

A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIAL STUDIES  
EXHIBITED BY GRADE TWELVE STUDENTS  
IN THE PLACENTIA-ST. MARY'S SCHOOL DISTRICT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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A study of the attitudes toward social  
studies exhibited by grade twelve students  
in the Placentia-St. Mary's School District

by

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## ABSTRACT

Social studies is a core subject for students registered in the senior high school program in Newfoundland and therefore is important. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes toward social studies held by the grade twelve students in the Placentia-St. Mary's R.C. School District to see how they ranked it and to determine whether there was any relationship between the attitudes toward social studies and the teaching strategies that are used in the classroom.

The sample was the entire student population registered in grade twelve for the 1990/91 school year and those teachers who were teaching senior high social studies courses that year. The number of students was 191 and the number of teachers was 18.

Analysis of data showed a difference in how students and teachers ranked the social studies with teachers being more positive than students in their ranking. The researcher also found that there were no significant differences in how the grade twelve boys and girls ranked the social studies.

There were differences found between the perceptions of students and the perceptions of teachers based on the frequency that particular strategies were perceived to have

been used in the classroom. Students were more likely than teachers to say that certain strategies were never used in the classroom.

A regression analysis was used by the researcher to determine whether there were differences in attitude toward social studies between students who identified their classroom as traditional-oriented or those who identified their classroom as non traditional oriented. Differences at the  $p < .05$  level of significance were found with students in the non traditional classroom being more positive in their attitudes toward the social studies than the students in the traditional classroom.

The researcher also found differences in the perceptions of the teaching strategies between the boys and girls as well as differences in the attitudes toward social studies. The girls tended to be more positive in their attitudes toward social studies than the boys were.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### Background Information

Today's world is very complex and its wide-ranging societal and cultural dimensions are continuously subjected to change; change that becomes more rapid as ever-new scientific and technological developments occur. An indepth knowledge and adequate understanding of these various dimensions can be very advantageous for coping with the multitude of problems that the modern world presents. The provision of such knowledge and understanding is very much related to the mission of social studies. For decades social studies has been recognized as being an important vehicle for exploring and imparting concepts and values that are essential for the well-being of society, for understanding the changes that occur and for transmitting the ideas and beliefs that have become the cornerstones of a democratic society.

The Master Guide for Social Studies, K-XII in Newfoundland and Labrador (1984) highlights two very important goals of social studies, personal development and socialization and growth in citizenship. Jarolimek (1981) stated that "citizenship remains a main purpose of schools, and social studies has a unique responsibility for helping schools satisfy this purpose." (p. 13) He went on to say "It is the responsibility of everyone concerned about the

future of this nation (United States) to ensure that social studies education is placed at the top of the list of priorities for education in the decade of the 1980's." (p. 18) These statements clearly express the importance of social studies. Students, through exposure to the social studies, create meaning and understanding of the world around them. As Cornbleth, Gay and Dueck pointed out in the NSSE Yearbook (1981):

Social studies education cannot build a new social order but it can acknowledge the multiple realities of the present one, with its various tensions and discontinuities, and incorporate these realities into curriculum materials and instruction practices to help students understand and cope with them in constructive, humane, and necessarily diverse ways. (p. 189)

There can be no doubt that the social studies program can play a positive role in the education of young people.

Considering the importance and priority given to social studies by the writers and educators in the field one wonders whether this opinion is shared by the teachers and students who are in the classroom. It appears from the literature observed that this is not necessarily the case. The low status given to social studies was first identified by Jersild (1949), but since then a number of writers and researchers have addressed the question and have noted

further the low status of social studies, or the low-level of importance given to it. Curry and Hughes (1965), Gross (1977), Wood (1978), Haladyna and Thomas (1979), Fraser (1981), Haladyna, Shaughnessey and Redsun (1982), McGowan (1984) and others all found some evidence to suggest that things are not well with respect to the attitudes that students portray toward social studies.

The literature indicates that students have a low regard for social studies. It also suggests that negative or apathetic attitudes toward social studies (McGowan 1984) are prevalent in many schools and perhaps some of the student attitudes may stem from these prevailing school attitudes. School administrators often seem to think that anyone can teach social studies. This often results in a situation where the social studies teacher is determined by who has some free time after other subjects such as english, science, math, etc. have been assigned. Adomanis (1986) refers to this as A3CTS2. "After all, Anyone can Teach Social Studies" and calls it an "ugly monster." (p.3) In situations such as this, the teacher delivering the social studies program may resent having to do so and may project negative feelings about the subject to the students who may develop similiar attitudes. For example a teacher may make negative comments such as "I don't like this stuff and I teach it only because I have to" or may make direct comments on the relative unimportance of the subject matter.

As we enter the decade of the 1990's in Newfoundland there is a downgrading of the importance of social studies by significant others. When the senior high school program in Newfoundland was reorganized in 1980-81 social studies was given a prominent place in the curriculum. Students were required to complete a minimum of six credits in social studies compared to the requirement of two credits each in mathematics and science. This has now changed because of pressure from different sources. For example, The Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education (1989) says: "...the public does not see all school activities to be of equal value. Areas such as language, mathematics, and science are to be of higher priority than other areas." (p.41) The report states this as its first principle, "Not all school subjects are of equal value. Schools should assign their highest priority to teaching the basic academic subjects which they are best equipped to handle, and which are not part of the mandate of other institutions in society. Mathematics and science must be among the areas of highest priority." (p.42) This priority has been accepted by the Department of Education, and it has led to a downgrading of social studies while requirements for mathematics, science and economic education has been upgraded. Students graduating in 1993 now need four credits in social studies, science and mathematics and two credits in economic education.

Another document released during the 1980s The Report of the Junior High Reorganization Committee (1986) indirectly suggested a downgrading of social studies. It recommended that social studies continue to be a core credit but that it should receive 9.6% of the time compared to the 10% held presently. To date this report has not been officially adopted as policy but it may indicate a particular attitude that may be prevalent in our society.

The literature suggests there are a variety of reasons why students exhibit negative or apathetic attitudes toward social studies. McGowan, Sutton and Smith (1990) identified a number of studies that have attempted to identify causal linkages. Though none of the researchers have been able to specify causal linkages, they suggest that some probable causes for student dislike of social studies include teacher performance, the nature of the content, curriculum patterns, mass media, gender, neighborhood, social class, scholastic aptitudes, classroom climate and teacher preparation. These researchers further noted that "evidence mounts, nevertheless, that conditions over which teachers exercise direct control shape student reactions to social studies." (p.38) Weible and Evans (1984), for example, suggested that teaching strategies affected the way elementary students viewed social studies though McGowan (1984) found no evidence that methodology impacted upon social studies attitude. In their own study of a particular teacher's

influence on attitudes toward social studies, McGowan, Sutton and Smith (1990) found that the teacher does indeed influence social studies attitudes but their evidence suggests that the particular instructional strategy is not a factor in reducing student negativism.

The present study being undertaken will examine the attitudes towards social studies exhibited by senior high school students in a school district in Newfoundland and will explore the relationship between the teaching strategies used in the classroom and their influence upon student attitudes.

#### Purpose of the study

After the exuberance of the 1970s, the 1980s became a period of refocusing and retrenchment. "Back to the basics" became a frequently heard slogan. There was a strengthening of the conservative viewpoint and considerable questioning about where education was heading. With mounting economic problems and a concerted effort to cut back, to spend less money, to get more for the dollar, the 1990's promise to be a difficult time for everyone, including schools. Whether this will happen will be determined by influences external to the school as well as by students and teachers. In these circumstances, with mounting pressure from significant others, social studies may well find itself being pushed to

the frill area. Yet good, sound evidence can be found to emphasize its importance. If there continues to be negativism and apathy, the social studies curriculum may be attacked and downgraded in importance. If this were to happen it would be a sad commentary on our schools and on social studies education in particular.

The purpose of this study is to find out whether the students and teachers in a Newfoundland jurisdiction exhibit the kinds of attitudes found in the other jurisdictions where such research has been undertaken. (A lot of the research that has been done has been carried on throughout the United States). If these negative and apathetic attitudes are being held by the students then there should be concern among educators of Newfoundland.

During the 1980's, the social studies program offered in Newfoundland schools was revamped with emphasis being put on personal development and socialization and citizenship growth. The program is now basically a product-process program in which what is being taught is complemented by how it is being taught.

Learning to think is the major process goal of Social Studies, but it cannot be satisfied by resorting to a single mode of teaching. Its accomplishment demands a commitment to eclecticism and variety, choosing the methods best suited to the objectives, content, learner



needs, and other variables of the teaching-learning situation. Opportunities for personal inquiry and for expression of independent thought, in various ways, written and verbal, are essential ingredients of instruction in Social Studies. (The Master Guide, 1984)

The question to be asked is if teachers are teaching these programs the way it is recommended they should be taught, does this have any effect on what students are saying about the social studies? Motivation may well be affected by the relationship between attitudes and the teaching strategies; however research is not clear on this particular linkage.

### Hypotheses

Considering the findings of research in other jurisdictions and in perceptions formed through personal experience the writer expects to find that students in Newfoundland will express negative and/or apathetic attitudes toward social studies. The writer expects a strong correlation between the attitudes put forth by students and teachers; however, the writer expects to find differences if different methodologies are used. To explore this topic further, the following hypotheses will be tested.

1. There is no significant difference in the ranking of social studies in relation to the other subjects between the grade twelve

students and social studies teachers in Newfoundland.

2. There is no significant differences in the ranking of social studies in relation to the other subjects between the grade twelve boys and girls in Newfoundland.
3. There is no significant differences in the perceptions of the social studies teaching strategies between the teachers and grade twelve students in Newfoundland.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitudes toward social studies between students who identify the classroom as traditional-oriented and those who identify their classroom as resource-based oriented.
5. There is no significant differences in the perception of the teaching strategies used in the classroom between the grade twelve boys and girls.
6. There is no significant difference in the attitudes toward social studies between the grade twelve boys and girls.

#### Methodology

This study deals with the attitudes that students and teachers hold toward social studies and examines the extent

that methodology impacts upon these attitudes. The data for the study will be collected from the teachers and students of the Placentia-St. Mary's Roman Catholic School District. To determine the attitudes toward social studies, two questionnaires were developed, one directed at the students and one directed at the teachers. These survey instruments will be administered during the latter part of the 1990-91 school year. They could be completed in one class period.

To determine the rankings of subjects, the students and teachers will be given a list of the courses presently taught in the senior high school program and will be asked to rank them from one to eleven. The means of the rankings will be used to identify how each group ranks the various subjects.

Correlation coefficients will also be used to analyse the data that will be gathered.

#### Scope and limitations of the study

The survey will be carried out in the Placentia-St. Mary's R. C. School District which is a rural school District covering the southern Avalon region from Come-by-Chance in Placentia Bay to St. Vincents in St. Mary's Bay. There are eight schools offering the senior high program and these vary in size and configuration. Three are all grade schools, three are central high schools, one is a senior high and one offers from grade 4 to level 3. The total

school board population is approximately 3200 students. Except for the Dunville and Come-by-Chance areas, no other school board serves this area.

One of the limitations of this study is the sample used. For reasons of efficiency the Placentia-St. Mary's School District was chosen as the target group. This District may or may not be representative of the other Districts throughout the province. Therefore, any conclusions drawn would apply only to this School District.

A second limitation of the study is the difficulty of establishing causal linkages between the perceptions that students hold regarding social studies and the teaching strategies. Certain trends may indicate a strong relationship but one still could not say that this is a direct cause. The difficulty lies in trying to identify the causes of an attitude which undoubtedly may have many reasons for its existence.

A third limitation of this study is the fact that it is being conducted in the final year of secondary school and students are being asked to recall what went on in a number of different classes over several years. Two questions arise: will students clearly recall specific events and activities over this period of time and will their assessment be accurate? Such uncertainty makes it difficult to generalize from the study. Obviously any indicated

trends and relationships would need to be supported by further research.

### Significance of the study

This study is significant because it is important for educators to have an indepth knowledge of the various factors that influence the learning situation. The attitudes that are held about a particular school subject are important determinants of how students act and react in various situations. Haladyna and Thomas (1979) noted that "educators and psychologists have supported affective education and the role of attitudes toward learning and future learning." (p.18) One can assume that if a student holds positive attitudes toward a subject this will encourage him or her to get more actively involved in the learning process which may lead to greater returns for the school and for society at large.

At this point in history, social studies has an important role to play; yet, because of pressure from other subject areas, social studies could well find itself relegated to a lesser role in the school system.

A third point of consideration is whether all the work that has been done in social studies has had any effect on changing perceptions toward the subject. Has there been any change in the status of the social studies? It is only through research that such questions can be answered.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Social studies, as a recognized curriculum area, is a relatively new creation. Prior to the nineteenth century, the term "social studies" did not exist. (Martorella, 1976) The term "social studies" was officially adopted as the name of a curriculum area in 1916 by the Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education of the National Education Association. This committee's recommendation for the selection and sequencing of the school's social studies courses helped to shape the school's social studies program to the present. (Jarolimek, 1981, p.5)

What were the goals of the social studies program? Jarolimek noted that the National Council for the Social Studies asserted that the "basic goal of social studies education is to prepare young people to be humane, rational, participating citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly independent." (p.5)

Barth (1983) suggested that "social studies is an integration of social science and humanities for the purpose of instruction in citizenship education." (p.3) Because of this emphasis on citizenship education, social studies is recognized as being important in the school curriculum.

Jarolimek commented that social studies should be included within the scope of basic education because

citizenship remains a main purpose of schools, and social studies has a unique responsibility for helping schools satisfy this purpose. (p.13)

Hunkins, Jeter and Maxey (1982) put it another way when they stated:

A primary purpose of education is to prepare young people to participate in and help to improve society. The content of social studies is particularly vital to that participation, drawing as it does from the fields of the social sciences and the humanities, and from human experiences. (p. 21)

The importance of social studies is reflected in these basic comments. Other writers have also recognized this; Michaelis (1985) said that "the importance of the social studies is recognized in the continuing demands for improvement and enrichment of the social studies program." (p.2)

Given this perceived importance, it would be expected that social studies might be recognized by students who engage in its study as being important. But, is this really the case? Just how do students view the social studies? What attitudes do they exhibit toward it? Before this question is answered, it is necessary to first clarify the term attitude.

### Definition of attitude

Jahoda and Warren (1968) commented that there are problems in trying to define the concept of attitude (p.6) however, various writers have attempted to do so. One of the widely accepted definitions of attitude was offered by Allport (1935) who said that an attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations. (cited in Insko, 1967, p.2)

Rokeach defined attitude in terms of beliefs. He said:

An attitude ... is an organization of several beliefs focused on a specific object (physical, or social, concrete, or abstract) or situation, predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner. Some of these beliefs about an object or situation concern matters of fact and others concern matters of evaluation. An attitude is thus a package of beliefs consisting of interconnected assertion to the effect that certain things about a specific object or situation are true or false, and other things about it are desirable or undesirable. (Hunkins et al, 1977)



Another definition offered by Kahle (1984) states:

Attitudes are adaptation abstractions or generalizations, about functioning in the environment, especially the social environment, that are expressed as predispositions to evaluate an object, concept or symbol. This abstraction process emerges continuously from the assimilation, accommodation, and organization of environmental information by individuals, in order to promote interchanges between the individual and the environment that form the individual's perspective, are favourable to preservation and optimal functioning. (p.5)

Thus, in simplified terms, attitude is "a general and enduring favourable or unfavourable feeling about an object." (Petty, 1981, p.32)

Bulcock (1986) suggested that the concept of attitude has four components. There is a cognitive aspect in that attitudes are consciously held beliefs or opinions; there is an affective component in that attitudes are associated with feelings and emotion; there is an evaluative component since attitudes can be positive or negative and finally, there is a conative or dispositional

component since attitudes imply disposition for actions.  
(p.15)

The complexity of the concept of attitude is well illustrated in these definitions and implicit in the definitions is the rationale for wanting to explore student attitudes toward the various curriculum areas and towards social studies in particular. The definitions imply that how students feel about a subject will be instrumental in determining how they will act or react toward it.

Curry and Hughes (1965) explicitly outlined the reasons why educators should be concerned about attitudes toward the various subject areas. They wrote:

... it is of vital importance to the teacher of the different subject areas to know which groups of students tend to prefer certain subject areas. This information can serve the teacher in that it will indicate which groups require the teacher to exert special effort in motivating the students. As a result, the teacher can adjust teaching methods and techniques to the group or individual being taught.  
(p.236)

Shaughnessy and Haladyna (1985) in discussing the implications of the research into attitudes toward social

studies offered several reasons for its fundamental importance.

First, attitude may be causally related to achievement. Second, students with a positive attitude toward a subject matter are likely to want to continue their education in that area or extend their learning to college or graduate school. Third, attitude is conveyed to parents, children, peers and others. If negative, an invasive situation results in a prejudice against the social studies. Ultimately, a negative attitude may promote a lack of support for the social studies resulting in diminished resources allocated to it. (p.692)

Undoubtably these are obvious reasons why educators should be interested in determining how the students feel about social studies as a curriculum area.

As early as 1949, it was reported that social studies was the least-liked subject in school. (Jersild reported in Shaughnessy and Haladyna, 1985) Since then a number of researchers and writers have inquired into the issue of student attitudes toward social studies. A review of the literature on attitudes toward social studies reveals two

basic type of studies; status studies and causal studies. The status studies have been concerned with the status of social studies when compared to other subjects, while the causal studies have tried to identify the potential causes of the attitudes that are held. (Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985)

### Status studies

Most of these studies show social studies has a very low status. Joyce (1986) commented that "with few exceptions, the research shows that elementary and secondary students displayed more negativity toward the social studies than other school subjects." (p.21) At the same time, though, a note of caution regarding these studies comes from Beck (1977) who drew attention to the inconsistent quality of the research in this area by identifying a number of problems including limited range of grades and populations studied, technical weaknesses, and the restricted scope--in level and content--of the instruments used. (p.73)

At the elementary level a number of researchers have studied the subject preferences of the students. Mosher (1952) investigated the subject preferences of girls and boys in New York State. The sample of 2164 girls and boys in grades 4-12 came from three schools representing an urban-industrial community, a rural agricultural community

and a mountain community. Their preferences were determined by means of two checklists on which the pupils were asked to indicate their first, second and third choices and likes, dislikes or neither for each subject. The findings in this study were somewhat different from many others, in that social studies "instead of being far down the line, stands up well among the top choices, with pupils of both sexes, on all levels." The study further indicated little significance in the slight variation of the subject preferences of girls and boys with respect to their community whether it be rural, urban or mountain but, the study did indicate that sex differences in subject preferences grow progressively greater as the girls and boys achieve different levels of maturation.

Another researcher, Greenblatt (1962) considered the subject preferences of third, fourth and fifth graders in the Los Alamitos School District in California. Three hundred children were asked to list, in order of preference, their favourite subject. On the basis of total point accumulation, the study found that art, arithmetic and reading were significantly preferred over other subjects, with the possible exception of spelling and social studies. Social studies was not significantly more preferred than the least desirable of the subjects but neither were art, arithmetic and reading found to be significantly preferred over social studies. The other findings of the study were

that students with low I.Q. ranked the social studies the lowest subject, with boys preferring social studies more than girls.

Herman (1963) inquired into how fourth, fifth and sixth grade students ranked the subjects using a multiple-choice Interest Inventory covering five subject areas including arithmetic, english, science, social studies and spelling. He reported that social studies was disliked more than any other subject by fourth-grade girls and boys and fifth-grade boys. Science and social studies items were tied for being disliked the most by sixth-grade girls. The fifth-grade girls disliked science items most and social studies next. Overall, the study indicated a very low interest in social studies.

Inskeep and Rowland (1965) also conducted an analysis of the school subject preferences of elementary school children. The sample was 550 children in grades four, five and six and their 19 teachers from the Cajon Valley School District in California. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire. The researchers were interested in the correlation of each individual pupil's subject preferences with the preferences of his teacher and the correlation of each individual pupil's preference with his perception of the preferences of his teacher. The correlation coefficients used were Spearman rhos. An examination of the results showed social studies to be ranked very low on the

list behind arithmetic, art, health and physical education, reading, spelling, science and music. No significant correlation between the preferences of the pupils and the preferences of the teachers for the various elementary school subjects were found.

Beck (1977) examined pupils' attitudes toward or interest in various school subjects, including four content areas--reading/ language, mathematics, science and social studies. He used a nationally standardized Survey of School Attitudes, which is a sixty-item, self-report inventory, designed for grades One through Eight. A total of 13,500 pupils from 12 school systems across ten states were included in the study. The participating schools were considered representative of the nation's school population in geographic distribution, socioeconomic variables, minority backgrounds and size of community. The generalizations the researcher drew from this study were that pupils' attitudes toward school curriculum are generally positive but attitudes toward the school curriculum are less positive as grade level increases. Science came through as the best liked subject and mathematics as the least liked. The researcher reported no sex differences in attitude toward social studies.

Wood (1978) investigated the subject preferences of elementary school students in relation to sex and size of community. He used a stratified random sample of 3,246

students from grades three, four, five and six drawn from 15 schools from three different sized communities in South Dakota. A Subject Preference Checklist limited to ten commonly taught elementary school subjects was created by the researcher using arbitrarily selected types of questions. Overall, students ranked social studies ninth on the list with english only being lower. The study showed little difference in mean ranking of the subjects with respect to population or size of the community but there were sex differences identified. Boys ranked the social studies sixth, whereas the girls ranked it ninth. This was not considered a major difference and it was similiar to what Greenblatt had found in his research.

One well-known piece of research on the issue of attitudes toward social studies was carried out by Haladyna and Thomas (1979) who conducted a study of the attitudes of elementary school children toward school and subject matters with interest in grade level and sex. The subjects of this study were 350 elementary and junior high teachers and their students (N = 2845) representing grades one to eight in three regions in the state of Oregon. On the issue of social studies, it should be pointed out that the researchers confined their study to grades four to eight because the researchers felt that social studies was not sufficiently defined from grades one to three.



Randomness was not used in this study because the teachers were selected from a list of volunteers. A non-verbal attitude inventory was created by the researchers for the purposes of this study and the data was analyzed through a one way analysis of variance and t-tests. For the analysis of variance, a .01 level of significance was used to guard against trivial differences being statistically significant.

The study showed social studies being ranked the lowest, regardless of the grade level, and the mean attitude actually declined from grades four to eight, which was also the trend for the attitude toward school. Generally, the study showed a steady decline from grades one to eight. Also shown was a statistically significant difference between boys and girls in their ratings of attitudes toward school and this difference increased from grades four to eight. For social studies though, no practically significant differences were found since both sexes gave it low ratings.

This study supports the idea that students have a very low opinion of social studies and they grow in their dislike of school as they progress through the school years. Both findings should be major concerns of educators generally.

Other studies that have been conducted through the years support these findings. For example, the Science

Education Yearbook (1980) reported a national survey which showed that only three percent of nine year olds surveyed, named social studies as their favourite subject as compared to 48 percent favouring mathematics and 24 percent favouring language.

Combden (1986) conducted a field study on the issue of student attitudes and social studies in the Bonavista-Trinity-Placentia Integrated School District, Newfoundland. He asked 844 students in grades four, five, six in eight schools to rank order the subjects of art, french, health, language arts, math, music, physical education, social studies, religion. As well, information on how teachers ranked the ten subjects was collected. He found that social studies was ranked the lowest of all the subjects by the students, which was different from the teachers who ranked it third in importance.

Most of the studies reported have shown a very negative rating for social studies with inconclusive evidence as to whether there are, in fact, gender differences. A review of the studies conducted at the secondary level reveal similiar findings. Generally, social studies is ranked low.

One of the earlier studies at this level was conducted by Curry and Hughes (1965) who targeted 904 eleventh-grade students in four high schools in Waco, Texas to determine the preferential order of required subject areas for high school juniors. The subject areas included were english,

mathematics, physical education, science and social studies. The students were asked to rank these subjects. Data was also collected on sex, socioeconomic status, ethnic group and I.Q.. The conclusions of this study were:

1. Among the white students, mathematics, physical education, and science were more popular for boys than girls; whereas, english and social studies were less popular for boys than the girls.
2. Among the Negro (sic) students, science and social studies were more popular for the boys than the girls; whereas, english and physical education were less popular for the boys than the girls.
3. When the ethnic group were compared, english and social studies were more popular with Negro students than with white students; whereas, physical education was less popular with the Negro students than with the white students.
4. When the stated preferences of both ethnic groups were combined, physical education, mathematics, and science were more popular with the boys than girls; whereas, english and social studies were less popular with boys than girls.
5. Socioeconomic status had little, if any, influence on the ranking of social studies.
6. The mean I.Q. was higher for students who selected mathematics and science as their subject areas of

first choice than for students who selected other subject areas as their first choice.

The gender differences appear stronger in this study than in those reported for the elementary level.

Yamamoto, Thomas and Karns (1969) conducted a cross-sectional study of the school related attitudes of middle school age students. The target population was 800 randomly selected students in the sixth through ninth grade in a suburban public school. A semantic differential was used to collect the data. On the basis of a factor analytic study, the researchers selected nine scales to represent the three factors in people ratings and eight scales to represent the two factors in curricula ratings. The results were analyzed factor by factor by a three-way analysis of variance (grade x sex x concept). One of the main findings of this study was that curricular ratings became increasingly more unfavourable as the grade level increased from the sixth through the ninth grade. On the factor of vigor, the ranking was mathematics, science, social studies and language, while on the factor of certainty, the ranking was language, mathematics, social studies and science. No significant sex differences were seen. The study did show that many complex relationships exist among grade, sex and concept but these tend to be masked by the main effects.

Echman, Merlinger and Patrick (1974) reported a Life magazine national poll which indicated that students in the

secondary school considered history to be one of the most boring and irrelevant subjects in school, with english only being more so. (p.4)

Again referring to the Science Education Data book (1980), it was reported that for both 13-year olds and 17-year olds only 13 percent selected social studies as their favourite subject.

A study carried out in Australia by Fraser (1980) supported the general finding of the low status of social studies. He conducted a cross-sectional study into grade level and sex differences among junior high school students in attitudes toward four school subjects, namely english, mathematics, social studies, and art. The sample for the study was 1817 students in 68 different classes in 17 different schools in the Melbourne area. The schools were not randomly selected; rather, they were chosen to be representative of the various geographic and socioeconomic areas and of the number of high schools, technical schools, Catholic schools and independent non-Catholic schools in suburban Melbourne.

Student attitude toward school was measured with the same six-item semantic differential scale. The first stage of the data analysis used a two-way MANOVA to look at the relationship between subject and the grade level and subject and the sex variable. The second stage involved using t-

tests to interpret differences in attitude at the four grade levels.

The results of this study were: the attitudes toward all school subjects decreased with increasing grade level (Haladyna and Thomas, 1979); the magnitude of the attitude decline with grade level varied from school subject to school subject with smaller declines for english and mathematics than for social studies and art; the students' attitudes were most favourable to english, next most favourable to mathematics, next to social studies and least favourable to art. Also, it was found that boys expressed significantly more favourable attitudes than girls toward mathematics, whereas girls expressed significantly more favourable attitudes than boys towards english, social studies and art.

In a further analysis of this data, Fraser (1981) wrote that the study also indicated a decline in attitude toward social studies which assumed practical, as well as statistical, significance since the decline in attitude from grade seven to grade ten was approximately five raw score points which is approximately two-thirds of a standard deviation. This finding is consistent with the previous research in the area of science and schooling generally.

The evidence put forward by these various researchers makes a strong statement on the status of the social studies. These findings support generalizations that have

been made by other writers and researchers. Several national surveys of the status of social studies in the United States have reported some rather disturbing information for social studies educators. For example, Gross (1977) commented: "From an overall standpoint the fundamental conclusion to be drawn from these figures is that social studies enrollment has not maintained itself to parallel the growth of total pupil enrollment in secondary education." (p.196)

Shaver, Davis, Hepburn (1977) reporting on three National Science Foundation studies said that: "Students generally find social studies content and modes of instruction uninteresting." (p.151) Morrissett, Hawke and Superka (1980) also drew attention to the problem of the status of social studies with the comment "Simply stated, in social studies classes today, students are learning less than in the past and enjoying social studies less than other subjects." (p.562) They further state "... while there are exceptions, most students do not like social studies very much and do not believe that the subject is very relevant to their lives." (p.562)

Taken together, the evidence overwhelmingly supports the conclusions that social studies has a very low status.

### Causal studies

Knowing that large numbers of students have a very negative attitude toward social studies is a first step; but of greater importance is the question: Why do students hold these kinds of attitudes? The literature reports some studies that have tried to establish the causes for the low status of social studies.

One of the earlier studies conducted in this area was carried out by Wheeler and Ryan (1973) who examined the effects of cooperative and competitive classroom environments on the attitudes and achievements of elementary school children engaged in social studies inquiry activities. Their sample of 88 fifth and sixth grade students from a suburban Minneapolis elementary school were identified as high achievers, with the majority being classified as upper class. They were subjected to one of three treatments: cooperative, competitive or control. Experimental instruction was carried out over 18 days and the experimenters tried to minimize the teacher personality variable by having two teachers teach both the cooperative group and the competitive group. The major finding of this study was that the cooperative treatments were better than the competitive treatments for creating a positive attitude toward social studies but no difference in achievement between the two groups were recorded. The findings indicate that inquiry activities carried on in an



atmosphere relatively free from the threat of individual failure and which allows students to make specific contributions toward a common goal will result in more positive student attitudes.

Several studies dealing with the special effects of the program "Man: A Course of Study" (MACOS) have been conducted. Calvert (1970 as reported in Shaughnessey and Haladyna) found that those students who participated in this course had a more positive attitude toward social studies.

Peckham and Ware (1973) reported on a study of six elementary schools, three using Macos and three using the regular social studies program. The study was conducted in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade classrooms. The findings reported were that in the area of attitudes, the students in the Macos program had a more positive view of themselves as social studies students and a more positive perception of the way their teachers viewed them. There was no evidence to show that students liked social studies any better or worse in either of the programs. When compared to teachers in the regular program, teachers in the MACOS Program perceived the students as being more interested in social studies. Such information, however, is very inconclusive since there are many other variables in addition to the program variable identifiable as potentially affecting student attitudes.

A study inquiring into high school perceptions of the social studies was conducted by Fernadez, Massey and Dornbush (1976) in the San Francisco Unified School District. A questionnaire was administered to a five percent random sample of students ( $N = 722$ ) in eight comprehensive and academic high schools. In analyzing the data, the researchers looked mainly at patterns and consistency. Comparisons were made by cross-tabulating key variables with variables such as ethnicity and sex.

Articulation, defined to be the degree of linkage which students perceive between schooling and their occupational goals, was considered important in this study. Students perceived lower articulation for social studies (.23) than for math (.46) or english (.48) and the same pattern held for male and female. In other words, students did not see social studies as being important for achieving their occupational goals.

Students also reported that learning social studies (.33) was less important than learning english (.57) or math (.50) for entrance into their chosen occupations.

As well, students reported that learning social studies (.38) was less important than learning math (.53) and learning English (.56) for performance in their choice of occupation. The researchers made the assumption that high articulation leads to regarding an activity as highly important which, in turn, leads to high effort. Because

there was a low articulation between social studies and work, a lower proportion of the students saw social studies as important as compared to english and mathematics.

Most students in this study also reported that their parents considered all of the subjects as important but social studies was perceived as being slightly less important. Friends were perceived as not considering learning to be important and they were perceived as considering social studies to be less important than the other subjects. Thus, significant others may be factors in determining attitude, though further research would be needed to prove this.

Two other significant findings of this study that are worth noting are: students saw passing the grade as being more important than learning the material; a high proportion of the students reported that if they did poor work in social studies, they would not receive a poor grade.

In summary, this study showed that high school students do not consider the content of social studies to be as important as what they learn in other courses for future occupational choices and goals.

This study was later given attention by Farnen, Natriello and Dornbush (1978) who reexamined the data in light of two issues: (1) the assumption that students will work harder to learn subject matter that they perceive as relevant to their future goals; (2) the concept of

articulation, testing the claim of social studies that it teaches skills and knowledge that students perceive as basic to their later lives, if not related to careers.

In their analysis of the data, the researchers agreed with the findings of the original research. They found that career articulation is a strong determinant of how important students believe it is to learn the subject matter, while beliefs about the subject matter likewise influence student efforts. The opinion of others also affect student attitudes toward the subject, but neither social influence nor perceived career articulation appear to have substantial direct effect on student effort.

In considering the second issue, the researchers did not include direct questions about the relationships between course work and other aspects of students' lives. There were, however, questions which permitted an indirect test of the effects of articulation to other aspects of future life. None of the three subjects of math, english or social studies were perceived as closely articulated to marriage and family life; but, students who thought that work in the community was important to their future happiness were much more likely to consider learning social studies as important. On the other hand, few students considered community work as important, thus only a few students saw social studies as important.

A study conducted by McTeer, Blanton and Lee (1975) at Cedar Town, Georgia attempted to determine the relationship of certain student characteristics to student interest in social studies versus English, math and science. No randomness was used. The researchers selected six groups of 30 students on the following basis: (1) those students having high interest in social studies but low interest in English, (2) those students having low interest in social studies but high interest in English, (3) those students having high interest in social studies but low interest in math, (4) those students having low interest in social studies but high interest in math, (5) those students having a high interest in social studies but a low interest in science and (6) those students having low interest in social studies but high interest in science. This pairing was necessary for comparison purposes with respect to the variables of intelligence quotient, reading ability, grade point average, educational level of mothers, educational level of fathers, and sex.

When the data was analyzed, the researchers noted some gender differences in that high school boys showed a higher interest in social studies than in english; girls showed a higher interest in english. Boys showed a higher interest in science when compared to interest in social studies; whereas, girls showed more interest in social studies.

The other significant finding of this study was the parental influence on attitudes in that mothers of students having high interest in social studies combined with a low interest in math have a higher level of education as reflected by number of years in school than do mothers of students having low interest in social studies and high interest in math. Beyond these findings the researchers did not explore the causal relationships any further.

Two very informative and important studies of variables influencing attitudes toward social studies were published in 1982. (Haladyna, Shaughnessy and Redsun 1982a, 1982b)

The first study (Haladyna, Shaughnessy and Redsun, 1982b) was an attempt to determine which of a set of student, teacher and learning environment variables were most significantly related to students' attitudes toward the social studies as a school subject. The researchers did a cross-sectional, correlational, descriptive study using 1758 students in grades four, seven and nine drawn through a stratified sampling plan with the intention of having a sample that widely represented urban and rural locales of varying sizes, having widely varying school environments. An Inventory for Affective Aspects of Schooling was created in two forms to measure the variables of the study, one for grade four and the other for grades seven and nine. Two types of analyses were performed. First, simple product-moment correlations were computed between all independent

variables and the dependent variable of attitude toward social studies. The student was the unit of analysis. The second type of analysis used ordinary least-squares regression analysis to identify in sequential order groups of variables that maximumly predicted attitude toward social studies.

The findings of this study have added significantly to our understanding of the relationship between student attitudes and social studies. The students with higher degrees of self-confidence, with lower degrees of fatalism--the tendency to let the fates determine one's future in the subject matter--and higher ratings of the importance of social studies tended to like social studies. Some sex differences were evident, most notably at the grade nine level. The high degree of intercorrelations among the six teacher variables led to the creation of an overall teacher quality scale. This variable was consistently related to social studies, although more so for boys than girls. School environment variables such as satisfaction with class, enjoyment of classmates and class environment were important factors in the earlier grades but less so at the grade nine level.

The management-organization variables were greatest in number, making interpretations very complex. Even so, this set of variables showed the lowest correlations with social studies though some factors showed significance; for

example, speed, attentiveness, goal direction and disorganization.

Conclusions can be drawn from this study that student and teacher variables appear to be more responsible for individual attitudes and seem to be causal determinants of attitudes toward social studies.

A second study completed by Haladyna et. al. (1982a) dealt with the same variables of attitude toward the school subject but the unit of analysis was the classroom rather than the student. The researchers used the Inventory of Affective Aspects of Schooling to collect data from the students while a questionnaire was administered to the teachers.

Again the researchers used two types of analyses, product-moment correlations and regression analyses to study the data.

The conclusions drawn by the researchers were as follows:

1. The three student variables of fatalism, self-confidence and importance of subject matter appear to show consistent and strong correlations to attitude toward social studies. Class attitude is higher in classes where fatalism is low and feelings of importance and confidence are high.



2. The researchers found a strong relationship between overall teacher quality and attitude. Some of the characteristics identified were enthusiasm for the subject, a willingness to help students at a personal level, use of praise and reinforcement, fairness to students, and a commitment to help students learn.
3. On the question of the relative importance of the various variables, the learning environment was clearly shown to play a bigger role in accounting for the variance of class social studies attitude across the three grade levels. At the same time, though, the teacher variable showed increases from grade four to nine that nearly equalled that of the learning environment variables.
4. On the question of the best set of variables across the dimensions of student, teacher and learning environment the researcher identified the following:
  - (1) Student: Fatalism, Self-confidence, Importance of social studies.
  - (2) Teacher: Overall teacher quality.
  - (3) Learning environment: (A) Social-Psychological  
Enjoyment of classmates  
(B) Classroom Organization  
and Conduct;

Friction,  
Classroom activity,  
Formality,  
Attentiveness,  
Goal direction

This research is very important because while it does not establish a causal link per se, these factors do appear to influence student attitudes toward social studies. If this is really the case, then all teachers should be aware of it because the teacher is in the best position to control, either directly or indirectly, most of these variables.

Another research project, undertaken by Shug, Todd and Beery (1984), attempted to find out what elementary and secondary students think about aspects of the social studies and attempted to generate some ideas for further research by using a best case approach. They randomly selected forty-six students from the social studies classes at two schools in a Midwest school district. Twenty-three (23) of these students were in grade six and 23 were in grade twelve. An interview protocol was used to collect the data.

The researchers reported that social studies was regarded as less important than english, math, and reading but more important than science. Future career was often cited as the reason for considering a subject important or unimportant.

When asked what is uninteresting about social studies, "boring," "redundant subject matter" were cited most frequently. When asked why their favourite course was more interesting than social studies, "more opportunity for active learning," "success in the subject" were the most frequent replies.

While this study shows some indifference to social studies, and implies a relationship between career goals and attitude, it offers very little to identify the causal relationship of attitudes toward social studies.

Another study, Weible and Evans (1984) surveyed 867 fifth and sixth graders from urban and rural settings on their views of social studies. They required students to express their thoughts in writing by answering open-ended questions, mainly what they liked most, what they did not like and what they would like to learn more about in social studies. Some of the likes included responses such as "When we have some time to do something by ourselves," "I like when the art museum sent paintings and artifacts for us to see," "Pretending to be an archaeologist and finding things in the year 2000," "The activities, baking bread, biscuits, making butter, looking at maps." The researchers noted that most of the likes seemed to focus more on content than on instruction.

Some of the comments on what students do not like were "I don't like social studies because sometimes you just hear

the same things over," "The study of things that don't effect my life," "Studying about explorers," "It's boring when we have to listen to something we never get to understand," "When the teacher gets up in front of the room and talks and talks and talks." Overall negative perceptions appeared to be directed toward instruction.

This study seems to say that students do not find the content of social studies objectionable but do have problems with the instruction. Contradictory to this, however, McGowan (1984) found that methodology did not significantly impact on social studies attitude. Such confusion points out that drawing conclusions from this type of study is tenuous at best because there are so many inherent problems in interpreting the data.

As reported earlier, Haladyna et. al. (1982) identified the learning environment as the factor accounting for the most variance in class social studies attitudes. Fouts (1987) explored further into this idea by trying to determine the nature of the high school social studies environments and by exploring the environmental determinants of attitudes toward social studies.

For his study Fouts chose a stratified random sample of 27 high school social studies classrooms (N = 686) from four high schools in a large suburban West Coast District.

Excluded from this study were the honours and remedial classes, and of the students who participated in the study 75% were white.

To assess the classroom environments of these social studies classes, the Classroom Environment Scales (Mos and Trickett, 1974) were used and a cluster analysis was employed to identify the types of environments and the characteristics of the social studies classroom. Students were also required to complete forced-choice questions on their favourite and least favourite subject and on the subjects they believed to be the most and least important.

Two distinctive classroom environments were identified through the cluster analysis while another classroom cluster fell somewhere between the two. In a Cluster 3 environment, students were very involved in the class, had positive and strong relationships with the other students in the class and felt a great deal of personal support from the teacher on both an academic and a personal level. The classroom was somewhat competitive and task-oriented, orderly and organized with class expectations and rules clearly known and the frequency of classroom problems and need for its teacher to enforce the rules were relatively low. A variety of teaching strategies often using new techniques and a variety of routine were employed regularly.

In Cluster 1 environments the students were highly task oriented with clear rules and expectations, but with much

more teacher control and dominance. They were generally less competitive, less actively involved in the class and felt little support from teachers who did not try to alter the classroom routine or method of instruction.

Fouts found that, with the cluster as the unit of analysis, frequency distributions showed a higher percentage of students in Cluster 3 classrooms (29.5% and 14.3%) identified social studies as their favourite and most important subject, followed by students in Cluster 2 (19% and 6.4%) and Cluster 1 (15.4% and 5.1%). Thus, Cluster 3 classroom students were most likely and Cluster 1 classroom students were least likely to identify social studies as their favourite and most important class.

Frequency distributions also showed that a higher percentage of students in Cluster 1 classrooms identified social studies as their least favourite (23.9%) and least important subject (33.3%) followed by Cluster 2 classroom students (17% and 31.2%), and Cluster 3 classroom students (11.2% and 21.3%). These distributions were significant at .05 level on chi square analyses.

Fouts also found that elective social studies classes had students who showed more positive attitudes toward social studies than did students in required courses, which probably would be an expected outcome considering that it was the students choice to do the course. Another important finding was that the elective-required status of the course,

class size, school and area of preparation of teachers are not necessarily limiting factors in determining the class environment. These factors may be overcome by the teacher to create a Cluster 3 environment. The importance of this finding relates directly to the teacher being the key to a successful classroom. This seems to say that a "teacher can and does make a difference."

Two years later Fouts (1989) replicated this study focusing on the junior high school, grades 7-8. The sample was 491 students from three junior high schools in two suburban west coast school districts.

The Classroom Environment Scale and a forced-choice questionnaire used in the original study were employed again and the data was subjected to a cluster analysis. Three different clusters were identified with the greatest variance being shown on the environmental dimensions of Rule Clarity, Involvement and Competition.

Cluster 1 classrooms were identified as being characterized by students not behaving in an orderly and polite manner, having little attentive interest in class activities or assignments and by the teacher being seen as inconsistent in dealing with rule infractions while the rules themselves were not clear or followed.

Cluster 3 classrooms, on the other hand, appear to be classes in which the students were well-behaved, usually

remaining calm and quiet in well-organized activities, were involved in class discussions and did additional work on their own. There were established clear expectations and consistency in enforcing the rules.

The two classrooms were also differentiated in that Cluster 3 classroom students had a higher degree of affiliation with their fellow students while still competing for good grades. They also perceived the teacher to be highly task-oriented and helpful and interested in their well-being both in and out of class. Cluster 2 classrooms fell somewhere between the other two.

An examination of the forced-choice questionnaire indicated that students in Cluster 1 classrooms had a more negative view toward social studies than did students in the other two clusters. A clear relationship between the classroom environment and a student's "least favourite subject" was indicated, but statistical significance was not found on the question of the importance of the subject, even though there were expected patterns present in the data. The conclusion drawn was that classroom environment was, at least, a partial determinant of student attitudes.

At the junior high level the environment factors related to classroom management emerged as the most important dimensions while involvement was the only major differentiating factor common to both studies.



One other finding that was similar in both studies was the one on teacher preparation. In both studies, teachers trained as social studies teachers taught in the Cluster 1 classrooms while many teachers not trained in social studies taught in the Cluster 3 classrooms. This suggests that training as social studies teachers does not make teachers more effective in creating classroom environments that create more positive views of social studies as a subject.

This research begun by Haladyna et al and continued by Fouts is important work that helps establish a causal relationship between classroom environment and attitude toward social studies, though further work is needed to delineate all the aspects of this perceived relationship.

McGowan (1990) explored the question of whether a teacher can generate more positive views toward social studies and also categorized the teaching strategy and style that was used in doing so. The study focused on one sixth-grade classroom teacher at a laboratory school of a midwestern state university. The woman had a master's degree in educational administration, approximately 13 years teaching experience and had a reputation among her supervisors as an exemplary teacher whose social studies classes were "fun."

The data for the study was collected through surveying her students ( $N = 21$ ) and through observing the social studies lessons. The surveys were completed three times

during the academic year--August, January and May. Students were asked to rank order the nine subjects in terms of enjoyment and importance as well as responding in writing to the question "What is social studies." To determine the teaching strategy, the lesson plans were analyzed and the learning activities were classified according to the method, the choice of materials and the content selection. Observations of the teaching style were carried out periodically from December to March and throughout April and May. Two university faculty members independently observed the lessons and created an anecdotal summary of each observation. This data was analyzed through a three stage method outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984). The results of this study indicated that the subject teacher positively influenced class attitude towards social studies.

The teacher used traditional strategy for teaching social studies, teacher-centered activities, a direct instruction sequence to structure lessons, the basal textbook and chalkboard as teaching aids. The one area where the teacher departed from the traditional was in her content selection which McGowan terms "eclectic." She used an expanding environments approach emphasizing history interspersed with skill-building units.

The teacher's teaching style showed nine elements of which eight can be identified using Haladyna et al

terminology. These are: commitment to student learning, confidence, diversity, enthusiasm, fairness, formality, goal direction, praise and reinforcement and support for the individual.

McGowan's study showed that a teacher can transform student views of social studies and suggests that it is not instructional strategy that is important but rather teaching style. The teacher used an engaging, dynamic manner to relate to her students and the nine elements of style previously outlined played a major part in this. Thus the researcher suggests that a learning setting in which children are challenged, supported, excited, directed, accepted, praised, probed, informed, structured and treated fairly is necessary if a teacher wants to change attitudes toward social studies.

### Conclusion

This review of the literature indicates that a negative attitude toward social studies is quite widespread and has been identified by researchers for the last forty years. Students seem to not like social studies very much and generally seem to think that it is unimportant.

Why do these negative views exist? The answer to this question is much less clear and few studies have been done to clarify the picture. However, what research has been done seems to establish linkages between attitudes toward

social studies and certain student, teacher and learning environment factors. Not enough research has been conducted to clearly demonstrate what the influence of each of these factors truly is and it is an area which needs further exploration since there are good reasons for needing to know about student attitudes and what influences them. Knowing this may well enable a teacher to affect the outcomes that can be achieved in the social studies classroom, although none of the studies cited attempted to relate attitudes toward social studies and overall student achievement but it is an acceptable assumption that positive attitudes toward the subject would translate into positive benefits in the classroom. Further research will be necessary before it can be stated conclusively that this is actually the case.

## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe the methodology that was used to carry out the study. Included will be a description of how the data was collected, what instrumentation was used, how the instruments were administered, how the data was interpreted, and what the limitations to the study are.

Design of study

This study focused on students in the Placentia-St. Mary's R.C. School District and, in particular, on the grade twelve students and their teachers with regard to how they ranked the social studies in relation to the other subjects, with regard to what attitudes toward social studies they expressed and with whether a relationship existed between the attitudes that students expressed and the teaching strategies that were perceived to have been used in the classroom.

The study is designed to describe what existed in the Placentia-St. Mary's R.C. School District as of May, 1991 relating to the teaching of social studies in the senior high school. A survey type of design was used to carry out the study.

### Data collection

The Placentia-St. Mary's School District was chosen as the site for this study. The study consisted of a survey being carried out among the senior high social studies teachers and all of the students who were registered in the final year of the senior high program for the 1990 - 91 school year.

There were eight schools in the district that offered senior high social studies courses. Three of the schools were all-grade, serving students from kindergarten to grade twelve; one school served grades four to twelve; one served grades nine to twelve and three were central high schools serving grades seven to twelve.

In total 250 students were registered in the final year of the senior high program in 1990 - 91, but only 191 questionnaires were completed. Those students who were absent from class at the time scheduled for the survey were not included in the study.

The teacher survey was sent to all teachers who were teaching courses at the senior high level. Eighteen teachers completed and returned the questionnaire.

### Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to conduct this investigation. Both a student questionnaire and a teacher

questionnaire were constructed by the researcher to gather the required information. ( See appendices A and B )

The student questionnaire contained four sections. Section A required students to indicate their gender and the senior high social studies courses that they had completed or were presently studying.

Section B contained ten statements designed to garner information on student attitudes toward social studies using a Likert-like scale. Students were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with certain attitudinal statements such as whether social studies was important, interesting, easy and so on. Student reaction to these statements allowed the researcher to draw certain conclusions about whether students were positive or negative in their views toward social studies.

Section C asked the students to identify the teaching strategies that teachers had used in the teaching of social studies by indicating whether the strategy was frequently used, occasionally used or never used. Because the formal identification of some of these teaching strategies might cause some problems for students, the researcher included a brief description with some of the strategies to ensure that all students understood what was being considered.

Section D required students to rank eleven subjects, including social studies, which are studied throughout the high school years. Students were asked to rank the most

important subject as number one and the least important as number eleven. Those in between were ranked according to how students viewed them in relation to the other subjects.

The teacher questionnaire contained three sections. Section A required teachers to supply some background information such as gender, degrees earned, teaching experience and amount of time spent teaching social studies.

Section B was similar to the last section of the student questionnaire in that it required teachers to rank the various high school subjects, assigning the most important number one and the least important number eleven.

Section C of the teachers questionnaire asked teachers to indicate how frequently they used the various teaching strategies. This section basically was the same as section C on the student questionnaire.

#### Administration of the instruments

The survey was carried out in the school district in May of 1990 - 91. The French coordinator in the school district, who also had been given some responsibility for the social studies program, agreed to administer the student questionnaires in all schools during May, 1991. A forty-five minute period was allotted for completing the instrument but no class required the full time to complete. The same procedure was followed in each class with only those present in class at the scheduled time completing the instrument.



The teacher questionnaires were given to the principals by the coordinator. The principals circulated the questionnaires to their teachers who were teaching social studies courses at the senior level. The completed questionnaires were then returned to the principals who forwarded them to the researcher.

### Interpretation

To interpret the results of this study the data was organized in several ways.

Some basic background information was gathered from the students and the teachers. Most of this information was best analyzed using ranking and frequency tables. Hypotheses one and two were considered on the basis of the rankings. Since there are no tests for deciding the significance of ranking, the procedure becomes a simple matter of determining whether there were any observable differences in the way the various items were ranked.

Hypothesis three was analyzed using a frequency table. Decisions were based on the spread of the percentage points.

To study hypothesis four it was necessary to put the information into a manageable form. From the list of teaching strategies, two variables were created called traditional teaching methods and non traditional teaching methods. This was achieved by the researcher identifying certain strategies as being traditional and the remaining

strategies being non traditional. By taking the mean of the traditional strategies and the mean of the non traditional strategies, two new variables called traditional teaching methods and non traditional teaching methods were created.

To test the hypothesis that there would be no differences in the attitudes toward social studies expressed by students from the traditional and non traditional classrooms, a multiple regression analysis was generated. Multiple regression provides considerable versatility and information yield about relationships between variables. As well, it provides estimates both of the magnitude and statistical significance of relationships between variables. It is defined as a multivariate technique for determining the correlation between a criterion variable and some combination of two or more predictor variables. (Borg and Gall, 1983, p.596)

Because the path coefficients have the same meaning as the beta (B) coefficients calculated in the multiple regression, a path analysis can be carried out to determine the direct effect of one variable on another variable. The level of significance chosen for the regression was  $p < .05$ .

Hypothesis five was analyzed using frequency tables and involved determining whether there were percentage differences between what the boys and girls were saying. This basically involved making observations of the data to determine if there were differences. The researcher

considered a difference of ten or more percentage points as being significant.

Hypothesis six was tested using a one way analysis of variance. The purpose of the analysis of variance is "to determine whether the groups differ significantly among themselves or, more technically, to determine whether the between-groups variance is significantly greater than the within-groups variance." (Borg and Gall, 1983, p.550) A significance level of  $p < .05$  was chosen.

#### Limitation of study

Two major limitations in this study were the assumption that students and teachers would accurately recall what had happened in their social studies classrooms over the previous three years and the assumption that students and teachers would be working with similar definitions or understandings of the teaching strategies. It is possible that when they were responding to the surveys that the various terms might have had different meanings for them, though the researcher assumed, because of the descriptions and definitions provided, that this was not the case.

## CHAPTER IV

## FINDINGS

This chapter will analyze the results of a study conducted in the Placentia-St. Mary's R.C. School District to determine student attitudes toward social studies and to determine whether a relationship exists between those attitudes and the perceived teaching strategies used in the social studies classroom. Also of interest was whether any relationship existed between what the teachers and the students were saying about the teaching strategies that are used in the teaching of social studies and whether the boys and girls showed any differences in attitudes toward social studies and whether they showed differences in their perceptions of the teaching strategies.

Demographic information

The study was carried out in the Placentia-St. Mary's School District. In total, 191 students and 18 teachers participated. There were 82 boys and 105 girls while four respondents did not indicate their gender.

The students were registered in grade twelve and the study was done during the month of May which was very close to the end of their secondary school experience. Because Democracy 2102 and Cultural Heritage 1200 are compulsory most students had studied these courses, but two students indicated they had not had contact with these courses.

World Geography 3202 was the most frequently chosen course for the world studies credits and Canadian Law was the favourite choice for the Canada studies credit. The other social studies courses were chosen infrequently and, in particular, World Problems 3204 was done by only one student who probably had transferred in from some other district or had studied it through independent study. Table 1 shows the number of students who were studying or had completed the various social studies.

Table 1

The number of students who were studying or had completed social studies courses:

---

| Course                 | Number of Students |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Democracy 2102         | 189                |
| Cultural Heritage 1200 | 189                |
| Canadian Law 2104      | 179                |
| Canadian Economy 2103  | 11                 |
| Canadian Issues 1201   | 29                 |
| World History 2200     | 24                 |
| World History 3201     | 46                 |
| World Problems 3204    | 1                  |
| World Geography 3202   | 165                |
| Consumer Studies 1201  | 15                 |

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### Teacher profile

There were 18 teachers in the study, 16 male and 2 female. Seventy-two point two percent had 16 years or more teaching experience while 44.4% had twenty or more years in the classroom which is indicative that the teaching population of that district is aging. Table 2 shows the teaching experience of the teachers.

Table 2

Percent of teachers who had various years of teaching experience:

---

| Teaching experience--years | Percent of teachers |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 - 5                      | 5.6%                |
| 6 - 10                     | 11.1%               |
| 11 - 15                    | 11.1%               |
| 16 - 20                    | 27.8%               |
| 20+                        | 44.4%               |

---

Generally the teachers were well-qualified with 94.4% having a grade five or higher certificate. Table 3 shows the percent of teachers who held the different levels of teaching certificate.

Table 3

The percent of teachers holding particular teaching  
certificates

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| Certificate Level | Percent of teachers |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 4                 | 5.6%                |
| 5                 | 38.9%               |
| 6                 | 44.4%               |
| 7                 | 11.1%               |

---

Less than half of the teachers had an academic background in the social studies areas. Only 44.6% indicated they had completed a major in the social studies areas; no one indicated they had completed a minor in the social studies area. Table 4 shows the program major as indicated by the teachers.

Table 4

Program major as described by the teachers


---

| Major              | Percent of teachers |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| History            | 27.8%               |
| English            | 16.7%               |
| Social Studies     | 5.6%                |
| Psychology         | 11.1%               |
| Geography          | 5.6%                |
| Economics          | 5.6%                |
| Mathematics        | 11.1%               |
| Physical Education | 5.6%                |
| Music              | 5.6%                |

---

Table 5 shows the program minor as indicated by the teachers. No teachers indicated that they had completed a minor in any of the social studies areas.



Table 5

Program minor as indicated by the teachers

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| Minor               | Percent of teachers |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| English             | 55.6%               |
| French              | 11.1%               |
| Psychology          | 5.6%                |
| Religious Education | 5.6%                |
| Classics            | 5.6%                |
| Mathematics         | 5.6%                |
| Not applicable      | 5.6%                |
| Physics             | 5.6%                |

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## Findings

In order to investigate the social studies attitudes held by the grade twelve students, and the relationship between those attitudes and the teaching strategies that were used in the classroom, a number of hypotheses were formulated. The following is an analysis of the findings of the study in relation to each of these hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference in the ranking of social studies in relation to the other subjects between the grade twelve students and the senior high social studies teachers.

The students and teachers were asked to rank, in order of importance from the most important (1) to the least important (11), eleven subjects that are taught in the senior high program in Newfoundland. Differences in how the students and teachers rated the social studies were apparent.

Forty-two point four percent of the students rated social studies as being either third or fourth in the order of importance whereas 66.7% of the teachers ranked it as third or fourth in importance.

Put in a different perspective, 48.2% of the students rated social studies somewhere in the top four while 72.3% of the teachers rated it somewhere in the top four subjects. From this it appears that teachers rate the social studies more highly than the students but few students or teachers see it ranking as number one or two in importance. However, very few students or teachers ranked it in the bottom categories. Table 6 shows how teachers and students rank the social studies.

Table 6

How students and teachers rank the social studies


---

| Ranking | Percent of students | Percent of teachers |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1       | 2.1%                | 5.6%                |
| 2       | 3.7%                | -                   |
| 3       | 7.3%                | 27.8%               |
| 4       | 35.3%               | 38.9%               |
| 5       | 16.8%               | 11.1%               |
| 6       | 10.5%               | 5.6%                |
| 7       | 8.4%                | 5.6%                |
| 8       | 4.2%                | -                   |
| 9       | 2.1%                | -                   |
| 10      | 3.7%                | -                   |
| 11      | 2.6%                | 5.6%                |

---

Few students--5.8% or teachers--5.6% saw social studies as number one or two in importance, while 44.4% of the teachers rated English as number one and 54.5% of students rated mathematics as number one. Students saw mathematics and science as being the two most important subjects and teachers identified English and mathematics as two of the most important subjects. Table 7 shows the percentage of students and teachers who ranked the social studies as first in importance.

Table 7

Percent of students and teachers who ranked the subject as first in importance

---

| Subject              | Percent of students | Percent of teachers |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Art/Music            | 1.0%                | 5.6%                |
| Business Education   | 2.6%                | -                   |
| English              | 12.6%               | 44.4%               |
| Family Studies       | 1.6%                | -                   |
| French               | 2.1%                | -                   |
| Industrial Education | 2.1%                | -                   |
| Mathematics          | 54.5%               | 33.3%               |
| Physical Education   | 3.7%                | -                   |
| Religion             | .5%                 | 5.6%                |
| Science              | 17.3%               | -                   |
| Social Studies       | 2.1%                | 5.6%                |

---

Looking at the cumulative percentages for students and teachers who ranked the social studies from 1 to 4 also reveals some differences. Fifty percent of the students ranked the social studies in the top four subjects while 72.2% of the teachers put it in the top four. Generally this was a very favourable ranking compared to subjects such as art/music, French and religion but it was much lower than the ranking for English, mathematics and science. In

relation to the other subjects, students ranked social studies fourth behind English, mathematics and science while teachers ranked it third because English and mathematics were both perceived by teachers to be equal in importance. Table 8 shows the cumulative percentage of students and teachers who ranked the subject as either first, second, third or fourth in importance.

Table 8

Cumulative percent of students and teachers who ranked the subject as either first, second, third or fourth in importance

| Subject            | Percent of students | Percent of teachers |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Art/Music          | 6.3%                | 11.1%               |
| Business Education | 15.7%               | 11.1%               |
| English            | 78.0% (3)           | 83.3% (1)           |
| Family Studies     | 13.1%               | 11.1%               |
| French             | 35.6%               | 5.6%                |
| Industrial Arts    | 6.8%                | 11.1%               |
| Mathematics        | 89.0% (1)           | 83.3% (1)           |
| Physical Education | 10.5%               | 22.2%               |
| Religion           | 9.4%                | 33.3%               |
| Science            | 83.2% (2)           | 66.7% (2)           |
| Social Studies     | 50.0% (4)           | 72.2% (3)           |

Thus, based on these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion is that differences do exist between how students and social studies teachers rank the social studies.

**Hypothesis 2:** There are no differences in the ranking of social studies between the grade twelve boys and girls.

Little difference was observed in the first three rankings of the social studies but some difference was noted in the fourth and fifth ranking. Of the boys, 39.5% ranked social studies as fourth in order of importance while 33.7% of the girls ranked it fourth. Ranking it fifth in importance were 14.5% of the boys and 20.2% of the girls.

More boys and girls ranked the social studies as fourth in order of importance than they did for any other ranking. Table 9 shows how the boys and girls ranked the social studies.

Table 9

How the boys and girls ranked the social studies


---

| Ranking | % of Boys | % of Girls |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 1       | -         | 2.9%       |
| 2       | 2.6%      | 4.8%       |
| 3       | 6.6%      | 7.7%       |
| 4       | 39.5%     | 33.7%      |
| 5       | 14.5%     | 20.2%      |
| 6       | 9.2%      | 12.5%      |
| 7       | 9.2%      | 8.7%       |
| 8       | 3.9%      | 4.8%       |
| 9       | 3.9%      | 1.0%       |
| 10      | 7.9%      | 1.0%       |
| 11      | 2.6%      | 2.9%       |

---

When percentages are added together for those who ranked the various subjects as first, second, third or fourth there is no significant difference between the boys and girls. Social studies was ranked fourth behind mathematics, science and english respectively. Table 10 shows the cumulative percentages of boys and girls who ranked the subject as first, second, third or fourth.

Table 10

Cumulative percent of boys and girls who ranked the subject as first, second, third or fourth

---

| Subject            | Boys      | Girls     |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Art/Music          | 10.9%     | 2.9%      |
| Business Education | 14.7%     | 16.3%     |
| English            | 75.6% (3) | 82.7% (3) |
| Family Studies     | 10.1%     | 16.3%     |
| French             | 31.6%     | 38.3%     |
| Industrial Arts    | 15.3%     | 1.0%      |
| Mathematics        | 89.8% (1) | 92.3% (1) |
| Physical Education | 13.9%     | 8.7%      |
| Religion           | 15.7%     | 5.8%      |
| Science            | 84.5% (2) | 87.4% (2) |
| Social Studies     | 48.4%     | 49.1% (4) |

---

Though some small differences were noted in how boys and girls ranked the social studies the differences were not considered significant and the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus the conclusion is that there is no difference in how the boys and girls ranked the social studies.

Hypothesis 3: There are no differences in the perceptions of the social studies teaching strategies between the teachers and the grade twelve students.



Analysis of the data indicated there were apparent differences in the perceptions of the social studies teaching strategies between the social studies teachers and the grade twelve students in that one or the other group indicated that certain strategies were used more or less frequently than the other did. See table 11.

Students did not perceive strategy 1--lecture being used as a strategy as frequently as did the teachers. As Table 11 indicates, 72.5% of the teachers noted lecture being frequently used as a strategy whereas only 48.9% of the students identified it as being used frequently. What was surprising also was the fact that 12.1% of the students said that lecture was never used in their social studies classroom which may indicate either that the students were not accurately recalling what happened in their various social studies classrooms or they perceived lecture as a much more formal technique than did the teachers.

A wide difference was observed between what teachers said about strategy 2--demonstration and what students said about it. Only 5.6% of the teachers said that they never used demonstration as a strategy whereas 38.3% of the students perceived it as never being used.

Differences were also apparent in the perception of strategy 3--mastery-drill in that 23.5% of the teachers said it was never used while 51.3% of the students said that it was not used in their classrooms.

Strategy 5--case-study also showed differences between teacher and student perception. Eighty-three point three percent of the teachers indicated that it was used occasionally, whereas only 54.3% of the students said it was used occasionally, and while 11.1% of the teachers said case-study was frequently used 34.6% of the students said that it was frequently used.

Differences were also observed on strategy 6--inquiry/discovery. Only 5.6% of the teachers said it was never used while 37.8% of the students said it was never used.

Differences were also observed for strategy 8--role-playing. Forty-one point two percent of the teachers said it was never used in their classrooms while 52.9% said that it was occasionally used. Among the students 65.4% said case-study was not used in their social studies classrooms and 31.4% said it was occasionally used.

Further differences were apparent in the perception of strategy 9--photo analysis with 27.8% of the teachers saying it was never used while 52.9% of the students claimed it was never used. The numbers were similar for strategy 10 --Document Analysis with only 27.8% of the teachers saying it was never used while 48.4% of the students said it was never used.

Strategy 12-- games had a wide discrepancy with 35.3% of the teachers saying it was never used while 72.1% of the students said it was never used. The numbers for strategy 15--interview were not much different with 27.8% of the teachers saying they never used it while 63.8% of the students saw it as never being used.

Teachers and students also varied greatly on how frequently interviews were used as a teaching strategy with 27.8% of the teachers saying that it was never used while 63.8% of the students said it was never used.

Very few teachers (11.1%) claimed to never using strategy 17--individualized instruction but 41.3% of the students said it was never used in their classrooms. On the other hand 88.9% of the teachers said it was occasionally used while 51.3% of the students said it was occasionally used.

Likewise, a big difference was apparent with strategy 20--resource persons. While only 5.9% of teachers said they never used resource persons, 44.1% of the students said that resource persons were never used in their classrooms.

No teachers claimed to have never used videos in their classrooms while 19.4% of the students said they were never used in their classrooms.

There were also differences in the perception of the use of overhead transparency with 23.5% of the teachers and 45.8% of the students saying it was never used. A similar

difference was noted for television with 11.8% of the teachers and 36.1% of the students saying it was never used.

Differences were apparent for photos/collages with 35.3% of the teachers versus 50% of the students saying they were never used.

No teacher claimed to use non-directed discussion frequently while 47.1% of the students said it was frequently used.

Jigsaw was a method of discussion that was identified by 94.1% of the teachers as being never used while only 63.5% of the students said it was never used.

A large percentage, 77.8% of the teachers also claimed to never use round table discussion while a lower percentage, 63.5% of the students said it was never used.

On the other hand, 38.9% of the teachers said they never used panel-discussion while 77.2% of the students said it was never used.

A difference was noted in brainstorming as a strategy with no teachers saying they frequently used it while 21.6% of the students said it was frequently used.

Though many differences in perceptions of the use of the teaching strategies were observed from the data, there were similarities noted as well. For example, for most strategies, a higher percentage of both teachers and students said they were occasionally used than said they were never or frequently used.

Another similarity was the percentage of students and teachers who chose the frequently category for most strategies. Except for strategies 1, 5, 6, 14, 17, 18, only a few percentage points separated the teachers and students perceptions.

Table 11

Comparison of teacher and student perception of the use of the teaching strategies

|                           | Teacher |       |       | Student |       |       |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
|                           | Never   | Occ.  | Freq. | Never   | Occ.  | Freq. |
| 1. Lecture                | -       | 27.8% | 72.2% | 12.1%   | 38.9% | 48.9% |
| 2. Demonstration          | 5.6%    | 88.9% | 5.6%  | 38.3%   | 54.8% | 6.9%  |
| 3. Mastery Drill          | 23.5%   | 70.6% | 5.9%  | 51.3%   | 39.0% | 9.6%  |
| 4. Quest/Answer           | -       | 33.3% | 66.7% | 3.7%    | 29.3% | 67.0% |
| 5. Case-study             | 5.6%    | 83.3% | 11.1% | 11.2%   | 54.3% | 34.6% |
| 6. Inquiry/<br>Discussion | 5.6%    | 72.2% | 22.2% | 37.8%   | 54.3% | 8.0%  |
| 7. Prob.-solving          | 11.8%   | 64.7% | 23.5% | 25.4%   | 57.1% | 17.5% |
| 8. Role-playing           | 41.2%   | 52.9% | 5.9%  | 65.4%   | 31.4% | 3.1%  |
| 9. Photo-analysis         | 27.8%   | 66.7% | 5.6%  | 52.9%   | 41.3% | 5.8%  |
| 10. Document<br>analysis  | 27.8%   | 66.7% | 5.6%  | 48.4%   | 45.3% | 6.3%  |
| 11. Seminar               | 66.7%   | 33.3% | -     | 72.3%   | 23.4% | 4.3%  |
| 12. Games                 | 35.3%   | 64.7% | -     | 72.1%   | 22.1% | 5.8%  |

Table 11 cont.

|                                | Teacher |       |       | Student |       |       |
|--------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
|                                | Never   | Occ.  | Freq. | Never   | Occ.  | Freq. |
| 13. Skits/Plays/<br>Pantomime  | 61.1%   | 38.9% | -     | 69.5%   | 26.3% | 4.2%  |
| 14. Research Paper             | 5.6%    | 72.2% | 22.2% | 9.4%    | 56.5% | 34.0% |
| 15. Interview                  | 27.8%   | 72.2% | -     | 63.8%   | 33.5% | 2.7%  |
| 16. Written product            | -       | 50.0% | 50.0% | 7.9%    | 45.3% | 46.3% |
| 17. Individual<br>Instruction  | 11.1%   | 88.9% | -     | 41.3%   | 51.3% | 7.4%  |
| 18. Exchange                   | 50.0%   | 37.5% | 12.5% | 68.8%   | 26.5% | 4.8%  |
| 19. Field Trips                | 47.1%   | 52.9% | -     | 57.9%   | 37.4% | 4.7%  |
| 20. Resource Person            | 5.9%    | 94.1% | -     | 44.1%   | 51.1% | 4.8%  |
| 21. Slides                     | 22.2%   | 77.8% | -     | 37.2%   | 54.5% | 8.4%  |
| 22. Videos                     | -       | 82.4% | 17.6% | 19.4%   | 68.6% | 12.0% |
| 23. Overhead<br>Transparency   | 23.5%   | 64.7% | 11.8% | 45.8%   | 43.2% | 11.1% |
| 24. Television                 | 11.8%   | 82.4% | 5.9%  | 36.1%   | 57.1% | 6.8%  |
| 25. Filmstrips                 | 16.7%   | 77.8% | 5.6%  | 21.5%   | 69.1% | 9.4%  |
| 26. Films                      | 22.2%   | 61.1% | 16.7% | 19.4%   | 69.1% | 11.5% |
| 27. Computer<br>Programs       | 94.1%   | 5.9%  | -     | 85.3%   | 8.9%  | 5.8%  |
| 28. Audio Tapes                | 55.6%   | 44.4% | -     | 64.9%   | 31.4% | 3.7%  |
| 29. Photos/Collages            | 35.3%   | 64.7% | -     | 50.0%   | 45.8% | 4.2%  |
| 30. Non-directed<br>Discussion | 33.3%   | 66.7% | -     | 10.5%   | 42.4% | 47.1% |
| 31. Debate                     | 41.2%   | 58.8% | -     | 43.7%   | 45.3% | 11.1% |
| 32. Fishbowl                   | 84.6%   | 15.4% | -     | 71.4%   | 21.2% | 7.4%  |

Table 11 cont.

|                   | Teacher |       |       | Student |       |       |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
|                   | Never   | Occ.  | Freq. | Never   | Occ.  | Freq. |
| 33. Jigsaw        | 94.1%   | 5.9%  | -     | 63.5%   | 27.5% | 9.0%  |
| 34. Round-table   | 77.8%   | 22.2% | -     | 55.3%   | 39.4% | 5.3%  |
| 35. Panel discuss | 38.9%   | 61.1% | -     | 77.2%   | 16.9% | 5.8%  |
| 36. Brainstorming | 23.5%   | 76.5% | -     | 31.1%   | 47.4% | 21.6% |

---

When the choices are collapsed into two categories, never or occasionally and frequently, the differences become much less obvious as Table 12 indicates. Sizeable differences were then observed in only six of 36 strategies, namely lecture, case-study, inquiry-discovery, research paper, non-directed discussion and brainstorming. Teachers said that lecture and inquiry-discovery was used more frequently than the students said it was. Students, on the other hand, saw case-study, research paper, non-directed discussion and brainstorming being used more frequently than the teachers did.

**Differences between the students' and teachers' perceptions of certain teaching strategies.**

| Strategy                | Teacher |       | Student |       |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
|                         | N/O     | F     | N/O     | F     |
| Lecture                 | 27.8%   | 72.2% | 51.0%   | 48.9% |
| Case-study              | 88.9%   | 11.1% | 65.5%   | 34.6% |
| Inquiry-discovery       | 77.8%   | 22.2% | 92.1%   | 8.0%  |
| Research paper          | 77.8%   | 22.2% | 65.9%   | 34.0% |
| Non-directed discussion | 100 %   | -     | 52.9%   | 47.1% |
| Brainstorming           | 100 %   | -     | 78.5%   | 21.6% |

Note: N/O = Never/Occasionally, F=Frequently

Based on the analysis of the data the researcher found significant differences between the teachers and the students perceptions of the use of the teaching strategies. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the conclusion was drawn that differences did indeed exist between the teachers and students perceptions of the use of the teaching strategies.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no difference in the social studies attitudes between students who identify the classroom as traditional-oriented and those who identify their classroom as resource-based oriented.



To do this part of the study, the teaching methods were collapsed into two categories, traditional teaching methods and non traditional teaching methods and these were the independent variables. This was done by getting the  $\bar{x}$  response for the traditional questions and the  $\bar{x}$  response for the non traditional questions. The dependent variables were the ten attitude statements.

A statistical analysis of the data was carried out. Table 13 shows the descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and variance that was generated for the total sample of 191 students. On the dependent variables the mean ranged between 2.974 and 1.931 while on the independent variables the mean for the traditional teaching methods was 2.185 and it was 1.585 for the non traditional teaching methods, indicating traditional methods are used more frequently than non traditional methods.

Table 13

Descriptive statistics: Means, Standard Deviation (S.D.),  
Variance (N = 191)

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|                 | Mean  | S.D. | Variance |
|-----------------|-------|------|----------|
| Q1              | 2.885 | .686 | .471     |
| Q2              | 2.921 | .594 | .352     |
| Q3              | 2.889 | .756 | .572     |
| Q4              | 2.691 | .830 | .688     |
| Q5              | 2.623 | .836 | .699     |
| Q6              | 2.974 | .778 | .605     |
| Q7              | 2.247 | .863 | .744     |
| Q8              | 2.858 | .685 | .469     |
| Q9              | 1.931 | .775 | .601     |
| Q10             | 2.853 | .657 | .431     |
| Traditional     | 2.185 | .283 | .080     |
| Non traditional | 1.585 | .274 | .075     |

---

In order to test the hypothesis, a multiple regression procedure was used to study the relationship between the independent variables--the teaching methods and the dependent variables--the attitude statements.

A correlation matrix was generated for all the variables as shown in Table 14. For the independent

variable--traditional teaching methods, there was a statistically significant correlation with two dependent variables, Q4 and Q7. In this case both were a negative relationship indicating the more frequently the traditional methods were used the more likely the students were to disagree with the attitude statements.

The non traditional teaching methods had three statistically significant correlations with Q6, Q7 and Q9 being significant at the  $p < .05$  level. The relationship with Q6 and Q7 were negative indicating that as the frequency of the non traditional methods increases the agreement with these attitude statements decreases. It is necessary here to note though that Q7 had a significantly negative correlation to both the traditional and non traditional teaching methods suggesting that students generally do not think they should have to do courses in social studies. The relationship between the non traditional teaching methods and Q9 is a positive one indicating that an increase in frequency of the non traditional methods is significantly related to an increase in agreement with Q9. Since Q4, Q6, Q9, appear to have significant correlations to certain teaching methods the conclusion can be drawn that there is a relationship between the teaching methods and the student response to certain social studies attitudinal statements.

Table 14

Correlation Matrix for Variables

| Var.      | Q1    | Q2    | Q3    | Q4    | Q5    | Q6    |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Q1        | 1.000 | .003  | 0.000 | .019  | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Q2        | .199  | 1.000 | .002  | .481  | .164  | .003  |
| Q3        | .573  | .205  | 1.000 | .058  | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Q4        | .150  | -.003 | .114  | 1.000 | 0.000 | .431  |
| Q5        | .364  | .071  | .301  | .408  | 1.000 | .036  |
| Q6        | .271  | .201  | .407  | -.013 | .130  | 1.000 |
| Q7        | .228  | .241  | .124  | .102  | .190  | .198  |
| Q8        | .056  | .401  | .165  | .061  | .073  | .182  |
| Q9        | -.163 | -.068 | -.138 | .008  | .002  | -.352 |
| Q10       | .278  | .418  | .423  | .100  | .244  | .312  |
| Trad.     | -.032 | -.075 | -.086 | -.119 | -.109 | -.076 |
| Non Trad. | -.105 | -.084 | -.050 | .048  | .073  | -.168 |
| $\bar{x}$ | 2.885 | 2.927 | 2.889 | 2.691 | 2.623 | 2.974 |
| SD        | .684  | .597  | .759  | .830  | .836  | .778  |

Table 14 cont.

| Var.      | Q7    | Q8    | Q9    | Q10   | Trad  | Nont. |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Q1        | .001  | .220  | .012  | 0.000 | .332  | .074  |
| Q2        | 0.000 | 0.000 | .174  | 0.000 | .152  | .124  |
| Q3        | .044  | .011  | .029  | 0.000 | .119  | .246  |
| Q4        | .081  | .200  | .455  | .084  | .050  | .256  |
| Q5        | .004  | .159  | .492  | 0.000 | .067  | .158  |
| Q6        | .003  | .006  | 0.000 | 0.000 | .147  | .010  |
| Q7        | 1.000 | 0.000 | .080  | 0.000 | .022  | .004  |
| Q8        | .238  | 1.000 | .251  | 0.000 | .444  | .260  |
| Q9        | -.102 | -.049 | 1.000 | .005  | .137  | .010  |
| Q10       | .260  | .447  | -.185 | 1.000 | .451  | .098  |
| Trad.     | -.146 | -.010 | -.080 | .009  | 1.000 | .001  |
| NonTrad.  | -.189 | .047  | .168  | -.094 | .230  | 1.000 |
| $\bar{x}$ | 2.247 | 2.858 | 1.931 | 2.853 | 2.185 | 1.585 |
| SD        | .863  | .685  | .775  | .657  | .283  | .274  |

Note: Correlation coefficient below the diagonal; significance levels above the diagonal. P values < .05 are statistically significant.

The results of the multiple regression analysis allowed a path analysis to be done since the path coefficients are the same as the beta coefficients calculated in the multiple regression. These results are presented in Table 15 and a graphic representation of this is shown in figures 1 - 10.

Table 15

Standardized Regression Coefficients


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| Independent Variables |       | Dependent Variables |         |        |        |        |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
|                       |       | Q1                  | Q2      | Q3     | Q4     | Q5     |
| Non Trad.             | Beta  | -.1035              | -.0705  | -.0319 | .0794  | .1034  |
|                       | Sig.T | .1665               | .3454   | .6692  | .2855  | .1642  |
| Trad.                 | Beta  | -.0078              | -.0584  | -.0783 | -.1376 | -.1328 |
|                       | Sig.T | .9162               | .4341   | .2951  | .0650  | .0746  |
|                       |       | Q6                  | Q7      | Q8     | Q9     | Q10    |
| Non. Trad.            | Beta  | -.1591              | -2.2480 | .0519  | .1968  | -.1014 |
|                       | Sig.T | .0323               | .0257   | .4883  | .0079  | .1755  |
| Trad.                 | Beta  | -.0395              | -.1077  | -.0221 | -.1249 | .0323  |
|                       | Sig.T | .5928               | .1424   | .7676  | .0901  | .6648  |

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The student reaction to the attitude statements did not seem to be affected by the traditional teaching methods because none of the beta coefficients were statistically significant. Although seven of the attitude statements did not seem to be affected by the non traditional teaching methods, there were three that were responsive to them as indicated by the beta coefficients being statistically significant.

On Q.6 the beta coefficient for the non traditional teaching methods was  $-.159$  which was significant (see figure 6). This can be interpreted to say that students who frequently were exposed to these methods strongly agreed with the statement that the social studies textbooks were/are always interesting. This may be because texts were not the dominant sources of information, but were used along with various other sources.

On Q.7 the beta coefficient of  $-2.248$  for the non traditional teaching methods is also statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level (see figure 7). This means that students who frequently were exposed to non traditional teaching methods strongly agreed with the statement that every student graduating from high school should have to do several courses in social studies while those who never were exposed to non traditional methods strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 9 shows the results of Q.9 and again the beta coefficient of  $2.685$  is statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level. This shows that students who were exposed to non traditional teaching methods were likely to strongly disagree with the statement--a subject in school that needs improvement is social studies and those who never were exposed to traditional teaching methods were likely to say that a subject in school that needs improvement is social studies.

When the parameters are considered, the overall effects are relatively low with only about 3%, 5% and 4% of the variance being accounted for by the non traditional methods but there is no doubt that statistically it is significant. There are obviously a number of other factors that may account for the attitudes that students may hold toward social studies.

It is interesting to note that those students who were exposed to the non traditional teaching methods seemed to be more positive in their attitudes toward social studies than those who were exposed to the traditional teaching methods.

Based on the analysis of the data the null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion is drawn that there is indeed a difference in the social studies attitudes between students who are taught by traditional teaching methods and those who are taught by non traditional teaching methods.

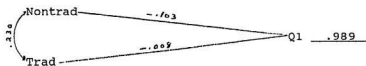


Figure 1. Path diagram for Q.1



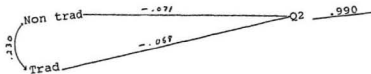


Figure 2. Path diagram for Q.2

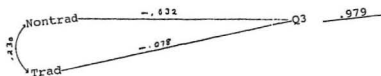


Figure 3. Path diagram for Q.4.

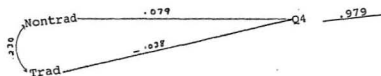


Figure 4. Path diagram for Q.4

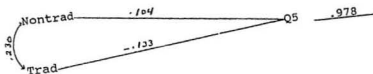


Figure 5. Path diagram for Q.5

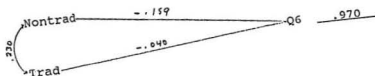


Figure 6. Path diagram for Q.6.

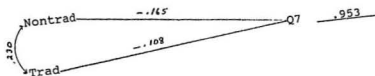


Figure 7. Path diagram for Q.7.

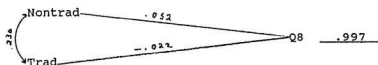


Figure 8. Path diagram for Q.8.

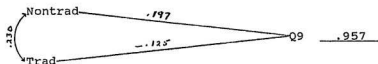


Figure 9. Path diagram for Q.9.

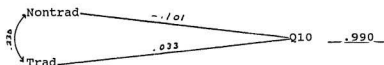


Figure 10. Path diagram for Q.10.

Hypothesis five: There is no difference in the perception of the teaching strategies used in the classroom between the grade twelve boys and girls.

A breakdown of student opinion of whether certain teaching strategies were used in the social studies classroom reveals some differences between the perceptions of the boys and girls with ten strategies showing a difference of more than ten percentage points.

Problem solving, strategy 7 was perceived by 19.8% of the boys as never being used and by 64.2% as being occasionally used while 29.8% of the girls said it was never used and 51.9% said it was occasionally used.

As Table 16 indicates, percentage differences are noted for role-playing--strategy 8, document analysis--strategy 10, games--strategy 12, skits/plays/pantomime--strategy 13, individualized instruction--strategy 17, non-directed discussion--strategy 30, debate--strategy 31, round table discussion--strategy 34, and panel discussion--strategy 35. Girls most often perceived these strategies as being never used.

The greatest difference between the perceptions of the boys and girls is noted for strategy 34--round table discussion. While 42% of the boys indicated they had never been exposed to round table discussion, 66% of the girls indicated they had never been exposed to it, a difference of 24 percentage points.

Table 16

Perceptions of how frequently the teaching strategies were used in the social studies classroom

| Strategy | Gender | Never | Occas | Freq   |
|----------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| #1       | Boys   | 15.9% | 41.5% | 42.7%  |
|          | Girls  | 9.6   | 37.5  | 52.6   |
| 2        | Boys   | 35.4  | 58.5  | 6.1    |
|          | Girls  | 41.2  | 51.0  | 7.8    |
| 3        | Boys   | 52.4  | 40.2  | 7.3    |
|          | Girls  | 52.5  | 35.6  | 11.9   |
| 4        | Boys   | 4.9   | 29.3  | 65.9   |
|          | Girls  | 2.9   | 30.5  | 66.7   |
| 5        | Boys   | 8.6   | 54.3  | 37.0   |
|          | Girls  | 13.6  | 54.4  | 32.0   |
| 6        | Boys   | 36.6  | 52.4  | 11.0   |
|          | Girls  | 39.2  | 55.9  | 4.9    |
| 7        | Boys   | 19.8  | 64.2  | * 16.0 |
|          | Girls  | 29.9  | 51.9  | 18.3   |
| 8        | Boys   | 58.5  | 37.8  | * 3.7  |
|          | Girls  | 71.4  | 25.7  | 2.9    |
| 9        | Boys   | 53.7  | 40.2  | 6.1    |
|          | Girls  | 52.4  | 42.7  | 4.9    |
| 10       | Boys   | 41.5  | 53.7  | * 4.9  |
|          | Girls  | 52.9  | 40.4  | 6.7    |
| 11       | Boys   | 63.4  | 31.7  | 4.9    |
|          | Girls  | 79.6  | 16.5  | 3.9    |
| 12       | Boys   | 67.1  | 26.8  | * 6.1  |
|          | Girls  | 76.9  | 17.3  | 5.8    |
| 13       | Boys   | 59.8  | 34.1  | * 6.1  |
|          | Girls  | 77.9  | 19.2  | 2.9    |

Table 16 cont.

|    |       |      |      |       |
|----|-------|------|------|-------|
| 14 | Boys  | 8.5  | 56.1 | 35.4  |
|    | Girls | 10.5 | 57.1 | 32.4  |
| 15 | Boys  | 60.5 | 35.8 | 3.7   |
|    | Girls | 67.0 | 31.1 | 1.9   |
| 16 | Boys  | 9.8  | 45.1 | 45.1  |
|    | Girls | 6.7  | 46.2 | 47.1  |
| 17 | Boys  | 32.1 | 59.3 | 8.6   |
|    | Girls | 48.1 | 45.2 | * 6.7 |
| 18 | Boys  | 61.7 | 33.3 | 4.9   |
|    | Girls | 73.1 | 27.1 | 4.8   |
| 19 | Boys  | 52.4 | 40.2 | 7.3   |
|    | Girls | 61.5 | 35.6 | 2.9   |
| 20 | Boys  | 43.2 | 51.9 | 4.9   |
|    | Girls | 44.2 | 51.0 | 4.8   |
| 21 | Boys  | 39.0 | 51.2 | 9.8   |
|    | Girls | 37.1 | 55.2 | 7.6   |
| 22 | Boys  | 18.3 | 73.2 | 8.5   |
|    | Girls | 20.0 | 64.8 | 15.2  |
| 23 | Boys  | 46.3 | 45.1 | 8.5   |
|    | Girls | 45.2 | 41.3 | 13.5  |
| 24 | Boys  | 31.7 | 58.5 | 9.8   |
|    | Girls | 39.0 | 56.2 | 4.8   |
| 25 | Boys  | 22.0 | 70.7 | 7.3   |
|    | Girls | 21.9 | 66.7 | 11.4  |
| 26 | Boys  | 22.0 | 70.7 | 7.3   |
|    | Girls | 17.1 | 67.6 | 15.2  |
| 27 | Boys  | 81.5 | 12.2 | 7.3   |
|    | Girls | 88.6 | 6.7  | 4.8   |
| 28 | Boys  | 64.6 | 31.7 | 3.7   |
|    | Girls | 66.7 | 29.5 | 3.8   |
| 29 | Boys  | 50.0 | 43.9 | 6.1   |
|    | Girls | 49.0 | 48.1 | 2.9   |

Table 16 cont.

|    |       |      |      |   |      |
|----|-------|------|------|---|------|
| 30 | Boys  | 8.5  | 52.4 |   | 39.0 |
|    | Girls | 12.4 | 32.4 | * | 55.2 |
| 31 | Boys  | 35.4 | 54.9 |   | 9.8  |
|    | Girls | 50.0 | 37.5 | * | 12.5 |
| 32 | Boys  | 68.3 | 22.0 |   | 9.8  |
|    | Girls | 72.8 | 21.4 |   | 5.8  |
| 33 | Boys  | 63.4 | 29.3 |   | 7.3  |
|    | Girls | 63.1 | 26.2 |   | 10.7 |
| 34 | Boys  | 42.0 | 49.4 |   | 8.6  |
|    | Girls | 66.0 | 31.1 | * | 2.9  |
| 35 | Boys  | 69.5 | 23.2 |   | 7.3  |
|    | Girls | 83.5 | 11.7 | * | 4.9  |
| 36 | Boys  | 28.0 | 50.0 |   | 22.0 |
|    | Girls | 33.7 | 44.2 |   | 22.1 |

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\* differences noted

Further analysis of the table shows that certain strategies were used very infrequently. Table 17 shows those strategies where more than 50% of the students said they were never exposed to the strategy.

Table 17

Strategies to which more than 50% of the students indicated they had never been exposed

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| Strategy                    | % Boys | % Girls |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| #3 - Mastery drill          | 52.4   | 52.5    |
| 8 - Role-playing            | 58.5   | 71.4    |
| 9 - Photo-analysis          | 53.7   | 52.4    |
| 11 - Seminar                | 63.4   | 79.6    |
| 12 - Games                  | 67.1   | 76.9    |
| 13 - Skits/plays/pantomime  | 59.8   | 77.9    |
| 15 - Interview              | 60.5   | 67.0    |
| 18 - Exchange               | 61.7   | 73.1    |
| 27 - Computer Programs      | 80.5   | 88.6    |
| 28 - Audio Tapes            | 64.6   | 66.7    |
| 29 - Photos/Collages        | 50.0   | 49.0    |
| 32 - Fishbowl Discussion    | 68.3   | 72.8    |
| 33 - Jigsaw Discussion      | 63.4   | 63.1    |
| 34 - Round Table Discussion | 42.0   | 66.0    |
| 35 - Panel Discussion       | 69.5   | 83.5    |

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In contrast, very few strategies were perceived of as being frequently used by a large percentage of students.



Table 18 shows those strategies that a high percentage of students indicated were frequently used. Differences between the boys and girls were rather modest.

Table 18

Strategies that a high percentage of students indicated were used frequently

| Strategy                     | Boys | Girls |
|------------------------------|------|-------|
| #1 - Lecture                 | 42.7 | 52.6  |
| 4 - Question-answer          | 65.9 | 66.7  |
| 5 - Case-study               | 37.0 | 32.0  |
| 14 - Research papers         | 35.4 | 32.4  |
| 16 - Written product         | 45.1 | 55.2  |
| 30 - Non-directed discussion | 39.0 | 55.2  |

Based on the findings hypothesis five is rejected and the conclusion is reached that there are indeed differences in the perceptions of the teaching strategies between the grade twelve boys and girls.

Hypothesis six: There is no significant difference in the attitudes toward social studies between the grade twelve boys and girls.

This hypothesis was tested using analysis of variance. When the attitudes were broken down by sex, significant

differences between the boys and the girls were found on one question only.

Boys and girls differed in attitude toward statement 8, the most useful subject in school is social studies. Grade twelve boys differed significantly from the grade twelve girls in their response to this statement. Both were negative in their response, but the boys were more negative ( $\bar{x} = 3.0$ ) than the girls ( $\bar{x} = 2.7$ ). Table 19 shows the analysis of variance results of the difference in attitudes between the grade twelve boys and girls.

Table 19

ANOVA results of the difference in attitudes between the grade twelve boys and girls

| Dep. Var |   | SS       | DF  | MS     | F      | Sig   |
|----------|---|----------|-----|--------|--------|-------|
| Q1       | 1 | .0097    | 1   | .0097  | .0211  | .8846 |
|          | 2 | 85.0598  | 185 | .4598  |        |       |
| Q2       | 1 | 1.2879   | 1   | 1.2879 | 3.6764 | .0567 |
|          | 2 | 64.8084  | 185 | .3503  |        |       |
| Q3       | 1 | .0146    | 1   | .0146  | .0263  | .8713 |
|          | 2 | 101.8349 | 184 | .5535  |        |       |
| Q4       | 1 | 1.7571   | 1   | 1.7571 | 2.5422 | .1122 |
|          | 2 | 127.8685 | 184 | .6912  |        |       |
| Q5       | 1 | .2966    | 1   | .2966  | .4172  | .5191 |
|          | 2 | 131.5002 | 185 | .7108  |        |       |
| Q6       | 1 | .0309    | 1   | .0309  | .0525  | .8190 |
|          | 2 | 108.8354 | 185 | .5883  |        |       |
| Q7       | 1 | 2.5622   | 1   | 2.5622 | 3.4400 | .0652 |
|          | 2 | 137.0507 | 184 | .7948  |        |       |
| Q8       | 1 | 3.0903   | 1   | 3.0903 | 6.7699 | .0100 |
|          | 2 | 83.9904  | 184 | .4565  |        |       |
| Q9       | 1 | .2993    | 1   | .2993  | .4900  | .4848 |
|          | 2 | 111.7872 | 183 | .6109  |        |       |
| Q10      | 1 | .1751    | 1   | .1751  | .4003  | .5277 |
|          | 2 | 80.9265  | 185 | .4374  |        |       |

1 = between groups; 2 = within groups; SS = sum of squares; DF = degrees of freedom; MS = means square; P values <.05 are statistically significant.

As table 19 indicates Q2 and Q7, while not being statistically significant, were sufficiently different to

suggest a practical significance. On Q2--the most important subject in school is social studies--boys modestly differed from girls. Though both were less than positive on this statement, girls were more positive ( $\bar{x} = 2.8$ ) than boys ( $\bar{x} = 3.0$ ). On Q7 there also was a practical difference in the response of the boys and girls. Girls were more positive ( $\bar{x} = 2.1$ ) than boys ( $\bar{x} = 2.3$ ) in responding to the statement that every student graduating from high school should have to do several courses in social studies.

Based on these findings the null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion is drawn that boys and girls do differ in their attitudes toward social studies.

### Conclusion

Overall, teachers and students tended to rank social studies toward the middle of the courses that are taught in the senior high school, though teachers appear to be more favourable in their ranking than the students. Among the students, the boys and girls did not vary much in their ranking.

Teachers and students also varied considerably in their perception of how frequently certain teaching strategies were used in the social studies classroom.

On the question of whether teaching strategies affected student response to certain attitude statements, significant

differences were found, though there were not as many differences as imagined. Students in the nontraditional classroom were more positive in their response to certain attitude statements than the students who were in the traditional classroom. There were also differences between how frequently the boys and girls saw the social studies strategies being used in the classroom. The boys chose occasionally as a response more often than the girls.

Boys and girls differed significantly in their response to only one of the attitude statements. Girls were more positive in their attitudes than boys were.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter has three purposes. First, the study will be summarized and conclusions about the findings will be drawn. Second, theoretical and practical implications will be presented. Third, suggestions for replication and extension of this study will be given.

Summary and conclusions

This study was conducted to find out what attitudes toward social studies were held by the grade twelve students in the Placentia-St. Mary's R.C. School District and to find out whether there was any relationship between the teaching strategies used in the district and the social studies attitudes that the students held. The researcher was also interested in whether the students and the social studies teachers held similar views toward social studies and whether the boys and girls were saying similar things about social studies.

Because the Placentia-St. Mary's R.C. School District is small, the sample consisted of the entire student population of grade twelve students, though only those present during the scheduled session, 191 in total,

completed the questionnaire and 18 senior high social studies teachers.

The conclusions drawn from the study are:

1. There were differences in the ranking of social studies in relation to the other subjects between the grade twelve students and the social studies teachers with the teachers being more positive in their ranking than the students.
2. The grade twelve boys and girls did not differ significantly in how they ranked the social studies in relation to the other subjects.
3. Senior high social studies teachers and grade twelve students differed in their perception of how frequently certain teaching strategies were used. Students seemed more likely than teachers to say that certain strategies were never used though both teachers and students seemed to favour occasionally as their answer.
4. There were differences in the attitudes toward social studies between students who identified the classroom as traditional-oriented and those who identified their classroom as resource-based oriented. Those who identified their classrooms as resource-based oriented were more positive in their attitudes toward social studies than those who did not.

5. There were differences in the perceptions of the teaching strategies used in the classroom between the grade twelve boys and girls. Girls were more likely than boys to say that certain teaching strategies were never used. Many teaching strategies, especially those identified as resource-based or non traditional, were never used in the classroom according to a very high percentage of boys and girls.
6. There were differences in the attitudes toward social studies between the grade twelve boys and girls. Girls were more positive than the boys in their response to how useful and important social studies was. Girls were also more positive than boys about students having to do several social studies courses as a graduation requirement.

This research supports previous research in other jurisdictions that found a relatively negative attitude toward social studies, however student attitudes were far less negative than in many studies.

### Implications

From this study it can be seen that social studies, while not being the lowest ranked subject in school, does have a relatively low ranking particularly among students. There seems to be a direct relationship between the teaching



strategies used in the classroom and the attitudes toward social studies that students hold. This study suggests that if resource-based teaching methods were used in the classroom, students would be much more positive about social studies and would be more accepting of the reasons for studying social studies but this study shows that these are the strategies that are used most infrequently in the classroom. Teachers need to use more seminar, role-playing, inquiry, multi-media and so forth in their teaching of social studies if they want students to be positive about their classes.

#### Recommendations for further research

Since this study was carried out, the Placentia-St. Mary's Roman Catholic School District has been consolidated with two other districts to form a new district called Western Avalon Roman Catholic School District. This study could be replicated in the large, new district or it could be replicated in some other school district in Newfoundland to give more credibility to the findings of this research.

The study found a relatively negative attitude toward social studies which raises several question for further investigation. Why do these attitudes exist? How do these attitudes affect achievement and classroom behaviour? What can teachers do to change these attitudes?

Further research is needed into the effects of the teaching strategies. This would allow teachers to make informed decisions when choosing the specific teaching strategies to use in their classrooms. An assumption is that if students feel more positive about what they are doing they will put more effort into it and will achieve more highly. If teachers can contribute to more positive attitudes among their students the over-all achievement in the classroom may be much improved

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## APPENDIX A

## Survey of Attitudes toward Social Studies

## Student Questionnaire

## Section A. Background Information

Check the appropriate blank.

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Check the following social studies courses that you have completed or are presently studying.

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Democracy 2101         | _____ |
| Cultural Heritage 1202 | _____ |
| Canadian Law 2104      | _____ |
| Canadian Economy 2103  | _____ |
| Canadian Issues 1201   | _____ |
| World History 2206     | _____ |
| World History 3201     | _____ |
| World Problems 3204    | _____ |
| World Geography 3202   | _____ |
| Consumer Studies 1201  | _____ |

## Section B. Attitudes toward social studies

The following statements are designed to provide information on your attitudes toward social studies. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Your response should indicate how you usually feel about the statement. Your response to the statements merely indicates your feelings. The response to each statement will fall in the range of strongly agree to strongly disagree.

- 1 Strongly agree (SA)
- 2 Agree (A)
- 3 Disagree (D)
- 4 Strongly disagree (SD)

| SA | A | D | SD |   |
|----|---|---|----|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 1. My favorite subject in school is social studies.   |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 2. The most important subject in school is social studies.  |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 3. The most interesting subject in school is social studies.                                      |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 4. The easiest subject in school is social studies.   |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5. The highest marks that I receive in school are in social studies.                              |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 6. The social studies textbooks were/are always interesting.                                      |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 7. Every student graduating from high school should have to do several courses in social studies. |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 8. The most useful subject in school is social studies.   |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 9. A subject in school that needs improvement is social studies.                                  |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 10. The most meaningful subject in school is social studies.                                      |

### Section C. Teaching strategies

The following are possible teaching strategies that can be used in the social studies classroom. Identify how often each of these strategies were or are used in your social studies classrooms by circling the appropriate number.

- Key: 1    Never  
       2    Occasionally  
       3    Frequently

|                                | Never | Occas. | Freq. |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| 1. Lecture                     | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 2. Demonstration               | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 3. Mastery-drill               | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 4. Question-answer             | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 5. Case-study                  | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 6. Inquiry/discovery           | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 7. Problem-solving             | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 8. Role-playing                | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 9. Photo-analysis              | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 10. Document analysis          | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 11. Seminar                    | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 12. Games                      | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 13. Skits/plays/pantomime      | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 14. Research papers            | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 15. Interview                  | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 16. Written product            | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 17. Individualized instruction | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 18. Exchange                   | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 19. Field trips                | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 20. Resource person            | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 21. Slides                     | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 22. Videos                     | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 23. Overhead transparency      | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 24. Television                 | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 25. Filmstrips                 | 1     | 2      | 3     |

|                       |   |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| 26. Films             | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. Computer Programs | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. Audio Tapes       | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. Photos/Collages   | 1 | 2 | 3 |

The following are various ways that a class can engage in a discussion exercise. Each is briefly explained so that students will be able to understand it. Indicate how often each was used in your social studies class.

|                               |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 30. Non directed discussssion | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|

This type of discussion occurs when anyone in class is free to raise any points on any topic and everyone who wishes is free to offer any comments that they wish with the interference of the teacher.

|            |   |   |   |
|------------|---|---|---|
| 31. Debate | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|------------|---|---|---|

This is a formal type of discussion which is organized by the teacher with several students being appointed to argue for the pro side of a particular topic while several others would be assigned to argue for the con side, that is against the topic.

|              |   |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| 32. Fishbowl | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|---|---|---|

A number of students would be assigned a topic to discuss and they would gather around the table to carry out the discussion. The other students would be given the task of observing what was happening in the group as you would observe the behaviour of fish in a bowl. After the first group of students had finished talking the second group would make observations about how the discussion went, noting such things as who spoke the most, whether some students in the group did not respond, whether all relevant points were made etc.

## 33. Jig-saw

1

2

3

To conduct this type of discussion the teacher decides the number of groups and the number of students in each group. Let's say that a teacher decides that he will have four groups of five. The teacher will make five sets of cards numbered from one to four. These cards are randomly distributed to the class. When the class

breaks into groups, all those with the number one get into one group, all those with the number two make another group and so on. Thus there would be four groups of five. After working on the topic the class would reconvene as a large group to hear the reports of the smaller groups.

## 34. Round table

1

2

3

This type of discussion involves the students sitting around the table and each member of the group would be given an opportunity to make whatever comments they want to on the assigned topic.

## 35. Panel discussion

1

2

3

The teacher would set up a panel that may be composed of students only, or students and guests, or just guests from outside to discuss a certain topic. Each person on the panel would be given an opportunity to speak on the topic followed by a general discussion.

## 36. Brainstorming

1

2

3

A form of non-directed discussion where students are called upon to come up with as many ideas as they can on a particular topic or issue. All suggestions offered would be accepted, though these might be narrowed down later.

#### Section D. Ranking of the subjects

The following are courses studied throughout the high school years. Please rank the subjects, in order of importance, from 1 to 11 giving the subject you consider most important a ranking of 1 and the subject you consider least important a ranking of 11.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Art/Music
- \_\_\_\_\_ Business Education (Typing, General Business)
- \_\_\_\_\_ English (Literature, Language)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family Studies (Food, Clothing, Family Living, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ French
- \_\_\_\_\_ Industrial Education (Drawing & Planning,  
Woodworking, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mathematics
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Religion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Science (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social Studies (Cult., Demo., Law, etc.)

## APPENDIX B

## Survey of Attitudes toward Social Studies

## Teacher Questionnaire

## Section A. Background Information

Check the appropriate blank.

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_

Minor \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching experience \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following best represents the portion of time you spend teaching social studies?

0--25% \_\_\_\_\_

25--50% \_\_\_\_\_

50--75% \_\_\_\_\_

75--100% \_\_\_\_\_

## Section B. Ranking of the subjects

The following are courses studied throughout the high school years. Please rank the subjects in order of importance from 1 to 11, giving the subject you consider the most important a ranking of 1 and the subject you consider the least important a ranking of 11.

\_\_\_\_\_ Art/Music

\_\_\_\_\_ Business Education (Typing, General Business)

\_\_\_\_\_ English (Literature, Language)

\_\_\_\_\_ Family Studies (Food, Clothing, Family Living, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ French



- \_\_\_\_\_ Industrial Education (Drawing & Planning,  
Woodworking, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mathematics
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Religion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Science (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social Studies (Cult., Demo., Law, etc.)

### Section C. Teaching strategies

The following are possible teaching strategies that can be used in the social studies classroom. Identify how often you use each of these strategies in your social studies classroom by circling the appropriate number.

- Key    1    Never  
       2    Occasionally  
       3    Frequently

|                       | Never | Occas. | Freq. |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| 1. Lecture            | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 2. Demonstration      | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 3. Mastery-drill      | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 4. Question-answer    | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 5. Case-study         | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 6. Inquiry/discovery  | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 7. Problem-solving    | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 8. Role-playing       | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 9. Photo-analysis     | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 10. Document analysis | 1     | 2      | 3     |
| 11. Seminar           | 1     | 2      | 3     |

|                                |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 12. Games                      | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Skits/Plays/pantomine      | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. Research papers            | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. Interview                  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. Written product            | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. Individualized instruction | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. Exchange                   | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. Field trips                | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. Resource person            | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. Slides                     | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 22. Videos                     | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 23. Overhead transparency      | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. Television                 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25. Filmstrips                 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 26. Films                      | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. Computer Programs          | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. Audio Tapes                | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. Photos/Collages            | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 30. Non-directed discussion    | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 31. Debate                     | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 32. Fishbowl                   | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 33. Jig-saw                    | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 34. Round table                | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 35. Panel discussion           | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 36. Brainstorming              | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## APPENDIX C

Holyrood  
Conception Bay  
AOA 2R0  
April 12, 1991

Dear :

I am presently working on a thesis as part of the requirements for a Master of Education degree in the area of social studies from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Recently I was given permission by Mr. John Harte, Superintendent, to conduct a survey of all of the senior high teachers who are teaching one or more social studies courses and the Level Three students in the Placentia-St. Mary's Roman Catholic School District. I would sincerely appreciate it if you would consent to having this survey carried out in your school and if you would take a few moments to encourage your students and teachers to complete the questionnaires to the best of their abilities. To protect the identities of the individuals and the schools, no identifying information is requested as this is not relevant to the study.

Mr. Kevin Flynn has graciously consented to conduct the survey and he will be collecting the completed questionnaires from the principals and will be returning the same to me.

Thank you for your cooperation in allowing this study to be conducted in your school.

Yours truly,

Thomas J. McCarthy

TJM/mm

## APPENDIX D

Holyrood  
Conception Bay  
AOA 2RO  
April 12, 1991

Dear Teacher:

The following research is undertaken as part of a thesis study being completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Master of Education degree in curriculum. Mr. John Harte, Superintendent, has given his approval to this project. You are requested to complete the questionnaire according to the directions given for each section. Please consider each item carefully and answer as honestly as possible. Care has been taken to protect the identities of teachers and schools, as neither are relevant to the overall purpose of the study.

Mr. Kevin Flynn has graciously consented to circulate the questionnaire and he will be collecting it when it is finished. Your prompt attention to and return of the completed questionnaire to your principal will be gratefully appreciated and I thank you in advance for your participation in this study.

Yours truly,

Thomas J. McCarthy

TJM/mm







