

## CAUSES OF STUDENTS BOREDOM IN SOCIAL STUDIES DISCUSSIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was conducted to find out why students get bored in Social Studies discussions. It involved 50 Grade-10 Social Studies students enrolled in a public secondary school in the Division of Zambales for the School Year 2017-2018. The study made use of a qualitative design using descriptive phenomenology with a structured interview guide as main gathering tool. Four major themes emerged from the categorized statements of the participants on why they get bored in Social Studies discussions. It includes the Nature of the Subject, Students' Interest, Teacher-Factor, and the Teaching Strategy used by the teacher. Two themes emerged from the categorized responses of the participants on how they cope up with the boredom in their Social Studies discussions namely: Reappraising and Evading. The students' preferred teaching strategy in Social Studies discussions includes lecture discussions, use of intelligent humors in class, story-telling or personal-related experiences, and cooperative learning. It can be concluded that the causes of students' boredom in Social Studies discussions are the nature of the subject itself, students' interest, and the teacher's style and strategy in teaching; students use reappraising and evading as their boredom-coping strategies in Social Studies discussions; Social Studies students prefer a mixture of lecture-discussion and cooperative learning teaching strategy. The study recommends that Social Studies teachers must be equipped with varied teaching strategies that will cater all learners' needs and to avoid boredom during class discussions.*

**Keywords:** Qualitative, Students' Boredom, Coping Strategies in Classroom Boredom, Teaching Strategies in Social Studies.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Students frequently are not positive about their Social Studies subject experiences. Even more alarming are studies showing that students do not feel social studies as a particularly valuable or interesting part of the school curriculum (Schug, Todd, & Beery, 1982). It is clear that if Social Studies is recognized by the students as not being important and interesting, then probably learning Social Studies will not be inviting for them and they have no reasons to get involve and participate in the classroom discussions.

Boredom is one of the most frequently experienced negative emotions among students. Bored students cannot reach their cognitive and metacognitive potential, especially during classroom instruction. In this way, boredom reflects a dissipation of human resources that modern, achievement-oriented societies cannot afford, particularly in regards of an increasing competition due to globalization. For the students who experience boredom in class it is a mostly negative experience, which should therefore be avoided as effectively as possible. Aside students themselves, teachers are the ones who can most directly impact students' experience of boredom by designing classroom environments that either promote or reduce the occurrence of this emotion (Daschmann, 2013).

The study of Schug et. al. (1982) determined why kids don't like Social Studies. Results shown that many students found Social Studies content boring, citing that the information is too far removed from their experience, too detailed, or too repetitious. These reasons suggest the need to strive for greater variety in instruction and provide more opportunities for student's success.

Students nowadays, perceive Social Studies as a boring subject that led them not to focus on the lesson being discussed by the teacher. If teachers will only know the reasons of students' boredom, they will be able to address the problem and help students cope with boredom. Hence, this study focused on why students get bored in Social Studies discussions.

## **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

This study aimed to find out why Grade 10 students of a secondary school in Zambales, Philippines in School Year 2017-2018 get bored in Social Studies discussions.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This study was to find out why students get bored in Social Studies discussions.

The study would concentrate on (a) Why students get bored in Social Studies discussions? (b) How do students cope with the boredom in their class discussions? (c) What teaching strategy in Social Studies discussions do students prefer?

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive phenomenology. This is designed to explore and create a detailed description of a phenomenon - why students get bored in Social Studies discussions. It is used further to deduce information from one's live experiences and, in turn, forming a description of universal importance (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2009).

The study was conducted at Castillejos National High School (CNHS) located at Barangay San Roque, Castillejos, Zambales for the school year 2017-2018. It involved a total of 50 Grade 10 Social Studies students purposively selected, divided into 2 sections of Castillejos National High School. 45 of the participants are Grade 10 Zircon which consists of 20 boys and 25 girls while the remaining 5 participants were boys that came from Grade 10 Garnet.

Structured Interview Guide served as the main instrument in gathering the data. The researchers used three questions that are standardized, open-ended that enable participants to answer as much as they like in their own words. This study used thematic analysis. It is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis consists of the participants' significant points and statements which was classified and summarized into themes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Students' Reasons on Why They Get Bored in Social Studies Discussions

Table 1 shows students' reasons on why they get bored in Social Studies discussions. Various perspectives were reported by the students on why they get bored in Social Studies discussions. Four major themes emerged from the categorized statements of the participants which include the nature of the subject, students' interest, teacher- factor, and the teaching strategy used by the teacher.

**Nature of the Subject.** Social studies is the study of man and his physical, social, political, cultural and economical environment. It centers on the development of man, how man influences his environment and how the environment influences him in return (Salmamza, n.d.). As cited by one participant, *“Nababagot ako sa talakayan sa Araling Panlipunan dahil masyadong malawak ang nakapaloob sa asignaturang ito, hindi lang sariling bansa kundi maging ang mga bansa sa Asya at sa buong daigdig.”*

According to Teachnology (n.d.), Social Studies will provide people the knowledge about their country and the world through the help of other disciplines as well such As Political Science, History, Economics, Religion, Geography, Anthropology, and as well as Psychology.

**Students’ Interest.** McCarthy (2014) stated that students get interested in a topic holds so much power. When a topic connects to what students like to do, engagement deepens as they willingly spend time thinking, dialoging, and creating ideas in meaningful ways. One participant stated, *“Kaya ako nababagot sa talakayan sa Araling Panlipunan dahil hindi ako nakakarelate sa aming tinatalakay.”*

Making learning contextual to real-world experiences is a key learning technique with differentiating for student interests. Often, the core content and concepts are represented in the world beyond the classroom or school building -- in ways that students cannot see, as if they're walking through life wearing a blindfold. When teachers plan for content, processing, and product, differentiating by interests helps remove the blindfold so that learners can see those invisible concepts (McCarthy, 2014).

**Teacher-Factor.** The teacher himself must come into possession of adequate knowledge of the objectives and standards of the curriculum, skills in teaching, interests, appreciation and ideals (Barberos, Gonzalo, & Padayogdog, n.d.).

Teacher’s passion in teaching affects student’s interaction with the lesson, and increases the enjoyment during class time (Witt, Wheelless, & Allen, 2004). As stated by one participant, *“Nakakabagot ang talakayan sa Araling Panlipunan dahil sa aming guro na boring, walang gana, at nakakaantok kung magturo.”*

According to Barberos et. al. (n.d.), the teacher needs to exert effort to lead students into a life that is large, full, stimulating and satisfying. Some students seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many need or expect their instructors or teachers to inspire, challenge or stimulate them.

**Teaching Strategy Used.** Teachers, being the focal figure in education, must be competent and knowledgeable in order to impart the knowledge they are able to give to their students. Good teaching is a very personal manner. Effective teaching is concerned with the student as a person and with his general development (Barberos et. al., n.d.).

One participant stated, “*Kaya ako nababagot sa talakayan sa Araling panlipunan dahil puro nalang pasulat si Teacher ng lecture na hindi naman ipinaliliwanag ng maayos.*” As stated by Barberos et. al. (n.d.), the teacher must recognize individual differences among his/her students and adjust instructions that best suit to the learners. It is always a fact that as educators, we play varied and vital roles in the classroom.

Table 1  
*Students’ Reasons on Why They Get Bored in Social Studies Discussions*

Question	Categorized Significant Statement	Emerging Themes
<i>Bakit ka nababagot sa talakayan sa asignaturang Araling Panlipunan?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dahil ang mga pinag-aaralan ay patungkol sa lipunan, ekonomiya at kasaysayan.</li> </ul>	<i>Nature of the Subject</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dahil minsan, paulit-ulit nalang ang talakayan.</li> <li>Dahil maraming impormasyong kailangang tandaan.</li> <li>Dahil kadalasan, mahirap sundan ang mga talakayan.</li> <li>Dahil masyadong malawak ang nakapaloob sa asignaturang ito, hindi lang sariling bansa kundi maging ang mga bansa sa Asya at sa buong daigdig.</li> <li>Dahil maraming salitang hindi pamilyar at mahirap intindihin.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dahil hindi ako nakakarelate.</li> <li>Dahil wala akong hilig sa mga talakayan patungkol sa nakaraan.</li> <li>Dahil ayaw ko ng mga pinag-aaralan sa asignaturang ito.</li> </ul>	<i>Student’s Interest</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dahil boring, walang gana, at nakakaantok magturo si Teacher.</li> </ul>	

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• Dahil hindi ko maintindihan ang itinuturo ng aking guro.	<b><i>Teacher-Factor</i></b>
• Dahil puro nalang pasulat si Teacher ng lecture na hindi naman ipinaliliwanag ng maayos.	<b><i>Teaching Strategy Used</i></b>

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### Students' Boredom Coping Strategies in Social Studies Discussions

Coping strategies can be correlated to certain personality traits, but the experience of boredom is assumed to exist as the product of school experience (Schelpat, n.d.)

Table 3 shows students' boredom coping strategies in their Social Studies discussions. Various responses were stated by the participants on how they cope up with the boredom in their Social Studies discussions. Two themes emerged from the categorized responses of the participants namely: reappraising and evading.

**Reappraising.** Reappraising is a boredom-coping strategy wherein students (reappraisers) cope with boring activities by increasing their focus on their potentially valuable aspects of the activity (Nett et. al., 2010). As stated by one participant, "*Para maalís ang pagkabagot ko sa aming talakayan sa Araling Panlipunan, nakikinig ako sa itinuturo ng aming guro upang mayroong maisagot kapag siya ay nagtanong.*"

According to Nett et. al. (2010), reappraisers mitigate boredom through a cognitive reassessment of the situation, focusing on the utility value of a subject.

**Evading.** Evading is a boredom-coping strategy wherein students (evaders) engage in cognitive and behavioral avoidance strategies to mitigate their boredom (Nett et. al., 2010). One participant said, "*Nakikipag-usap ako sa katabi ko para maalís ang pagkabagot ko sa talakayan naming sa Araling Panlipunan.*"

Nett et. al. (2010) stated that evaders particularly used behavioral avoidance strategies such as chatting with classmates when bored.

Table 2

*Students' Boredom Coping Strategies in Social Studies Discussions*

Question	Categorized Significant Statement	Emerging Theme
<p>Ano ang iyong ginagawa upang maalis ang iyong pagkabagot sa inyong talakayan sa Araling Panlipunan?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nakikinig ako sa itinuturo ng aming guro upang mayroong maisagot kapag siya ay nagtanong.</li> </ul>	<b><i>Reappraising</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilit kong iniintindi ang talakayan.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nakikinig sa guro habang nagsusulat upang maunawaan ang talakayan at hindi mapag-iwanan.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isinusulat ang tinatalakay ng guro upang hindi antukin.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nagbabasa ng modyul upang masundan ang sinasabi ng guro.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sumasagot sa mga tanong ng guro.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nagdadrawing.</li> <li>• Nakikipag-usap sa katabi.</li> <li>• Ginagawang biro ang talakayan.</li> <li>• Nag-iingay.</li> <li>• Kumakanta.</li> <li>• Iniisip ko kung ano ang sekreto ng buhay.</li> <li>• Natutulog nalang sa klase.</li> <li>• Nagcecellphone ng patago.</li> </ul>	

**Students' Preferred Teaching Strategies in Social Studies**

There are many useful teaching strategies to support effective teaching in social studies. Multiple responses were reported by the participants on what teaching strategy in Social Studies discussions do they prefer.

Table 3 shows that the participants preferred lecture discussion, use of humor, story-telling, and cooperative learning.



Teaching is more likely to be effective when it is informed by an understanding of how students learn. Teachers need to find out what teaching strategy works best for every student to help them succeed.

**Lecture Discussion.** Lecture discussion is a teaching strategy wherein the teacher presents information for students to learn. One participant stated, “*Ang pamamaraan ng pagtuturo sa Araling Panlipunan na gusto ko ay ‘yong ipinaliliwanag ng maayos ang talakayan upang lalong maintindihan ng mga mag-aaral at makasagot sa mga katanungan ng guro.*” Effective lectures incorporate audio-visual aids, opportunities for students to actively participate and a clear focus (Everything Social Studies, n.d.).

**Use of Humor.** According to Weimer (n.d.), humors in educational settings serve a variety of positive functions beyond simply making people laugh. Humor builds group (as in class) unity and somehow lessen the boredom or eventually eliminate boredom during class discussions. As stated by one participant, “*Ang pamamaraan ng pagtuturo na gusto ko sa pag-aaral ng Araling Panlipunan ay ‘yong may halong biro kapag nagtuturo para sumigla ang mga estudyante.*” People respond more positively to each other when humor is present.

**Story-Telling.** Through telling stories, you make life and learning more relevant, giving reluctant learners a better angle of engagement. It humanizes learning (Catapano, n.d.). As cited by one participant, “*Ang pamamaraan ng pagtuturo sa Araling Panlipunan na gusto ay ‘yong ikinukuwento ang nangyari sa nakaraan para mas ganahan kaming makinig at mas maintindihan namin ang itinuturo.*” As stated by Hansen (n.d.), stories help students realize that social studies is not simply the study of history, but an exploration of real people and their lives.

**Cooperative Learning.** Cooperative learning is a technique that allows students to learn from each other and gain important interpersonal skills. It is fun, so students enjoy it and are more motivated and it is interactive, so students are engaged, active participants in the learning (Olsen, n.d.). One participant stated, “*Ang gusto kong pamamaraan ng pagtuturo ng Araling Panlipunan ay ‘yong maraming group activity para tulungan sa paggawa o pagsagot sa mga tanong.*” Cooperative learning allows discussion and critical thinking, so students learn more and remember what they've learned for a longer period of time.



Table 3

Question	Categorized Significant Statement	Emerging Themes
Anong pamamaraan ng pagtuturo ang mas gusto mo sa pag-aaral ng araling Panlipunan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ipinaliliwanag ng maayos ang talakayan upang lalong maintindihan ng mga mag-aaral at makasagot sa mga katanungan ng guro.</li> </ul>	<i>Lecture discussion</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ipinaliliwanag ng maayos ang lahat ng ipinapasulat.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May halong joke ang lesson.</li> </ul>	<i>Use of humor</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May halong biro kapag nagtuturo para sumigla ang mga estudyante.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ikinukuwento ang nangyari sa nakaraan para mas ganahan kaming makinig at mas maintindihan namin ang itinuturo.</li> </ul>	<i>Story-Telling</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nagkukuwento patungkol sa buhay niya ng naaayon sa tinatalakay</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maraming group activity para tulungan sa paggawa o pagsagot sa mga tanong.</li> </ul>	<i>Cooperative Learning</i>

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the causes of students' boredom in Social Studies discussions are the nature of the subject itself, students' interest, and the teacher's style and strategy in teaching. Students use reappraising and evading as their boredom-coping strategies in Social Studies discussions. Furthermore, Social Studies students prefer a mixture of lecture-discussion and cooperative learning teaching strategy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary of the investigations and conclusions, the researcher advised the Social Studies teachers to use varied teaching strategies that will cater all learners' needs and to avoid boredom during class discussions. They may also provide ice breaker activities related to the topic they are teaching to help students avoid boredom and may use innovative instructional materials for effective students' learning.

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