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# The State of Social Studies Teacher Preparation: An Analysis of Program Requirements in the United States

Bonnie Bittman[1], William B. Russell III[2], Joshua Kenna[3], Lloyd Beckles[4], Carolyn V. Zandt[5]

## Abstract

What is the current state of social studies Teacher Preparation Programs (TPPs) for licensure across the United States? The purpose of this research study is to fill the gap in the academic research, providing an overview of social studies TPPs across the United States. In order to best answer that question the researchers examined the required pedagogical preparation courses, social science content courses, classroom management courses, and length of student teaching experiences of all public/state university teacher preparation programs in the United States.

***Keywords:*** *Teacher education; Social Studies.*

## Introduction

The United States was once considered the leader in educational attainment. However, many historically low performing countries are now outperforming the United States in terms of student achievement (Greenberg, Mckee, & Walsh, 2013). Recently, there has been growing concern about the quality of teacher preparation programs (TPPs) and the various evaluation methods used to measure their effectiveness (Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky & Ahn, 2013). As a direct result, Arne Duncan, the former U.S. Secretary of Education, urged TPPs "to make better outcomes for students the overarching mission that propels all their efforts" in a speech to Columbia University's Teachers College (Cruz, 2009). As of August 29, 2013, new standards have been put in place with the specific purpose of enhancing the accreditation process for TPPs (Heafner, McIntyre & Spooner, 2014). Yet prior to the last few years, although teacher quality

[1] PhD Candidate, The University of Central Florida, bonnie.bittman@ucf.edu
[2] Prof. Dr., The University of Central Florida, Russell@ucf.edu
[3] Asst. Prof., University of Tennessee, jkenna@utk.edu
[4] Dr., Seminole State College, lbeckles@gmail.com
[5] PhD Candidate, The University of Central Florida, Carolyn.VanZandt@ucf.edu

has garnered much attention, the preparation of teachers has largely gone unnoticed (Greenberg, et al., 2013).

Effective TPPs are designed to provide teachers with a basic understanding of pedagogy and subject matter content, or Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Feuer, et al., 2013; Shulman, 1986). Two subdomains of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, knowledge of content and students and knowledge of content and teaching identified by Ball, Thames, and Phelps (2008) emphasize the delicate balance required of TPPs. Teachers must know the subject they teach, but must also be able to make sense of the subject matter for their students. Interestingly, Ferguson and Womack (1993) have posited that the academic coursework preservice teachers complete in their TPPs accounts for about 16% of the variance in teaching performance. Additionally, it has long been accepted that high quality TPPs provide preservice teachers with opportunities for supervised classroom experience (Darling-Hammond, 1992). Currently, subject matter courses focus on methods for doing math or science or history, and education courses are too often theoretically to provide adequate Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008).

The literature suggests that within social studies, TPPs generally teach preservice teachers using active engagement methods, about educational theory and pedagogy, and how to plan lessons that address different student learning styles (Boyle-Baise & Grant, 2004; Chiodo & Byford, 2004; Russell, 2010; National Council for the Social Studies, 2014; Tannebaum, 2015 Kenna & Poole, 2017). Despite this focus, most current social studies education graduates of TPPs remain ill-prepared for teaching; lacking the necessary tools to add substantial value to student achievement through their teaching practice (Levine, 2006). More recently, colleges and universities in the United States are taking a more detailed look at their TPPs effectiveness, in terms of the quality of teachers, a result of recent federal legislation including No Child Left Behind (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2013). Teacher education programs in the U.S. are faced with thorough and robust standards and must be able to take advantage of effective teaching practices in their undergraduate and graduate education programs (Coggshall, Bivona, & Reschly, 2012).

Many teachers lack necessary content knowledge and pedagogical experience, leading to high turnover in the profession (Henry, Paterson, Campbell, & Yi, 2013; Ingersoll. Merrill, & May, 2014; Kilinç et al, 2016; Kopish, 2016). Furthermore, the type and quality of coursework

preservice teachers complete during their TPPs has shown to have a significant impact on future student achievement and teacher retention rates (Ingersoll, et al., 2014; Rice, 2003). Yet, research covering social science TPPs at the national scale is scarce. To improve student achievement and teacher retention, an understanding of how social studies TPPs are structured and what content is being offered must be identified (Poole & Russell, 2015; Mauch & Tarman, 2016; Tarman, 2016; Waters & Russell, 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to fill the gap in the academic research, providing an overview of social studies TPPs across the United States.

The guiding research question for this study is: What is the current state of social studies TPPs for licensure across the United States? In order to best answer that question we examined the following data: required pedagogical preparation courses, social studies content courses, classroom management courses, and length of student teaching. The subsequent questions guided our research:

a.) What percentage of public, in-state universities offer a social studies education, or similar, degree program at the undergraduate and graduate level?
b.) How many semester hours of pedagogical preparation in social studies education are required for graduation in undergraduate and graduate social studies education programs?
c.) How many semester hours in social studies content courses are required for graduation in undergraduate and graduate social studies education programs?
d.) How many classroom management credits are required in social studies education programs? and
e.) How many credits are devoted to student teaching in social studies education programs?
f.) Is there a difference in the number of required social studies education classes between accredited and non-accredited colleges and universities?

## Literature Review

Although this study is exploratory in nature, it is important to survey the nature of TPPs. That is, what are the philosophical underpinnings of TPPs? The literature identifies a philosophical divide, as described in more detail below, about the training and educating of teachers. To further cement this study, it was also important to examine the influence that TPPs have on teacher performance and retention.

### Philosophical Perspectives of Teacher Preparation

For years, researchers have shown the impact that qualified teachers have on student growth and learning (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2010). In fact, some scholars posit that teachers are the single most important factor in a student's educational setting. Even parents and politicians do not refute the importance of a qualified teacher. There is, however, ample division about what constitutes a qualified, let alone a *highly* qualified teacher. At the heart of this decades old divide are two philosophical perspectives, content knowledge and pedagogical skills (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009). And these perspectives lead to differing opinions about the rigors and requirements of teacher education and preparation.

On one side of the spectrum is content or subject knowledge. Proponents of this perspective believe that knowing *what* to teach is of paramount importance to becoming a qualified teacher. Content acquisition then is most important and simply obtaining a related subject area degree (e.g. history, geography, economics, etc.) is viewed as the most qualifying standard. Although proponents of this perspective value pedagogy, they often think it is best learned on the job rather than a being a major component of a TPP. Supporters point to college professors as an example, which obtain terminal degrees in a subject area yet receive little pedagogical training prior to starting their positions.

On the other side of the spectrum, however, are those who support a greater pedagogical focus. They believe knowing *how* to teach is of chief importance to becoming a qualified teacher, which includes, but is not limited to, preparation in the following areas: "coursework in teaching methods or teaching strategies, practice teaching, preparation in how to select and adapt instructional materials, coursework in learning theory or child/youth psychology, opportunities to observe others' classroom teaching, and formal feedback on their own teaching" (Ingersoll, et al., 2014, p. 14). From this perspective, thorough knowledge of a subject is less critical than comprehensive teaching skills. Some extreme supporters may even suggest that a good teacher can teach anything. Ultimately proponents of this view believe that the way to improve the K-12 teaching profession is to upgrade the pedagogical preparation required of new teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). In fact, teacher accreditation agencies such as, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, often favor this position.

Nevertheless, like all things on a spectrum there is always a middle ground. In this instance, it is a balance between content and pedagogy, what Shulman (1986) labeled Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Thus, supporters of PCK believe preservice teachers

need adequate content exposure and pedagogical preparation. While PCK sounds like a great compromise a problem still exists, how do TPPs achieve a perfect balance between content and pedagogy? Do TPPs simply require preservice teachers to take equal number of credit hours in content courses as pedagogical preparation courses? If that is the case, how will TPPs know they have achieved a balance? After all, we can test content knowledge to a certain degree but how do we test for pedagogical preparation?

This philosophical divide has not only produced variations in the structure and quality of TPPs, it has also influenced teacher certification requirements, and ultimately, the entry routes teachers take into the profession (Ingersoll, et al., 2014,). For example, several states have begun to test for pedagogical preparation through the utilization of the Teacher Performance Assessment or edTPA (An, 2017). According to the edTPA website (2017), "[It] is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States to emphasize, measure and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from Day 1 in the classroom." (n.p.). Teacher candidates are assessed through the creation of a portfolio that includes lesson plans, examples of teaching via videotaped recordings, and reflective commentary. While clearly there are proponents to edTPA (see Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2013), there are also critics (see Au, 2013). Although this study's focus is not on critiquing edTPA or addressing the debate about access to the teaching profession, the notion of perspectives and access leads to the next area of literature to review—the influence that the TPPs have on teacher performance.

**Influence of Teacher Preparation Programs**

Educational scholars have examined the significance of teacher qualifications and credentials on teacher performance, which has largely been measured by student achievement via some kind of assessment (Darling-Hammond, 2000a; 200b; 2002; Guarino, Hamilton, Lockwood, & Rathbun, 2006; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Some researchers, however, have measured teacher performance based on supervisors' rating of performance (Bliss, 1992) or observation-based measures of teacher practice (Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998), although much of that was prior to the wide spread use of standardized testing. The conclusions of these studies are often mixed; with a number of them indicating that teacher qualifications have little significant effects on student achievement (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Ingersoll, et al., 2014). Nonetheless, despite criticism towards teacher education (see Walsh, 2001), several studies have

found significant and positive correlations to teacher qualifications, of one kind or another, and student achievement.

For example, Boyd, et al. (2009) used data from 31 TPPs, whose graduates produce the vast majority of teachers for New York City (NYC) elementary public schools, to examine how preparation affects student learning. They found that TPPs that provided more student-teaching experiences supplied significantly more effective 1st-year teachers to NYC elementary public schools. Additionally, they found that TPPs that grounded their work in the practice of teaching (i.e. a capstone project, studying curricula, and oversight of student teaching) were associated with positive student achievement gains in the 1st year. While TPPs that grounded their work on content learning (i.e. disciplinary coursework requirements) were associated positively with student achievement gains in the 2nd year. However, Boyd, et al. urged caution with interpreting the results of their study, because while positive affects to teacher quality were identified there were still challenges to making direct links to TPPs as the source of that quality, rather than say, recruitment.

At the secondary level, Clotfelter, et al., (2010) utilized end-of-course tests in North Carolina to assess the connection between teacher credentials and student achievement. While the researchers examined many different types of credentials (i.e. experience, licensure test score, entry-licensure, certification, national board certification, graduate degree, and type of undergraduate college attended), they "[found] compelling evidence that teacher credentials affect student achievement in systematic ways and that the magnitudes are large enough to be policy relevant" (p. 2). Of particular interest was the effect of the entry-licensure credential, which included those who obtained a regular license through a TPP and those lateral entrants who obtained an alternative license. The researchers concluded that student achievement was reduced for alternatively licensed entrants when compared to traditional TPP entrants; however, after a couple of years of experience lateral entrants seem to be no less effective than regular entrants. Although training and experience might help explain the growth of alternatively licensed teachers, the authors noted a high departure rate among alternatively certified teachers. For instance, in their study there were 804 lateral entrants with 1-2 years of experience but only 155 lateral entrants with 3 or more years of experience.

Teacher retention is another important aspect that researchers have considered when evaluating teacher performance. In fact, Ingersoll and Merrill (2013) cited a steady increase in

the attrition rates of beginning teachers over the last two decades. Ingersoll, et al., (2014) also looked at the effects of TPPs on beginning teacher attrition and found, after controlling for selection bias, that pedagogical preparation was strongly related to the attrition rate. Those with a more comprehensive pedagogical training — five or more methods courses and at least a full semester of student teaching — were significantly less likely to leave after the first year. With the largest reduction in attrition occurring between those with little or no pedagogical training and those who received basic pedagogical training — some methods training and at least a full semester of student teaching. While some attrition is unavoidable and, in some cases, beneficial, according to Clotfelter, et al., (2010) most of the gains in student achievement associated with teacher experience occur in the first two years of teaching (p. 19).

While variations will surely exist among TPPs across the United States, given the current research on TPPs it would seem there may be some structural similarities — type and number of required pedagogical training courses, number of required content courses, and required of student teaching. No study, however, particularly within social studies education, seems to exist.

## Methodology

The status of social science teacher education programs in American schools has not been investigated on a national level. After the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation in 2002, social science in K-12 education has been marginalized compared with other academic subjects, and standards-based education reform movement excluded social studies from the nations accountability-testing trend (Vincent, Ross, & Wilson, 2012). Using a quantitative descriptive research method, this study sought to understand the status of social studies TPPs offering both an undergraduate and graduate degree with state licensure.

### Population

The population for this research study was all publicly-financed colleges and universities in the 50 states of the United States of America. The population was determined using the accredited post-secondary schools found in the U.S. Department of Education database *The Database of Accredited Post Secondary Institutions and Programs* (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This database included over 39,000 postsecondary educational institutions and programs that were sorted by accreditation agencies, including the Teacher Education Accreditation Council and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, which are currently merging together into the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

(CAEP). The population for the study was 419 colleges and universities. The list was then checked against each state's department of education list of publicly-financed universities to ensure no school was omitted accidentally. Schools were eliminated from the population if there were no social science related education degrees.

Because this study sought to understand the status of social science TPPs as a whole, TPPs for social science educators became the targeted population. The population of the study were public colleges and universities that offered education degree programs for undergraduate and/or graduate students, in social science education degrees or concentrations. Publicly financed colleges and universities were chosen because of their duel responsibilities to accreditation organizations and their respective state's Department of Education. Publicly-financed is defined as universities that receive a substantial amount of money from state budgets. Programs that offered only alternative certifications and no degree, education minors and no certification, or had teacher preparation programs that did not include social science, were not a part of our population as the purpose of the study was to understand the status of TPPs for social science educators. Data was collected from all schools that met the population's criteria. This type of population criteria is more generalizable than a sample (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

**Data Collection**

As some states within the United States certify teachers in specific individual disciplines rather than a general social studies degree, the researchers had to examine each school's website for social studies teacher degree programs within the school's departments, education or others. Oftentimes, the individual college or university would house social studies teaching certification program within a discipline's individual department, e.g. history department. Data collection consisted of the researchers dividing the United States into regions and individually examining each school's online catalogue of coursework for the 2014-2015 school year. Checks for accuracy were conducted periodically by each member of the research team to ensure accuracy. Undergraduate programs were examined for a social studies education track, the required social studies education courses, the discipline content course work required for degree conferral, the inclusion of a separate classroom management course, and the number of course hours required to for internship. Graduate programs in social studies education were also examined, including

the number of social studies education courses, the number of content area credits, the inclusion of a separate classroom management course, and the required number of internship hours. The school's accreditation is also examined. While most colleges and universities consider a single course to be three credit hours, there is some variation amongst schools and types of courses. Therefore, credit hours were reported as an alternative to individual courses.

### Data Analysis

Considering that this study examined all publicly-financed colleges and universities, descriptive statistics were deemed appropriate to identify national trends. The data was analyzed using IBM's SPSS statistical software.

### Limitations

The research is limited to accredited public state programs with online digital catalogues available to the researchers. Accessibility to information was not equal, and differences in the structure and nomenclature of the institutional websites and digital catalogs occasionally hindered researchers' navigation of individual school websites. Furthermore, although almost every school utilized credit hours per course, a few schools used a portfolio-based system with no individual courses in their education degree. Fewer than 10 schools were eliminated from the data set because the school did not utilize credit hours.

## Results

### Social Science Education Program Overview

To understand the current state of social science education programs, this study collected available online data from all publicly-financed state colleges and universities on undergraduate and graduate social science education programs. Considering the data was population level, descriptive statistics will be reported. With data from over 400 schools ($N$ = 419) collected, less than half of schools (41.3%) offered an undergraduate social science education degree or concentration leading to state certification. The data collected on graduate programs focused on Master's degrees in social science education or concentration for certification in that state. Colleges or universities rarely offered graduate programs with 14.1% of schools offering a Master of Arts degree and 7.2% offering a Master of Education degree. A cross-tabulation of both undergraduate and graduate programs (see Table 1) showed that 48.7% of schools offered neither an undergraduate or graduate certification program in social science education, 30.1% of schools offered undergraduate programs only, 11.2% of schools offered both graduate and

undergraduate programs, and 10% of schools offered only graduate degrees. Most social science education programs are offered as an undergraduate degree, with a small minority of schools offering only graduate certification programs in social science education.

Table 1

*Graduate * Undergraduate Cross Tabulation*

| Graduate | | Undergraduate | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | None | Undergraduate | Total |
| None | Count | 204 | 126 | 330 |
| | % of Total | 48.7% | 30.1% | 78.8% |
| MAT | Count | 31 | 28 | 59 |
| | % of Total | 7.4% | 6.7% | 14.1% |
| MEd | Count | 11 | 19 | 30 |
| | % of Total | 2.6% | 4.5% | 7.2% |
| Total | Count | 246 | 173 | 419 |
| | % of Total | 58.7% | 41.3% | 100.0% |

**Accreditation**

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which has recently merged with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), is the most widely used educational accreditation service for colleges and universities (Colwell, MacIsaac, Tichenor, Heins, & Piechura, 2014). This research study utilized the NCATE website to identify colleges and universities with social science education programs accredited by NCATE and CAEP. Considering the data for accreditation was ordinal, percentages and bar graphs were reported. Of the schools that offered undergraduate or graduate social science education programs, 79.5% ($N$ = 171) schools were accredited by NCATE, with only 20.5% ($N$ = 44) schools offering social science programs not accredited by NCATE (see Figure 1). With schools that offer undergraduate programs, the percentages are similar, with 83.2% ($N$ = 144) accredited, and 16.8% ($N$ = 29) not accredited by NCATE (see Figure 2). Graduate programs were accredited at a slightly lower rate, with 77.5% ($N$ = 69) accredited and 22.5% ($N$ = 20) of schools not accredited by NCATE (see Figure 3). The clear majority of schools offering degrees in social science education utilized the NCATE to accredit their social science education programs.

Schools with undergraduate programs accredited by NCATE averaged fewer required social science education classes ($n$ = 33, μ = 3.94) compared with schools not accredited by NCATE ($n$ = 146, $\mu$ = 3.66), although the difference is negligible. Examining graduate programs, there is a sharp decline in required social science education classes when programs were accredited ($n$ = 86, $\mu$ = 1.69) versus when they are not accredited ($n$ = 20, $\mu$ = 3.4).

**Undergraduate Social Science Education Programs**

This study examined several categories concerning undergraduate degrees leading towards state certification in publicly-financed colleges and universities. The number of required credit hours required in social science education, the number of required credit hours in social science content classes, the number of required classroom management credit hours, and the number of required internship credit hours were all collected from the college or university website, either from the respective department's website or the school catalog. The course hour data was ordinal, and this study use median and mode to report measures of central tendency and range to report variability for each variable. Charts (histogram) were included when appropriate to assist with visualization of the data.

For required social science education credits, the median number of credit hours offered by colleges and universities was three credit hours, "3 credit hours", was also the most frequently required number of credit hours (81 schools) as shown in Table 2. Schools requiring "0 credit hours" was second with 39 schools requiring no social science education courses. Social science education courses ranged from "0 credit hours" to "25 credit hours. Reviewing the frequency of social science education credit hours, 71.7% of colleges and universities require three hours or less (see Table 3). Only 18.5% of schools require two or more classes in social science education and the vast majority of schools (46.8%) required only one class.

Table 2

*Undergraduate Program Credit Hour Statistics*

| Type of Classes | Median | Mode | Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social Science Education | 3 | 3 | 25 |
| Social Science Content | 45 | 45[a] | 103 |
| Classroom Management | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Internship | 12 | 12 | 22 |

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 3

*Frequency of Undergraduate Social Science Education Credit Hours*

| Number of Credit Hours | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 39 | 22.5 |
| 1 | 1 | .6 |
| 2 | 3 | 1.7 |
| 3 | 81 | 46.8 |
| 4 | 13 | 7.5 |
| 5 | 4 | 2.3 |
| 6 | 15 | 8.7 |
| 7 | 3 | 1.7 |
| 8 | 1 | .6 |
| 9 | 4 | 2.3 |
| 10 | 1 | .6 |
| 12 | 3 | 1.7 |
| 15 | 3 | 1.7 |
| 20 | 1 | .6 |
| 25 | 1 | .6 |
| Total | 173 | |

Compared with social science content classes, the number of social science content classes varied greatly, ranging from 0 to 103 credit hours. The median was 45 credit hours, and the mode was 45 and 48 credit hours for social science classes. An examination of the histogram (Figure 1) showed a leptokurtic distribution, with less than 5 schools requiring more than 90 credit hours in content areas. The vast majority of colleges and universities required between 30 and 60 content area specific credit hours for undergraduate social science teacher certification programs.

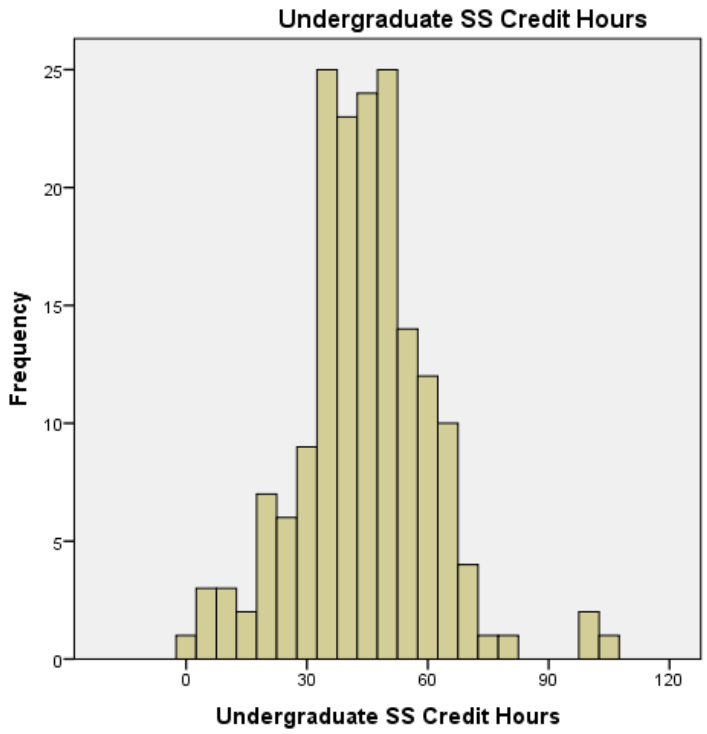


Figure 1 – Undergraduate Social Science Credit Hours

The number of classroom management credit hours required does not vary as much as social science education credits or content area credits. The mode of credit hours 0, the median 1, and the range of 0 to 6 credit hours showed less spread than other variables. A histogram (Figure 2) shows that over 80 colleges and universities require no classroom management class at all, over 70 schools require three credit hours, and only one school required six credit hours. Internship hours required in undergraduate programs range from 0 to 22 hours, with the median and mode both at 12 credit hours (63 schools). A large majority of schools, 81.5%, require 12 hours or less of internship credit hours.

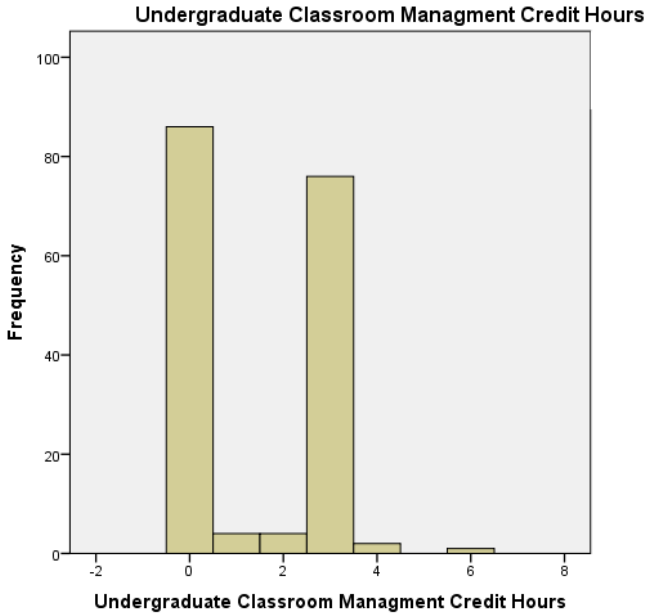


Figure 2 – Undergraduate Classroom Management Credit Hours

**Graduate Social Science Education Programs**

This study also examined several categories concerning graduate degrees leading to teacher licensure in publicly-financed colleges and universities. Within the social science TPPs, the number of required credit hours in social science education, social science content areas, classroom management, and internship were all collected. Again, the individual college or university's catalog or department website was used to collect the data. The course hour data was ordinal, and this study reported median and mode for central tendency, as well as range for variability. Histograms were included when appropriate to assist with visualization of the data.

Two different degrees are offered in education, either a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) or a Master of Education (M.Ed.), with 66.3% of schools offering a MAT ($N$ = 59) and 33.7% of schools offering a M.Ed. ($N$ = 30). Degrees were only included in this study if they lead to teacher licensure, which excluded many social science education graduate programs from this study. The number of credit hours in social science education ranged from 0 to 12, with 43.8% of schools requiring no social science specific education course (Table 4). One-third of schools, 33.7%, required only a single three-hour class, and only 9% of schools required two or more three-hour classes (Table 5).

Table 4

*Graduate Program Credit Hour Statistics*

| Type of Classes | Median | Mode | Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social Science Education | 3 | 0 | 12 |
| Social Science Content | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Classroom Management | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Internship | 6 | 0 | 27 |

Table 5

*Graduate Social Science Education Credit Hours*

| Number of Credit Hours | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 39 | 43.8 |
| 3 | 30 | 33.7 |
| 4 | 2 | 2.2 |
| 5 | 1 | 1.1 |
| 6 | 9 | 10.1 |
| 9 | 4 | 4.5 |
| 11 | 1 | 1.1 |
| 12 | 3 | 3.4 |
| Total | 89 | |

In looking at the number of credit hours required in social science content areas, over 50% of graduate degrees require no additional social science classes ($N = 52$). Only 22 schools require 12 hours or more of social science content hours (see Table 6). Classroom management classes are rarely required as a part of graduate degrees, with the median and mode both zero credit hours, and ranging only to 6 credit hours total. Internship credit hour requirements varied much more than credit hours, ranging from 0 to 27 hours, the median being 6 and the mode at 0. A histogram (Figure 3) of internship credit hours showed no bell curve, nor is there an obvious peak. Most of the required internship hours were between 3 and 12 credits.

Table 6

*Graduate Social Science Content Credit Hours*

| Number of Credit Hours | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 52 | 58.4 |
| 3 | 8 | 9.0 |
| 6 | 6 | 6.7 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 3 | 3.4 |
| 12 | 4 | 4.5 |
| 15 | 1 | 1.1 |
| 18 | 5 | 5.6 |
| 20 | 1 | 1.1 |
| 21 | 2 | 2.2 |
| 24 | 1 | 1.1 |
| 27 | 4 | 4.5 |
| 29 | 1 | 1.1 |
| 30 | 1 | 1.1 |
| Total | 89 | |

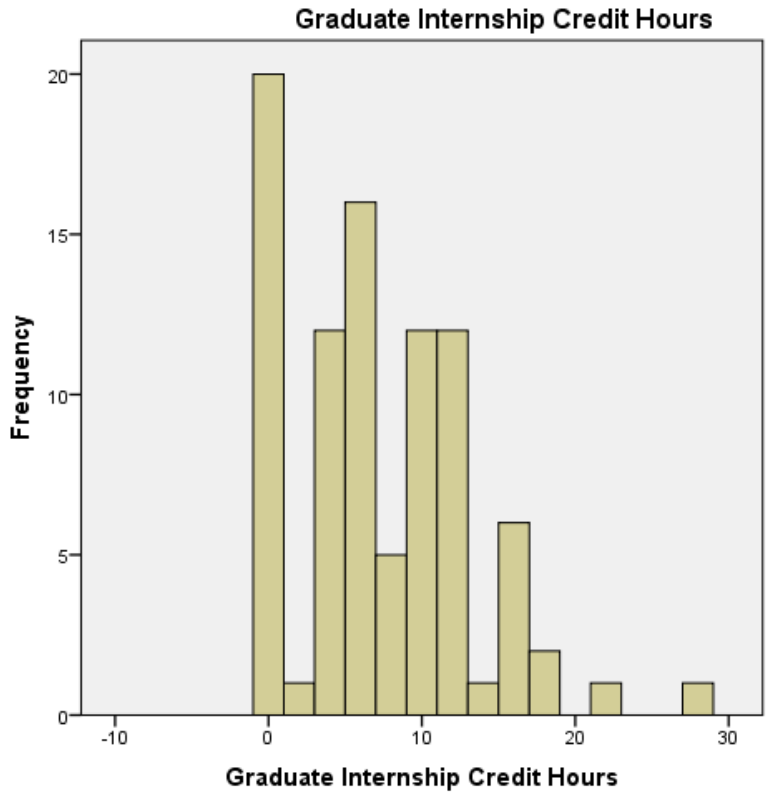


Figure 3 – Internship Credit Hours

## Discussion

The United States is a participatory democracy and social studies plays a significant role in incorporating democratic and citizenship into K-12 education, and into elementary and secondary students (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Barton & Levstik, 2004). Democratic education

through social studies aims to engage students in the democratic process and assist with developing civic awareness. Current debates in social studies education is divided between educators passing knowledge from one generation to the next, to foster patriotism in students, to expand students' cultural and social understanding, or to develop students' critical thinking skills (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Evans, 2004; Hess, 2009; National Council for the Social Studies, 2014; Thornton, 2004; Santora, 2011). These competing perspectives have influenced TPPs within the social sciences, with some arguing for a focus on traditional disciplines such as history, geography, sociology, and psychology, or a focus instead on pedagogical development through teacher education.

The need to unify standards for college and university requirements drove the first educational reforms that led to the "new history" and then the committee's creation of a civics class, *"Problems of Democracy"* and the creation of social science education (Marshall, et al., 2007). Newer reforms have led to high-stakes testing on more rigorous standards and programs do not have a singular vision in developing programs effective in addressing the standards at both the national and state level. Future political reforms may well define how our TPPs for the social sciences will be structured in the future, and social science education researchers must remain relevant.

Social studies TPP vary widely across the United States. Although the NCATE is a national accrediting agency for TPPs, the 50 different state departments of education complicate teacher licensure. This study aimed to identify national trends regarding TPPs and post-secondary social science education programs. The findings of this research study reflect the myriad conditions colleges and universities are required to take into consideration when crafting social science education programs. This research showed the resulting wide variety of requirements and the disparate nature of social science programs across the United States.

Future teachers must have a working understanding of both content and pedagogy to enter the field. Teacher preparation has lasting consequences from recruitment to retention (Ingersoll, et al., 2014). It is troubling to note the philosophical divide has led to the development of some programs that are heavy on the discipline with little or no support in pedagogical preparation. By filling a void in academic research, this study provides an understanding of current social studies teacher preparation programs in the United States.

Future research concerning social science education programs should build up on this foundation, examining the effect of national and state regulatory agencies on social science programs. This study is limited to publicly-financed state schools, and research on private schools is scarce, even compared to publicly-financed colleges and universities. The study limitations include a focus on publicly funded institutions, as well as a lack of similarities concerning the reporting of credit hours. Further research could offer policymakers a framework in developing national standards linking TPPs to student achievement scores on standardized tests.

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