

**EXAMINING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK,
PERCEPTIONS, AND PRACTICES OF TEACHERS IN
THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN**
THE CASE OF SOCIAL STUDIES

Anthony D. Griffith

This paper examines the conceptual framework of social studies as held by a sample of primary school teachers, as well as their perceptions and classroom practices. A modified Social Studies Perception Scale (SSPS) was employed with a sample of 98 primary school teachers in seven islands of the Eastern Caribbean. Using percentages, means, and t-tests, it was found that: 1) while the majority of the teachers indicated a clear preference for the reflective inquiry approach to the teaching of social studies, their actual classroom practices appear to be at odds with their perceptions of the subject; 2) while younger teachers are initially reflective in their approach and practice, over time they increasingly become didactic knowledge transmitters; and 3) male teachers are far more likely to exhibit a reflective approach and practices than female teachers. The t-tests also reveal some significant differences between male and female teachers, and between younger and older teachers. These findings may have implications both for the selection of social studies teachers and for teacher preparation programmes in the Caribbean.

The Conceptual Framework

The literature on social studies advances a number of different, sometimes conflicting, conceptual frameworks of the social studies curriculum and instruction (Brubaker, Simon, & Williams, 1977; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Janzen, 1995). In an attempt to classify the various conceptions and approaches, Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) identified what they called the “three teaching traditions” in social studies, which, they argue, are informed by teachers’ purpose, methods, and content in their teaching of the subject. According to this classification, teachers perceive and teach social studies as either (a) citizenship transmission, (b) social science, or (c) reflective inquiry.

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Citizen transmission places emphasis on transmitting a body of content, and projects a conception of the ideal society and citizen. The major concern of this approach is with the correct and proper interpretation of that content, and with the inculcation, in students, of certain norms, beliefs, and values.

Teachers in the social scientist tradition, while emphasizing the transmission of content, also engage in some inquiry. But the content, questions, and methods that they use tend to be those of the individual social science discipline, and the focus is more on the discovery of knowledge than on inquiry and decision making.

Teachers who conceptualize social studies as reflective inquiry will tend to nourish the thinking and inquiry process in the classroom. Their emphasis is on rational decision making, and they thus engage their students in examining and investigating social issues, ideas, and values; drawing conclusions; and generating solutions. Such teachers encourage classroom dialogue, and do not present content as providing the final or the right answer.

The Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) conceptual framework has remained as the most widely used classification, and has been reaffirmed by several social studies scholars (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). Carter (1990), in a study of teacher classroom practices, developed a psychometrically derived typology of what he called the "three images" of the social studies practitioner. The teacher's preferred approach to teaching, he argues, conditions the activities that take place in the classroom, and this preferred approach can thus be identified by specific teacher and student behaviours. These images thus reflect the preferred approaches to teaching social studies, and were identified as: (a) the knowledge transmitter, (b) the social scientist, and (c) the reflective thinker. Social studies teachers are seen as falling into one of these categories.

In his "pen portraits" of these practitioners, Carter (1990) posits that the teacher whose approach is that of the knowledge transmitter engages mainly in a didactic style, which is designed to enable the learner to memorize facts and retain information. This teacher utilizes expository strategies extensively, and follows a tight organization and pacing of the lesson, which affords little opportunity for student-initiated questions

or activities. Such a teacher views students as passive learners, and having them get the “right” answer is of prime concern.

The social scientist practitioner places much emphasis on the acquisition of skills such as observing, recording, and interpreting. These skills and the accompanying activities, however, are driven by the content and methodology of the parent social science discipline. This teacher thus uses a multidisciplinary approach, rather than being interdisciplinary in practice. While there is a great deal of student-teacher interaction centred around practical involvement with resource materials and raw data, the teacher nevertheless guides and directs all classroom activity.

The social studies teacher, as reflective thinker, emphasizes intellectual and cognitive processes through the active engagement of both teacher and students in probing social issues; and the content used provides the basis for thinking and decision making. The teacher’s primary concern is the development of critical thinking and reflective skills among the learners. He therefore devises strategies that force students to use their cognitive skills while seeking to analyze and understand social issues and value positions. Activities in the classroom revolve around the students and play a prominent role in their own learning. The teacher acts primarily as a facilitator of learning, and provides ample opportunity for students to engage in higher order, divergent thinking and in decision making.

Though labelled slightly differently, these two classifications—one conceptually derived and the other based on observed practice—clearly support and reinforce each other, and represent a very effective, if not powerful, framework for analyzing the teaching of social studies. Such a framework becomes even more useful in light of the fact that reflective inquiry, or thinking, embodies the notion of the student as both the centre of his own learning, and a creator/constructor of knowledge. According to both classifications, social studies teachers will fall into one of the categories identified, and will demonstrate a preference for one of these approaches, though Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1978) concede that some teachers may effectively exhibit characteristics of more than one tradition.

Purpose of the Study

While some studies have been undertaken on the attitudes of Caribbean teachers towards social studies (Alexander, 1996; Pascale, 1984), very little research has been conducted into identifying and understanding their perceptions and practices, and, by extension, their approaches to the teaching of the subject. Knowledge of these critical dimensions will have

implications not only for achieving the curricular goals of the subject area but, more importantly, for the preparation of social studies teachers.

In light of the above, the following questions are posed in this study: What are the perceptions and practices of Caribbean social studies teachers? Do these teachers fit into the above conceptual approaches to the teaching of social studies? What, if any, is their preferred approach to the teaching of the subject? What image do they project of the social studies practitioner? The purpose of this investigative study, therefore, is to identify any patterns and trends that exist among a sample of social studies teachers in Eastern Caribbean schools, with respect to their approaches, perceptions, and practices in the teaching of social studies.

Method

This study is a descriptive analysis, which attempts to address the above questions. It used a randomly selected sample of teachers who were all graduates of teachers' colleges and had received the Certificate in Teaching of The University of the West Indies (UWI). The sample was taken from each of seven territories in the Eastern Caribbean: the British Virgin Islands, St. Kitts-Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Eight responses were received from the BVI, and 15 from each of the others countries – a total of 98 respondents. Of the respondents in the sample, 74 were female and 24 were male.

The study employed a modified version of the Barth/Shermis Social Studies Preference Scale (1983), which was informed by the Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) classification. The modifications made related to the inclusion of some items on teacher practice from the Carter (1990) Teacher Self-Rating Scale. The modified instrument (see Appendix A) was pilot-tested, and yielded a test/retest reliability index of .9397. The instrument consisted of 27 items on a Likert-type scale, which ranged from *Strongly Agree* (1) to *Strongly Disagree* (4). Fifteen items related to the teachers' perceptions of Social studies, with five each reflecting the views of the subject as "knowledge transmission," "social science," and "reflective inquiry." A further 12 items examined the classroom activities/practices of the teachers, with four each reflecting the images of the teacher as "knowledge transmitter," "social scientist," and "reflective thinker/inquirer."

The data from the questionnaires were transferred to a coding sheet, which contained a six-cell matrix showing each of the three conceptual approaches, and the two dimensions of “perceptions” and “practices.” The matrix also contained the questionnaire item numbers corresponding to the relevant dimension and approach.

An overall mean score was calculated for each respondent on each conceptual approach, with the lowest mean score indicating the respondent’s preferred approach to teaching social studies. Mean scores were also calculated for each of the two dimensions under each approach, with the lowest mean scores indicating, respectively, the respondent’s perception of social studies and the image he projects as a social studies practitioner. A percentage frequency of lowest means was employed as the basis for classifying respondents as either knowledge transmitter, social scientist, or reflective inquirer. The t-test for difference between the means was employed to locate any sources of significant differences among the sample on any of the variables.

Findings

The major findings of this study are that:

1. While the majority of the teachers in the sample indicated a clear preference for the reflective inquiry approach to the teaching of social studies, their perceptions of the subject appear to be at odds with their actual classroom practices.
2. Younger teachers are more likely to be reflective inquirers in their approach, perceptions, and practice than older teachers; and males are more likely to exhibit a reflective approach and reflective practices than female teachers.

With respect to the three conceptual approaches to the teaching of social studies, as identified in the literature, two-thirds (66.3%) of the respondents exhibited a preference for the reflective inquiry approach (see Table 1). Only a small proportion – 10.6% and 8.4% respectively – showed a preference for either the knowledge transmission approach or the social scientist approach. The remaining 14.7% appeared uncertain or ambivalent, since they indicated no clear preference for any one conceptual approach.

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This general pattern held across all the territories, and for both the male and female teachers in the sample (see Table 1) who, based on the overall mean (see Table 2), generally appeared committed to the reflective inquiry approach. The male teachers, however, appeared significantly more likely to exhibit the reflective inquiry approach than their females counterparts (see Table 2, Column B).

Table 1. Teachers’ Conceptual Approaches, Perceptions, and Practices in the Teaching of Social Studies

	Approach	Perceptions	Practices
	%	%	%
Knowledge Transmission			
M	4.2	-	37.5
F	13.9	2.7	47.9
Total	10.6	2.1	45.9
Social Scientist			
M	8.7	8.3	4.2
F	8.3	6.8	5.4
Total	8.4	7.2	5.1
Reflective Inquiry			
M	83.3	73.9	37.5
F	61.1	74.7	17.6
Total	66.3	74.5	22.5

Note: Percentages will not total 100 due to the number of teachers who do not fall into either conceptual category (= “ambivalent”).

The evidence therefore seems to suggest that, in general, the reflective inquiry approach is the conceptual framework preferred by the majority of teachers in teaching social studies. It is also apparent, from the evidence,

that male teachers have a stronger preference and commitment to the reflective inquiry approach than female teachers.

In the context of the pedagogical value of the reflective inquiry approach to teaching, the outlook of the teachers in the sample is both positive and encouraging. It suggests, for example, that these social studies teachers prefer to nourish the thinking and inquiry process in their classroom, and to engage their students in challenging activities, which involve them in the in-depth examination of social issues and in decision making. It also suggests that they prefer a student-centred approach to the teaching of social studies, which emphasizes cognitive and intellectual processes, and encourages classroom dialogue and reflection. These teachers, it also appears, see themselves as facilitators of learning, who devise a variety of strategies to actively engage students in their own learning and in the active construction of knowledge.

The rather low percentage of teachers (10.6%) who indicated a preference for the knowledge transmission approach, further reinforces the preferred approach of this sample of Eastern Caribbean social studies teachers – one that rejects the traditional “banking concept” of education and the notion of learning as the memorization of factual information and the “right answers.”

If the reflective inquiry approach is in fact driving the teaching of social studies in Eastern Caribbean schools, then both the teaching and the learning of the subject face very good prospects, and one can be assured of the future of the subject in the Caribbean and of the attainment of its educational and social goals.

However, when one disaggregates the two dimensions of the approaches – perceptions and practice – and examines them individually, a somewhat different picture appears to emerge with respect to the sample’s approach to the teaching of social studies. While in their perceptions of social studies, the responses are largely reflective of their preferred conceptual approach, their actual classroom practices appear quite at odds with these perceptions. The consistently low percentage of teachers who indicated a social scientist approach, perception, or practice suggests that the contrasting characteristics among the sample lie mainly between knowledge transmission and reflective inquiry.

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In terms of perceptions, a large majority (74.5%) of the teachers in the sample viewed social studies as a process of reflective inquiry, compared to only 7.2% who saw it as social science, and 2.1% who perceived it as knowledge transmission (see Table 1). The remaining 16.2% appeared somewhat ambivalent – not clearly indicating either of the perceptions. The perception of social studies as reflective inquiry was equally shared by both male (73.9%) and female (74.7%) teachers. But males were more likely to have this perception than females (see Table 3, Column B).

In spite of the strong perception of social studies as reflective inquiry by the sample as a whole (74.5%), in terms of their classroom practice, only 22.5% actually practised the classroom behaviours associated with reflective inquiry (see Table 1). On the other hand, the single largest group of the teachers (45.9%) actually engaged in the activities of the knowledge transmitter, as compared with the mere 2.1% who claimed to perceive the subject through this lens. Only 5.1% taught as social scientists. There is thus almost an inverse relationship between the perceptions and the classroom practices of the teachers in the sample (see Tables 2, 3, 4, Column A). In fact, results of the t-test showed that the teachers in the sample were significantly ($p < .001$) more likely to be reflective in their perceptions of social studies than in their classroom practice, and equally more likely to be knowledge transmitters in their practice than in their perceptions.

Only 37.5% of the male teachers and 17.6% of female teachers clearly practised reflective inquiry activities in their classroom, as compared with 37.5% males and 48.7% females who adopted the classroom practices of the knowledge transmitter. Thus, although both groups are more knowledge transmitter than reflective inquirer in their actual classroom practice, the male teachers are somewhat more likely to be reflective inquirers than the female teachers (see Table 4, Column B).

The sample was further analyzed by age. Though older teachers – over 30 years of age – are somewhat under-represented in the sample, it nevertheless appears that the younger teachers – under 30 years of age – are more likely to exhibit a reflective inquiry approach than their older colleagues (see Table 2, Column C), who, in turn, are significantly more likely to prefer the knowledge transmission approach. Younger male teachers, however, are significantly more likely than younger females to adopt a reflective inquiry approach (see Table 2, Column D).

Table 2. Means and Results of t-test on Independent Variables: Approaches

Variables	A Overall Mean	B By Sex M/F	C By Age <30/>30	D By Sex (under 30 yrs) M/F	E By Sex (over 30 yrs) M/F	F By Age (Males) <30/>30	G By Age (Females) <30/>30
Knowledge Transmission	2.202	2.17/2.21 p = .489	2.21/2.02* p = .048	2.12/2.24 p = .082	2.36/1.93 p = .097	2.12/2.35 p = .399	2.24/1.93* p = .025
Reflective Inquiry	1.795	1.64*/1.84 p = .017	1.77/2.01 p = .057	1.58*/1.83 p = .005	2.16/1.97 p = .539	1.58/2.16 p = .137	1.83/1.97 p = .376
Social Scientist	2.173	2.14/2.18 p = .531	2.17/2.23 p = .613	2.13/2.18 p = .553	2.23/2.23 p = .994	2.13/2.23 p = .760	2.18/2.22 p = .789

N.B. Differences are in favour of the group with the lower mean.

* indicates cases where the differences are significant.

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In terms of perceptions, younger males are significantly more likely to perceive social studies as reflective inquiry than younger females (see Table 3, Column D). Additionally, while 77.6% of the teachers under 30 years of age perceive social studies as reflective inquiry, a smaller percentage (44.4%) of older teachers appear to have this perception of the subject area. This apparent difference by age, though not statistically significant (see Table 3, Column C), applies equally to both male and female teachers.

Further, while the younger teachers, both male and female, are significantly more likely to adopt more reflective inquiry activities than their older colleagues (see Table 4, Column C), the older teachers appear to be more knowledge transmitter in practice than the younger teachers. In addition, it is the older female teachers, significantly more so than the older males, who tend to be more expository in practice than their younger colleagues (see Table 4, Columns F, G). This is reflected in the fact that older females are significantly more knowledge transmitter in approach than younger females (see Table 4, Column G).

What is also of interest is that closer examination of the data reveals that more than a quarter (26.5%) of the sample appear to be ambivalent in their practice, with their teaching activities not clearly falling into either of the conceptual categories. In addition to these “ambivalent” practitioners, one can also note that some 17.2% of the teachers may be described as adopting classroom practices which are directly in conflict with their perceptions, that is, while they clearly perceive the subject as reflective inquiry, their classroom activities are equally clearly those of the knowledge transmitter. Thus, some 43.7% of the teachers in the sample are either ambivalent and unclear about their classroom practices, or adopt practices that are actually at odds with their perceptions of the subject.

Female teachers (28.2%) emerge as being somewhat more ambivalent in their classroom practices than male teachers (22.7%), while males (29.2%) appear to be far more contradictory in their perceptions and practice than female teachers (12.2%). Younger teachers, in general, also appear to be somewhat more contradictory in their practice than older teachers. Overall, only 21.4 % of the sample – 29.2% of the males and 18.9% of the females – exhibit a clear and consistent perspective towards social studies in terms of both perceptions and practice, all of whom are younger teachers, under 30 years of age.

Table 3. Means and Results of t-test on Independent Variables: Perceptions

Variables	A Overall Mean	B By Sex M/F	C By Age <30/>30	D By Sex (under 30 yrs) M/F	E By Sex (over 30 yrs) M/F	F By Age (Males) <30/>30	G By Age (Females) <30/>30
Knowledge Transmission	2.716	2.73/2.71 p = .842	2.74/2.46* p = .046	2.73/2.74 p = .889	2.70/2.39 p = .382	2.73/2.70 p = .824	2.74/2.40 p = .082
Reflective Inquiry	1.725	1.59/1.77 p = .059	1.71/1.81 p = .466	1.52*/1.77 p = .009	2.30/1.68 p = .075	1.52*/2.30 p = .010	1.77/1.68 p = .559
Social Scientist	2.246	2.16/2.28 p = .189	2.27/2.09 p = .172	2.17/2.30 p = .170	2.20/2.06 p = .731	2.17/2.20 p = .702	2.30/2.06 p = .292

N.B. Differences are in favour of the group with the lower mean.

* indicates cases where the differences are significant.

Table 4. Means and Results of t-test on Independent Variables: Practice

Variables	A Overall Mean	B By Sex M/F	C By Age <30/>30	D By Sex (under 30 yrs) M/F	E. By Sex (over 30 yrs) M/F	F By Age (Males) <30/>30	G By Age (Females) <30/>30
Knowledge Transmission	1.674	1.59/1.70 p = .199	1.67/1.58 p = .466	1.50*/1.72 p = .012	2.00/1.46* p = .049	1.50/2.00 p = .276	1.72/1.46* p = .044
Reflective Inquiry	1.851	1.68/1.90 p = .053	1.81*/2.20 p = .019	1.64/1.87 p = .053	2.00/2.26 p = .493	1.63/2.00 p = .355	1.86*/2.26 p = .027
Social Scientist	2.10	2.11/2.10 p = .897	2.07/2.36 p = .095	2.09/2.06 p = .837	2.25/2.39 p = .721	2.08/2.25 p = .801	2.06/2.39 p = .093

N.B. Differences are in favour of the group with the lower mean.

* indicates cases where the differences are significant.

Discussion

The data and findings of this study appear to suggest a number of interesting conclusions:

1. If reflective inquiry is considered as the most effective conceptual approach to teaching social studies, then male teachers in the Eastern Caribbean are better social studies teachers than female teachers.
2. While younger teachers are, initially, reflective in their approach and practice and see themselves as facilitators of learning who nourish thinking and inquiry, they become, over time, increasingly didactic in style, focusing on the transmission of content and ensuring that students get the right answers.
3. A large proportion of social studies teachers in the Eastern Caribbean (> 45%) either engage in classroom activities that are in conflict with their perceptions of the subject, or are rather ambivalent in their classroom practices, that is, not conforming to any identifiable approach or pattern.

What therefore emerges from this research is a rather complex, conflicting image of social studies practitioners in Eastern Caribbean schools. The findings and conclusions have implications for the expected classroom performance of the teachers, and for the assignment of persons to teach social studies. In a wider context, these findings also have implications for teacher-preparation programmes in the Eastern Caribbean.

It is rather difficult to explain why the male teachers seem to emerge as being more reflective in their teaching than their female colleagues. This may reflect the notion that males tend to be more willing to question and actively investigate topics and issues (Evans, 1999) and, perhaps, to be less conventional (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001) in their approach to teaching. Figueroa (1996) also suggests that while female pedagogical practices tend to be more conventional and passive, the practices of male teachers are more activity oriented and related to what students are interested in and want to do. These latter practices are more consistent with reflective inquiry. However, given that in this study, both groups of teachers appear,

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initially, to be more reflective in both conceptual approach and practice, it does seem that other factors may explain why male teachers remain so for a longer period while, over time, their female colleagues become relatively more didactic and knowledge transmitting.

Certainly, however, the image of Caribbean teachers, over their careers, as adopting an increasingly expository, knowledge-transmission approach and practice, clearly does not conform to the existing models of teacher development and expected classroom practice. Research by Berliner (1988), Burden (1990), and Kagan (1992), for example, suggests that novice or beginning teachers are, initially, more concerned about their own capabilities as teachers, and therefore tend to be somewhat obsessed with discipline and class control (Kagan, 1992). As such, their teaching practices tend to be rational and inflexible, leaving little room for experimentation. With time, however, the teachers become more confident and self-assured, more knowledgeable in their subject matter, and more concerned with the students' needs and performance. They have also developed, and perfected, a repertoire of teaching techniques, and are more willing and likely to vary their activities and to challenge students to engage in higher-order thinking, analysis, and decision making.

The teachers in the present sample, however, appear at first to be enthusiastic, highly motivated, and eager to engage their students in challenging, reflective activities. But, over time, they appear to lose that enthusiasm, and to fall into more routine, didactic, knowledge-transmission activities. Both anecdotal and empirical evidence (Griffith, 1999) suggest that lack of resource materials, lack of administrative support, and the demands of content coverage and written examinations may be contributing factors to this pedagogical relapse. These are conditions that need to be addressed, but further research is needed to more clearly indicate the specific factors—personal, professional, or contextual—that may be impacting on this apparent loss in enthusiasm and reflective thinking.

The image of social studies teachers in the Eastern Caribbean is further complicated by the fact that about one-fifth of them do emerge with their perceptions and practices quite consistent with the literature. Interestingly, however, this latter group of teachers are mostly male, and are all younger teachers.

The fact that almost half of the teachers in the sample are either ambivalent or contradictory in their classroom practices also appears to contradict the literature on the relationship between teacher perceptions of the subject and their classroom practice. Brickhouse (1990), Ross, Cornett, and McCutcheon (1992), and other writers are all supportive of the view that teachers' perception of the subject both conditions and reflects their classroom practices. This perception is itself conditioned by the teacher's beliefs and personal experiences (Kagan, 1992). This functional relationship would require that teachers who perceive social studies as reflective inquiry should also be adopting the practices of the reflective inquirer in their classrooms. Clearly, this is not the case with the sample of teachers in this study. If teachers are not clear and consistent, in their own minds, with respect to the subject they teach, then their conflicting practices and perceptions could also have implications, not only for the logic and coherence of their instructional choices, but also for student learning and for the image they project of the subject.

Such apparent contradictions have been recently emerging in the literature on Caribbean teachers. Griffith (1995) and Jones (1997), for example, have found that there is little or no difference in pedagogical performance between trained and untrained teachers in either the elementary or the secondary school. This situation was found to be the case in social studies classes as well as in English and science classes. These apparent contradictions among Caribbean teachers represent an obvious area for our attention. Issues of resource materials and other contextual factors, as well as administrative support, are clearly important variables that need to be factored into teachers' classroom behaviour (Larson, 1999; Richards, 1995). Though clearly relevant, these may not, however, be sufficient to explain the contradictions and the changes in teachers' instructional practices over time. Further research is perhaps needed into what factors may be impacting on teachers' classroom instruction.

Lortie (1975), in his classic work, argues that teachers' predispositions exert a more powerful effect on teacher socialization and classroom practices than either their formal training or subsequent experiences in the work place. Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) further suggest that teacher beliefs and thinking more directly predict their classroom practice than does their cognitive grasp of either theoretical instructional issues or alternative practices.

Given the predispositions and beliefs that individual teachers bring to the classroom, and since these powerfully affect their teaching, the findings of this study could have certain implications for the philosophy, structure, and emphases of teacher preparation programmes in the Caribbean. The findings may, for example, challenge the current conceptions of Caribbean teacher education as being primarily to provide prospective teachers with certain pedagogical knowledge and skills (Jennings, 2000, p. 45), while paying little attention to engaging them in questioning their predispositions and beliefs about teaching (Evans, 2000, p. 8), and to modifying these, if necessary.

The current training programmes in the Eastern Caribbean appear to avoid creating such dissonance, which could creatively help teachers in clarifying their own thinking and perceptions of teaching. Yet, the literature on teacher education is insistent on the benefits of requiring entering teachers, as part of their preparation, to examine their own motivation for teaching (Ryan & Cooper, 1998), and their image of themselves as teachers (Kagan, 1992). Calderhead (1991) further suggests that prospective teachers often hold beliefs that are not, in fact, well adapted to teaching, and it is seen as the role of the teacher education programme to engage them in rethinking their existing beliefs about teaching and learning (Bird, Anderson, Sullivan, & Swidler 1993). Moallem (1997) and Doebler, Roberson, and Ponder (1998) also observe that teacher self-analysis allows them to articulate their implicit theories as a step towards resolving any inconsistencies or conflicting ideas that may exist in their belief system. These unresolved predispositions may help to explain the persistence of the above contradictions among Caribbean teachers.

The structure and emphases in the existing training programmes may then need to shift in order to accommodate more opportunities for teacher reflection and self-examination of their own beliefs and perceptions of teaching. Appropriate mechanisms may also need to be put in place to adequately assist the prospective teachers through this critical process of personal and professional development.

Conclusion

Further research would indicate whether, in fact, the findings from this study obtain across other subject areas in the curriculum. An examination of the extent to which teacher predispositions and beliefs are challenged, or confronted, during the teacher training programme should also prove

worthwhile, and may indeed indicate some directions for change in the current programmes.

Clearly, certain factors appear to be impacting on teachers in the Eastern Caribbean during the course of their teaching careers, and to be having a profound effect on their classroom practice and on their professional development. An understanding of the reasons for the apparent anomalies and ambiguities could inform the response to the challenges ahead in adequately preparing future teachers to function optimally in Caribbean classrooms.

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Appendix A

Teachers' Self-Rating Scale

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather research data on the views and perceptions of teachers with respect to Social Studies, and their approach to teaching it. The Questionnaire itself is divided into three (3) sections:

SECTION A: Some general biographical data.

SECTION B: Your views on Social Studies.

SECTION C: How you teach Social Studies in your classroom.

Please read each item/question carefully and give your personal response and your **real feelings**.
Your answers and feelings will be held in strict confidence.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

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A. D. Griffith

TEACHER SELF-RATING SCALE

PART 1					
<p style="text-align: center;">Tick the response which best represents your own perception of what should take place in a Social Studies class.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree</p>					
No.	Statements	1	2	3	4
1.	All students in the class should learn exactly the same material.				
2.	Teachers should always strictly follow their lesson plans				
3.	The content learned in Social Studies should be taken form History, Geography, or one of the social science subjects.				
4.	Students should investigate social issues in order to acquire relevant facts and to learn new concepts.				
5.	Classroom activities should revolve around the needs and concerns of students.				
6.	Probing and analyzing social issues is a major focus in Social Studies.				
7.	In Social Studies, the textbook should be the major resource material.				
8.	Students should be encouraged to test and challenge the ideas held in geography, history, economics and the other social sciences.				
9.	The teacher should make extensive use of the textbook in all Social Studies classes.				

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4
10.	In Social Studies, students should be encouraged to deal with their own ideas, opinions and speculation, rather than with facts and correct information only				
11.	Students should not be allowed to take the initiative in Social Studies classes, since this would indicate that the teacher has lost control.				
12.	Teachers should always give students the correct answer to questions asked, or enable them to arrive at the right answer.				
13.	Students should be encouraged to interrupt the teacher to ask questions or to make comments.				
14.	Students should investigate social issues in order to gain insight and understanding.				
15.	In Social Studies, history, geography, current events and so on should be studied separately.				
<p>PART 2</p> <p>Indicate how often you, as a Social Studies teacher, perform and/or encourage your students in the activities listed below, during a typical Social Studies lesson.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 1 = Very Often 2 = Often 3 = Seldom 4 = Never </p>					
16.	Following a set sequence of steps in order to complete a task.				
17.	Applying the research procedures of the social science disciplines				
18.	Making judgements based on facts and sound reasons.				
19.	Using evidence to defend a position taken.				
20.	Applying the concepts of the social science to selected social problems.				

Conceptual Framework, Perceptions, and Practices of EC Teachers

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4
21.	Learn/acquire definitions of important terms.				
22.	Stressing the importance of acquiring facts and getting the right answers.				
23.	Identifying and discussing specific examples				
24.	Analyzing a problems and proposing a solution.				
25.	Interpreting observed or recorded data				
26.	Separating fact from opinion				
27.	Testing for knowledge				