

A STUDY TO ASSESS THE STATUS
OF THE TEACHING OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
IN SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS IN
SELECTED SCHOOL DIVISIONS IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The scenario is typical in social studies classrooms across America. One day a week, usually Friday, the teacher devotes class time to current events discussion. Perhaps the class begins with a ten-question true-or-false quiz, and then for thirty minutes the students mention names and places in the news during the past week.

Unfortunately, these current events days usually offer little real instruction of contemporary issues. Rarely are the events discussed in regard to their impact on the world and, more importantly, on the lives of the students. With this in mind, Gross, McPhie, and Fraenkel comment:

It seems terribly tame to carry on such weekly current events lessons in the face of a world which is shot through with rampant doubt, confusion, and contradictions; a world in which we talk of peace, but in which the arms race continues; a world in which Americans fight and die, but we are not at war. We listen to current event reports about civil rights struggles in classrooms which are often part of blatantly de facto segregated schools. These are the problems we need to deal with if we are to help our students make some sense out of a world which strikes most of them as being just this side of overwhelming. If we want our students to grow to adulthood with the skills and the drive to take on some share of the

responsibility for what goes on in this world, to make their voices heard on the issues of the day, something more is needed than current events Friday. (Gross, et. al., 1969, p. 382).

More and more, it is becoming obvious that many social studies teachers agree that "current events Fridays" are no longer acceptable. Position statements have also been made emphasizing the need for contemporary issues instruction by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). Even though many social studies teachers would quickly claim that they teach contemporary issues, a closer examination of their curriculum and instruction would probably show very little attention to ongoing, integrated instruction of contemporary issues that pervade the world around us. Thus, this researcher contends that a need exists for assessment, evaluation, and discussion of contemporary issues instruction in social studies classrooms.

That many social studies educators feel the inadequacies of "current events Friday" is clear from Position Statements published by the National Council for the Social Studies. Beginning in the early 1970s, the organization offered social studies guidelines aimed at producing students who have understanding of contemporary issues and are intellectually involved in attempted resolution of these issues.

In 1971 and more recently in 1979, social studies educators formally proclaimed that the study of contemporary issues is an important aspect of the teaching of social studies. The "NCSS Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines" published by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1971 and revised in 1979 is a document that presents "a comprehensive set of principles or standards which could be systematically applied to existing or new social studies curricula to assess and give directions to programmatic concerns" (Cogan and Miner, 1977, p. 1) for the implementation of contemporary issues instruction. In the 1979 NCSS Position Statement, Guideline 2.0 states "The Social Studies Program Should Deal with the Real Social World" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267). It continues to say, "In too many social studies classrooms the social world is idealized and mythologized" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267).

Too often, teachers of the social studies teach to students what they consider to be a body of factual knowledge. Many times students are required to memorize these facts as undeniable and surely unquestionable truths. This body of knowledge is all too often closed to discussion, on the basis that what has already happened cannot be changed. Many would ask, therefore, what purpose could exist for discussing what could have been? In such

cases, one encounters precisely what the NCSS believes to be one of the greatest weaknesses in the teaching of social studies. If students are not allowed to discuss the issues in an intellectual setting, they lose the true-to-life experience that accompanied the original situations. This human experience makes more concrete the study of social studies and causes the social studies student to become an active participant in learning; such experience may produce more active participants in society. Failure to attempt to grasp some of the human experiences of an issue results in failure to grasp the totality of that issue.

Central to the NCSS Position Statement is Guideline 2.1 (1979 Position Statement), which holds that "the program should focus on the social world as it is, its flaws, its ideals, its strengths, its dangers, and its promise" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267). Teaching about the world as it is may prove difficult for some social studies teachers since textbooks often do not provide this content; further, "[t]eachers tend not only to rely on, but to believe in the textbook as the source of knowledge. Textbooks are not seen as support materials, but as the central instrument of instruction by most social studies teachers" (Shaver, et. al., 1979, p. 151). Teachers may fear dealing with issues not covered by texts; moreover, should these issues be mentioned in their texts, teachers

may not feel adequately prepared to treat these pervasive issues objectively. This may largely explain the reliance on "current events."

There will also exist social studies teachers, history teachers in particular, who may believe that a study of history has no room for the analysis of contemporary issues. However, Guideline 2.2 of the 1979 National Council for the Social Studies Position Statement asserts that "the [overall] program should emphasize pervasive and enduring social issues" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267). The statement continues:

[T]hese guidelines take the position that enduring or pervasive social issues such as economic injustice, conflict, racism, social disorder, and environmental imbalance are appropriate content for the K-12 social studies curriculum. The primary purpose of a social studies program is neither to advance the frontiers of knowledge nor to produce social scientists. Rather, its task is to engage students in analyzing and attempting to resolve the social issues confronting them. To do so, young people must draw on the content and methods of the social science disciplines as well as their own beliefs and considered values and, whenever and wherever appropriate, on such fields as the humanities and the natural sciences ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267).

All secondary grade level social studies courses could be used to initiate student discussions concerning contemporary issues. At the outset, these discussions could

focus on particular world problems, with emphasis on the existence of the problem, the people or areas most affected by the problem, and reasons why these people or areas might be most affected. Another aspect of student discussion could, after research, focus on attempted resolution to the problems given the resources and understanding that students and teacher bring to their discussions.

The social studies program "should include analysis and attempts to formulate potential resolutions of present and controversial global problems such as racism, sexism, world resources, nuclear proliferation, and ecological imbalance" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267). This 1979 Guideline number 2.4 differs only slightly from its counterpart in the 1971 NCSS document. In 1971 the issues listed by the NCSS Position Statement included racism, poverty, war and population. The issues may change gradually over time, but the skilled learner adapts to new issues using his or her basic interest and understanding possibly formulated while studying earlier issues. To expose students to the analysis of global issues and to allow them to formulate potential resolutions to these issues provide them with a host of decision-making skills they can use long after they have left their social studies classrooms. The students' understandings of issues discussed in the social studies classroom should help them

better to understand and attempt to resolve issues that they will have to face in the future as voting citizens.

The NCSS Guidelines Position Statement published in 1979 differs also with that published in 1971 with the addition of guideline 2.9. A social studies program "should provide the opportunity for students to examine potential future conditions and problems" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines, 1979, p. 267). If one believes that future conditions and problems grow in part from issues discussed and debated today, then for citizens to best participate in future decision making, an understanding of contemporary issues is vital.

In 1977, Cogan and Miner published a study entitled "Social Studies Supervisors' Rankings of the NCSS Curriculum Guidelines." In this study, survey participants were asked to rank the sixty-six 1971 NCSS Curriculum Guidelines in categories ranging from "least important to social studies education" to "most important to social studies education." The findings of this study reveal that supervisors valued highly the study of contemporary issues in the social studies classroom. Of the nine broad categories of the 1971 NCSS Guidelines, category number two ("The Social Studies Program Should Deal With the Real Social World") was ranked by supervisors of social studies curricula second highest in importance for emphasis in the overall social studies

program. There is, therefore, evidence of supervisory support for the teaching of contemporary social issues. Even though this study focused on the 1971 guidelines, the 1979 NCSS Revised Curriculum Guidelines were essentially a restatement of those published in 1971.

In 1980 the National Council for the Social Studies reaffirmed its stance for contemporary issues education in its document entitled "Essentials of the Social Studies." Asserting that a study of critical issues in the real world was essential, rather than just basic, to social studies instruction, this position paper opens with:

Citizen participation in public life is essential to the health of our democratic system. Effective social studies programs help prepare young people who can identify, understand and work to solve the problems that face our increasingly diverse nation and interdependent world (Essentials of the Social Studies, 1980).

One of the nine introductory points for a social studies program was that such programs should "deal with critical issues and the world as it really is" (Essentials of the Social Studies, 1980).

The social studies, which include history, government, geography, sociology, economics, and anthropology, need not be taught in isolation from present day issues; reasons always exist for what has transpired. While we may never understand all of the issues of an international dispute, a

domestic political dilemma, or a world depression, students should be given at least the opportunity to explore reasons for the information or content they are asked to believe. Students' thinking about the world as it was, as it is, and as it will be should be a major goal for social studies instruction.

If one agrees with the 1979 National Council for the Social Studies Position Statement "Revision of the NCSS Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines" which states that "[t]he basic goal of social studies education is to prepare young people to be humane, rational, participating citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 262), it is not enough to study the social studies for the sake of learning. This challenge can best be met by the teaching of contemporary issues in the social studies classroom with emphasis given to what from our past led to these issues and how these issues may affect our future. If social studies are to have meaning, then students must be able to apply what they have learned to a study of today's issues and to predicting tomorrow's problems, as well as methods of approaching or handling anticipated issues.

The teaching of social studies may easily be explained as an exercise in relevance. While classroom teachers need not attempt consciously to relate each lesson taught to some

present day issue, the end result of an instructional segment -- a unit's culmination or the outcome of a year's study in the social studies -- would be to foster reflective thinking by students on what has been studied in relation to contemporary concerns. If one believes that an understanding of past events and issues provides guidance for handling present day issues, then one should recognize that a study of contemporary issues could aid in solving future problems. For those of us who accept this rationale, "the social studies are centrally concerned with the education of citizens. The mark of a good citizen is the quality of decisions which he reaches on public and private matters of social concern" (Barr, et al., p. 4).

Many professionals see as a major goal for social studies education the teaching of decision-making skills. In conjunction with this decision-making instruction, issues of social concern are perceived as a major area of study in social studies classrooms. "In the last analysis, increasingly more informed and mature treatment of our persistent social problems is the single most important objective of the social sciences...[S]ince it is the solution to social problems about which citizens must make decisions, it is logical that 'decision making' ought to relate somehow to social problems and matters of public controversy" (Barr, et al., 1977, p. 4).

DEFINITION

The teaching of contemporary issues includes discussion and attempted resolution of enduring and pervasive problems that concern mankind. Contemporary, social, or current issues instruction should be clearly distinguished from a weekly current events assignment. Lee C. Cain explains:

Current affairs bears similarity to studies with such titles as current events, contemporary history, international relations and world problems...While similarities exist, "current events" treats of immediate contemporary happenings and may be ephemeral in nature. Studies under the other titles are wider in scope (Cain, 1977, p. 54).

Issues instruction is broader and significantly more important to the learner. While current events instruction may provide a good springboard for discussions of a higher cognitive level, current events instruction in and of itself constitutes a much lower level of contemporary issues education. Selakovich suggests that what is most important is:

[t]he development of an attitude in the class by whatever means that the problems to be dealt with are ones for which there are solutions. Even the most difficult national [and international] problems have one or more solutions. What may be most important and most neglected in the...considerations of contemporary issues is an analysis of why issues have not been solved. The major teaching task may be to get students to ask themselves this question. Examining

alternative solutions offered by experts (or by students) to persistent issues... should not be the end of the discussion. More properly, it is the beginning. The real learning may occur as students examine why certain solutions do not gain immediate consensus from decision makers (Selakovich, 1975, p. 149).

Examples of contemporary issues that merit consideration for inclusion as topics of study in secondary social studies classrooms are nuclear proliferation, ecological imbalance, racism, hunger, disease, overpopulation, and world resource allocation.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in selected secondary social studies classrooms in the State of Virginia. The following research questions were used to facilitate the development and implementation of this study:

1. What contemporary issues are identified by secondary social studies teachers as potentially most affecting students' present and future lives and thus being most significant for student understanding?
2. Should a study of contemporary issues be a part of social studies curricula in the State of Virginia? If so, in which subjects are they presently covered and in which subjects should they be covered?
3. In those subjects where contemporary issues are covered, what teaching strategies are employed for this instruction?

4. What extent of overall social studies class time is devoted to the coverage of contemporary issues?
5. How are students evaluated as to their understanding of contemporary issues?
6. Is there a sequential contemporary issues program as part of the social studies curriculum that spans grade levels and builds on concepts studied from year to year?
7. What sources of information are used as the basis for contemporary issues instruction?
8. What helps or hinders teachers in dealing with contemporary issues in the social studies classroom?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The teaching of contemporary issues in the social studies classroom has been judged profoundly important by the National Council for the Social Studies, the most prestigious and professionally honored organization of social studies educators in the country. The NCSS, in the February 1960 issue of its publication Social Education, reported that at its 1959 annual meeting in Kansas City, a major topic for discussion was contemporary issues instruction. While in its formal Position Statements of 1971 and 1979 the NCSS specifically called for the teaching of enduring and pervasive contemporary social issues in conjunction with the stated curriculum, this writer is concerned as to whether this is being done in Virginia secondary social studies programs.

The enduring and pervasive social nature of these issues justifies their treatment in social studies classrooms. Too, the very importance of these issues calls for classroom concentration on them by teachers of different secondary grade levels and ability groups. Finally, a sequential curriculum could be developed which would expose students to the same issues year after year but with increasing degrees of sophistication in approach and viewpoint. The coverage of issues in this manner would follow the proposed "expanding horizons" approach of building upon what was previously covered in the system's social studies curriculum.

To believe these issues worthy of consideration for inclusion in the social studies curriculum is not enough. Many teachers may believe that student understanding of these issues, along with other stated curriculum content, is vital to a comprehensive social studies education. Others may fail to recognize the significance of contemporary issues education. This study is designed to ascertain the nature and magnitude of this discrepancy in teachers' thinking and instructional implementation of actual contemporary issues. The major purpose is to assess and evaluate collected data about the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms in selected school systems in the State of Virginia.

Limitations of the Study

This study was designed to assess teacher perceptions of contemporary issues instruction in secondary social studies classrooms in four southwest Virginia school districts. In order for the results of this study to be properly interpreted, a number of limitations must be recognized and accepted.

Because only 116 teachers were involved in the population, one must be extremely careful about generalizing from this study. Moreover, the 116 teachers surveyed all taught in one of four southwest Virginia localities within a 75 mile range of the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg. Not only the relatively small sample size, but also the close proximity to one another of each of the localities used in this study should cause one to generalize from this study with extreme caution.

Another limitation noted in this study is the fact that the journals of two prominent educational organizations were publishing articles and surveys concerning contemporary issues instruction at the time this research was being conducted. This was seen as somewhat of a mixed blessing. On the positive side, it showed national support for this type of research study. However, this researcher was somewhat concerned that these surveys could possibly raise teacher awareness of and emphasis on contemporary issues in

social studies instruction. While it is doubtful that many teachers used for this study were affected by articles published at the time this study was being conducted, it is worthy to note that this coincidence did occur.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although much has been written about the need for contemporary issues instruction, little research has been conducted in this general area. While position statements advocating the teaching of contemporary issues education are noted and included herein, few actual research studies had been found before April, 1983 that revealed statistics concerning this issue. However, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the National Council for the Social Studies have recently conducted surveys concerning the teaching of contemporary issues in public schools. The findings from these surveys are reported in this review of literature.

Because this topic of study is relatively new, few resources reporting research findings are available. This lack of information should not suggest, however, that the teaching of contemporary issues is new to social studies education. As early as 1959, the National Council for the Social Studies advocated the teaching of contemporary issues as an integral component of an overall social studies curriculum ("Reviewing the Convention," 1960). Many school

systems have already incorporated these issues into their curricula and even have published explanations of their instructional approaches. While other systems may have failed to incorporate these issues actively into their social studies programs of study, a rationale may exist for this failure.

In his study entitled "Educators and the Nuclear Threat," Elam reports Dr. Robert Jay Lifton's beliefs that: "[t]he more important a subject is, the less likely it is to be studied in our academies" (Elam, 1983, p. 534). Lifton says that because certain subjects are unpleasant and even disturbing, their coverage is often limited in planned courses of study (Elam, p. 534). Moreover, he contends that the concentrated study of these issues may be limited because "to study [these issues] you have to alter your assumptions, your presuppositions, your conceptual approach. You have to change your way of looking at things as a professional...and most professionals do not want to do that" (Elam, p. 534). As Elam reports, "Lifton adds that much the same can be said about teaching a subject. It is true that the more important a subject is, the less likely it is to be taught" (Elam, p. 534).

Because the teaching of contemporary issues may involve analysis of particular "unpleasant or disturbing" concerns, teachers may avoid instructing in these issues rather than

attempt to base their instruction on somewhat unsettling or troublesome topics. As these issues may not be considered "appropriate" content by many social studies teachers, classroom instruction and research into this instruction has not in the past been deemed as significantly worthy of consideration. This stance may be shifting, however. Educators are becoming more involved in teaching and even researching information concerning contemporary issues education as exemplified by articles in Educational Leadership, (October, 1982) and Social Education, (January, 1983). As data are reported and professionals' perceptions are noted concerning this instruction, more emphasis may be given to this issue by teacher training institutions, school systems, and teachers.

In research studies dealing with the teaching of contemporary issues, certain aspects of this instruction merit consideration. What contemporary issues are covered in social studies classrooms, and what strategies are implemented in this instruction? How does this instruction differ from what has been typically reported as "current events" studies? What supplemental instructional goals or aims do professionals believe contemporary issues education will hold for students' overall social studies education? A clear understanding of answers to the above questions can better establish a sound contemporary issues educational

program for students in secondary social studies classrooms, even though some teachers still may have reservations.

Dealing with Controversial Issues

Although the term "issues" in the phrase "enduring and pervasive social issues" (NCSS, 1971, p.17) might connote the existence of controversy, one need not fear discussion of these issues in secondary classrooms on the basis of their controversial nature alone. Some issues from this "enduring and pervasive social" group may not be suitable for coverage by the social studies classroom teacher, but other issues may be quite appropriate for classroom discussion. To belabor the point of these issues' controversial status is unnecessary because the individual classroom teacher and his school system are the ultimate judges of the issues' merit and the need for discussion as they relate to their particular situation. Thus, while some issues may not be suitable for discussion with some students, other issues may prove to be wholly appropriate if the social studies teacher selects the issues in regard to his students' backgrounds. For instance, while measures to control population growth might not be appropriate topics for certain fifth or sixth grade students, this discussion might certainly be relevant to older high school students as they explore world population problems.

Contemporary Issues Education: The Issues

In discussing contemporary issues education, one must remember that some issues are defined as "enduring and pervasive" (NCSS, 1971, p. 17, 1979). These issues are recognized and accepted as major social problems and are considered long-lasting as compared to immediately newsworthy situations. While solutions to these issues often may be seen as almost overwhelmingly difficult to achieve, these types of issues should provide the basis for a contemporary issues educational program component.

As stated earlier, the National Council for the Social Studies in 1971 listed the following issues as worthy of consideration in a contemporary issues program: "racism, poverty, war, and population" (NCSS, 1971, p. 17). By 1979, the NCSS adjusted its list of "pervasive and enduring" social issues to include "racism, sexism, world resources, nuclear proliferation, and ecological imbalance" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines, 1979, p. 267).

Besides the National Council for the Social Studies, a number of authors writing on the subject of contemporary issues education have devised what they consider to be lists of important global issues. Gross writes that "inflation, crime and juvenile delinquency, medical care, conservation, civil rights, minorities, war, the role of the United States in the Middle East, and international organizations" (Gross,

1964, p. 2) are some of the world's most pressing social concerns. McConnell says that

[t]he pile of world problems seems to be getting higher and higher---world poverty, starvation, and inadequate food distribution; overcrowding, crime, and declining quality of life; deteriorating neighborhoods and urban and regional decline; inability to develop adequate and just management of our resources, mistrust and disintegration of our political institutions; our hunger for military power and more arms, and our insensitivity to the needs of others in different age groups, in different communities, and in different cultures (McConnell, 1976, p. 3).

Cain notes "[t]he world food problem, the energy crisis faced by industrialized nations, war and sporadic hostilities in the Middle East, war in Indo-China and the growing problem of pollution" (Cain, 1976-77, p. 57) as the most persistent social ills worthy of consideration as content for a contemporary issues lesson.

In keeping with earlier lists, yet phrased somewhat differently, Brodbelt lists "natural resources usage, the effect of the pollution of air, water, and soil upon the environment; the problems of starvation and disease in the underdeveloped nations, and the need to promote global sharing of wealth and food resources" (Brodbelt, 1979, p. 1, 2) as enduring social problems. Lamy, considers the following as the most important world problems: "resource scarcity and limits to growth issues; arms and disarmament;

human rights; political freedom; violence and repression, [and] inequality and global conflict" (Lamy, 1980, p. 8).

Among the social issues listed in identical surveys published in Educational Leadership ("Survey on Social Issues," Oct., 1982, p. 41) and Social Education ("Survey on Social Issues," Jan., 1983, p. 65) are "nuclear disarmament, pollution of earth's environment, division of planet into areas of wealth and poverty, alternatives to existing forms of U.S. political, social, and economic organization, racism, sexism, [and] genetic engineering."

Obviously, lists of global issues suitable for inclusion in a contemporary issues program may vary slightly according to the time period. While the teaching of social issues is seen as an important aspect of social studies education, the list of issues discussed and student understanding gained from that discussion is only one benefit of contemporary issues education. The critical-thinking, problem-solving skills gained from those discussions will better prepare students to become more educated decision-makers of the future.

Commercially Published Resources for
Contemporary Issues Instruction

In his article "Why Teach Contemporary Issues?" Stanley E. Easton comments:

Various lists of objectives for contemporary affairs teaching read like the aims of all social studies

education. The purposes of contemporary affairs education, however, may be summarized as follows: (1) to provide for the fullest possible intellectual development of students, (2) to make school experiences relevant to life in the world outside the classroom, and (3) to preserve and extend democratic institutions through the development of an informed citizenry which continually seeks new information regarding public affairs (Easton, 1976, p. 157).

A number of school systems across the country seem to include aspects of contemporary issues education as part of their overall social studies curricula guidelines (Curtis and Shaver, p. 265). With the inclusion of these topics, "a wide variety of commercially-prepared materials is currently available for examining contemporary societal problems and issues" (Curtis and Shaver, 1979, p. 265). Some of the better known contemporary issues/current events programs include those produced by newspapers and magazines. The New York Times, Time and Newsweek all publish a variety of materials in current affairs instruction that may be purchased as supplements for social studies instruction. For example, these commercially-published activity packets may at times include a news article along with some pertinent background commentaries of the issue discussed. Large wall maps are also provided so that students may see in detail those areas discussed in an article. Teacher instructions for successfully incorporating the packet into the curriculum and an evaluation designed to assess student

understanding of what has been read and discussed are also included. The large publishing companies often send multiple copies of yearly current affairs examinations to teachers subscribing to their current affairs service so that teachers may better assess what contemporary issues/current events information their students have retained.

Curtis and Shaver continue to explain that many of the commercially-prepared units provide well-developed, sophisticated coverage of contemporary affairs instruction with excellent teacher resources. Many of these packages do indeed contain up-to-date information with excellent sources of case studies and teacher suggestions for successfully implementing the materials. Problems do exist in some other of the commercially-prepared materials dealing with social problems. The scope of problems selected for some of these units is somewhat limited, leading to the dating of information too quickly (Curtis and Shaver, 1979, p. 265). In these cases, one must question the selection of issues, as a sound contemporary issues education program should focus primarily on those social issues considered to be "pervasive and enduring" (NCSS, 1971, p. 17).

In the 1983 Catalog published by Social Studies School Service, one notices the inclusion of the topics dealing specifically with "Controversial Issues" and "Current Social

Issues." Moreover, the authors of this clearinghouse of materials devote coverage in an entire section entitled "Global Issues and Perspectives" to such topics as "War/Peace Issues," "Atomic Age," "Nuclear War," "Energy/Environment," "Global Education," "International Relations," "Food and Population," "Third World," "Human Rights/Terrorism," "World Ideologies," "Comparative Systems" and "Future Studies" (Social Studies School Service, 1983, pp. 181-20). These pages include information about paperbacks, reference materials, simulations, hardbacks, and audio-visual software, along with a listing of publishers, copyright dates, and costs for ordering the materials. This catalog, a compilation of the most current resources for instructional use in social studies classrooms nationally, reflects the ideas of publishers who produce social studies materials. To see such availability of materials on contemporary issues not only gives credence to the assumption that many resources are available in this area of study but also fosters the belief that a potential educational market exists for these types of materials.

Contemporary Issues Education:
Teaching Models

The Harvard University Social Studies Project, directed by Donald W. Oliver and James P. Shaver, is one of the most widely recognized attempts at implementing an organized

research-based program for current affairs and public issues instruction in secondary social studies classrooms. This project "has developed curriculum materials, teaching approaches, and evaluation devices based on the conviction that the analysis of public controversy should command primary attention in public secondary schools" ("Harvard University," 1972, p. 749).

Begun in 1956, "the original research and development work [of the project] resulted in the book Teaching Public Issues in the High School" ("Harvard University," p. 749) by Oliver and Shaver. It was after the publication of this book that the twenty-eight instructional unit pamphlets of the program were published by Fred Newmann and Donald Oliver ("Harvard University," p. 749). The units, each devoted to a particular public issue, are supplemented by a teacher's guide suggesting strategies for instruction and offering two objective tests ("Harvard University," p. 749). This article states, "[t]he most broadly stated objective [of the Project Materials] is to train students to examine and analyze, through discussion and argument, the kinds of disputes which give birth to social conflict" ("Harvard University," p. 749). It is these types of "real world" situations that can provide relevancy for social studies instruction.

Influenced by earlier work in conjunction with the Harvard University Social Studies Project, James P. Shaver, working with A. Guy Larkins, received funding for Analysis of Public Issues, an outgrowth of the Utah State University Social Studies Project (Shaver and Larkins, 1972, p. 770). While seemingly more geared to facilitating student decision-making skills than to identifying and discussing contemporary issues, this program "can be integrated into any social studies course, 'where the concern is with helping students develop a foundation of basic concepts for analyzing public issues'" (Shaver and Larkins, 1972, p. 771). Because of this reason, the program, composed of thirty-two "bundles" which include audio-visual aids, student booklets and a textbook entitled Decision Making in a Democracy, is noted here. Again, contemporary issues instruction is based on the proposition that attention should be given to real world issues; in conjunction with coverage of stated text information, such an emphasis can only underscore the belief that social studies instruction can be a practical and useful endeavor in today's ever-changing society.

Many school systems may incorporate contemporary issues education into their social studies curricula. While it is desirable that contemporary issues become a focal point of all secondary courses within a social studies curriculum, a

number of school systems have established elective courses geared toward this topic. Described below are a number of social studies courses (both elective and required) which detail the study of contemporary issues. As these school systems have published explanations of their courses in contemporary affairs, they were included in this review. Many more school systems must offer courses or at least curriculum components dealing with contemporary issues but have not concerned themselves with publishing their curricula.

In 1968, the Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey Board of Education published United States History in the Secondary School: Contemporary Problems. This teaching unit contains an overview of contemporary problems, student objectives, suggested evaluation ideas, and activities to foster better student understanding of the intricacies of contemporary problems. The unit explains what one particular school system has accomplished in advancing the idea of incorporating contemporary issues. The Providence, Rhode Island Public Schools in grades nine and twelve offers instructional units entitled Toward A Global Civilization and World Problems, Social Issues. The ninth grade course deals in part with the identification of problems such as "hunger, disease, literacy, housing, and employment," with discussion and research aimed toward the establishment of

possible solutions to these problems (Providence Public Schools, Grade 9, Resource Unit III, 1969, pp. 3-4).

The twelfth grade course-- World Problems --is divided into three sets of issues: "power issues, development issues, and social issues" (Providence Public Schools, Grade 12, Resource Unit I, 1969, p. 1). Only the units dealing with social issues and development issues are discussed here. The resource unit states:

In the twelfth grade program, fifteen specific world problems are identified. [The problems] prepared for study are those which seem to recur with considerable frequency in the daily press, in periodical literature, and in public statements of world statesmen, as well as on the agenda of the United Nations and its allied agencies. The problems have been selected, moreover, because each lends itself to an analysis within the context of the United States culture and several other cultural settings. Each has world-wide dimension as well (Providence Public Schools, Grade 12, Unit I, 1969, p. 1).

Aims, methodology, and generalizations, along with student questions and activities, are provided in these units. Dealing specifically with the list of contemporary concerns discussed in the development issues unit, the members of the Providence Public Schools curriculum committee chose "conservation, distribution, economic growth, literacy, population, poverty and technology" as the formal issues for this unit (Providence Public Schools, Grade 12, Unit III, 1969, p. 1).

The Syracuse, New York School District has likewise implemented a contemporary issues component as part of its social studies program. A grade twelve elective course for students in this school district is entitled Great Issues. Included as a part of this course is discussion of such topics as racial conflict, social problems, "pollution, poverty, human relations, living in space, population control, and the roles of Asia, Africa, [and] Latin America in tomorrow's world" (Syracuse City School District, 1970, p. 7). This series of unit concepts and generalizations is supplemented with suggested activities and resources. As is explained at the beginning of the six major student objectives, this unit is meant "to provide opportunity for [students to] use...techniques of critical thinking through depth studies of issues which are the concerns of the present and possibly the future" (Syracuse City School District, p. 6).

Implementing similar goals and instructional strategies, the Dade County, Florida Public Schools has published a teaching unit entitled Current Domestic Problems, Social Studies. Some of the major issues studied in this elective course include "civil rights, crime control, preservation of the environment, preservation of natural resources, and over-population" (Moore, 1971).

World hunger and the population explosion are major topics of study for the Anchorage (Alaska) Borough School District's Survey-Elective Social Studies Program for Senior High Schools dealing with contemporary problems. A course description and objectives, a list of books and materials, a course outline with suggested approaches, a statement of philosophy, and social studies objectives comprise this unit package (Anchorage Borough School District, 1971, pp. 121-122).

Russell Crawford of the Peoria-Perkin, Illinois Council for the Social Studies and a teacher at Perkin High School describes in detail a contemporary issues course entitled The PPP: Problem Panel Project which he teaches. As instructor of an overwhelmingly student-oriented course, Crawford describes his techniques:

First, students decide which contemporary problems they want to study and then form a panel with other interested students. Second, the group researches their given topic in the library. Third, students break the topics down into subtopics and assign a specific one to each member of the panel. Fourth, each student reads, analyzes, and summarizes 10 primary sources on the particular subtopic. Fifth, the students present their individual research to the panel for suggestions and possible additional research. Each student prepares a short oral presentation on his individual topic. The panel then organizes the individual oral presentation into a group presentation to be given before the entire class. Sixth, the final presentation is given, including an

introduction, various presentations on subtopics, and an overall conclusion based on the results of the research (Crawford, 1974, Abstract).

A detailed explanation of each aspect of the unit's process is also provided.

Contemporary Issues Education: Teacher Training In-Service Model

Because a number of school systems offer courses in contemporary issues instruction or incorporate contemporary issues education into the overall social studies curriculum, a teacher in-service model is detailed below. Other models may exist which have been used in various school systems, but those systems and/or authors, however, have given little or no thought to publishing their in-service models.

Comparative World Problems: An Interdisciplinary Model For Inservice Teacher Training was published by Steven L. Lamy in 1980. As director for the Center for Teaching International Relations at the Graduate School of International Studies of the University of Denver, Lamy first explained this model at the 1980 International Studies Association Convention in Los Angeles:

The first course [in this 45-hour Master's degree program] introduces existing precollegiate curriculum in international studies and gives strategies for curriculum development, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation....The second course is intended to help teachers develop sensitivity to world problems of resource scarcity, human rights,

disarmament, and political freedom.
(Lamy, 1980, Abstract)

The model is introduced with information establishing a rationale for this type of program. Statistics on program participants, a program description, and a syllabus follow. One of the major stated goals, besides developing knowledge of contemporary world problems, is "to develop an appreciation that world problems are our responsibility as citizens of the most powerful nation in the world" (Lamy, 1980, p. 10). Lamy also believes that this program of studies will help teachers learn to evaluate public policies critically and to involve themselves in influencing the outcomes of issues (Lamy, 1980, p. 8).

Evaluation of Contemporary Issues Instruction

Alleman et al., authors of A Self-Assessment Inventory For Social Studies To Accompany The National Council for Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines, developed this instrument "to help teachers, supervisors, and administrators determine their readiness to embark upon or review their status relative to the new social studies curriculum" (Alleman et al., 1975, Abstract). Developed to correspond with the then newly published 1971 National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines, this evaluation instrument details the nine broad goals stated in the Curriculum Guidelines. Guideline 2.0 (with its

component guidelines 2.1, 2.2, 2.3), which deals specifically with the teaching of contemporary social issues, is included in Appendix A.

For those social studies teachers, departments, or school systems that wish to evaluate their contemporary affairs programs for their compliance with goals suggested by the National Council for the Social Studies, this instrument provides appropriate guidance and structure.

Contemporary Issues Education:
Recent Developments

In October, 1982, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development published in its journal, Educational Leadership, a "Survey on Social Issues and School Curriculum." Three months later, the editors of Social Education, the publication of the NCSS, published the same survey. Members from both organizations were asked to respond to the survey and the results were presented in later issues. In May, 1983, Alex Molnar, the author of the survey, published an article in Social Education in which he analyzed and compared the ASCD and NCSS results.

Seven contemporary issues were listed in this survey:
"nuclear disarmament; pollution of earth's environment; division of the planet into areas of wealth and poverty; alternatives to existing forms of U.S. political, social, and economic organization; racism; sexism; and genetic

engineering" ("Survey," 1982, p. 41). Readers were asked to rank each contemporary issue on a scale of 1 ("unimportant") to 5 ("very important") explaining the "significance of that issue for humankind" ("Survey," 1982, p. 41). They were then asked if each particular issue is included (a) in social studies instruction and (b) in other subjects.

Again, a Likert scale was used to measure responses from 1 ("very little") to 5 ("to a great extent"). Respondents were then requested to mark for each issue whether it should be included (a) in social studies and (b) in other subjects.

The question, "What is the most important social issue regularly studied as part of the school curricula?," ("Survey," 1982, p. 42) was once again to be scaled as it was perceived to be included in the social studies and in other subjects. Also, readers were asked in this question if these issues should be included in social studies classrooms and in other subjects. Readers were then asked in Question 9 to list the most important social issue facing mankind. Again, this answer was to be considered for its inclusion in social studies and other subjects and if it should be included in these two areas.

"How satisfied are you with the school's choice of social issues to study?" ("Survey," 1982, p. 42) was listed as Question 10. A one-five scale was listed again for this response. Question numbers 11 and 12 to be answered with

yes or no responses were "Do you think educators, as a group, should try to formulate positions on social issues?" and "Is there any social issue you want educators to take a position on?" ("Survey," 1982, p. 42). Finally in Question 13, respondents are asked to write their answers to Question 12 if their answers were "yes."

The survey concludes with seven demographic questions on occupation, level of employment, type of institution, sex, heritage, age, and ASCD membership ("Survey," 1982, p. 42).

Molnar stated that the purpose of the survey was "to assess the perceived significance of selected social issues ... [and] ...to determine the extent to which respondents believed these issues were and should be included in the school curriculum" (Molnar, "Results of ASCD/NCSS Survey," 1983, p. 305).

Molnar concluded that both NCSS and ASCD respondents thought nuclear disarmament was the most significant issue facing mankind and that it was not included in curricula as much as it should be. Both groups were quite sensitive to social issues and both groups thought the most important issues were not the issues being studied in school. Also, both thought educators should "attempt to formulate positions on social issues" (Molnar, 1983, p. 305). Complete details of the NCSS and ASCD results of this survey are listed in Appendix B.

More important to social studies education, Lynne B. Iglitzin, executive director of NCSS, analyzed the results of her members' surveys in the May, 1983 edition of Social Education. Iglitzin points out several disparities in the teaching of social issues that the survey revealed. Ninety-seven percent of the survey respondents thought pollution of the earth's environment to be an important issue, but only 22% believed it was widely prevalent in social studies curricula. Likewise, 93% of the respondents considered nuclear disarmament a significant issue; yet, only 19% thought it was often included in most curricula. Other social issues considered by the respondents to be significant include wealth and poverty in the world, global understanding, conflict resolution, economic survival, war and peace, human rights, and personal morality. Iglitzin concludes from these results that "the social studies curriculum should be far more involved with social issues than it presently is" (Iglitzin, 1983, p. 304).

Iglitzin also mentions that the survey shows dissatisfaction among NCSS members concerning the school's choice of which social issues should be taught. Also, 81% of the respondents felt that educators as a group should formulate stands on social issues. Finally, Iglitzin concludes that more than likely many social studies educators--"probably far more than ... the public at

large"--would favor a revision of curriculum to include more social issues teaching (Iglitzin, 1983, p. 357). Details of the NCSS responses can also be found in Appendix B.

This researcher would be remiss in not pointing out major concerns of the ASCD/NCSS Social Issues Survey as noted by Alex Molnar himself. These major concerns raise questions about the validity and reliability surrounding results of this survey.

The [Molnar] survey is based on a total of 375 responses--286 from ASCD and 89 from NCSS questionnaires returned. Of these, 49 came in too late to be tabulated, while 36 were rejected because they were submitted in a single envelope from a single source. Because of the small number and because this is not a scientific sample, the survey results must be treated with great caution. In order to compare the two surveys, an unequal n analysis of variance was used (Molnar, 1983, p. 305).

While results of this survey could be viewed as useless from a scientific point of view, this researcher is pleased that an attempt was, at least, made to survey educators concerning contemporary issues. The survey itself, subsequent results, and related articles published in two major educational journals point to the concern and need that educators perceive for classroom instruction of these issues.

In summary, little research in contemporary issues instruction has been conducted until recently. Yet,

position statements advocating the teaching of contemporary issues have been published, and many educators have developed lists of contemporary issues they have found to be pervasive and enduring. Resources for the teacher of contemporary issues have largely been commercially published by such news organizations as New York Times, Newsweek and Time. Various models which include materials, strategies, and evaluation instruments have been developed by universities and public school systems. More and more, teachers are being presented in-service models to aid them in their instruction of contemporary issues. Likewise, models exist for the evaluation of contemporary issues instruction. Finally, the most timely and perhaps the most extensive research of contemporary issues is the survey of educators by Alex Molnar in 1983 to assess the status of contemporary issues instruction. While results from Molnar's study provided few significant results on contemporary issues instruction, the study itself was seen as useful in that it pointed out the need for such research.

Concluding Statement

Stanley Easton comments:

Having accepted the legitimacy of contemporary affairs as part of the social studies curriculum, the challenge to social studies educators becomes that of designing activities with power sufficient to attain the purposes upon which that legitimacy is based. In addition, the social studies curriculum

must be constructed in such a way as to allow the incorporation of contemporary affairs in an orderly fashion and to give due recognition to the parity of contemporary affairs with other components of the total program. These are concerns not to be taken lightly (Easton, 1976, p. 159).

Believing in the position espoused by Easton and profoundly interested in the extent of contemporary issues instruction in the public schools of Virginia, I have undertaken to assess the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in selected school divisions in the State of Virginia. Chapter 3 will explain the methodology used to achieve that goal.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms in selected school systems in Virginia. The methodology used for this research focused on the collection of data relating to contemporary issues instruction. A number of relevant topics detailing contemporary issues instruction were studied: issues covered by teachers, issues that should be taught, social studies subjects in which issues are taught and subject areas in which they should be taught, teaching and evaluation strategies and informational sources used for contemporary issues coverage, along with factors which aid or hinder teachers in their contemporary issues instruction. Classroom teachers' responses and perceptions, therefore, provided the information needed for this study's completion. Teachers from selected school divisions in western and southwestern Virginia were surveyed.

School Divisions Used in This Study

In an attempt to survey teachers from urban, rural, and suburban school systems in Virginia, social studies

supervisors from the following four school systems were contacted: Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Pulaski County, and Tazewell County. After hearing an explanation of the study detailing the purpose and proposed methodology, all four local social studies supervisors obtained approval for the study to be conducted in their school districts.

In selecting these particular school systems, a number of concerns were taken into consideration. Primarily, systems possessing urban, rural, and suburban population characteristics were desired. Roanoke City was selected because of its status as the largest urban area in western Virginia. Roanoke County was ultimately chosen because it surrounds Roanoke City and is considered the most suburban of any area in western Virginia. Pulaski and Tazewell Counties, each with smaller populations than either the City of Roanoke or Roanoke County, were chosen because their populations are mostly small town or rural. A similar number of teachers were surveyed from urban, suburban, and rural systems. All of the secondary social studies teachers of world geography, world history, U.S. history, and U.S. government (the basic secondary social studies courses taught in Virginia) in each system were surveyed. Because no single rural school system in southwest Virginia had secondary social studies teacher populations comparable to either Roanoke County or Roanoke City, the suburban and

urban districts chosen for this study, two rural systems had to be surveyed in order to somewhat equalize the urban, suburban and rural populations.

Student standardized test scores were also reviewed to help determine the school systems to be used in this study. In noting the Virginia State Department of Education report detailing each of Virginia's school systems' Spring 1982 SRA Test Results, areal trends in scores were evident. The eleventh grade scores in reading and social studies generally followed community socio-economic patterns with suburban-district scores noticeably higher than similar test scores in the more urban and rural areas. In citing statistics from the report, the average state social studies score reported (in percentile ranks) for all eleventh grade students who took the test in Spring 1982 was 50. In the area of reading, the state average for eleventh-grade students was 52. Eleventh-grade student results on the SRA reading and social studies tests for the four school systems used in this study are reported in Table 1. Note that the suburban students' scores are higher than scores for the urban and rural systems' students.

Table 1

1982 Eleventh Grade SRA Test Results
(reported in percentile ranks)

<u>Socio-economic Classification</u>	<u>School System</u>	<u>Social Studies</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Urban:	Roanoke City	40	45
Suburban:	Roanoke County	61	65
Rural:	Pulaski County	39	39
	Tazewell County	47	47
Virginia:		50	52

These trends in scores for urban, suburban, and rural school systems were noted generally statewide. Research suggests that a positive correlation exists between the socio-economic background of a given community's population and its student scores on achievement tests (Lerman, 1972, pp. 366-383 and Mare, 1980, pp. 295-305). The 1982 SRA test results from the four school systems examined in this study tend to confirm this belief. This information was also used to explain why Pulaski County, Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Tazewell County were selected for this study.

It should also be noted that other reasons exist for these systems' selection. All four school divisions are in close proximity to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and would thus provide convenience in collecting data. Too, each of the four social studies supervisors involved were interested, offered assistance, and were

considered assets assuring a larger return from survey respondents. This possibility of receiving a large return from the chosen population was deemed a significant factor when local school systems were being considered.

In return for the cooperation offered by each school system, a summary result of its teachers' surveys (but not individual teacher results) was forwarded to the social studies supervisor of that system at the conclusion of this study. However, no identification of individual school district data was released beyond this dissertation study.

Teachers Surveyed

Secondary social studies teachers from Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Pulaski County and Tazewell County were surveyed for this study. In grades nine through twelve of Virginia's public schools, four social studies subjects must be offered by local school systems. These subjects include world geography and world history, one of which must be successfully completed by all students. World geography is generally offered to ninth grade students while world history is most often offered to students in the tenth grade. In the eleventh grade, all Virginia public school students must enroll in a course entitled Virginia and United States history. All twelfth-grade students complete a course in Virginia and United States government in order to graduate. Teachers who teach one or more of these basic

social studies courses were asked to respond to a questionnaire sent to them.

In the four selected school divisions, 116 secondary social studies teachers, teaching one or more of the four basic courses, were asked to respond to the survey. Table 2 details the number of teachers surveyed from each system.

Table 2

Number of Teachers Surveyed from Each School System

<u>System</u>	<u>Number of Secondary Social Studies Teachers Surveyed</u>
Roanoke County - suburban	42
Roanoke City - urban	35
Pulaski County - rural	15
Tazewell County - rural	24
Total:	116

Procedures and Instrumentation

On May 9, 1983, each secondary social studies teacher in the four selected school divisions was mailed a questionnaire entitled "Survey on Contemporary Issues and the Social Studies Curriculum" (Appendix C). A corresponding cover letter was included with each questionnaire explaining the purpose and nature of the

instrument (Appendix D). The cover letter also served to explain to all teachers that confidentiality for their opinions was guaranteed in the examination and treatment of all data received. Included in each packet mailed to teachers was a pencil and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

From this May 9 mailing of questionnaires, sixty-one teachers (52% of the population surveyed) returned their completed form by the May 18, 1983 deadline. Immediately, a second cover letter was drafted (Appendix E) and on May 23, a second packet, composed of the new cover letter, an identical questionnaire, and another self-addressed, stamped envelope was mailed to all teachers from the population who had not returned the first questionnaire. Teachers were asked in this letter to return their completed forms by May 31, ten days before the June 10, 1983 cut-off date. Thirty-three teachers (29% of the total population) responded to this second request. By June 10, 1983, ninety-four questionnaires had been returned. This represented 81% of those teachers who were asked to participate in the survey. A follow-up exercise was conducted in the fall of 1983 to assess responses from 50% of those twenty-two teachers (19% of the total population surveyed) who failed to respond to either of the two mailings. In general, few differences existed between those who did respond and those who did not respond to the mailings.

Thirteen of the forty-two teachers from Roanoke County failed to return their surveys. Three out of thirty-five Roanoke City teachers failed to respond. In Pulaski County, two of the fifteen teachers surveyed failed to return their surveys, and in Tazewell County, four of the twenty-four teachers surveyed did not respond. In order to ascertain if those teachers who failed to respond would have reported responses that would have significantly altered the computed responses from the ninety four teachers who did respond, a follow-up exercise was conducted in the fall of 1983. Fifty percent of those teachers (eleven out of twenty-two) who did not respond to either questionnaire were telephoned in this follow-up exercise. Since thirteen teachers in Roanoke County failed to respond, seven teachers representing fifty-four percent of this locality's non-response group were randomly selected to be contacted. Three teachers in Roanoke City did not respond. One of these teachers was randomly chosen for the follow up. One of the two non-respondents from Pulaski County was randomly selected as were two of the four non-respondents from Tazewell County.

In conversations with the eleven randomly chosen non-respondents, three questions were asked. The questions were devised to solicit non-respondents' perceptions concerning the significance and actual teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms. Also, a question

was asked in order to ascertain why these teachers failed to return their questionnaires.

To the first question, "Do you think contemporary issues studies are important to the teaching of social studies?," all eleven teachers responded "yes." The second question that was asked of this group was "Do you incorporate contemporary issues into your own social studies teaching?" Again, all eleven responded affirmatively. These two sets of answers suggest that responses from those eleven teachers would not have significantly altered the computed results from those teachers who did return questionnaires.

The final question that was asked to each selected non-respondent was "Would you please generally explain your reasons for not returning the original or follow-up questionnaire?" Eight of the eleven teachers responded that a lack of time prevented their returning the questionnaire. Most were apologetic for this failure. Two teachers reported that they were somewhat offended that the questionnaire was coded. In each case, they had thought they had been promised anonymity and were disturbed when they saw the code. After an explanation, each understood that what they had been promised was confidentiality and not anonymity. One final teacher failed to respond because he misunderstood this researcher's source of employment. He

was originally offended as he perceived that the questionnaire was sponsored by a state education agency. After this misunderstanding was resolved, he willingly cooperated.

The questionnaire, itself, was composed of a data sheet and two sections of questions. The data sheet consisted of nine questions designed to ascertain personal and demographic information from respondents. In this section, teachers were first asked to indicate if they were their school's social studies chairperson. They were then asked what social studies they currently taught and what social studies subjects they felt most qualified to teach. Finally, they were asked a series of questions about their age, sex, years of teaching experience, race, educational degree, and college major and minor.

Part I of the questionnaire detailed teacher perceptions about the teaching of contemporary issues in social studies classrooms. A list of contemporary issues was provided with additional spaces left so that respondents could add to the list if they desired. Teachers were asked to rank on a one to five (1-5) scale, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, the significance of each issue listed, the extent of its coverage at his/her school, the extent of its coverage that should be taught at his/her school, and in what social studies subjects instruction on this issue should be conducted.

In Part II, teachers were asked to explain their contemporary issues teaching and evaluation strategies, the approximate extent of their class time that was devoted to contemporary issues instruction, and sources of information used for this instruction. They were then asked about the status of contemporary issues instruction detailed in their school's social studies curriculum. Finally, this section concluded with questions detailing factors most and least beneficial to their teaching of contemporary issues.

Before this questionnaire was sent to teachers in the four selected school divisions, it was first reviewed and critiqued by nine secondary social studies teachers in Montgomery County. Shortly thereafter, a group of graduate students -- including social studies teachers, department heads, and supervisors -- reviewed the questionnaire. Finally, before the questionnaire was formally administered, it was reviewed by five social studies supervisors from various localities throughout the state. This series of critical reviews by social studies professionals along with subsequent revisions served to refine the questionnaire before it was administered to the teachers comprising the population of this study.

Analysis of the Data

During the summer of 1983, analysis of data received from questionnaires was begun. The first step, before the actual analysis could commence, was to convert raw data on questionnaires to computer sheets for processing. The faculty of the Learning Resources Center (VPI & SU) was helpful in overseeing this transfer of information. Also invaluable was the support offered by this Center in conferring with this researcher and presenting data in printout form in order to facilitate beginning of the review of collected information.

Most questions in Parts I and II of the questionnaire were divided into a number of sub-questions. For each of these sub-questions, teachers were asked to circle one number between 1 and 5 which best represented their perceptions on this issue. (It was recorded on the computer sheets when a teacher left a sub-question blank.) When respondents answered the sub-questions to a given question, two statistics could then be computed.

The first of the statistics to be used was the mean scores. Each sub-question was analyzed by the mean score that it received after each teacher's response was entered. These mean scores to each subset of each major question are detailed in Chapter 4. An example to illustrate this point will be explained. Question 1 in Part II of the

questionnaire asks "What instructional strategies are important to you in your teaching of contemporary issues?" Eight instructional strategies are then listed. These eight strategies comprise eight sub-questions to Question 1. The first of these strategies listed is "lecture." Using a one to five scale (one meaning "never" - five, meaning "most often"), each teacher was to circle the number corresponding to his/her frequency of using lecture as a contemporary issues teaching strategy. The overall mean score for this question, computed by adding all individual teacher responses and dividing by the number of responses, was 3.55. This figure represents the overall group mean for sub-question 1 of Question 1 in Part II of the survey. All means were computed in this manner.

The second statistic that was computed for each of the fifteen major questions in Part I and II of the questionnaire was summated scale scores. These scores were used to compute correlation between questions in Parts I and II of the questionnaire and demographic data collected from the "Data Sheet" which was the first sheet to which each teacher was asked to respond.

These scale scores were computed in the following manner. As previously explained, each major question was divided into a number of sub-questions. Teachers responded to each of the sub-questions by indicating a number on a one

to five Likert scale which best represented their beliefs. Each teacher's responses were then tallied for each of the sub-questions of each major question. If a major question had eight sub-questions, then an individual teacher's tallied response for this major question would fall in the range of eight (if he indicated "1" as his response to each sub-question) to "forty" (if he indicated "5" as his response to each sub-question). All teacher's tallied scores to each question were then added together and divided by the number of teachers responding. This summated score indicates the frequency with which this sample of teachers used the eight strategies listed as sub-questions. Again, this number is used in this study for correlational purposes.

Other than for correlational purposes, a second major reason for computing summated scale scores was to establish a reliability for each question asked. When summated scale scores for each of the fifteen major questions in Parts I and II of the questionnaire were computed, a corresponding standard deviation and coefficient alpha for each question's responses were also computed. Using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha to test for the reliability of responses to each question, results reveal high reliabilities for each question asked. Those high reliabilities (ranging from 0.6900 to 0.8815) indicate that had these same teachers been

surveyed again using the same instrument, their second responses would have been quite similar to those recorded earlier. The questions used in this survey, therefore, may be said to be reasonably reliable measures of these teachers' attitudes. Summated mean scores, standard deviations, and coefficient alphas for each major question asked in Parts I and II of the questionnaire can be found in Table 3.

As mentioned, one of the main reasons for computing summated scale scores for each question in Parts I and II of the questionnaire was for correlational purposes. The "Data Sheet," the first sheet on each questionnaire, was designed to collect demographic data about the population surveyed. Questions on this sheet included sex, age, total years of teaching experience, race, college degree, and undergraduate majors and minors obtained. Also, teachers were asked to list the social studies subject area in which they felt most qualified to teach, social studies preparations they were currently teaching and if they held the position of department chair. Responses to certain demographic questions were correlated using the Pearson product-moment statistic with questions in Parts I and II in order to ascertain if sub-samples of the population responded differently.

Table 3
Summated Scale Score Statistics for All Responders

Question	Number of Responders	Mean	Maximum Possible Score	Standard Deviation	Coefficient Alpha
Part I Significance of Issues	94	3.76	5	0.55	0.8382
Part I Extent of Coverage in Curriculum	94	2.99	5	0.60	0.8662
Part I Extent of Coverage that Should be in Curriculum	94	3.58	5	0.60	0.8815
Part I World Geography as Suggested Course for Coverage	94	1.45	2	0.27	0.8608
Part I World History as Suggested Course for Coverage	94	1.42	2	0.28	0.8502
Part I U.S. History as Suggested Course for Coverage	94	1.49	2	0.29	0.8566
Part I U.S. Government as Suggested Course for Coverage	94	1.58	2	0.31	0.8793
Part II Question 1 - Strategies	94	3.27	5	0.62	0.7438
Part II Question 2A World Geography Teachers' Coverage of Issues	36	1.59	2	0.25	0.7598
Part II Question 2B World History Teachers' Coverage of Issues	19	1.55	2	0.25	0.7582
Part II Question 2C U.S. History Teachers' Coverage of Issues	43	1.63	2	0.27	0.8127
Part II Question 2D U.S. Government Teachers' Coverage of Issues	29	1.64	2	0.25	0.7620
Part II Question 3 Sources of Information	93	3.34	5	0.60	0.7235
Part II Question 4 Evaluation	94	3.15	5	0.79	0.6900
Part II Question 8 Sources of Support	93	3.17	5	0.60	0.8469

In order to investigate relationships between the demographic variables and responses to Parts 1 and 2 of the questionnaire, Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between questions 1 (department chair), 4 (sex), 5 (age), 6 (teaching experience), 7 (race), and 8 (college degree) and the summated scale scores. These were evaluated at the .05 level of significance. Details of all significant correlations noted in the study are discussed in Chapter 4.

Summary

A survey was designed to assess the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms in selected school divisions in Virginia. A total of 116 teachers from Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Pulaski County and Tazewell County comprised the population used for this study. These teachers represented all world geography, world history, U.S. history, and U.S. government teachers employed in these school districts.

Of the 116 teachers surveyed, 94 (81%) returned completed questionnaires. Information on these questionnaires was converted to computer sheets and a computer print-out was obtained. This print-out detailed mean scores, summated mean scores, standard deviations and coefficients alpha for each question in Parts I and II of

the questionnaire. Mean scores for each sub-question of the questionnaire are reviewed in detail in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, also, are discussions concerning correlations which were derived from using the Pearson product-moment statistic.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study was undertaken to assess the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in social studies classrooms in selected school divisions in Virginia. Answers to eight basic questions were to be analyzed after all data collection was completed. These questions were:

1. What contemporary issues are identified by secondary social studies teachers as most significantly affecting students' present and future lives?
2. Should contemporary issues be a focus of study in secondary social studies classrooms? If so, in which subjects are they presently covered and in which subjects should they be covered?
3. What teaching strategies are used for contemporary issues instruction?
4. What extent of class time is devoted to the coverage of contemporary issues?
5. How are students evaluated on their contemporary issues studies?
6. Is there a contemporary issues program that spans grade levels and builds on concepts studied earlier?
7. What are the primary sources of information used for contemporary issues instruction?
8. What factors help or hinder teachers in their contemporary issues instruction?

In order to find answers to these questions, a questionnaire was sent to 116 social studies teachers employed by four southwest Virginia localities in April, 1983. These teachers represented the entire population of world geography, world history, U.S. history and U.S. government teachers in Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Pulaski County, and Tazewell County.

Ninety-four teachers (81%) returned completed questionnaires after the original and follow-up surveys were mailed. This figure included surveys from twenty-nine teachers from Roanoke County representing a 70% return rate, thirty-two from Roanoke City teachers (92%), thirteen (83%) from Pulaski County teachers, and twenty (84%) from Tazewell County teachers. A follow-up study was conducted in the fall of 1983.

Demographic Data

The data sheet which was attached to each questionnaire consisted of nine questions. These questions were asked to determine specifics about the population surveyed. Also, responses to these demographic questions were to be analyzed with responses to contemporary issues questions to ascertain if relationships could be made concerning groups of teachers and their perceptions of contemporary issues education. A detailed analysis of responses from the population surveyed follows.

Department Chairperson. The first question on the data sheet asked for teachers to check if they were the social studies chairpersons for their schools. Since department chairpersons are generally perceived to be experienced curriculum leaders in their schools, their responses to survey questions might reveal an instructional tone for the teaching of these issues among teachers in their departments. Of the ninety-four respondents to the questionnaire, eighteen listed themselves as department chairpersons. This figure represented 19 percent of the total response group. Using the Pearson product-moment correlation, no evidence exists at the .05 level of significance to suggest that department chairpersons responded differently from other teachers to any questions asked in Parts I and II of the questionnaire.

Teaching Areas. Question 2 asked respondents to list the social studies subject area in which they felt most qualified to teach. Seventeen teachers (18%) listed world geography as the subject for which they felt the most qualified. Ten teachers (11%) listed world history. U.S. history was the choice of forty-three teachers representing 46% of the group total. Finally, twenty-four teachers (26%) listed U.S. government as the subject they felt most qualified to teach.

For Question 3, teachers were requested to list their subject preparations for the 1982-83 school year. A total of thirty-six teachers (38%) were teaching world geography. Comparing this percentage to the percentage of teachers who felt most qualified to teach world geography, at least 20% of the instructors were teaching world geography and did not feel that it was the subject for which they were best qualified.

The situation was similar for world history teachers. Twenty (21%) were teaching world history in 1982-83 whereas only ten (11%) felt it was the subject for which they were best qualified.

Forty-five teachers (48%) were teaching U.S. history. This figure compares well with the 46% who listed it as the subject they felt best qualified to teach. (It is only hoped that the 46% who felt best teaching U.S. history were among the 48% who were actually teaching it.)

U.S. government was being taught by thirty-two teachers representing 34% of the total. Only twenty-four teachers (26%) listed U.S. government as the subject for which they felt most qualified to teach.

Sex. The distribution between males and females was the fourth issue to be covered on this demographic data sheet. For this question, all respondents were asked to check either male or female. The sex distribution among

respondents was almost even. Out of ninety-four teachers, fifty (53%) were males and forty-four (47%) were females. The break-down of males and females responding from each district presented some interesting findings, however. Roanoke County had a 41% to 59% male/female response. Roanoke City had a 69% to 31% male/female rate. In Pulaski County 54% of the teachers were males and in Tazewell County the ratio of male to female respondents was 45% to 55%. Again, using a Pearson product-moment correlation, no evidence exists at the .05 level of significance to suggest that sex, as a variable, affected responses to any questions in Parts I and II of the survey.

Age. The age distribution of teachers responding to the questionnaires offered few surprises. Teachers were given four choices and were asked to check the choice within which their age fell. One person (1%) listed that he/she was under 25 years of age. Twenty-nine out of the total of ninety-four respondents (31%) checked that their age was in the 26-35 range. Forty-four percent (41 teachers) responded that their age was between 36 and 50. Twenty-three teachers (24%) checked that their age was over 50. Correlations between the age variable and all summated scale scores were nonsignificant ($p > .05$). Thus, it is concluded that age has no influence on responses to the questions of this survey.

Experience. Similar in format to the age question, teachers were asked to check the range representing their total number of years of teaching experience. Four teachers (4%) marked that they had taught between one and three years. Fourteen teachers (15%) listed their years of experience as between four and eight years. The nine-twelve year range of teaching experience had eighteen teachers to check it. The largest group by far, however, was the over twelve years experience group. Fifty-eight teachers (62%) responded by checking this range. Detailing this particular statistic, Roanoke City had 72% of its teachers surveyed marking over twelve years of teaching. Tazewell County was next with 60% of its teachers marking the over twelve year range. When the Pearson product-moment statistic was used to correlate years of experience with questions from Parts I and II of the survey, no relationship was evident at the .05 level of significance.

Race. Seven teachers representing 7% of the total number of respondents identified themselves as members of the black race. Eighty-six teachers (91%) responded that they were members of the white race. One person failed to respond to this question. Because so few blacks participated in this study, no correlations dealing with race differences are reported herein.

College Degree. For question eight, each of the questionnaire respondents was asked to check his college degree status. Fifty teachers (53%) marked that they had received a B.A. or B.S. Forty-three respondents (46%) had completed their Master's degree. Fifty-six percent of the teachers from Roanoke City listed Master's degrees. In Roanoke County, fifty-two percent of the respondents checked the Master's category. Thirty-eight percent in Pulaski County had Master's degrees while in Tazewell County, twenty-five percent marked that they had obtained their Master's degree. No one listed that he had received a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies and one teacher from Roanoke County had received his doctorate in education. An interesting outcome was evident when the number of degrees received was correlated with questions from Part II of the questionnaire. For Question 3 (Sources of Information used) and again for Question 8 (Support for Issues Instruction) a positive correlation was shown to exist. A detailed explanation will be given when results from Questions 3 and 8 are discussed later in this chapter.

Undergraduate Majors and Minors. The final question from the data sheet asked of teachers their undergraduate majors and minors. For majors, thirty-three teachers from the entire group of respondents (35%) listed history as their major. Twenty-seven teachers (29%) listed social

studies education as their major. Sixteen teachers (17%) listed their major as social studies disciplines other than history, and sixteen teachers listed their majors as non-social studies.

When asked to list their undergraduate minors, twenty-five teachers (27%) listed specific social studies disciplines. Twenty-one teachers (22%) listed social studies, in general, as their minor. Seventeen teachers (18%) responded that their minors were received in the field of language arts and ten teachers had received a minor in the area of math/science.

As has been detailed, the first page of the questionnaire entitled "Data Sheet" provided the researcher demographic data pertaining to the population surveyed. The actual body of the questionnaire was divided into two major sections. Part I detailed the twelve contemporary issues which would be the major focus of the survey. Teachers were asked to mark the significance of each issue, the extent of coverage each issue was given in the social studies curriculum of their schools, and the extent of coverage that should be given each issue in their school's social studies curriculum. Finally, in this first part of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to suggest in which required social studies subjects each issue should be taught. Detailed responses to these questions are provided in this chapter.

In Part II of the questionnaire teachers were asked to respond to questions about instructional strategies and sources of information used in contemporary issues instruction, the evaluation strategies used to measure students' contemporary issues understanding, and factors which either hinder or aid teachers in their contemporary issues instruction. Also in this chapter, a detailed analysis of responses to these questions is provided.

Part I

In Part I of the questionnaire, twelve contemporary issues were listed. These twelve issues were:

advancements and ethical concerns in
medical technology
aging and the elderly
ecological imbalance/environmental
concerns
world resource allocation
population growth
hunger/poverty
sexism
racism
increasing militarism, revolution, and
limited wars
nuclear proliferation

economic growth: inflation,
unemployment, recession and
global human rights.

Concerning each of these contemporary issues, teachers were asked four questions about each issue and its inclusion in the social studies curriculum of their school district.

Significant Issues. The first question asked was "To what extent do you think this issue is significant?" For each of the twelve listed issues, teachers were asked to circle a number from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (important) in response to the question. Table 4 shows the mean score responses to Question 1 from the overall survey population and each of the individual school districts.

Using a 1 (unimportant) to 5 (important) scale with 3 being a median score between the two extremes, no issue from the list received a mean score below 2.85. Furthermore, only two issues, advancements and ethical concerns in medical technology and sexism, received mean scores below 3. Both of these lowest scores were registered from teachers in Pulaski County. Noting such high mean scores to this question, one can infer that the teachers surveyed believed the majority of issues included in the survey were significant. Of all issues listed, economic growth, increasing militarism, and nuclear proliferation were noted as receiving the highest mean scores from the overall group

Table 4
 To What Extent Do You Think This Issue Is Significant?
 (Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
1. Advancements and Ethical Concerns in Medical Technology	3.23	3.34	3.16	2.85	3.40
2. Aging and the Elderly	3.41	3.45	3.32	3.25	3.60
3. Ecological Imbalance/ Environmental Concerns	3.79	3.72	3.70	4.00	3.90
4. World Resource Allocation	3.79	3.90	3.57	4.00	3.85
5. Population Growth	3.95	3.97	3.97	4.08	3.80
6. Hunger/Poverty	3.92	4.10	3.84	3.67	3.95
7. Sexism	3.07	3.14	2.97	3.25	3.00
8. Racism	3.70	3.32	3.69	3.67	3.55
9. Increasing Militarism: Revolution & Limited Wars	4.14	4.29	4.00	3.85	4.35
10. Nuclear Proliferation	4.04	4.17	3.84	3.92	4.25
11. Economic Growth: Inflation, Unemployment, Recession	4.26	4.29	4.31	3.77	4.45
12. Global Human Rights	3.87	3.93	3.69	4.08	3.95

of teachers. These issues received mean scores of 4.26, 4.14, and 4.04 respectively. Roanoke County and Tazewell County teachers chose these same three issues as those they considered most significant, whereas Roanoke City teachers felt that population growth was more significant than nuclear proliferation. Pulaski County teachers gave higher marks to population growth, world resource allocation and ecological imbalance/environmental concerns. While the significance of these issues varied to a small degree among the teachers surveyed, each issue was clearly deemed somewhat significant with no issue receiving less than 2.85 out of a scale of 5.

Among those issues deemed less significant by the overall population were sexism which received a mean score of 3.07, advancements and ethical concerns in medical technology with a mean score of 3.23 and aging and the elderly with a 3.41. Each of these issues, however, received scores greater than the possible median of 3 on this 5 point scale.

Issue Coverage. While question 1 revealed that teachers perceived selected contemporary issues to be significant, question 2 asked these same social studies teachers the extent of coverage of each of these issues in the social studies curriculum of their schools. Again a 1 (very little) to 5 (great extent) scale was used. Table 5

presents mean score results for this question from the overall population surveyed and from each of the local school districts.

Once again noting a median score of 3 when using a 1 to 5 scale, it is evident that mean scores shown in Table 5 are lower than those reported in Table 4. Whereas teachers have deemed issues to be significant (all issues received at least a mean score of 3), the coverage of these issues does not always appear to a great extent in the social studies curriculum of their school districts. A pattern does exist, however, between the perceived significance of an issue and the amount of coverage it receives in the social studies curriculum.

Economic growth received the highest mean score (3.69) to question 2. This issue was also deemed the most significant issue listed in Question 1. Too, increasing militarism, the issue listed as second most significant in Question 1, is also noted as receiving the second greatest extent of coverage (3.44) in the social studies curriculum. On the other end of the spectrum, sexism, advancements and ethical concerns in medical technology, and aging and the elderly -- those three issues deemed least significant in question one -- were also the three issues which were listed as receiving the least extent of coverage in the social studies curriculum in Question 2. There were two issues,

Table 5
 Extent of Coverage of This Issue in
 the Social Studies Curriculum of Your School
 (Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
1. Advancements and Ethical Concerns in Medical Technology	1.94	1.72	1.84	2.23	2.20
2. Aging and the Elderly	2.17	2.03	2.03	2.25	2.55
3. Ecological Imbalance/ Environmental Concerns	2.89	2.76	2.80	3.00	3.15
4. World Resource Allocation	3.02	3.00	2.87	3.17	3.20
5. Population Growth	3.26	3.10	3.35	3.33	3.30
6. Hunger/Poverty	3.22	3.31	3.13	3.00	3.35
7. Sexism	2.64	2.64	2.58	2.83	2.63
8. Racism	3.28	3.29	3.31	3.50	3.10
9. Increasing Militarism: Revolution & Limited Wars	3.44	3.52	3.19	3.46	3.70
10. Nuclear Proliferation	3.14	3.34	2.66	3.17	3.60
11. Economic Growth: Inflation, Unemployment, Recession	3.67	3.96	3.25	3.46	4.05
12. Global Human Rights	3.12	3.00	2.84	3.62	3.40

however, which did not correlate well when their perceived significance was compared to their extent of coverage in the social studies curriculum.

The issue of racism is ranked ninth with a mean of 3.70 when it is compared to the perceived significance of other issues in Question 1. However, when teachers were asked the extent of coverage each issue received, racism, with a mean of 3.28, is ranked third. Another disparity between perceived significance and extent of coverage is noted with the issue of nuclear proliferation. It ranked third in perceived significance with a mean of 4.04, but ranked sixth in extent of coverage with a mean of 3.14.

While contemporary issues are deemed significant, the extent of their coverage in the social studies curriculum is not as clearly seen as their perceived significance might indicate. Patterns exist between how significant an issue is deemed and the amount of coverage it is granted in the curriculum. Of the twelve issues listed, only two (racism and nuclear proliferation) seemed to reveal somewhat of a disparity between significance and coverage when the two ranked lists were compared.

Needed Coverage. Question number 3 asks teachers the extent of coverage of each issue that should be incorporated into the social studies curriculum. Mean score results to this question for the overall population and each separate school district is listed in Table 6.

Table 6
 Extent of Coverage of this Issue That Should Be
 Incorporated Into the Social Studies Curriculum of Your School
 (Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
1. Advancements and Ethical Concerns in Medical Technology	2.85	2.64	2.74	3.00	3.20
2. Aging and the Elderly	3.11	3.03	3.06	3.25	3.20
3. Ecological Imbalance/ Environmental Concerns	3.60	3.59	3.43	3.75	3.78
4. World Resource Allocation	3.67	3.62	3.50	3.91	3.85
5. Population Growth	3.77	3.61	3.77	4.08	3.80
6. Hunger/Poverty	3.89	4.07	3.81	3.58	3.95
7. Sexism	3.06	3.15	3.10	3.17	2.79
8. Racism	3.61	3.74	3.57	3.58	3.50
9. Increasing Militarism: Revolution & Limited Wars	3.85	3.86	3.73	3.77	4.05
10. Nuclear Proliferation	3.81	3.97	3.59	3.75	3.95
11. Economic Growth: Inflation, Unemployment, Recession	4.12	4.26	4.00	3.69	4.40
12. Global Human Rights	3.74	3.70	3.59	3.92	3.90

Again, teachers believed that economic growth was the most important contemporary issue that should be incorporated into the social studies curriculum. On the 1 (very little) to 5 (great extent) scale, this issue received an overall average score of 4.12. Following this economic issue, hunger/poverty was listed as the second most significant issue (3.89) that should be included for coverage. Interestingly, this issue which was ranked fifth in both questions one and two, significance and extent of present coverage in the curriculum, jumped to number two in the ranking when teachers were asked the extent of coverage of this issue that should be incorporated into the curriculum. The third contemporary issue that was listed for inclusion was increasing militarism which accumulated a mean score from teachers of 3.85.

While the results for the top-three-ranking issues to this question were not completely predictable, the issues that teachers felt should least be considered for inclusion in the curriculum (ranking 10, 11, 12) were expected. Aging and the elderly, ranked 10 with a mean of 3.11; sexism, eleven, with a mean of 3.06; and advancements and ethical concerns in medical technology, which ranked twelve with a mean of 2.85, rounded out the complete list of issues.

Noting the list of overall mean scores to question three, only one issue -- advancements and ethical concerns

in medical technology -- received a score less than the mean of three. Each of the other twelve issues accumulated mean scores which would suggest that a study of these issues should be included in the overall secondary social studies curriculum. Responses to question number four in this first part of the questionnaire suggest where each of these issues should be incorporated into the social studies curriculum.

Location of Issues. Many of the contemporary issues used in this study could easily be incorporated into any of the curricula of the four main secondary social studies disciplines which are taught in the public schools of the state of Virginia. As the survey responses to question number four of this first part indicate, there is no clear consensus in what social studies subject -- world geography, world history, Virginia and U.S. history, or Virginia and U.S. government -- contemporary issues instruction should be focused. Results of the question "Although many of these issues could be touched upon in all courses listed below, coverage of this issue most appropriately should be included in what required social studies subject(s)?" are shown in Table 7.

In reviewing Table 7, one should remember that teachers were allowed to circle more than one course where each contemporary issue could be incorporated. For that reason, percentages total more than one hundred percent. Even

Table 7

Where Issues Should Be Taught

(More than one subject may have been circled)

	<u>World Geography</u>	<u>World History</u>	<u>U.S. History</u>	<u>U.S. Government</u>
1. Advancements and Ethical Concerns in Medical Technology	15%	22%	31%	46%
2. Aging and the Elderly	13%	15%	37%	67%
3. Ecological Imbalance/ Environmental Concerns	70%	23%	31%	50%
4. World Resource Allocation	82%	35%	26%	38%
5. Population Growth	76%	46%	40%	47%
6. Hunger/Poverty	74%	46%	41%	48%
7. Sexism	24%	29%	49%	59%
8. Racism	35%	46%	78%	63%
9. Increasing Militarism: Revolution & Limited Wars	31%	72%	78%	68%
10. Nuclear Proliferation	31%	60%	68%	71%
11. Economic Growth: Inflation, Unemployment, Recession	34%	32%	68%	76%
12. Global Human Rights	51%	76%	36%	52%

though many teachers felt that certain issues should be taught in several areas, some definite patterns did arise as to where certain issues should be taught.

World geography was clearly chosen as the best discipline for instruction of four of the twelve listed contemporary issues. Seventy percent of the teachers listed ecological imbalance/environmental concerns as an issue to be taught in world geography. World resource allocation was selected for inclusion in the geography curriculum by 82% of the teachers surveyed. Seventy-six percent of the teachers chose geography for the teaching of population growth, while 74% chose geography for hunger/poverty coverage.

While world history was selected by a number of teachers as an area for contemporary issues instruction, in only one case, global human rights (76%), was world history unquestionably favored by a majority of teachers for issues instruction. Two other issues, however, received enough attention for world history inclusion to be mentioned. Increasing militarism: revolution, and limited wars was selected by 72% of the teachers surveyed for inclusion in the world history curriculum, but 78% of those same teachers felt U.S. history was the appropriate place in the curriculum for instruction of this issue. Too, the issue of nuclear proliferation was selected by 60% of the teachers for coverage in the world history curriculum. However, this

figure of 60% was smaller than the 71% of the teachers marking government as the best area for this issue's coverage and 68% of these teachers designating U.S. history as the more appropriate area. It was clearly noted, therefore, that world history was the last choice of teachers as the course in the curriculum for contemporary issues instruction.

Virginia and U.S. history, the typical eleventh-grade social studies course in Virginia, was chosen specifically by teachers as the subject where two issues should be taught, and the course received strong support from teachers concerning two other issues. The issue of racism was noted by 78% of those surveyed for inclusion in the U.S. history curriculum, and also by the same percentage (78%), Virginia and U.S. history was selected as the most appropriate course for coverage of the issue of increasing militarism. Too, U.S. and Virginia history came in a close second as the choice by teachers as the best area of coverage for two other issues. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers marked nuclear proliferation for coverage in U.S. history, and 68% of the teachers felt this course was an appropriate subject area for the teaching of economic growth: inflation, unemployment, recession.

Virginia and U.S. government, as world geography, received the highest support in five instances. Only 46% of

the teachers felt that advancement and ethical concerns in medical technology should be taught in this twelfth-grade course, but this percentage clearly indicated that if this issue were to be taught, government should be the course. Another less popular issue, sexism, was suggested for inclusion in government with 59% support. Receiving 67% support, the issue of aging and the elderly was also marked for coverage in government classes. With a large percentage of total responses, government classes were given priority for the coverage of two other issues. Nuclear proliferation and economic growth, receiving 71% and 76% of the teachers' responses respectively, were also issues to be included in government courses.

World geography and U.S. government were the two favored areas of the curriculum for contemporary issues instruction. In several instances, world history and U.S. history received the second largest percentage of votes. For example, concerning the issue of economic growth, 68% of the teachers surveyed chose U.S. history as the most appropriate subject for this issue's coverage; however, 76% chose U.S. government as the subject in which this issue should be covered. This situation occurred because teachers were allowed to choose more than one subject area in which these issues should be taught. In three cases, the two courses of world history and U.S. history were chosen as the

most appropriate subject area for inclusion of particular issues.

PART II

Part II of the questionnaire detailed the coverage of contemporary issues as these issues were currently being included in social studies classroom instruction.

Instructional Strategies. Question 1, "What instructional strategies are important to you in your teaching of contemporary issues?", was followed by eight instructional strategies. Beside each of these strategies was a 1 (never) to 5 (most often) scale. The strategies listed included lecture, student reading of textbook, student reading of newspapers/news magazines, teacher-directed large group discussion, and student-directed discussion. Also listed were simulation/role playing activities, audio-visuals, and student projects. Mean results from the overall group and from each locality surveyed are shown in Table 8.

Of the eight strategies listed, teacher-directed large group discussion student reading of newspapers/news magazines, and lecture were the three most frequently used instructional strategies for teaching contemporary issues. At least two of these three strategies were selected by all four local school districts' teachers as those most

Table 8
 Instructional Strategies Used for Teaching Contemporary Issues
 (Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
1. Lecture	3.55	3.36	3.63	3.92	3.45
2. Student Reading of Textbook	3.25	2.96	3.55	3.54	3.30
3. Student Reading of Newspapers/ News Magazines	3.65	4.04	3.10	3.69	3.95
4. Teacher-Directed Large Group Discussion	3.86	4.17	3.56	3.77	3.95
5. Student-Directed Discussion	2.76	2.64	2.55	2.77	3.25
6. Simulation/Role-playing Activities	2.29	2.07	2.31	2.08	2.70
7. Audio-visuals (films, filmstrips, T.V., etc.)	3.43	3.26	3.25	3.77	3.75
8. Student Projects (research/ writing/discussion)	3.23	3.00	3.19	3.38	3.50

frequently employed. On the other hand, the least used strategies implemented for contemporary issues instruction in all four districts were simulation/role playing activities and student-directed discussion.

Issues That Should Be Taught. Question 4 of Part I of the survey asked all teachers to choose required secondary social studies disciplines where certain contemporary issues should be taught. In Part II, Question 2 of the questionnaire, teachers of particular required disciplines were asked specifically what contemporary issues were covered in their teaching of that discipline. Each group of teachers of world geography, world history, Virginia and U.S. history, and Virginia and U.S. government were surveyed as to their coverage of specific contemporary issues in this in-class instruction. Detailed results of each group's strategies are summarized and charted in Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12.

World Geography. World geography teachers were provided with the list of twelve contemporary issues. Beside each issue, each teacher was asked to check those issues which were at least introduced in their teaching of this course. Results of this question from the overall group of geography teachers and from geography teachers in each locality are shown in Table 9. Percentages refer to number of teachers out of the total who checked each issue.

Table 9

Coverage of Particular Contemporary Issues By
World Georgraphy Teachers

(Reported in Percentages of World Georgraphy Teachers Totals)

	Overall Group 36 Teachers	Roanoke County 13 Teachers	Roanoke City 13 Teachers	Pulaski County 5 Teachers	Tazewell County 5 Teachers
1. Ethics of Medical Technology	33%	54%	15%	20%	40%
2. Aging and the Elderly	44%	38%	54%	20%	60%
3. Ecological/Environmental Concerns	75%	62%	92%	60%	80%
4. World Resource Allocation	72%	62%	92%	40%	80%
5. Population Growth	78%	62%	100%	60%	80%
6. Hunger/Poverty	75%	62%	85%	80%	80%
7. Sexism	47%	38%	46%	40%	30%
8. Racism	58%	38%	77%	40%	80%
9. Increasing Militarism	47%	46%	54%	20%	60%
10. Nuclear Proliferation	42%	46%	31%	40%	60%
11. Economic Growth	69%	46%	100%	40%	80%
12. Global Human Rights	67%	54%	77%	60%	80%

Of the twelve issues listed, geography teachers reported population growth, ecological/environmental concerns, hunger/poverty, and world resource allocation as those issues which are most frequently covered in their classroom instruction. These are the same four issues which most teachers from the overall survey population reported in Part I, Question 4 that should be incorporated into the geography curriculum. Those issues that geography teachers mentioned as least often being incorporated into their instruction included ethics of medical technology, aging and the elderly, and nuclear proliferation. Of the two world studies courses, world geography and world history, which are taught in secondary social studies classrooms in Virginia, world geography was more often chosen for contemporary issues instruction over world history.

World History. World history teachers in each of the localities were also asked to check each of the twelve contemporary issues that were, at least, introduced in their teaching of that course. When all social studies teachers were asked in Question 4 of Part I to choose the course where each issue most appropriately should be taught, only global human rights was associated particularly with world history instruction. When world history teachers, themselves, were asked to choose those issues which are included in their instruction, global human rights was not ranked highly.

Table 10
 Coverage of Particular Contemporary Issues By
 World History Teachers
 (Reported in Percentages of World History Teachers Totals)

	Overall Group 19 Teachers	Roanoke County 3 Teachers	Roanoke City 7 Teachers	Pulaski County 2 Teachers	Tazewell County 7 Teachers
1. Ethics of Medical Technology	32%	33%	14%	50%	43%
2. Aging and the Elderly	32%	0%	29%	50%	43%
3. Ecological/Environmental Concerns	47%	67%	57%	50%	29%
4. World Resource Allocation	47%	67%	57%	100%	14%
5. Population Growth	63%	67%	86%	100%	29%
6. Hunger/Poverty	63%	67%	71%	100%	43%
7. Sexism	53%	67%	29%	50%	71%
8. Racism	68%	100%	71%	50%	57%
9. Increasing Militarism	79%	67%	86%	100%	71%
10. Nuclear Proliferation	68%	67%	43%	100%	86%
11. Economic Growth	68%	67%	100%	50%	43%
12. Global Human Rights	42%	33%	57%	50%	29%

However, a number of other issues were selected by world history teachers as issues introduced in their teaching of this course. Increasing militarism, selected by 79% of them, was the most popular issue noted for inclusion. Following increasing militarism with 68% each were racism, nuclear proliferation and economic growth. Global human rights, with 42%, was only considered more important than ethics of medical technology, accumulating support from 32% of the world history teachers surveyed. These statistics, along with previously discussed figures, seem to imply that even though social studies teachers, as a whole, do not see world history as a course particularly designed for contemporary issues coverage, world history teachers, themselves, disagree somewhat in that six of the listed issues received support from at least 63% of the world history teachers surveyed. World history teachers, as well as U.S. history teachers whose data is reported next, dispel somewhat the notion that history classes are not particularly suited for contemporary issues instruction.

U.S. History. Teachers of Virginia and U.S. history comprised the largest group of teachers of a particular social studies course surveyed. Forty-three teachers from the four localities responded to the same question by checking those contemporary issues which were at least introduced in their teaching of this course. In Question 4

of Part I, the overall group of teachers believed Virginia and U.S. history to be the most appropriate course for the teaching of racism and increasing militarism. Many teachers also selected Virginia and U.S. history as an appropriate course for the teaching of nuclear proliferation and economic growth. Table 11 reveals what Virginia and U.S. history teachers actually say they include as far as contemporary issues are concerned.

Virginia and U.S. history teachers, themselves, noted racism (84%), increasing militarism (77%), and economic growth (74%) as the three issues most often incorporated into their teaching. Comparing these three issues with those issues the overall group felt (Question 4, Part I) most appropriately should be incorporated into this curriculum, the correlation is quite high. The issues of racism, increasing militarism, and economic growth were selected as major issues by each group. The issues of global human rights, ethics of medical technology, and world resource allocation were the three that Virginia and U.S. history teachers least incorporated into their classroom instruction. As reported earlier, these issues were not selected by the overall group for inclusion in the Virginia and U.S. history curriculum.

U.S. Government. In question four of Part I, the overall group of teachers surveyed believed that economic

Table 11

Coverage of Particular Contemporary Issues By
Virginia & U.S. History Teachers

(Reported in Percentages of Virginia & U.S. History Teachers Totals)

	Overall Group 43 Teachers	Roanoke County 9 Teachers	Roanoke City 19 Teachers	Pulaski County 5 Teachers	Tazewell County 10 Teachers
1. Ethics of Medical Technology	40%	67%	37%	0%	40%
2. Aging and the Elderly	60%	56%	58%	60%	70%
3. Ecological/Environmental Concerns	65%	67%	58%	60%	80%
4. World Resource Allocation	51%	67%	47%	20%	60%
5. Population Growth	70%	67%	68%	80%	70%
6. Hunger/Poverty	67%	67%	74%	40%	70%
7. Sexism	60%	67%	64%	40%	60%
8. Racism	84%	78%	89%	80%	80%
9. Increasing Militarism	77%	56%	89%	80%	70%
10. Nuclear Proliferation	65%	67%	58%	60%	30%
11. Economic Growth	74%	67%	79%	60%	30%
12. Global Human Rights	37%	44%	32%	20%	50%

growth (76%), nuclear proliferation (71%), aging and the elderly (67%), sexism (59%) and advancements in medical technology (46%) were to be most appropriately associated with the twelfth-grade Virginia and U.S. government curriculum. Like other secondary social studies teachers of the required courses, government teachers were asked to check those issues which are, at least, introduced in the teaching of this subject. Results to this question are reported in Table 12.

Government teachers selected nuclear proliferation (76%) as the issue they felt is most often included in their course. Following nuclear proliferation, racism received 72% of government teachers' support with aging and the elderly, increasing militarism, and economic growth each accumulating 69% support from these teachers. As mentioned earlier in Question 4 of Part I of the survey, the overall group of teachers believed that economic growth, nuclear proliferation, aging and the elderly, sexism, and advancements in medical technology were those issues most appropriately to be covered in government instruction. Government teachers, themselves, agreed that economic growth, nuclear proliferation and aging and the elderly were being incorporated into their curriculum but they did not list the issues of sexism and advancements in medical technology as issues they teach.

Table 12

Coverage of Particular Contemporary Issues By
Virginia & U.S. Government Teachers

(Reported in Percentages of Virginia & U.S. Government Teachers Totals)

	Overall Group 29 Teachers	Roanoke County 11 Teachers	Roanoke City 9 Teachers	Fulaski County 3 Teachers	Tazewell County 5 Teachers
1. Ethics of Medical Technology	45%	45%	22%	33%	83%
2. Aging and the Elderly	69%	91%	67%	67%	33%
3. Ecological/Environmental Concerns	66%	92%	67%	67%	33%
4. World Resource Allocation	39%	82%	67%	33%	17%
5. Population Growth	62%	73%	78%	33%	33%
6. Hunger/Poverty	62%	32%	56%	67%	33%
7. Sexism	66%	73%	56%	67%	67%
8. Racism	72%	91%	56%	67%	67%
9. Increasing Militarism	69%	91%	56%	33%	67%
10. Nuclear Proliferation	76%	91%	78%	67%	50%
11. Economic Growth	69%	32%	67%	100%	33%
12. Global Human Rights	58%	73%	33%	100%	50%

In fact, ethics of medical technology received the least amount of support of any of the twelve issues when government teachers were asked to select those issues they incorporated into their curriculum. It is interesting to note, however, that even though this issue received the least amount of overall support from government teachers with only 45% of them selecting this issue as one they cover, there was great variance in the way that government teachers from the various localities marked this issue. Roanoke County teachers and Pulaski County teachers marked this issue as being taught by 45% and 33% respectively. Only 22% of Roanoke City's government teachers mentioned that they included this issue for instruction. However, 83% of government teachers in Tazewell County checked this issue as one they incorporate in their instruction. While the issue of advancements and ethical concerns of medical technology was given the least amount of support by the overall group of government teachers as an issue currently covered in their classrooms, it was noted that the issue, like others, received varying degrees of support from teachers in the four localities surveyed.

Summary of Issues as Selected
by Subject Area Teachers

Question 2 in Part II of the questionnaire asked teachers in all four required social studies courses to

select the issues presently covered in their teaching. Answers to this question, just detailed, are believed to be some of the more important responses gathered from teachers because these responses reveal what issues teachers believe to be significant enough for inclusion in their coverage of the particular subjects they teach. Because of the perceived significance of these responses, Table 13 is devised to review and summarize the issues as they were selected by each group of subject area teachers. Issues are listed in order of importance as they were selected by each subject's teachers. Percentages are included to show the extent of support given by each group of teachers surveyed.

Certain issues do fall within the instructional domain of particular subject areas. For other issues, it is not so obvious that they are presently being covered by social studies teachers in any of the four major courses within the curriculum. The issue of advancements and ethical concerns in medical technology is one such issue. The Virginia and U.S. history teachers group was the only one which did not rank this issue at the bottom of its list; it was ranked second from last only surpassing global human rights in coverage. Aging and the elderly, another issue not garnering much coverage from social studies teachers in general, did find some support from government teachers as they rated this issue fifth in coverage from their list of

Table 13

Coverage of Particular Issues By Teachers of
Each Required Social Studies Discipline
(Overall Group Scores)

	World Geography Teachers 36	World History Teachers 19	VA & U.S. History Teachers 45	VA & U.S. Government Teachers 29
1.	Population Growth (78%)	Increasing Militarism (79%)	Racism (84%)	Nuclear Proliferation (76%)
2.	Ecological/Environmental Concerns (75%)	Racism (68%)	Increasing Militarism (77%)	Racism (72%)
3.	Hunger/Poverty (75%)	Nuclear Proliferation (68%)	Economic Growth (74%)	Increasing Militarism (69%)
4.	World Resource Allocation (72%)	Economic Growth (68%)	Population Growth (70%)	Economic Growth (69%)
5.	Economic Growth (69%)	Population Growth (63%)	Hunger/Poverty (67%)	Aging & the Elderly (69%)
6.	Global Human Rights (67%)	Hunger/Poverty (63%)	Ecological/Environmental Concerns (65%)	Sexism (66%)
7.	Racism (58%)	Ecological/Environmental Concerns (47%)	Nuclear Proliferation (65%)	Ecological/Environmental Concerns (66%)
8.	Sexism (47%)	World Resource Allocation (47%)	Sexism (60%)	Population Growth (62%)
9.	Increasing Militarism (47%)	Sexism (53%)	Aging & the Elderly (60%)	Hunger/Poverty (62%)
10.	Aging & the Elderly (44%)	Global Human Rights (42%)	World Resource Allocation (51%)	World Resource Allocation (59%)
11.	Nuclear Proliferation (42%)	Aging & the Elderly (32%)	Ethics of Medical Techno- logy (40%)	Global Human Rights (58%)
12.	Ethics of Medical Techno- logy (32%)	Ethics of Medical Techno- logy (32%)	Global Human Rights (37%)	Ethics of Medical Techno- logy (45%)

twelve issues. World geography teachers overwhelmingly adopted the issue of ecological imbalance/environmental concerns as one that is presently covered in their instruction. Too, world resource allocation was an issue presently covered by 72% of geography teachers surveyed.

Population growth was noted by 78% of the geography teachers as an issue that is covered in their teaching. However, this same issue was selected by 70% of the Virginia and U.S. history teachers, 63% of world history teachers, and 62% of government teachers for inclusion in their instruction.

Another issue, hunger/poverty, was marked as presently being covered by more than one group of social studies teachers. Ranked third on their list with 75%, geography teachers showed their acceptance of this issue. However, this same issue was noted by 67% of Virginia and U.S. history teachers, 63% of world history teachers and 62% of government teachers as an issue covered in the teaching of their subjects.

The issue of sexism was not one of the most popular issues for inclusion by any of the four groups of teachers surveyed. Sixty-six percent of government teachers, 60% of Virginia and U.S. history teachers, 53% of world history teachers, and 47% of geography teachers noted that they incorporated this issue into their instruction.

Racism was noted by 84% of Virginia and U.S. history teachers as an important issue covered in their teaching. Seventy-two percent of government teachers and 68% of world history teachers (ranked second out of 12 issues in each case) marked this issue as one covered in their teaching.

Again with the issue of increasing militarism the same three subjects were noted as their teachers selected this issue as one they presently cover. Ranked first on their list, 79% of world history teachers checked this issue. Ranked second and third on their lists respectively, Virginia and U. S. history (77%) and Virginia and U.S. government (69%) teachers marked that they presently include the issue of increasing militarism in this instruction.

Virginia and U.S. government teachers selected nuclear proliferation as the first issue on their list. Seventy-six percent of those surveyed revealed that they presently include information about this topic in their classroom work. Also, 68% of the world history teachers surveyed said that this issue is covered in their instruction whereas 65% of Virginia and U.S. history teachers noted that they cover this issue.

Economic growth was one issue that seemed to be covered almost equally in all four subjects. Ranked either third, fourth, or fifth in each subject, this issue was noted by 74% of Virginia and U.S. history teachers, 69% of government

and geography teachers, and by 68% of world history teachers as an issue at least introduced in their teaching.

The last issue on the questionnaire was global human rights. Sixty-seven percent of geography teachers surveyed mentioned that this topic was covered in their instruction. Teachers in the other three subjects did not particularly note this issue as one necessarily covered in their instruction as it was ranked tenth, eleventh, and twelfth by world history, government, and Virginia and U.S. history teachers respectively.

After each group of teachers from each locality selected the contemporary issues which were, at least, introduced in their teaching of their course, they were then asked, "Overall, what is the extent of coverage of these issues in this course?" Given a 1 (no coverage) to 5 (extensive coverage) scale, teachers of each course reported how much coverage they gave to contemporary issues instruction. Table 14 reveals responses to this question for all four social studies subject areas. This table includes results from each subject's overall total and the total of each subject in each locality.

Teachers of Virginia and U.S. government classes include more contemporary issues studies in their teaching than do teachers of the other three required social studies subject areas. The score revealing the extent of coverage

Table 14
 Extent of Coverage of Contemporary Issues by
 Teachers of Each Subject
 (Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
World Geography	3.03	3.29	3.00	2.60	3.00
World History	2.68	2.33	3.00	3.00	2.43
Virginia & U.S. History	3.07	2.78	3.05	3.00	3.40
Virginia & U.S. Government	3.21	3.26	3.11	3.67	2.33

of contemporary issues for government teachers was 3.21 out of a possible score of 5. Government teachers in three localities -- Roanoke County, Roanoke City, and Pulaski County -- reported the highest score to this question. It was only in Tazewell County that another subject -- Virginia and U.S. history -- was reported as receiving more contemporary issues coverage.

Virginia and U.S. history teachers reported that they, too, include contemporary issues instruction in their overall teaching. With a score of 3.07 out of a possible 5, this discipline received the overall second highest mean score as reported by its teachers. While Tazewell County U.S. history teachers' figures reveal that contemporary issues are stressed in their U.S. history courses (3.40), U.S. history teachers in Roanoke County mentioned that their extent of coverage of these issues is a less integral part of their teaching (2.78).

The extent of contemporary issue coverage in geography classrooms received the third greatest support from the overall group of geography teachers surveyed. Their responses reveal that the coverage of these issues was 3.03 on a five-point scale. Roanoke County geography teachers reported the greatest extent of these issues' coverage (3.29), whereas, at the other extreme, Pulaski County geography teachers reported their coverage as only 2.60 on a five-point scale.

World history teachers, when asked the extent of contemporary issues coverage in their teaching, reported an extent of only 2.68 on a five-point scale. This figure was the lowest overall figure for extent of coverage for any of the social studies subjects surveyed. It was only the teachers from Pulaski County who listed an extent of coverage which was greater than the extent reported by another subject area teacher group from that school system. It was the geography teachers from Pulaski County who reported less coverage of contemporary issues.

Findings concerning the teaching of contemporary issues in world history classes have been somewhat enlightening throughout the reporting of these data. In Question 4 of Part I of the survey, the entire population of teachers surveyed reported that world history courses would be the least likely secondary social studies course for the inclusion of contemporary issues. When world history teachers were asked in Question 2, Part II of the survey to select those issues which were covered in their teaching, six contemporary issues received support from at least 63% of the world history teachers surveyed. It is interesting to note, however, when extent of coverage is computed, world history teachers reported the extent of contemporary issues coverage was less than any of the four groups of teachers surveyed. It can only be inferred that while world history

teachers do cover certain contemporary issues, they admit that the extent of their coverage is less than the coverage of these issues in other courses.

Sources of Information. Data have been shown that teachers in all required secondary social studies subjects from the four school districts surveyed believe that many contemporary issues topics should be incorporated into their social studies curriculum. Many of these same teachers report that they currently cover contemporary issues instruction in the teaching of their courses. Since contemporary issues are not usually detailed in a specific section of a required text, teachers must have other sources of content information for this instruction. Question 3 of Part II of the survey was asked in order to assess what sources of information were used by teachers for contemporary issues instruction. Results to this question from the entire population and each school district's social studies teachers are reported in Table 15.

In this question, teachers were given eight sources that could be used as content informational bases for their teaching of contemporary issues. These sources included newspapers, television, radio, news magazines, professional journals, textbooks, personal experiences, and guest speakers. Teachers were asked to rank on a 1 (least often) to 5 (most often) scale their use of each of these sources.

Table 15
Sources of Information for Contemporary
Issues Instruction
(Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
1. newspaper	3.89	4.21	3.59	4.08	3.80
2. television	3.59	3.79	3.13	3.85	3.90
3. radio	2.57	3.00	2.29	2.67	2.32
4. news magazine	3.77	3.96	3.53	4.00	3.75
5. professional journals	2.67	2.61	2.61	2.92	2.72
6. textbooks	3.70	3.39	3.88	3.85	3.75
7. personal experiences (work, travel, etc.)	3.96	4.21	3.74	3.85	4.00
8. guest speakers	2.49	2.79	2.25	2.23	2.65

Of the sources of information listed, personal experiences received the highest mean score (3.96) from the overall population of teachers surveyed. Teachers in Roanoke County and Tazewell County listed it as the major source of information aiding their teaching. The second overall highest source (3.89) was for newspapers as the major source of information. Teachers from Roanoke County and Pulaski County rated this source high on their lists. Third, news magazines were chosen by the overall group as a major source (3.77). Pulaski County teachers ranked news magazines second on their list of eight possible sources. Roanoke County teachers ranked it third, whereas Roanoke City and Tazewell County teachers ranked this choice fourth. Textbooks were listed as the fourth most used source of information for teaching contemporary issues. It is interesting to note, however, that Roanoke City teachers listed textbooks as the number one source of information. The fifth highest receiver of support as a source for teaching these issues was television (3.59). It was ranked second, third, fourth, and fifth by Tazewell, Pulaski, Roanoke County, and Roanoke City teachers, respectively. Professional journals received the sixth highest mean score from the eight sources of information listed. Three of the four school districts' teachers ranked it sixth in support. Roanoke County teachers ranked it eighth. Radio was listed

as the seventh most important source of information used by these teachers with guest speakers being last as a means of providing content information for the teaching of these issues.

An interesting outcome was shown when Question 3 (sources of information) was correlated with the number of degrees acquired. Evidence revealed that the more college degrees a person acquired, the more useful, in general, that person will find each of the sources of information listed in their teaching of contemporary issues. Moreover, the higher the degree obtained, the more varied that person will be in relying on different sources of information to teach contemporary issues.

Evaluation of Students on Contemporary Issues.

Teachers, during a school year, may conduct thousands of planned discussions with their students. Some of these discussions will detail topics for which the teacher sees little need to evaluate. The majority of classroom discussions between teachers and students, however, will serve as content bases for some type of student evaluation on that topic of study. Since teachers evaluate students on those topics that are considered important and usually avoid student evaluations on topics for which they see less significance, this writer believes that evaluations of student understanding of contemporary issues is vital if

teachers and students are to take contemporary issues studies as an important and useful topic for discussion.

Question 4 of Part II of the survey is used to assess teachers' evaluations of students' contemporary issues understanding.

The question, "How do you evaluate your students on their understanding of contemporary issues?", was followed by six commonly used evaluation strategies. To the right of each strategy, a one to five (least often to most often) scale was listed so that teachers could circle the degree to which they used each strategy for evaluation of contemporary issues. The evaluation strategies included: regularly scheduled quizzes, participation grade for class discussion, student research/position papers, questions incorporated on regularly scheduled tests, oral presentations, and extra credit. Results to this question are reported in Table 16.

The most often used strategy for evaluating students on their understanding of contemporary issues was questions incorporated into regularly scheduled tests. This strategy, the first choice from teachers in all four school districts, received an overall group mean score of 3.84 out of a possible score of 5. The second most often used strategy was regularly scheduled quizzes (3.23). Participation grade for classroom discussion was the third most often used strategy, receiving a mean score of 3.14. Accumulating a

Table 16
 Evaluation of Students' Contemporary
 Issues Understanding
 (Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
1. regularly scheduled quizzes	3.23	2.89	3.45	3.25	3.33
2. participation grade for classroom discussion	3.14	2.86	3.27	3.15	3.35
3. student research/ position papers	2.60	2.31	2.71	2.33	2.95
4. questions incorporated on regularly scheduled tests	3.84	3.89	3.63	4.00	3.95
5. oral presentations	2.94	2.93	2.94	2.58	3.21
6. extra credit	2.99	3.08	2.90	2.92	3.05

mean score of 2.99, extra credit was the fourth most used method. Oral presentations (2.94) and student research/position papers (2.60) received support from teachers for fifth and sixth most used strategies. Student research/position papers, as a listed strategy, received the least support from teachers in all four districts.

Because this writer believed that teachers could discuss with students contemporary issues from time to time and never evaluate students on their understanding of these issues, a "no evaluation" choice was also listed in this question. Again, using a one to five (least often to most often) scale, teachers were asked to circle their frequency of using no evaluation after discussing contemporary issues. Two percent of the overall group surveyed circled choice 5 reporting that most often they do not evaluate students on these issues. Three percent circled choice 4, four percent circled choice 3; and nine percent circled choice 2. An overwhelming majority (80%) of all teachers surveyed said that "no evaluation" was least often used. In other words, 80% of those teachers surveyed evaluated their students on contemporary issues instruction. If, again, one believes that teachers evaluate on content they perceive as important while failing to evaluate on less important content, this 80% figure reinforces what these teachers earlier reported concerning the importance of teaching contemporary issues.

Information has been reported concerning which contemporary issues should be taught in the secondary social studies curriculum and in what specific courses they should be taught. The type of contemporary issues that are currently being taught by teachers from the four southwest Virginia school districts have been explained. Further information has detailed instruction and evaluation strategies, along with sources of information used in teaching these issues. Question 8 in Part II of the survey asked teachers about the support they received from a variety of sources concerning contemporary issues instruction.

Sources of Support. When asked the question "What support for contemporary issues instruction do the following factors give?" teachers were requested to evaluate each listed factor on a one (very little) to five (great extent) scale. The factors included principal, supervisor, local social studies curriculum guidelines, college preparation, and textbook coverage. Also included were in-service activities, community groups, system or departmental emphasis on contemporary issues instruction, resources such as newspapers, magazines, journals, and television. The list of factors also included students' content background, teacher's understanding of contemporary issues, and personal experiences such as work and travel. Results to this question are reported in Table 17.

Table 17
 Support for Contemporary Issues Instruction
 (Median = 3)

	Overall	Roanoke County	Roanoke City	Pulaski County	Tazewell County
1. principal	2.64	2.63	2.47	2.54	3.00
2. supervisor	3.37	3.93	3.25	3.31	2.79
3. local social studies curriculum guidelines	3.00	3.59	2.37	3.08	3.11
4. college preparation	3.20	3.08	3.17	2.92	3.60
5. textbook coverage	2.99	2.93	3.00	3.00	3.05
6. in-service activities	2.46	2.89	2.35	2.75	1.85
7. community groups	2.43	2.93	2.25	2.73	2.20
8. system or departmental emphasis	2.48	2.81	2.22	2.77	2.25
9. resources such as newspapers, magazines or journals	4.07	4.32	3.94	4.00	3.95
10. television	3.88	4.32	3.50	3.75	3.95
11. students' content back- ground	2.68	3.14	2.32	2.67	2.60
12. teacher's understanding of contemporary issues	4.09	4.36	4.03	3.75	4.00
13. personal experiences (work, travel, etc.)	3.86	4.22	3.66	3.54	3.90

Teacher's understanding of contemporary issues received the highest mean score (4.09) from the overall group as a factor supporting the teaching of these issues. Social studies teachers in three of the four school districts ranked this factor as most significant. Following closely as a support with a mean score from the overall group of 4.07, were resources such as newspapers, magazines, and journals. Television (3.88) was seen as a third support factor aiding contemporary issues instruction. Supervisors (3.37) and college preparation (3.20) conclude this list of factors which received mean scores of over 3.00 on this one to five point scale.

At the opposite extreme, a number of factors were shown to offer little support to teachers in their efforts at teaching contemporary issues. Community groups, ranked last with a mean of 2.43, was shown to offer least support of the thirteen factors listed. With a mean of 2.43, in-service activities was another factor said to offer minimal support. Departmental emphasis on contemporary issues instruction (2.48) was also perceived by the overall group of teachers surveyed as offering little support to them in their efforts at contemporary issues instruction.

Somewhat in the middle of these rankings of supporting factors for teaching contemporary issues were local social studies curriculum guidelines (3.00), textbooks (2.99),

students' content background (2.68), and the principal (2.64).

A somewhat interesting outcome was revealed when number of degrees obtained was correlated with Question 8 dealing with sources of support. Evidence indicates that the more degrees acquired, the greater the perceived support for teaching contemporary issues.

The last three questions to be discussed are Questions 5, 6, and 7 from Part II of the survey. These concluding questions ask for information about contemporary issues as they are detailed in each locality's curriculum and about the coordination of contemporary issues instruction among teachers of differing courses within the curriculum. It is here that one perceives a tone for this instruction as it occurs in each school district and in the four districts as a whole.

Contemporary Issues in the Curriculum. Question 5 of Part II of the survey asked teachers to what extent contemporary issues are stated as a part of the secondary social studies curriculum in their school system. On a one to five scale, teachers were asked to circle the number corresponding to their perception. Results are listed in Table 18.

Table 18

Extent of Contemporary Issues Stated in Curriculum
(Median = 3)

<u>Overall</u>	<u>Roanoke County</u>	<u>Roanoke City</u>	<u>Pulaski County</u>	<u>Tazewell County</u>
3.18	3.45	2.88	3.23	3.26

It appears evident that the secondary social studies curriculum of Roanoke County schools gives greater attention to contemporary issues studies. At any rate, Roanoke County teachers perceive that their curriculum gives greater attention to this topic than do teachers in the other three districts. The perception of teachers in Tazewell County (3.26) and Pulaski County (3.23) are quite similar with each system accumulating means just above the median point of 3. Roanoke City teachers perceived that the extent of contemporary issues stated in their curriculum was 2.88 on this five-point scale. This score of 2.88 was slightly below the median point of 3.

Coordination. In Question 6 of Part II, teachers were asked if coordination of the teaching of contemporary issues existed among social studies teachers of differing grade levels at their schools. Results, reported using mean scores, are listed in Table 19. In answering this question, teachers were asked to evaluate this extent using a one (very little) to five (great extent) scale. The median score is three.

Table 19

Coordination Among Different Grade Level
Teachers in Contemporary Issues Instruction

<u>Overall</u>	<u>Roanoke County</u>	<u>Roanoke City</u>	<u>Pulaski County</u>	<u>Tazewell County</u>
2.30	2.26	2.22	2.38	2.45

Overwhelmingly, teachers tend to agree that coordination among teachers in contemporary issues instruction is not available to the extent that it should be. With an overall group mean of 2.30, teachers made a clear point with their responses generally falling in the less than 3 (median) category. Figures from all four districts fell in the 2.22 to 2.45 range, with Tazewell County teachers perceiving the greatest coordination among teachers in their school system. Roanoke City teachers (2.22) revealed that their perception of coordination among teachers was the least of the four school districts surveyed.

Should Coordination Exist? A final point to be made concerning coordination among teachers in contemporary issues instruction is whether or not coordination should exist among teachers in the instruction of these issues. Question 7, Part II asks, "Should there be coordination of

contemporary issues instruction so that certain issues will be studied at certain grade levels?" Responses to this question are reported using mean scores in Table 20. Again a one (very little) to five (great extent) scale was used.

Table 20

Should Coordination Among Teachers
of Differing Grade Levels Exist for Contemporary
Issues Instruction

<u>Overall</u>	<u>Roanoke County</u>	<u>Roanoke City</u>	<u>Pulaski County</u>	<u>Tazewell County</u>
3.48	3.03	3.65	3.75	3.70

Responses to this question were higher than the responses from the previous question concerning the actual existence of coordination among teachers. Noting a median score of three, the overall group mean to this question was 3.48.

Teachers from each locality tend to believe that coordination should exist among teachers of differing grade levels concerning contemporary issues instruction. Pulaski County teachers reported the highest response (3.75) to this question. Roanoke County teachers reported the lowest response (3.03). Even Roanoke County's teachers responses, however, averaged higher than the median of three.

Basically, the last three questions concerning contemporary issues instruction and the social studies curriculum could best be explained by saying that the teachers surveyed reported that contemporary issues are detailed in the curriculum to some degree. Coordination among teachers in contemporary issues instruction is not overly existent. However, this coordination should exist to assure a more comprehensive and thorough coverage of contemporary issues topics.

Summary

The results of the survey on contemporary issues have been presented in tables and discussed in this chapter. After analyzing those results, the following statements can be made concerning teachers' opinions of contemporary issues and the social studies curriculum:

1. When asked the significance of certain contemporary issues, the teachers listed economic growth, increasing militarism, nuclear proliferation, population growth, and hunger/poverty as the five most important issues to be studied.
2. Teachers next reported that the following issues were the top five given more extensive coverage in their curricula: economic growth, increasing militarism, racism, population growth, and hunger poverty.
3. Teachers were then asked what issues should be covered in their curriculum. The five most popular suggestions were economic growth, hunger/poverty, increasing militarism, nuclear proliferation, and population growth.

4. When asked in what social studies course major contemporary issues should be covered, the teachers responded as follows: advancements and ethical concerns, 46% chose government classes; aging and the elderly, 67%, government; ecological imbalance, 70%, world geography; world resource allocation, 82%, geography; population growth, 76%, geography; hunger/poverty, 74%, geography; sexism, 59%, government; racism, 78%, U.S. history; increasing militarism, 78% chose U.S. history followed closely by world history with 72%; nuclear proliferation, 71% chose government, 68% chose U.S. history, and 60% chose world history; economic growth, 76% chose government and 68% chose U.S. history; and global human rights, 76% chose world history. (Teachers could choose more than one course.)
5. The five most often used strategies in the teaching of contemporary issues included teacher-directed large group discussion, student readings of newspapers/news magazines, lecture, audio-visuals, and student reading of textbook.
6. Government classes are the settings for most contemporary issues instruction, followed by U.S. history, world geography, and world history.
7. When asked their sources of information for teaching contemporary issues, the teachers listed the following as the five most frequently used sources: personal experience, newspapers, news magazines, textbooks, and television.
8. The evaluation of students' understanding of contemporary issues included these six methods: questions on regularly scheduled tests, regularly scheduled quizzes, participation grade for discussion, extra credit, oral presentations, and student research papers.
9. The teachers listed the following as the top five areas of support in their teaching of contemporary issues: teachers' understanding of contemporary issues; resources such as newspapers, magazines, or journals; television; personal experiences; and their supervisors.
10. Teachers noted that contemporary issues were detailed, to a certain degree, in the social studies curriculum of their schools.

11. Teachers perceived that limited coordination among teachers existed in instructing in contemporary issues.
12. Teachers reported that more coordination should exist among teachers of differing courses for contemporary issues instruction.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to assess the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms in selected school divisions in the state of Virginia. In this study, a questionnaire was mailed to selected social studies teachers in southwest Virginia. Results from this population reveal that respondents perceived contemporary issues to be significant. The extent of actual classroom coverage of these issues, however, does not equal what southwest Virginia educators questioned in this survey believe it should. These same teachers indicated what issues should be covered in each required secondary social studies course and in which courses they perceived to be best suited for issues instruction. They explained what teaching strategies were most often used in contemporary issues instruction and what sources of information served as support for this instruction. The evaluation of students on their understanding of issues instruction was detailed. Too, these teachers identified what factors aided them in this instruction as well as what factors hindered their teaching of contemporary issues.

Lastly, these 94 teachers from four school districts stated that while contemporary issues were detailed, to a certain degree, in their local curriculum guidelines, little coordination existed among teachers in teaching these issues. Teachers surveyed agreed that generally more coordination should exist among teachers of differing secondary level courses for contemporary issues instruction.

Need for the Study

Students in secondary social studies classrooms often study national and international events as they are reported in newspapers, news magazines, and on television. These current events studies generally focus on the here and now, with little attention paid to reasons for what has transpired or ways in which national or international events may affect them personally. Moreover, students are seldom involved in any sort of attempted resolution to world problems which might foster greater depth of study and understanding of these issues.

The National Council for the Social Studies proclaimed in 1971 and again in 1979 that a study of contemporary social issues, more detailed than a mere review of disjointed current events, was an important aspect to the teaching of social studies. While current events studies could provide a springboard for a detailed analysis of global issues, current events studies, themselves, too often

do not allow students to discuss in depth the actual experiences nor consider decisions needed for possible resolutions to these issues.

In Guideline 2.1 of its "Revision of NCSS Guidelines," the NCSS proclaimed that "the [social studies] program should focus on the social world as it is, its flaws, its ideals, its strengths, its dangers, and its promise" ("Revision of the NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267). Included as an explanation for this Guideline, the NCSS suggested that a study of "enduring and pervasive social issues such as economic injustice, conflict, racism, social disorder, and environmental imbalance are appropriate content for the K-12 social studies curriculum" ("Revision of NCSS Guidelines," 1979, p. 267). A study of contemporary issues, therefore, should be reviewed by social studies educators for inclusion in the curriculum.

Contemporary issues studies in social studies classrooms have more recently become foci for both the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). In identical surveys published in 1982-83 in Social Education, the NCSS journal, and Educational Leadership, the journal of ASCD, each organization's membership was asked to respond to a questionnaire concerning the study of contemporary social issues. Because of national concerns

regarding the teaching of these issues and the need for the inclusion of these issues in social studies curricula as suggested by NCSS, a focus for this study was realized.

To be aware of concerns for curriculum innovation from national educational organizations is important. Equally important, however, is making educators on the local level cognizant of these concerns. In order to understand fully local teacher awareness and acceptance for the teaching of contemporary issues, input from teachers must be obtained. A need for this study existed, therefore, because an assessment of the teaching of contemporary issues must be conducted before an evaluation of that teaching could be made by local educators. A major goal of this study was to provide to local social studies curriculum leaders this assessment on the teaching of contemporary issues among teachers in their localities.

Purpose of the Study

Believing that the study of contemporary social issues is vital to a comprehensive social studies program, this researcher was interested in the perceptions of local social studies teachers concerning this issue. While it was believed that some teachers understood and implemented contemporary issues instruction, it was also accepted that other teachers may not recognize the importance of this effort. It was to recognize and better understand the

nature of these probable differences of opinion among teachers for which this study was designed. The major purpose of this study was to assess and evaluate collected data about the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms in selected school divisions in Virginia.

Design of the Study

In an attempt to assess the status of the teaching of contemporary issues, a survey was devised to be sent to selected teachers. These teachers represented the population of secondary social studies teachers working with classes in world geography, world history, U.S. history, and U.S. government in four southwest Virginia localities. The localities chosen provided a cross-section of rural, suburban, and urban schools. Roanoke City, the one urban locality, employed thirty-five teachers to be contacted. Forty-two teachers from Roanoke County, the one suburban locality, were asked to respond. Pulaski County, a rural locality, employed fifteen teachers to be contacted, and in Tazewell County, another rural school district, twenty-four teachers were contacted. A total of 116 teachers from four school districts, therefore, comprised the population contacted to participate in this study.

Each teacher was sent on May 9, 1983 a questionnaire with a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the cover

letter, each was asked to return the questionnaire by May 18, 1983. A fifty-two percent return rate from teachers was realized from the first survey request.

On May 23, 1983, a follow-up questionnaire was mailed to those teachers who had failed to respond to the earlier request. By May 31, 1983, an additional twenty-nine percent of the teachers surveyed had responded. At the June 10 cut-off date, a total of 94 teachers (81%) had returned their questionnaires. A follow-up study was conducted in the fall of 1983. In this follow-up study, 50% of the non-responding teachers (11) were randomly selected and contacted. Caution was used to make sure that non-respondents from all four localities were randomly chosen.

The questionnaire sent to the population of teachers contained a "Data Sheet" which asked demographic questions and four additional pages comprising the body of the form. In Part I of the four-page questionnaire, teachers were asked to respond to questions concerning the significance of contemporary issues and the presence of these issues in the social studies curriculum of their schools.

In Part II, questions dealt with the actual teaching of these issues. Instructional strategies, sources of information and the evaluation of students were among the topics to which teachers were asked to respond.

Data collected from these questionnaires were analyzed using summated scale scores which indicated respondents support for individual questions in Parts I and II of the questionnaire. These summated scores were then correlated, using the Pearson product-moment coefficient to ascertain if sub-samples of the population responded differently to questions. Results to each aspect of every question were reported in mean scores.

Limitations of the Study

Interested in assessing teacher perceptions of contemporary issues instruction in secondary social studies classrooms, this researcher surveyed 116 secondary social studies teachers in four southwest Virginia school districts in order to ascertain their perceptions of such instruction. Because of the limited population targeted, both in its number and in its geographic range within southwest Virginia, one should be very cautious in generalizing about the results of this study beyond the population utilized. Another area for concern is from the publications by two national organizations which were conducting related research on educator perceptions on contemporary issues instruction nationwide at the same time this research study was undertaken. The publication of national surveys, and the emphasis on the topic in national journals, could have

raised, though there was no indication of such, the awareness of teachers in southwest Virginia to this issue and thereby affected their responses in this research study.

Results of the Study

In the questionnaire entitled "Survey on Contemporary Issues and the Social Studies Curriculum," teachers were asked to detail their perceptions of contemporary issues instruction in their schools. They were asked to identify those contemporary issues that they felt were significant to humankind. They were asked the extent of coverage of each of these issues that was presently covered and that should be covered in their school's curriculum. They were then asked to list the secondary social studies courses in which each of these issues should be covered.

After these series of questions, teachers were asked their perceptions concerning the present coverage of these issues in their teaching. Questions dealing with instructional strategies, sources of information, means of evaluation and sources of support for contemporary issues instruction were then answered by teachers. These questions reveal the actual concentration that contemporary issues receive within social studies classrooms of teachers surveyed.

Results to these questions show that teachers perceive economic growth, increasing militarism, nuclear proliferation, population growth, and hunger/poverty as significant to humankind. The five most extensively covered issues in their curriculum, however, were economic growth, increasing militarism, racism, population growth, and hunger/poverty.

When asked what issues should certainly be covered in their social studies curriculum, economic growth, hunger/poverty, increasing militarism, nuclear proliferation, and population growth were listed. From this question, one might infer that teachers realize the need for more nuclear issues coverage, but for whatever reasons, have not implemented study of this issue.

Teachers next responded to the question asking in what courses each issue should be relegated. Since it was hoped that teachers realized that certain issues might be expanded upon, if necessary, from year to year, they were allowed to choose more than one course, if they desired, for each issue. World geography courses were chosen as the most appropriate subject for instruction concerning ecological imbalance, world resource allocation, population growth and hunger/poverty. The issues of increasing militarism, nuclear proliferation, and global human rights were suggested for world history coverage. United States history

classes were considered appropriate for coverage of racism, increasing militarism, nuclear proliferation, and economic growth. The following issues were considered suitable content for United States government classes: advancements and ethical concerns in medical technology, aging and the elderly, sexism, nuclear proliferation, and economic growth. The overlapping of certain issues in different courses could easily be handled through an approach which builds on topics previously studied.

For their contemporary issues instruction, teachers listed that their teaching strategies most often included teacher-directed large group discussion, student readings of newspapers/news magazines, lecture, audio-visuals, and student reading of textbook. Newspapers/news magazines were also listed as one of their major sources of information.

Other informational sources most often used in guiding their contemporary issues instruction were personal experience, textbooks and television. Newspapers, news magazines, and television were also listed to a great extent when teachers were asked to detail sources of support for their instruction of these issues.

Sources of support that were mentioned as aiding teachers' efforts in issues instruction not only included the news media but also teachers' understanding of contemporary issues, personal experiences, and their supervisors.

When teachers were asked what strategies they used to evaluate their students' understanding of their issues instruction, a varied list of strategies was revealed. These evaluation strategies most frequently listed included questions on regularly scheduled tests, regularly scheduled quizzes, participation grade for discussion, extra credit, oral presentations, and student research papers. Quite naturally, evaluation of contemporary issues instruction was more frequently noticed in those courses where more instruction occurred.

Teachers listed government classes as the setting for most contemporary issues instruction. U.S. history was the course in which teachers believed the second highest amount of this coverage occurred. World geography students, they believed, received the third greatest extent of contemporary issues coverage with world history students receiving the least amount.

Generally, teachers believed that contemporary issues studies were a part of their curriculum. They did note, however, that the coordination among teachers to assure proper coverage of these issues was not sufficiently present.

Interpretation of the Results

At the onset of this study it was stated that the purpose of the study was to assess the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms in selected school systems in southwest Virginia. The results of this study, previously explained, detail the status of this instruction.

Teachers sampled in this survey believe that contemporary issues are significant to humankind. While certain contemporary issues such as racism, population growth, world resource allocation, increasing militarism, nuclear proliferation, economic growth, and global human rights are detailed in the social studies curriculum of their schools, others from the list such as ethics of medical technology, aging and the elderly, and ecological imbalance are not given great attention. Textbooks used in secondary social studies courses may explain why teachers reported that certain issues were detailed in their curriculum while others were not. As it is accepted that textbooks are the major source for most curriculum content, it should be expected that issues that are detailed in textbooks would be detailed in the curriculum while issues that are not generally covered by textbook publishers might not be a part of a school's curriculum (Morrisset, 1980, p. 562). It is interesting to note that teachers in this

study's population reported that the issue of nuclear proliferation was detailed in their curriculum. This issue is generally not covered in depth by textbook publishers (Fleming, 1983, p. 483). The stated coverage of the issue of nuclear proliferation by teachers might have resulted from that issue's recent focus in the news media and television dramas detailing nuclear war concerns.

Teachers' reports that the issues of ethics of medical technology and aging and the elderly were not detailed in their curriculum offered little surprise as less national attention has been focused upon those issues. It is also not surprising that ecological imbalance was not detailed in their curricula; this issue is often covered in the science curriculum.

One point needs attention here, however. While teachers reported that certain issues were detailed in their curriculum, little information was collected in this study explaining the degree of detail that each issue received. This lack of specificity would be one area somewhat altered if this study were revised.

When asked if more attention should be given each of the listed issues, every issue listed was suggested for greater attention than it was currently receiving. Still, certain issues such as ethics of medical technology, aging and the elderly, and sexism were considered least important

for additional coverage in each of the four basic secondary social studies subjects. It is not uncommon for teachers to believe that most anything they do could be improved. For that reason, one might justify their concerns that more attention be given to each of the stated issues. This researcher believes that most contemporary issues listed were at least briefly discussed by teachers in this survey. One questions, however, if many of these issues really received the amount of coverage due them based on their significance in modern society.

Each of the four subjects -- world geography, world history, U.S. history, and U.S. government -- were believed to be suitable for coverage of certain issues. (Again the word coverage was so loosely defined, one could not be sure exactly how teachers interpreted the term.) As noticed in this study, teachers were not always in agreement as to which issues should be covered in particular courses. Curriculum decisions would have to be made to assure coverage of issues in particular courses. Too, for those issues detailed in more than one course, decisions on content development would have to be made. Different teaching strategies could also be used to expand students' understanding of issues previously introduced.

Teachers revealed that they implement a variety of instructional strategies in their contemporary issues

teaching. Many teachers mentioned that they have students read newspapers and news magazines. (It was with these resources that this researcher feared that teachers were slightly confusing contemporary issues coverage with current events lessons.) Others, however, said that they prefer to discuss, lecture or use audio-visuals. More than likely, for those teachers who prefer to lecture or discuss, their sources of information include the news media or commercially-published audio-visual media. This explains the value of the news media as a major source of information for contemporary issues instruction. Newspapers and news magazines provide excellent current information on contemporary issues topics. These media sources, however, do not generally provide more than up-to-date information on an immediate situation. Contemporary issues studies require much more of an in depth analysis of world-wide social issues. Newspapers and news magazines, therefore, would generally have to be supplemented with more in depth information in order to provide true contemporary issues instruction.

While personal experiences was listed as the greatest source of teachers' information aiding instruction on contemporary issues topics, the newspaper was listed as the second most valuable source of information. It is interesting to note that textbooks were listed as a valuable

source of information. Textbooks generally do not handle contemporary issues topics frequently or to any great extent. Television, as expected, was also listed as an important informational source for issues instruction. While this topic detailing teachers' sources of information provided few overall surprises, one finding was puzzling. Teachers reported that personal experiences such as travel provided their greatest source of information for instructing on these topics. This answer-choice was provided so that those few teachers who truly had traveled extensively and studied contemporary issues from a national and even limited international perspective would have a proper medium for responding to the question. It was never expected that this answer-choice would receive the most attention from the overall group.

Teachers often tend to evaluate their students on content information that the teachers, themselves, perceive to be worthy of study. The most frequent evaluational strategy used by teachers in this sample was the inclusion of contemporary issues questions on regularly scheduled tests. Teachers also reported that they give quizzes to measure their students' understanding of these issues. Another often used evaluation strategy was a participation grade for classroom discussion. Teacher responses do not indicate that they evaluate contemporary issues lessons, as

separate units of study, as often as this researcher would have expected. It is believed that the most sophisticated evaluation strategy listed on the questionnaire was student research/position papers because this strategy would foster an in depth, independent study of these issues by students. Teachers selected this strategy as their least often used strategy. This strategy, however, would necessitate more time for teachers to read and analyze these papers. Teachers may feel that they do not have time given them for extensive use of this evaluation strategy. Their responses could also indicate, however, that little attention is given to a separate, detailed evaluation of their contemporary issues instruction. This lack of in depth evaluative strategies would certainly cause one to reflect on these teachers' contemporary issues studies as a major emphasis of their overall instruction.

The next topic analyzed by teachers was sources of support they receive for contemporary issues instruction. As expected, the media was listed as a supportive factor for this instruction, as was their own understanding of these issues which can most probably be attributed to the news media. Teachers, too, mentioned that their personal experiences, such as travel, helped them in their issues instruction. Supervisors, too, were listed as a source of support for this instruction. This would seem to be

reasonable because, if any central office personnel were to be considered supportive of these issues, it would more than likely be the content supervisor who would be directly in charge of curriculum. It is promising to note that teachers perceive supervisors as a source of support for the teaching of these issues; supervisors could possibly determine the success or failure of a curriculum project merely by offering or withholding their support. Principals, however, were not listed by teachers surveyed as being particularly supportive. This finding was not especially surprising when one realizes that many principals, particularly on the secondary level, may not be knowledgeable in all aspects of his school's overall curriculum. Most teachers agreed that in-service activities and textbooks had not generally benefited them in their instruction of these issues.

The issue of the textbooks is interesting because while teachers tend to indicate that their texts are not supportive, they do list these texts as valuable sources of information used for this teaching. This is seen as somewhat contradictory. While textbooks may briefly detail some contemporary issues topics, the textbook, itself, usually only provides a skeletal coverage of these issues. It would be supportive in this respect, however. For in depth studies, teachers would generally have to search elsewhere for information. When teachers were asked to

decide what support their local curriculum guidelines provided for issues instruction, the mean to this question fell directly in the middle with Roanoke City's teachers being the only group responding negatively. Again, this researcher's concern over the quantity and/or quality of coverage detailed in the curriculum as opposed to the mere mentioning of contemporary issues topics is a perceived weakness of these data. This concern is remedied, to a certain degree, by responses to the next questions analyzed.

Teachers were later asked to detail the extent of contemporary issues stated in their social studies curriculum. To this question, the response was somewhat higher than the survey question on support would indicate. Teachers did largely agree, however, that even though contemporary issues were stated in the curriculum, coordination among teachers for this instruction was not present to a great extent. They agreed that much more coordination is needed among all secondary social studies teachers to assure proper coverage and continuity of this instruction. These stated teacher concerns for instructional coordination were predictable.

Implications of this Study

Four social studies supervisors from localities in southwest Virginia agreed, with administrative approval, to

allow this research to be conducted among secondary social studies teachers in their schools. Each supervisor was promised a compilation of their teachers' responses and the overall population's responses to all questions asked. Using the results of this study and their own teachers' support, each of these supervisors could initiate work to evaluate and possibly revise their social studies curriculum so that it reflects emphasis in contemporary issues instruction. In-service activities could be implemented to explain to teachers curriculum revisions and to train teachers for more effective issues instruction. Certain issues could be delegated to the curriculum of specific courses with teachers recognizing what issues were to be taught where. Units could be designed by teacher groups in order to assure teacher understanding and implementation of these new units across the curriculum. Appropriate supplemental resources could be created or purchased to enhance these topics of study.

Whether or not curriculum revisions occur from this study will be a decision that supervisors and teachers must make in individual settings. Nevertheless, it is believed that for those teachers who did participate in this study, a raised awareness of contemporary issues instruction has occurred. Even though contemporary issues are considered to be somewhat "pervasive and enduring" ("Revision of NCSS

Guidelines," 1979, p. 267) in nature, it is recognized that different issues may be in the forefront of peoples' minds occasionally. For example, when economic issues are concerns of a community, those concerns are often discussed in social studies classrooms. Television programs dramatizing certain issues or current events reports might bring attention to certain issues at given times. For this reason, continued monitoring of teachers' perceptions concerning these issues would be advisable.

Still, on a local scale, these supervisors could solicit support from nearby college and university faculty for designing courses and/or in-services to aid teachers in the instruction of particular topics or contemporary issues in general.

It is fully recognized that before contemporary issues instruction is to be given more attention by local educators, the supervisors and teachers, themselves, must perceive a need for this instruction and desire to increase their coverage of these issues. It is hoped that this study's results, which will be provided to the social studies supervisors of the participating localities, will offer a rationale for commencing evaluation of contemporary issues instruction within the curriculum and classrooms of these localities.

One must be extremely cautious in generalizing from results gathered in this research beyond the southwest Virginia school systems used in the study. One could, however, suggest and, even to a degree, speculate about contemporary issues instruction in other localities from information generated in this study. It is believed, moreover, that aspects of this research study have concrete implications for school systems elsewhere. Results from this study may foster thinking from school officials in other school systems about their contemporary issues instruction. This thinking may result in analysis of their curricula concerning the emphasis given these issues. Too, a perceived strength of this research effort has been the creation of a contemporary issues assessment instrument--the questionnaire. This survey instrument could very well be used to provide other school divisions a means for collecting data detailing their contemporary issues instruction. This assessment of their curricula could lead to increased coverage of contemporary issues. Assessment, heightened awareness, and increased coverage of these issues in social studies classrooms were major goals of this researcher in conducting this study. Attention to the questionnaire used in this study by social studies teachers in other localities could possibly provide similar considerations from those educators hoping to raise

awareness of these issues in their secondary social studies curriculum.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study focused upon teacher perceptions concerning contemporary issues instruction. Several questions from the questionnaire dealt specifically with coverage of particular contemporary issues by teachers. After results from the surveys were analyzed, this researcher realized that the term "coverage" was ambiguous. It seemed that teachers defined this term in different ways leading to results not being particularly specific. A remedy to this confusion could be derived from defining coverage as the specific amount of class time devoted to instruction of these issues. A future study of contemporary issues could focus more directly on class time devoted to these issues rather than coverage of these issues.

Other recommendations for future studies involve findings from this research effort. These recommendations, however, are not related to problems noted in the results of this study but rather are from questions generated from teachers' responses as noted by this researcher.

In the questionnaire teachers were asked what support a number of factors offered them in their teaching of these issues. One of these factors was their school principals.

Overwhelmingly, teachers perceived that principals offered little support for the teaching of contemporary issues.

A building principal is generally considered to be the instructional leader of his school. In that role, he should be cognizant of each curriculum's major topics and offer teachers support in implementing those topics of study. An interesting study, as a follow-up to this study, could focus on administrative perceptions--particularly those of secondary administrators from the four localities used in this study--concerning the teaching of contemporary issues.

Teachers in this survey were also asked if their social studies supervisor offered support for their teaching of contemporary issues. Since supervisors are often considered to be a guiding force in curriculum innovation within a given school system, their perceptions on the teaching of contemporary issues would be noteworthy. As another follow-up study, supervisors from the four localities used in this study, or even from localities throughout the state, could respond to a questionnaire detailing their views on actual contemporary issues instruction in their localities. They could also respond to questions concerning what this instruction should entail.

Probably one of the most interesting studies which could be implemented as a follow-up to this study would focus on students' perceptions about their contemporary

issues instruction. Surveying students from the school districts used in this study about their perceptions of contemporary issues instruction in their social studies classes would provide an excellent opportunity to verify results from teacher questionnaires used in this study.

Another study that would merit attention could be focused upon elementary and middle school coverage of contemporary issues in social studies classrooms. Teachers in the four school districts used for this study could provide valuable insights into the contemporary issues education received by students before they reach the secondary level. With this added information, one could have a clearer understanding of contemporary issues instruction in the K-12 social studies curriculum of each of these school districts.

Another follow-up exercise in which student input would be valuable would be to test students in the four southwest Virginia localities used in this study on their contemporary issues knowledge. This would be another means of validating what teachers reported concerning their instruction of these issues.

This study focused upon teachers in four southwest Virginia localities. An expansion of this study in which secondary social studies teachers from across the state of Virginia could respond to a similar questionnaire would

offer insight into the actual state-wide teaching of contemporary issues. In this case, a random sampling of Virginia secondary social studies teachers, rather than an entire population study, could most probably be used satisfactorily.

A seventh recommendation for future studies could involve secondary social studies educators from throughout the country. While results from the Molnar study detailed in Social Education, (May, 1983, p. 305) are interesting, their validity and reliability are highly questionable because of the unscientific survey techniques used and the extremely small rate of return of questionnaires. This lack of validity is unfortunate. This researcher, after having asked some questions in this survey modeled from Molnar's questionnaire, believes that a scientific study on a national level would provide valuable insights into the teaching of contemporary issues. The study suggested here, however, should involve more in depth questioning of educators' views on contemporary issues instruction than did Molnar's study. A study of this magnitude would provide information on contemporary issues instruction nationwide. This research could affect textbook publishers, teacher preparation institutions, state departments of education, local school districts, classroom teachers, and students across the country.

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APPENDIX A

NCSS Curriculum Guideline 2.0 Evaluation

2.0 The Social Studies Program Should Deal With the Real Social World.

Guideline #2 recognizes that the social world is neither all good, nor all bad. It recognizes that the student should familiarize himself with not only the past but the present. It also recognizes the value of introducing students at an early age to social interaction in which values, social issues, and conflicts are explained, where alternatives are considered, and where possible, issues are resolved.

- 2.1 The program should focus on the social world as it is, its flaws, its ideals, its strengths, its dangers, and its promises.
- a. Are a variety of materials utilized to allow all sides of an issue to be examined?
 - b. Are a wide variety of materials prepared at a multiplicity of reading and interest levels in an effort to expose every child to all sides of the issues, to insure the student that he will be able to generalize and formulate tentative conclusions based on his exposure to many points of view?
 - c. Does the program include study of those events and policies that may be construed as contrary to or varying from present national goals? Are materials for such a study made available?

- d. Are resources drawn from a variety of social sciences such as history, economics, geography, etc.?

Comments:

2.2 The program should emphasize pervasive and enduring social issues.

- a. Are the social issues enduring? Do they tend to recur throughout human experience? If so, are your curriculum examples in a single grade or unit drawn from a series of similar events over time?
- b. If the same social issue is treated sequentially throughout a series of grade levels or units of work, how is continuity or the "enduring" aspect of this issue assured between grade levels?
- c. If an "enduring social issue" is treated over a series of grade levels, how is increasing complexity and sophistication (rather than mere repetition of the same material) assured?
- d. Is the social issue selected seen as "pervasive," i.e., are curriculum examples drawn from a variety of cultural settings? (Or is only a single example studied so that students will be likely to perceive the problems as unique or isolated phenomena?)
- e. Do social studies teachers at all levels stress problem solving and decision making in problematic situations?

- f. Is the following approach recognized and utilized in the classroom setting as one way of attacking the pervasive social issues: formulate hypotheses; gather pertinent information; analyze the data; formulate tentative conclusions; reassess original hypotheses?
- g. Does the program provide extensive opportunities for students to state and support their views?

Comments:

2.3 The program should include the analysis and attempts to formulate potential resolutions of present and controversial problems such as racism, poverty, war, and pollution.

- a. Are up-to-date materials relative to the kinds of controversial issues mentioned above available for student use?
- b. Is each social science recognized in an attempt to clarify the basic issues that afflict society?
- c. Does the social studies program provide opportunities for students (through the use of materials from the social science disciplines) to analyze component parts of the issue, to suggest alternatives, to predict some of the consequences associated with each issue, and to formulate decisions that attempt to resolve the issue?

Comments:

(Alleman et al., 1971, p. 4-5).

[After each of the six guideline components of 2.0 are discussed, a final "Evaluation Schedule for Guideline 2" is offered. The committee members reviewing these components of its social studies curriculum are then asked to evaluate their classroom, school, and district on their compliance with Guideline 2.0. Again, only those specific questions that deal with guidelines 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 are noted here.]

Evaluation Schedule for Guideline #2

Place a C for classroom at the appropriate place.
Place an S for school at the appropriate place.
Place a D for district at the appropriate place.

1. The central focus of the curriculum of my classroom/school/ district revolves principally around enduring social issues.

hardly ever 1 2 3 4 5 almost always

Draw an arrow to the number where each classroom/school/district should be.

2. In my classroom/school/district a wide variety of materials are prepared at a multiplicity of reading and interest levels in an effort to expose every child to all sides of an issue.

hardly ever 1 2 3 4 5 almost always

Draw an arrow to the number where each classroom/school/district should be.

3. In my classroom/school/district the curriculum being studied focuses upon problem solving and the decision making process related to social issues.

hardly ever 1 2 3 4 5 almost always

Draw an arrow to the number where each classroom/school/district should be.

4. Controversial issues such as racism, poverty, war, and pollution are dealt with in increasing complexity throughout the grades in my classroom/school/district.

hardly ever 1 2 3 4 5 almost always

Draw an arrow to the number where each classroom/school/district should be.

(Alleman et al., 1971, p. 13)

APPENDIX B

Results of NCSS and ASCD Social Issues Surveys

Source: Molnar, Alex. "Results of the ASCD/NCSS Social Issues Survey. "Are the Issues Studied in School the Important Issues Facing Humankind?" Social Education, May, 1983, 47, 306,307.

Table 21A

Table 21B

Issue	Rating Scale	Significance of the Issue for humankind					Extent to which issue is included in social studies				
		unimportant		very important			very little		to a great extent		
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Nuclear disarmament	NCSS	0%	1.1%	5.6%	27.0%	66.3%	9.5%	41.7%	29.8%	14.3%	4.3%
	ASCD	0	1.4	4.9	19.0	74.6	27.4	34.7	23.2	11.2	3.5
Pollution of earth's environment	NCSS	0	1.1	2.2	36.0	60.7	4.8	19.3	54.2	16.9	4.8
	ASCD	.4	0	4.2	16.9	78.5	6.2	19.2	40.8	28.1	5.8
Division of the planet into areas of wealth and poverty	NCSS	3.4	1.1	25.5	35.2	35.2	11.1	21.0	43.2	18.5	6.2
	ASCD	2.2	6.5	21.2	36.3	33.8	16.3	23.8	36.1	21.0	2.8
Alternatives to existing forms of U.S. political, social, and economic organization	NCSS	2.3	14.0	39.5	23.3	20.9	20.7	32.9	23.2	15.9	7.3
	ASCD	3.9	11.7	27.4	35.6	21.4	20.8	23.1	28.8	23.1	4.2
Racism	NCSS	0	3.4	19.1	36.0	41.6	2.4	9.6	32.5	37.3	18.1
	ASCD	1.1	2.0	13.1	35.3	47.7	5.8	18.3	38.5	28.8	8.6
Sexism	NCSS	3.4	9.1	31.8	33.8	22.7	3.7	29.3	36.6	24.4	6.1
	ASCD	2.5	7.1	25.5	27.3	37.6	18.6	29.8	34.5	11.2	5.8
Genetic engineering	NCSS	4.5	13.5	34.8	28.1	19.1	47.6	37.8	9.8	3.7	1.2
	ASCD	3.5	10.3	27.3	32.3	26.2	56.2	25.0	12.7	5.4	.8

Table 21C

Table 21D

Issue	Rating Scale	Extent to which issue should be included in social studies					Extent to which issue is included in other subjects				
		very little		to a great extent			very little		to a great extent		
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Nuclear disarmament	NCSS	2.3%	1.1%	18.2%	36.4%	42.0%	46.8%	39.0%	13.0%	0%	1.3%
	ASCD	.4	3.2	11.3	32.5	48.7	51.7	25.1	12.5	6.7	2.0
Pollution of earth's environment	NCSS	0	1.1	22.7	43.2	33.0	1.3	30.8	38.5	25.6	3.8
	ASCD	.4	3.0	11.9	34.7	50.0	8.2	27.1	32.9	25.1	6.7
Division of the planet into areas of wealth and poverty	NCSS	3.5	2.3	27.9	39.5	26.7	44.6	36.5	14.9	4.1	0
	ASCD	2.7	8.0	24.3	36.5	28.5	44.0	28.6	18.1	6.5	2.8
Alternatives to existing forms of U.S. political, social, and economic organization	NCSS	4.7	9.4	32.9	37.6	15.3	65.8	23.7	7.9	2.6	0
	ASCD	5.2	6.4	31.5	32.6	24.3	52.0	28.0	11.6	4.4	1.2
Racism	NCSS	1.1	3.4	19.5	36.8	39.1	16.9	45.5	31.2	5.2	1.3
	ASCD	2.3	3.8	16.2	36.8	41.0	27.9	28.7	29.1	9.6	4.8
Sexism	NCSS	2.4	8.2	37.6	32.9	18.8	28.0	46.7	20.0	4.0	1.3
	ASCD	2.6	9.4	29.7	26.7	31.6	37.1	27.9	21.9	7.6	5.6
Genetic engineering	NCSS	16.3	15.1	45.3	16.3	7.0	30.7	40.0	24.0	5.3	0
	ASCD	12.4	18.0	35.0	21.7	10.9	45.9	25.5	18.4	7.1	3.1

Table 21E

Issue	Rating Scale	Extent to which issue should be included in other subjects				
		very little		to a great extent		
		1	2	3	4	5
Nuclear disarmament	NCSS	5.0%	11.2%	46.2%	17.5%	20.0%
	ASCD	3.1	14.0	26.5	31.5	24.9
Pollution of earth's environment	NCSS	0	1.2	31.3	39.8	27.7
	ASCD	1.9	4.2	11.5	40.1	42.4
Division of the planet into areas of wealth and poverty	NCSS	13.9	20.3	30.4	26.6	8.9
	ASCD	7.6	16.1	34.9	24.1	17.3
Alternatives to existing forms of U.S. political, social, and economic organization	NCSS	19.0	32.9	30.4	13.9	3.8
	ASCD	15.8	19.4	37.5	15.8	11.5
Racism	NCSS	3.7	11.0	34.1	25.6	25.6
	ASCD	5.4	8.6	26.1	30.0	30.0
Sexism	NCSS	5.1	20.3	32.9	24.1	17.7
	ASCD	5.9	13.3	30.9	23.0	27.0
Genetic engineering	NCSS	9.9	9.9	42.0	28.4	9.9
	ASCD	11.2	15.4	31.3	22.4	19.7

Table 21F

How satisfied are you with
the school's choice of
social issues to study?

Rating Scale	very dissatisfied			very satisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5
NCSS	12.0%	22.9%	41.0%	19.3%	4.8%
ASCD	10.5	25.9	43.2	15.3	4.5

Table 21G

Do you think educators,
as a group, should try
to formulate positions
on social issues?

	Yes	No
NCSS	81.2%	18.8%
ASCD	71.5	28.5

Table 21H

Is there any social issue
you want educators to take
a position on?

	Yes	No
NCSS	84.0%	16.5%
ASCD	71.5	28.5

Table 21I
Issues Identified by Respondents

Issue	What is the most important social issue regularly studied as part of the school curriculum?		What is the most important issue facing humankind?		Is there a social issue you want educators to take a position on? What is that issue?	
	NCSS	ASCD	NCSS	ASCD	NCSS	ASCD
1. Nuclear disarmament	9.5%	6.4%	34.5%	34.8%	33.8%	36.8%
2. Pollution of earth's environment	9.5	19.7	15.5	10.7	7.4	7.3
3. Division of the planet into areas of wealth and poverty	9.5	9.6	15.5	16.6	4.4	4.7
4. Alternatives to existing forms of U.S. political, social and economic organization	24.3	16.5	15.5	6.3	8.8	2.6
5. Racism	13.5	5.5	3.6	2.0	7.4	4.1
6. Sexism	1.4	4.6	0	2.0	0	4.7
7. Genetic engineering	0	.5	0	.8	1.5	1.6
8. Role of education in society	2.7	3.7	0	1.2	16.2	17.1
9. Substance abuse	0	4.6	2.4	.8	1.5	.5
10. Relation between God and humans	2.7	.9	0	.8	0	.5
11. Citizenship	17.6	18.3	10.7	20.9	14.7	18.1
12. American history	9.5	9.6	2.4	2.8	4.4	2.1

(Molnar, "Results of the ASCD/NCSS Survey," 1983, pp. 306-307.)

APPENDIX C

Survey on Contemporary Issues
and the Social Studies Curriculum

Survey on Contemporary Issues and the Social Studies Curriculum

DATA SHEET

1. Check here if Department Chair: _____
2. Social Studies subject area in which you feel most qualified to teach: _____
3. Social Studies subjects (preparations) you teach this year:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. Sex: Male _____ Female _____
5. Age: _____ under 25
 _____ 26-35
 _____ 36-50
 _____ over 50
6. Total years of teaching experience:
 - _____ 1-3
 - _____ 4-8
 - _____ 9-12
 - _____ over 12
7. Race: _____ Black _____ White _____ Other
8. Degree: B.A./B.S. _____, M.A./M.S. _____, CAGS/Specialist _____, Ed.D./Ph.D. _____
9. College: Undergraduate Major(s) _____
 Undergraduate Minor(s) _____

Part 1. Although some of the issues listed below may seem to overlap, please circle the number under each question and beside each issue that best represents your beliefs.

Issues:	To what extent do you think this issue is significant?					Extent of coverage of this issue in the social studies curriculum of your school?					Extent of coverage of this issue that <u>should</u> be incorporated into the social studies curriculum of your school?					Although many of these issues could be touched upon in all courses listed below, coverage of this issue most appropriately should be included in what <u>required</u> social studies subject(s)? (You may circle more than one.)				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	Mo. Geog.	Mo. Hist.	U.S. Hist.	U.S. Gov't.	None
1. Advancements and Ethical Concerns in Medical Technology																				
2. Aging and the Elderly																				
3. Ecological Imbalance/ Environmental Concerns																				
4. World Resource Allocation																				
5. Population Growth																				
6. Hunger/Poverty																				
7. Sexism																				
8. Racism																				
9. Increasing Militarism, Revolution, and Limited Wars																				
10. Nuclear Proliferation																				
11. Economic Growth; Inflation, Unemployment, Recession																				
12. Global Human Rights																				
13. Others (please list)																				

ALL QUESTIONS BELOW RELATE TO THE CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IDENTIFIED PREVIOUSLY.

Part II.

1. What instructional strategies are important to you in your teaching of contemporary issues? (Please circle your response for each strategy.)

STRATEGY	NEVER ----- MOST OFTEN				
a. lecture	1	2	3	4	5
b. student reading of textbook	1	2	3	4	5
c. student reading of newspapers/ news magazines	1	2	3	4	5
d. teacher directed large-group discussion	1	2	3	4	5
e. student-directed discussion	1	2	3	4	5
f. simulation/role-playing activities	1	2	3	4	5
g. audio-visuals (films, filmstrips, T.V., etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
h. student projects (research/writing/ discussion)	1	2	3	4	5

2. This question is designed to assess the coverage of contemporary issues instruction in the classes you teach. Please answer the following questions relating to your contemporary issues instruction.

a. Subject Preparation #1 (the one you teach most this year)

Name of subject: _____

Please check those issues listed below which are at least introduced in your teaching of this preparation.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics of Medical Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging and the Elderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing militarism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ecological/Environmental concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuclear Proliferation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World resource allocation | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Human Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunger/Poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexism | |

Overall, what is the extent of coverage of these issues in this course?

No coverage ----- Extensive coverage
1 2 3 4 5

b. Subject Preparation #2 (if you teach a second social studies preparation)

Name of subject: _____

Please check those issues listed below which are at least introduced in your teaching of this preparation.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics of Medical Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging and the Elderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing Militarism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ecological/Environmental concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuclear Proliferation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World resource allocation | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Human Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunger/Poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexism | |

Overall, what is the extent of coverage of these issues in this course?

No coverage ----- Extensive coverage
1 2 3 4 5

c. Subject Preparation #3 (if you teach a third social studies preparation)

Name of subject: _____

Please check those issues listed below which are at least introduced in your teaching of this preparation.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics of Medical Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging and the Elderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing militarism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ecological/Environmental concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuclear Proliferation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World resource allocation | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Human Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunger/Poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexism | |

Overall, what is the extent of coverage of these issues in this course?

No coverage ----- Extensive coverage
1 2 3 4 5

To what extent do you use each of the listed sources of information as the basis for your contemporary issues instruction?

3

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>NEVER ----- FREQUENTLY</u>				
a. newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
b. television	1	2	3	4	5
c. radio	1	2	3	4	5
d. news magazines	1	2	3	4	5
e. professional journals	1	2	3	4	5
f. textbooks	1	2	3	4	5
g. personal experiences (work, travel, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
h. guest speakers	1	2	3	4	5

4. How do you evaluate your students on their understanding of contemporary issues? (Please circle your response for each evaluation strategy listed.)

<u>EVALUATION</u>	<u>LEAST OFTEN -- MOST OFTEN</u>				
a. regularly scheduled quizzes	1	2	3	4	5
b. participation grade for classroom discussion	1	2	3	4	5
c. student research/position papers	1	2	3	4	5
d. questions incorporated on regularly scheduled tests	1	2	3	4	5
e. oral presentations	1	2	3	4	5
f. extra credit	1	2	3	4	5
g. no evaluation	1	2	3	4	5

5. To what extent are contemporary issues stated as part of the secondary social studies curriculum or program of studies in your school system?

very little ----- great extent
1 2 3 4 5

6. Is there coordination of the teaching of contemporary issues among social studies teachers of differing grade levels at your school?

very little ----- great extent
1 2 3 4 5

7. Should there be coordination of contemporary issues instruction so that certain issues will be studied at certain grade levels?

very little ----- great extent
1 2 3 4 5

8. What support for contemporary issues instruction do the following factors give?

<u>FACTORS</u>	<u>VERY LITTLE ——— GREAT EXTENT</u>				
a. principal	1	2	3	4	5
b. supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
c. local social studies curriculum guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
d. college preparation	1	2	3	4	5
e. textbook coverage	1	2	3	4	5
f. in-service activities	1	2	3	4	5
g. community groups	1	2	3	4	5
h. system or departmental emphasis on contemporary issues instruction	1	2	3	4	5
i. resources such as newspapers, magazines, journals	1	2	3	4	5
j. television	1	2	3	4	5
k. students' content background	1	2	3	4	5
l. teacher's understanding of contemporary issues	1	2	3	4	5
m. personal experiences (work, travel, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX D

Cover Letter to Questionnaire

May 9, 1983.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 - 8498

DIVISION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

May 9, 1983

Dear Social Studies Educator:

A current topic of concern for professional educators, as indicated in recent educational journal articles, is the teaching of contemporary social issues. Two major research studies will be released this summer concerning the broad status of the teaching of these issues in our nation's classrooms. Studies also reveal what many professional educators believe to be the most pervasive and enduring social issues that presently face humankind. I, too, am interested in these issues and their coverage in social studies classrooms.

As a Social Studies Education doctoral student completing a one-year leave of absence from my social studies position at Blacksburg High School, I am interested in your perceptions about the teaching of these issues. I have devised a questionnaire to obtain your input concerning your teaching of contemporary social issues in your individual classes. You are part of a relatively small population so your input is highly valuable. Would you please take fifteen to twenty minutes of your time to share your thoughts and to be included in this study? A pencil has been included for your convenience in completing this survey. Please keep the pencil as a small token of appreciation.

Your individual responses to the enclosed questionnaire will remain strictly confidential. No individual teacher responses to the survey will be released. Each school system's compiled statistics will be forwarded to that system only. Any teacher respondent, also, may receive his system's statistics upon request. Merely make a note on the questionnaire if you desire to receive your system's compiled statistics.

Overall statistics will be compiled from teacher responses to the enclosed questionnaire. Please complete this survey and return it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope to Virginia Tech by Wednesday, May 18. Your responses are very much needed and desired. Thank you for sharing your thoughts about contemporary issues. Your input is appreciated.

Sincerely,

James L. Sellers
 University Supervisor
 Social Studies Student Teachers

JLS:jwl

Enclosures

APPENDIX E

Cover Letter to Follow-up Questionnaire
May 23, 1983.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 - 8498

DIVISION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

May 23, 1983

Dear Social Studies Educator:

Have you completed the Contemporary Issues survey which you received two weeks ago? If you have already returned the completed survey, I would like to thank you for your help. However, if you have not yet completed and returned the survey, please do so by Tuesday, May 31.

As mentioned before, only a small population of social studies teachers were selected for this study. Therefore, your response to the questionnaire is extremely important. You will find a copy of the survey and another self-addressed stamped envelop enclosed. Please take fifteen minutes to complete and return it.

Again, I remind you that your individual responses to the questionnaire will remain strictly confidential. No individual teacher responses to the survey will be released. Your cooperation is very much appreciated. Should you have any concerns about the questionnaire that you would like to discuss with me, please telephone me collect in Blacksburg at 951-3581 after 5:00 P.M.

Thank you for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,

Jim Sellers
University Supervisor
Social Studies Student Teachers

PLEASE HELP

PLEASE HELP

PLEASE HELP

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A STUDY TO ASSESS THE STATUS
OF THE TEACHING OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
IN SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS IN
SELECTED SCHOOL DIVISIONS IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

by

James L. Sellers

(ABSTRACT)

This study assesses the status of the teaching of contemporary issues in secondary social studies classrooms in four southwest Virginia school divisions. One hundred and sixteen secondary teachers in these school divisions were surveyed concerning their attitudes toward contemporary issues and the instruction of these issues in their social studies classrooms. Mean score results show that the issues that teachers perceived to be most significant to humankind were generally those issues that were given more extensive coverage in the curriculum. Teachers were divided when asked what issues would best be covered in each of the four major secondary subject areas. Each subject area was clearly noted for specific coverage of particular issues, with government classes providing the greatest amount of coverage and world history classes the least amount. A variety of teaching strategies, sources of information, and evaluation strategies were implemented in this instruction.

Teachers also detailed what they considered to be major sources of support for the teaching of these issues. Finally, while teachers noted that contemporary issues were detailed in their curricula, they perceived limited coordination among teachers in this instruction. They also reported that more coordination among teachers of different secondary social studies courses should exist.