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Establishing Content Validity of High-Leverage Content Topics and Practices for Teaching Social Studies

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Abstract

The accumulation of content validity evidence is critically important in constructing licensure assessments and evaluating claims based on their scores. The purpose of this study is to explore the validity evidence supporting social studies content knowledge topics and teaching practices assessed in a kindergarten through 6th grade teacher licensure assessment. We accumulated relevance, importance, and frequency judgments from experts on 24 content knowledge topics and 26 social studies teaching practices. We surveyed 109 practitioners to verify the necessity of these competencies for elementary school social studies teachers first entering the teaching profession. Overall, practitioners in our sample judged that the content knowledge topics and teaching practices assessed are important for a beginning elementary school social studies teacher's ability to be an effective educator.

Key words: teacher licensure, social studies, elementary school, content knowledge for teaching, content-related validity

In the American educational system, ensuring the quality of the teaching workforce is an important priority. One of the chief mechanisms used to ensure a high standard of teaching quality is the teacher licensure process. The principal purpose of licensure assessments is to differentiate between individuals who possess the knowledge and skills required for professionals beginning practice and those who do not (Clauser, Margolis, & Case, 2006; Smith & Hambleton, 1990). The main purpose of this study is to examine evidence concerning the content-related validity of the content knowledge portion of a new elementary school teacher licensure exam in the social studies domain.

Identifying the Content Domain

Regardless of the domain, licensure assessments typically measure the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required for performing a job, rather than actual performance on particular job tasks or activities (Wang, Schnipke, & Witt, 2005). It is crucial that licensure assessments test job-related content, and job-analytic evidence (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005) supports that aim (Raymond, 2001). Test specifications for licensure tests outline the content of the assessments and the KSAs that should be measured therein (Raymond, 1996) and are vital components of necessary validity evidence (Ebel & Frisbie, 1991).

One strategy that is often used to define the content domain for a licensure test requires a panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) to generate a list of KSAs necessary for the effective completion of job tasks (Tannenbaum & Wesley, 1993; Wang et al., 2005). It is critical that this panel of SMEs be diverse and represent a variety of professional backgrounds and job positions within a particular field (Raymond, 2001; Raymond & Luecht, 2013). Ideally, SME background characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, urban/rural setting, geographic location) should be taken into account when finding and choosing qualified experts for this purpose (Clauser et al., 2006; Tannenbaum & Wesley, 1993). It is desirable for the final group of experts to represent perspectives from different demographic groups, given that respondents with different characteristics may vary in the types of communities and students they serve and may encounter differing kinds of work-related issues (Raymond, 2001).

As a second step, one option that has previously been used often is to have a large sample of qualified practitioners in a particular profession surveyed to corroborate the KSA judgments made by the panel of SMEs (Rosenfeld & Tannenbaum, 1991; Tannenbaum & Wesley, 1993). These surveys cover a list of KSAs thought to be necessary for performing the critical tasks for a

given job effectively. The SMEs surveyed are frequently asked to rate the KSAs regarding their relevance and importance (Kane, Kingsbury, Colton, & Estes, 1989; Raymond, 2005; Tannenbaum & Wesley, 1993) and the frequency with which particular tasks are performed (Wang et al., 2005). Frequency judgments are informative for content validation. Research has suggested that professional licensure assessments should greater emphasize teaching practices that are performed more often (Raymond & Neustel, 2006). These ratings then constitute supporting evidence for test specifications that are derived using the input of the aforementioned panel of experts.

After survey information has been collected, this information can be used to support and verify test specifications. Information that is ultimately included within a licensure test should be judged to be both relevant and important for performing a job by the sample of SMEs that are surveyed (Tannenbaum & Rosenfeld, 1994). If a specific KSA is not considered relevant or important for a beginning teacher to be able to effectively practice, that KSA should not be assessed within a licensure exam.

The Current Study

The licensure test under study in this investigation is designed to assess elementary teacher candidates on the content knowledge that is essential for supporting student learning in elementary social studies. Often referred to as content knowledge for teaching (CKT), knowledge tests of this type rely on a two-dimensional framework. The first dimension of the framework focuses on the grade-appropriate student content learning outcomes that are the focus of the assessment. The second dimension of the framework focuses on the recurrent critical tasks that teachers carry out in order to provide students opportunities to learn the desired content (Etkina et al., 2018). The first step in the content validity process is to create a set of test specifications that clearly identify the KSAs considered relevant or important for a beginning elementary teacher to be able to safely and effectively teach social studies. First, we identified the social studies content that is foundational to the elementary social studies curriculum. Second, we identified the teaching practices germane to social studies that support student learning.

Our first step was to identify the critical tasks that elementary social studies teachers engage in as they work with students, curriculum, and instruction. To do so, we reviewed a compilation of resources, including empirical research about teaching in social studies (e.g.,

Kloser, 2014; Windschitl, Thompson, Braaten, & Stroupe, 2012), and relevant standard documents, such as the National Council for the Social Studies: National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies and College, Career, and Civil Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Where standards focused on student learning outcomes, we considered what teachers would need to know and do to provide students with opportunities to learn this content. Based on this review, we proposed a set of key instructional practices that are critical for beginning elementary social studies teachers to be able to engage in from their first day on the job and that have been either recommended or shown to hold the most promise for improving student outcomes.

Next, we convened a local advisory committee (LAC) meeting in order to provide an overview of the *PRAXIS*® Content Knowledge for Teaching assessments and to review and modify the draft proficiency model for the social studies content knowledge test, which would cover both content knowledge topics and teaching practices. The proficiency model that this committee reviewed was then presented to a national advisory committee (NAC; discussed in more detail below). The LAC consisted of two classroom teachers and one faculty member from a higher education institution that were locally representative.

LAC members reviewed and modified the proficiency model as a group. The group started by reviewing teaching practices and was asked to consider whether the practices in question did not overlap, were appropriate, and were necessary to teach social studies in an elementary school setting. The members determined whether the specific tasks included activities that were important to the teaching of social studies in elementary classrooms. LAC members then reviewed the content knowledge topics as a group. They were asked to consider whether the topics consisted of knowledge that elementary students in social studies across the country were expected to learn. The members came to the consensus that using the four common divisions of social studies content—history, government and citizenship, human and physical geography, and economics—was the optimal way to organize the topics.

Then, we convened an NAC to review the test specifications for inclusion of the most essential student-level content domain and tasks of teaching elementary social studies. To maximize diversity of perspectives on the NAC, we selected participants to include experienced elementary social studies teachers, teacher educators, and education researchers from across

various regions of the United States. We also made sure to include participants who had expertise across the various social studies content areas (e.g., history, government and citizenship, human and physical geography, etc.) and across the elementary grades. The NAC was comprised of 11 members (10 females, 1 male), which included three elementary social studies teacher faculty members and eight elementary social studies teachers. NAC members were asked to consider whether the content knowledge categories and tasks of teaching were reflective of the bodies of knowledge and teaching practices that are important for entry-level practice. We then collected additional survey evidence to further support the inclusion of these content knowledge topics and practices in the elementary school social studies teacher licensure assessment.

Research Questions

We sought to gather information from expert educators about the content knowledge topics and teaching practices for elementary social studies. Our three research questions are listed here:

1. Is knowing how to teach this area of content/the practice relevant to a beginning elementary school social studies teacher's ability to be a safe and effective educator?
2. If knowing how to teach this area of content/the practice is relevant, how important is it to a beginning elementary school social studies teacher's ability to be a safe and effective educator?
3. How frequently is this practice applied by beginning elementary school teachers when teaching social studies?

Method

Sample

We sampled elementary school social studies teachers and college faculty who prepare social studies teachers. We first contacted 14,000 elementary school social studies teachers and 735 faculty members at teacher preparation programs. We utilized two database companies (MCH-Data and MDR) to obtain contact information for elementary teachers. Of those contacted, 224 responded for an overall response rate of 1.5% and 109 (48.7%) met the study eligibility criteria (i.e., either a licensed elementary school social studies teachers or college

faculty currently preparing elementary school teacher candidates to teach social studies) and participated in the study. Demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

We aimed to sample twice as many teachers as faculty members to obtain a significant number of teachers currently teaching lower and upper elementary classes. Participants were not compensated monetarily for their participation in the study, which took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Table 1. Background Information of Overall Sample (*N* = 109)

Item	Teachers (*N* = 80)	Faculty (*N* = 29)
Gender		
Female	71 (89%)	18 (62%)
Male	7 (9%)	8 (28%)
Other/prefer not to specify/missing	2 (3%)	3 (10%)
Race/ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Asian or Asian American	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Black or African American	3 (4%)	3 (10%)
Hispanic/Latino	1 (1%)	1 (3%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
White	63 (79%)	20 (69%)
Two or more races	3 (4%)	1 (3%)
Other/prefer not to answer/missing	8 (10%)	3 (10%)
Geographic region		
Northeast	11 (14%)	5 (17%)
Midwest	26 (33%)	10 (34%)
South	28 (35%)	10 (34%)
West	15 (19%)	4 (14%)
Current teaching assignment		
Lower (Grades K–3)	38 (48%)	-
Upper (Grades 4–6)	40 (50%)	-
Other	2 (3%)	-
Years of experience		
0–2 Years	4 (5%)	-
3–5 Years	8 (10%)	-
6–10 Years	18 (23%)	-
11–20 Years	18 (23%)	-
21 years or more	32 (40%)	-
Mentored or supervised student teachers		
Yes	-	23 (79%)
No	-	6 (21%)
Missing	-	0 (0%)
School or institution location		
Urban	14 (18%)	-
Suburban	27 (34%)	-
Rural	39 (49%)	-
Minority-serving institution		
Yes	-	2 (7%)
No	-	21 (72%)
Designation not available	-	6 (21%)

Survey

We collected information regarding the relevance and importance of the 24 social studies content knowledge topics for a beginning teacher's ability to effectively teach the subject. We also collected information regarding the frequency with which 26 teaching practices for social studies were performed by beginning teachers. Two content-related validity questions were posed to educators for each social studies content topic and practice:

1. Is [knowing how to teach this area of content/the practice] relevant to a beginning elementary school social studies teacher's ability to be a safe and effective educator?
2. If [knowing how to teach this area of content/the practice] is relevant, how important is it to a beginning elementary school social studies teacher's ability to be a safe and effective educator?

For the 26 practices of teaching social studies, a third question was posed:

3. How frequently is this practice applied by beginning elementary school teachers when teaching social studies?

If educators judged a social studies content topic or practice of teaching social studies as relevant, they then rated the importance of the topic or practice using a 6-point Likert scale, with anchors that ranged from 1 (*not at all important*) to 6 (*extremely important*). Thus, importance ratings were only collected from respondents who judged the social studies content topic or practice of teaching social studies as *relevant*. For the practices of teaching social studies only, if educators judged a practice of teaching social studies as relevant, they then rated the frequency with which the practice is applied after making judgments regarding the practice's importance using a 6-point Likert scale, with anchors that ranged from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*very frequently*).

Analysis

We report two types of analyses. The first type represents patterns in average relevance, importance, and frequency judgment ratings across the overall sample and by subgroups among teachers following the rationale provided by Tannenbaum and Rosenfeld (1994). Tannenbaum and Rosenfeld recommended that an average importance judgment of 3.5 on a 5-point scale be interpreted as sufficient to determine importance for licensure. The rationale for this threshold, they argued, is that that value represents the midpoint between *moderately important* and *very important*, which they established as a psychologically meaningful criterion for distinguishing

between important and unimportant topics or practices. Translating this finding to the 6-point scale would result in a threshold of 4.2, which similarly falls between the anchors *moderately important* and *very important* on the scale used in this investigation.

The content knowledge topic areas and social studies teaching practices should be deemed relevant, important, and frequently applied by teachers across grade levels to support their inclusion on the licensure test (Tannenbaum & Rosenfeld, 1994). In line with prior content validity research examining subgroup differences (see Martin-Raugh, Reese, Howell, et al., 2016; Martin-Raugh, Reese, Phelps, et al., 2016) and to examine whether judgments of topics and practices differed significantly by grade level, comparisons were made for grade level bands [K–3, 4–6] using effect sizes in which the mean difference between two groups was divided by a combination of group sample sizes and standard deviations. This action highlights notable areas in which differences between subgroups were observed. Effect sizes are often categorized by magnitude in terms of absolute value (Cohen, 1988): negligible (below 0.20), low (0.20 to 0.49), medium (0.50 to 0.79), and high (0.80 and above). Although nonnegligible effect sizes are categorized as low, following Fan (2001), for the purposes of this paper, we therefore report effect sizes that are at least medium in size to highlight notable differences in judgments across different groups. For clarification purposes, when discussing teachers and faculty together, we refer to this grouping as the overall sample. The second type of analysis indexes agreement for relevance, importance, and frequency judgments using intraclass correlations (ICC(2); Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). Grade level bands were the only subgroups analyzed because sample sizes were not large enough to conduct subgroup analysis by race/ethnicity (White, non-White) or geographic region (northeast, midwest, south, west) as in previous research (see Martin-Raugh Reese, Howell, et al., 2016; Martin-Raugh, Reese, Phelps, et al., 2016).

Results

We computed agreement in relevance, importance, and frequency judgments. The ICC(2) (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979) indexing agreement among educators regarding their relevance ratings across the 24 content knowledge topics was .83 (95% CI [.78, .87]) and .84 (95% CI [.79, .88]) for the 26 teaching practices. The ICC(2) indexing agreement among educators regarding their importance ratings across the 24 content knowledge topics was .94 (95% CI [.92, .95]) and .93 (95% CI [.92, .95]) for the 26 teaching practices. The ICC(2) indexing agreement among educators regarding their frequency ratings was .95 (95% CI [.94, .96]) for the 26 teaching

practices. Thus, agreement regarding relevance, importance, and frequency judgments can be considered excellent (Cicchetti, 1994).

More than three quarters of educators surveyed judged all content topics and practices to be relevant. Table 2 summarizes educators' judgments regarding the importance of each social studies topic, and Table 3 summarizes related judgments with respect to each practice. The average importance judgment for the 24 topics was approximately 4.05 or higher and across the 26 practices was 4.59 or higher. Using the guidelines from Tannenbaum and Rosenfeld (1994), results suggest that all but two topics and all practices included in the survey are of sufficient importance for inclusion in a licensure examination, according to our survey respondents.

Table 2. Summary of Importance Judgments for Content Knowledge for Teaching (CKT) Areas

Item	Teachers	Faculty	Overall
CKT 1	4.94 (0.85)	5.04 (0.92)	4.96 (0.86)
CKT 2	4.70 (0.99)	5.11 (0.89)	4.82 (0.98)
CKT 3	4.10 (1.04)	3.92 (0.78)	4.05 (0.97)
CKT 4	4.64 (0.83)	4.61 (1.03)	4.63 (0.88)
CKT 5	4.87 (0.78)	4.54 (0.88)	4.78 (0.82)
CKT 6	4.95 (0.85)	4.75 (0.89)	4.89 (0.86)
CKT 7	5.08 (0.98)	5.07 (1.00)	5.07 (0.98)
CKT 8	4.85 (0.87)	4.89 (0.96)	4.86 (0.89)
CKT 9	4.69 (0.95)	4.85 (0.91)	4.73 (0.94)
CKT 10	4.81 (1.00)	5.24 (0.87)	4.93 (0.98)
CKT 11	5.01 (0.98)	5.14 (0.74)	5.05 (0.92)
CKT 12	4.77 (1.07)	4.93 (0.96)	4.82 (1.04)
CKT 13	4.60 (0.97)	4.86 (1.08)	4.67 (1.00)
CKT 14	4.91 (1.02)	5.21 (0.73)	4.99 (0.95)
CKT 15	5.05 (0.98)	5.21 (0.88)	5.09 (0.95)
CKT 16	4.72 (0.95)	4.90 (0.98)	4.77 (0.95)
CKT 17	4.59 (0.99)	4.62 (1.24)	4.60 (1.06)
CKT 18	4.49 (0.98)	4.79 (0.94)	4.58 (0.98)
CKT 19	4.87 (1.00)	5.28 (0.84)	4.98 (0.97)
CKT 20	4.58 (1.06)	5.07 (1.03)	4.71 (1.07)
CKT 21	4.49 (0.95)	4.79 (0.94)	4.58 (0.96)
CKT 22	4.76 (0.96)	5.07 (1.05)	4.84 (0.99)
CKT 23	4.26 (0.97)	4.30 (1.30)	4.27 (1.06)
CKT 24	4.08 (1.03)	4.41 (1.22)	4.18 (1.09)
Minimum	4.08	3.92	4.05
Maximum	5.08	5.28	5.09
Sample size	58–80	24–29	82–108

Note. Importance scale: 1 (*not at all important*), 2 (*of little importance*), 3 (*of some importance*), 4 (*moderately important*), 5 (*very important*), 6 (*extremely important*). Respondents who judged the topic or practice not relevant are not included in the calculation of the average importance judgment.

Table 3. Summary of Importance Judgments for Social Studies Practice (SP) Areas

Item	Teachers	Faculty	Overall
SP 1	4.79 (0.78)	4.93 (0.84)	4.83 (0.79)
SP 2	5.00 (0.81)	5.31 (0.81)	5.08 (0.81)
SP 3	5.16 (0.82)	5.17 (0.66)	5.17 (0.78)
SP 4	4.68 (0.80)	4.73 (1.12)	4.69 (0.89)
SP 5	5.15 (0.82)	5.04 (0.98)	5.12 (0.86)
SP 6	4.90 (0.84)	4.79 (0.86)	4.87 (0.84)
SP 7	4.49 (0.91)	5.23 (0.82)	4.69 (0.94)
SP 8	4.69 (0.94)	5.15 (0.82)	4.81 (0.92)
SP 9	5.36 (0.79)	5.38 (0.82)	5.36 (0.79)
SP 10	4.83 (0.84)	4.83 (1.04)	4.83 (0.90)
SP 11	4.99 (0.94)	5.08 (1.04)	5.01 (0.96)
SP 12	5.18 (0.84)	5.43 (0.69)	5.25 (0.81)
SP 13	4.65 (0.92)	4.96 (0.90)	4.74 (0.92)
SP 14	4.62 (0.95)	5.12 (0.82)	4.75 (0.94)
SP 15	4.58 (0.89)	4.77 (1.03)	4.63 (0.93)
SP 16	4.59 (1.05)	4.60 (1.08)	4.59 (1.06)
SP 17	5.18 (0.79)	5.45 (0.69)	5.25 (0.77)
SP 18	4.82 (0.94)	5.41 (0.80)	4.98 (0.94)
SP 19	4.70 (0.92)	5.08 (0.93)	4.80 (0.93)
SP 20	4.95 (0.98)	5.00 (0.67)	4.96 (0.91)
SP 21	5.09 (0.80)	5.21 (0.57)	5.12 (0.75)
SP 22	4.85 (0.81)	5.07 (0.72)	4.91 (0.79)
SP 23	4.63 (0.88)	4.81 (0.85)	4.68 (0.87)
SP 24	4.93 (0.79)	5.19 (0.75)	5.00 (0.79)
SP 25	5.35 (0.79)	5.24 (0.74)	5.32 (0.78)
SP 26	5.09 (0.77)	5.17 (0.71)	5.11 (0.75)
Minimum	4.49	4.60	4.59
Maximum	5.36	5.45	5.36
Sample size	64–80	24–29	90–109

Note. Importance scale: 1 (*not at all important*), 2 (*of little importance*), 3 (*of some importance*), 4 (*moderately important*), 5 (*very important*), 6 (*extremely important*). Respondents who judged the topic or practice not relevant are not included in the calculation of the average importance judgment.

Respondents also judged how frequently a practice is applied by beginning elementary school teachers when teaching social studies. Table 4 summarizes the frequency judgments. The average frequency judgments ranged from 3.98–4.83 for the 26 social studies practices (SPs; 4 [*occasionally*] and 5 [*frequently*]), supporting the prevalence of these SPs for beginning elementary school teachers.

Table 4. Summary of Frequency Judgments for Social Studies Practice (SP) Areas

Item	Teachers	Faculty	Overall
SP 1	4.47 (0.83)	4.03 (0.94)	4.35 (0.88)
SP 2	4.64 (0.95)	4.21 (1.05)	4.52 (0.99)
SP 3	4.75 (1.04)	4.38 (1.01)	4.65 (1.04)
SP 4	4.39 (0.96)	4.15 (1.19)	4.33 (1.02)
SP 5	4.62 (0.92)	4.19 (1.00)	4.51 (0.96)
SP 6	4.55 (0.91)	4.14 (1.03)	4.44 (0.96)
SP 7	4.10 (1.03)	3.73 (1.15)	4.00 (1.07)
SP 8	4.23 (1.01)	3.93 (0.96)	4.15 (1.00)
SP 9	4.92 (0.98)	4.59 (1.09)	4.83 (1.01)
SP 10	4.45 (0.94)	3.93 (1.07)	4.30 (1.00)
SP 11	4.67 (0.99)	4.28 (1.17)	4.57 (1.05)
SP 12	4.57 (1.09)	4.25 (1.14)	4.49 (1.11)
SP 13	4.21 (1.01)	3.96 (1.22)	4.14 (1.07)
SP 14	4.32 (1.02)	4.08 (1.16)	4.26 (1.06)
SP 15	4.31 (0.96)	4.12 (1.07)	4.26 (0.99)
SP 16	4.26 (1.09)	3.88 (1.09)	4.16 (1.10)
SP 17	4.73 (1.11)	4.41 (1.05)	4.64 (1.10)
SP 18	4.22 (1.08)	3.89 (1.34)	4.13 (1.15)
SP 19	4.06 (1.10)	3.75 (1.29)	3.98 (1.15)
SP 20	4.64 (1.05)	4.32 (0.82)	4.55 (1.00)
SP 21	4.77 (0.91)	4.46 (0.84)	4.69 (0.89)
SP 22	4.55 (0.96)	3.96 (1.07)	4.39 (1.02)
SP 23	4.26 (0.86)	3.69 (1.16)	4.11 (0.98)
SP 24	4.37 (1.01)	3.92 (1.02)	4.26 (1.03)
SP 25	4.90 (1.08)	4.48 (1.15)	4.78 (1.11)
SP 26	4.71 (0.85)	4.24 (1.09)	4.58 (0.94)
Minimum	4.06	3.69	3.98
Maximum	4.92	4.59	4.83
Sample size	64–80	24–29	90–109

Note. Frequency scale: 1 (*never*), 2 (*very rarely*), 3 (*rarely*), 4 (*occasionally*), 5 (*frequently*), 6 (*very frequently*). Respondents who judged the practice not relevant are not included in the calculation of the average frequency judgment.

Survey participants were instructed to consider the full range of elementary grades when indicating their judgments. The examination of average importance judgments by grade level band taught can be seen in Tables 5 and 6. Average ratings were considered for teachers who are currently teaching lower (kindergarten through Grade 3) and upper (Grades 4−6) elementary grades. CKT areas on average were rated within a range of 4.13 to 5.16 for lower grade teachers and 3.97 to 5.13 for upper grade teachers. SPs had slightly higher ranges in average importance judgments, which were 4.43 to 5.27 for lower grade teachers and 4.50 to 5.50 for upper grade teachers.

Table 5. Summary of Importance Judgments for Content Knowledge for Teaching (CKT) Areas by Current Grade Level Taught

Item	Lower (K–3)	Upper (4–6)	Difference
CKT 1	4.79 (0.84)	5.03 (0.83)	0.24 (0.28)
CKT 2	4.42 (0.97)	4.92 (0.97)	0.49 (0.51)
CKT 3	4.13 (0.95)	4.09 (1.15)	0.03 (0.03)
CKT 4	4.77 (0.88)	4.53 (0.78)	0.25 (0.30)
CKT 5	4.92 (0.73)	4.82 (0.82)	0.10 (0.12)
CKT 6	4.91 (0.90)	4.97 (0.84)	0.06 (0.07)
CKT 7	5.03 (0.99)	5.13 (0.99)	0.10 (0.10)
CKT 8	4.85 (0.93)	4.87 (0.83)	0.02 (0.02)
CKT 9	4.67 (1.05)	4.69 (0.89)	0.03 (0.03)
CKT 10	4.92 (0.94)	4.74 (1.07)	0.18 (0.18)
CKT 11	5.05 (0.88)	4.98 (1.07)	0.08 (0.08)
CKT 12	4.71 (1.13)	4.84 (1.04)	0.12 (0.11)
CKT 13	4.53 (0.91)	4.62 (1.04)	0.09 (0.10)
CKT 14	4.71 (0.93)	5.05 (1.08)	0.34 (0.33)
CKT 15	5.16 (0.82)	4.98 (1.12)	0.18 (0.19)
CKT 16	4.84 (0.80)	4.60 (1.08)	0.24 (0.25)
CKT 17	4.76 (0.88)	4.44 (1.10)	0.33 (0.33)
CKT 18	4.57 (1.09)	4.45 (0.89)	0.12 (0.12)
CKT 19	4.81 (1.05)	4.92 (0.98)	0.11 (0.11)
CKT 20	4.79 (1.12)	4.37 (1.00)	0.42 (0.40)
CKT 21	4.61 (0.95)	4.41 (0.98)	0.20 (0.21)
CKT 22	4.82 (0.98)	4.71 (0.96)	0.11 (0.11)
CKT 23	4.43 (1.04)	4.07 (0.87)	0.36 (0.38)
CKT 24	4.25 (1.00)	3.97 (1.05)	0.28 (0.27)
Minimum	4.13	3.97	0.02
Maximum	5.16	5.13	0.49
Sample size	24–38	30–40	

Note. Importance scale: 1 (*not at all important*), 2 (*of little importance*), 3 (*of some importance*), 4 (*moderately important*), 5 (*very important*), 6 (*extremely important*). Respondents who judged the topic or practice not relevant are not included in the calculation of the average importance judgment. Consistent with prior reporting (e.g., Martin-Raugh, Reese, Howell, et al., 2016), difference values are presented in the third column.

Table 6. Summary of Importance Judgments for Social Studies Practice (SP) Areas by Current Grade Level Taught

Item	Lower (K–3)	Upper (4–6)	Difference
SP 1	4.65 (0.86)	4.92 (0.68)	0.27 (0.35)
SP 2	4.89 (0.89)	5.13 (0.70)	0.23 (0.29)
SP 3	5.03 (0.85)	5.28 (0.78)	0.25 (0.30)
SP 4	4.68 (0.77)	4.69 (0.86)	0.02 (0.02)
SP 5	5.14 (0.82)	5.15 (0.83)	0.01 (0.02)
SP 6	4.87 (0.70)	4.93 (0.97)	0.06 (0.07)
SP 7	4.48 (0.97)	4.50 (0.88)	0.02 (0.02)
SP 8	4.59 (0.96)	4.76 (0.94)	0.17 (0.18)
SP 9	5.27 (0.84)	5.44 (0.75)	0.17 (0.21)
SP 10	4.76 (0.90)	4.89 (0.82)	0.13 (0.15)
SP 11	4.91 (0.98)	5.05 (0.93)	0.14 (0.14)
SP 12	5.22 (0.79)	5.15 (0.90)	0.06 (0.07)
SP 13	4.49 (0.95)	4.86 (0.88)	0.37 (0.41)
SP 14	4.57 (0.99)	4.71 (0.93)	0.14 (0.15)
SP 15	4.57 (0.88)	4.62 (0.89)	0.05 (0.05)
SP 16	4.43 (1.14)	4.72 (0.94)	0.29 (0.28)
SP 17	5.25 (0.81)	5.13 (0.79)	0.12 (0.16)
SP 18	4.95 (0.97)	4.69 (0.92)	0.25 (0.27)
SP 19	4.90 (0.96)	4.60 (0.85)	0.30 (0.33)
SP 20	4.78 (1.05)	5.14 (0.86)	0.36 (0.37)
SP 21	5.00 (0.74)	5.18 (0.88)	0.18 (0.22)
SP 22	4.94 (0.78)	4.76 (0.85)	0.18 (0.22)
SP 23	4.66 (0.83)	4.57 (0.92)	0.08 (0.10)
SP 24	4.86 (0.81)	5.00 (0.81)	0.14 (0.18)
SP 25	5.17 (0.88)	5.50 (0.68)	0.33 (0.43)
SP 26	4.95 (0.78)	5.23 (0.77)	0.28 (0.36)
Minimum	4.43	4.50	0.01
Maximum	5.27	5.50	0.37
Sample size	28–38	34–40	

Note. Importance scale: 1 (*not at all important*), 2 (*of little importance*), 3 (*of some importance*), 4 (*moderately important*), 5 (*very important*), 6 (*extremely important*). Respondents who judged the topic or practice not relevant are not included in the calculation of the average importance judgment. Consistent with prior reporting (e.g., Martin-Raugh, Reese, Howell, et al., 2016), difference values are presented in the third column.

Both lower and upper grade teachers provided average importance judgments below 4.2 for CKT 3 (Understands the contributions of classical civilizations such as China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome); upper grade teachers also provided judgments at a similar level for CKT 23 (Understands how businesses operate) and CKT 24 (Understands the patterns of economic activities in the United States and the world). All average importance judgments for SPs were above 4.2; thus, they were sufficient for inclusion in the examination. In investigating teachers' average importance ratings by grade level band taught, there was only one effect size greater than 0.50 for any of the CKT or SP areas: CKT 2 (Understands how various sources provide information about the past and present; mean difference = 0.49, effect size = 0.51) where upper

grade teachers' importance ratings were higher on average (4.92) than for lower grade teachers (4.42).

Table 7 presents average frequency judgments comparing lower elementary school teachers (kindergarten to Grade 3) and upper elementary school teachers (Grades 4−6) across the SPs. It is worth noting that participants were asked to consider the frequency with which practices were applied across the elementary school grade span. The average frequency judgments fell within similar ranges for lower elementary school teachers (4.10 to 5.00) and for upper elementary school teachers (4.00 to 4.93). Effect sizes were below 0.50 for all SPs, suggesting that differences in teacher judgments across different grade level bands were small. This evidence supports the inclusion of the SPs on the licensure exam.

Table 7. Summary of Frequency Judgments for Social Studies Practice (SP) Areas by Current Grade Level Taught

Item	Lower (K–3)	Upper (4–6)	Difference
SP 1	4.43 (0.77)	4.49 (0.90)	0.05 (0.06)
SP 2	4.68 (0.87)	4.59 (1.04)	0.09 (0.10)
SP 3	4.79 (0.87)	4.73 (1.20)	0.06 (0.06)
SP 4	4.47 (0.90)	4.33 (1.04)	0.14 (0.14)
SP 5	4.76 (0.93)	4.50 (0.93)	0.26 (0.28)
SP 6	4.68 (0.84)	4.43 (0.98)	0.26 (0.28)
SP 7	4.21 (1.02)	4.00 (1.07)	0.21 (0.20)
SP 8	4.41 (0.96)	4.05 (1.06)	0.36 (0.35)
SP 9	5.00 (0.85)	4.82 (1.10)	0.18 (0.18)
SP 10	4.42 (0.97)	4.44 (0.94)	0.02 (0.02)
SP 11	4.74 (0.95)	4.58 (1.06)	0.16 (0.16)
SP 12	4.65 (0.98)	4.51 (1.21)	0.14 (0.12)
SP 13	4.20 (0.90)	4.23 (1.14)	0.03 (0.03)
SP 14	4.32 (1.03)	4.34 (1.05)	0.02 (0.02)
SP 15	4.25 (1.04)	4.35 (0.92)	0.10 (0.11)
SP 16	4.10 (1.16)	4.36 (1.02)	0.26 (0.24)
SP 17	4.89 (1.04)	4.55 (1.15)	0.34 (0.31)
SP 18	4.38 (1.06)	4.03 (1.08)	0.35 (0.33)
SP 19	4.13 (1.20)	4.00 (1.06)	0.13 (0.12)
SP 20	4.58 (0.94)	4.70 (1.18)	0.12 (0.11)
SP 21	4.84 (0.89)	4.69 (0.95)	0.15 (0.16)
SP 22	4.59 (1.02)	4.53 (0.92)	0.06 (0.06)
SP 23	4.22 (0.87)	4.26 (0.82)	0.04 (0.05)
SP 24	4.46 (1.01)	4.26 (1.03)	0.19 (0.19)
SP 25	4.86 (0.99)	4.93 (1.19)	0.06 (0.06)
SP 26	4.59 (0.93)	4.83 (0.78)	0.23 (0.27)
Minimum	4.10	4.00	0.02
Maximum	5.00	4.93	0.36
Sample size	28–38	34–40	

Note. Frequency scale: 1 (*never*), 2 (*very rarely*), 3 (*rarely*), 4 (*occasionally*), 5 (*frequently*), 6 (*very frequently*). Respondents who judged the practice not relevant are not included in the calculation of the average frequency judgment. Consistent with prior reporting (e.g., Martin-Raugh, Reese, Howell, et al., 2016), difference values are presented in the third column.

Discussion

The accrual of content validity evidence is of crucial importance for the development and evaluation of licensure assessments (Kane, 2004; Sireci & Sukin, 2013). In summary, the responses we obtained support the inclusion of the social studies content areas and practices that are central to the *PRAXIS*® Elementary Education: Content Knowledge for Teaching (CKT) assessment in social studies.

In this study, more than three quarters of the educators who responded to our survey judged all content topics and practices to be relevant. This response is supporting evidence for the inclusion of the 24 social studies content knowledge topics and 26 teaching practices on the

teacher licensure assessment in the social studies domain. Moreover, the ICC(2) (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979) indicating the level of agreement among educators who responded to our survey regarding their relevance ratings across the various content knowledge topics and teaching practices ranged from .83 to .95, which translates to excellent agreement (Cicchetti, 1994).

Domain experts' importance judgments are of particular significance when examining the content validity of a licensure examination (Kane, 1982). Our results suggest that the majority of topics and practices included in this survey are of sufficient importance for inclusion in a licensure examination. However, notable exceptions include CKT 3 (Understands the contributions of classical civilizations such as China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome) and CKT 24 (Understands the patterns of economic activities in the United States and the world), where the average importance ratings (4.05 and 4.18, respectively) fall slightly below this threshold.

Prior research has suggested that professional licensure assessments should place more focus on teaching practices that are performed more often (Raymond & Neustel, 2006), as tasks that need to be performed often within a job are presumably more critical to the profession. Accordingly, in this investigation, we asked teachers and faculty members who prepare teachers to judge how frequently a practice is applied by beginning elementary school teachers when teaching social studies. In general, the average frequency judgments for the 26 teaching practices in social studies across both practicing teachers and faculty members who prepare teachers buttress the pervasiveness of these teaching practices for beginning elementary school social studies teachers.

Finally, when comparing judgments made by lower and upper elementary school teachers for all 24 content knowledge topics and 26 teaching practices, only CKT 2 (Understands how various sources provide information about the past and present) yielded an effect size greater than 0.50. Consequently, overall, differences in teacher judgments across the different elementary school grade levels were marginal, providing support for the inclusion of the content knowledge topics and teaching practices on the social studies licensure assessment.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The study presented here is not without limitations. One limitation concerns the relatively small sample size of experts surveyed. Prior research has stated that sufficient generalizability can be obtained from samples of 200 to 400 respondents (Kane, Miller, Trine, Becker, & Carson, 1995). However, the sample size in this study fell short of that threshold. Moreover, the

respondents that chose to participate were not randomly selected, and it is not possible to determine how study respondents differed from those that chose not to participate. Future research with a larger sample size would afford improved precision in statistical analyses, reduced bias, and improved generalizability of findings to the broader population of teachers (Raymond, 2001). However, as large samples of experts can often be difficult to obtain, future content validation efforts may consider using smaller, more targeted groups of experts to participate in focus groups as an alternative to using the survey methodology employed for this study. One benefit of this strategy over the use of a more large-scale survey methodology is that a smaller, more targeted group of experts may be chosen such that they are more representative of the national population of educators than those that may participate in a large-scale survey. However, it is worth noting that both methodologies are susceptible to response bias.

Additionally, prior content validity research on teacher licensure assessments in other subject areas, such as English language arts (Martin-Raugh, Reese, Phelps, et al., 2016), mathematics (Martin-Raugh, Reese, Howell, et al., 2016), and science (Martin-Raugh, Mikeska, Steinberg, & Minsky, 2018), presented findings regarding average importance and frequency judgments disaggregated by race/ethnicity and geographic region. However, the comparatively smaller sample size obtained in the current study precluded this type of analysis. Future research may examine the extent to which relevance, importance, and frequency ratings generalize across different stakeholder groups, as the diversity and representativeness of experts within a particular field is important to consider given that individuals may serve different type of communities and encounter different types of issues at work (Clauser et al., 2006; Raymond, 2001; Tannenbaum & Wesley, 1993).

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Appendix A. Social Studies Knowledge Content Areas

- CKT 1
  Understands the concept of chronology
- CKT 2
  Understands how various sources provide information about the past and present
- CKT 3
  Understands the contributions of classical civilizations such as China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome
- CKT 4
  Understands the characteristics of indigenous people in North America before European exploration
- CKT 5
  Understands the causes and effects of European exploration and the colonization of North America
- CKT 6
  Understands how conflict between the American colonies and Great Britain led to American independence
- CKT 7
  Understands the development of the U.S. government
- CKT 8
  Understands political, economic, and social changes that occurred in the United States during the nineteenth century
- CKT 9
  Understands important developments in the United States during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries
- CKT 10
  Understands the concepts of family and community
- CKT 11
  Understands the purposes and functions of government
- CKT 12
  Understands the various levels of government

- CKT 13
  Understands the various forms of government
- CKT 14
  Understands important ideas in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights
- CKT 15
  Understands the characteristics of responsible citizenship
- CKT 16
  Understands the concepts of location, distance, and direction
- CKT 17
  Understands physical characteristics of place and how they affect human activities and settlement patterns
- CKT 18
  Understands human characteristics of place and how humans adapt to variations in the physical environment
- CKT 19
  Understand similarities and differences among people
- CKT 20
  Understands how human needs are met
- CKT 21
  Understands the concepts of goods and services and the roles of producers and consumers
- CKT 22
  Understands the purposes of earning, spending, and saving money
- CKT 23
  Understands how businesses operate
- CKT 24
  Understands the patterns of economic activities in the United States and the world

Appendix B. Social Studies Teaching Practices

- SP 1

  Anticipate common patterns of thinking, including misperceptions and alternate interpretations, that may distort student comprehension of social studies concepts and processes
- SP 2

  Recognize the effect of student abilities, interest, motivation, background knowledge, as well as personal and cultural experiences on the capability to understand and make use of social studies content
- SP 3

  Select, create, or adapt questions or tasks to determine if students understand a particular social studies concept or skill or to determine the student's level of understanding
- SP 4

  Anticipate and determine student interest and motivation around particular social studies concepts, texts, resources, and processes
- SP 5

  Locate resources and instructional tools and evaluate their potential to support and develop understanding of social studies concepts or skills
- SP 6

  Select, create, or adapt resources and examples to address and illustrate social studies concepts as well as to address student questions or misconceptions
- SP 7

  Evaluate and select representations that support multiple interpretations
- SP 8

  Evaluate and select multiple representations that illustrate a particular social studies concept or skill
- SP 9

  Define, explain and model social studies concepts or skills
- SP 10

  Evaluate and select processes for working with social studies content

- SP 11
  Master the work that will be demanded of the students as part of the intended curriculum
- SP 12
  Select, create, or adapt questions or tasks that address social studies concepts or skills and also differentiate among student ability levels and vary in approach, difficulty, or complexity
- SP 13
  Use overarching themes to engage and develop students' inquiry and investigation skills
- SP 14
  Use overarching themes to develop context and make connections between and among social studies topics
- SP 15
  Support with evidence why a social studies strategy or skill is appropriate or effective
- SP 16
  Support with evidence why a particular social studies concept or representation serves a particular purpose
- SP 17
  Scaffold learning activities to reinforce or build on prior learning
- SP 18
  Help students extend social studies inquiry beyond the classroom lesson
- SP 19
  Guide students to extend understanding of socials studies concepts and skills to take informed action
- SP 20
  Select, create, or adapt tasks that address mastery of an objective as measured by an assessment
- SP 21
  Lead discussions with or among students to build knowledge of and competence with social studies content

- SP 22

  Evaluate discussion among students for evidence of understanding or to determine methods for focusing instruction
- SP 23

  Evaluate student explanations or arguments for use of appropriate social studies processes
- SP 24

  Evaluate student thinking to identify the basis for misconceptions in order to determine a strategy to improve student comprehension
- SP 25

  Provide feedback to encourage student participation or increase student comprehension
- SP 26

  Select appropriate methods to assess student comprehension of social studies concepts and skills