The social studies classroom: attitudes and perspective from the deaf and hard of hearing students through literature

Amanda Sievers

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.rit.edu/theses

Recommended Citation


This Master's Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Thesis/Dissertation Collections at RIT Scholar Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of RIT Scholar Works. For more information, please contact rit.scholarworks@rit.edu.
The Social Studies Classroom: Attitudes and Perspectives from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students through Literature

MSSE Master's Project

Submitted to the Faculty
Of the Master of Science Program in Secondary Education
Of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

National Technical Institute for the Deaf
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

By

Amanda R. Sievers

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Masters of Science

Rochester, New York

June 17th, 2005

Approved:

Project Advisor

MSSE Program Director
# Table of Contents

Topics by Page

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Introduction of Literature Review .............................................................................................. 4-7
The Content of Social Studies ..................................................................................................... 8
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students ............................................................................................ 8-15
Students of Social Studies Classrooms in General ...................................................................... 15-26
Implications for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in Social Studies .............................................. 26-28
The Last Word ............................................................................................................................. 28-29
References .................................................................................................................................... 30-32
Abstract

Millions of children attend elementary, middle and high schools throughout the country to be instructed by teachers within six major subjects. Out of six main subjects taught in academic schools, social studies has been proven as one of the most difficult yet complex subjects among students especially the deaf and hard of hearing students.

It has been noted where social studies, elaborate and diverse as it may be, have created an environment where most students have the tendency associate this subject with negative attitude and experiences. Critical factors contribute to the overall decline interest in social studies such as lack of strong teacher to student relationship, the complexity of materials, and/or the constant repetition of old information.

This thesis presents the overview of available literature reviews along with proposed research implementation for future studies based upon the information among deaf and hard of hearing students. With the help of these literature reviews based on the students and teachers in social studies, we can come to use this method of research to expand the new field of social studies within the deaf and hard of hearing group. With this meaningful information, we as professional can use the data to assist us in creating better and positive environment for the deaf and hard of hearing students within the social studies classroom.
Overview

Millions and millions of children today attend variety educational settings across the country to be taught by the well-educated teachers in their well-developed subjects. Educational settings such as elementary and high schools were created to provide an environment that enabled the children to learn how to work and apply their newly developed skills within the schools as well as outside in their homes and communities. Administrators, educators, and parents may believe the overall education's purposes serves to promote the abilities among children in becoming more mature and active thinkers, gain new sense of responsibilities, develop self-independent trait, and especially becoming ever more empowered participants in the communities.

These may be the most typical general characteristics of education; there are many other multiple factors, which may contribute to the shaping of each individual's lives and their place in society small and large. Once again, the intentions of the subjects being taught in schools are meant to offer children stronger foundation to construct their skills and to prepare them life of future opportunities after equipped with knowledge and capabilities to continue as individuals and whole in society.

Within the educational settings, the six main subjects taught in elementary and secondary schools are language, mathematics, science, social studies, music, and visual arts. In each of the subjects being taught, all are equipped with their own educational goals and objectives to promote overall learning. The six subjects may be commonly known to instruct several necessary components in learning: to think effectively, to communicate successfully, to direct their own learning, to foster integrity, to show
respect and tolerance among values and beliefs, and most importantly to contribute responsibly with oneself and/or with the group.

Other than these characteristics, the outcome learning will always be influenced and shaped daily by the students’ attitudes, experiences, and perspectives. The attitudes, experiences, and perspectives among the students may vary in each subject positively or negatively. Motivation, construction of materials, teaching methods, group work, critical thinking, learning environment, and resources are one of the many indicators that shape their attitudes, experiences, and perspectives. As the students progress in their learning environment in schools, it has been discovered through researches where students may perceive some core subjects negatively along with low interests in studying the materials and concepts especially in the area of social studies (Thiveos and Moroz 2001, Ataya and Kulikovich 2002). In addition to other researches, the statistics has been compiled with supporting evidence where students have claimed social studies were not beneficial for their overall learning (Schug, Todd, and Beery 1984, Shaughnessy and Haladyna 1985, Fouts 1990).

In the past several decades, there have been quite some extensive researches in education that covers multiple aspects in different subject areas. However the findings through researches in social studies education are limited. Researchers from many years past has come with few yet partial conclusions drawn from several formal and informal studies where social studies has been perceived at least well-liked by the students. Again, researchers have discovered one of the most important trend – students in all grades ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade do not display great positive feelings towards social studies.
Thesis

Social studies is one of the top core subjects to be taught in educational settings; it has been showed through researches demonstrating the current trends where in social studies area there are negative relationships between social studies area and students’ attitudes, experiences, and perspectives. The negative relationship overall may be impacted by multiple components such as varying degree of difficulties among materials, teacher-student relationship, class/school environment, lack of motivation/interest, and disregarding social studies as a way to study the past and apply to the future. The list may be endless.

A question to be answered, to what extent are there adequate information available in reporting data in regards to attitude-related due to numerous components in which deaf and hard of hearing students hold towards social studies in their classrooms? What do the educators like us can say of the deaf and hard of hearing and their attitudes, their experiences, and their perspectives within the social studies classrooms is something we must come to explore. Out of the limited publications of social studies, there is even less publications available where they provide the current information about the deaf and hard of hearing students within social studies field.

As written by Wang, Oliver, and Lumpe (1996), “little research effort has been expanded to date on the examination of student attitude relations toward the study of curricular subjects”. The main focal point of this thesis is to gather information through literature exploring multiple components including the attitudes of the general population of students in variety of educational settings in order to create a theory that may be applied to the deaf and hard of hearing students towards social studies in mainstreamed
schools and deaf institutions. The overall objectives of this literature review have two main parts. First purpose of this literature review is to review the body of literature available within the past decades to collect and analyze information of different aspects such as the attitude, experiences, and perspectives among deaf/hard of hearing students, school/classroom environment, the curriculum, teachers' role and instructions and so forth. Since the research upon deaf and hard of hearing students are quite limited, I will be expanding the review of current literature upon the general population of students which will include wide range of diversity such as hearing students to visualize much better imagery of what may be applicable among deaf students.

Second purpose is to discuss future study/implications of how new research can be formulate in the hopes of sparking an interest in among others to develop new studies to collect and study new information. With this potential new information relating to attitudes, experiences, and perspectives based upon the deaf and hard of hearing students' involvements within the social studies classrooms could lead to a better understanding of how we can improve classroom environment containing socials studies content to encourage students’ participation and at the same time to receive a wholesome positive feelings towards it.
Literature Review

The Content of Social Studies

Teaching social studies is not easy as it looks. It can be quite diverse throughout K-12 including college level. Social studies cover multiple thematic areas such as economics, geography, history, civics, government, law, culture, and religion. The list goes on. Depending on the grade levels where students are currently at, the substance of social studies varies in accordance to the state curriculum as well as the school-grade level curriculum. Social Studies may involve of simple and complex cognitive thinking processes, analytic skills, continuance of participation, and principles/concepts for students to use as an application of life within today’s society. It has been noted (Thiveos and Moroz 2001); social studies are used to teach students a “coherent and sequential treatment of knowledge, skills, and values” necessary for the students to thrive in society.

Like any other subjects, social studies consisted of multiple mode of instruction. It may be class lecture, note-taking, homework assignments, test and quizzes. Classes would also include role-playing, cooperative group, and discussion activities. Social studies just like any other are not limited but are open to guest speakers, video presentations, and hands on experiments/activities.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Before we begin to discuss the current information in regards to the available data on the deaf and hard of hearing students’ perspectives within social studies classroom; we should take a brief glimpse into the characteristics of deaf learners, which would enable us to visualize the overall picture of why these students may experience such difficult
degree, express little or no interest in the subject matter, or portray such negativity towards the content of social studies.

It is very common among researchers, an accepted fact that 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children, both male and female, are typically born into hearing families with hearing parents. The remaining 10% of deaf and hard of hearing children come from either deaf parents or generations consisting of deaf relatives. All these deaf and hard of hearing children will grow up in two main different surroundings: within or outside of deaf communities (Marschark, Lang, and Albertini 2002 & Karchmer and Mitchell 2002). Within these environment, deaf and hard of hearing children may have one or more deaf peers/friends or perhaps none. Some may have great exposure to deaf communities, culture, language, families, and schools. Some of these kids may grow up lacking the knowledge of what is out there about the deaf world. Some may become strong in language and culture while others may have weak foundation. This all depends on where and how deaf or hard of hearing children are raised on the other hand, it may depend on how the deaf and hard of hearing were taught in variety of school environments where they spent most of their childhood in.

Deaf and hard of hearing children have different educational opportunities when the time has come to attend school programs of the appropriate age. According to the 2000-2001 Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Youth, about 37,200 students from the age of 6 to 21 who responded, two-thirds of the students attend mainstreamed schools. Mainstreamed school includes resource rooms, total integration within the regular classrooms, and self-contained classrooms. About one-third of the deaf
and hard of hearing students attend and were taught in deaf institutions or residential schools (Gallaudet Research Institute 2001).

In the meanwhile during their course of schooling, we often collect over the years of the deaf and hard of hearing students' academic achievements compiled from several types of test namely the most popular kind: standardized testing. Over the years, the scores derived from the standardized testing may describe their current levels of intelligence and perhaps their capability to harvest and retain new knowledge as they progress into their years. By taking these scores into considerations as one of the strongest indicators, we use them to determine the current rank among the students throughout content areas such as mathematics, writing, reading, science and social studies. The scores from all content areas inform us greatly of any additional characteristics of deaf learners that enable us to foresee any future planning and to implement instructions to guide the deaf and hard of hearing students into academic success.

It is common knowledge that reading is the most fundamental yet essential component throughout different kinds of testing including subject materials in all content areas. Of the scores perceived, it has been noted where scores are ranked lower than hearing students in general especially in the area of reading. Most of the subject areas being tested required tremendous amount of energy invested into reading. Poetry, essays, maps, problem-solving stories, chemistry set-up directions, and many others require reading. It appears from these scores derived, deaf and hard of hearing have trouble reading effectively.
A researcher, Allen (1986), who have collected data over the years based on the deaf and hard of hearing students’ academic achievements has discovered that these students lag far behind their hearing counterparts in reading levels. With Allen’s data, it has been noted where deaf and hard of hearing students trailed six grades equivalents behind hearing students both at the age of 15. Similar findings from a research conducted by Traxler (2000) who also collected data from achievement testing support Allen’s evidence. Statistics showed that the deaf and hard of hearing students’ reading performances as teenagers can be found at elementary level as compared to their hearing peers at high school reading levels.

When the differences between the hearing students and the deaf and hard of hearings students in the level of reading performances can be determined, it may be possible to determine the differences between female and male students within the deaf and hard of hearing group. It has been shown through informal and formal testing where female students have the tendency to score higher than males in language, arts, and music. On the contrary, the male students have the tendency to outdo female students in mathematics, science and social studies. Even if the male students performed better than female in social studies, we have to come to terms to know that deaf and hard of hearing students’ scores in any content areas especially social studies will remain lower than their hearing peers. What are their true scores in the area of social studies? Does it differ among male and female deaf and hard of hearing students? Would deaf and hard of hearing male students still have the tendency to do better than female students in socials studies area such as history, civics, or perhaps economics? Scores among female and male students within the deaf and hard of hearing group of social studies are yet to be
found and discussed in depth for there are inadequate researches conducted. Such findings are extremely limited.

From knowing what socials studies covers throughout all grade levels from K to 12, it appears to be a fact that social studies requires two of the most important skills: reading and comprehension. If one could recall, the average ability to read and translate words amongst deaf and hard of hearing students ranks at all time low. Since there are not adequate information collected upon the deaf and hard of hearing students within reach, can one really assume that perhaps there are reasons why these students display lack of interest or have difficulties in social studies. First, deaf and hard of hearing students may claim that there is too much reading at tasks which prose to be difficult at times to tackle. Second, the level of reading in textbooks and materials may not match their current reading level at the grade they are in. Textbooks may be quite lengthy, vague, and unclear with fewer interpretations. After all if the language and reading level among the deaf and hard of hearing students are not high, it is possible that these textbooks would be much difficult for them to comprehend. Third, for some students, their primary language is the American Sign Language which again differs greatly from the written English language; it would also prose to be problematical for their reading comprehension. The reasons outlined above are the possible examples of why the interest in social studies is on the decline.

Complexities of the materials could be a rocky trail for the deaf and hard of hearing to journey upon if their reading performances are at low. How the deaf and hard of hearing students are able to use critical thinking in social studies instruction is one area that needs another look. High order thinking according to Martin (1995) is one area prone
to weakness among the deaf. He who has written about deaf learners’ abilities of higher-order reasoning has discovered that deaf learners seem to have trouble accessing and using their metacognitive capability to process on at higher order level of thinking. Deaf learners appear to face dilemmas with problem-solving skills and analytic skills. They also have problems addressing analogical reasoning, interpretations, abstractions, explanations, and understanding alternative viewpoints. One can believe that these are all the necessities essential in coming to terms of understanding social studies in order to become successful academically.

Social studies in college has become much broader yet difficult. Social studies now include specific sub-areas of history such as China, European, and Japan even women’s history. Economics have been expanded into their own sub-areas: macro-system and micro-system economics. There are college courses covering sociology, philosophy, politics, government, law, and so forth. A year before, two staff from Rochester Institute of Technology published a brief article stating of the several classroom struggles among deaf learners on college level. They have concluded that most of their deaf and hard of hearing students who entered college after high school completion often face daily struggles inside and outside of their classroom (Reber and Senior 1994). It is often related to coping with new information they receive on a daily basis from their courses.

College-entrance level students often struggle with the ability to use textbooks. Deaf learners face problems in organizing and categorizing information, synthesizing subject materials. Deaf college students often come equipped with low reading comprehension and are often uncertain on how to handle new information. These
students do not appear to show high interest in how to obtain answers through steps (Reber, et al 1994). Even thought these are the findings based upon college-level students, one must keep in mind that upon graduation, deaf and hard of hearing students often leave with 4th to 5th grade reading levels (Long and Aldersley 1984). These kinds of problems can be applied to all subject areas and still can be found within the area of social studies.

How difficult for the deaf and hard of hearing students to acquire cognitive skills may show another reason of declining motivation and interest in social studies. One could imagine where cognitive skills in social studies classroom may require thorough thinking and applications of the past, present, and future. It may require the deaf learners to think and acquire information and answers through reading, active participation, discussion, and cooperative activities. The ability to draw the main ideas/themes from selected text may provide to be a tough task among the deaf and hard of hearing students. They appear to perform a bit weaker than their hearing counterparts when it comes to identifying the main ideas and themes according to a study conducted in 1982 by Coggiola from University of Rochester (Long et al 1984).

In acquiring new information by reading in language arts would be harder whereas obtaining new information from math and science may be a bit easier where students can find concrete answers instead of searching and reading over to figure out the answers. Social studies is a lot about reading, analyzing, computing, interpreting, and judging information. All these skills required the deaf learners to use cognitive thinking skills; as stated above; deaf learners have the tendency to have such weak skills.
It also appears that by providing more visual materials within the classroom will give stronger support in assisting the deaf and hard of hearing students in comprehension of text. Also produce more opportunities for the deaf and hard of hearing students to participate in classroom activities more often. The question is how can we improve comprehension by using visual aids among these students? As Lang and Steely (2003) have wrote where “if well-designed...instruction programs for hearing students can be successfully adapted for use with deaf students by interspersing text and ASL explanations with content animation and by providing additional practice on vocabulary.” If this can be successfully used among deaf and hard of hearing students in social studies classroom, the motivation, attitude, perspectives, and interest would surely increase.

Evidences and findings within the field of deaf and hard of hearing in the content of social studies are severely limited. How can we as researchers, teachers, or even school administrators can in the future plan and implement better content instructions to improve academic progress if only small amount of information can be found? We must take one step back and explore more within the broad, general population of students including hearing students at large to study the aspects of social studies. With better understanding of how the attitude and perspective of students in general are influenced by social studies, we can furthermore break down and employ this information in gathering ground-breaking information and statistics about deaf and hard of hearing students.

_Students of Social Studies Classrooms in General_

Apart from the limited literature available about the deaf and hard of hearing students, such information on what the deaf and hard of hearing students know and feel
about social studies are even quite limited or perhaps none. As we take a look at the
general population attending wide range of educational settings, several publications has
something to say about the general population within the social studies classrooms. A few
researches have actually collected statistics as well as comments and thoughts from the
students in general expressing negativity towards social studies. This may come to help
us broaden our minds and see how we can create new studies to collect data of what may
attribute these negative associations among deaf and hard of hearing students.

A number of studies have proven where social studies are not perceived as the
most positive experiences the students have ever encountered in school as compared to
other subjects such as English, mathematics, and science. Researchers have been long
attempted to figure out the reasons why. They have established different methods of data-
collecting techniques to explore this unique aspect of social studies. In the hopes of
gathering useful insight among students of general, researchers have become inspired in
hoping that teachers of social studies would take a another serious look into what could
be the next best thing ever happen. With new findings, teachers would in a positive light
change their way of teaching to change the students’ attitude and perspective from
negative to positive experiences.

Two of the earliest researches have been conducted to gather information
superficially in pertaining to the attitudes among the students in different content areas.
An early study conducted by Inskeep and Rowland (1963) has proven through a set of
questionnaires where most students dislike social studies. Among students in 4th and 6th
grade, it appears where out of all the subjects taught in school, social studies was ranked
low. Social studies trailed behind math, reading, science, and music respectively. Two
years later, another study directed by Curry and Hughie (1965) has provided similar series of questionnaires which was targeted for high school students. The researchers have found social studies were placed behind English, science, and physical education in preferences of learning among 900 high school kids.

Another study showed similar results by using different method of data-collecting. Schug, Todd, and Beery (1984) conducted open-end interviews among 46 students from two schools to collect their responses about social studies. The authors created more clear and direct questions that would encourage the students from 6th and 12th grade to think carefully and provide detailed answers. Two examples of interview questions were used as part of their interview process: “What do you think is the most important subject you study in school? Why?” and “What are some things in social studies classes which are not interesting? Why?” As a result, it has been revealed only 17% of 46 students ranked social studies as the most important subject whereas English was ranked first at 31% and mathematics at 20%. Based on the percentages, the students offered explanations why they have decided a certain subject to be of such importance. Their choices were determined by their selection of future career preparations and to build innovative life skills. Most of the students have considered English to the most important; they believe this subject would lead them to better future opportunities whereas social studies would not.

A literature review was performed by Shaughnessy and Haladyna (1985) which showed similar findings where social studies was ranked low as a strong interest among students of all grade levels. As the student progress into upper grades from elementary to junior high, their interest in social studies were actually on the decline. In this research, it
has stated there are not enough practical studies to explore the negative aspects of social studies or the reasons why students dislike social studies.

Fouts (1989) fashioned a study targeting middle school students and their opinions toward social studies. Based on 491 students from middle schools on the west coast, it has discovered that most of the students possess negative views towards social studies. In addition to Fouts' study, a research by Wolters and Pintrich (1998) shown that text anxiety was linked strongly to social studies and their self-efficacy to work in social studies was ranked low. With all these dislikes, lack of interest, test anxiety and low self-efficacy upon these students, it may be obvious to the mind that students perceived social studies to be at least importance in reason of studying in schools.

As important it is to collect and analyze concrete statistics based on the students' response towards social studies, we cannot neglect the thorough comments supplied by the students with explanations of their reasoning and thoughts. With their comments, we can take a deeper look into how we can improve their attitudes, experiences, and perspective within social studies classroom. Some examples of such comments were provided from the study of Schug, Todd, and Beery (1984):

“Well, it got boring when you are memorizing date after date, name after name, President after President—that type of thing. It gets a little tedious after a while.”
“When we studied the Native Americans...we were studying about one part; and then the next one was kind of like going over the same thing again.”

“In social studies class you’re sitting inside a lot, digging in books. In horticulture you’re outside, doing the things that you’re learning. I feel I learn a lot more by doing that; by experience, you know.”

“It was just read the chapter, do a worksheet, take the test”

By using the comments by the students, we can see what aspects of social studies may need work. If one would take a look at the statistics and the comments provided by the students, one would ask one important question – “What is it about social studies the students do not appear to take interest in learning?” Based on the research conducted by Schug et al (1984), the authors attempted to explore the reasons where students who have decided social studies were not their top favorite subjects. Some students claimed social studies materials to be demanding and uninteresting. Some believe the subject is quite complicated and can be easily forgotten. They also see social studies as the hardest subject to digest for it requires so much critical/cognitive thinking. Critical thinking (Morgan 1995) could some difficult steps such as making clarifications, inducing and deducing steps, applying interpretations, and making judgments.

Students believed there are too much homework assignments, reading chapters, copying from blackboard/whiteboards, and/or map work. According to Thiveos and
Moroz (1991), over 1,000 students who participated in the survey in relating to social studies, 96% of the students spent most of their time doing homework. While 91% did textbook work, 81% did reading, and 71% spend their time copying information from the backboard. Less time were spent on problem solving, group activities, newspaper activities, class discussions, role-plays, and guest speakers.

Students in classrooms in addition believe in pursuing other courses actively besides social studies where they will be able to receive more opportunities for learning in order to become successful in school and in life. In other courses where students mostly prefer, they considered them as an important tool of success in future employment.

In visualizing the bigger picture of social studies among the general population, one can not ignore the biggest gap that can be found at schools – the gender gap. The differences between female and male students do play a role in all content areas especially in social studies. Shaughnessy et al (1985) briefly stated girls have the tendency to show less attention to social studies than their male counterparts.

This has furthermore been supported with actual evidence in a study created in the 1990s. Fouts (1990) invited 1,174 students from secondary level schools to participate in a research enabling the researcher to investigate aspects of the social studies classrooms. As a result from the study of 594 female students and 580 male students, it has shown where about 26% of the male students viewed social studies as their favorite subject as compared to 15.8% of female students. Through statistics, female students have perceived themselves to be less involved in social studies than male students. This research has supported the fact where gender differences do exist within social studies
classrooms. Previous researches have proven where negative attitudes towards social studies exit, additional studies have also proven where gender differences in attitude-related experiences and perspectives within social studies classrooms do exit (Fouts 1990).

Another aspect of gender-based within social studies classroom should not be largely ignored. From a couple of studies, female students may demonstrate lack of interest and express negative attitude in social studies due to the gender role of teachers. Studies have shown where female students in female teachers' social studies classroom were positively correlated as compared to female students in male teachers in social studies classrooms. From these findings, we can now see that female students feel more comfortable and involved in social studies classroom taught by female teachers. They have more positive experiences and appear to have more positive attitude towards social studies (Fouts 1990, Sanders 2002). Sanders wrote some of the female students' comments where they feel social studies along with math, science and technology to be of masculine-dominated subjects. Perhaps with better understanding of gender equity throughout the curriculum in schools will help improve the learning environment in all subject areas especially social studies where female students may feel less resisted in learning. Teachers with better understanding of gender equity could create better academic and social environment for female and male students for life in future.

Materials may play an important factor in female students’ learning style in social studies classrooms. History textbooks has long been male-dominated and frequently written by men, there are several textbooks where women are usually excluded. Names and information about each woman in history are often neglected or abandoned.
Clark, Allard, and Mahoney (2004) created a counting study to see how women are frequently visible in our history textbooks from 1960s to 1990s. An alarming result appeared, the authors have seen that women have received less attention than men written in history textbooks. For instance, back in 1960s among selected history textbooks, about 6% of pages mentioned women and perhaps about 5% of published pictures consisted of women. The rest were written about men. In comparing the books to 1990s, the number of women being mentioned has improved however not drastically as these authors hoped for. According to the researchers, the textbooks of 1990s showed some amount of women being mentioned: on the average of about 15% of pages consisted of brief paragraph detailing of women’s life and the role they play in shaping history. Only 40% of pictures consisted of women. A very small increase among the pages mentioned women; a considerable amount of pictures was used within the textbooks. One must see that the amount of women being mentioned throughout the history books is low. This may contribute to one of the reason of lacking interest among female students within social studies classroom.

Sincero and Woyshner (2003) proposed by writing more of the women into history textbooks may draw more female audience to take upon an interest in reading more history in social studies. Flournoy and Patterson (2003) suggested by using web-based resources with information on the history of women should be used as one of the method of including female students within the social studies classroom. For example, by encouraging female students to work together with others by participating actively, teachers can provide web-based resources to teach a specific area of history where it includes a well-balance amount of notable men and women. Female students will feel a
part of history and part of classroom learning where endless documents and databases can be provided online to be explored.

Another aspect of social studies is needed to explore. We have come to see what research has to say about students in general. What of the teachers who teach social studies? Teachers could contribute to overall impact of learning among the students in social studies (Shaughnessy et al. 1985). Shaughnessy's study has revealed that the learning environment where teachers work is one of the strongest indicators of the learning among students. It may depend on how well the teachers are committed in instructing and on how they provide lesson and materials through instructions. Some teachers may spend little or a lot of investment in preparing activities and assignments which are all powerfully related to the attitude and perspective among the students in social studies. A display of negative attitudes and perspective along with less interest in social studies may be one of the greatest assessment of how well teachers can meet up to the students' standards. In the end, it may be up to the teachers and their responsibilities to intervene and enhance the students' learning environment of the classrooms.

Wolters and Pintrich (1998) believe in examining the "students' motivational beliefs and self-regulated learning" would lead the researchers to gain a better understanding in how content area can be linked to their attitudes and perspectives. Thiveos and Moroz (2001) wrote where students would become more involved in social studies classroom if pursued in more active learning style. With these methods, it may help us to examine the students' motivations and self-learning within social studies. By learning how we can motivate students positively, we can encourage the students to obtain their own unique self-regulated learning to appreciate more of social studies.
investigating what makes the students enthusiastic in learning whether it would be in an active learning environment or in self-regulated learning environment, we can come to terms what works best to improve their attitudes and perspectives.

Does it matter how teachers teach the materials and content? Are they teaching in the right steps for the student to learn and retain knowledge? Social studies and cognitive thinking could be strongly related, teachers need to provide strong foundation in cognitive thinking. Teachers should always provide students the opportunities and support to become effective learners in social studies (Cornbleth 1985, Morgan 1995) In addition to articles written by Newmann (1990a, 1990b), several teaching technique has often been largely ignored practices in social studies classroom which facilitate cognitive thinking among students. Such techniques that are often neglected or used in small amount are questioning and discussion, thoughtful discourse with students, incorporating student experiences into the lesson, and more. It seems teachers are not confident in using these methods due to the fact that they believed students are more likely to resist the higher order thinking because it appears to be difficult to master. This may assume that teachers would choose the easy way out in order to get the students to complete different tasks at easy levels.

To what extent of social studies would students actually learn and stick to? One study conducted by Mailhoit and Kobasigawa (1997) suggested two objectives to be taken into consideration: the specific objectives (short term goals) and the cross-curricular objectives (long term goals). Specific objectives include immediate learning outcomes that children are expected to achieve in specific areas in order to proceed to the next level. For instance in social studies, children are expected to memorize famous
names of the founding fathers in sequential order before they may move onto the next harder level. Cross-curricular objectives may include the developing skills and application necessary to use in life. One example would be using methods to apply the principles and concepts of Civil War to ongoing civil war of another country. Out of 199 students of elementary level who responded, the researchers have established that students perform better in social studies where specific objectives are focused. The children do see social studies as important but only if specific goals are emphasized not cross curricular goals.

Is there much emphasis on social studies in school? Not when technology is on the rise. Wang, Oliver, and Lumpe (1996) claimed where schools are placing enormous amount of emphasis in teaching math and science with the use of technology, the emphasis in social studies are often uncared for. This would be one of other factors leading to potential negative views of socials studies since now that there is more technology-related in math and science. According to Clegg (1991), by using games and simulations in social studies classroom, the interests among students will increase. Students will be able to use their decision-making abilities by participating in these games and simulation activities would improve their area of interests, motivation, and gratification.

Technology will change and increase in quantities, dynamics of students will change, and environmental influences will changes; all these changes would constantly influence students in how they function, behave and think in all subject areas (Ballatine 1997, Schug, et al 1984, Fouts 1989, Harwood 1992, Wolters et al 1998). Along with effective and direct instruction such as classroom management, student and teacher
relationship, the classroom environment and assessment, and method of instruction, the attitude and perspectives of students may improve the overall student’s motivation in social studies (Wang, Haertel, and Walberg 1993). It has also been suggested by improving the classroom environment with newly teacher-center learning activities along with the implantation of unique teaching strategies and methods would result in a shift from negative view into positive views towards social studies (Fouts 1989).

**Implications for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in Social Studies**

From reviewing and bringing together all the possible aspects of social studies, these are what may contribute to overall negative attitudes, experiences, and perspectives among the students. What does this say about the deaf and hard of hearing students? It is time to look back and think of the most important questions we need to answers in order to improve the social studies classroom environments among the deaf and hard of hearing students. Knowing that there are inadequate researches of the deaf and hard of hearing students in social studies, we must use current information of general student population to create effective researches. It is needed to explore more of the deaf and hard of hearing students’ attitudes, experiences, and perspectives in social studies classroom to understand the circumstances better to improve the quality of classroom environment in the secondary schools.

More researches of deaf and hard of hearings students would provide to be a tool for the school administrators and teachers in making vital decisions about social studies practices in academic programs. If we all can come to comprehend the factors underlying their reasons of disliking social studies, we can come to work on improving the learning
environments within the classrooms. Perhaps to establish a stronger and direct framework where teachers can employ in order to guide students to become successful for social studies and at the same time enable the students to have pleasant experiences in learning.

How can we establish studies to find the information we need in order to move onto the next stage how we can change the negative attitudes into most positive kinds so students can become successful? We as researchers need to establish and implement different kinds of methods to gather information. One, we could create survey to update the previous studies conducted by well-known researchers however aimed towards deaf and hard of hearing students. This should also targeted students in both mainstreamed schools and deaf institutions. We should not only question students but teachers as well for they are the important aspect of social studies classroom. Teachers’ commitment and attitudes may have an impact on how their students learn. “Students’ learning is improved when they perceive the purposes of teachers’ instruction accurately” (Mailhoit and Kobasigawa 1997).

I believe researchers should observe aspects of social studies from all directions. What I mean by that is by using scores derived from informal and formal test, by using responses upon survey and questionnaires from teachers and students alike and by observing the students within the social studies classroom would enable the researchers to see where they stand. My recommendation to all researchers who are quite curious about the subject of social studies among the deaf and hard of hearing students is to choose a beginning foundation where they may later expand to explore deeply in selected areas.

Harwood (1992) suggested that we need to take a glimpse into the four aspect of overall education: classroom activities, teacher characteristics, student involvement, and
classroom environment. These four aspects are what make up the entire learning environment. If we could study each of these variables within the social studies classroom in depth, I believe we could create more precise research in analyzing and producing firmer results in order to assist teachers as well as researchers in coming to terms of what makes social studies work.

The Last Word

The field of deaf education are constantly determined and influenced by new and current findings, statistical data, and the resources available with evidence found through research. One may ask, "How does this literature review may contribute specifically to the field of deaf education?" By using the researches about students in general to apply the latest information about the deaf and hard of hearing students’ attitudes and perspectives toward social studies would push the doors open farther for future research in the field of deaf education as well as in the field of social studies.

One can see from looking at the available research, social studies are something that are lacking in research along with any future implication in improving the classroom environment for the teachers and students alike. Perhaps it is time for us to put into action in changing the outlook of social studies and particularly the attitude among the students they have towards social studies.

It may be best for the school administrators and teachers to develop and coordinate academic programs and curriculum to improve students’ participants in social studies. By encouraging the students to express their thoughts and feelings, they could assist the teachers to improve the classroom learning atmosphere. Teachers or even the
school administrators may get better textbooks with clarification of information to provide the content in an interdisciplinary context. Most of all, teachers could demonstrate students on how to appreciate the subject of social studies of its usefulness in our today’s society. And furthermore to bridge the gap between female and male students would provide to be a challenge nonetheless necessary to build a successful social studies environment.

In any case, the function of this literature review is to investigate previous studies and literature reviews to create a potential foundation for researchers to take upon the task in creating extensive research to find new information. The results would lead to the prospective improvements for the deaf and hard of hearing students by creating challenging yet worthwhile educational environment in both mainstreamed schools and institutions for the deaf within the area of social studies. After all...

“You have to start where people are, because their growth is going to be from there, not from some abstraction or where you are or someone else is.” – Myles Horton


Sanders, J. (2002, November) Something is missing from teacher education: attention to two genders. *Phi Delta Kappan.* 84(3), 241-244.


