a journal article to refer thinking, such as thinking, thinking skills, thinking processes, thinking operations, critical thinking, critical thinking skills, problem solving, decision making, cognitive skills, cognitive processes, higher order thinking, reflective thinking, inquiry, higher mental operations, and deductive - inductive thinking.

Second, the researcher also identified that, no matter what term or how many terms scholars used, many of them did not provide a definition for the term(s) that they utilized. In addition to scholars' application of a wide range of terms, they used those terms interchangeably within the content of the same journal article without providing a definition(s) or making a clear distinction among them.

For instance, in a journal article, an author might use the term critical thinking at the beginning. But then, as the article progresses the author alters his or her use of the term to thinking or higher order processes or cognitive processes and does not offer a definition for any of the terms. By doing so, social studies scholars, intentionally or unintentionally supported the notion that numerous terms they used for thinking all meant the same thing or were a different way of referring to the same thing. So, in general, the researcher found that between the years 1977 and 2006, social studies scholars' application of terminology regarding thinking was problematic and vague. Conceptualizing thinking in such an indistinct manner might have

facilitated confusion in the literature concerning theoretical and practical aspects of thinking among the consumers of the literature. Besides this prevalent terminology confusion, the researcher identified some additional patterns in scholars' utilization of terms.

Specifically, the researcher found that scholars' terminology preferences for thinking remained mostly the same in three decades, between 1977 and 2006. She identified thinking, thinking skills, critical thinking, critical thinking skills, decision making, problem solving, higher order thinking, higher order thinking skills, and inquiry as prevailing terms for thinking. Moreover, the researcher identified *critical thinking* as being the most popular and widely used term within the published journal articles in all three decades. The term critical thinking dominated the scholarly writings and discussions within published journal articles. In Figure 2 is a breakdown of scholars' terminological preferences on a decade – by decade basis.

Figure 2: Terms related to the teaching of Thinking (* indicates the most frequently used term)

1977-1986	1987-1996	1997-2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking * • Thinking • Problem Solving • Decision Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking * • Thinking • Higher Order thinking • Inquiry • Problem Solving • Decision Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking * • Decision making • Higher order thinking • Problem solving • Inquiry

In the first decade studied (1977-1986), terms including critical thinking, thinking, decision making, and problem solving were the most frequently used terms within the literature. In the second decade (1987-1996), popular terms that scholars employed were critical thinking, thinking, higher order thinking, decision making, and problem solving. For this decade, the researcher did find, however, changes in the popular pattern of terminology.

Specifically, between the years 1987 and 1996, the researcher identified that the terms higher order thinking or higher-level thinking started to appear more frequently than in the previous decade. During this same time period, research projects conducted by Fred Newmann and his associates (e.g. Newmann, 1990) concerning thinking in social studies education were based on Newmann's definition of the term higher order thinking; indicating a relationship between the theories expressed in the articles and in social studies research.

Another emerging term the researcher identified for this decade was inquiry. Social studies scholars started using the term inquiry more frequently toward the end of this period. In fact, many of them articulated the term inquiry specifically with questioning behavior and in-depth study of content. These apparent changes in scholars' use of terminology is important because this change could also be a reflection of the shift in scholar's prevailing conceptions of thinking, and thus their preferences concerning methods of teaching it.

Finally, in the third decade under study (1997-2006), social studies scholars employed the same widely used terms. In particular, they frequently utilized the terms decision-making, higher order thinking, problem solving, and thinking. As in the previous decade, inquiry was one of the popular terms. Scholars, for the most part, equated thinking with inquiry and highlighted the

connection between inquiry and the skills of questioning. They also emphasized the importance of systematic and disciplined inquiry on developing students' thinking ability.

In summary, the researcher identified three noteworthy features. First, between the years 1977 and 2006, there was indeed terminology confusion in social studies literature which was partially caused by scholars' overlapping use of an array of terms for thinking. Second, although scholars employed an abundance of terms for thinking, many of the authors did not provide a definition for the term(s) they used or establish a clear distinction among them. And third, among those various terms, *critical thinking* has been the most frequently used and the most popular term within the examined journal articles for the years between 1977 and 2006. Social studies scholars' application and interchangeable use of wide range of terms with lack of a clear distinction among them lead the researcher to explore an allied concern: how did scholars define the terms they used?

Definition of Thinking

In the previous section, the researcher discussed that there has been prevailing confusion concerning terminology related to thinking in the social studies literature over thirty - year period. She further identified that the confusion was mainly caused by scholars' use of a pervasive murk of terms to refer to thinking, and overlapping application of terms without suggesting a definition or making clear distinction between terms. In this section of this dissertation, the researcher explored definitions of thinking and related patterns in detail as expressed by social studies scholars in published journal articles. The patterns indentified in scholars' descriptions of thinking for the years between 1977 and 2006 are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Summary of Definitions of Thinking.

1977-1986	1987-1996	1997-2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discrete Skills• Analysis, Evaluation, Judgment• Both frame of mind and mental operations• A process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills,• Analysis, evaluation, judgment,• Inquiry,• Both skill and disposition / attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills,• Analysis, evaluation, judgment,• Questioning and inquiry

Definitions of Thinking from the Years 1977 to 1986

In the first decade, social studies scholars predominantly applied four perspectives to conceptualize thinking. Based on the analysis of published articles, the researcher identified four patterns that were used to conceptualize thinking as

- 1- Discrete skills,
- 2- A process,
- 3- A combination of frame of mind and mental operations,
- 4- Analysis, evaluation, and judgment.

In the early years of this, some scholars perceived and identified thinking as a group of *discrete skills* (e.g. Hunkins, 1985; Beyer, 1985) such as gathering data, observing, identifying, comparing and contrasting, predicting, distinguishing relevant or irrelevant data, identifying

unstated assumptions, synthesizing, or interpreting as discrete skills of thinking. Even though they viewed thinking as discrete skills, they never identified one single discrete skill as thinking.

Literature based on this definition had several specific characteristics. First, scholars who perceived thinking as discrete skills identified them as distinct entities and emphasized them as such. Second, scholars predominantly perceived that discrete skills of thinking include mental or intellectual manipulation of social studies content or data. Additionally, scholars who defined thinking as discrete skills did not consider them as sequential. In fact, to clarify this point, Beyer (1985) wrote that "...thinking is not a unified operation consisting of a number of operations through which one proceeds in sequence" (p.272). Similarly, McFarland (1985) pointed out that several aspects of thinking may occur at the same time.

The discrete skills view of thinking contradicts other conceptions of thinking identified for this decade. In the earlier years of this decade, some scholars perceived *thinking as a process*. These scholars mostly used the terms thinking, decision-making, or problem solving interchangeably with a systematic approach, a scientific process to solve problems, or the scientific method (Alleman-Brooks & Ellis, 1977; Mahood, 1978). In a way, these scholars equated thinking with problem solving or decision making in such a way that they described it as a sequential process.

For instance, Glenn and Ellis (1982) described problem solving as a complex operation that incorporates a number of factors and interactive steps. Similarly, according to Mahood (1978) the decision making process consists of recall and restatement of issues, listing of alternative solutions, and analysis and evaluation of the consequences of decisions. Along

parallel lines, others described the scientific process of solving problems as observation, recording data, processing, and inference making (Alleman-Brooks and Ellis, 1977).

Emerging directly from the skills perspective of thinking, some scholars primarily focused on a definite number of skills by clearly indicating that thinking encompasses not one skill, but numerous skills. Thus, they encouraged practicing a definite number of thinking skills and successfully mastering these skills to promote students' ability to think critically. For instance, Rudin (1984) identified as many as seven skills including analyzing statistics, recognizing valid generalizations, finding cause effect relationships, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, recognizing unstated assumptions, analyzing points of view, and recognizing inferences.

According to Beyer (1985), thinking comprised ten essential skills, including determining the reliability of a source, distinguishing facts and value claims, determining the factual accuracy of a statement, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, claims, or reasons, detecting bias, identifying unstated assumptions, identifying ambiguous or equivocal claims or arguments, recognizing logical inconsistencies or fallacies in a line of reasoning, distinguishing warranted or unwarranted claims, and determining strength of an argument. Regardless of the suggested numbers of skills, these scholars' conception of thinking appeared to mirror the idea that being proficient in thinking is a matter of being good at performing and mastering a definite number of distinct skills.

In fact, when scholars conceptualized thinking as particular skills, they also frequently mentioned the name of Benjamin Bloom and his taxonomy of educational objectives. Some scholars perceived that being good at thinking, meant being proficient at performing lower level

cognitive objectives in Blooms' taxonomy, such as recalling information or understanding the main points. However, many scholars of this decade equated thinking directly with Bloom's higher levels of cognitive objectives, particularly analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These scholars (e.g. Atwood, 1985; Beyer, 1985; Davis, 1984; Kownslar, 1985; McFarland, 1985) conceived of thinking specifically as a combination of analysis and evaluation. Beyer (1985) defined critical thinking as a "...collection of discrete skills or operations [that] combines analysis and evaluation" (p.272). Other scholars described thinking as the skills of *analysis, evaluation, and judgment* (Atwood, 1985; Fleming & Weber, 1980; Hunkins, 1985).

In relation to this perspective, there was a connection between scholars' preferred terminology and their conception of thinking. In the previous section of this chapter, the researcher identified critical thinking as the most common term for this decade. When scholars describe thinking as the skills of analysis, evaluation, and judgment, they predominantly preferred the term critical thinking. In fact, this is probably the point where the distinction between thinking and critical thinking rests. When scholars specifically focused on dealing with statements, involving any kinds of issues, identifying unstated assumptions, distinguishing fact from opinion, or just simply being critical about the social studies content and resource, they preferred to utilize the term critical thinking. In that sense, it might be argued that critical thinking as scholars conceptualized it represented the critical aspect of thinking.

In addition to the three perspectives of thinking discussed above, the researcher identified an uncommon yet emerging view of thinking for this decade. Toward the end of the first decade, a small number of scholars indicated that thinking is more than a numerous skills or particular skills, or skills of dealing with statements. Rather, they pointed out that critical thinking has two

integrated aspects: *a frame of mind* and number of *mental operations* (Singleton, 1979; Beyer, 1985). By recognizing two incorporated aspects, Singleton (1979) used the term reflection and defined it as “...the essential but non-gadget-like feature of science, and to an attitude of mind and a generalized set of mental operations with which to approach all the problems, whether social and physical in nature” (p.220).

As the generalized mental operations, scholars commonly referred to thinking skills identified previously: to analyze, to gather data, to synthesize, or to interpret. When thinking was conceptualized as a frame of mind, scholars indicated that it comprises “...alertness to the need to evaluate information, a willingness to test opinions, and a desire to consider all viewpoints” (McClure and West, 1961 cited in Beyer, 1985, p.271). McFarland (1985) pointed out the importance of having both willingness and the ability to think critically in social studies. Quoting McPeck, Beyer (1985) indicated that having a certain frame of mind also requires an inclination.

The researcher found this perspective of thinking interesting and important. This small group of scholars, unlike other scholars of this decade, claimed that thinking entails not only performing a skill or skills, but also having attitudes / dispositions. This newly emerging view of thinking was a unique attempt to connect the skill(s) or discrete perspectives of thinking to certain attitudes of individual students who possess or exhibits those particular skills. By doing so, these social studies scholars approached thinking from a more holistic point of view – not simply performing the skills of analysis or evaluation but also a willingness to analyze opinions, or a desire to consider all viewpoints counts as thinking. Toward the end of the first decade, some scholars moved away from the mere mechanics of thinking (e.g. emphasizing or performing specific skills of thinking) toward a perspective including both skills and attitudes.

Definitions of Thinking from the Years 1987 to 1996

In the second decade under study, the researcher found similar patterns as in the previous decade as well as some newly emerging issues. For this decade, social studies scholars viewed thinking as

- 1- Skills,
- 2- Analysis, evaluation, and judgment,
- 3- A combination of certain skills and dispositions or attitudes,
- 4- Inquiry.

The *skill* perspective of thinking was very much alive in this decade as well. For the years 1987 to 1996, scholars conceptualized thinking as skills and listed a wide range of skills as thinking (e.g. Hodge, 1988; Haas, 1988; Laney and Moseley, 1990). However, unlike the scholars of the previous decade, these scholars identified thinking skills not as discrete but as interrelated. Some of the thinking skills that scholars identified for this decade were observing, data gathering, classifying, identifying, and hypothesizing.

Some social studies scholars continued to predominantly conceptualize thinking as the skills of *analysis, evaluation, and judgment* in particular (Gabelko, 1988; Green, 1990; Margolis et al., 1990; Olsen, 1995), identifying them as all higher order thinking skills or as the higher-level cognitive skills in Bloom's taxonomy (Green, 1990; Naumann, 1991). Other continued to equate thinking specifically with Newmann's concept of higher order thinking which he defined as non routine organization, interpretation, analysis, and manipulation of information (Newmann, 1990).

Some scholars of this decade conceived thinking as more than specific skills but as a combination of *skills* and *attitudes* or *dispositions*. Although this view of thinking was emerging toward the end of previous decade, it appeared with more emphasis and detail between 1987 and 1996. Several scholars in this decade conceptualized thinking as both skills (e.g. evaluating evidence, analyzing point of view) and dispositions (Walsh, 1988; Eeds & Wells, 1991). Proponents of this view indicated that thinking incorporates both skills and attitudes or dispositions in a way that they complement each other. Based on the works of D'Angelo (1971) and Nickerson (1988), some scholars noted that attitudes such as intellectual curiosity, objectivity, fair-mindedness and openness to evidence on any issue, intellectual skepticism and honesty, desire to be informed, respect for opinions that are different from one's own, and a tendency to reflect before acting were all considered essential in performing and learning the skills of thinking (quoted in Walsh, 1988; Eeds & Wells, 1991; Gabelko, 1988; Walsh, 1988; Wright, 1995).

Many of the scholars who embraced this view of thinking further emphasized in-depth exploration of content (Walsh, 1988; O'Reilly, 1991; Naumann, 1991; Soley, 1996), more time for instruction or for exploring the content in depth or for student reflection, as well as positive and constructive social settings (Walsh, 1988; Gabelko, 1988; Eeds & Wells, 1991). In fact, in relation to attitudes, more scholars emphasized the importance of students' value bases, and frames of reference for development of their thinking. These scholars described thinking as more than performing the skills of analysis or evaluation or any other skill. Instead, they defined it as a combination of skills and attitudes. By doing so, scholars of this decade simply rejected the discrete skill approach to thinking. They focused on not only performing the skills of thinking,

but also what it means to execute those skills – analyze, evaluate, judge – with respect to social studies content knowledge, student attitudes, and social context.

Finally, the researcher identified a new and an emerging view of thinking for this decade, equating the skills of thinking with *inquiry* similar to that social scientists employ to collect data, to assess the quality of data, and to use data to interpret events (Laney & Moseley, 1990; Vanderhoof, & et al., 1992; Levitt, et al., 1992). By doing so, they explicitly advocated instructing students in skills used by social scientists (Green, 1990; Laney & Moseley, 1990; Levitt, & et al.1992). Not many scholars in this decade went beyond the terminology level and defined inquiry, however. The one definition of inquiry identified for this period was “reflective examination of a problem in a logical and systematic fashion” (Shelly, & Wilen, 1988).

In summary, with the exception of “inquiry,” scholars in this decade explained thinking in a more detailed and comprehensive manner than in the previous decade. That indicated that the concepts of thinking and thus scholars’ perceptions of thinking evolved and progressed over the years.

Definitions of Thinking from the Years 1997 to 2006

During the final decade under study, social studies scholars in NCSS journals mostly viewed thinking as

- 1- Skills,
- 2- Analysis, evaluation, and judgment,
- 3- Questioning and inquiry.

As in previous decades of this dissertation, some social studies scholars continued to conceptualize thinking as the *skills* of information gathering, classification, analysis, synthesis,

interpretation, evaluation, and judgment (McBride, 1999; Rea, 1999; Edgington, 1999; Molebash and Dodge, 2003; Larson, 2005; Wieseman and Cadwell, 2005; Sperry, 2006; Bohn and Kolloff, 2006). In this decade, scholars embracing the skills approach combined both higher-level skills and lower-level skills. For example, students who examined an issue or analyzed multiple points concerning an issue were also expected to gather necessary information and construct specific knowledge or viewpoints related to that issue by employing lower level thinking skills. Then, they were expected to perform higher level skills, to justify and support their perspective with evidence, provide reasoned viewpoints, and explain why's related to their stance.

As in previous decades under study, there were scholars in this decade who predominantly viewed thinking as the skills of *analysis, evaluation, and judgment*. These skills were particularly considered essential in relation to social studies content: to understand logical and fallacious arguments, to identify inaccuracies, to develop a well reasoned answer or decision, to assess multiple points of views and multiple sources, to identify alternative course of action and consequences, to develop an individual perspective, to challenge and to defend ideas in particular. Thus, scholars specified all of these skills essential for the development of thinking.

Many scholars of this decade equated the skills of *questioning* and *inquiry* as important aspects of thinking, building on the emergence of inquiry in the previous decade. Questioning and inquiry were considered crucial for gathering complete information, searching and establishing well-reasoned and informed perspectives or opinions (Poling, 2000; Lapham, 2003; Sperry, 2006). In fact, McBride (1999) identified observing and questioning as the cornerstones of critical thinking. Along parallel lines, another scholar pointed out deeper exploration and

long-lasting understanding of content as two benefits of questioning and inquiry skills (Hickman, 1999).

Whereas scholars in previous two decades conceived thinking overtly both as skills and attitudes or dispositions, scholars of this era did not embrace such a conception of thinking. The researcher found this interesting, because, for this decade scholars repeatedly emphasized students' exposure to and understanding of multiple perspectives on issues, awareness of their values, openness to evidence, respect for opinions of others that are different from theirs as well as discussion, and deliberation in relation to thinking. Regardless of their explanations, these scholars did not view thinking as a combination of particular skills and attitudes or identify it as such.

To summarize findings of three decades regarding scholars' definitions of thinking, the researcher found that early in the first decade, some scholars perceived thinking as discrete skills and others identified thinking as a process, which actually contradicts the discrete skill perspective thinking. Many other scholars predominantly indicated that thinking specifically comprises analysis, evaluation, and judgment and they preferred the term critical thinking. Toward the end of first decade, a small number of scholars perceived that critical thinking includes a combination of mental operations and frame of mind. This perspective of thinking was unique in the sense that it embraced a holistic perspective of thinking.

In the following decade, although the skill perspective of thinking still persisted, scholars predominantly conceived of thinking as the skills of analysis, evaluation, and judgment in particular. A group of scholars defined thinking as certain skills or mental operations and a frame of mind or dispositions / attitudes. These two patterns appear to reflect patterns found in the

previous decade. On the other hand, some scholars conceptualized thinking as inquiry, which the researcher identified as new emerging perspective of thinking. In the last decade, some social studies scholars conceptualized thinking as skills and many others perceived it specifically as the skills of analysis, evaluation, and judgment, as in the previous two decades of this dissertation. The researcher further identified thinking defined as questioning and systematic inquiry by some scholars.

Analysis of Methods of Teaching Thinking

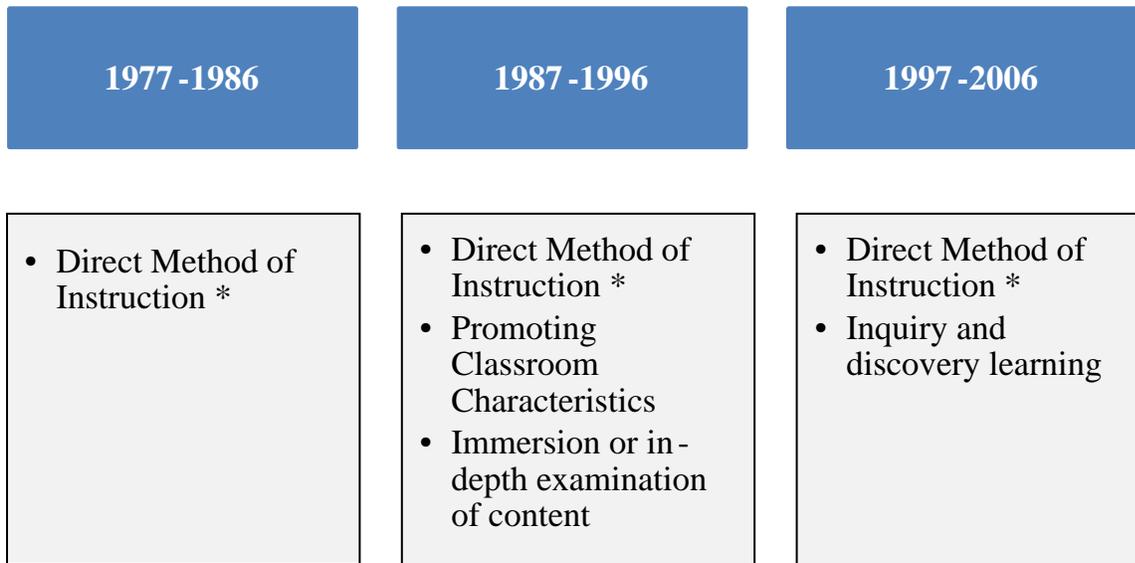
In the final section of Chapter Four, using data collected from the 132 published journal articles, the researcher discussed findings concerning methods for teaching thinking in detail as expressed by social studies scholars between the years 1977 to 2006. Specifically, she explored scholars' perspectives regarding ways to promote thinking and methods of teaching it based on five characteristics: instructional methods, content, student behavior, teacher behavior, and classroom activities.

Instructional Methods: The Years from 1977 to 2006

Figure 4 shows the summary of methods of teaching thinking identified in the three journals between 1977 and 2006. The *direct instruction method* of thinking was the most recurring and dominant approach that social studies scholars supported in all three decades (e.g. Beyer, 1977; Beyer, 1985; Glenn, 1977; Glenn and Ellis, 1982; Heitzman, 2000; Hickey, 1990; Holloday & Grskovich, 2002; Laney & Moseley, 1990; O'Reilly, 1985; Parker et al, 1991). The direct instruction approach was commonly defined as a specific method that progresses step by step in which teachers explicitly provide clear explanation of what is to be learned, necessary

knowledge and skills of thinking within the social studies content with appropriate practice and feedback (Glenn and Ellis, 1982; Heitzman, 2000; Holloday & Grskovich, 2002; Wright, 1995).

Figure 4: Summary of Methods of Teaching Thinking. (* indicates the most frequently suggested method)



Although some scholars referred to the direct instruction method differently, for instance, as explicit instruction or the infusion of thinking skills approach, they generally articulated it with bottom up, from simple to complex, and step by step instruction. While some scholars specified the direct instruction method by its name, others only addressed and explained the direct method by emphasizing its characteristics. Whatever the case may be, social studies scholars recurrently emphasized two basic premises of the direct instruction method.

First, the direct instruction method was primarily focused on teaching students the specifics of thinking skills explicitly; its components or knowledge of its essential mechanism,

all of what constitute the skill, or what it entails (Glenn, 1977). Second, the direct instruction method aimed to incorporate clearly explained skills of thinking into a wide range of social studies content.

In that sense, social studies scholars who supported direct teaching of thinking perceived that thinking skill development and content knowledge learning were interdependent. So, they viewed that providing students with necessary information concerning the skills of thinking, its components, and incorporating that information within specific social studies content was essential.

However, in the first two decades, some scholars disagreed that the direct instruction approach was applicable at all times in all conditions. Instead, they pointed out that depending on the students' ability level, teachers needed to adjust their method. They indicated that direct instruction methods were more beneficial when students lacked the skills of thinking or at an early stage in learning it (Parker et al, 1991). Otherwise, they suggested teachers prompt students to thinking, which was based on the assumption that students possessed the knowledge but for some reason were not showing it (Parker et al, 1991).

For the second decade under study (1987 – 1996), other approaches were identified in addition to direct instruction. Specifically, some scholars emphasized promoting particular classroom characteristics and prioritized them for successful teaching and learning to think (Walsh, 1988; Gabelko, 1988). Scholars who wrote about classroom characteristics and creating a positive environment were also the ones who emphasized the importance of particular attitudes and dispositions for students' ability to think.

Additionally, a very small number of scholars mentioned immersion of students into a deep study of content as an alternative approach for teaching thinking; however, they did not explain this method in detail (O'Reilly, 1991; Soley, 1996). In-depth examination of content was considered essential for the development of thinking skills in general, not only in the second decade and not as a method. In the final decade under study (1997-2006), some authors mentioned inquiry and discovery learning as an approach for teaching thinking.

Content: The Years from 1977 to 2006

Analysis of three decades of NCSS literature indicated that social studies scholars widely described *thinking as a content dependent* activity in such a way that the development of thinking skills and content learning reinforce each other and occur concurrently. As scholars advocated teaching thinking with content knowledge, they emphasized content as an essential tool for developing and improving students' thinking skills in classrooms. Scholars specified this interdependence between thinking and content on two levels.

On one level, scholars indicated students' background content knowledge on the subject was an essential element for them to be able to think critically (Gillard & Morton, 1981). Specifically, to be able to think, students' background knowledge on the subject is essential for further analysis and synthesis of the content, thus for thinking and learning (Heitzman, 2000; Hickey, 1990; Mayer, 1998; McCormick, 2004; Wright, 1995; Saye, 1998; Soley, 1996). Echoing John McPeck (1981), who argued that complex knowledge is one of the most important components of critical thinking, some scholars pointed out that deep exploration of content knowledge is crucial for the development of thinking (Walsh, 1988; Newmann, 1990; Levitt et al., 1992; Olsen, 1995; Soley, 1996).

On another level, scholars also indicated that engaging in content and mentally manipulating it was a key factor for learning the content as well as thinking about it. Mentally manipulating content was necessary for students to think as well as to acquire that content as opposed to memorize it. According to Rudin (1984), students who intellectually manipulate the content, for instance analyze or recognize unstated assumptions, are more likely to think critically about the information they receive and to retain it longer periods of time.

Essentially, in all three decades, social studies scholars widely accepted the interdependence between content and thinking. This interdependence between thinking skills and social studies content has specific implications for classroom practices. Scholars perceived that infusing thinking skills into existing social studies curriculum meaningfully entailed incorporation of content and thinking skills such a way that their developments go hand in hand without providing token attention or teaching them in isolation (O'Reilley, 1998; Edgington, 2001). Therefore, as Newmann (1990) stated that social studies teachers who want to promote thinking do not aim to teach and test for discrete thinking skills (e.g. observing, or data gathering) rather they teach students to interpret, analyze, and use the knowledge.

As scholars repeatedly emphasized the interdependence between knowledge and development of critical thinking skills in numerous journal articles, the researcher further examined an allied question: considering the multidisciplinary nature of social studies, which subject focus(s), if any, was considered more beneficial than the other(s) for the purpose of or for facilitating thinking in social studies classrooms? Analysis revealed two common patterns in all three decades: real life problems in a wide range of subjects, and real life problems in certain specific subjects.

Analysis indicated that social studies scholars specifically preferred *real problems*, *issues*, and *dilemmas* within a wide range of subjects, for example history, economics, moral issues or questions, literature, economics, geography, environmental education, and abstract topics. Yet, within the first decade, some scholars suggested that certain subject focuses more beneficial to the development of thinking skills than the others. For instance, O'Reilly (1985) pointed out that history is an ideal subject to teach critical thinking skills. On the other hand, Gillard and Morton (1981) argued that the study of economics promotes the goals of citizenship education because of its obvious emphasis on critical thinking and decision-making skills.

For the years between 1977 and 1986, the *back to basics* movement affected the field of social studies. As a result of criticisms of *New Social Studies* movement in the 70s, numerous publications showing declining students' test scores, as well as the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, reflected, to a certain degree, pressure to improve teaching and learning in history, geography, and economics, not in social studies. In spite of the *back to basics movement*, other scholars advocated for application of real problems and issues which be found within a wide range of social studies subjects as opposed to a single subject focus. Therefore, regardless of the content focuses, real life problems and issues were perceived as productive and purposeful way for students to learn content and skills of critical thinking in the social studies classrooms (Alleman-Brooks and Ellis, 1977; Ciaccio, 2002; Glenn and Ellis, 1982; Mackey, 1977; Parker et al., 1991; Rappoport & Kletzien, 1997; Chilcoat et al., 2002; Soley, 1996).

Over the years, many scholars identified numerous yet unique reasons to explicate why application of real life problems and issues is essential for facilitating thinking in social studies classrooms. They indicated that the essence of problems or issues was being real, not

hypothetical. Therefore, what students learned in social studies classrooms would not just seem like schooling but would have real life applications, being more interesting, more relevant, and simply part of the real world (Mahood, 1978; Rea, 1999; Poling, 2000). Consequently, studying real problems in social studies classrooms increases the possibility of transfer of the learned skill or knowledge to outside of school contexts. That, ultimately connects students' lives with content, creating meaningful learning opportunities such a way that social studies content represents the realities of everyday social life.

Others pointed out that, by their nature, problems and issues are ill structured, complex, value based, represent multiple viewpoints and perspectives, and have incomplete information and insufficient evidence available, thus their analyses do not lend students to a unified action, or simple solution but to the possibility of reexamination (Rappoport & Kletzien, 1997; Chilcoat et al, 2002). Therefore, they naturally direct students to constant thought and action - to reflect, recall, and restate the problems in their own words, to list alternative solutions, to analyze and to clarify arguments, draw analogies to other times and places, to explore others' perspectives, to interrogate positions, to make decisions and to evaluate of the consequences of their decisions (Mahood, 1978; Parker et al, 1991).

So, many scholars pointed out that dealing with real life issues and problems ultimately prepares students for their citizenship roles. Arguing from John Dewey's democratic problem solving point of view, these scholars perceived that by their nature, real problems and issues help students to see themselves as social and political beings, make informed decisions about social issues or problems, and take proper social action (Gallava, 1997; Ciaccio, 2002; Joseph & Windschitl, 1999; Ukpokodu, 2002).

Use of *controversial topics* was another pattern identified in social studies content between 1977 and 2006, as a means to encourage students think and develop their thinking skills. Scholars who suggested use of controversial issues in classrooms indicated that, controversy is everywhere within the subjects that constitute social studies. At the heart of each significant historical event or social concern lays a controversy. For instance, when the subject of focus was economics (specifically economic scarcity) learning its concepts depended on students' understanding of different and conflicting interests associated with it, how to allocate resources or how to prioritize the resources. But most importantly, scholars indicated that controversies are inherently complex simply because they are based on values, so more than one point of view exists and there is no one right way to solve them.

That is probably why scholars viewed controversy as a constructive learning experience for teaching thinking in social studies classrooms (Duis & Duis, 1998; Fertig, 1997; Soley, 1996). Controversies require individuals to challenge each other's understanding, explore and discover new ways of conceptualizing a problem, and deeply explore the topics, all of which were also identified as essential for teaching thinking (Duis & Duis, 1998). Controversies demand going beyond the information provided in a textbook, exploring multiple perspectives, and being aware of and analyzing values. In fact, the primary purpose of teaching controversial issues was to help students to think in depth, and to identify and analyze their values as well as values of others (Soley, 1996). A growing number of scholars pointed out the critical importance of presenting social studies content from different and multiple viewpoints in order to provide opportunities for discussion, reexamination, and reflection for developing students' critical

thinking skills in social studies classrooms (Gallenstein, 2000; Golden, 2006; Henning et al, 2006; Wheat, 2004).

Beginning in the second decade under study (1987-1996), scholars frequently described an *interdisciplinary* view of content. Unlike some scholars in the first decade, scholars of the second and third decades repeatedly emphasized a more integrated view of content. They moved away from a single subject approach toward more integration of subjects (e.g. social studies and math) or interdisciplinary perspective (e.g. environmental education). In fact, the researcher found that the interdisciplinary perspective toward content progressed in parallel lines with the previously identified problems and controversial issue aspects of content. As numerous scholars pointed out, social issues and problems tend to be multi logical, and to cut across subjects, so they are not generally found within the boundaries of a single discipline (Wright, 1995; Wright, 1995; Simmons, 1995).

That is also the reason why some scholars perceived that one way to integrate a wide range of subjects was through the application of real life, authentic problems and issues. As scholars viewed content as being more unified than separate, they identified a broad range of problems, issues, or controversies of everyday social life central for the development of critical thinking skills (Gallenstein, 2000).

For the years between 1987 and 2006, social studies scholars viewed no single subject is better or beneficial than the other for teaching students thinking. They persistently advocated an interdisciplinary perspective toward content and suggested integration of subjects such as literature, math, science, language arts, or history through a thematic curriculum (Ciaccio, 1998; Saye, 1998; Johnson & Janisch, 1998; O'Brien & White, 1999). They also viewed that

meaningful themes and connections across subject areas were essential ingredients to provide rich instruction to students.

In the 1990s, the *standards movement* became dominant in education, and impacted on social studies as well. The standards movement emphasized clearly defined content standards and student learning standards in each subject. As a direct impact of the standards movement in the 1990s, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) published *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* in 1994. In this document, NCSS defined social studies as “integrated study of the social sciences and humanities” and united history, geography, economics, civics and government with sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc. (Saxe, 1992). By doing so, the NCSS curriculum standards of 1994 specifically emphasized integration of numerous subjects under the roof of social studies. That is directly reflected in authors’ conception of content between 1987 and 2006 in particular.

The researcher found this pattern interesting because this view contradicted the pattern the researcher identified within the first decade. Specifically, for the years between 1977 and 1986, some scholars viewed teaching of a particular subject (e.g. history, economic) more beneficial than others. Even later, one scholar pointed out that integration of subjects contrasts sharply to the fragmented, isolated, single subject orientation that persisted especially in most secondary schools (Ciaccio, 1998).

Finally, in relation to content, scholars showed a growing amount of attention to and emphasis on students’ needs and interests when selecting a problem to solve or a controversy or an issue for focus between 1997 and 2006 (Johnson & Janisch, 1998; O’Brien & White, 1999; Hickman, 1999). These scholars pointed out that student control over learning was essential for

students personalize their learning and to express themselves naturally through formats that fit their own learning, styles and needs (Edgington, 1999).

Student Behavior: The Years from 1977 to 2006

The researcher found a wide agreement among scholars' perceptions concerning student behavior and involvement in social studies classrooms. In particular, scholars widely agreed on the fact that *active student involvement* was essential to learn, to practice and to develop skills of thinking (Glenn, 1977; Alleman-Brooks & Ellis, 1977; Hunkins, 1985; Gabelko, 1988; Haas, 1988; Keiper, 1999; Matusevich, 2006; Saye, 1998). Specifically, scholars identified that acquiring social studies content, developing thinking skills, making decisions, and developing attitudes were all dynamic, reflective, active, and self-paced activities. They simply viewed active student involvement as a means to construct learning both of meaningful content learning and of the necessary skills of thinking (Saye, 1998). Scholars also emphasized that students' everyday social lives demand practice of active involvement.

In real life, students continuously are bombarded with large amounts of facts and information presented by numerous sources, such as political candidates, office holders, writers, special interest groups, advertisers, as well as textbooks. To be able to process and make sense out of all the information, students need to actively practice the skills of thinking - analysis, interpretation, and evaluation - so that they understand the conditions better, clarify their values, develop a perspective, accordingly solve problems or make decisions (Fouts & Hermeier, 1979; Rudin, 1984).

Although scholars described thinking as an individual enterprise to a certain degree, they emphasized the essential contribution of social interaction on development of thinking skills as

well. Therefore, in all three decades, scholars emphasized the importance of *small or large group work*, and cooperative learning as essential for learning to think (Beyer, 1977; Fouts & Hermeier, 1979; Hunkins, 1985). Group work provides students opportunities to interact socially, share their ideas, encounter different and even conflicting perspectives, learn from each other, collaborate, experience differences in viewpoints, and learn to deliberate, all of which ultimately contributes to their thinking (Duis & Duis, 1998; Fertig, 1997; Fouts & Hermeier, 1979; Gabelko, 1988; Pallante & Shively, 1999; Parker, 1988; Rea, 1999; Walsh, 1988). Through group activities, students are exposed to the views of their peers, challenge others' ideas, are challenged, and defend their views (Saye, 1998), which simply creates a constructive avenue for them to learn and experience democratic way of living (Guyton, 1991; Sesow et al, 1992; Wilen & Philips, 1995).

Scholars also highlighted the importance of certain *dispositions or attitudes* regarding thinking in all three decades. Although this view emerged toward the end of the first decade, it evolved and progressed specifically in second decade and continued into the last decade as well. Toward the end of the first decade, a very small number of scholars pointed out that to be able think, students also need to develop certain attitudes or frames of mind (Singleton, 1979; Beyer, 1985). These scholars believed that being a critical thinker or developing as one required more than performing certain skills successfully. Students gain and develop particular attitudes or dispositions such as respect, cooperation, ability to listen, or deliberate, all of which were perceived essential for productive social interactions, working in a group or as a team.

As for the first decade, specifically between 1977 and 1986, the researcher also identified that student learning and practice of mental operations was particularly emphasized. This view

was parallel with the discrete skills approach to thinking, explicitly stated in that decade.

Scholars further indicated that to learn how to think critically students also need to become more skilled at asking and pursuing their own questions (Hunkins, 1985).

In fact, some scholars identified the first step of becoming a critical thinker as skepticism (O'Reilly, 1985). Students' questioning behaviors were considered essential and strongly equated with their ability to think, to solve problems, to inquire and to explore content further, as well as to construct a knowledge base (Fulwiler & McGuire, 1997). For this decade, scholars perceived that asking a broad range of questions including analysis and evaluation questions, either for the purpose of indentifying the evidence (e.g. is this a form of evidence or factual information), or questioning the information source essential for learning to think (Singleton, 1979; O'Reilly, 1985).

In the following decade, between 1986 and 1997, scholars elaborated more on the role of social interaction and emphasized that a positive social atmosphere has a role in promoting classrooms' social dynamics as well. Scholars of this era equated this perspective with students' attitudes and dispositions related to thinking. Unique to this decade, the development of metacognitive awareness – self monitoring behavior, what the learner knows about his or her thinking process – was discussed with respect to students' thinking by some scholars (Wilén & Philips, 1995). Students' awareness of their personal knowledge and their ability to monitor their own understanding and progress were considered the essence of being an effective and efficient thinker (Eeds & Wells, 1991; Wilén & Philips, 1995).

Toward the end of the second decade, the researcher also identified an emerging pattern reflecting scholars' views on students and thinking. Growing numbers of scholars emphasized

teaching students thinking skills and empowering them so that they take further action on social issues and get involved in the community. This pattern continued into the third decade as well, with more emphasis.

In the final decade under study (1997-2006), social studies scholars emphasized student empowerment specifically for the purpose of social and civil action (Rappoport & Kletzien, 1997; Joseph & Windschitl, 1999; Rowell et al, 1999). They indicated that empowering students by helping them to develop necessary knowledge bases and skills of thinking were essential for their development as future citizens. To do so, some of the scholars suggested students do service-learning projects (Ciaccio, 1998)

Teacher Behavior: The Years from 1977 to 2006

Analysis of data regarding teacher behavior and involvement revealed some commonalities as well as some changes in scholars' perspectives over the years. Providing deliberate, systematic, and explicit instruction to students was considered important for promoting the skills of thinking within the first two decades examined. That is, scholars primarily suggested defining and explaining the skills of thinking, systematically highlighting processes, and steps involved in it through a bottom – up or simple to complex instruction (Glenn, 1977), with teachers providing thinking instruction systematically and as explicitly as possible, providing opportunities for students to practice over an extended period of time with a corrective feedback (Fouts & Hermeier, 1979; Fleming & Weber, 1980; Beyer, 1985). In addition to all of these, teachers were also advised to employ alternative methods of instruction and classroom materials (Fleming & Weber, 1980).

Scholars also endorsed a point of view that students' levels should determine teachers' explicitness in thinking skills instruction. So, if the students are at an early stage of learning the skills of thinking, more explicit and direct teacher instruction was considered beneficial. As the students learned the skills of critical thinking and improved by practicing it over time, decrease in teacher direction was considered necessary (Beyer, 1977; Glenn, 1977).

Along parallel lines, social studies scholars perceived that teacher modeling behavior was important for students learning thinking skills. In fact, this view was supported by the scholars of all three decades. Social studies teachers primarily were expected to model the desired student behaviors. This specifically meant teachers illustrating and showing students how someone thinks through the problems, so that students observe and learn (O'Reilly, 1998). One of the useful strategies recommended for teacher modeling was the thinking aloud strategy.

Teacher facilitation and teacher guidance on classroom activities were also perceived important. Teachers were commonly directed to be models, facilitators, and guides in all three decades. Some scholars highlighted the importance of facilitating thinking skills with teacher guidance: using them in different settings, with different data and context (Beyer, 1985). Others emphasized the importance of providing constant opportunities for students to employ and sharpen their skills of thinking.

Some others, who called attention to a positive classroom environment for teaching thinking described teachers as models who are enthusiastic thinkers themselves and able to create a positive classroom environment that facilitates inquiry and is conducive to thinking (Eeds & Wells, 1991). However, active teacher involvement was emphasized especially within the last two decades (e.g. Mattioli & Drake, 1999; Mayer, 1998).

For the years between 1987 and 2006, in particular, scholars elaborated more on teacher modeling or guidance and emphasized teachers' listening, questioning, and discussion skills. They indicated that teachers need to guide their students, ask them numerous questions, and encourage them to talk and express their feelings, and lead classroom discussions (Fulwiler & McGuire, 1997; Duis & Duis, 1998). In fact, the teachers' role was described as more of a process facilitator than a classroom manager (Gallavan, 1997).

Additionally, scholars underlined the importance of teacher questioning behavior, asking high cognitive level questions (e.g. discussing and explaining why and how), creating effective classroom environments and conducting discussions –in this second decade. In fact, one scholar emphasized teachers' questioning technique as one of the essential ingredients of conducting quality instruction in thinking (Atwood & Wilen, 1991). They also perceived that it was the teachers' responsibility to provide classroom activities that were challenging and meaningful, and which lead to further opportunities for decision making, problem solving, and discussion (Suiter, 1998; Mattioli & Drake, 1999).

Teacher collaboration and team teaching were especially emphasized for the years between 1987 and 2006. As discussed previously in the content section, scholars viewed social studies content as more holistic and interdisciplinary between 1987 and 2006 than previously. In fact, they also emphasized topics of social issues and problems that cut across the subject lines. As scholars viewed content to be more integrated, they encouraged teachers from diverse content areas to interact, to collaborate, and to do team teaching (Gallavan, 1997; Pallante & Shively, 1999).

What to Do in Classrooms: The Years from 1977 to 2006

In order to effectively promote critical thinking in social studies classrooms, social studies scholars predominantly suggested active teaching methods in the journal articles examined. Figure 5 shows the most common classroom activities that scholars suggested within the three decade period under study.

Figure 5: What to do in classrooms.

1977-1986	1987-1996	1997-2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussions,• Writing,• Asking questions,• Develop critical reading skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussions,• Writing,• Asking questions,• Inquiry,• Role playing,• Projects,• Mysteries,• Case studies• Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussions,• Writing,• Asking questions,• Role playing• Projects• Simulations• Technology• Literature-based• Service learning

Three common patterns concerning classroom activities were identified in published journal articles for the years 1977 – 2006. One of the most frequently recurring patterns identified was utilization of *classroom discussions* (Beyer, 1977; Fouts & Hermeier, 1979; Haas, 1982; Davis, 1984; Kownslar, 1985 ; Walsh, 1988; Gabelko, 1988; Shelly & Wilen, 1988; Guyton, 1991; Eeds & Wells, 1991; Bean et al. 1996; Larson, 1997; Saye, 1998; Duis & Duis, 1998; Mattioli & Drake, 1999; Pallante & Shively, 1999; Rowell et al, 1999). Over the years, scholars repeatedly indicated that a discussion, either in small or large group format, was

essential and beneficial for the development of thinking skills. Discussions are based on social interactions, so providing significant opportunities for social interaction among students, through which they can gain a deeper understanding on a particular topic, explore broad range of alternative views, be exposed to different and even conflicting perspectives, and learn to deliberate, cooperate, and collaborate as well. In that sense, discussions simply model experience of the democratic way of living (Atwood & Wilen, 1991; Ferig, 1997).

So, on one hand, discussions were perceived as necessary avenues for students to learn and construct content knowledge so that they could talk about or discuss an issue (Larson, 1997). On the other hand, they were considered essential to learn from others, consider others' viewpoint, and to confront their own as well as others' point of views, perceptions, misconceptions, and even stereotypes.

The other pattern identified concerning facilitating critical thinking in classrooms was *writing activities*. Over the years, social studies scholars predominantly agreed on the fact that writing activities were essential for the development of students' thinking skills (Beyer, 1977; Giroux, 1979; Hoge, 1988; Ladenburg & Tegnell, 1986; Margolis, et al, 1990; O'Day, 1994). Scholars indicated that writing involves mental manipulation of data, demands examination of one's own assumptions on an ongoing basis, and examination of one's position on a certain topic or defending it. So, it helps one to think interpretively and critically about the content (Giroux, 1979).

The strong connection between writing and thinking led social studies scholars to continuously support numerous forms of writing activities such as draft writing, reflective writing, or dialogical position papers –arguing for both sides of an issue - either to be practiced

as a primary focus of the lesson or supplementary for content learning. Scholars indicated that writing activities can be transferred easily and naturally to other areas of curriculum, and teachers can modify them for students at all ages and various developmental levels. Essentially, a writing activity was commonly viewed as an essential tool for students to think and think more deeply (Gallavan, 1997; Fulwiler & McGuire, 1997; O'Day, 1994)

The third pattern found was the *application of questions* in social studies classrooms. Scholars indicated that questions help students to develop a deep understanding of the content as well as to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills (Fulwiler & McGuire, 1997). Regardless of the content focus, whether be it a historical debate or a topic related to economics, or a real life dilemma, asking questions of students and helping them learn to ask questions themselves was considered an important way to facilitate critical thinking skills (Mackey, 1977; Hunkins, 1985; Kownslar, 1985; McFarland, 1985; Hoge, 1988; Walsh, 1988; Haas, 1988; O'Reilly, 1991). According to Walsh (1988) being disposed to a question is the initial step for critical thinking.

However, in relation to asking questions scholars made a distinction: quality of questions rather than quantity counts. That is, asking higher level questions of students such as analysis, or synthesis - why and how - as opposed to asking simple recall - what or comprehension - questions were particularly emphasized. For example, a question might ask what happens in a neighborhood when people litter, who is responsible for picking up the litter, what can we do to solve this problem? (Fulwiler & McGuire, 1997) At the same time having students learn to ask their own questions and search for answers were perceived essential.

The researcher found it interesting that despite the recurring emphasis in the literature on discussions, not many scholars focused on classroom conditions or characteristics and their possible impact on conducting classroom discussions. Toward the end of the first decade, one scholar indicated "...discussion is facilitated by a comfortable atmosphere created when students do not have to find one right answer and when they are not judged for voicing their opinion" (Davis, 1984). Along parallel lines, the researcher also identified that many of the scholars did not specify or describe teacher characteristics and skills in relation to conducting and facilitating classroom discussions.

Scholars' emphasis on classroom characteristics increased within the second decade in particular. For the years between 1986 and 1997, scholars identified that there was a connection between students' intellectual functioning and social context (Parker, 1988; Gabelko, 1988; Eeds & Wells, 1991). The social atmosphere of the classroom should be pluralistic to protect everybody's rights, be democratic, prevent personal attacks, and safe enough that students freely exchange their ideas, are willing to take risks with their thoughts, accept and appreciate individual differences (Parker, 1988; Walsh, 1988; Lynch & McKenna, 1990).

Unlike scholars of the second decade, many scholars of the last decade did not identify role of classroom atmosphere in promoting and learning thinking in social studies classrooms. The researcher finds this change in scholars' perspective interesting because even though scholars of the last decade consistently emphasized the importance of discussion, exploring and challenging multiple points of view, use of controversies, and encouraging students to talk about their views and feelings in the classrooms, they did not allocate same amount of attention to the classroom context to make such rich discussions and expressions a possibility.

Over the years growing number of scholars emphasized the importance of in-depth exploration of content for teaching thinking skills. Scholars also recognized that exploring social studies content in depth was possible on two conditions: having more time and covering less content. In a similar vein, many others condemned simply filling students' minds with large amount of information and trying to cover as much topic as possible (Olsen, 1995). In fact, O'Reilly (1991) very plainly described that "We want students to drink at the fountain of knowledge, not gargle it" (p.298)

Beginning with the second decade (1987 – 1996), technological improvements and developments exerted an impact on instruction methods and suggested methods of teaching thinking. In fact, the effect of technology on teaching thinking steadily continued within the next decade with a growing emphasis. An increasing number of scholars suggested the application of technology (e.g. computers) and creating a technology assisted-environment (e.g. Internet, web discussion groups) for facilitating students' thinking skills (Bean et al, 1996; Saye, 1998; Mason, 1999; Keiper, 1999; Swain et al, 2003).

Over the years technological improvements made fast-expanding knowledge more accessible to all students. In fact, that is also why developing thinking skills was considered far more important in today's technological and multimedia society than any other time (Shiveley, 2004). Technological tools became teachers' aid in classrooms (e.g. web quest Internet, electronic discussions). Particularly three characteristics of technology were highlighted as beneficial for teaching thinking: current technology provides more independent time for students and expands time in classroom - leave more time for thinking about meaning - , it is interactive,

and it is flexible, which provides individualized learning opportunities to meet specific needs and interests in particular (Saye, 1998).

Especially in the last decade, more scholars focused on literature based activities for teaching thinking. The researcher identified two aspects of literature based activities are particularly helpful for promoting thinking in social studies. First, scholars viewed literature based activities, for instance use of trade books, as alternative sources to textbooks, or an opportunity for students to go beyond the information provided in textbooks (Chilcoat et al, 2002; Holliday & Grskovic, 2002; Wasta, 2006; Henning et al. 2006). That simply opens up opportunities for students reading about the same issue or historical event from multiple sources, examining multiple points of views, identifying bias in written documents or pictures, and understanding inaccuracies among them.

Second, in relation to literature based activities, some other scholars emphasized the critical literacy aspect of literature based activities which includes critical examination of resources, authors, and multiple viewpoints, in order to develop a well-rounded understanding of the content and accordingly take necessary action (Burstein & Hutton, 2005; Golden, 2006; Ford & Neville, 2006). They identified multicultural literature as well as source work, examining primary or secondary documents as means to that end (Ukpokodu, 2002; Burstein & Hutton, 2005; Horton, 2002; Kohlmeier, 2004; VanSledright, 2004; McCormick, 2004).

For the last decade, the researcher identified growing scholarly interest and emphasis on service learning projects. Between 1997 and 2006, an increasing number of scholars placed a growing emphasis on taking social action and conceived it as an important upshot of student thinking and decision making regarding social problems or issues. They pointed to service

learning as a way to create caring, active, and involved citizens (Ciaccio, 1998; Rea, 1999).

Service learning was conceived as authentic interdisciplinary experience through which teachers connect real life experiences with students' interests and lives, as well as social studies content.

The researcher provided a recap of Findings, in Figure 6, followed by a section in which she specifically discussed each research questions.

Figure 6: Summary of Findings

	1977-1986 (25 articles) <i>Social Education</i>	1987-1996 (37 articles) <i>Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning</i>	1997-2006 (70 articles) <i>Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning</i>
Terminology (most frequent indicated with *)	*critical thinking Thinking problem solving decision making	*critical thinking problem solving decision making (skills) inquiry higher order thinking	*critical thinking thinking problem solving decision making (skills) inquiry
Definition of Thinking	Discrete skills A Process Analysis, evaluation and judgment Combination of frame of mind and mental operations	Skills Analysis, evaluation and judgment Combination of certain skills with dispositions or attitudes	Skills Analysis, evaluation and judgment Questioning and systematic inquiry
Teaching Methods	Direct Instruction	Direct instruction Promoting certain classroom characteristics Deep exploration, in-depth study of content	Direct instruction Inquiry Discovery Learning
Content	Interdependent with thinking skill development Real problems and issues from separate and wide range of social studies disciplines Controversial topics	Interdependent with thinking skill development Real life problems and issues Contemporary controversial issues Interdisciplinary approach Deep immersion of content	Interdependent with thinking skill development Real life problems and issues Controversies, meaningful themes Interdisciplinary approach - integration among Social Studies and with other subject areas Incorporate students' needs and interests Deep immersion of content, beyond textbook
Student Behavior	Active student involvement Work in small or large groups Have attitudes and dispositions Learn and practice mentally processing information Ask and pursue own questions	Active student involvement Work in small or large groups Have attitudes and dispositions Interaction, sharing, encounter conflicting perspectives, collaborate, deliberate. Metacognitive awareness, Self-monitoring Social Action	Active student involvement Work in small or large groups Have attitudes and dispositions Ask questions Empowerment for social action
Teacher Behavior	Deliberate, systematic, explicit instruction Be models Facilitate and guide Provide constant opportunities for students to employ and sharpen thinking skills	Deliberate, systematic, explicit instruction Be models Facilitate and guide Listening, questioning, discussing Collaborate with other teachers	Be models (e.g. think aloud) Facilitate and guide Listening, questioning, discussing Provide challenging, meaningful activities Collaborate with other teachers, team teaching
What to Do in Classrooms	Discussions Writing Application of questions	Discussions Writing Asking questions (why?) Inquiry Use of technology Role playing, Projects, Mysteries, Case studies	Discussions Writing Asking questions Inquiry Use of technology Role playing, Projects, Simulations, Literature-based Service learning

Research Question 1. How have the definitions of thinking, decision-making, and problem solving evolved in the social studies field between the years 1977-2006?

The researcher analyzed 132 journal articles collected from three major journals of NCSS Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, and Middle Level Learning. To be able to provide a more detailed and comprehensive view of how the definition of thinking evolved over the years, the researcher analyzed the data on two levels, focusing first on basic terminology within published journal articles and second on the definition or meaning of the used term(s) within a given journal article.

Based on her analysis, the researcher found that social studies literature is indeed marked by terminology confusion. This terminology confusion was augmented by the absence of a definition(s) of a used term(s) and a clear distinction among them. Although some terms appeared more frequently in some decades than the others (e.g. higher order thinking from 1987 to 1996), the researcher's close examination of the literature revealed that the term *critical thinking* was by far the most popular and widely accepted term across the thirty year period.

Despite the confusion or because of it, the definition of thinking evolved and was shaped over the years. In particular, social studies scholars moved away from a discrete skills perspective of thinking and embraced more comprehensive and holistic views of thinking which were infused with its citizenship purpose. In fact, the researcher did not identify very strong distinctions among scholars' conceptions of thinking—social studies scholars mostly reflected similar views of thinking.

Early in the first decade, some scholars defined critical thinking as discrete skills; however, social studies scholars widely described thinking as both lower level and higher-level

skills. Toward the end of the first decade, an increasing number of scholars embraced the notion that critical thinking entails both skills and attitudes or dispositions; this new conception of thinking continued to develop in the following decade and coincided with scholars' growing emphasis on other related factors such as positive social atmosphere, or social interaction.

When scholars highlighted certain attitudes and dispositions as necessary for the development of thinking skills, they clearly articulated the role of social interaction, thus suggested more time, a positive social context and a conducive classroom environment. In that sense, the researcher found that scholars' view of thinking reached to a point where social, mental, and individual aspects of thinking are intertwined. Scholars simply embraced a more comprehensive, holistic, and dynamic perspective of thinking over time.

As for the last decade, the researcher found that scholars articulated their perception of thinking more explicitly with the citizenship purpose of social studies. Scholars predominantly identified citizenship as the primary purpose for teaching thinking in all three decades. However, what it means to be a good citizen – to know or to act – remained somewhat at a theoretical level in the early decades. To a small extent in the second decade but mostly in the last decade, scholars articulated skills of thinking and performing these skills through social action.

Specifically, in the last decade, the question who is a good citizen - the one who knows or the one who acts or both- is answered in a more comprehensive manner. In fact, social studies scholars unified acting and knowing aspects of citizenship: citizens need to know, question, explore different perspectives or points of views, and think so that they can act on issues or problems in a more informed and reasoned way. In that sense, empowerment of students through teaching of critical thinking skills as well as social action was the emphasis of the last decade. In

that sense, since the publication of Barr, Barth, and Shermis's book and their definition of thinking based on citizenship purpose, the current analysis suggested that social studies literature completed a full circle. Although scholars' emphasis on thinking for the purpose of citizenship has always been there, they expressed it more overtly within the last decade in particular.

Overall, the researcher found that although confusion in scholars' use of terminology persisted over the years, analysis of data regarding the definition of thinking indicated that scholars' definition of thinking emerged and developed based on more commonalities than differences. Social studies literature went through a constructive process in terms of defining and describing thinking during the three decades investigated in this study.

Research Question 2. Is there a common definition of thinking in social studies field today and if so, how does it relate to decision-making and problem solving?

Over the years, scholars emphasized the need for a common definition of thinking in social studies literature and considered it as essential for the development of both theory and practice of thinking. In order to identify whether a common definition existed, the researcher analyzed data collected from 132 journal articles from three major journals of NCSS published between 1977 and 2006 and found that *critical thinking* has been the most commonly used term. However, there seems to be no single common definition of thinking. Repeating patterns were identified in scholars' perceptions of thinking which ultimately pinpointed their conception of thinking.

The term critical thinking was the most commonly used and widely accepted term within the published journal articles, and analysis revealed that the term critical thinking was used to refer to:

- Skills – lower level and higher level, specifically analysis, evaluation, and judgment,
- Questioning, and inquiring, and
- Various dispositions or attitudes.

Scholars predominantly emphasized that critical thinking includes a group of skills, all of which were perceived to be essential mental manipulation of social studies information or data, and included lower level (e.g. obtaining data, or remembering information) as well as higher-level skills.

Scholars also highlighted the importance of attitudes and dispositions on ability to think critically. Objectivity, willingness to consider other points of views, etc. were identified as crucial for the development of critical thinking skills. In this way, scholars defined critical thinking as more than learning or performing particular skills. Instead, they conceived it as both skills and attitudes.

In regard to the relationship between scholars' conception of critical thinking with decision making and problem solving, the researcher identified citizenship as an overriding core concept for all three. Specifically, critical thinking skills were identified as the essence of citizenship, which demands effective participation in public life, solving its problems and making decisions.

Despite the interchangeable use of the terms thinking, decision making or problems solving and the lack of definition(s), throughout the literature studied, the development of citizenship skills is and has been the core concept that critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving all centered around. All of the scholars specified that the development of quality

citizenship depends on citizens' ability to think critically, to make reasoned decision, and solve problems concerning social issues.

Research Question 3. How, if at all, do the definitions of thinking, decision making, and problem solving influence the description of preferred methods of teaching thinking in social studies?

The researcher found a strong relationship: scholars' perceptions of thinking tend to reflect their preferred instructional methods of teaching thinking, and vice versa. When scholars defined thinking as discrete skills, they specifically focused on practicing and performing skills of thinking within various conditions and contexts to sharpen them. On the other hand, scholars who conceptualized thinking as both certain skills (both higher level and low level skills) and attitudes not only aimed at teaching particular skills but also aimed at development of personal habits of mind (e.g. questioning, intellectual curiosity, objectiveness, and respect for other viewpoints). Specifically, these scholars emphasized socially interactive and positive classroom environments. So, it seemed like the way scholars defined thinking was highly related to the way they articulated teaching methods, content, student and teacher behaviors, as well as activities to do in classrooms.

Research Question 4. How do definitions and recommendations in the literature compare to the NCSS Standards related to thinking, decision-making, problem solving and methods of teaching in the Social Studies?

The researcher found that, over the years, NCSS standards and the social studies literature reflected parallel views concerning the definition of thinking and methods of teaching

it. Patterns presented in the NCSS standards mirrored the topics and patterns published in the three journals, as described below.

In its September 1993 issue of Social Education, in an article entitled, “A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy,” NCSS endorsed the view that:

“The primary purpose of the social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (Task Force on Standards for Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies, 1993, p. 213).

In describing thinking skills NCSS wrote “those associated with acquiring, interpreting, organizing, and communicating information, processing data in order to investigate questions, solving problems, and making decisions, and interacting with others” (NCSS, 1993). In that sense, NCSS reflected social studies scholars’ view of thinking skills and the primary purpose of teaching those skills. That is, by incorporating and promoting thinking in the social studies, students will be better prepared to meet the challenges and obligations of democratic citizenship. In a similar vein, NCSS also pointed out that

“Children must acquire the skills of decision making, but also study the process that occurs as groups make decisions” (NCSS 1989, 16)

As for the content, NCSS pointed out important aspects regarding content. For instance, in the characteristics statements (1989, 3-4):6 “Content knowledge from the social studies should not be treated as received knowledge to be accepted and memorized, but as the means through which open and vital questions may be explored and confronted”.

The Curriculum Task Force report (NCSS 1989, 4) called for “...curriculum where students are engaged in debating, role playing, and using appropriate critical thinking skills where students will have time for in-depth study”. In a similar vein Characteristic 10 stated “the core of essential knowledge to be incorporated in the instructional program at every level must be selective enough to provide time for extended in-depth study” (1984, 4).

In 1989 NCSS (p.15) stated “The school itself serves as a laboratory for students to learn social participation directly and not symbolically. Democratic and participatory school and classroom environments are essential to this type of real world learning.” Also, the researcher did find citizenship education was a specific theme that NCSS wrote extensively about. Published in the May / June 2001 issue of Social Education was an article entitled, “Service Learning: An Essential Component of Citizenship Education,” which endorsed the viewpoint that:

“Service learning provides an authentic means for using social studies content and skills to investigate social, political, and economic issues and to take direct action in an effort to create a more just and equitable society” (NCSS Citizenship Select Subcommittee, 2001, p. 240).

Similarly, the September 2001 issue of Social Education article, “Creating Effective Citizens,” endorsed the point of view that:

“Throughout the curriculum and at every grade level, students should have opportunities to apply their civic knowledge, skills, and values as they work to solve real problems in their school, the community, our nation, and the world. Citizens in the twenty – first century must be prepared to deal with rapid change, complex local, national, and global issues, cultural and religious conflicts, and the

increasing interdependence of nations in a global economy” (NCSS Task Force on Revitalizing Citizenship Education, 2001, p. 319).

Summary

Chapter Four served to explain the patterns associated with the definition of thinking and methods of teaching thinking found by the researcher in three NCSS publications, between the years 1977 and 2006. A summary of those patterns is discussed below.

The first pattern the researcher identified concerning definitions of thinking was that between the years 1977-2006 social studies scholars applied a large number of terms for thinking which naturally created confusion. So, in relation to scholars’ use of terminology, the researcher noted that terminological patterns remained pretty much the same over the years. That is, social studies scholars employed the terms thinking, critical thinking, higher order thinking, inquiry, decision making, and problem solving most frequently. However, among the numerous terms, the researcher identified that the term critical thinking was the most popular in all three decades.

With regard to defining critical thinking, the researcher identified four themes. First, scholars who perceived thinking as a skill requiring mental or intellectual manipulation of information, using both lower level (e.g. data gathering, identifying) and higher level skills - skills of analysis, evaluation and judgment in particular. Second, those scholars who conceptualized that thinking consisted of both skills and certain attitudes and dispositions. Third, scholars who emphasized that questioning and inquiring were essential for thinking.

Fourth and finally, although scholars’ interchangeable use of terms and absence of definitions of terms or distinctions among terms prevailed, the researcher identified more similarities than differences in scholars’ conceptions of thinking. In the early years the term

thinking conceptualized as more of discrete skills, but as the years progressed scholars indicated more holistic and comprehensive perspectives of thinking. So, as the term thinking evolved, it became more articulated with the nature of social studies and its content knowledge, as well as characteristics of individual students and social and democratic life. Scholars indicated that for effectively participating in public life in democratic societies, students need to develop the skills of thinking so that they can make decisions and solve problems on issues affecting them personally as well as society.

With regard to methods of teaching thinking, the researcher identified that scholars' conceptions of thinking reflected the instructional methods of teaching thinking they advocated. For promoting thinking in classrooms, social studies scholars predominantly favored active teaching and active learning approaches. Over the years scholars predominantly encouraged direct instruction method of teaching thinking. Regardless of the instructional method, scholars mostly encouraged small or large group discussion, writing activities, dealing with questions, cooperative learning activities, role playing, and simulations.

The researcher also found that NCSS, as a major international organization of social studies, emphasized aspects of thinking and methods of teaching thinking in social studies in its standards that were similar to those found in the articles studied.

In Chapter Five, the researcher will include Conclusions and Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Conclusions and Recommendations

The concern about the absence of a common definition for thinking and methods of teaching thinking in social studies raises questions related to the prevailing perspectives of thinking and methods of teaching thinking in social studies. For this reason, the purpose of this dissertation was to identify and describe prevailing perspectives of thinking and the progression of the definition of thinking as expressed by social studies scholars over a thirty-year period from 1977 – 2006, and secondly, to determine methods of teaching thinking in that time frame. Specifically, the purpose was to examine three major journals of NCSS, namely Social Studies and the Young Learner, Social Education, and its supplement, Middle Level Learning to identify the progression of the definition of thinking and methods of teaching thinking.

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter Five, Conclusion, contains three sections: Conclusions and Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research. The first section synthesizes the collection of findings concerning definition of thinking and methods of teaching thinking as expressed by social studies scholars in articles found in the three major journals of NCSS. The researcher accomplishes this by addressing the four research questions for this dissertation.

The second section, Implications, explains the significance of these findings in relation to both theory and practice aspects of elementary and secondary social studies. The final section of the chapter, Recommendations, describes the future research questions which might be pursued based upon this dissertation's findings and makes recommendations for curriculum development in the area of critical thinking and its instruction.

Conclusions and Discussion

As shown in Chapter 2 and again in Chapter 4, numerous scholars indicated that citizenship is and has been the core concept around which social studies education is established. Over the years, social studies scholars perceived the objectives of citizenship as its “raison d’être”. As social studies has been widely defined based on its citizenship goal and objectives, scholars directly associated it with the skills of thinking, critical thinking and decision-making. In doing so, they persistently emphasized the importance of instructing and engaging students in critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making in social studies classrooms. As an increasing number of scholars focused on thinking in social studies over the years, the term thinking became a “buzz word” in social studies literature.

As the skills of thinking, critical thinking, and decision making was placed at the center of social studies education, many if not all scholars and practitioners attempted to define those skills as well as instructional method. Based on her analysis of 132 published journal articles in the three major NCSS journals between 1977 and 2006, the researcher made four conclusions. These were:

1- There is a continuous persistent absence of a clear definition for thinking in the literature that is problematic. However, the researcher also found that between 1977 and 2006, social studies scholars preferred the term critical thinking by and large and conceptualized it as a combination of lower level and higher level skills, specifically analysis, evaluation, judgment, questioning and inquiring as well as certain dispositions and attitudes.

2- Scholars equated critical thinking with decision making and problem solving and related that to levels of understanding citizenship. Scholars perceived critical thinking as

essential for performing reasoned and informed decision making, and problem solving in participatory democracies.

3- The way scholars conceptualized thinking had a definite impact on their preferences regarding methods of teaching thinking. The way scholars defined thinking was highly related to the way they articulated teaching methods, content, student and teacher behaviors, as well as activities to do in classrooms.

4- There was a strong correspondence between the characteristics of thinking that NCSS focused on in its standards documents and those that were important to authors and scholars in social studies journals.

Implications

One implication to be drawn from the first conclusion is that the term *critical thinking* needs to be more than a synonym for thinking in social studies literature and needs to be accepted as a common term for thinking among social studies scholars. Eventually, this will end the terminology confusion persistent in social studies literature over the years.

Although there seems to be no single common definition for critical thinking, scholars' perceptions of thinking reflected more commonalities than differences. That is, when scholars described critical thinking, they specifically focused on lower level skills, skills of analysis, evaluation, judgment, questioning and inquiring as well as certain attitudes and dispositions. That also establishes an agreement on the definition of critical thinking, which has been unclear.

A second implication relates to the second conclusion—that citizenship is the essence of teaching critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving in social studies classrooms.

Therefore, to develop as future citizens, students need to engage real life problem solving and decision making activities which require them to think critically and make reasoned decisions.

An implication of the third conclusion is related to the way social studies scholars suggested critical thinking should be taught in social studies classrooms. Teachers need to pay extra attention to explore content in depth, to create more time, social context, as well as students' dispositions and attitudes.

Recommendations for Future Research

This dissertation is examined the prevailing definitions and conceptions of thinking to the extent that social studies scholars discussed and examined these within three major journals of NCSS across a thirty- year time period. In relation to prevailing definitions, it also attempted to explain suggested methods of teaching thinking as expressed by social studies scholars. The examinations of published journal articles concerning thinking throughout the course of this research suggest several recommendations related to future research and development. The recommendations for future research are as follows:

1. Separate studies, based on different dimensions of critical thinking instruction, should be conducted. The first dimension would be to examine the extent to which social studies teachers define thinking and also to detect why they define thinking in the particular ways they do. By doing so, underlying principles of teachers' perspectives of thinking may be revealed. Accordingly, the disparity between teachers' views and viewpoints of authors of journal articles, if there is any, become obvious.

The second dimension would be an inspection of the instructional methods that teachers apply to teach critical thinking in social studies classrooms and an examination of why they

prefer to teach it that particular way. Some scholars pointed out that, teachers' understandings of critical thinking, their epistemological and ontological views, and their perspectives concerning methods of teaching it are conflicted not only within themselves, but also with other scholars'. Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions of thinking – how they define, why, what do they do in classroom, why, are all essential for the fate of critical thinking in social studies classrooms.

2. Additional research related to methods of teaching critical thinking should continue to be conducted. This research could be qualitative in nature which focuses on examination of teachers' instructional styles, interactions between students and teacher or student and student, and the role of the immediate social and contextual factors that have possible impact on teaching critical thinking in social studies classrooms.

3. Further research focuses should identify the role of teacher education departments (e.g. specific courses on critical thinking, specific training for teachers on questioning or discussion strategies) in preparing social studies teachers to teach critical thinking in social studies classrooms. What do teacher education departments currently do to prepare future teachers to teach thinking and to develop their perspectives regarding critical thinking? A follow up study might examine teachers' points of view concerning the education they received. Based on teachers' perspectives regarding the education they received, in-service teachers might also be asked their opinions on what they need and what else teacher education departments need to do.

4. Studies should be conducted to examine and reveal classroom characteristics (e.g. how to create a positive intellectual classroom atmosphere) and school or institutional constraints that

inhibit teachers' efficiency in teaching or students' success in learning critical thinking in social studies classrooms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Articles Used as Data Source

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