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A Survey of the Procedures Used in the Selection of Social Studies Textbooks in the Public Schools

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A SURVEY OF THE PROCEDURES USED IN THE SELECTION OF
SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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A Thesis
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The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Wayne D. Pringle
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Since the textbook has been used extensively in the social studies, as well as other areas of the curriculum, educators are continually involved with textbook selection in their efforts to meet changing curricular needs. In view of the students' needs to conceptualize and formulate judgments in the area of social studies, increasing emphasis must be placed on the method of textbook selection.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to (1) survey the procedures used in the selection of social studies textbooks in the public schools; (2) to determine the qualities considered in the selecting a textbook in social studies;

Importance of the study. Teaching students to think critically and to appreciate our cultural heritage are primary objectives of education. In the area of social studies the need for accurate, unbiased content is of utmost importance. However, educators often overlook various criterion for textbook selection. The result is a hastily made choice

based upon a casual selection of a textbook. In many instances responsibility is placed upon the textbook companies for formulating criteria. Ruth Strickland notes:

Our present social studies textbooks are notoriously thin in content. Many are little more than pleasant reading books filled with general approaches to various aspects of life but containing little for children to learn and know. Children need some basic facts from which to work out generalizations. With this principle in mind, we should look for the addition of depth to social studies textbooks. (8-6)

Editorial comment in The New Republic, April 24, 1961, expresses similar concern.

One of the chronic causes of friction in American public education is the fact that many teachers have had less education (and in worse colleges) than many influential parents and school board members. Such parents think, not without reason, that they know more about what their children should be doing than the teachers themselves, and very often they say so. Since business and the professions are constantly increasing their educational requirements, we are likely to be stuck for the foreseeable future with a substantial number of parents who feel their children are not getting as much intellectual stimulation in school as they might. But what can they do about it? (4:5)

The tempo of criticism has increased in recent years due to the insecurity of many people as they viewed the initial successes of Russian rocketry. Criticism was directed at the public schools in many broad areas of the curriculum. However, because of the need to achieve a balanced perspective in the many areas of controversy, pressure has been brought upon the schools to select social studies textbooks that would conform to a particular

viewpoint shared by pressure groups. Mayer makes this observation:

Textbooks, curiously, receive less public criticism than any other kind of writing. They are never reviewed in the general press, and even the educational press gives them no more than perfunctory notice. A few noisy pressure groups, usually the Radical Right, make a business of attacking textbooks on ideological grounds, but no major citizens organization has ever paid systematic attention to the quality of the books used in the public schools.

Yet, nobody would deny their importance. These texts--casually ignored or given statistical treatment in the most recent controversies over American education--must influence what goes into the heads of all our children. When the books are poor, they can lead to a contempt for education, and even the printed page. Many a boy leaves school with an ingrained conviction that all books must be a bore, because the books the school takes most seriously are nothing but a bore. (13:65)

Educators must focus greater attention to the content being used in social studies textbooks. Suitable criterion can be developed for faculty use in obtaining textbooks that are challenging, free from bias, and better meet educational goals in proportion to the understanding of our heritage in a democratic society.

II. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to a search of the available literature on criterion for textbook selection in the social studies area of the public schools curriculum.

A survey of the various criterion included content material used in the social studies textbooks as it related

to the course of study, maturity of the student, and desired goals in a democracy.

Selection procedures were surveyed among school teachers attending Central Washington State College in the summer session of 1959.

The study was limited to textbook selection procedures in the social studies area from grade one to grade twelve in the public schools.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Procedures. As used in this study, the term "procedure" refers to the various methods used in the selection of social studies textbooks. An attempt was made in the survey to determine consistent patterns of procedures in the selection of a textbook.

Social studies. The term "social studies" was interpreted to be a study of people, their activities, and their relationship to others. The research concentrated on the importance of the quality of the content relevant to educational objectives.

Textbook. "Textbook" in the context of this study is defined as a book for regular study by students.

Criterion. Throughout this report the term "criterion" will be interpreted as a rule, or standard, for making a judgment in the selection of social studies textbooks in the public schools.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter two is concerned with a survey of the literature since 1918 about the textbook and its use in the public schools.

Material for the study was developed through a survey of the literature in books, periodicals, and pamphlets pertinent to this present study.

Chapter three is a report of the findings based on a questionnaire distributed to teachers enrolled at Central Washington State College during the summer of 1959. It was felt this enrollment represented a sufficient sampling of school districts for the purposes of the survey. Information from the questionnaire was obtained regarding the procedures used in the selection of social studies textbooks in the public schools, and listing of criterion used in evaluation of textbooks.

Chapter four summarizes the results of the findings and states conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The importance of the textbook in the public schools of America has been well established in the available literature but only a brief summary will be presented significant to the study.

I. LITERATURE BASED ON RESEARCH

A survey of the literature based on research indicated data pertinent to the selection process. John Palmer, writing in the March, 1964, issue of the Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University, refers to recent studies which have implications concerning criteria for textbook evaluation.

Palmer noted from a survey made by Allan A. Siemers, "World History in Selected California High Schools," that a basic text was used in over 90 per cent of the world history courses. Second, 50 per cent of the teachers used other media such as newspapers, periodicals, encyclopedias and other materials to enrich the basic text. Third, 24 per cent of the teachers failed to use paperbacks and over 50 per cent never used other texts as sources for instruction. Fourth, more than one-third of the teachers surveyed, "considered poor instructional resources a major problem." Palmer

concluded, "While there are many dissatisfactions, most teachers evidently do not like or are not able to take advantage of the possible alternatives." (17:79)

Palmer also made note of suggested criteria to be used in selection of a textbook. He was of the opinion that most criteria suggested by authors are of limited value since they represent, primarily, the opinions of the authors. He stated, "Presentations of this sort are of limited assistance in selecting a social studies textbook beyond the avoidance of gross inadequacies." Even the use of criteria was neglected according to a survey made by Laurence (1962). Palmer, in citing this survey, noted that 73 per cent of the California high schools sampled reported, "no stated guidelines for textbook selection." He commented, "Many teachers and administrators stated that the textbook selected had not been carefully examined and that the selection process had little relation to the program of curriculum development." (17:80)

Since the selection processes are subjective rather than scientific, it would appear that criteria based on an analytical approach to the problem of selecting a textbook is the best method though there is the danger of "gross inadequacies" indicated by Palmer.

II. LITERATURE BASED ON OPINION

The printed textbook does not seem to be on the decline. One may visit any classroom and find an abundance of textual material being used by the teacher and students.

Earlier studies of the importance of the textbook indicated an affirmative position on the adequacy of such materials. Hall-Quest in his study made in 1918 was of the opinion that the textbook held a central place in school work because it offered a compact arrangement of educational material. He considered the textbook a "Compendium" of knowledge for classroom use and for a ready reference after the student had completed his formal education. He also viewed with favor the universality of the textbook because it provided a uniform education throughout the country.

Although Hall-Quest considered the textbook to be of primary importance, he was concerned with the need of criteria for selection. He stated:

The judging of textbooks is so often haphazard and ill defined process that all concerned need to cooperate in constructing standards that will greatly aid the judge in this important matter. Generally speaking, a textbook should be well and clearly printed, i.e. printed in accord with the needs of the stage of development, physically and mentally of school children. It should be mechanically attractive and affective both in illustrations, binding, and general arrangement of contents. The material should be graded, new words carefully defined on the page where they occur, statements made accurately, and the literary style simple and direct so that pupils can easily understand them. Rules and exceptions should be printed in different type. (7:119)

At the end of the nineteenth century textbooks attained a status containing elements from which modern books were evolved. Jensen, in a study made in 1931, noted:

. . . Three distinct influences have chiefly been instrumental in the development of textbooks. First, a study of the child, resulting in the development of a more scientific method; second, the establishment of the textbook business as a specialized industry rather than a subordinate branch of general printing or publishing business; and third, the revival of interest in printing. (11:6)

With the increasing use of the textbook in the public schools, attention was directed to the procedures of selection. Jensen continues:

The problem of selecting textbooks arose when uniformity was required in all units of school control. With the introduction of the practice came the problem of a textbook selection agency. The laws made it the duty of the people, in annual meetings, or of the trustees, to determine the textbooks to be used in the schools. The parents were then expected to provide their children with the adopted books. The law usually prevented too frequent changes of books by providing for an adopting period of from three to five years. County and State uniformity of textbooks followed as a direct result of moving population in America. (11:9)

As school districts continued to develop a more complex organization, greater responsibility was placed upon the professional staff. The school board delegates responsibilities which are professional to the superintendent and his assistants. These responsibilities include the selection of teachers, textbooks, and courses of study. In the previous years, textbooks were often selected by board members who were not qualified by experience or training. The professional

selection of textbooks by educators has resulted in a higher degree of integrity and honesty in contrast to the method of school board selection. (11:41)

Educators have come under increasing attacks in recent years as to the inadequacy of current social studies textbooks. Much has been written in reference to the quality of content in its treatment of moral and spiritual values, an appreciation of our cultural heritage, and to the degree textbook writers have been able to challenge the varying intellectual levels of the students using the text. Although many educators have defended the excellence of social studies textbooks, there seems to be considerable adverse opinion.

A study of the literature indicated increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of textbooks used in the public schools. This concern is often highly vocal and extremely critical. One might question the validity of such criticism, but a more objective attitude would indicate the need to appraise its validity. Ohles commented in The Social Studies, February, 1953:

Just what is wrong with our texts? Well, first of all, they try to be all things to all men and end up being nothing to most. In order to serve the average student, they prove to be over the heads of the duller, and fail to furnish any challenge to the upper strata. In order to confine themselves to the maximum number of pages, yet include as much material as possible while crowding in an illustration per page, the texts have become reciters of facts without the window-dressing that makes those facts interesting," . . . (16:65)

Ohles mentioned the failure of the texts to correlate with the course of study, thus, often influencing the study content regardless of the needs of the students, community and teachers. The point was made that the responsibility of determining the needs of the student and the courses of study belonged to the "individual teacher". (16:65)

The Committee on the Study of State Textbook Adoptions, The Arizona Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, notes this point of view of Dr. Hollis L. Caswell of Teachers College at Columbia University:

. . . the textbook probably exerts greater influence than any other factor upon the curriculum of the American schools. Textbooks have been credited for significant improvements in the curriculum, and blamed for major shortcomings. They have been characterized both as the principal block to good teaching and as highly effective means of making available to teachers and pupils the services of experts which otherwise could not be used. The evils associated with textbooks more often arise from the way they are selected and from local and state regulations concerning their use than from the nature of the texts themselves. (10:3)

The need for greater attention to the selection process is reflected in such comments as these complaints as noted in The Wilson Library Bulletin, January, 1963:

In October, John J. Theobald, superintendent of schools in New York City, asked the textbook appraisal committees of the Board of Education to evaluate social studies texts according to the following criteria: Do they adequately (treat) the role of minority groups in American culture? Do the illustrations reflect the pluralistic nature of our society? At the same time a similar notice was sent to publishers by Jacob H. Shack, acting associate superintendent in charge of curriculum, claiming that certain studies revealed the predominance

of a 'white Anglo-Saxon' view of U. S. history and society, ignoring the Indians, Negroes, Jews, citizens of Latin American countries, and other groups. (15:376)

Albert Alexander writing in the January, 1960, issue of Social Education noted:

. . . To this list must be added the avoidance of offense to those states which still practice the anachronistic policy of 'basal and exclusive' state adoption: one text for a particular grade of a subject in all classrooms in that state. For that matter any limiting system of selection gives the purchasing agency a strong economic weapon over publishers. (20:192)

Editorial comment in the National Review, September 11, 1962, was critical of the poor content material found in American textbooks:

From primary readers to manuals for college seniors, American textbooks--taken gross and gross they are--remain sorry enough, despite all the protest about the quality of American schooling that has gone on for more than a decade. I have reviewed some fifteen high school and junior high textbooks in various disciplines fairly recently; and only three or four of these both contain something for the mind and are fairly impartial. The question is, can people do anything about improvement in this realm? (20:192)

That teachers and educators have a responsibility in determining the effectiveness of the textbook as a teaching device is mentioned by J. H. Haefner in the April, 1953, NEA Journal:

Most of us deplore the fact that in many schools, the textbooks are almost the sole instrument of instruction and that too many teachers look upon them as infallible. To the extent that charges against textbooks force teachers and educators to reexamine **what** they are doing and to check their tools of instruction, criticisms are wholesome and add strength to our system of education. (6:227)

McAulay took a favorable position in defense of social studies textbooks. He felt that the American textbooks as sold by commercial companies were excellent. He was impressed with the qualities of writing, organization, and illustration. Also, attention was drawn to the use of the latest results in child growth and development in the presentation of current problems and socially significant concepts of American democracy. McAulay praised the quality of scholarship in the writing of these texts by stating that many of our outstanding American educators have been involved in the planning and construction. He noted,

The teacher helps that accompany many of the textbook series are organized and written on the best philosophical and psychological principles, with excellent suggestions for projects, activities, exercises, outside references and resources, audio-visual aids and field trips. (14:23)

A review of the literature based on opinion indicated the responsibility placed upon the teacher in the social studies textbook selection process. This responsibility would imply the necessity of selecting sufficient recognized criteria to use in obtaining the best textbook for instructional purposes.

III. LITERATURE BASED ON OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS

Educators are in general agreement that the textbook is essential to classroom use. Their criticisms of the poor quality of textbooks is followed with suggestions to help improve the selection procedures. The responsibility for such selection is placed upon the teachers who use them. Consequently, if there is to be an improvement in the kind of textbooks to be used in the social studies, it can only come through the application of generally agreed upon criteria to be used in the selection process.

In discussing textbook selection, P. Vartanian states:

The bulk of the teachers responsible for the selection of textbooks, exclusive of large systems, are the teachers who use them. These people are attracted to books containing a profusion of illustrative material or the lack of it; or they are drawn by the arrangement of lessons and exercises, or the design of the cover and the format. The approach to textbook evaluation often amateurishly fails to take into account the interrelationships of the text's components to form a single instrument. As with the publishers and authors of textbooks, criticism of the teachers' inadequacies in selecting does not dispose of the problem of bad textbooks in the classroom. However, a criticism should serve to stimulate the profession to a greater awareness of its shortcomings in the field of textbook analysis, evaluation and selections. (18:123)

Kimball Wiles makes this observation concerning
textbook selection:

The most important criterion a text must meet is that of relevancy. It must contain information suited to the needs of the locality and of the pupils. If the

content of the text bears on the problems of another region or includes only illustrations foreign to the past experience of the student, it is obviously unsuited. Too many textbooks in the past have been directed to an urban audience because the largest sale for the book was in city systems and because the experience of the writer did not include country life. One solution, in some fields at least, lies in the writing of regional texts by authors from that region. But when regional books are produced, care must be exercised to prevent local bias and prejudice from coloring the presentation. Regionalism should be manifest in the choice of problems presented, not in point of view or selection of the evidence. (21:154)

The importance of teacher participation in the selection of social studies textbooks is stressed in this article, "How Schools Can Best Select Textbooks." This statement is made:

First and foremost, the selection should be largely influenced by the classroom teachers. They will be responsible for the use of the materials in the classroom, and they should have a strong voice in the decision. (9:10)

Paul S. Anderson in an Article, "How Teachers Share in Textbook Selection," states:

In recent years administrators have been sharing the responsibility for selection of textbooks with classroom teachers. For this change two good reasons exist. The textbook is a classroom tool with which the teacher fashions her instructional program. She knows her needs and those of the children with whom she works better than any other person. The second reason is that evaluation of new materials brings on opportunity for in-service training and growth. The selection of textbooks focuses attention on the present practice, recent research, and changes made in the communities. (2:67)

Educators were in general agreement in these areas of selection procedure: (1) The use of faculty committee; (2) The establishment of guidelines to help the committee; and

(3) Reliable criteria to make a valid judgement. Brown and Brown reflected the areas of general agreement from, "How to Select a Social Studies Textbook." Their comment:

If school or system wide adoptions are to be made, we therefore, advocate that the textbook selection committees function on a year around basis, and work closely with curriculum committees. Furthermore, the membership should rotate so that the largest number of teachers will gain experience of analyzing and evaluating textbooks. Such committees should be made up largely of classroom teachers. In any event, we emphasize that a single book is never the best answer. Supplementary books for the bright, easier books for the non-readers, a variety of materials to illuminate certain areas--these are essentials. (3:397).

Opinion among educators indicated that responsibility for textbook selection in social studies is given to the superintendent and his staff. Emphasis was placed upon the value of teacher involvement in the selection procedure, and the importance of criteria in selection.

Authorities are in agreement that a specific list of criteria is important to the process of textbook selection. Ivan R. Waterman in the January, 1952, issue of The Phi Delta Kappan, makes this suggestion:

1. The formulation of a set of criteria, or standards by which textbooks under consideration may be judged.
2. The construction of a score card, based on the assignment of numerical values to the several items of the criteria in accordance with their relative importance.
3. The conduct of comparative studies, objective in nature so far as possible, to determine the

relative merits of the several books on 'each' item of criteria or score card.

4. The rating of the textbooks on the score card on the basis of data from the comparative studies. (19:267)

Another listing of criteria is mentioned by Byron G. Massialas in the May, 1961, issue of Social Education. He lists eleven criteria for consideration:

1. Does the author have an all-encompassing conceptual framework which gives direction and purpose to his work?
2. Does the author base his content on clearly stated or inferred principles or generalizations?
3. Does the author provide opportunities for the student to question various observations and related interpretations of social phenomena or does he stifle creative and imaginative thinking by purporting to give the 'right' answers?
4. Does the author make a conscious effort to apply the scientific method to his work?
5. Does the author speak to a given age level of the student?
6. Is he inconsistent and contradictory?
7. Does he offer an annotated bibliography for the students?
8. When the author introduces certain ideas and generalizations, does he produce related information drawn from studies of other cultures?
9. Does the author avoid discussion of value-loaded questions?
10. Does the author employ data from all social science disciplines or is he relying upon one only?

11. Does the author provide a manual (brief analysis of his work), state objectives clearly? (12:237)

Brown and Brown have devised a list of criteria based on two categories, "definites" and "indefinites". The "definites" are items that can be accurately measured, counted, or recorded. "Indefinites" involve opinions or value judgments because they are items or areas on which teachers would find agreement difficult. The following is a list of criteria suggested by the authors:

Definites

1. Title-author-publisher
2. Date
3. Number of pages
4. Cost
5. Type, size and faces
6. Page format
7. Binding
8. Inclusion of a preface-introduction
9. Table of Contents
10. List of maps and illustrations
11. Complete index
12. Inclusion of material in appendices
13. Existence of a teacher's manual
14. Existence of a workbook for pupils

Indefinites

1. Style
 - a. Vocabulary-interest appeal-readability-reading level (are these based on an understanding of psychological development of children of the age for whom this work is intended)?
 - b. Handling concepts
 - c. Proportion of generalizations to specific examples-use of incidents
 - d. Technical terms-method of use-explanation of terms.
 - e. Use of illustrations to increase interest

2. Scholarship
 - a. Emphasis
 - b. Selection
 - c. Handling of data
 - d. Awareness and coverage of new interpretations
3. Organization
 - a. Is sequence and development adequate?
 - b. Are chronological and geographical balance maintained?
 - c. Is there continuity between chapters?
 - d. Are political, economic, social and cultural factors all developed?
4. Teaching aids
 - a. Type and quality of the exercises, questions, activities
 - b. their relationship to: (1) text, (2) aims of text, (3) goals of teacher
 - c. The quality of illustrations and maps
 - d. The relationship of illustrations to text-to teaching aims.
 - e. References to other materials such as book lists, library resources, visual aids, etc.
5. Philosophy
 - a. What is the philosophy or point of view of the author?
 - b. Is the actual philosophy of the book clearly set forth in the introduction or preface or manual?
 - c. Is this philosophy acceptable to the teachers who are to use it?
 - d. Is it acceptable to the community?
 - e. Is 'slanting' held to a minimum and prejudice acknowledged?
 - f. Is the book written out of awareness of current issues and problems? (3:394)

In addition to the criteria listed by the preceding authors, Pershing Vartanian has written an exhaustive treatment of criteria in an article, "Criteria and Technique for Textbook Evaluation," featured in the April, 1962, issue of Social Studies. This study of criteria is more sophisticated than other lists, but similar in the areas noted. (18:123-127)

A survey of the literature based on the opinions and attitudes of educators indicated agreement in three areas: (1) That criteria for selection of social studies textbooks is necessary for a valid judgment, (2) The importance of teacher participation through faculty committees, (3) An abundance of suggested criteria based upon the needs of the teachers and students, the course of study and the community, was available.

IV. SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a brief summary of the problems educators face in the selection of social studies textbooks in the public schools.

Attention is given to the history of the textbook and its place in the public schools of America. The inadequacies of social studies textbooks has been noted in a review of the literature. A concensus of opinion placed the responsibility for textbook selection on the superintendent of public schools and his faculty. The need for more specific criteria in selecting social studies textbooks is mentioned and recommended criteria outlined.

The concensus is the need for a more objective use of criteria in social studies textbook selection to assure more

desirable textbooks suitable to the current needs of the curriculum, the students and the teachers; and the importance of teacher participation in the selection process in cooperation with the administration.

The importance of more effective criteria necessary in selection of social studies textbooks has been dramatized by pressures of vocal special interest groups seeking the selection of textbooks that meet their particular needs.

CHAPTER III

REPORT OF THE RESEARCH

I. THE METHODS EMPLOYED

Data concerning social studies textbook selection procedures were obtained from 170 school teachers representing school districts in the states of Washington, California, Idaho, Oregon and Virginia who were attending Central Washington State College during the summer of 1959. Of the total responses, 161 were from districts in this state and nine from districts in other states. Permission for the survey questionnaire was granted through the Dean of the Graduate School. It was assumed that a sampling of the students enrolled during the summer session would result in a broad survey of many school districts in the state and some from adjacent states.

II. THE GROUPS STUDIED

The 170 completed questionnaires returned represented 85 per cent of the complete sample of teachers. These teachers were distributed from grades one to fourteen. Classification of the teachers by grade levels, according to Table I, includes: elementary, 57.64 per cent, junior high, 14.12 per cent, senior high, 14.12 per cent, junior college,

TABLE I
CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHERS BY LEVEL

Level	Teachers	Percentage
Elementary	98	57.64
Junior high	24	14.12
Senior high	24	14.12
Junior college	2	1.18
Miscellaneous	22	12.94
Total	170	100.00

1.18 per cent, and specialized areas (administration, coordinator, special education) 12.94 per cent. A grouping of teachers by sex indicated 57.1 per cent, men and 42.9 per cent women.

Classification of teachers by years of experience is reported in Table II. The years of experience ranged from one year to thirty-two years, with 61 per cent having from one to four years. Three teachers, 1.9 per cent, listed no experience. The other classifications by experience are indicated in this table. It was assumed that the majority of junior and senior high teachers had some experience teaching social studies.

The writer contended that the process of selecting social studies textbooks was accomplished without consideration of sufficient criteria that would meet the needs of the curriculum, the students and teachers.

TABLE II
CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHERS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Years Taught	Teachers	Percentage
0 to 4	107	62.94
5 to 10	29	17.06
11 to 15	16	9.41
16 to 20	11	6.47
21 to 25	5	2.94
26 to 30	1	.59
31 to 32	1	.59
Total	170	100.00

To test this hypotheses, a questionnaire was designed to survey social studies textbook selection procedures in the public schools. A discussion of each of the questions follows. (See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire).

III. THE THESIS RESEARCH

The teachers were asked if they had participated in the selection of social studies textbooks. Table III indicates their response to this question. It was found forty-one teachers, 24.70 per cent, had the experience of selecting social studies textbooks. One hundred twenty-five, 73.30 per cent, of the teachers listed no experience. These figures suggest a lack of planning by the school districts.

TABLE III
TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN SELECTION OF
SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Number participating	41	24.70
Number not participating	125	75.30
Total	166	100.00

An indication of the number of teachers serving on social studies textbook committees is shown in Table IV. The data indicates twenty-four, 14.29 per cent, had experience. One hundred forty-four teachers, 85.71 per cent, had no experience. It was interesting to note that only 14.29 per cent of 168 teachers were involved on a social studies textbook selection committee.

TABLE IV
TEACHER APPOINTMENT TO SERVE ON A SOCIAL STUDIES
TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Number participating	24	14.29
Number not participating	144	85.71
Total	168	100.00

Table V is concerned with the faculty committee as a procedure in the selection of social studies textbooks. Of a total of 158 responses, one hundred six teachers, 67.09 per cent, said their district used this procedure. Fifty-two teachers, 32.91 per cent, said the faculty committee was not used. Although a majority of the school districts use the faculty committee as a selection procedure, only 14.29 per cent of the teachers mentioned in Table IV had experience on a social studies textbook selection committee.

TABLE V

TEACHERS REPORTING THE USE OF THE FACULTY COMMITTEE
IN SELECTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Committee used	106	67.09
Committee not used	52	32.91
Total	158	100.00

In Table VI, teachers were asked to list criteria used in social studies textbook selection if they had served on a faculty textbook committee. Of the total of 170 teachers surveyed, twenty-five said they had worked on a faculty committee, and all twenty-five teachers mentioned criteria. However,

when asked to list criteria, only a partial listing was entered on the questionnaire. All teachers recognized some importance of criteria, but did not recall a large number of items. The items indicated were fragmentary and do not reflect an organized approach in determining what kinds of criteria are important to good textbook selection. An unedited listing of the criteria includes these comments:

An over-all study of what material is covered, research and how well it is written for class level.

Subject matter covered, illustrations, background of author, quality of binding, size of print, quality of paper, and price.

We evaluated each textbook according to our needs, our class levels and ability of children. We also checked to see if it covered our units.

Vocabulary control, pictures, and suitability of content to age level interest.

Reading level, interest level, content of information as to readability, accuracy, timeliness. Physical structure of text such as binding, page weight, cover. Pictures, charts, and graphs, attractiveness, appeal, and accuracy. Associated unit activities suggested.

The suitability of the material in relation to the level concerned in such things as topics vocabulary, and style. Format, maps, pictures, appearance.

Is vocabulary suitable for grade level, scope, sequence, illustrations, maps, charts, geographical and historical events, use of illustration, charts, maps.

Material covered, format of the books, continuity with study guide, survey of all available books.

We used a comparison of several texts placed before us. The selected was chosen on content, word selection, and ease of reading. Not necessarily in that order.

High school--emphasis on recent history, relationship of political, economic, social concepts. Is the emphasis based on problem solving rather than straight chronological sequences? Is the visual section related to the content, do the pictures and graphs draw interest? Is the author a recognized authority?

Only as a librarian in high school to show supplementary book or materials.

Format, vocabulary used, illustrations, size of print, background of authors, how well content fits into curriculum requirements, how interestingly the subject matter is presented.

Grade level of the vocabulary, topics covered, types of charts, graphs, maps ease in reading the print, how up-to-date the information.

Content, vocabulary, economy, obtain ability.

Subjects well covered, up-to-date, binding, corresponds with what we cover in each grade level.

Copyright--most recent possible, publisher well known in field, binding of good quality, reliability level, etc. (to community), interesting-quality reading, illustrations and good maps, educationally sound, accurate and up-to-date.

Up-to-date material, continuity, pictures--maps, etc. Lessons and study guides, cost, durability.

Does it cover the material, does it use understandable language, does it develop skills, does it promote understandings, etc.?

State guide plus opinions of all sixth grade teachers in district as to interest, information, color and various qualities we thought our texts should have.

Chronological placement of subject areas, vocabulary, development of social studies concepts, illustrations, maps, charts. Construction, or durability, size etc., text.

The examination of many books in social studies by the committee. Their selection of the books which fit our curriculum program at the school. The administration will accept teachers' selections of texts.

Is vocabulary suitable? Are contents authoritative? Are illustrations pertinent? Do contents cover the desired area? Is the type easily read? Is the format attractive? What study helps are included? Is there a bibliography for pupil use?

Questionnaire to all teachers in the district asking areas covered, desired changes, suggestions for better text, etc.

Cost, content, text corresponding with material taught, illustrations and maps, level required to read and understand text.

TABLE VI
TEACHER REPORT OF CRITERIA USED IN SOCIAL STUDIES
TEXTBOOK SELECTION

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Listed criteria	25	100.00
Failed to list criteria	0	00.00
Total	25	100.00

Information in Table VII dealt with information about other procedures than those mentioned in the first four questions. A total of 122 teachers listed other procedures of selection. The following procedures were noted: (a) the superintendent, eighteen, 14.75 per cent; (b) the individual teacher, twenty-six, 21.31 per cent; (c) the curriculum supervisor, fifteen, 12.30 per cent; (d) the principal, twenty-six, 21.31 per cent; (e) others, thirty-seven, 30.32 per cent.

(See Appendix B for listing). Although 67.09 per cent of the teachers in Table V listed the faculty committee used in the selection process, it was apparent that final approval remained with the administrative staff in most instances. This would seem to indicate the need for the administration and faculty in most school districts to reevaluate their method of social studies textbook selection. Opinion among educators in general suggests greater use of the faculty committee for this purpose.

TABLE VII
TEACHER REPORT OF OTHER PROCEDURES OF SELECTION

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
The superintendent	18	14.75
The individual teacher	26	21.31
The curriculum supervisor	15	12.30
The principal	26	21.31
Others	37	30.33
Total	122	100.00

Information obtained in Table VIII pertained to the approval of the local school district's textbook selection procedure. A total of 150 teachers replied to the question. Teachers who approved their district procedures included one hundred twenty-eight, 85.33 per cent, and those who

disapproved, twenty-two, 14.66 per cent. These reactions support current textbook selection procedures in the majority of school districts according to the classroom teachers.

TABLE VIII

TEACHER APPROVAL OF PROCEDURE OF SOCIAL STUDIES
TEXTBOOKS SELECTION IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Teachers in favor	128	85.33
Teachers not in favor	22	14.67
Total	150	100.00

Table IX consisted of information regarding the contacting of other school districts for suggestions in selecting social studies textbooks. Thirty-eight teachers, 34.45 per cent said their districts did contact other school districts. Teacher response in the negative was seventy-two, 65.45 per cent. A total of 110 teachers responded to this question. Some importance was attached to the value of this practice, although districts in the majority of instances placed confidence in their own selection procedures.

School districts contacted the county superintendent for guidance in social studies textbook selection according to Table X. A total of 104 teachers answered this question.

TABLE IX
TEACHER USE OF OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN TEXTBOOK
SELECTION

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Used other districts	38	34.55
Districts not contacted	72	65.46
Total	110	100.00

TABLE X
TEACHER USE OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT IN TEXTBOOK
SELECTION

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Contacted county office	44	42.31
County office not contacted	60	57.69
Total	104	100.00

Of this amount, forty-four, 42.31 per cent, indicated their districts did contact the county superintendent, and sixty, 57.69 per cent, made no contact. A supportive role is indicated in the use of the county office.

Teachers were asked to what extent the State Superintendent of Public Instruction was contacted for suggestions on social studies textbook selection. It was noted in Table XI that twenty-three teachers, 23.71 per cent, said the state office was used. Seventy-four teachers, 76.29 per cent, said no contact was made. These percentages indicate a supportive role of the state superintendent's office in obtaining textbooks.

TABLE XI

TEACHER USE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC
INSTRUCTION FOR TEXTBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Used the state office	23	23.71
State office not used	74	76.29
Total	97	100.00

Considerable use of sales representatives from textbook companies was listed in Table XII. This procedure often consisted of a written invitation to come to the school

district for a presentation. Usually, the selection committee received samples of textbooks prior to the presentation. From a total of 139 replies, ninety-seven, 69.78 per cent, said this process was followed, while forty-two, 30.22 per cent, were negative. Apparently, considerable confidence is placed on a presentation by a sales representative. Authorities recommend this approach as a part of the selection procedure, but not the dominant factor.

TABLE XII

TEACHER REPORT ON INVITATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM
TEXTBOOK COMPANIES TO MAKE A PRESENTATION AT SCHOOL

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Used this procedure	97	69.78
Procedure not used	42	30.22
Total	139	100.00

A report of other procedures used in the selection of social studies textbooks is indicated in Table XIII. Of a total of 170 replies, one hundred forty-four, 84.71 per cent, listed no other procedures, and twenty-six, 15.29 per cent, noted such practices as grade level committees, state textbook listings, committee poll of teachers, samples received from textbook companies, county curriculum committee

recommendations and meeting with the principal or superintendent. It was of interest to find some utilization of the county curriculum committees, and a use of screening committees in the local districts. These techniques were used in a minority of responses, 15.29 per cent, and seemed to be ignored by the majority of school districts.

TABLE XIII
TEACHING LISTING OF OTHER PROCEDURES

Respondents	Teachers	Percentage
Listed procedures	26	15.29
No procedures	144	84.71
Total	170	100.00

Table XIV indicated the method of implementation of the faculty committee in the selection of social studies textbooks. A total of 106 teachers in Table V reported faculty committees in their school districts. The percentages used in Table XIV related to the total of 106. Of a total of 30 replies, ten, 9.43 per cent, said released time was given, and seven, 6.60 per cent noted extra salary credit. Thirteen teachers, 12.26 per cent, mentioned a permanent faculty committee. The faculty committee, therefore, is

considered in the same category as other staff committees in most school districts.

TABLE XIV

TEACHER REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FACULTY
COMMITTEE IN SELECTING TEXTBOOKS

	Teachers	Percentage
Released time	10	9.43
Extra salary credit	7	6.60
Permanent committee	13	12.26
Total	30	28.29

106 teachers in Table III reported the existence of a faculty committee. The percentages are figured on this basis.

III. SUMMARY

Through the use of a questionnaire, 200 teachers attending summer school at Central Washington State College in 1959, were asked to indicate the procedures of social studies textbook selection used in their school districts.

A discussion of each of the questions listed in the questionnaire was presented along with tables depicting the information obtained.

On the basis of the results of the questionnaire study, one could conclude that the selection procedures used

in choosing social studies textbooks in most school districts, have been lacking in objectivity.

A more effective approach to the criteria used in the selection of social studies textbooks should enable educators to offer a more rational defense of their selection.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

The Literature. Most of the literature dealing with the selection of social studies textbooks recognized the importance of the textbook in today's schools. Although there is a change in the emphasis of its use in the classroom, the textbook cannot be ignored as an important teaching device.

The textbook is used more widely today than in the past, with greater reliance on multiple texts and supplementary enrichment material for students. Because of the variety of textbooks used in the social studies curriculum, the problem of selection is one of considerable importance. The authors agreed that the responsibility for textbook selection belonged to the superintendent and his teachers.

Criticism of the social studies textbooks used in the public schools were noted in the quality of content. It was deficient in these areas: (1) Content failed to meet the needs of the curriculum. Since social studies textbooks often influence the curriculum of the school, they should be carefully selected to meet the needs of the students, the teachers and the community. (2) The printed text has a

tendency to be written for the average student, thus failing to meet the needs of either the gifted or the slow students. (3) In their efforts to satisfy the demands of state textbook adoption committees, regional bias, and placate pressure groups, the textbook companies have produced bland social studies textbooks which tend to avoid controversy and become repositories of dull facts. (4) The social studies textbooks reflect the Anglo-Saxon social viewpoint and have ignored the pluralistic nature of our society.

Textbook companies will have a tendency to offer social studies textbooks with the stated deficiencies to educators unless they demand a more balanced treatment of the American cultural heritage, a contention by several writers. To effect changes in the quality of social studies textbooks, a more objective approach to the selection process is indicated. Teachers need to establish guide-lines for more analytical selection. The faculty textbook selection committee should work closely with the curriculum committees to determine criteria for evaluation. It is suggested that teachers be involved in selecting social studies textbooks because they know the content material and the needs of the students.

The Study. A questionnaire was distributed to 200 teachers attending the summer session at Central Washington State College in 1959. Its purpose was to survey the procedures used in the selection of social studies textbooks used

in the public schools. Of a total of 200 questionnaires, 170 were returned, representing an 85 per cent sampling of the teachers in the survey. The results of the study are reviewed in Chapters II and III.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study attempted to show a need for a more objective procedure in the selection of social studies textbooks to be used in the public schools.

The concensus among authorities in this study is the need for a more objective use of criteria in the selection of social studies textbooks. It is felt a more objective selection procedure would assure more desirable textbooks suitable to the needs of the curriculum, the students and the teachers. Also included in the area of general agreement is the importance of teacher participation in the selection process through the use of a faculty committee charged with this responsibility. This committee for the selection of social studies textbooks should meet throughout the school year. Some authorities suggest a rotating membership so that as many teachers as possible may have experience in evaluating social studies textbooks. Continued evaluation is important in the social studies because of the changing nature of society, consequently, this committee would need to evaluate new editions of social studies textbooks when they appear in publication.

Many suggested criteria are available to school districts. Most lists of criteria stress the following points for evaluation of social studies textbooks: (1) The aim or point of view of the author in concept of social trends in history, (2) Subject matter should be considered in relation to the curriculum content, (3) ^D does the author provide for the grade level included? And (5) has the author and the publisher made effective use of teaching aids, such as, a teacher's manual, student workbook, filmstrips, pictures, charts, and other audio-visual aids?

There are many excellent lists of criteria for selection of social studies textbooks. Most school districts will find it necessary to design criteria which will most effectively meet their own needs because of local, regional and state influences.

The survey indicated consideration for the following points: (1) A greater need for teacher participation in selection of social studies textbooks, (2) A preference for the faculty committee in social studies textbook selection, (3) Teachers who had served on social studies textbook selection committees indicated the importance of criteria for textbook selection, and (4) confidence in other aids, such as, textbook representatives, recommendations from the county superintendent's office and the state superintendent are considered as a source of help in social studies textbook selection.

It would appear that social studies textbooks can be most effectively selected through teacher participation in a faculty committee. The committee should develop criteria which will assure an objective evaluation of all textbooks to the degree they meet the needs of the curriculum, students, teachers and the community.

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APPENDIX A
THE COVERING LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

August 12, 1959
Wilson Hall
Box 802
Ellensburg, Wash.

Dear Teacher,

This questionnaire is being circulated to selected classes on the campus this session. It is a part of the research related to a Plan I thesis. The purpose of the study is to determine the most commonly used procedures and criteria in the selection of social studies text books.

Will you please fill in all blanks and check the appropriate response?

Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Wayne D. Pringle

Number of years experience _____ Male _____ Female _____

Teaching level _____

How many teachers are employed by your district? _____

Location _____
 city county state

1. Have you participated in the selection of social studies textbooks? Yes _____ No _____
2. Did you serve as a member of a social studies bextbook selection committee? Yes _____ No _____
3. Does your school district use the faculty committee as a procedure in the selection of social studies textbooks? Yes _____ No _____
4. If you served on such a committee, what criteria did you use as a basis for textbook selection? Indicate in the Space below.

5. If questions (1), (2), (3), and (4) do not apply, are textbooks selected by:
 - A. The superintendent? _____

- B. The individual teacher? _____
- C. The curriculum supervisor? _____
- D. The principal? _____
- E. Other? _____ Specify _____
6. Are you in agreement with the procedure of social studies textbook selection in your district? Yes _____ No _____
7. Do you contact other districts in regard to selection of social studies textbooks? Yes _____ No _____ If this question is answered in affirmative, is this done by:
- A. Letter to other school districts? _____
- B. Contacting book companies and requestion them to submit lists of schools which use the series you are contemplating? _____
- C. Sending rating sheets to these schools? _____
8. Do you contact the County Superintendent for suggestions? Yes _____ No _____
9. Do you contact the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for recommendations? Yes _____ No _____
10. Have you invited representatives from book companies to come to your school for a presentation? Yes _____ No _____
11. List other procedures used. _____

12. If a faculty committee is used as a procedure for selecting textbooks is:

- A. Released time given? Yes _____ No _____
- B. Extra salary credit allowed? Yes _____ No _____
- C. This a permanent committee? Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX B

UNEDITED COMMENTS RELATED TO TABLE VII

Different teachers for each grade level

The teachers concerned with social studies

Teachers recommend and superintendent selects

County adopted (by committee) but not compulsory to us in our system

Committee of teachers selected from different schools within the district

Combination of teachers, principal

County board

County board

Faculty and administration

Committee of social studies teachers

Often times the choice of the selection committee is overridden so the district may stay with a particular series.

County committee

Administration go through and pick out our series, then have a selected committee of teachers choose from that.

State

Teachers and administration committees

All the teachers by vote

County textbook selection committee

Curriculum coordinator

Teachers-principal

A committee from grade levels

Teachers and principal work together, however, we had our social studies books so we didn't pick new ones.

State

By committee

Social studies faculty committee

Committee

County committee

I believe by committees in conjunction with elementary supervisor

Teachers in a committee

County textbook committee

We selected on the basis of need put out by the county office.

We do it on grade levels. The principal and fifth grade teachers select the textbooks for their particular grade level. The principal does this at each level.

The teacher selects and gets ok from principals

Selected by state of California

Taught art in junior college. Textbooks as far as art department was concerned was selected by instructor and instructors of department.

County curriculum committee

All teachers on each grade level

Teachers opinions solicited

Departments

Committee selected from faculty in grades affected.