

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL  
AND TRADITIONAL METHODS OF TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES

by 613-8301

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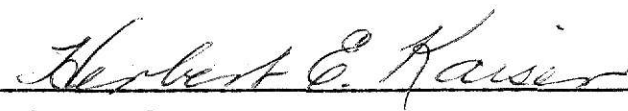
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The past emphasis has been placed mainly upon subject matter that may become obsolete to the individual in his lifetime. This modern age of educational innovations and technological changes increases the necessity to examine an approach to social studies that will enable the child to attack social situations more effectively.

Interest in learning by the traditional method compared to the discovery method in social studies continues among those who are concerned with the development of high mental processes and with possible approaches to facilitate such learning in the classroom. Current educational literature contains many references to the concept of discovery learning in social studies.

In implementing the discovery method of learning in social studies, Bruner states, "the urgent need for research will point the way to teaching which will preserve exciting sequences leading to student discovery."<sup>1</sup>

The social studies has drawn ever growing criticism from such eminent educators as Carr<sup>2</sup> and Fraser,<sup>3</sup> many classroom instructors and far too many

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<sup>1</sup>Jerome Bruner, Process of Education, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Edwin R. Carr, The Social Studies, (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1965).

<sup>3</sup>Dorothy M. Fraser, "What's Happening in the Social Studies," Curriculum Report (Curriculum Service Center/NASSP), 3:2, March, 1965.

students. Their consensus was that social studies are becoming a meaningless aspect of today's curriculum because of the increasing sophistication level and general knowledge of students.

### The Problem

Statement of the Problem - The purpose of this study was to identify the differences between two methods of teaching social studies, traditional method and discovery method. It was to determine whether the discovery method of teaching or the traditional method of teaching social studies would enable the pupils to solve their problems in their everyday task.

### Hypotheses

1. There is a difference between social studies classes taught by the discovery method.
2. There is a difference in opinion of teachers concerning results of using the discovery method as compared to the traditional method.
3. There are innovative differences present in the discovery method of teaching social studies that are not shown in the traditional method.

### Procedure

This study was conducted as an investigation, for it seemed to be the most appropriate method of getting answers to the specific questions indicated. The procedure consisted of the following steps:

1. Survey of literature.
2. Development of an *opinionnaire* that was submitted and approved by parish supervisors.
3. Developing a questionnaire based upon the *opinionnaire*.
4. Tests were given to students of both groups at the beginning of semester 1972 and the end of the first school semester 1973.

### Limitation

This study was limited to the population of 100 teachers in several

parishes of North Louisiana, two social studies classes of twenty-five each, one experimental group for the discovery method of study, and one controlled group for the traditional method of study, a total of 50 students of a Union Parish School. Limited to the 10th grade Civics class.

#### Data and Instrumentation

The experimental and control classes were administered the STEP test pass and the results were compared on the basis of a "T" test of significant difference between means. Data were also collected by the use of an opinionnaire and questionnaire constructed by the writer. Respondents were asked to rate the method of teaching they felt was most successful in a learning setting for students.

#### Analysis of Data

Tables were used to organize and analyze the data, by percentage by the teacher questionnaire. The test of "t" for significant difference between means was administered to the mean scores for the experimental and control classes that had taken the control test.

#### Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the following terms have been defined:

Discovery is the process in which the learner grasps the organizing principle so that he sees the relationships among the facts before him, he understands the cause of the phenomenon, and he relates what he sees to his prior knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

Social Studies is the study of man and his interaction with his social and physical environments in the past, present and emerging future. In the elementary school, the social studies are covered by the academic fields of geography, history, and citizenship.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Julian M. Boleratz, "Learning by Discovery," The Journal of Experimental Education, XXXVI (Winter, 1967), p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>John U. Michaelis, Social Studies for Children in a Democracy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 5.

Problem Solving is a searching process in which learners engage in inquiry into possible solutions to their problems.<sup>6</sup>

Method is a systematic orderly way by which each instructor approaches his instruction.<sup>7</sup>

Tradition is the overlapping of materials in such courses with stress being placed on subject matter and too little on the needs, taste, interest and personalities of the learner.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Helen Sagl, "Problem Solving, Inquiry, Discovery" Childhood Education XLIII (November, 1966), p. 137.

<sup>7</sup>Frank Steeves, Fundamental of Teaching in Secondary Schools, (New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1962).

<sup>8</sup>"Project Social Studies: A Search for Goals," Every Week Teacher, 29:101, March 26, 1965.

## CHAPTER II

### THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Increased educational writings favor the idea of adopting the discovery method over the traditional method as an approach to the teaching of general principles of problem solving in social studies. A brief survey of authoritative sources has been examined to reveal some of the strategies of attacking various avenues of related factors.

#### Discovery Method

One of the most important goals of education today seems to be the development of students who are capable of independent learning. Fiorino emphasizes the fact that:

Teachers should attempt to free the student from dependence on him--in effect, make the students capable of learning by themselves. A student who has gone through a social studies program which has emphasized the development of skills will have little difficulty in continuing to learn after his formal education.<sup>9</sup>

Bruner speaks with confidence when he relates the proposition that:

If children are to learn the working techniques of discovery, they must be afforded the opportunities of problem solving, the more likely they are to generalize what they learned into a style of inquiry that serves for any kind of task they may encounter. It is doubtful that anyone ever improved in the art and technique of inquiry by any other means than engaging in inquiry or problem solving.<sup>10</sup>

Proponents of a new social studies led by Edwin Fenton and Dorothy Fraser have set forth a cluster of three objectives. They are:

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<sup>9</sup>A. J. Fiorino, "A Framework for Developing a Social Studies Curriculum," The Social Studies (December, 1966), p. 309.

<sup>10</sup>Jerome Bruner, "Structures in Learning," NEA Journal LII (March, 1963), p. 27.

- (1) Knowledge: The ability to recall or recognize ideas or phenomena that a student has experienced in the same form or in a similar form at an earlier time.
- (2) Abilities and Skills: The ability to find appropriate information and techniques in a student's experience to help him solve new problems or cope with new experiences. In social studies the mode of inquiry of historians and social scientists are an important part of these abilities and skills.
- (3) Affective Objectives: The development of attitudes, understanding and value that will promote a democratic way of life and assist each student in developing a personal philosophy.<sup>11</sup>

Massialas and Zeuin proved that the highest state of human autonomy and perfection can be achieved when the child begins to discover for himself regularities or irregularities in the physical and socio-political environment when they conducted for one year a test of the discovery method on 35 students from the ages of 12-14 years. They recorded the results of a four day classroom situation on the effects of the discovery method in teaching social studies. It was revealed that the discovery method had a highly self-motivating effect on students and allowed an opportunity for personal involvement, classroom participation and intensive utilization of library resources.<sup>12</sup>

In an effort to translate into the classroom activity some of the thrilling episodes of discovery learning, one must devise a technique of getting children interested. Shelly P. Koenigsberg enacted a conjecture of nature when she generated the idea of "See and Suppose," in a seventh grade social studies class. Pupils were asked to look at photographs of museum

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<sup>11</sup>Edward Fenton, Teaching the New Social Studies in Secondary Schools, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966).

<sup>12</sup>Byron G. Massialas and Jack Levin, "Teaching Social Studies Through Discovery," Social Education, XXVIII (November, 1964), pp. 384-387.

slides related to the unit in European History being studied and to draw conclusions from their observations. Each member of the class had a chance to put things together for himself, to be his own discoverer. The results were that:

All pupils exhibited a desire to participate, including a substantial number of slow learners who had not shown as much enthusiasm previously.<sup>13</sup>

In New Frontiers in the Social Studies, Gibson indicated discovery and inquiry as synonymous terms which relate to:

. . . that method by means of which a student, alone or in concert with others, attempts to solve problems and develop concepts and skills by observing, stating a problem in solvable form, hypothesizing, gathering data, testing hypotheses, and concluding or generalizing with teachers . . . . They inquire, discover, participate and learn.<sup>14</sup>

Carr stated that:

Much of today's social studies education is conducted by use of curriculum guides and the overused method can be considered the topical unit approach (traditional) tied to an overall biographical data framework.<sup>15</sup>

Tryson elaborated by stating that:

In its practical application, the discovery (method) means the teaching of the same general body of material at different levels of instruction, adapting it at different levels to the interest capacities and psychological development for whom it is intended.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>S. P. Koenigsberg, "See and Suppose, Learning Through Discovery in Social Studies," Social Studies, LVII (November, 1968), pp. 257-59.

<sup>14</sup>John S. Gibson, New Frontiers in the Social Studies (New York: Citation Press, 1967), pp. 152-153.

<sup>15</sup>Edwin R. Carr, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>16</sup>Rolla M. Tryson, The Social Sciences as School Subjects (Chicago: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955).

The publication surveys of Wesley, Fraser, Carr, Robinson and others suggests that methods must be appropriate to attain goals in social studies.

The goals were as follows:

- (1) To import knowledge and skills to assist in solving the problems of our times;
- (2) To create awareness of the effects of science on civilization and its use to improve the quality of life;
- (3) To bring about readiness for effective economic life;
- (4) To develop the ability to make value judgments for effective life in a changing world;
- (5) To bring recognition that we live in an open ended world, which requires receptivity to new facts, new ideas and new ways of life;
- (6) To bring about participation in the process of decision making through expression of views to representatives, experts and specialists;
- (7) To bring about belief in both liberty of the individual and equality for all;
- (8) To achieve pride in the achievements of the United States, appreciation of the contribution of other people, and support for international peace and cooperation;
- (9) To use the creative arts to sensitize oneself to universal human experience and to the uniqueness of the individual;
- (10) To achieve awareness of compassion and sensitivity for the needs, feeling, and aspirations of other human beings.<sup>17</sup>

In related literature on learning Ausubel and his associates . . . supported the posture that:

The manner in which new material is presented to the learner and the way it is learned are important factors in determining how

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<sup>17</sup> Donald W. Robinson, "Ferment in the Social Studies," Social Education 27:360-64, November, 1963.

usable the newly learned material may become for future perceptual tasks.<sup>18</sup>

According to these theorists, an ever-present danger in verbal learning tasks is that the learner will fail to make the learning meaningful, and hence learn only in rote fashion. Much research dating from Ebbinghaus (1885) to more recent studies demonstrates the superiority of meaningful learning over rote learning. Studies by Krueger,<sup>19</sup> Briggs and Reed<sup>20</sup> provided evidence that "meaningfully learned material is more effective for retention than is material learned in a rote manner."

Hilgard, Irvine, and Whipple's research findings led to the conclusion that:

Material learned meaningfully is not only retained longer than material learned in a mechanical way but that when underlying principles are learned, problem-solving tasks are more transferrable than when solutions are memorized without thought of their meaning.<sup>21</sup>

Anderson elaborated further by stating that:

It is the very emphasis on reasoning, inquiry, and discovery that holds the greatest promise for a renaissance of pupil's interest in knowledge about their environment and their culture. The constant change and vast amount of information make it difficult even for the specialist to keep up with all of the discoveries in this field.

In the discovery concept for children, they become active learners themselves, not passive recipients. If teachers themselves learn the methods of inquiry in the disciplines and translate the discovery

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<sup>18</sup>Kenneth Bullmer, "Improving Accuracy of Interpersonal Perception Through a Direct Teaching Method," Journal of Counseling Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 37-41, January, 1972.

<sup>19</sup>W. C. F. Krueger, "The Effect of Overlearning on Retention," Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1929, 12, 71-78.

<sup>20</sup>L. J. Briggs, and H. B. Reed, "The Curve of Retention for Substance Material," Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1943, 32, 513-517.

<sup>21</sup>E. R. Hilgard, R. P. Irvine, and J. E. Whipple, "Rote Memorization, Understanding and Transfer," Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1953, 46, 288-292.

method into the classroom, children can be helped to become perpetual self-discoverers.<sup>22</sup>

It seems that while there is much more research to be read that is related to the overall question of the discovery method, the above literature may serve as a good start toward further research.

#### Traditional Method

The traditional method of teaching social studies is essentially the same, too often being merely rote memory of quantified facts. "Variety," "child-centered," "problem solving," "teacher-pupil planning," and so on, almost always meant quantification and evaluation based on retention of minute bits of information.

It was emphasized by Soderbergh and Beard that "a gap exists between what ought to be and how to achieve it, and how it is achieved."<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to try to apply what has been considered a composite criterion developed by Alcorn for evaluating teaching methods:

Good instructional materials have appropriateness related to curriculum and units of study . . . daily lessons are suitable for particular age grade level, free from bias, prejudice, distortion, anti-social attitudes and untruthfulness . . . recency that is, up to date, reflecting current thought original or revised . . . availability, that is, materials and plans are readily available when needed . . . appeal, attention holding and esthetic . . . the cost is within school budget limitations.<sup>24</sup>

Present literature emphasized that current secondary-school methods

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<sup>22</sup>Vernon Anderson, Principles and Procedures of Curriculum Improvement (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1966), p. 147.

<sup>23</sup>Peter A. Soderbergh, "Charles A. Beard and the Commission on the Social Studies 1929-1933: A Reappraisal," Social Education, 31:465-468, October, 1967.

<sup>24</sup>Marvin D. Alcorn, Better Teaching in Secondary Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965).

continue to center around some form of an integrated unit plan for teaching which is a type of traditional method.

In one study Gross and Badger concluded that "students disliked and resisted social studies for several reasons." They were:

(1) Overlapping, (2) stigmatized courses, (3) lack of individual assignment, (4) categorical quantification of names, (5) dates, (6) facts taught as prime ends in themselves, (7) ill-prepared and uninterested teachers, and (8) teacher personality and lack of integration of courses on the same level.<sup>25</sup>

Traditional methods of teaching social studies stated by Fancier and Crawford are:

There are two general methods used in teaching social studies, the lecture method which serves best as a motivation for the attack on some general problem, secondly the textbook method which furnishes the fundamentals to be mastered.<sup>26</sup>

A 1929 professional book dealing with the curriculum in social studies pointed out warnings about the lecture method.

(1) A lecture is a form of broadcasting, however, and only pupils who have tuned in will derive much benefit.

(2) The lecturers must not degenerate into talkativeness with reminiscences and digression that bear only remotely on the purposes of the class meeting.

(3) Lectures must be followed up by some activities on the part of the children.<sup>27</sup>

The reviewed literature of many authors failed to give a superior method of teaching social studies.

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<sup>25</sup>Richard E. Gross and William V. Badger, "Social Studies," Encyclopedia of Education Research, 3rd Edition, (New York: MacMillan, 1960).

<sup>26</sup>Della G. Fancier and Claude C. Crawford, Teaching the Social Studies (Los Angeles, California: C. C. Crawford Press, 1929), p. 31-33.

<sup>27</sup>W. L. Cox, The Junior High School and its Curriculum (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 76-77.

The writer found debated issues and obstacles that are important in solving the problem of the social studies curriculum.

### Issues

The first area of disagreement among social studies curriculum reformers concerned the necessity of reform. It was possible to get agreement that social studies curriculum follows the general pattern which was outlined in 1916 by the committee on Social Studies of the National Education Association's Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education.<sup>28</sup> But there agreement ended. Cummings thought that "the present state of the social studies curriculum is not a cause of alarm."<sup>29</sup> He based this statement on the belief that changes have been made over the years within the existing framework--e.g., more recent history within the American history course, more non-European cultures in world history, and courses on Communism in Problem of Democracy. Bragdon agreed with Cummings, when he stated: ". . . There is nothing inherently wrong with this common pattern."<sup>30</sup> He would, though, change teaching methods within the pattern. The authoritative positions of Cummings and Bragdon notwithstanding Cummings was a Social Science specialist for the United States Office of Education, and Bragdon was a Phillips Exeter Academy history instructor and textbook

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<sup>28</sup>Howard H. Cummings, "Part One: The Social Studies in the Secondary School Today," Social Studies in the Senior High School (ed. Willis D. Moreland), (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. 4-5.

<sup>29</sup>Cummings, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>30</sup>Henry W. Bragdon, "A New Curricula in Social Studies with Emphasis on History," Revolution in Teaching (ed. Alfred de Grazia and David A. Sohn), (New York: MacMillan, 1969), p. 299.

author. Their viewpoint was by far in the minority. The majority of sources had statements similar to those of Carr:

The social studies curriculum is badly in need of examination and revision. This is a statement to which all but the most complacent of teachers will subscribe . . . . The social studies curriculum has on the whole improved through . . . piecemeal-patch-work on an old garment. It is time to ask whether an inclusive and extensive national effort, comparable to that undertaken in the sciences and mathematics, is not in order.<sup>31</sup>

The next area of disagreement (after that of the necessity of revision) was where to begin with the revision. Many authorities felt that no meaningful progress could be made until there was agreement on the goals to be achieved by the social studies curriculum.

Metcalf stated:

Because statements of purpose seem to have had no effect upon what teachers teach, or the way in which they teach, some reformers are now taking the position that purposes are unimportant, and that we ought to roll up our sleeves and seek improvement in courses without very much worry about our purposes. This is a healthy attitude to the extent that certain purposes are granted for the sake of working diligently on construction of the means necessary to their achievement.<sup>32</sup>

Becker joined this group by stating:

. . . Instead of bogging down in the futile attempt to agree on overall goals and philosophies, we [should] put together working projects composed of teachers and scholars who use their freedom to create new approaches and materials to fulfill their goals. From this effort in time will come the consensus needed for long range general change.<sup>33</sup>

A compromise approach to this issue was found in Bruner's work:

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<sup>31</sup>Carr, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>32</sup>Lawrence E. Metcalf, "Some Guidelines for Changing Social Studies Education," Social Education, 27:197-201, April, 1963.

<sup>33</sup>James M. Becker, "Prospects for Change in the Social Science Disciplines and the Social Studies," Social Education, 29:79-85, 8b, February, 1965.

In planning a curriculum, one properly distinguishes between the long-run objective one hopes to achieve and certain short-run steps that get one toward that objective. Those of practical turn of mind are likely to say that little is served by stating long-term objectives unless one can propose short-run methods for their achievement. More idealistic critics may too readily dismiss short-run educational goals on the grounds that they cannot see where they lead. We are inclined to take a middle ground. While one benefits from clarity about the end of education, it is often true we may discover or rediscover new ultimate objectives in the process of trying to reach more modest goals. Something of this order seems to have occurred in recent efforts to improve school curricula.<sup>34</sup>

If, for the sake of analysis only, the necessity of formulation of goals was granted, the next issue--and a lively one--was which goals to adopt. "It was evident from the beginning," said Turner, "that disagreement about the purposes that the social studies program is supposed to serve was going to present a major obstacle to curriculum reform."<sup>35</sup> One of the sharpest points of contention concerned "good civic behavior" as a goal. The National Council for the Social Studies has endorsed this statement: "The ultimate goal of education in the social studies is the development of desirable socio-civic and personal behavior."<sup>36</sup> A leading opponent of such a goal, Charles Keller, has said in part, "I insist that no discipline--or federation of subjects--should ever impose a pattern of behavior on anybody."<sup>37</sup> He added that:

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<sup>34</sup> Bruner, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> Gordon B. Turner, "The American Council of Learned Societies and Curriculum Revision," New Curricula (ed. Robert W. Heath), June 16, 1966, p. 139.

<sup>36</sup> Jack Allen et al., "The Role of the Social Studies," Social Education, 26:315, October, 1962.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Keller, addressing the New England Area History Conference, Regis College, Weston, Massachusetts, October 17, 1964; quoted in Gibson, New Frontiers in the Social Studies, The Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1965, p. 11.

. . . Students should learn how to think, to weigh evidence, to come to their own conclusions. They should understand things, not just know them . . . . Then they will develop attitudes for themselves; thus, we hope, they will become good citizens.<sup>38</sup>

A leading proponent of citizenship education, Samuel McCutchen, believed that:

. . . Unless we can focus sharply and successfully and demonstrate that we can really develop civic competence, our place in the school curriculum--our percentage of student time--is sure to diminish.<sup>39</sup>

On the other side, Mayer thought that ". . . as a practical matter, 'citizenship' is a hopeless goal for instruction. Any stupidity can be defended as helping to promote it."<sup>40</sup> But, in Gibson's opinion,

. . . "good citizens" do not necessarily result from absorption of knowledge and skills. The content, understanding, skills, and values which emerge from the social studies curriculum must be directed toward some higher, behavioral goal, which, in the writer's opinion, should be patterns of responsible and effective behavior.<sup>41</sup>

A fourth major area of disagreement in history and social studies curriculum revision was what Scholastic Teacher called "the basic issue in curriculum planning":<sup>42</sup> the divergence between those who favor the traditional approach, with the social studies centered on history, and those who wish to emphasize the behavioral science. Another aspect of this divergence was

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-12.

<sup>39</sup>Samuel P. McCutchen, "Discipline for the Social Studies," Social Education, 27:65, February, 1963.

<sup>40</sup>Martin Mayer, Social Studies in American Schools (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1962), p. 99.

<sup>41</sup>John S. Gibson, New Frontiers in the Social Studies: Goals for Students, Means for Teachers (Medford, Massachusetts: The Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1965), p. 12.

<sup>42</sup>"Social Studies Revision," Scholastic Teacher, 45:2T-4T, October 21, 1964.

the "separate-discipline approach" versus the "developmental approach."

Fraser has summarized the issue:

Social studies are a federation of seven academic disciplines, but this federation is frequently a reluctant one, to believe many of the spokesmen for the separate disciplines. School programs continue to draw heavily on the traditional fields of history, geography, and political science although an occasional historian can be heard muttering about withdrawing to join the humanities. But economics and sociology are asking for and getting more attention, while anthropology and psychology are coming strongly into the picture. Some observers fear that the battle among the several social sciences for places in the curriculum has only begun, and that this fight will be no more civilizing than war ever is.

Some believe and proclaim forcefully that the integrity and usefulness of each contributing discipline can be preserved and its insights understood only if its content is studied within the framework peculiar to that field of knowledge. Others contend equally strongly that an interdisciplinary design should be used, a design that is problem-centered and draws data and concepts as they are pertinent from all the social sciences. The proponents of an interdisciplinary approach also argue that the amount of school time that can be devoted to social studies makes it impossible for a student to study significantly from each of the seven fields when they are presented in separate-subject format.<sup>43</sup>

With this overview in mind, the writer found that a detailed consideration of the various viewpoints in this difficulty was indicative at least of the extent of differences involved.

Mayer commented that:

The study of society by the scientific method, however (resting as it does on faulty extrapolations of erroneous perceptions of data gathered without criteria of significance), is no more defensible than current events as a school subject.<sup>44</sup>

Patterson, a political scientist, was forced to agree:

Today, the social sciences seen from the middle distance seem extraordinarily diverse, sprawling, complex, and often either

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<sup>43</sup>Fraser, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>44</sup>Mayer, op. cit., p. 45.

portentously tentative about the obvious, or given, as Ann Roe once said, to better and better research designs about matters of less and less importance. As an influence upon the schools, they are handicapped by their lack of anything resembling a unified view of social science theory.<sup>45</sup>

### Obstacles

Besides the issues just discussed, several obstacles to social studies curriculum revision were often mentioned in the literature surveyed. Some of them may prove to be more difficult to solve than the issues, but the problem here was one of removing the obstacles, rather than resolving different points of view.

The first obstacle was what Scholastic Teacher called "the active public interest in what is being taught in this field."<sup>46</sup> The paper continued:

While the man in the street may not understand development in other fields--math, physics, etc.--he does have specific expectations in social studies--particularly the teaching of U. S. history, government, and economic systems, and the role of the U. S. in the world today.

Turner was another authority who noted that the social sciences ". . . must deal with sensitive issues of political , social, and economic policy."<sup>47</sup> He added, in part, that:

Some of the social sciences present problems unknown to the more impersonal disciplines. A child may, for example, unduly personalize matters that are presented in sociology or psychology or he may make direct applications to himself and to his environment

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<sup>45</sup>Franklin Patterson, The Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, (Elementary and Secondary) Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, (The Lincoln Filene Center). 1966.

<sup>46</sup>"Social Studies Revision," op. cit., p. 3T.

<sup>47</sup>Turner, op. cit., p. 144.

that are unjustified.<sup>48</sup>

Braddon quoted Feldmesser as conceding that ". . . objectivity may seem to the layman and the school child like the abdication of ethical standards."<sup>49</sup> The Stanford conference agreed that "studies are needed concerned with the emotional block to the learning of concepts in the social studies."<sup>50</sup>

It would appear that knowledge from the social sciences has difficulty in gaining ascendance over the 'common sense' of the learner . . . there is a tendency for individuals to reject out-of-hand content that seems to insult or attack their personal belief structure.<sup>51</sup>

While admitting the problem involved here, Becker believed that:

The protests about social studies by pressure groups and the lunatic fringe seem to indicate the social studies curriculum "does matter"--that what kids learn in school about the subjects of social science inquiry directly affects for good or ill, the kind of people they will be.<sup>52</sup>

He went on to state that the time has given the physical sciences greater freedom of inquiry, and that perhaps the same will happen to social studies.<sup>53</sup>

A second obstacle to reform concerned the restrictions of state laws. Carr has discussed the problem here, also.

<sup>48</sup>Turner, op. cit.

<sup>49</sup>Robert A. Feldmesser, Sociological Resources for Secondary Schools, Hanover, N. H.: Dartmouth College (National Science Foundation). 1968.

<sup>50</sup>G. Wesley Sowards, "A Re-Vitalized Social Studies Curriculum," The Educational Forum, 28:261-266, March, 1964.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

Prescriptions throw the curriculum out of balance, expending too much time and effort on one area at the expense of others. When certain topics are required to be taught at particular grade levels or for particular periods of time, they prevent the development of a logical course of study. Almost invariably these requirements introduce an element of rigidity into the curriculum which makes it less responsive to social change and causes it to become an obstacle in the path of curriculum revision. More than one state curriculum revision program in the social studies enthusiastically begun and conscientiously formulated and planned has failed because of the restrictive legal framework within which the revision had to be carried out.<sup>54</sup>

A third hindrance to reform, and perhaps the most difficult of all, was that of teacher knowledge, abilities, and skills.

With notable exceptions that prove the rule, school teachers in the social studies are not characteristically well prepared even in history or the older social sciences (e.g., economics, geography), to say nothing of the newer fields. Nor do the extreme pressures of day-to-day teaching allow them time in which to read or study to raise their level of scholarly competence, assuming that motivation to do so might be present. By their lack of broad or special preparation in the disciplines and their demolishing schedules, social studies teachers are driven to the easy way out: reliance on a standardized text in history or civics for most of what they try to teach. To expect such hard-pressed people to innovate, especially in a curriculum area as sensitive and inchoate as the "new social studies," would be naive.<sup>55</sup>

Becker agreed that the level and content of teacher education remains one of the strongest brakes on curriculum reform.<sup>56</sup> Further, the report of the Stanford conference stated that "this group could like to call attention to the cruciality of teacher education in this whole matter of improvement in the social studies."<sup>57</sup> Mayer indicated the magnitude of the problem involved here when he said:

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<sup>54</sup>Carr, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>55</sup>Patterson, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>56</sup>Becker, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>57</sup>Sowards, op. cit., p. 24.

Reform of secondary instruction and teacher training pre-supposes at some point in time the reform of the colleges, on the average, despite great improvement during the last decade, the weakest section of the American educational effort.<sup>58</sup>

Goodlad concurred:

The most pressing need for curriculum reform today is in the four-year college . . . . Such a revolution, decades overdue, will ultimately have a far greater impact on the quality of teachers and the quality of instruction they will provide in pre-collegiate schools than all the tinkering with certification requirements now going on in state capitols. The primary cause of inadequate teacher preparation and the pre-collegiate education dependent upon it is a badly fragmented collegiate curriculum which tosses together the significant and the trivial, fails to give its students a meaningful view of education, and does not teach its graduates the self-renewing quest for knowledge.<sup>59</sup>

Sowards joined the group with his remark, " . . . It is clear that curriculum improvement and teacher improvement are literally inseparable."<sup>60</sup>

In response to proposed curriculum centered on anthropology, Mendenhall pointed out that:

Present courses and personnel must be taken into account. A too precipitate introduction of an anthropological framework might well prove a catastrophe. To the extent that the basic organization of most secondary school courses, as well as the training of their teachers, is still essentially historical, perhaps a first step should be to slowly broaden this historical foundation.<sup>61</sup>

At this point in research of literature, the new method (discovery) appears to be the most accepted. It replaces repetition and memorization

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<sup>58</sup>Mayer, op. cit., p. 181.

<sup>59</sup>John I. Goodlad, School Curriculum Reform in the United States (New York: The Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1964), pp. 72-73.

<sup>60</sup>Sowards, "A Re-Vitalized Social Studies Curriculum," Education Forum, 28:266, March, 1964.

<sup>61</sup>Thomas C. Mendenhall, "Social Studies, History, and the Secondary School," Social Education, 27:202-204, April, 1963.

and also supports the new approach to the curriculum. The students are able to be more independent and work more effectively as an active researcher, not as passive receiver of information.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

##### Subjects

The fifty subjects in this study were randomly selected by use of random numbers from all tenth grade students in Bernice High School of Union Parish School District.

The high school was departmentalized from grades nine through twelve. Classes were attended for sixty minutes for each subject area. No regrouping of the classes was necessary for this experimental project.

In order to form these two groups for the experiment, one half of the fifty students, twenty-five were randomly assigned to the control group and the remaining one half, twenty-five, were placed in the experimental group. Randomizing the groups in this manner permitted the researcher to make the assumption that all important independent variables except the method of teaching were controlled.

##### Teaching Methods

Each social studies class period lasted for sixty minutes for each group each day. This study began shortly after the beginning of school in September and continued throughout the first semester and nine weeks of the second semester, 1973. The scheduling of class for the control group was the second period in the morning and class for the experimental group was the fourth period.

## Teaching Method and Procedure

### Control Group

The method and procedure for the control group consisted of the following:

- (1) The teacher taught the pupils on the same level of instruction, not considering the individual learning abilities.
- (2) A course outline was given to the class at the first class meeting to be followed for the first semester.
- (3) Teacher taught directly from the textbook and used limited references chosen by the instructor.
- (4) The teacher used several methods of teaching. They are: lecture, question and answer, problem solving, drill for factual information, textbook assignment and memorization. Each pupil in the class did the same assignment.

### Material

The following materials were used for the control group.

- (1) Basic Textbook (only)
- (2) Workbooks
- (3) Maps, charts and graphs

The teacher's use of other innovations was limited. No resource persons were used and field trips were omitted.

### Experimental Procedure

At the beginning of the semester the teacher and students set their goals and expectations for the course.

- (1) The teacher grouped the pupils according to their instructional levels and worked with one group while the other pupils used some of the resources listed under materials. The class was divided in two groups according to their ability.
- (2) Textbooks were used as a guide not as the only source of information.

- (3) Selected reading materials were chosen by the teacher based on the individual instructional levels of the students.
- (4) A self-contained library was convenient for this class.
- (5) Students were instructed how to use related resource materials.

### Materials

The materials used for the experimental group were selected according to the student's individual instructional levels.

- (1) Encyclopedia
- (2) Science Research Associates Inc.  
(Individualized instruction kit)
- (3) Maps, charts, graphs
- (4) Film, filmstrips, filmstrips with records and  
16 mm sound films
- (5) Tape recorders, tapes, record player, overhead  
projector, transparencies, television
- (6) Newspapers, magazines, bulletin board displays,  
student's workbooks and textbook
- (7) Resource persons, field trips and educational  
tours

### Tests and Procedures for Collection and Treatment of Data

In September the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress, Level II was administered to the experimental group and controlled group. This test aims chiefly to measure indicated abilities, previous knowledge concerning the subject matter on the test. The skills presumably measured are the ability to: identify generalizations, identify values, distinguish facts from opinions, assess data, compare data, and draw conclusions.

Perhaps the strongest feature of the test series is the attempt to

measure dimensions of social problem analysis, rather than recall or comprehension of facts or generalizations in standard social studies courses.

Buros stated: "The reliability correlations (Kuder-Richardson formula 20) of .84 to .93 on the A forms attest to high internal consistency. Equivalence of Forms A and B is presumed on the basis of a common score scale."<sup>62</sup>

The means, standard deviations, and differences in the means for both the control and experimental groups were computed in order to test each of the hypotheses. Tests for the significance of differences were calculated. Fisher's t technique for independent samples was used to test the significance of difference between the means obtained for the control and experimental groups. In using this technique, it is assumed that the criterion variable (test scores) would be normally distributed for the population. This assumption is supported by the observance of approximate normality in the sample distributions of scores in this and other studies. Another important assumption is that the variances of the test scores of the samples are approximately equal.

Another procedure used for collection of data was the opinionnaire sent out to one hundred teachers in the adjacent parishes who were teaching social studies by the individualized instruction method. A questionnaire was constructed and sent to supervisors and teachers for the evaluation of the program.

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<sup>62</sup>Oscar K. Buros, ed., The Sixth Mental Measurements Year Book (Highland Park, N. J.: Gryphon Press, 1963 to present), pp. 1224-1226.

### Methods of Analysis of Data

According to the responses of 100 social studies teachers who reacted to a number of questions (see Appendix Table 3) that were sent to them in regard to using the discovery method to teach the general principles of problem solving, the results were organized in an explanation, and then tabulated in the tables.

The 15 jury experts were chosen on the basis of qualifications, based upon their experiences as a teacher, supervisor, and principal. Each group had the following qualifications:

A. Teachers:

1. Social studies teacher for five years.
2. Should have gained some new knowledge of the new trends in social studies in the past three years.
3. Should have an interest in the profession.

B. Supervisors:

1. Master's degrees in supervision.
2. Have attended some college or university within the past five years.
3. Should have a general knowledge of the new trends in social studies.

C. Principals:

1. Has had a course in curriculum study.
2. School which he is principal of should have a social studies teaching staff.
3. Should have a general knowledge of the new trends in social studies.

The questionnaires sent to these jury of experts were to get their consensus of which method was the most feasible in teaching social studies. The consensus of these 15 jury of experts supported the discovery method over the

traditional method of teaching social studies (see Appendix Table IV).

The responses of 100 social studies teachers who reacted to a number of questions regarding the discovery method were in the majority.

Ninety-eight percent of the respondents agreed that the discovery method of teaching develops inquiring minds in social studies as compared with 5 percent that responded negatively. Ninety percent responded favorably that the discovery method motivates learning in social studies, as compared with 10 percent that responded unfavorably. Seventy percent responded favorably that the discovery method can be implemented effectively when teaching social studies, as compared with 30 percent that responded unfavorably. Ninety-eight percent gave favorable responses on whether the child can associate new concepts with previously learned experiences, consequently reinforcing what he already knows in the method of discovery as compared with 2 percent that responded unfavorably. Forty-eight percent responded favorably that the discovery method of learning added meaning rather than memorization to learning new social studies concepts, as compared with fifty-two percent that responded unfavorably. Eighty-eight percent responded favorably that the discovery method of learning added student participation in social studies, as compared with 12 percent that responded unfavorably. Ninety-four percent agreed that special materials should be available to teach by the discovery method, as compared to six percent that disagreed. Ninety-eight percent that responded favorably that there is a need for an approach such as this to inspire children to learn social studies, as compared to two percent that responded unfavorably. Thirty-six percent responded favorably that discovery is a method of learning for oneself, as compared to 64 percent who responded unfavorably. That

children can discover answers through experiment was answered favorably by 60 percent as compared to 40 percent that responded unfavorably. Ninety-nine percent responded favorably that the discovery method can develop independent thinkers, as compared to one percent that responded unfavorably. Ninety-one percent responded favorably that the children will gain new concepts in social studies when applying this method, as compared with 9 percent that responded unfavorably. Eighty percent responded favorably that problem solving, inquiring and discovery work together as compared to 20 percent that responded unfavorably. Ninety-five percent gave favorable responses that the pupils will improve in their understanding of how other subjects are related to social studies as compared with 5 percent that responded unfavorably. Ninety percent gave favorable responses that the discovery method develops logical reasoning in children as compared to 10 percent that rejected unfavorably. The summary of these results may be found in the Appendix (see Table I).

## CHAPTER V

## FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding

The purposes of this study were : (1) to identify the differences between two methods of teaching social studies, traditional method and discovery method (2) to determine whether the discovery method of teaching or the traditional method of teaching social studies would enable the pupils to solve their problems in their everyday task.

Based upon the data received from 100 social studies teachers as presented in Chapter III, the following findings are believed to be defensible:

1. The discovery method of teaching develops inquiring minds in social studies.
2. The discovery method motivates learning in the social studies.
3. The child can associate new concepts with previously learned experiences, consequently reinforcing what he already knows in the method of discovery.
4. The discovery method involves student participation in social studies.
5. Special materials should be available to teach by the discovery method.
6. There is a need for an approach of this nature to inspire children to learn in social studies.
7. The discovery method can develop independent thinkers.

8. The children will gain new concepts in social studies when applying this method.
9. Problem solving, inquiry and discovery work together.
10. The pupils will improve in their understanding of how other subjects are related to social studies.
11. The discovery method develops logical reasoning in children.

The experimental and control groups were tested and observed for the entire semester of the school year. Both groups were given pre test and post test as a means for evaluation.

As a result of the study (see Appendix, Table II) the experimental group had a greater reliability than that of the control group.

### Results

Hypotheses 1 and 2 are both upheld. The "t" tests showed a significant difference between the two classes, showing the experimental method to be superior. The teachers opinions in favor of the discovery method were likewise upheld.

Ninety-eight percent of the respondents agreed that the discovery method of teaching develops inquiring minds in social studies as compared with 5 percent that responded negatively. Ninety percent responded favorably that the discovery method motivates learning in social studies, as compared with 10 percent that responded unfavorably. Seventy percent responded favorably that the discovery method can be implemented effectively when teaching social studies, as compared with 30 percent that responded unfavorably. Ninety-eight percent gave favorable responses on whether the child can associate new concepts with previously learned experiences, consequently

reinforcing what he already knows in the method of discovery as compared with 2 percent that responded unfavorably. Forty-eight percent responded favorably that the discovery method of learning added meaning rather than memorization to learning new social studies concepts, as compared with 52 percent that responded unfavorably.

According to the data presented in Chapter III and the test results of both experimental and control groups the discovery method of teaching the social studies is an effective technique for teaching the general principles of problem solving.

#### Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions presented herein, the following recommendations are considered adequately:

1. Inquiry, discovery and self-direction should replace repetition and memorization.
2. Intuition and creativity should be highly valued as aspects of learning.
3. Children should be encouraged to pursue their interests, to ask questions, to investigate problems in depth, to read extensively, write original reports, work both cooperatively and independently and approach the social studies as an active researcher, not as a passive receiver of information.

## APPENDIX

Table 1. Statements Depicting Responses of 100 Social Studies Teachers on Whether the Discovery Method Can Be Used Effectively in Teaching the General Principles of Problem Solving in the Social Studies.

	Favorable		Unfavorable	
	#	%	#	%
1. The discovery method of teaching develops inquiring minds in social studies.	98	98	2	2
2. The discovery method motivates learning in the social studies.	90	90	10	10
3. The discovery method can be implemented effectively when teaching the social studies.	70	70	30	30
4. The child can associate new concepts with previously learned experiences, consequently reinforcing what he already knows in the method of discovery.	98	98	2	2
5. The discovery method of learning adds meaning rather than memorization to learning new social studies concepts.	48	48	52	52
6. The discovery method involves student participation in social studies.	88	88	12	12
7. Special materials should be available to teach by the discovery method.	94	94	6	6
8. There is a need for an approach of this nature to inspire children to learn in social studies.	98	98	2	2

Table 1. (Continued)

	Favorable		Unfavorable	
	#	%	#	%
9. Discovery is a method of learning for yourself.	36	36	64	64
10. Children can discover answers through experiments.	60	60	40	40
11. The discovery method can develop independent thinkers.	99	99	1	1
12. The children will gain new concepts in social studies when applying this method.	91	91	9	9
13. Problem solving inquiry and discovery work together.	80	80	20	20
14. The pupils will improve in their understanding of how other subjects are related to social studies.	95	95	5	5
15. The discovery method develops logical reasoning in children.	90	90	10	10

Table II. A Comparison of the Results of the STEP Test for the Control Group and the Experimental Group.

Variables	Experimental Group N = 25		Control Group N = 25		<u>t</u>
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Pre-test STEP Scores	2.13	.79	1.49	.81	2.90*
Post-test STEP Scores	1.48	.73	.94	.70	2.70*

\*Statistically significant, P .01.

Table III. Opinionnaire and Chart of References.

Listed below are 20 statements based upon the implementation of the discovery method for teaching the general principles of problem solving in the social studies. If you have confidence that these elements offer an improved approach to teaching the social studies, please indicate your reaction by marking an X under the alphabet opposite each statement. The rating scale range from A to R, A being the highest and R the lowest rating.

Statements	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1. The discovery method develops inquiring minds.	X			X		X								X	X			
2. The discovery method motivates in social studies.						X		X		X				X	X			
3. The discovery method can be implemented when teaching social studies.	X			X				X	X						X			
4. The child can associate new concepts with previous experiences.		X					X			X	X			X				
5. It serves as a basis for problem solving.			X	X			X					X		X				
6. It adds meaning rather than memorization.			X	X	X									X				X

Table III. (Continued)

Statements	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
7. Intuition and discovery work together.					X	X	X						X		X			
8. It involves student participation.		X					X	X						X				X
9. Proper materials should be available.							X		X	X				X				X
10. There is a need for new approach in social studies.						X			X			X	X	X				
11. Discovery is a method of learning.				X			X		X	X	X							
12. Children can learn through experiments		X			X							X			X		X	
13. It develops new concepts.	X					X	X	X									X	
14. It develops independence in pupils.	X	X				X	X	X										
15. It develops critical thinking	X			X						X		X			X			
16. It is a promising fresh approach.	X						X	X							X			X

Table III. (Continued)

Statements	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
17. Problem solving, inquiry and discovery are related terms.	X						X	X						X	X			
18. It may prove to be the scientific approach to social studies.							X						X	X	X		X	
19. It helps children understand relationships.	X	X			X		X							X				
20. It gives rise to logical reasoning.				X			X						X	X	X			

## QUALIFICATIONS OF JURY EXPERTS

### A. Teachers:

1. Social studies teacher for five years.
2. Should have gained some new knowledge of the new trends in social studies in the past three years.
3. Should have an interest in the profession.

### B. Supervisors:

1. Master's degrees in supervision.
2. Have attended some college or university within the past five years.
3. Should have a general knowledge of the new trends in social studies.

### C. Principals:

1. Has had a course in curriculum study.
2. School which he is principal of should have a social studies teaching staff.
3. Should have a general knowledge of the new trends in social studies.

Table IV. Endorsement of 15 Statements by Jury of Experts.

	Yes	No
1. The discovery method of teaching social studies can help develop inquiring minds.	14	1
2. The discovery method motivates learning.	15	0
3. The discovery method can be implemented effectively when teaching social studies.	15	0
4. The child can associate new concepts with previous experiences when using this method.	15	0
5. It serves as a basis for problem solving.	11	4
6. It adds meaning rather than memorization.	12	3
7. Intuition and discovery work together.	10	5
8. The discovery method involves student participation.	15	0
9. Proper materials should be available.	15	0
10. There is a need for an approach of this type.	15	0
11. Boys and girls enjoy discovering the answers for themselves.	14	1
12. Children can discover the answer through experiments.	13	2
13. The discovery method develops independence in pupils.	14	1
14. The child gains new concepts.	14	1
15. Critical thinking can be achieved.	10	5
16. It is a promising fresh approach.	11	4
17. Problem solving, inquiry, and discovery work together.	14	1
18. It may prove to be the scientific approach to study social studies.	11	4

Table IV. (Continued)

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	Yes	No
19. Children can see how things are related and offers an opportunity to associate them.	14	1
20. This method develops logical reasoning in pupils.	14	1

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL  
AND TRADITIONAL METHOD OF TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES

by

C. H. JACKSON

B.S., Grambling College, 1965

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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The past emphasis has been placed mainly upon subject matter that may become obsolete to the individual in his lifetime. This modern age of educational innovations and technological changes increases the necessity to examine an approach to social studies that will enable the child to attack social situations more effectively.

This study was conducted as an investigation to identify the differences between two methods of teaching social studies, traditional method and discovery method. It was to determine whether the discovery method of teaching or the traditional method of teaching social studies would enable the pupils to solve their problems in their everyday task, and to make suggestions for improvements.

The study was limited to the population of one hundred teachers in several parishes of North Louisiana by means of opinionnaires and questionnaires, two social studies classes of twenty-five in each class, one experimental group for the discovery method, and one controlled group for the traditional method, a total of fifty students of a Union Parish School.

The Sequential Tests of Educational Progress were administered at the beginning and end of the experiment. There was a significant difference between the means of the control and the experimental groups on pre test and post test in favor of the control group. Though there was a loss for both groups it was less for the control group, however no "T" tests were run on this comparison.

Based upon data received from one hundred social studies teachers, 88% to 98% agreed with the following statement:

1. The discovery method of teaching develops inquiring minds in

social studies.

2. The discovery method motivates learning in Social Studies.
3. The child associates new concepts with previous experiences by reinforcements.
4. The discovery method involves student participation in social studies.
5. Special materials should be available to teach the discovery method.
6. The discovery method can develop independent thinkers and logical reasoning.
7. Problems solving, inquiry and discovery works together.
8. The pupils will improve in their understanding of how other subjects are related to social studies.

The study indicated that the experimental method had the support the vast majority of the teachers polled. Even though the experiment group had a lower mean on the STEP than the control on both the pre and post test, the loss was less for the experimental group. This also supported the preceptions of the teachers in favor of the discovery method.

It is recommended that similar studies be conducted to assess the effect of the discovery method of teaching social studies.