Chapter 70
High School Teachers' Gender–Oriented Perceptions of Technology Integration

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ABSTRACT

Within social studies, researchers note limited attention has been given to examining gender differences associated with technology integration, and have called for increased dialogue regarding gender-related technology issues (Crocco, 2006, 2008; Crocco, Cramer, & Meier, 2008; Friedman & Hicks, 2006; Marri, 2007; Mason, Manfra, & Siko, 2005; Sanders, 2006). In response, this chapter explores the gender divide in secondary teachers' perceptions of effective technology integration. Using a qualitative research design, this chapter provides insight into social studies teachers' perceptions of their pedagogical practices and technology integration. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the differences in male and female teachers' use of technology to teach and support student learning. Consideration of how technology is associated with gender-sensitive pedagogical thinking and practice may address the aforementioned gap in technology usage in social studies. Patterns uncovered in data analysis suggest that gender plays a critical role in social studies technology integration. The results from this study can inform methods in which technology is integrated into future social studies classrooms, particularly in emerging areas such as online courses.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the Internet has become a useful tool for social studies teachers and students. Free access to a plethora of primary and secondary sources not readily available in the classroom (Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2006; Hicks & Ewing, 2003; VanFossen &. Shiveley, 2000) and an emphasis on historical thinking (Barton, 2005; Barton & Levstik, 2004; VanSledright, 2011; Wineburg, 2001) have been central factors in rationalizing technology integration within the discipline (DeWitt, 2007; Friedman, 2006; Hicks, Doolittle, & Lee, 2004; Marri, 2005; Martin & Wineburg, 2008; Swan, & Locascio, 2008). Moreover, national efforts have encouraged technology integration with expectations for frequent and successful applications with K-12 learners (c.f. CCSS, ISTE, P21, C3, and NCSS). External factors, such as the ubiquitous personal use of technology, afforded *anywhere, anytime* access to information and constant connectivity which furthered the expectation of technology as a primary learning tool (CTIA, 2011; Cellsigns, 2010; Pew Research Center, 2011). Students of the 21st century garner information through media and electronics at a much faster and more efficient pace than previous generations. Technological advances have both created and addressed growing student needs.

As technological advances have steadily entered the field of education, the impact of technology and media have contributed to each core subject area in a unique way (Anderson, & Williams, 2012). While technology tools became pervasive in some classrooms, overall the field of social studies has lagged in this process (Swan & Hofer, 2008). The National Council for the Social Studies identifies the primary purpose of social studies education as contributing to the development of responsible citizens (NCSS, 2014). Designing an environment where students can develop into successful global citizens while honing 21st century skills can be challenging, but not impossible. A "key

component is the role educational technology can have in facilitating teaching and learning in social studies" (Green, Ponder, & Donovan, 2014). For example, Internet access and gaming have been documented as increasing civic engagement and participation (Bers, 2008; Lenhart, Kahne, Middaugh, 2008; Montgomery, 2009; Perkins-Gough, 2009; VanFossen, 2006). The availability of web-based instruction and access to the Internet, historical documents, diverse perspective, political campaigning, and varying geographic locations enable online social studies educators to pair social studies curriculum with 21st century skills in a 21st century classroom. The process of how research is done in social studies classrooms has radically changed with increased technology access (Bolick, 2006). Within elementary and secondary social studies classrooms across United States the integration of technology has enabled social studies educators to seamlessly interweave the various academic disciplines examined in social studies through online interactive lessons, video, maps, photos, digital archives, and access to historical and political documents (Berson & Berson, 2013; Brush & Saye, 2009; Friedman & Heafner, 2007, 2008; Harris, Mishra, & Koehler, 2009; Heafner & Friedman, 2008; Tally & Goldenberg, 2005; Whitworth & Berson, 2003). However, access does not always imply effective integration, quality instruction, or successful student use for discipline specific learning. At a fundamental level, access does not ensure that technology integration in social studies is ubiquitous.

In order to address the diverse needs of 21st century learners, several states and school districts have developed distance education learning platforms as supplemental academic support (Barbour, 2009; Barbour & Reeves, 2009). These state-initiated platforms eventually evolved from supplemental academic supports to full public, private, and charter virtual schools. Online learning is generally classified according to the following structures: supplemental, districted based, consortium, or cyber charter school (Cavanaugh,

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