

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

A STUDY OF THE ROLE PERCEPTION OF ELEMENTARY
SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS WITH REFERENCE TO
SOCIAL ACTION LEARNING

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine what relationship, if any, existed between teacher-role perception and social action learning. In other words, it was an exploratory study to determine how elementary teachers perceive social action learning. The important question was: Will elementary social studies teachers who tend not to be active in community affairs perceive social studies instruction as preparation for social participation and community action? A total of 28 items representing four major categories of activity was included in a questionnaire distributed to a sampling of elementary social studies teachers in Leon and Gadsden counties of the state of Florida. The data provided by this study and presented in various tables are intended to show the importance of social action learning and social-political participation at the elementary level. Chi-square analyses revealed strong agreement among teachers relative to social action learning and social-participation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The National Council for the Social Studies (1971) issued a statement on guidelines for the social studies curriculum. Four primary objectives of the social studies were identified as objectives necessary to achieve effective citizenship, and effective citizenship was seen as the central focus of social studies education.

From its inception the school has been viewed as the social institution charged with transmitting knowledge to the young. Yet, despite this long-standing responsibility, it would be difficult to demonstrate that the school has handled this task well or that standards of accuracy and validity have been systematically applied to the information presented in the classroom. Nor can many schools assert with confidence that their curricula deal effectively with significant and powerful ideas.

The traditional and obvious sources of knowledge for social studies are the social science disciplines. They are and should remain important sources. However, the reasons for deriving social studies knowledge from the social sciences are not self-evident. Such knowledge is justified on arguments revolving around the needs of

individual students and of society for powerful ideas, dependable information, and reliable methods of inquiry.

Broadly based social issues do not respect the boundaries of the academic disciplines. The notion that the disciplines must always be studied in their pure form or that social studies content should be drawn only from the social sciences is insufficient for a curriculum intended to demonstrate the relationship between knowledge and rationally-based social participation.

According to the National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines the knowledge component of the curriculum serves three functions. First, it provides historical perspective which enables an individual to establish a cultural identity. Second, knowledge helps a person perceive patterns and systems in his or her environment. Third, the knowledge functions as the foundation for social participation. Without valid knowledge, participation in the affairs of society will likely be ineffectual and irresponsible.

In summary, the broad function of knowledge, whatever its source, is to provide the reservoir of data and ideas in combination with inquiry skills and social participation opportunities which can be used by the student to function rationally and humanely.

Included in the skills concept are intellectual, data processing, and human relations competencies.

Intellectual skills are of paramount importance in resolving social issues. They represent a vital link between knowledge and social participation.

Social studies education neither can nor should evade questions of value. Turmoil, discontent, and struggle for change characterize the present. Neither young people nor society will deal constructively with present social realities through blind acceptance of specified ways of behaving or of particular positions on public issues, or even of basic cultural values. Substantial proportions of young people and their communities are objecting to the rigid requirements of uniformity. Limiting the school's role to indoctrination is not only ineffectual, but incompatible with the principles of a free society.

Young children especially must learn the values in the course of daily living. Fair play and justice, opportunity for decision making, and social action, all of these ought to be expected for all students and teachers in every classroom.

Social participation in a democracy calls for individual behavior guided by the values of human dignity and rationality and directed toward the resolution of problems confronting society. The practice of the school and particularly of social studies programs have not provided for active and systematic student participation.

Social participation should mean the application of knowledge, thinking, and commitment in the social arena. Educational institutions can make a significant contribution to society by providing students with the knowledge and experience necessary to be effective, singly or as part of organized groups, in dealing with social problems.

It is essential that these four curriculum components, namely, knowledge, skills, values, and social participation be viewed as equally important; ignoring any of them weakens a social studies program. Each interacts with the others. Each nourishes the other.

Today, more than ever before, social action learning should be an integral part of the social studies curriculum.

Action learning is based on the premise that the 12 elementary and secondary school years are too long for young people to remain isolated from the responsibilities, issues, and rewards of practical involvement in the world outside the school. Unrich (1974) stated that action learning seeks to use the learning resources of the real world to give young students opportunities to participate with persons of all ages in performing tasks and making decisions that confront problems of the society.

Aronstein and Olsen (1974) contend that what is needed today is a curriculum that is oriented to the present and the future centered on the persisting problems, issues, and values of this era, focused directly

upon the life-concerns, needs, and resources of this generation.

To this end, ways must be found to blend the concept and practice of community-service education with the conventional school disciplines. Such opportunities can be found through school and student involvement outside the classroom, and through constructive interaction within the community. Included will be alternative kinds of teaching-learning. The most promising of these is the action learning project involving school and community for creative development.

Community participation in the selection of curricula materials is vital to American education. It is one aspect of community participation that schools everywhere should be encouraging. The American school is the part of government closest to the citizen and the successes and failures of the schools affect the lives of all children and their families.

One of the major issues of the 1977 annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies was the role of the social studies teacher in political participation at the local, national, and international levels.

Ehman, Mehlinger, and Patrick (1974) stated that social studies classrooms have been dominated by attempts to transmit knowledge, often very specific knowledge, about people, places, dates, and institutional structures.

Input from the academic disciplines has reinforced this knowledge transmission purpose.

Cassidy and Kurfman (1977) stated that in spite of the emphases on concepts, inquiry, and other new strategies from the social science disciplines the social studies curriculum has changed little. Instead of facts the emphasis has been on concepts; fact-finding skills have shifted to inquiry and process skills. Yet, the purpose remains the same: the acquisition of sound knowledge. The ideal is that of the disinterested student pursuing truth for its own sake.

There is no denying the importance of knowledge: the more one knows, the more sensible his world becomes. However, as an overall purpose of social studies, knowledge attainment is not sufficient to guide curriculum development or to inspire modern students. Most people, including students, are not primarily "knowers"; they are primarily "doers."

According to Hawke, Ahrens, and Morrissett (1975), a second characteristic of contemporary social studies programs is their emphasis on basic skills. The accountability movement provides encouragement for this emphasis. Students are expected to do well on tests. Within social studies, the focus is on reading social studies content, graphs, and maps.

Many social studies teachers in elementary schools

are faced with increasing pressure to produce students with increased capability in the three R's. Consequently, there seems to be less and less time for social studies. Priority is often given to measurable skills, such as reading content.

Learning only easily testable fact-finding skills will prove increasingly inadequate for life in the modern world.

A third category of goals includes values, the feeling dimension of social studies. According to Jarolimek (1977) there are those who believe that the school should play a forceful and positive role in teaching attitudes, values, and beliefs that characterize the American way of life as they perceive it. Others take exception to this approach. They would insist that the school should not tell pupils what to believe or value, that these are individual and personal affairs. The issue is further complicated because statements of beliefs, values, or attitudes are subject to a variety of interpretations and because there is a tendency to confuse general values with personal values.

In spite of these difficulties, social studies programs are expected to and do teach certain values. These general values are the ethical guidelines of society, and helping pupils internalize them is a responsibility the school shares with other agencies. However,

a conception of valuing is inadequate to build a social studies curriculum. Many people are unaware of what their values are, and hence have difficulty determining whether a particular thing or class of things is of worth, and why.

At this particular moment in the social studies, there is agreement and disagreement, consensus and confusion. Most social studies educators currently accept the concept of citizenship education as the primary purpose of the field, and most would agree that the primary objectives would be requisite to the citizenship education goal: knowledge, skills, values, and performance. Yet, when educators attempt to explain these core objectives, contradictions and concerns become evident.

According to Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977), three traditions, namely, social studies as citizenship transmission, social studies as social science, and social studies as reflective inquiry represent distinct competing philosophical systems. Each has advocates attempting to establish their system as the principal approach to social studies. The philosophical systems of each tradition have built up perspectives on knowledge, values, the processing of information, and a means for participation.

Proponents of each of the three traditions have gone on record as endorsing citizenship as the central goal of social studies education. To this end, the three traditions agree that good citizens need to accomplish such objectives as gaining knowledge, acquiring some

way of processing new information, learning how to select values, and knowing how to apply knowledge and values in the arena of civic participation.

While there are areas of agreement at a very general level, the philosophical conflicts inherent in the Three Traditions continue to create difficult problems for both teachers and school-based curriculum personnel.

Because of the confusion in social studies, it is essential that a teacher develop a rationale for teaching. Among the areas needing clarification are assumptions about society and the school's relationship to it, about the nature of children and how they learn, about the nature of values, and the need for action learning.

Raths, Harmon, and Simon (1966) contend that the teacher of social studies must be actively involved in the valuing process; and for a person to hold a value, he must act repeatedly in behalf of his professed belief. The student learns to be an active citizen in his immediate environment. Active involvement will at times be controversial, but the rationale for living one's professed beliefs is within one's democratic heritage.

One of the key contributions an elementary social studies teacher can make is to create a classroom environment where students feel free to speculate and to participate in social action learning to resolve personal and social problems. Elementary students must be taught within an uncoerced classroom atmosphere a process for

deriving, clarifying, and reflecting on the consequences of their values.

A child's political world has begun to take form before he or she enters school; however, the most rapid change in his or her political beliefs takes place during the elementary school years. Due to this fact, emphasis must be placed upon the political world of the elementary school teacher, who, either through direct or indirect means, will affect the student by his or her values and attitudes. One role of the teacher is that of a model and a developer of social values acceptable in society.

In order for action learning to take place, the student must be the self-initiator and the teacher the facilitator. The teacher must discontinue his or her traditional role of authority in the classroom and become a facilitator of action learning.

The major point is that social participation is no longer something to prepare for after reaching age 21, but social participation is something students are involved in as a learning activity throughout the school years.

A review of the social studies literature supports the assumption that didactic teaching is not adequate to meet today's challenges and that what is needed is a teaching style which promotes social action learning.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to investigate the role perception of social studies teachers with reference to social action learning. The purpose of this study was to find out what relationship, if any, existed between teacher-role perception and social action learning. In other words, it was an exploratory study to determine how elementary teachers perceive social action learning. The important question was: Will elementary social studies teachers who tend not to be active in community affairs perceive social studies instruction as preparation for social participation and community action?

Significance of the Study

One of the main themes of American politics is that of citizen participation, of involving individuals in the decision-making that would affect lives.

The world in which children will be adults will be different from the world in which they were children, in ways that are indistinct. Life as far ahead as can be seen will be carried on in a social context of continuing and increasing turmoil, locally, nationally, and internationally. As a result, there will be a crucial need for social action learning and community involvement.

Banks (1977) argues that involvement of elementary students in the activities of their community is essential. The involvement might take the form of observation or

information seeking, such as field trips, attending meetings, and interviews. It may take the form of political campaigning, community service or improvement, or even responsible demonstrations. The school should not only provide channels for such activities, but also build them into the design of its social studies program, kindergarten through grade twelve.

Manson, Marker, Ochoa, and Tucker (1971) stated that social participation is a necessary and essential component of modern-day social studies programs.

Douglas (1967) contends that the competent citizen has an active and positive desire to contribute to the common good and is becoming more alert to his or her social responsibilities. It is important that elementary students become aware of their social responsibilities and to participate in social action projects to implement the decisions that they make. Teachers have a responsibility to plan and implement such activities.

Cartwright (1968) states that in the case of young children, the schools are charged with the special responsibility of selecting, transmitting, and enlarging those portions of the culture which are appropriate to their stage of growth. Thus no teacher can escape the responsibility of being an alert student of social developments. A teacher cannot select wisely, teach effectively, or plan with foresight unless he or she keeps abreast of social

changes. This obligation rests with weight upon the elementary social studies teacher, because what he or she selects or neglects has a cumulative effect upon the students as they advance to the upper grades.

The elementary social studies teacher should be committed to community participation and social action in order to provide students with opportunities to make decisions and to carry out those decisions in some form of social action. Teachers who take participation roles in the everyday activities of communities will tend to influence students to become participants in their communities.

Teachers might take the role of helping to implement political decisions by campaigning in elections to help candidates through primaries and general elections. Teachers might take the role as organizer to advocate or object to consumer practices. It is hypothesized that such teachers will carry these practices into the classroom.

Skeel (1970) argues that numerous purposes can be listed for teaching an elementary school child about the daily events occurring around him. Teachers can encourage students to participate in making school policy as well as participating in community projects, such as preparing literature to inspire drivers to drive more safely.

Michaelis and Keach (1972) contend that teachers should give elementary children every opportunity to make choices, decisions, and judgments on matters that really concern them.

Easton and Dennis (1969) studied the origin of political efficacy. Their findings suggest that third graders have acquired a sense of political efficacy but that an early attachment to this norm does not uniformly occur in all children. Easton and Dennis' research suggests a program that would include community participation and social action at the elementary level.

Jarolimek (1977) hypothesizes that the elementary school child is not too young to begin applying knowledge to action, thereby, making school learning a part of real life. To be socially active does not mean that young children have to be concerned with the social issues of the time. But they can and should be involved in experiences that bridge the gap between what is learned in school and the real world in which they live.

Elementary children will not be socially active without the help of their teacher. It is reasonable to assume that most students will need some help and encouragement to make the change from classroom learning to out-of-school application. These activities may be no more than a cleanup of the school grounds, or they may be sophisticated attempts to influence local legislation but, in any case, social action projects provide students with valuable experiences in such application.

Preston (1974) stated that it is of critical importance that teachers make their classroom places where

children develop a sense of involvement. In such a classroom environment the meaning of involvement is learned. Since children learn what they live, and since it is important that they learn participatory democracy, elementary teachers should look for concrete ways in which student input has a better than even chance of influencing policy. Such experiences might take the form of action projects such as the improvement of automobile safety, to expose the inhuman conditions in many hospitals, prisons, and inner-city schools.

Thomas and Brubaker (1971) contend that critics of the schools have charged that the typical elementary social studies program fails to prepare children for active roles as enlightened citizens because it fails to engage them in real life problem-solving situations.

Patrick (1968) contends that the elementary years rather than high school years present the crucial time for training in citizenship attitudes and the wider range of behavior called political socialization. Social and political values learned during early childhood are unlikely to change. Social scientists place great stress upon the strength of early learning. Early learning has a crucial effect upon later learning; it conditions the individual's attitude toward politics throughout his adult life.

Curlee (1972) stated that the world's students have become a political force to be taken into account. They

have shaken many governments and toppled some. Therefore, it is important to begin at the elementary level to involve students in numerous challenges to initiate action in the school and to cope with issues in the adult, non-school world. If social studies instruction remains only on the knowledge level, the learners, in later life are likely to sit back and verbalize about social issues as they did in school rather than take appropriate action. But if they practice taking suitable action throughout their school years, they are likely to continue doing so as adults. The elementary years should provide a foundation of knowledge for action they can later take as citizens after finishing their education.

Ryan (1977) suggested that community action programs should be initiated during the elementary years, rather than waiting until students are in junior or senior high school.

Brubaker, Simon, and Williams (1977) stated that an active citizen is one who learns now in his immediate environment. He or she can be active as a decision-maker in his or her school and community outside. The good teacher according to this position is one who facilitates this involvement and is personally active himself.

In summary, teacher perceptions of their roles as elementary social studies teachers were important factors in social action learning from the classroom.

Need for the Study

To date, the practices of the school and particularly of social studies programs have not provided for action and systematic student participation in action learning.

The data which are presently available do not allow many conclusions of how the elementary social studies teacher perceives his or her role in action learning.

A limited amount of research has given attention to the extent of involvement of elementary teachers in the social and political activities of the community. It is the purpose of this study to present additional data on this aspect of social action involvement.

Definition of Terms

In order that the reader may more readily understand the language and interpret the data in this study, definitions of some frequently used terms are presented.

Social action learning: Action learning is learning through a combination of direct social experience and associated instruction and reflection. The three levels of action learning are (1) experiencing learning, (2) participation, and (3) action. Action learning consists of two kinds of learning: (1) participation and (2) change agency (action).

Social action: The term social action, as used in the educational setting, is any behavior consistent with the norms of rationality and human dignity, directed toward resolving a social issue. Ideally, social action is direct involvement by pupils of all ages in public affairs as a consequence of careful analysis of an issue and with thoughtful acceptance of the consequences of involvement.

Social action may occur in a variety of situations, ranging from spontaneous reactions to carefully planned learning experiences. Spontaneous social action projects usually arise from a situation that pupils perceive as critical. For an example, pupils might say, "Let's do something about that situation." The social action that results usually seeks to alleviate the symptoms rather than eliminate the causes of a social issue.

Social action projects: The term social action projects is used in the study to mean activities designed to influence society to improve the conditions of both the physical and social environment.

Social participation: The term social participation as used in this study refers to taking a part in social and political activities. Social participation provides the link between a learning experience and the political world.

Liberal: The term liberal as used in this study refers to an individual who favors progress and social action.

Rationale for Social Action Learning

All of the research in education reveals that one learns best when one is involved physically as well as mentally, because from this involvement comes the necessity to learn. Action learning produces this kind of involvement.

Action learning is learning through a combination of direct experience and associated instruction and reflection. Because it is still a developing practice in education no one label is universally used and accepted. Numerous synonyms are used for action learning. Among the synonyms are service learning, youth participation, community-based education, experiential education, and community involvement. The purposes and kinds of student experiences often vary according to the label employed. In service learning, volunteering in projects that fulfill community needs is emphasized. Experiential learning may connote activities more focused on self development such as travel or internship. What binds them together is an emphasis on the personal involvement of young people in the wider community and the recognition that learning should take place outside the classroom.

The strategies of the school have not demonstrated direct participation of the learner in the resolution of social problems. The potential of knowledge and thinking skills has not been realized because educators have confined their thinking to what has been termed two-by-four education, meaning the two covers of the textbook and the

four walls of the classroom. Such attempts on the part of the school have been limited to student government days or field trips to legislative sessions.

Recently, inquiry-oriented approaches have received considerable emphasis in educational literature. However, widespread practice and support are not evident. There is almost universal agreement among scholars, educators, educational theorists and even serious critics of education that students need to be involved in the learning process in some active way. Thus, modern programs are, without exception, requiring more active participation by the learner.

When students study social issues they should be given an opportunity to act on their decisions when it is reasonable and practical for them to do so. Vicarious learning, though desirable, is not enough.

In order for action learning to take place, the student must be the self-initiator and the teacher the facilitator. The teacher must relinquish his traditional role of authority in the classroom and become the enthusiastic helper. The teacher and student are involved in inquiry, with the resources of the community made available to the learning process. Students must learn to be responsible for and take the consequences of their decisions and actions, thus setting a pattern for the role they will play in their own community.

Before one can expect to recommend change he or

she must look at what exists. It is the purpose of this study to look at the teacher of elementary social studies and discover what he or she perceives to be his or her role in social action learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature for this study was limited to research related to the role perception of social studies teachers with reference to social action learning. To that end, the findings discussed have been arranged under the following sub-topics:

1. Teacher Role Perception
2. Social-Political Participation
3. Social Action Projects

According to Wright, Camp, Stosberg, and Fleming (1971), the idea that children and teachers should demonstrate changed social behaviors as a result of what is included in the school curriculum is not new, nor is the idea that education should become a tool for social actions. The teacher has always been expected to prepare children to become effective participants in public affairs. Hummel and Cox (1970) stated that the traditional role of the public school teacher is, to characterize it crudely, that of a bureaucratic functionary. The changing role of the elementary social studies teacher is a reflection of the changes in today's culture.

countries placed themselves in the lowest most disapproving position. This is an indication that teachers in general do not perceive of a role for themselves in the political process.

Hepburn (1975) surveyed 301 teachers of grades five, six, seven, and eight in metropolitan Atlanta to determine how well prepared are social studies teachers to assume their roles in the political education of children. These middle grade teachers revealed that they had very limited training in government. One fifth of the teachers had taken no political science course at all. Seventy-five percent of the teachers had taken a formal course in American government. Very few had studied any other area of government and politics. Despite their limited backgrounds in political studies, few had taken additional work in social studies beyond their college requirements. Only 17% had ever attended any type of social studies workshop or summer institute. It was concluded that the apparent weakness in content is one that should be considered in regard to teachers of the middle grades for their students usually range from 10 to 13 years old. This is the age level that most students can be expected to have cognitive skills that will enable them to organize data and think concretely. The teacher's lack of supporting knowledge of government and politics may make a difference in both the extent of motivation and the depth

of the investigation. Adelson and O'Neill (1966) reported that 11- and 13-year-olds are in the period of adolescence when the most substantial advance in understanding political ideas takes place.

Carpenter (1972) defined the role of the teacher as a director of learning, a counselor and advisor, a mediator of the culture, and a link with the community. The teacher's role covers not only a teacher's performance in the classroom but includes activities and responsibilities outside the classroom which are part of his or her total task.

Wiersma (1971) investigated teacher-role perception of 405 elementary and secondary education students and teachers. The roles of disciplinarian, counselor, advice-information giver, referrer, and motivator were used. He found that teachers placed more emphasis on the roles of disciplinarian and referrer and less emphasis to that of a motivator.

Loughary (1966) stated that the teacher's role as a presenter of information could be eliminated easily, but the teacher would continue to interpret, synthesize, and clarify information for action learning. Biddle (1964) stated that often the teacher is thought of simultaneously as a director of learning, as a friend and counselor of pupils, and as a citizen participating in various community activities. Gagne (1965) contends that

a role of the teacher is manager of the conditions of learning. The way in which a teacher perceives of his or her role will be indicative of what he or she does in the classroom.

Nickse (1973) concluded that as the administrator's role grew in response to the cries for efficiency in school operation the role of the teacher as decision-maker diminished. Another finding was that a major problem faced by teachers that inhibits them from taking leadership roles is their fear of reprisal.

Demarte and Sorgman (1974) studied the effects of an interdisciplinary course in inquiry on the perceptions of teachers. They found that teachers do not perceive of themselves as inquirers. It was concluded that the true effect relates to self-perceptions of the role of teacher in the conduct of inquiry that behavior follows perception. If teachers do not perceive of themselves as inquirers they will be reluctant to engage students in the decision-making process. Silberman (1973) concluded from a study on the teaching of inquiry that the teacher should be given an active role in creating opportunities for student-directed learning.

Feely (1972) stated that social studies teachers often inquire in a restrictive manner which results in teacher dominance instead of student autonomy. He concluded that this reflects the teacher's insecurity about what he or she perceives his or her role to be if he or she is not

directing each activity. This substantiates the hypothesis that many teachers do not perceive of their roles as coordinators of independent learning.

Anderson and Brewer (1946) studied the effects of teachers' dominative and integrative contacts on children's classroom behavior. They found that second grade children with a teacher who promoted social interchange had higher frequencies of social contributions to others than did a similar group of students with a teacher who was more directive, authoritarian, and controlling. Recently inquiry-oriented approaches have received considerable emphasis in educational literature; however, widespread practice and support are not evident.

Olsen and Parsley (1974) found from a study of 220 teachers in 11 school districts in southeast Ohio that teachers are unable to perceive a situation from another's viewpoint. Most teachers recognize that one of the roles of a social studies teacher is to explore values. These teachers admit that students should engage in valuing, that is forming their own values in an atmosphere of free inquiry. The disagreement among teachers results from defining a value and planning a process for its use.

Carson, Goldhammer, and Pellegrin (1967) studied role expectations and behavior of 508 teachers. The data presented provided strong evidence that experiences and aspirations concerning social participation are quite

limited for most teachers in three ways: First, teachers do not believe it is appropriate for them to participate widely in activities either in education or in other areas of community life. Second, they have not participated extensively in these activities. Third, teachers do not aspire toward a position in decision-making. They have low aspirations for their roles in decision-making which is limited in matters that extend beyond the individual classroom.

Kaltsounis (1972) stated that the role of the teacher in social participation is to make sure that children consider all alternatives, and their consequences, before taking action. The Educational Policies Commission (1967) stated that the teacher as a citizen of a community should exercise his right to influence public policies, thus setting an example for pupils. School administrators should recognize these diverse roles of the teacher. Wiley (1970) contends that educators must take advantage of the existing climate for change to redefine in a more dynamic manner the role of the classroom teacher, which should in return produce a new image of the profession.

Social-Political Participation

The involvement of teachers in social-political concerns must be accomplished in the social climate of today. As teachers, each one must work to teach skills necessary for the skillful management of private and

public affairs. There is a large segment of the population who is either by chance, choice, or design not taking part in the decision-making process. The teacher's responsibility is the encouragement of participation and opening of avenues that make participation interesting and productive.

Alutto and Belasco (cited in Conway, 1972) and Conway (1973) stated that teachers were not homogeneous in their desires for participation in decision making. In contradiction to the above findings, Wilsey and Schroeder (1974) stated that in recent years teachers have been striving for a stronger voice in the policy and decision-making procedures of the schools and that their roles are in a continuous state of flux.

McAulay (1968) studied the political and social attitudes of elementary teachers in an attempt to determine the attitudes of elementary teachers regarding contemporary social-political activities and the behavior of elementary teachers in relation to these attitudes. After determining attitudes, he attempted to find out if there were any relationships between a teacher's attitude and the pattern of behavior exhibited in the classroom. He concluded that elementary teachers seem to be somewhat liberal in their social-political beliefs, but less liberal in community behavior and still less liberal, socially and politically, within the classroom. One finding was that

teachers in the age categories of 30 to 40 are more liberal in their social-political beliefs and community behavior than they are in the classroom; whereas, with teachers between the ages of 50 to 60 this situation is reversed.

Eddins (1971) investigated the attitudes of 330 teachers relating to social and educational issues. He found that only 12% of the teachers participated in political elections.

Calloway (1951) reported in a study of 1,800 teachers in Missouri that one-half of them did not belong to either civic or social organizations. Cook and Greenhoe (cited in Calloway) in a study of the political actions of teachers found that less than one-eighth of teachers belonged to political groups. Running for political office and making political speeches tended to be disapproved. There seems to be an underlying hypothesis that indicating a political preference will reflect unfavorably on students and in teaching social studies. Engle (1971) stated that most teachers retreat to the safety of teaching trivia, avoiding controversial issues. A few, who are old enough to run the risk involved in dealing with controversy are in continual fear of public reprisal, unprotected by their fellow teachers who would prefer not to get involved. Atwell (1973) concluded from a study of the political values and political involvement of 202 social studies

teachers in Missouri that teachers have felt pressures not to participate actively in political processes. Another finding was that as age increased so did the amount of political involvement. The extent of political involvement cannot be predicted from the political values which are held. The only personal characteristic significant is the number of years in teaching and age. Robinson, Rush, and Heard (1968) found from measures of political attitudes that age apparently is not an important factor in regard to interest in public affairs or how well individuals are informed. They concluded that those in their thirties, forties and early fifties seem to be the most interested. although, during the 1960s Americans in their twenties were more inclined to step up the pace of civil rights.

According to Seeman (1967) teachers who perceive their political actions as effective are not only more likely to engage in such actions, but they may be better informed politically which increased their effectiveness.

Ziegler (1967) contends that a teacher's active political involvement contributed to a greater expression of political ideas in the classroom. Another finding from the study was that a significant degree of differences existed in the amount of political participation on the part of teachers in metropolitan areas, as opposed to teachers in rural and suburban areas. Still another finding was that teachers who perceived that political activity

was not sanctioned by the administration and the school board were more apt to be involved in political activity in professional education work than in community politics.

Franklin (1972) concluded from a study of 1,370 elementary teachers of grades one through six that most teachers placed themselves as liberals on the liberal-conservative scale. Although they were willing to take greater part in educational politics within the district and politics within the community, they were not willing to engage in discussion of conflict and political reality in the classroom. Willower and Jones (1963) found that more experienced teachers generally held conservative views while less experienced teachers were more liberal and permissive.

Fitzpatrick (1974) found from a study of the political orientations of 96 students attending schools in Buffalo, New York that relatively little research has been produced which can be useful to teachers concerned with the child's learning of political beliefs. Hess and Easton (1967) in a study of 12,000 children in grades two through eight found that elementary children have a highly idealized view of government. They concluded that the child's political orientation is completed between the ages 3 to 13. They were concerned that little action takes places in the elementary classroom.

Jennings (1971) stated that scholars are just now at the dawn of knowledge about political learning. Just how the teacher perceives his or her role in the process of political socialization has been barely researched. Although much has been done of late on political attitudes of children, little has been done on the elementary teacher who must play the agent of his socialization in school.

Social Action

Social action is a category that is perhaps the most controversial but is an area of social activity that has an enormous growth. Action is the efforts of local people to take a more direct say in the decisions that affect them. It differs from participation in that these activities have no established structure. They are self-created and self-directing movements of groups of people to attain desired ends. All of the research in education tells us that a person learns best when he is involved physically as well as mentally, because from this involvement comes the necessity to learn. Action learning produces this kind of involvement.

Newmann (1973) stated that many may equate social action only with militant forms of public protest but such is not the intent. Social action should be construed more generally as any behavior directed toward exerting influence in public affairs.

Armstrong (1977) concluded from case studies of community work that action groups throughout the country have become most marked and that adult involvement has already begun and many students are already leading, advising, or helping action groups in many ways. Teachers should begin to teach the skills necessary for community action at the elementary level.

Almond and Verba (1963) found from cross-cultural studies that adults who remembered having had opportunities to participate during early childhood years in decision-making at school were more likely to have a sense of political efficacy than adults who recalled no such participatory opportunities. They concluded that all citizens must have the ability to exert influence be it used only occasionally. Ochoa and Manson (1969) stated that there is almost universal agreement among scholars, educators, educational theorists, and even serious critics of educators that students need to be involved in the learning process in some active way. Without exception, modern programs are calling for more active participation by students. Daigon and Dempsey (1974) stated that not all learning takes place in the classroom. In recognition of that fact some schools now make it possible for students to become involved in action learning. Ubbellohde (1973) suggested that students already have an area of concern which is social, political, and ethical within their classrooms and schools. The

classroom or school should not, however, be viewed as an end in itself or as a limitation on student social action. It is the responsibility of the teacher to help students deal with social-political issues in an effort to bring about needed social change and action.

Watford and Haley (1973) in a study of innovative social studies in urban elementary schools found that the community was used as a classroom by 70 teachers with 2,000 students in grades four through eight. Some of the students who had been involved in social action learning organized programs in their secondary schools as a by-product of their elementary experience. Haller and Thorson (1968) concluded that the structure of the elementary school can provide ample opportunity for children to develop a sense of personal efficacy.

Keasey (1971) found from a study of 75 boys and 69 girls that the quality of a child's social participation facilitates moral development.

Burges (1976) concluded from a research study that some people are concerned and active; others are alienated and apathetic. But people everywhere recognize that political promises and professional decisions have limited value if made in the absence of accountability to and input from the community. What is needed is an approach in which community people and school professionals can work together.

The data which are presently available do not allow many conclusions about the social-political involvement of social studies teachers as a separate group. However, with the limited data about all teachers in this area, it appears that there is little involvement in the political and social activities of the community and one can assume that this might hold true for social studies teachers also.

A review of the literature supports the contention that little or no social action takes place at the elementary level and that what is needed is a teaching attitude that supports social action. It also reveals very little research directly related to the problem under investigation.

Extant Action Learning Programs

Quite a number of classrooms exist in which social action learning is the norm.

One third-grade class offers a messenger-shopping service for neighborhood members who are invalids. Each student spends one-half hour twice a week carrying messages and shopping for small items for persons who are unable to get out.

A first-grade class interviews parents and next-door neighbors to answer the question, "What can 6-year-olds do to improve this neighborhood?" The children select some of the recommended activities and carry them out

during the year.

A group of 7-year-olds in a small private school helps a group of 5-year-olds to read. Each week the 7-year-olds write a story and illustrate it. The story is copied onto large newsprint sheets and the illustrations are made on brown paper sheets that can be tacked up. Once a week the 7-year-olds read and dramatize their story for the 5-year-old children. They then help the 5-year-olds to read it.

A third grade class studies ways of reaching out to others.

The children made a large human relating map of the neighborhood, depicting all the people in the neighborhood whom they contact regularly. They try to figure out how to approach each one in such a way as to make his day a more cheerful and warm one. For example, if one youngster regularly stops at a newstand and buys a paper for his parents, he and his group will practice ways of saying things and asking for the paper that express goodwill and warmth.

A New York City teacher of fourth graders has for many years helped her (usually all white) students try to understand the black experience in America. After a great deal of study she and her children approach the question, "How can we help, now, to improve racial relations in America?" Last year they found another class in another

school (largely black) that had the same interest. After several meetings they decided they needed to begin with themselves; a long program of activities ensued in which the children carried out small service projects together, exploring their attitudes and reactions as they did so.

Sketches of Action Programs

Belmont Hills Elementary School--Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Belmont Hills Elementary School is a public elementary school with 500 students in grades one through six. The fifth grade classes consisting of 75 students are concerned about illegal dumping of refuse by local truckers. Principal objectives of the project include reclamation of the dumping site, prevention of dumping refuse at other non-developed sites in the area, and interrelating physical and social science disciplines. Student activities focus on achieving community awareness for the problem as well as utilizing community resources in correcting the damage already done to the study site. Fences are being erected, nature and access trails are being established, and students are being trained as guides and overseers of the trails and study pond.

Sharswood Elementary School--Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sharswood is a public elementary school with a

total of 640 students in grades kindergarten through six including two classes of retarded children.

The students identified discarded glass as a serious problem in their neighborhood. Broken glass litters streets, alleys, vacant lots, and the school yard. The objectives are to alert the community to the environmental hazards of broken glass; to lessen the amount of glass in the neighborhood; to teach pollution awareness to the students of the school; and to promote community-school cooperation. Major activities include "Operation typewriter," a multi-media information approach to achieving community awareness and cooperation, and the collection of broken glass during a clean-up campaign whereby proceeds from students' recycling efforts will be reinvested into the project activities.

Walnut Street Elementary
School--Darby, Pennsylvania

Walnut Street school is a public elementary school with 600 students in grades kindergarten through six in a suburban area.

A total of 50 students in grades six are concerned about the deterioration of the Darby and Cobbs Creek as recreational, educational, natural, and aesthetic settings for the citizens of Darby and Colwyn. The primary objective is to test and develop the combined creek watershed through joint school-community efforts. Student activities

involve in-depth investigation of the creek pollution, comparison analyses of creeks, and establishment of study sites on the creeks for utilization by students and community groups. Students also are initiating an environmental-education program to inform local citizens of the pollution problem and ways by which they contribute to solutions.

Chestnutwood Elementary
School--Ardmore,
Pennsylvania

Chestnutwood has a total of 400 students in grades one through six.

The students are alarmed at the rapid depletion of nutritive elements in soils at selected sites in Haverford Township. During extensive field and laboratory studies of these soils, the primary activities are to illustrate "before and after" effects of man's abuse of soils, to examine the results of treating planted soils with various nutrients and radiation, to carry out field population studies and to compare data with that obtained by students in an urban school. The chief objective is to help the students understand the effects of soil abuse on dependent plant and animal life.

Westtown Lower School--
Westtown, Pennsylvania

Westtown has a total of 131 students in grades kindergarten through six.

The primary environmental concerns of the students relate to the ecosystems which are found on the school campus. The purpose is to examine carefully ecosystem in its present conditions and to restore those which have been abused. In this way, a unique variety of natural habitats are being maintained and used by Westtown students as well as youngsters from other schools in Chester and Delaware counties. A feasibility study is also being conducted to determine if an old mill on the premises is suitable for use as an ecology center and a connecting hiking and bicycle trail might be coordinated with the environmental plans of the West Chester Area School District.

Wheatley Elementary School
--South Eastern,
Pennsylvania

Six graders chose a neighborhood project Model Cities Program. The students began fieldwork by walking around their neighborhood taking pictures of abandoned houses and dangerous areas. They then contacted the neighborhood improvement Project of Model Cities for help in improving whatever they could. Classroom follow-up of the community study included story writing, reports, poetry writing, research, photo displays with captions and a complete use of knowledge gained.

Woodland Elementary School
--South Eastern,
Pennsylvania

Students are working for positive and constructive change in their school building, especially the cafeteria, where ceiling tiles regularly become unfastened and drop to the floor or onto a table. At the students' request a local television station has given the problem coverage, and the students are confident of receiving the repairs needed.

Kansas City, Missouri
School System

The community as a classroom began as an intermediate program and is currently being used by 70 teachers with 2,000 grade four through eight students in nine schools. The students spend approximately half of their social studies time outside of the classroom investigating topics of their own choice. Indoor activities include reading and writing to record facts and create impressions, verbal interaction in discussion groups, activity planning and listening to speakers. Students use instamatic and movie cameras to document their investigation. Student surveys of community characteristics such as neighborhood street lights and numbers of occupants per dwelling create spinoff community activities that are improving neighborhoods. Some of the students have organized programs in their secondary schools as a by-product of their

affairs which affect their lives. The teacher who is committed to social action will perceive of his or her role as a participant based on the belief that social change can best be accomplished by engaging in such activities.

Population and Sample

The population from which the sample was drawn included 19 elementary schools in Leon County and seven elementary schools in Gadsden County.

It was decided that the sample would consist of 78 primary and intermediate teachers drawn from a table of random numbers. This yielded a sampling of three teachers from each of the schools in the population.

Description of the Instrument

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to examine the teacher's perception of his or her role as an elementary social studies teacher and to find out if role perception influences the way a teacher perceives of social action learning. The instrument consisted of four parts. The first part contained 10 items designed to measure the teacher's perception of his or her role as an elementary social studies teacher.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of five items designed to measure the teacher's attitude toward community involvement and participation by students

and teachers.

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of five items designed to measure the teacher's attitude toward social action projects as an instructional strategy.

The teacher was asked to respond to each question by checking the response that most closely represented his or her feeling. A 5-point scale was utilized: agree, partly agree, partly disagree, disagree, uncertain.

Part four of the questionnaire consisted of eight items designed to elicit the teacher's opinion of social-political participation both personal and as an instructional strategy. The teacher was required to respond to each question by checking either yes or no.

Statistical Methodology

This section is composed of the hypotheses, assumptions, methodology, and analyses of the data.

Hypotheses

Four null hypotheses were expressed for the purposes of this study:

1. The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as a social studies teacher (i.e., judge, motivator, purveyor of knowledge) is independent of the way that a teacher perceives his or her role as a decision-maker.

2. The way a teacher perceives his or her

traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., to teach political participation skills) and his or her role in the participation in social-political activities are independent.

3. The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., an organizer) and his or her role in the implementation of social action learning are independent.

4. The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies educator to teach active participation in social action projects and the age of the teacher are independent.

Assumptions of the Study

1. Elementary social studies teachers need to redefine the role of the social studies teacher which would produce a new image of the profession.

2. Elementary social studies teachers tend to avoid value issues in the classroom.

3. Teachers verbalize about values with children but fail to initiate action upon these social values.

4. Teachers feel that the nature of their teaching position forbids participation in political activity.

5. Political commitment and skills beyond voting are not usually taught in elementary social studies.

6. Elementary social studies teachers are more

Presentation of Data

Raw Data

The response patterns of all teachers within Leon and Gadsden counties who completed the questionnaires are listed in Tables 1 through 6.

The raw data were converted to percentages in Tables 1 through 6. By comparing the percentages of teachers responding in a specific way to a particular item, it is possible to determine both similarity and differences in responses.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Teachers Sampled as
to Age and Sex

	Number	Relative frequency percentage	Adjusted frequency percentage
Age			
26-25	5	7.1	7.1
26-30	11	15.7	15.7
31-40	30	42.9	42.9
41-50	11	15.7	15.7
51 and Over	13	18.6	18.6
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Sex			
Female	62	88.6	100.0
Missing cases	8	11.4	Missing
Total--valid cases	62		

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Teachers Sampled as to Length
of Teaching Experience

Length of teaching experience	Number	Relative frequency percentage	Adjusted frequency percentage
1st year	1	1.4	1.4
1-2 years	3	4.3	4.3
3-5 years	8	11.4	11.4
6-10 years	24	34.3	34.3
11-20 years	18	25.7	25.7
Over 20	16	22.9	22.9
Total	70	100.0	100.0

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Teachers Sampled on Role Perceptions

Role	Number	Relative frequency percentage	Adjusted frequency percentage
<u>Indivisible</u>			
Agree	65	92.9	92.9
Partly agree	5	7.1	7.1
Partly disagree	—	—	—
Disagree	—	—	—
Uncertain	—	—	—
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Confident</u>			
Agree	15	21.4	21.7
Partly agree	32	45.7	68.1
Partly disagree	6	8.6	76.8
Disagree	14	20.0	97.1
Uncertain	2	2.9	100.0
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing case
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Just</u>			
Agree	9	12.9	12.9
Partly agree	15	21.4	21.4
Partly disagree	15	21.4	21.4
Disagree	27	38.6	38.6
Uncertain	4	5.7	5.7
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Disciplinarian</u>			
Agree	23	32.9	32.9
Partly agree	20	28.6	28.6
Partly disagree	8	11.4	11.4
Disagree	18	25.7	25.7
Uncertain	1	1.4	1.4
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Paragon of Knowledge</u>			
Agree	32	45.7	49.2
Partly agree	21	30.0	32.3
Partly disagree	3	4.3	4.6
Disagree	6	8.6	9.2
Uncertain	3	4.3	4.6
Missing cases	5	7.1	Missing
Total valid cases	70	100.0	100.0

Table 3--Continued.

Role	Number	Relative frequency percentage	Adjusted frequency percentage
<u>General adviser</u>			
Agree	49	70.0	73.1
Partly agree	12	17.1	17.9
Partly disagree	2	2.9	3.0
Disagree	2	2.9	3.0
Uncertain	2	2.9	3.0
Missing cases	3	4.2	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Director of human relations</u>			
Agree	57	81.4	81.4
Partly agree	13	18.6	18.6
Partly disagree	—	—	—
Disagree	—	—	—
Uncertain	—	—	—
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Coordinator of group and independent learning</u>			
Agree	58	82.9	82.9
Partly agree	11	15.7	15.7
Partly disagree	1	1.4	1.4
Disagree	—	—	—
Uncertain	—	—	—
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Media specialist</u>			
Agree	51	72.9	72.9
Partly agree	15	27.1	27.1
Partly disagree	—	—	—
Disagree	—	—	—
Uncertain	—	—	—
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>How a teacher involves his or her role in the learning</u>			
Agree	66	94.3	94.3
Partly agree	4	5.7	5.7
Partly disagree	—	—	—
Disagree	—	—	—
Uncertain	—	—	—
Total	70	100.0	100.0

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of Teachers Sampled on Community Participation

Role	Number	Relative frequency percentage	Adjusted frequency percentage
<u>Observer</u>			
Agree	39	55.7	56.5
Partly agree	25	35.7	36.2
Partly disagree	1	1.4	4.3
Disagree	1	1.4	1.4
Uncertain	1	1.4	1.4
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Organizer</u>			
Agree	9	12.9	12.9
Partly agree	23	32.9	32.9
Partly disagree	12	17.1	17.1
Disagree	24	34.3	34.3
Uncertain	2	2.9	2.9
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Supporter</u>			
Agree	27	38.6	38.6
Partly agree	28	40.0	40.0
Partly disagree	3	4.3	4.3
Disagree	9	12.9	12.9
Uncertain	3	4.3	4.3
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Advocater</u>			
Agree	9	12.9	13.0
Partly agree	26	37.1	37.7
Partly disagree	12	17.1	17.4
Disagree	14	20.0	20.3
Uncertain	8	11.4	11.6
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Teach political participation skills</u>			
Agree	30	42.9	44.1
Partly agree	19	27.1	27.9
Partly disagree	9	12.9	13.2
Disagree	6	8.6	8.8
Uncertain	4	5.7	5.9
Missing case	2	2.9	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0

Table 5
Frequency Distribution of Teachers Sampled on Social Action Projects

Role	Number	Relative frequency percentage	Adjusted frequency percentage
<u>Active participant</u>			
Agree	14	20.0	20.3
Partly agree	26	37.1	37.7
Partly disagree	12	17.1	17.4
Disagree	14	20.0	20.3
Uncertain	3	4.3	4.3
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>General advisor</u>			
Agree	26	37.1	37.7
Partly agree	22	31.4	31.9
Partly disagree	10	14.3	14.5
Disagree	8	11.4	11.6
Uncertain	3	4.3	4.3
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Decision-maker</u>			
Agree	9	12.9	13.0
Partly agree	22	31.4	31.9
Partly disagree	14	20.0	20.3
Disagree	22	31.4	31.9
Uncertain	2	2.9	2.9
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Organizer</u>			
Agree	32	45.7	47.1
Partly agree	27	38.6	39.7
Partly disagree	7	10.0	10.3
Disagree	2	2.9	2.9
Uncertain	—	—	—
Missing case	2	2.9	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
<u>Manipulator</u>			
Agree	21	30.0	30.4
Partly agree	19	27.1	27.5
Partly disagree	14	20.0	20.3
Disagree	9	12.9	13.0
Uncertain	6	8.6	8.7
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0

Table 6
Frequency Distribution of Teachers Sampled on Social-Political Participation

Question	Number	Relative frequency percentage	Adjusted frequency percentage
Do you believe in carrying your social-political beliefs into the classroom?			
Yes	12	17.1	18.2
No	54	77.1	81.8
Missing case	4	5.7	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Do you believe that social-political issues should be discussed in the classroom?			
Yes	56	80.0	83.6
No	11	15.7	16.4
Missing case	3	4.3	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Do you discuss social-political issues in the class?			
Yes	47	67.1	68.1
No	22	31.4	31.9
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Do you participate in social-political issues outside the school environment?			
Yes	43	61.4	62.3
No	26	37.1	37.7
Missing case	1	1.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Should social action be a part of the elementary school curriculum?			
Yes	43	61.4	68.3
No	20	28.6	31.7
Missing case	7	10.0	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Do you feel that you have the time, ability, and inclination to implement community participation projects?			
Yes	16	22.9	23.9
No	51	72.9	76.1
Missing case	3	4.3	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Do you feel that you need special skills and experiences to implement community participation projects?			
Yes	50	71.4	74.6
No	17	24.3	25.4
Missing case	3	4.3	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0
Do you believe that the public accepts community action?			
Yes	56	80.0	90.3
No	6	8.6	9.7
Missing case	8	11.4	Missing
Total	70	100.0	100.0

However, while percentage tables are an effective method of presenting data, they have serious limitations. They cannot tell whether differences in response patterns are statistically significant, nor can they tell, at a glance, how the response patterns to each of the items range on a continuum from complete agreement to complete disagreement.

As a result, the data contained in Table 1 were also analyzed by Chi-square Goodness of Fit test. The results are contained in Tables 7 through 10. (Appendix B).

Hypothesis 1

The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., judge, motivator, purveyor of knowledge) is independent of the way that a teacher perceives his or her role as a decision-maker.

Findings

Chi-square analyses revealed that there is a dependency between the way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as a judge, motivator, and purveyor of knowledge and the way that a teacher perceives his or her role as a decision-maker.

Analysis of these data is shown in Table 7, Appendix B.

Conclusion

The Chi-square Goodness of Fit test for independence revealed that there is a relationship in the way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role and his or her role as a decision-maker. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., to teach political participation skills) and his or her role in the participation in social-political activities are independent.

Findings

Chi-square analyses revealed that the way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., to teach political participation skills) and his or her actual role in social-political activities are independent.

Conclusion

The Chi-square Goodness of Fit test indicated independence in role perception. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., an

Conclusion

Due to the findings revealed by the Chi-square Goodness of Fit test, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

In interpreting the meaning of the data collected and analyzed by Chi-square, it probably can be said that teachers either agree in their perceptions of the role of an elementary social studies teacher or, if they disagree, they will not differ greatly in their perceptions.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The data presented provided strong evidence that experiences and aspirations concerning social action learning and social-political participation are quite limited for most teachers in three ways. First, they are limited in that teachers tend not to believe that it is appropriate for them to participate widely in activities of a social-political nature either in school or in other areas of community life. Second, they have not participated extensively in these activities. Third, teachers tend not to aspire toward a more powerful role in decision-making in school policies or in other spheres of community life. Teachers have low aspirations for their roles in matters that extend beyond the borders of the individual classroom.

Rejection of Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis that the way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., judge, motivator, purveyor of knowledge) is independent of the way that a

teacher perceives his or her role as a decision-maker was rejected. See Table 7 in Appendices.

The test for independence of answers between the way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as a judge, motivator, purveyor of knowledge and his or her role as a decision-maker was done by a Chi-square Goodness of Fit test for independence in a two-way contingency table. The calculated Chi-square value was 54.28. Whereas the critical, or rejection region, as defined by χ^2 with 16 degrees of freedom is 26.296 at alpha .05 level of significance. The calculated Chi-square value was 54.28 which exceeds the critical value of 26.296. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

Teachers tend to perceive their traditional role (i.e., as a judge, motivator, and purveyor of knowledge) the same way that they perceive of their role as a decision-maker. Due to this fact, independence in role perception was rejected.

Fail to Reject Hypothesis 2

The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., to teach political participation skills) and his or her role in the participation in social-political activities are independent. For this reason, the hypothesis

was not rejected. See Table 8 in Appendices.

To test the teacher's perception of his or her traditional role to teach political participation skills and his or her actual role in social-political activities was done by a Chi-square Goodness of Fit test for independence in a two-way contingency table. The calculated χ^2 value was 1.75 while the critical value, or rejection region, is given by a χ^2 value with 4 degrees of freedom of 9.488, significant at the .05 level. Since χ^2 calculated value is 1.75 which is smaller than the critical value at 9.488, the hypothesis of independence is not rejected.

Conclusion

This supports the hypothesis that the way a teacher perceives his or her role as a teacher of political participation skills and the teacher's actual participation in social-political activities are independent. The way a teacher perceives his or her role and his or her actual participation in social-political activities are different.

Fail to Reject Hypothesis 3

The way a teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an elementary social studies teacher (i.e., an organizer) and his or her role in the implementation of community action projects are independent. The hypothesis was not rejected. See Table 9 of the Appendices.

is 26.296 at .05 level of significance. Since the calculated Chi-square value of 15.064 is less than the critical value of 26.296 at .05 level of significance, the hypothesis was not rejected.

However, a significant level of 0.52 which is not significant as compared to the test made in hypothesis 3 must be mentioned. At some levels of alpha the hypothesis of independence would be rejected.

Conclusion

As stated before, the data presented provide strong evidence that experiences and aspirations concerning social action learning and social-political participation are quite limited for most teachers.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to 78 teachers drawn from 19 elementary schools in Leon County and seven elementary schools in Gadsden County. The findings will be valid only when generalized to the population area.

The study depends crucially on the validity of the questionnaire as an appropriate measure of how teachers perceive of their roles as elementary social studies teachers. The use of a questionnaire to collect data for any study is limited; the researcher can never be sure that the responses he or she receives from the questionnaire represent the true feelings and actions of

the subject.

Due to the fact that very little research has been done in the area of social action learning at the elementary level, documentations for the study were limited in that area.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study. They are based on the data gathered from a random sample of 78 elementary teachers in 26 schools. The results have been generalized to the population which includes the classroom teachers in the public schools of Leon and Gadsden counties in the state of Florida.

1. Social-political activities considered to be both a right and a duty by people in most walks of life are not regarded as appropriate by a majority of the teachers sampled.

2. The apparent lack of time, ability, and inclination of elementary social studies teachers to pursue social action learning and community participation should be considered seriously for it is at this level that teachers are expected to begin to prepare children to become effective participants in public affairs.

3. Elementary social studies teachers who perceive that the administration and school board do not sanction political activity tend not to be active.

4. Elementary social studies teachers do not believe that it is appropriate for them to engage in political discussion and planning of social action projects or to participate widely in community activities.

5. Elementary social studies teachers do not feel that they should convey to students their own feelings when discussing social action or political issues for they feel that elementary children are too young to be exposed to political and social problems.

6. Elementary social studies teachers do not aspire for the role of decision-maker beyond the classroom.

7. The way in which an elementary social studies teacher perceives his or her traditional role as judge, motivator, purveyor of knowledge and his or her role as a decision-maker is dependent or the same.

8. The way an elementary social studies teacher perceives his or her traditional role to teach political participation skills and his or her role in the participation in social-political activities are independent.

9. The way an elementary social studies teacher perceives his or her traditional role as an organizer and his or her role in the implementation of community action projects are independent.

10. The way a teacher perceives his or her

traditional role as an elementary social studies educator to teach active participation in social action projects and the age of the teacher are independent.

11. Teachers who are between 30 and 40 years old tend to be more liberal in their socioeconomic beliefs and community behavior than they are in the classroom.

12. Teachers who are 50 years old and older tend to be less liberal.

Recommendations for Further Study

Just how the teacher of elementary social studies perceives his or her role in social action learning and social-political participation has barely been researched. The findings of this exploratory study encourages the writer to feel that the study is worthy of replication with the following changes:

1. The sample should be enlarged to include subjects from a variety of localities.

2. The questionnaire should be revised and expanded to include other areas of concern and a better way of eliciting responses from the subjects.

Further recommendations include the following:

1. Teachers of elementary social studies should take a more active part in community affairs in order to influence public policies thus setting examples for their students.

2. Research should be done to determine if economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds have any influence on a teacher's social-political activities.

3. More active participation by elementary students in community affairs is recommended.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

DATE:

TO: The Elementary Teachers of
Leon and Gadsden Counties

SUBJECT: Teacher Role Perceptions

The enclosed questionnaire is designed to determine how elementary social studies teachers perceive of their roles in the classroom.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts. The first part concerns your perception of what the role of an elementary social studies teacher should be.

The second part concerns your perception of what the role of an elementary social studies teacher should be in community involvement and participation.

The third part concerns your perception of what the role of a social studies teacher should be in implementing social action projects.

The fourth part concerns your opinion of social-political participation.

In order to present a document of how teachers perceive of an elementary social studies teacher's role, I am asking your help. Please take a few minutes to check the questionnaire. Your answers should reflect your sincere opinion.

If you would be interested in receiving the significant findings of the study, please fill out the information at the end of the questionnaire and I will be most happy to forward them to you.

Sincerely,

Juanita C. Bailey

JCB/s

Enc.

QUESTIONNAIRE

SOCIAL-POLITICAL CONCERNS

Name of School _____

Location of School _____

School Population: Less than 2,500 ☐ 2,500 ☐Greater than 2,500 ☐Your Age: 20-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐51 and over ☐ Sex: Male ☐Female ☐Number of years of teaching experience: 1st year ☐1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ over 20 ☐

Grade level teaching (Fall, 1977) or estimated grade level, if ungraded _____.

DIRECTIONS: Read each item carefully. Answer each item concerning your perception of what the role of an elementary social studies teacher should be. Answer each item concerning your perception of what the role of an elementary social studies teacher should be in community involvement and participation. Answer each item concerning your perception of what the role of a social studies teacher should be in implementing social action projects. Your answers should reflect your sincere opinion.

Marking the Questionnaire:

Each item is a statement of opinion. You may
 (a) agree, (b) partly agree, (c) partly disagree,
 (d) disagree, (e) uncertain. Partly agree is more inclined to agree and partly disagree is more inclined to disagree.

PART I--Role Perception

1. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a motivator to facilitate learning.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
2. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a confidant, one to whom secrets are confided.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
3. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a judge to form an opinion after inquiry or to form a conclusion or an evaluation about something.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
4. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a disciplinarian, one who disciplines or enforces order.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐

5. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a purveyor of knowledge.
- Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
6. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of general advisor, supplying information on people, places, and resources in the community and on procedures and strategies.
- Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
7. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a director of human relations to explore and clarify values as they relate to each other and to society.
- Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
8. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a coordinator of group and independent learning activities through the use of the process of inquiry.
- Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
9. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a media specialist in the selection of simulated role-play exercises through which children can practice leadership, decision-making and participation skills.
- Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
10. How a teacher perceives of his role in the classroom affects the learning environment of children.
- Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐

PART II--Community Participation

1. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of an observer, to gather knowledge about what is happening in local, national, and international areas.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
2. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of an organizer, one who arranges community action projects.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
3. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a supporter, one who supports community projects.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
4. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of an advocator, one who argues for programs and ways elementary students can participate.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
5. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children should be to teach political participation skills.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐

PART III--Social Action Projects

1. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of an active participant in social action projects.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
2. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a general advisor to supply information on procedures and strategies for implementing social action projects.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
3. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a decision-maker to determine what constitutes an issue for social action.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
4. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of an organizer to arrange social action projects suitable for classroom participation.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐
5. A role of the elementary social studies teacher to children is that of a manipulator, one who manages social action projects suitable to the needs and capabilities of elementary children.
 Agree ☐ Partly Agree ☐ Partly Disagree ☐
 Disagree ☐ Uncertain ☐

PART IV--Social-Political Participation

Directions: Below are a list of question. Indicate your response by checking either yes or no. Your answers should reflect your sincere opinion.

1. Do you believe in carrying your social-political beliefs into the classroom?
Yes _____ No _____
2. Do you believe that social-political issues should be discussed in the classroom?
Yes _____ No _____
3. Do you discuss social-political issues in the classroom?
Yes _____ No _____
4. Do you participate in social-political issues outside the school environment?
Yes _____ No _____
5. Should social action be a part of the elementary school curriculum?
Yes _____ No _____
6. As an elementary social studies teacher, do you feel that you have the time, ability, and inclination to implement community action projects?
Yes _____ No _____
7. Do you feel that you need special skills and experiences to implement community participation projects?
Yes _____ No _____
8. Do you believe that the public accepts community action?
Yes _____ No _____

- - -

I want to receive the significant findings of the study.

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

COUNTY _____

APPENDIX B

TABLES

Table 7

Chi-square Test of Analyses Between the Way a Teacher of Social Studies Perceives His or Her Traditional Role (i.e., Judge, Motivator, Purveyor of Knowledge) and the Way a Teacher Perceives His or Her Role as a Decision Maker

Judge, Motivator, Purveyor of Knowledge		Decision maker										Row total	
		Agree		Partly agree		Partly disagree		Disagree		Uncertain			
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Agree	1	5	7.2	—	—	2	2.9	1	1.4	1	1.4	9	13.0
Partly agree	2	3	4.3	7	10.1	4	5.8	1	1.4	—	—	15	21.7
Partly disagree	3	1	1.4	10	14.5	2	2.9	1	1.4	1	1.4	15	21.7
Disagree	4	—	—	3	4.3	5	7.2	18	26.1	—	—	26	37.7
Uncertain	5	—	—	2	2.9	1	1.4	1	1.4	—	—	4	5.8
Column total		9	13.0	22	31.9	14	20.3	22	31.9	2	2.9	69	100.0

Chi-square = 54.28 with 16 degrees of freedom.

Table 8

Chi-square Test of Analyses Between the Way a Teacher of Social Studies Perceives His or Her Traditional Role to Teach Political Participation Skills and His or Her Role in the Participation in Social-Political Activities

Teach political participation skills		Participation in social-political activities						Row total	
		Yes			No				
		No.	1	Percent	No.	2	Percent	No.	Percent
Agree	1	19	28.4	11	16.4		30	44.8	
Partly agree	2	13	19.4	6	9.0		19	28.4	
Partly disagree	3	4	6.0	5	7.5		9	13.4	
Disagree	4	3	4.5	2	3.0		5	7.5	
Uncertain	5	2	3.0	2	3.0		4	6.0	
Column total		41	61.2	26	38.8		67	100.0	

Chi-square = 1.75 with 4 degrees of freedom.

Table 9

Chi-square Analysis Between the Way a Teacher of Social Studies
Perceives His or Her Traditional Role as an Organizer to Arrange
Social Action Projects Suitable for Classroom Participation and
Whether or Not He or She Has the Time, Ability and Inclination
to Implement Community Action Projects

Organizer		Time, ability, and inclination				Row total	
		Yes		No			
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Agree	1	8	12.2	22	33.8	30	46.2
Partly agree	2	7	10.8	20	30.8	27	41.5
Partly disagree	3	1	1.5	5	7.7	6	9.2
Disagree	4	—	—	2	3.1	2	3.1
Uncertain	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Column total		16	24.6	49	75.4	65	100.0

Chi-square = 0.95 with 3 degrees of freedom.

Table 10

Chi-square Analysis Between the Way a Teacher of Social Studies Perceives
His or Her Role as an Active Participant in Social Action
Projects and the Age of the Teacher

Active participant		Age										Row total	
		20-25		26-30		31-40		41-50		51 & Over			
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Agree	1	1	1.4	2	2.9	4	5.8	3	4.3	4	5.8	14	20.3
Partly agree	2	3	4.3	4	5.8	10	14.5	5	7.2	4	5.8	26	37.7
Partly disagree	3	—	—	2	2.9	9	13.0	—	—	1	1.4	12	17.4
Disagree	4	—	—	3	4.3	6	8.7	3	4.3	2	2.9	14	20.3
Uncertain	5	1	1.4	—	—	1	1.4	—	—	1	1.4	3	4.3
Column total		5	7.2	11	15.9	30	43.5	11	15.9	12	17.4	69	100.0

Chi-square = 15.664 with 16 degrees of freedom.

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