Based on an extensive review of literature, the concerns expressed by principals and educational leaders on the subject, and my own experience as a Social Studies practitioner, my conceptual framework examines the preconceptions built by preservice Social Studies teachers related to their understanding of Social Studies instruction and their ability to think about instruction that integrates technology into the classroom while still focusing on curriculum content. Building on the work that I have done researching current studies as well as my personal experience, I see a number of factors intersecting within the pre-service educator, including their formal teacher training, their personal interpretation of what Social Studies education looks like, and their experiences with technology as well as their attitudes about technology.

Currently, the research indicates that many preservice and novice Social Studies teachers struggle with their ability to meet the needs of their students when they reach the classroom because their current pedagogy and practice classes are not adequate to meet the needs of a modern teacher. Many of the formal teacher training classes that Social Studies educators experience focus on separate conceptual ideas; teaching in the classroom, social studies content, and basic technology training skills. Due to the disjointed nature of their formal education, Social Studies teachers are developing a perception of instruction that is often disjointed as well, forcing them to choose between using technology or teaching the content. Additionally, Social Studies educators are defining their instruction based on their content background and do not develop methods of Social Studies instruction that can be applied on a broader scale, regardless of which content they are covering.

While the formal education of future educators is playing a role in their lack of preparation to teach in the modern classroom, their own experiences as a K-12 student also impacts their perception of Social Studies instruction, how technology integrates into the classroom, and the role that technology plays in school. Many researchers have found that preservice teachers base many of their beliefs about instructional technology on their own
experiences with technology in the classroom, which means that if there are currently teachers who do not know how to successfully integrate technology to support their instruction, their students develop a misguided perception of the role of technology in the classroom. This perception goes on to influence how teachers design their lessons, manage their classroom, and, potentially, interact with technology in their own lives.

An additional challenge is the perceived separation between personal and educational technology. While we live in an era of constant contact through social media and cell phones, these forms of technology are still greatly frowned upon in the traditional classroom, which is an attitude that is instilled in K-12 students that are now training to become teachers. Additionally, many teacher preparation programs treat technology as a basic skill to learn, rather than a tool to integrate into the classroom that can support and enhance instruction.

All of these challenges are influencing each other within the preservice teacher. As educators experience formalized training that is void of technology, they plan lessons and units that do not integrate technology. Additionally, their lack of instruction in educational technology and its affordances leads them to believe that there is no connection between the tools they use in their personal lives with the technology they might integrate into their classrooms.

My conceptual framework focuses on the idea that preservice Social Studies teachers perception of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge are disjointed and perceived as unique concepts that do not intersect in classroom instruction. By providing an intervention that affords students an environment where technology plays an active role in the development of content knowledge, construction of complex problems and solutions, and enables students to communicate and collaborate with peers, I believe that preservice teachers perception of technology in education will shift dramatically. Additionally, by providing Social Studies teachers with an environment that focuses on overarching Habits of Mind that can be applied to any Social Studies curriculum, their beliefs and attitudes about Social Studies instruction will shift, perceiving the conceptual skills as more meaningful and powerful than specific content.