



English Language Learners

Opportunities to Learn

Tina L. Heafner, Ph.D.

University of North Carolina
at Charlotte



Marginalization
Not New

high stakes testing
and standardization
perpetually situating
social studies on the
sidelines (Au, 2007,
2009; Fitchett & Heafner,
2010; Heafner & Fitchett,
2012; Leming, et al.,
2006a; Pace, 2007, 2011;
Wills, 2007)

Policy & Teacher Decision-Making

1. Policies impact how social studies is delivered; it dictates & constricts the possibilities (Au, 2007, 2009; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Gerwin & Visone, 2006; Levstik, 2008; Wills & Sandholz, 2009)
2. Standardization & testing are contradictions to maverick teaching (Brophy, 1993)
3. “Teachers are not passive victims of school policy; they continue to make important decisions as they interpret policy and create educational experiences for their students. Despite mandates, the enacted curriculum is shaped by individual teachers working within more or less constraining environments” (Pace , 2011, p.34)
4. Autonomous in their pedagogical & content decision-making (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Gerwin & Visone, 2006; Gradwell, 2006; Grant, 2003; Hanna, 1937; Thornton, 2005; van Hover, 2006)

Steps Toward Remediating Marginalization

1. Additional time in the school day
2. Assessment practices that hold teachers accountable for teaching social studies
3. Ambitious or maverick teachers
4. Integration

(Brophy, 1993; Gradwell, 2006; Grant, 2007; Fitchett, Heafner, & Lambert, 2012; Holloway & Chiodo, 2009; Heafner et al., 2006; Heafner & Fitchett, 2012a; Pace, 2011; Pittman & Romberg, 2000; van Hover, 2006; VanSledright, 2010; Wills, 2007; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009; Yeager & van Hover, 2006)



When a local urban district
mandated both time (45 minutes)
and testing (for Social Studies) ...

Setting: case study of 1 suburban
elementary school

Purpose: to explore how these reforms
were enacted and their impact on the
teaching of social studies



Motives for Educational Reform: To re-prioritize the school curriculum?

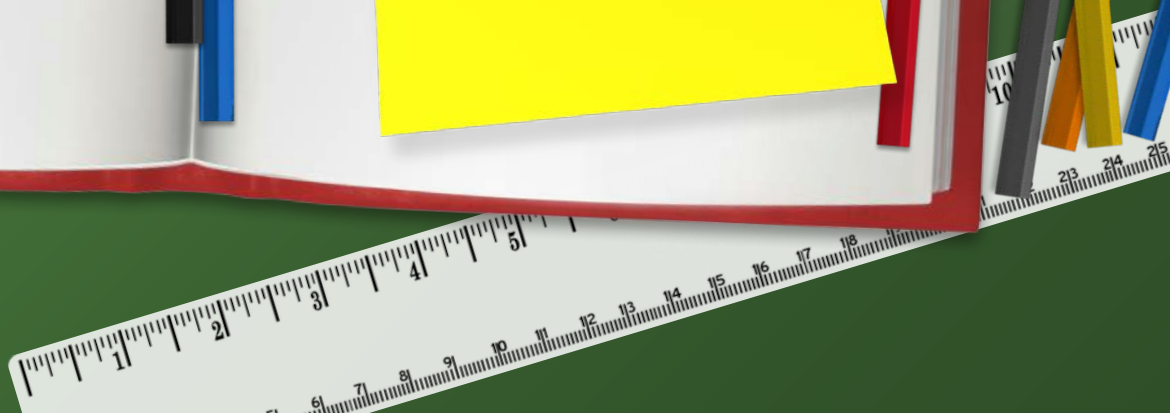


- *Race to the Top* funding
- *Pay for Performance*
- *Value Added Assessments*

Federal Pushes & Economic Pulls in Education

Scrambling to Enact Reforms

Emphasize
individual teachers'
impact on student
achievement

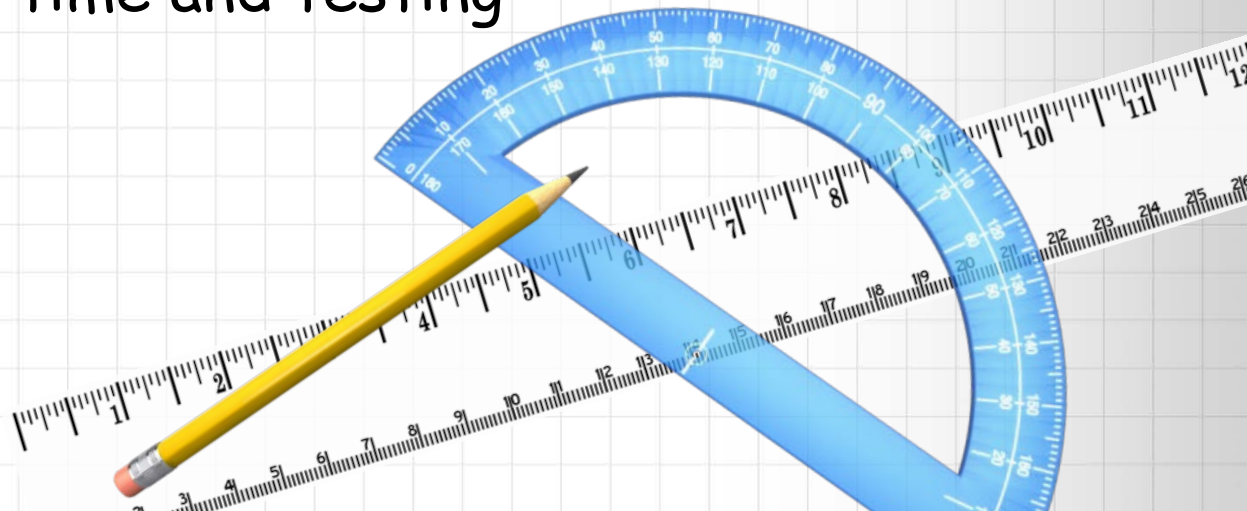


Literature Review

- Marginalization
- Extended School Days
- Testing
- Integrated Model of Instruction
- Maverick Teaching



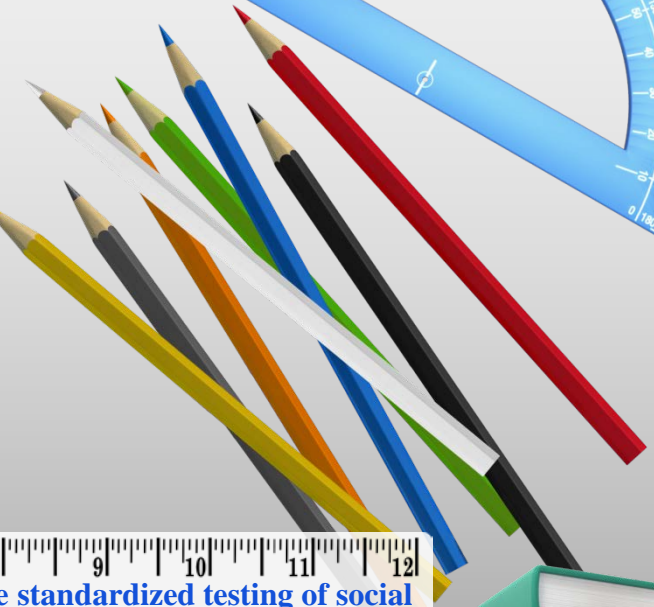
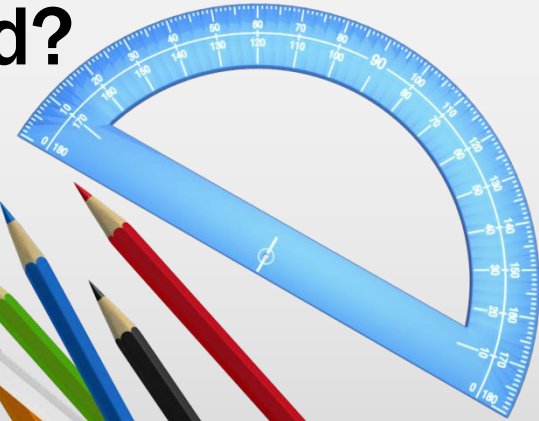
Describe context of social studies in an elementary school and how teachers enact policy changes related to time and testing



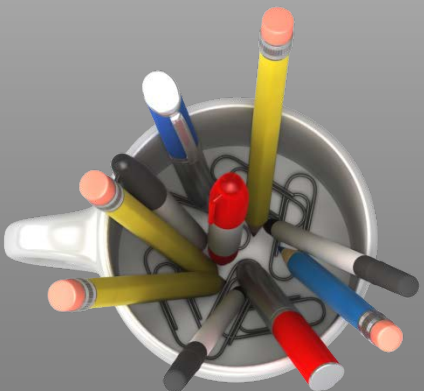
How are policies enacted?

RQ1: How has the additional 45 minutes influenced instructional time allocation for social studies?

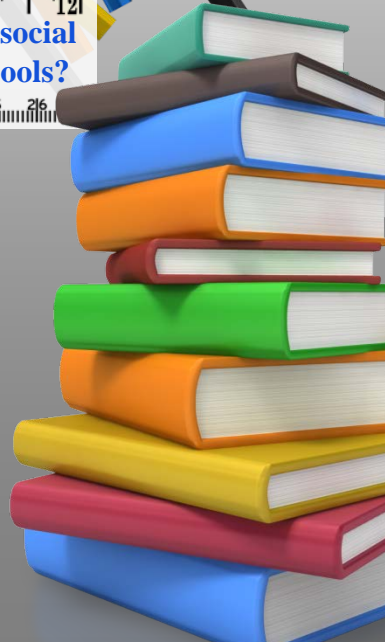
potential for maverick teaching, and a strong national trend toward individual teacher performance and accountability



RQ2: How has the addition of both formative and summative standardized testing of social studies influenced how teachers approach delivery of social studies in elementary schools?



RQ3: Working within the allocated time for social studies and based upon individual teachers priorities, how is social studies teaching enacted in the classroom?



Suburban School, Urban District

729 students, 34
classroom teachers , 28
support staff

50% white, 15% African
American, 15% Hispanic,
and 15% Asian

30% were defined as
economically
disadvantaged

90% of students
performed at or above
the grade level standards
defined by the district

Stratified Sample

- 6 teachers (K-5)
- 1 administrator
- 3 specialized teachers
(special education,
English as a second
language & academically
gifted teachers)
- n=10

Data Sources

- 3 interviews, time
journals, observations,
field notes, master
schedule (2 yrs), school
calendar (2 yrs)

Participants

Professional Role	# of Participants
K-5 Classroom Teachers	6
ESL Teachers	1
EC Teachers	2
Administrators	1
TOTAL	10

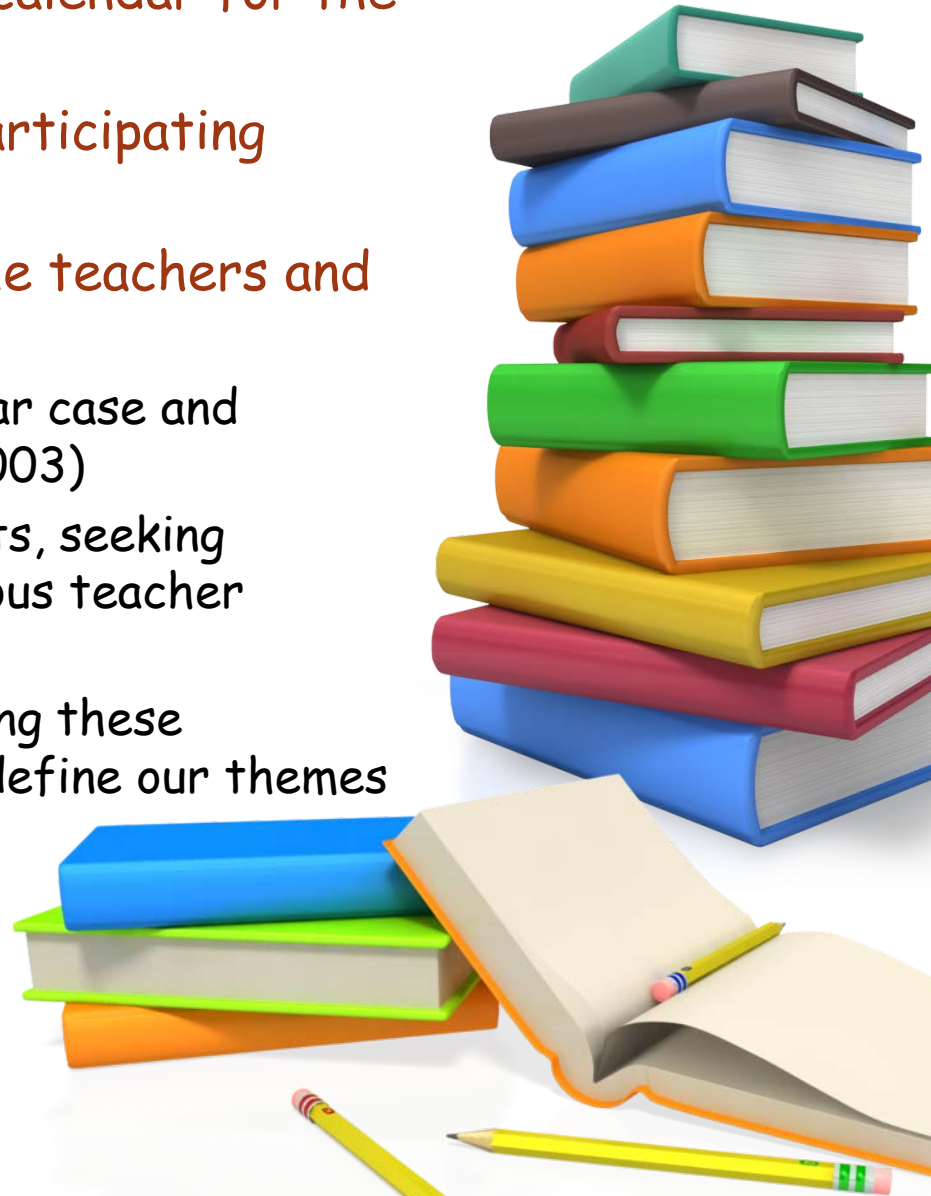
Data Analysis: Multi-Tiered

Tier 1: examined the school's master calendar for the current and previous year

Tier 2: time journals maintained by participating teachers

Tier 3: audio taped interviews with the teachers and the administrator

- Treated each participant as a particular case and employed a within-case analysis (Yin, 2003)
- Across-case analysis for all participants, seeking patterns that emerged across the various teacher assignments (Creswell, 2007)
- Maintained a grid to assist in identifying these overarching patterns in an attempt to define our themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994)
- Constant comparative analysis of emergent themes & data patterns Oct. to June (Strauss & Corbin, 1978)



Data Source	Quantity
45- 60-Minute Open-ended Individual Teacher Interviews	9
60- Minute Small-group Interviews	4
2- Hour Teacher Focus Group	1
60-Minute Open-ended Individual Administrator Interviews	2
Weekly Planning/Time Journals (3 per teacher)	27
“Off the Clock” Journals	9
45-90 Minute Scheduled Observations (3 per teacher)	27
45-90 Minute Special Observations	6
Classroom Artifacts	n/a
Informal Discussions through Participation	n/a

Students Opportunity to Learn

- 1) the design of the instructional schedule
- 2) the structure of the ESL program
- 3) communication and collaboration
- 4) the cumulative effects of differential social studies exposure

The Integrated Model

- ▶ “I think we moved to (the integrated model) this year because of (district) summatives. When we looked at the data that came back, and we saw the scores our questions began with, *do they know how to read it and we didn't teach the facts of it?* Or, did we teach the social studies facts and processes but we didn't teach them how to read?”

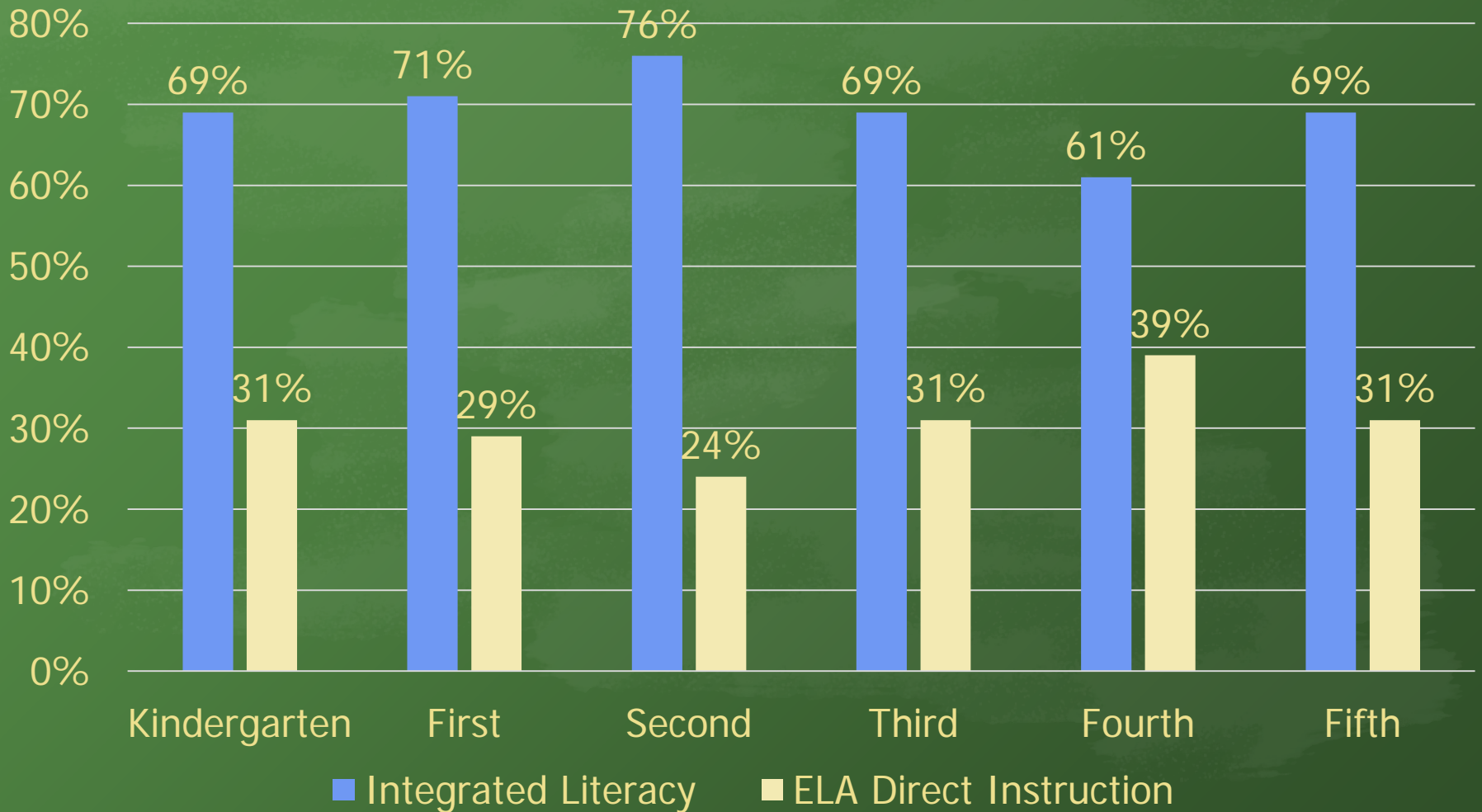
Weekly Scheduled Literacy Time in Minutes by Grade Level

Grade Level	Integrated Literacy	ELA Direct Instruction	Total Literacy
Kindergarten	600	270	870
First	555	225	780
Second	555	180	735
Third	550	245	795
Fourth	275	175	450
Fifth	550	245	795

Instructional Schedule Design

- design of the school day played a significant role in if, when, and how ELs received social studies instruction
- time was scheduled during the ELA/social studies integrated instructional time

Distribution of Instructional Time for Integrated and Direct Literacy Instruction



Instructional Content Varies

KINDERGARTEN

- **ESL teacher's lesson plans**
 - "review letters already studied," "segment and blend sounds together," and "write and illustrate words that begin with the focus letter"
- **Classroom teacher's social studies plans**
 - "creating class rules," "reviewing class promises," and "describing a home by naming its attributes."

Grade Level Curricular Differences

- ▶ 2nd grade & 3rd grade Pullouts
- ▶ Specialist journal during integrated ELA/SS
 - ▶ “read, discuss and clarify vocabulary”
 - ▶ “develops phonemic awareness and demonstrates knowledge of alphabetic principles.”
 - ▶ Materials listed for one particular week were, “What Animals Need, Animal Habitats, and Journals.”

Primary vs. Intermediate Grades

Stand Alone

- ▶ “Literacy/Social Studies (Workshop),”
“Literacy/Social Studies (Direct Instruction)”
- ▶ 100% Integrated -- “the new curriculum is not integrated with the literature”
- ▶ “When I focus on ELA, I am giving up social studies.”

Departmentalized

- ▶ Engaged social studies curriculum - mapmaking
- ▶ Incongruent ELA and SS curriculum - gaps in teaching SS
- ▶ **“I can’t teach social studies, teach writing, and teach literacy skills. It’s an either/or and not both.”**

Consistently Missed Learning Opportunities

- ▶ “the ESL teacher’s schedule. If she [the ESL specialist] didn’t take her out during the literacy/social studies time, she would then take her out...when we are doing stations, which would not be ideal, because that is when we are not doing social studies.”
- ▶ “I’ve struggled with ESL students missing social studies, and administration is saying it is still my problem to figure out. But I don’t understand why they are being pulled from a time when they have to receive that lesson.”

Structure of the ESL Program

- ▶ “Last year we did literacy push-in, which was beautiful. We pushed in the ESL, TD, and EC teachers during literacy; we had literacy staggered all over the place- it gave so much help. We couldn’t do it this year because of the way the schedule went Monday through Friday. It was so effective last year because they did [push-in] with fidelity.”
- ▶ “it works really well if you have a lot of intermediate students in one grade level.”
- ▶ “They wanted me to teach...I couldn’t do what they were asking me to do.... So, I pulled them out, and I taught them the basics.”

Motives for Pull-outs

- ▶ push-in instruction not a viable or beneficial option for ELLs
- ▶ Classroom teacher: "extra body in the room."
 - ▶ "her students were engaged in a hands-on activity, but she was working on crowd control and watching the clock."
 - ▶ "I don't know what to do with [the ESL teacher]. She pushes in with her students but doesn't help with the lesson's instruction. Her students also seem to be falling behind."
- ▶ ESL teacher: "I like to watch the lesson and then reteach the lesson in small pull-out groups. This allows for more literacy support and vocabulary learning."
 - ▶ feelings of uncertainty in being in the mainstream classroom due to "my lack of content training in all subject areas."

Lack of satisfaction with pull-outs

- ▶ Out of 22 students, I have 12 that are on a PEP, IEP or being referred. (Those students who do not meet benchmark) will be pulled from me at some point, so I will have no one left in my room. I have three that leave during [literacy/social studies] workshop time to go to TD/literacy, I have three that go to IEP services, and one going to ESL services. I never have my whole block ever, all day long. Never do I have 22 students in my room. I am struggling greatly with the fact that I don't believe in pull-out services to begin with, and on top of it, I never have my whole class, but I am responsible for their scores. I am really struggling morally with that.
- ▶ (An ESL student) goes out during the literacy social studies time, so a lot of times she is going to miss social studies. When I do social studies, she is going to miss it... Now that I am thinking about it, I am the kind of person who will find a solution for it. It is just not right for her to miss a whole year of social studies. And she is smart enough to do both if we work our time right. I just don't feel good about it.

Gaps in Communication and Collaboration

- ▶ ESL Teacher: that's what I am not real sure on. I've been talking to the teachers and apparently they are going to be doing literacy-based instruction on social studies two days a week, and just literacy the other days. I'm not real clear on that now. ESL teachers have to wait until the classroom teacher makes their plans before they can make their own. Last year, once a quarter, we got a schedule from the administration that told us what they are teaching in the classroom, I haven't seen that this year, but I hope to.
- ▶ Classroom Teacher: Why isn't what (the ESL teacher) is teaching in her room connected to what I am teaching in my room? Why aren't we given that collaborative planning time to plan that way so that she can cover (the missed) instruction and I don't have to find a way to get it in later?

Planning Time- That's the solution?

- ▶ (Last year) the administration planned it so I had planning time with each grade level, but the problem was, it really didn't work that way. Usually during the time that I was there, they (the grade level teachers) broke into small groups; so really, I was only planning with one teacher.
- ▶ administration told instructional specialists "to choose one grade level and to attend that grade level meeting."
- ▶ I haven't asked (to plan with the ESL teacher). But now that we are talking about it, I guess that would be a really good idea. It would have to be outside of the school day. I think if I asked her, and said this is what we are doing in social studies today, she would do it. It is really not okay that (her ESL student) missed social studies every day. It is not satisfactory. Here's what we can do to fix it, and then collaborate to do that.

The Cumulative Result of an Inaccessible Curriculum

- ▶ It's that trickledown [snowball] effect, if it [social studies] is not at least introduced and covered in every grade, then when they get to fifth grade they'll be way behind. It (curriculum) has to build foundational knowledge and so in fifth grade they are doing well, it's because they learned it along the way.
- ▶ "it is student deficits in content that create the inability to teach the curriculum as outlined in the standards."
- ▶ "for low achieving students, they [school system administrators] told teachers not to teach social studies until students learned how to read and write."
- ▶ **ADMINISTRATOR:** I think it is having content knowledge about what we need. And I know you can't keep extending social studies classes, but when I think about the social studies that I took in college for education, there was no real content....It's a time factor. They don't have the time to teach everything the state has asked them to teach and they don't have the skill set to pull out what is essential knowledge.

Summary of Key Findings

- ▶ ELs in our study did not have the same opportunity to learn social studies
- ▶ social studies curriculum in the pull-out classroom varied greatly from the content taught in the general education classroom
- ▶ lack of communication that resulted in the ESL teacher and classroom teachers operating in isolation from one another
- ▶ pull-out instructional services were provided almost entirely during the already limited social studies instructional time
 - ▶ focus on literacy and language objectives during pull-out
 - ▶ snowball effect created generative gaps in content knowledge and disciplinary vocabulary

Summary of Key Findings

- ▶ ELs in our study did not have the same opportunity to learn social studies
- ▶ social studies curriculum in the pull-out classroom varied greatly from the content taught in the general education classroom
- ▶ lack of communication that resulted in the ESL teacher and classroom teachers operating in isolation from one another
- ▶ pull-out instructional services were provided almost entirely during the already limited social studies instructional time
 - ▶ focus on literacy and language objectives during pull-out
 - ▶ snowball effect created generative gaps in content knowledge and disciplinary vocabulary

What can we do?

Recommendations

- ▶ Flexible scheduling
- ▶ Unique school needs based on English learner populations
- ▶ Large-scale administrative planning
- ▶ Integrative content and language instructional goals
- ▶ Specialist inclusion and access to resources
- ▶ District-level decisions

Flexible Scheduling



Unique school needs based on English learner populations



Large-scale Administrative Planning



Integrative Content and Language Instructional Goals



Specialist Inclusion and Access to Resources



District Level Decisions



Questions



Contact Information

Tina L. Heafner

Tina.Heafner@uncc.edu