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ALEXANDER S. BUTLER, Editor

Welcome to the 29th Volume of *Trends and Issues in Social Studies.* Thank you for taking the time to read Florida Council for the Social Studies' flagship journal. We are excited to present articles in our 29th volume that fulfill our purpose to be a forum for a diverse group of educational stakeholders. This volume's articles cover a variety of topics within the field of social studies and are relevant to K-12 educators, teacher educators, teacher candidates, and scholars.

Reading *Determined*: College Students' Experiences Of Relevance Reading A Holocaust Survivor's Memoir[1]

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We surveyed first-year college students and their instructors on the experience, impact, and relevance of reading and teaching/learning *Determined: A Memoir,* a Holocaust survivor's account, in a general education course. Findings suggest that students appeared to see relevance and personal lessons in reading the memoir which they also credited with broadening their perspective, that hearing from a Holocaust survivor in person may create distinctive learning opportunities, and that there is a need for a larger investigation of 'relevancy' and other commonly used terms within Holocaust education. We consider complex notions of relevancy, how relevance and active learning work together, and how teachers must be intentional—not only in the rationale and the planning for any active learning exercise, but also in the processing and debriefing of such an exercise. The combined learning of event-specific content and self-awareness that can arise from such a pedagogical practice is of the utmost value.

Keywords: Holocaust; Holocaust education; higher education; relevance; memoir

Introduction

In the 2019-20 academic year, an interesting research opportunity presented itself. Every year, Florida International University (FIU) assigns all incoming first-year students a common reading as part of the one-credit Student Life Skills (SLS) 1501: First-Year Experience course. In 2019-20, the book was *Determined: A Memoir*, a Holocaust survivor's account, written by Martin Baranek with Lisa Cicero (2018). In the memoir, Baranek recounts harrowing episodes and his miraculous survival in

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successive sites of incarceration during the Holocaust and his subsequent experiences in postwar Europe, Palestine, and Canada. We proposed to study the experience, impact, and relevance of reading and teaching/learning about *Determined* in such a setting, a general education course in which students had enrolled not due to any particular interest in the Holocaust.

This research was opportune. In 2018 and again in 2020, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (known as the "Claims Conference") released two surveys—the "Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Study" (Claims Conference, n.d.b), based on 1,350 interviews with American adults, and the "U.S. Millennial Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey" (Claims Conference, 2020), which surveyed 1,000 U.S. Millennials and members of Gen Z nationally plus an over-sample of 200 of the same age group in each state (total n=11,000), respectively—that, according to reports and press releases, revealed dramatic gaps in Holocaust knowledge, particularly among U.S. Millennials. For example, they argued that "Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of U.S. Millennials and Gen Z do not know that six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust" (Claims Conference, n.d.a, p. 1). Awareness of what the Claims Conference identified as essential facts about the Holocaust was poor, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of younger respondents reported learning about the Holocaust in school (see also, Claims Conference, n.d.a). Also published in 2020 was a different study, the "US College Survey," commissioned by Echoes & Reflections (2020), a joint project of the Anti-Defamation League, the USC Shoah Foundation, and Yad Vashem. Assessing a similar population but limited to the tertiary education setting rather than the general public, the Echoes & Reflections survey collected data from 1,500 students aged 18-24 in four-year colleges and universities. This analysis found more encouraging results, supporting the "positive impact of Holocaust education on students' attitudes towards diversity, tolerance, and upstander behavior in the face of hate and intolerance" (Echoes & Reflections, 2020, p. 8). While the Claims Conference surveys lamented the lack of historical knowledge about the Holocaust particularly among Millennials and Gen Z respondents, the Echoes and Reflections study suggested that exposure to survivor testimonies could produce more respectful and empathetic citizens. More research is clearly necessary to tease out the nuances of these disparate results. Our work relates to this larger trend in trying to understand what students learn from exposure to a particular Holocaust narrative.

Review of the Literature

Holocaust Education has long been included in social studies classrooms (see, for example, an entire special issue in Social Education—a flagship journal of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)—devoted to Holocaust education, edited by Samuel Totten, Stephen Feinberg, and Milton Kleg [1995]), and in 2018, NCSS passed Resolution 18-03-01 advocating for the improvement of Holocaust Education (NCSS, 2019). Holocaust education has also been prevalent in English/Language Arts (ELA), Humanities, and Religious Studies courses. In a similar vein, there have been pedagogical pieces published in the field of social studies education that support Holocaust education at all levels (PK-12 and higher education), discussing what to teach and how, and what not to teach and why. Lindquist (2006), as well as Totten and Feinberg (1995, 2001), outlined general guidelines for careful teaching about the Holocaust. Lindquist (2010) discussed complicating features of Holocaust education, including various pressures from community, institutions, and society; the existence of Holocaust denial; and concerns of age-appropriateness, amongst other considerations. Totten (2018, 2019) provided collections of advice and suggestions from secondary teachers, as well as university professors and museum educators, who teach about the Holocaust.

There have also been empirical articles published, albeit lesser in number,[4] that provide us important information about the teaching and learning of the Holocaust (and other genocides) in elementary and secondary school settings. Donnelly (2006) surveyed a representative sample of 327 English and Social Studies secondary school teachers, assessing practices of and rationales for teaching about the Holocaust. Schweber (2008) conducted a case study exploring a third grade class's experiences learning about the Holocaust. McArthur Harris et al. (2019) studied how two ELA teachers taught a unit comparing the genocide in Rwanda and the Holocaust using survivor testimonies in a Holocaust literature course. However, there have been even fewer empirical pieces discussing the teaching and learning about the Holocaust at the collegiate or higher education level. For example, Gordon et al. (2004) surveyed university students in an experimental group (students taking either a class on the Holocaust and genocide or a course on the western tradition that included two weeks of Holocaust content coverage) and in a control group (students in an introductory course on American politics with no specific Holocaust content coverage) for their general knowledge of the Holocaust, as well as their levels of

[4] Schweber (2006) also states that there are few empirical studies of the teaching of the Holocaust.

antisemitism and general political tolerance. Among their findings, it was noted that it would be "valuable to know what impact teaching about the Holocaust would have on students who were not self-selected" into courses (Gordon et al., 2004, p. 69). Furthermore, Naishtat-Bornstein and Naveh (2017) investigated how undergraduate students (who were also preservice teachers) in Israel related emotionally and cognitively to Holocaust testimonies. The students were able to engage in critical reflection on their assumptions, as well as "collective Israeli attitudes that inform those very beliefs" (p. 16). Finally, Aalai's (2020) exploratory study demonstrated the possibility of increased content knowledge and even transformational learning for 23 students. These students were exposed directly to Holocaust education via a colloquium series specifically around the theme of bystander complicity and collaboration. Aalai (2020) also notes the general lack of studies about Holocaust education at the college level.

Methods of Inquiry

The purpose of this study was to explore the possibilities of genocide education at the higher education (collegiate) level. We were curious about how reading one Holocaust memoir, *Determined* (Baranek with Cicero, 2018), and learning about its related history influenced students and instructors. In particularly, we highlighted the following five main queries:

1. What lessons did the students (and/or instructors) take from reading and learning the related history, and how did they integrate those lessons into their lives?
2. How did they find reading and learning about the Holocaust relevant to their own lives, if at all?
3. What specific content did they learn that they did not know previously?
4. What was the experience of learning (and/or teaching) about this content like?
5. How did they navigate teaching (and/or learning) about this content?

To investigate these questions, we set out to engage in a two-part research project. The first component of the research project was to survey students and

instructors. We sent 2026 student surveys and 99 instructor surveys[5] in fall 2019 and spring 2020 to everyone enrolled in or teaching SLS 1501. 126 student surveys (6.2%) and 48 instructor surveys (48%) were at least partially completed.[6] The survey consisted of up to 20 Likert-scale ('agree,' 'somewhat agree,' 'somewhat disagree,' 'disagree') or yes/no-style prompts, with three follow-up prompts for writing in qualitative responses.

We planned a second stage of the research to collect student assignments/artifacts and interview students and instructors to gain more nuanced information about how they processed the reading of the memoir. Because of IRB regulations and the design of the study, we relied on participants to opt in for the second stage of the research. Unfortunately, due to an extremely low number of volunteers, quickly followed by the Covid-19 pandemic, we did not pursue the more in-depth qualitative portion of the study.

For all these reasons, in this article, we focus primarily on analyzing the data from many of the Likert-scale prompts in our survey, rounding percentages up or down to the nearest whole number. Additionally, we focus here on one qualitative follow-up prompt from students, related to relevance, which directly addresses the second question outlined above.

Because of the nature and the evolution of our study, for which in the end we did not conduct qualitative interviews, we acknowledge a limitation of our data: lack of access to participants' self-understanding. Why did participants answer the Likert-scale questions the ways in which they did? Alas, aside from the responses to the three follow-up questions that were included, the nature of the survey format did not provide a window for us to understand participants' motivations, feelings, affects, etc. or to tease out nuances in their responses. This is an opportunity for future investigation. Despite this limitation, however, our study offers an opening to reflect on Holocaust education in social studies and beyond—both to question some assumptions about teaching/learning about the Holocaust and to speculate as to what it might do/mean for students to study the Holocaust.

What we discuss in the following section are some overall numerical findings from our survey with general insights coming from those findings. Next, we dig

[5] Surveys were sent to 91 unique instructors; eight of the instructors were sent surveys twice, once for each term, as they taught in both semesters. Because the surveys were completed anonymously, we cannot be certain which or if any of these instructors responded either or both times.

[6] Because the surveys were completely anonymous, we collected no explicit identifying information—including demographic data (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.). Participants may have offered anecdotal information about the ways in which they identify via some of the qualitative prompts, but we neither sought nor controlled for any identifying demographic information in this study.

deeper into qualitative responses related to questions of relevance and discuss what this can illuminate for Holocaust education and how we teach it. After that, we consider how relevance and active learning work together, and lastly, we conclude the article and name some next steps that the field should consider for increasing our understandings of Holocaust education.

Research Findings

The overwhelming majority of students (113/126) and instructors (44/48) responded 'agree' or 'somewhat agree' to the statement, "I enjoyed reading the book, *Determined*, assigned as the first-year common reading" and felt a "sense of pride and accomplishment" from completing it (96/119 students and 42/46 instructors). Not surprisingly, 76% of student respondents (91/120) either agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement, "I am more informed about the Holocaust now than before I read *Determined*" (compared with 81% {38/47} of instructor respondents). 87% of students reported discussing the book in class, which was to be expected. 91% of instructors reported discussing the book in class, and 83% of instructors agreed or somewhat agreed that "Discussing the book in my SLS section(s) helped me to think critically about teaching this material." While these findings are encouraging, as noted above, we did not ask specifically in which ways they became more informed or how they were thinking critically.

We were particularly interested to see that 64% of student respondents discussed the book with other FIU students outside the classroom, and 61% discussed it with family and friends outside FIU. This may indicate that the book is impacting students' lives, and they want to discuss it outside of class. On the other hand, instructors reported markedly less engagement outside the classroom. A minority of 41% discussed the book with other SLS 1501 instructors outside the classroom, and 56% discussed with other FIU colleagues (instructional or non-instructional) outside of the classroom. Additionally, compared to 61% of students who discussed the text with family or friends outside of FIU, 53% of instructors did the same. While additional investigation would be necessary to know why instructors were less likely to share about the book outside of the classroom compared to students (for example, perhaps there are fewer opportunities for SLS 1501 instructors to share across course sections), we are encouraged that instructors are sharing at all with other colleagues, friends, and family—much like students would be socializing with others. Since one of the goals of the Common Reading Program is to create community, this is confirming to find that students are doing so in the

context of discussing the book. At the same time, while the goal of the Common Reading Program is not necessarily to create an instructor community in the same way, we are nonetheless encouraged that these findings appear to indicate a sense of community emerging through discussion of this Holocaust memoir with others.

Additionally, 91% of students and 96% of instructors either agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement, "Reading the book made me aware of other perspectives beyond my own," and 76% of both students and instructors agreed or somewhat agreed they had "taken lessons from reading *Determined* into [their] personal [lives]." These findings are reminiscent of "Finding #2" from the Echoes & Reflections (2020) study: "Students with Holocaust education have more pluralistic attitudes and are more open to differing viewpoints" (p. 4).

Of the 29 (out of 114) students who attended the author visit,[7] 90% agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement "I learned something new about the Holocaust from hearing the author speak in person." 13 (out of 45) instructors attended the author visit *and* responded to the statement above. All 13 respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that they learned something new. What do respondents think they learned that is new? Unfortunately, we did not ask them directly, which would have been important in better determining how (and what) in-person survivor testimony contributes to Holocaust education. This finding also raises an important concern for the future of Holocaust education: what do we do when the survivors have all passed? Luckily, there have been extensive efforts to audio- and video-record Holocaust survivor testimony[8] and utilize first-hand accounts in classrooms (see e.g., Haas, 2020; Haas et al., 2015; Totten, 2001), but our findings suggest that there is something distinct about hearing from a Holocaust survivor in person. This seems to support the assumption that the living presence of the survivor is paramount to learning something new and a valuable component within Holocaust education. This resonates with the discussion within "Finding #4" of the Echoes & Reflections (2020) survey supporting the value of survivor testimony of any sort in the classroom: "Holocaust education with survivor testimony could be more beneficial for critical thinking than Holocaust education alone" (p. 8).[9]

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[7] In general, the SLS 1501 coordinators try to host the author of the common reading text for a presentation to students and instructors each semester the course is taught.

[8] See, for example, Yale University's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (https://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/) and the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive (https://vhaonline.usc.edu/about/archive)

[9] However, there is a distinction in that the Echoes & Reflections (2020) report is also making claims about potential future behavior, while we did not ask questions related to future behavior or ethics. For example, their study notes, "Beyond positive attitudes, our results show that students exposed to survivor testimony are

However, it is important to note that even if an educator invites a survivor to speak in the classroom, the learning is not going to happen automatically. While some might presume that the living presence of the survivor and their ability to answer students' questions is, in and of itself, a valuable pedagogical device, this does not relieve teachers from their responsibilities: we wish to examine presumptions about the *inherent* teaching/learning value of survivor testimony. Whether the survivor testimony is in-person, virtual/digital, and/or via memoir/written story, teachers need to think about how to help students see relevance in the account. As Naishtat-Bornstein and Naveh (2017) point out: "Teachers cannot serve as semi-authoritative or passive vehicles for the transmission of processed knowledge. They must function not only as knowledge agents but as facilitators of knowledge construction" (p. 21). Helping students see relevance in a survivor's account, bringing the content closer, requires highlighting and interrogating important similarities and differences between the students' lives and the survivor's life. This is a process of making analogies, as well as unpacking them and even questioning the appropriateness of making them. In short, can one—or should one—even make analogies? While such thinking is at the heart of the learning process, it remains fraught with difficulty—especially in today's politicized educational climate. Here, we wish to argue simply that the Holocaust survivors' accounts cannot, do not, and should not analogize by themselves. Analogies are a starting point. They are an opportunity for conversation and for learning—they are not an end point.

Deeper Relevance

The discussion concerning analogies leads into a discussion of the meaning and importance of the term 'relevance.' In response to the statement "I found Martin's experience relevant to my personal life," 59% of students (70/118) and 65% of instructors (30/46) either agreed or somewhat agreed. In this case, we also asked an open-ended follow-up: "Please describe how you found his experience personally relevant or not." In the remainder of this article, we focus primarily on student responses to this open-ended question.

We noticed distinct patterns in the qualitative student responses following each of the four possible categories (agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and disagree). Within the 'agree' category (30/118), qualitative replies that responded to the prompt fell within three types: 1. Responses declaring a clear connection to

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significantly more likely to report engaging in upstander behavior, such as challenging derogatory comments, educating oneself about other groups, and seeing the importance of challenging injustice in society" (p. 8).

personal and/or familial experience (e.g., "Being a descendant of Armenian genocide survivors, I already knew the atrocities the Jewish people had to go through during the Holocaust, as I was able to [...] draw a line connecting the Armenians' experience during the Genocide and the Jews' experience during the Holocaust");[10] 2. Responses expressing a more unspecified type of relatedness (e.g., "He shared his personal experience in a way that it made me reflect about how lucky [I am]"); 3. Responses communicating a general lesson or principle (e.g., "We all need to be vigilant of what is going on to not only ourselves, but those around us").

Overall, responses in this category were less likely to include qualifying/conditional language (e.g., 'because') than other categories. Additionally, a significantly lower number—only 40%—of student respondents in this category included a qualitative follow-up response compared to 73% of 'somewhat agree' responses, 72% of 'somewhat disagree' responses, and 78% of 'disagree' responses.[11] We speculate as to the reasons for the existence of these two attributes within the 'agree' category. First, while respondents indicated they felt Martin's experience was personally relevant, fewer chose—or, perhaps, were able—to put their reasons into words. When they did so, the language choices indicate less reflection, less willingness to explore what relevance might mean, and/or that the Holocaust, while a significant historical event, is distanced from their everyday lives. Alternatively, respondents in this category may simply feel that personal relevance is either so obvious that they don't need to comment or that simply agreeing with the statement is the 'correct' way to answer—who is going to disagree with 'never again'?

Within the 'somewhat agree' category (40/118), we also saw three distinct types of responses. Just like in the 'agree' category, there was a grouping of responses that also declared a clear connection to personal and/or familial experience. These responses have an illustration, example, or analogy of how the respondent connects Martin's experience with/to their personal lives, and the 'I' is generally featured prominently (e.g., "His immigration is relevant to me because I am myself an immigrant" and "I found it personally relevant from the perspective of

[10] See, also, Naishtat-Bornstein and Naveh (2017) for more on learning from testimony with strong familial connections. However, their study takes place in a very different context: in Israel with Jewish preservice teachers, where "students saw themselves and other Israelis as personally connected with the Holocaust, and hence more obligated to watch or listen to testimonies, and to preserve and promote the memory of the Holocaust, than people who are not Israeli Jews" (p. 13).

[11] This disparity in qualitative responses did not appear in the instructor surveys, where, for example, 100% of 'agree' respondents provided qualitative statements. In general, the qualitative responses from instructors were more articulate and thorough, but otherwise mirror the student responses.

an immigrant coming to the United States. You adopt a mentality of trying to do any work to survive and stay here, moreover, in the process of accomplishing long term goals you push yourself in the daily routine to keep marching on day after day, not unlike the attitude of Martin during the Death march"). However, there is one marked difference between the 'agree' category's responses and these in the 'somewhat agree' category; in the 'somewhat agree' category, none of the written responses indicate a personal, direct connection to surviving the Holocaust or genocide. Perhaps these respondents know the difference between their experience and that of a Holocaust survivors'. Perhaps they are more cautious and/or more hesitant to take the analogy all the way to 'agree.'

In the second type of response, as in the 'agree' category, there is a tendency to declare general relevancy, even when the response does not contain a personal (familial) connection or when the response reflects less of a first-person perspective. For example,

> His experience may be somewhat similar inherently but all in all way more different as Martin was forced into this experience without a choice and early on during his childhood. The themes surrounding his experiences were definitely relevant and applicable to everyone but nothing compares to his experience.

The responses in this grouping tend to be more concrete, are less abstract, and contain fewer platitudes than those in the agree category. Perhaps respondents in this category, who are tempering their 'agreement', are providing additional justification for their response by engaging in deeper reflection expressing specific connections to relevance and/or feeling they need to articulate their mitigation of full 'agreement' because they feel the memoir is *supposed to be* relevant.

The third type of response, a distinctive characteristic of a number of qualitative responses in the 'somewhat agree' category, is the use of qualifiers ('even though,' 'nevertheless,' 'but,' 'however') and more nuanced language of personal relevance (e.g., "Of course, his life was completely different than mine and to compare the two would be ignorant, however, my parents and I can relate to his determination of finding a better life as my family and I fled Cuba to do the same"). Perhaps students are struggling with their feelings of relevancy; it is as if a student might be saying, *Martin's experiences <u>are</u> relevant to mine, but I don't feel 100% comfortable comparing myself with Martin*. We speculate that examples of qualifying language like those cited above reveal a kind of ethical quandary on the part of the

respondent—where a student might ask, *Is it right to even compare my experience to Martin's?*

Within the 'somewhat disagree' category (25/118), we see a mirror to this tendency, as if students are saying, *Martin's experiences are not comparable to mine, but I'm not 100% comfortable rejecting the comparison*. What is interesting is that this response pattern continues into the 'disagree' category (23/118), where we do not see a marked distinction in the qualitative responses. When students see Martin's experience as not personally relevant, their statements appear very similar. Perhaps the absence of relevance is less nuanced than its perceived presence. In general, in both of these categories, students reject the idea of personal relevance and often provide an explanation for their rejection.

We do see some patterns across these two categories ('disagree' and 'somewhat disagree'). Some responses express general irrelevancy or incomparability (e.g., "He lived in a different time with a different culture, National Socialism was a uniquely German idea" {'somewhat disagree' category}; "The Holocaust is very difficult to compare to when it comes to our everyday lives" {somewhat disagree}; "You have to understand that this man literally saw hundreds of people die in front of him, had to suffer through intense starvation and literally constantly being near death" {disagree}). The majority of the responses either use the 'I' to explain what they find not personally relevant (e.g., "I didn't find it personally relevant because I don't have a lot of personal connection to the Holocaust" {somewhat disagree}; "I have not experienced any hardship remotely on a level that Martin has. It didn't resonate with me personally despite my interest in his life" {disagree}) or use it to explain what they find incomparable (e.g., "I couldn't fully relate to him since he is a [H]olocaust survivor and while I have gone through challenges and tough times, none are comparable to his experience" {somewhat disagree}; "No, I have not gone through even close to what he went through" {disagree}).

Within this segment—using the 'I' with explanation—there is also a subset of students who seem to chafe at the whole exercise, perhaps indicating some degree of cynicism in the qualitative responses. One such expression of this cynicism comes out with notions of unfairness which might be the extreme of incomparability (e.g., "I find it difficult to relate my life to that of someone going through a genocide of their people and months of endless torture and pain, both physically and emotionally. I'm just a student" {somewhat disagree}; "It's not really fair to try to find relevance or similarities to someone who experienced the Holocaust and whatever life troubles we [h]ave to endure" {disagree}; "I found his experience not relevant to mine

because I think it is unfair to try and relate a victim of the [H]olocaust story to some of the minor difficulties a freshman college student might experience. It is in no way comparable to my life but it was good to read just to be informed about what other people might have gone through" {disagree}). Another expression of this cynicism, while unique, was very direct and bears mentioning: "Could relate it to myself but only when needed for class[w]ork" {somewhat disagree}. It is almost as if these students are saying, *There is this looming, impactful story that is Martin's, and then, there is my life; I see what you are doing in asking about personal relevance, and I don't completely buy it.*

These responses indicate a level of resistance to the common pedagogical technique to have students personally relate to the content and/or themes of a text. While some students (those who agreed or somewhat agreed) are willing to engage in the exercise, these students (those who disagreed or somewhat disagreed) are resisting the invitation to translate or map Martin's experience onto their own, often noting incomparability. Within this group, the fairness complaint remains within the spirit of the survey prompt, which students engage while simultaneously resisting it with their qualitative responses, whereas the response of only relating if needed for classwork rejects the entire enterprise.

This brings us to question further the role and function—whether intentional or not—of the survey prompts we posed, "I found Martin's experience relevant to my personal life" and "Please describe how you found his experience personally relevant or not." We included these prompts because we wanted to know if—and how and the degree to which—these students, not self-selected into a Holocaust-specific course, would make personal connections to the text and the events/lessons contained therein. The quantitative responses seemed very straight forward; however, collectively, the qualitative responses showed a large range of reading 'personal relevance': from comparability (or incomparability) to their personal lives, to responding more generally (rather than personally) about relevance to society, and even to rejecting the entire exercise or not explaining at all. Due to this range of qualitative responses, we now reflexively ask ourselves what we meant by 'personally relevant'—which in many ways, is divided into asking about what we mean by 'personal' and what we mean by 'relevant.' For each of these, we raise a basket of related questions and concerns for future reflection and exploration.

Within the conversation around the term 'personal,' we wonder what, in particular, we were looking for students to connect to? On one hand, were we perhaps looking for expressions of empathy? When we received qualitative responses, many students utilized first person expressions (the 'I'), with responses such as "I can

relate to the experience of will and pushing through the unknown. As an immigrant, I also experienced departure from my family and going to places I hardly knew" {agree}. 'Personal' became a sort of activating word—with a range of connections where students could identify or empathize with Martin's situation (e.g., immigration experience, personal histories). On the other hand, were we perhaps asking about their emotions? Were we asking them to interrogate how the experience of reading and discussing the memoir made them feel? This leads us to wonder, then, if this question is too much of a heavy lift—if it is too much to ask a 19 (or so)-year-old in Miami how the story of someone living through the Holocaust is personally relevant to them (e.g., some students expressed resistance to the very question we were asking).

Within the conversation around the term 'relevant,' we wonder if students saw this term as asking about comparability. Indeed, some respondents, if they did not answer the question through the lens of the 'I,' elaborated with notions of comparability, with responses like "My life could never compare to the tragedies of the Holocaust" {disagree}. The qualifying language included in many responses indicated that students were wrestling with the relevance, which resulted in reflecting the questions back to us: What does 'relevant' mean? And what is the difference between relevancy and comparison? Perhaps if they cannot see the experience of Martin as comparable to theirs, they cannot see it as 'relevant.' Therefore, asking about relevance is more complicated in cases where there is a gap or gulf between the author's experiences and the students' experiences. This led us to wonder what the responses would have been like if we had asked a 'general' (rather than 'personal') relevance question (e.g., *Do you find Martin's experience relevant?* Or *do you find Martin's experience socially relevant?*). All this brings us to question further the role and function of this type of pedagogical exercise within Holocaust education more broadly. It also invites an examination of the importance of the language that researchers utilize in questions and/or survey prompts meant to address their research inquiries.

Considerations: Relevance and Activities

The results from this survey have led us to consider how relevance and active learning work together. In the field of education, teacher educators and/or researchers consistently tell teachers that relevance and active learning are important, but we often do not sufficiently interrogate how the two come together in the classroom. This is where the work is. Teacher educators often tell teachers that

relevance to students' personal lives is necessary for education. We do want students to relate to the content at hand, but, in this case, we do not want students to see Holocaust survivor trauma as completely comparable to their experiences. For example, when teachers propose to make the Holocaust more directly 'comparable' in the form of simulations, often, teacher educators and researchers come down hard on them, as this is not a pedagogically sound way to teach about the Holocaust (see, e.g., Totten, 2000).[12] Simulations make the Holocaust too personal and perhaps traumatic—and perhaps results in false equivalencies. Nonetheless, we (the authors) can understand why teachers gravitate towards simulations, because in many ways they are an outgrowth of their training (e.g., an emphasis on active learning). The point of 'relevancy' might be that students are supposed to learn 'big' lessons (resiliency, determination, etc.) from the Holocaust, but they cannot—and indeed should never—feel like they are experiencing the events and the associated trauma themselves. When educators put stories like Martin's out there for students, we all need to be wary of dangerous equivalencies. Such teaching/learning experiences can create an intensification of relevance, particularly in certain contexts, echoing Naishtat-Bornstein and Naveh's (2017) position:

> As educators, we strongly reject the use of survivor testimony to produce or intensify identification with the trauma of the Holocaust, resulting as it does in a simultaneous sense of victimhood and privilege among many Israelis. We are critical of the manipulative use of Holocaust testimony that places it outside the bounds of critical reflection, often for political ends. (p. 19)

These scholars nonetheless support more constructive uses of empathy, echoing Rich's (2019) concern for bringing more historical context into the classroom. For Rich (2019), there is a danger in teaching sympathy rather than historical empathy; for example:

> Students describe the Holocaust as "sad," which, at the most basic level, is an entirely fair adjective to use. But further content knowledge would allow students to engage with the Holocaust in a different way: rather than simply feeling that [the] Holocaust was "sad," they might begin to articulate why the

[12] Other Others provide helpful reflections and guidelines—not solely related to the Holocaust—for teachers wanting to consider using simulations in their classrooms (see, e.g., DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2013).

> Holocaust occurred in its very specific historical context and why genocides continue to take place in the world today. (p. 60)

This highlights another type of dangerous equivalency—a diminishment of relevance. While Rich (2019) addresses the reduction of the Holocaust to feeling 'sad,' another form of diminished relevance is to simplistically compare one's experiences with the survivor's—as if to say, *If Martin was able to do all this, then you should be able to get through your first year in college*. Moreover, what are the failings of an exercise like this? In our study, it seems as though some students were able to see through it all and reject the exercise outright, or perhaps students felt that there was a 'right' way to answer in identifying with the memoir (because the whole point of the assignment was that they find relevance in the book). It is possible that they answered in a particular way to 'get the grade'—which is another failing of the exercise.

All this puts more focus on intentionality. When instructors teach this difficult material, how intentional are they? First, teachers need to be thoughtful about what they mean by relevance in the classroom. Teachers should not just assign a Holocaust survivor memoir with the notion that its relevancy will teach itself but rather should think about why they are doing so and then communicate those intentions to their students.[13] This process of pulling back the curtain—having students and teachers work together to understand why the teacher assigned something—leads to deeper engagement and deeper learning. Second, teachers need to be more intentional in their responsiveness to students' grapplings with the challenges of personal relevance. Perhaps students struggle to articulate in what ways these lessons are personally relevant. We (the authors) suggest that the primary work for educators is in the subtle differences between the 'somewhat agrees' and 'somewhat disagrees.' If teachers can get into those 'gray' areas and hear their students' uncertainty and then work more directly with their struggles, deeper learning can happen. The pedagogical practices that lead to glib responses or rely on a simulation exercise both avoid the work in the 'gray' area of trying to understand where a story like Martin's is or is not relevant. This process of getting into the real nitty gritty of relevance, again, leads to deeper engagement and deeper learning. Comparable to Naishtat-Bornstein and Naveh's (2017) writings about the use of testimony in the classroom, we see "that emotional and personal

[13] This is related to Totten et al.'s (2001) argument that educators should develop clear rationales for teaching about the Holocaust; in the chapter, they provide guidance on how to develop, more clearly communicate, and utilize rationale statements to teach about the Holocaust.

identification can be a fruitful subject for reflective learning, enabling students to go beyond passive, futile reactions to the Holocaust such as traumatic regression, horror, and veneration" (p. 20). Naishtat-Bornstein and Naveh's (2017) study "highlights the choices made during the creation and consumption of testimony" (p. 20), such as the need to interrogate how first-person accounts were produced and for what purpose they are being used in the classroom and beyond—along with, we add, the need to include critical historical contexts for the teaching/learning of the Holocaust—all of which can result in "expanding the students' decision-making space and encouraging them to be active agents" (p. 20).

What we all need is a shared compact between teachers and students where they agree to explore these 'gray' areas together. Within this compact, teachers and students flesh out their difficulties in articulating senses of personal relevance and, thereby, experience relevancy as a classroom practice, not just as an abstract idea. Society should want students to wrestle with relevance without pretending to have experienced the event themselves and without falling back on platitudes like 'never again'. At the same time, this kind of 'relevancy' classroom practice—and the concomitant work of intentionality and engagement—places additional demands on teachers and students alike. When educational institutions put teachers and students in these more fraught positions of genuinely exploring relevance, they need to be aware of and responsible for what might arise, which might be unpredictable. On one hand, teachers and students might experience secondary traumas (which can also occur during simulations) related to their own experiences and family histories. On the other hand, teachers and students need to be prepared for things to 'get real' (e.g., people may feel exposed when expressing their true selves or fear being ostracized, relationships might become challenged), which has tremendous learning potential—but the means to get there might be uncomfortable. Throughout the exercise, teachers should not open students up and then abandon them in their secondary trauma, their exposure, and/or their self-questioning. So, teachers need to be prepared to help students process and debrief the pedagogical practice with their students. Therefore, teachers and students must be well-prepared to fully engage in a classroom practice of relevancy.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Overall, the limited findings from this survey are encouraging. Students appear to see relevance and personal lessons in reading a Holocaust survivor's memoir recounting his own perseverance and luck, and they overwhelmingly—granted, it is

a small sample—credit the book with broadening their perspective. While this one article could not cover everything from the survey (including additional qualitative prompt responses), we (the authors) continue to analyze the data. This initial analysis suggests the need for a larger investigation of 'relevancy'; such a commonly-used term remains important within Holocaust education—and the teaching and learning of difficult histories in general. Indeed, a topic not addressed in this article is student and instructor reports about 'difficulty' in reading and discussing the memoir, which we covered in the survey and which we hope to address in a future publication.

As we hope the reader will see from this article, relevance must be put into practice in the classroom as active-learning in an intentional and transparent way. The combined learning of event-specific content and self-awareness that can arise from such a pedagogical practice is of the utmost value. Thus, teachers must be intentional, not only in their purpose and planning for the exercise, but also in their processing and debriefing of such an exercise, helping students integrate and connect their learning—both of the content knowledge at hand and of themselves as human beings in this world.

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When Teacher Candidates Author Books: Towards the Development of Critical Multiculturalism

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Diversity in children's literature - both stories about diverse children and written by diverse authors - continues to be a national concern. In this mixed-methods study we developed a collaborative unit of inquiry to accomplish three central aims: a) educate teacher candidates about the institutional barriers that intentionally or unintentionally discourage diverse stories in children's literature, b) scaffold teacher candidates in writing and publishing diverse children's literature themselves, and c) support the development of critical multiculturalism among teacher candidates through story-writing. Using survey data and content analysis, we found none of the stories the teacher candidates authored represented evidence of critical multiculturalism because of an overemphasis on individual narratives, rather than a concern for social and political contexts that structured those individual narratives. Despite this, we found that the process of engaging in book writing increased the teacher candidates' perceptions of themselves as authors. We also found that some of the books they wrote could be seen as evidence of a developing critical multicultural perspective.

Keywords: critical multiculturalism, teacher education, children's literature

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Introduction

For more than a century, scholars and activists have advocated for the need for more diverse children's literature in the United States (Elliott, 2017; Dahlen, 2016; Myers, 2014; Myers, 2014; Naidoo, 2014; Reese, 2016). In response to the absence of children's literature about children of Color and by authors of Color, W.E.B DuBois and Augustus Dill published *The Brownies' Book* in 1920, a magazine that shared stories, illustrations, poems, puzzles, and columns by African American authors to normalize the experiences of African American children. Similar efforts were made later by Carter G. Woodson (1933), Charlamae Hill Rollins (1941), and Augusta Braxton Baker (1946) to promote racial diversity in children's literature. Yet, in 1980, Rudine Sims Bishop alerted us to just how little progress had been made in this area in her seminal essay, *Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors*. Bishop asserted that reading is a means of self-affirmation and readers need to find themselves in the books they read as they also open doors into other worlds; however, not enough non-white children are able to find books that accurately reflect their communities or themselves.

Bishop's call came on the heels of the multicultural education and ethnic studies movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Banks & Banks, 2009; Enciso, 1997; Nieto, 2002; Sleeter & Grant, 1999), and her call is being echoed today by numerous social media movements such as #weneediversebooks, #DISRUPTTEXTS, and #OwnVoices. While these movements have made – and continue to make – significant strides in recent years, there is far more work to do. The Cooperative Children's Book Center (2019 [CCBC]) keeps a national database on books by and about diverse authors providing yearly summaries since 1994. From 1994 to 2017, only 13% of children's books published in the U.S. contained multicultural content. In 2019, the CBBC received 4,035 books from U.S. publishers and, of that collection, only 29% were about Black, Indigenous, and characters of Color (BIPOC) while the remaining 71% were about white children or other non-BIPOC characters (i.e., talking animals, vehicles, or monsters). While more progress is arguably being made today than forty years ago, representation and diversity in children's literature and, more importantly, the lack thereof continues to be a national concern (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2020).

As elementary education teacher educators who teach methods courses in social studies and language arts at an urban university in the Southeast, we aim to centralize our instruction around high quality, diverse children's literature. Thus, we are deeply concerned by the lack of everyday stories about children of Color, children

with disabilities, children from rural and poor backgrounds, children from religious backgrounds other than Christianity, children whose family members are incarcerated, LBGTQ+ children or children in living in LBGTQ+ families and communities, children who are refugees, children who are undocumented or who live in mixed immigrant status families, and children with health issues. We are also concerned with the lack of exposure teacher candidates have with diverse literature. To address these concerns, we developed a collaborative unit of inquiry to accomplish three central aims: a) educate teacher candidates about the institutional barriers that intentionally or unintentionally discourage diverse stories in children's literature, b) scaffold teacher candidates in writing and publishing diverse children's literature themselves, and c) support the development of critical multiculturalism among teacher candidates through story writing.

Scenes and Stories: The Collaborative Project

Language arts and social studies are two methods courses taught concurrently for teacher candidates during their second year of coursework in elementary education and we – the five teacher educators primarily responsible for covering sections of these courses – collaborate in an effort to model for students how the two content areas can be integrated in their future classrooms. Given the lack of time in many elementary schools devoted to Social Studies instruction, (Bolick et al., 2010; Fitchett et al., 2014; Rock et al., 2006; VanFossen, 2015), we wanted to provide possibilities for our students to see social studies built into writing instruction as a model for integration of content areas. We developed a five-week cross-curricular unit that included lessons on a) how to write narrative nonfiction and informational texts, b) features and structures of nonfiction, c) required K-5 social studies content for our state that teacher candidates in our program will be expected to teach, d) challenges for diverse authors telling diverse stories, and e) self-publishing. The students completed a final assignment to demonstrate their mastery of the unit objectives that contributed to their final grade in both the language arts and social studies courses. For the final assignment, they wrote and published a text that could be used in classrooms to teach children about diverse topics, ideas, and groups of people that are often marginalized in our society. Here, we define *diverse* as representing perspectives from various cultures, social groups, and other intersectional identities around the globe, and *marginalization* broadly as the act of being pushed away from the center or pushed out toward the fringes of society. Related to children's literature, we refer specifically to stories about

people/events/ideas/cultures that are not proportionately recognized in relation to their existence.

Immediate Challenges

Immediately, we found challenges with our ideas. We are five teacher educators who self-identify as being a part of dominant groups across all areas of diversity we wished to explore: race, class, gender, documentation status, and language. The majority of our students also self-identified within those same groups. This led to a question that we considered at great length as we planned the first iteration of the unit of study: what business did we have requiring our students to develop stories from marginalized perspectives when most of them self-identity as being from dominant social groups? Moreover, what harm might we cause in moving forward with this requirement? This is not a novel question. For years, the authenticity of writers writing from perspectives not their own has raised widespread critique. Issues of representations that promote tokenism and stereotypical views of marginalized groups are some of the foregrounding concerns (Scroggins & Gangi, 2004). Thomas (2016) reminds us, "Stereotyping, caricature, and marginalization of minoritized groups have been persistent problems in children's literature throughout the field's long history" (p. 113). While it may be presumed that authors from marginalized groups have greater success in publishing stories that authentically represent their experiences, in reality dominant group authors are the ones who have a far easier time getting published, circulated, and cited even if they are writing about perspectives that are not their own (Cooperative Children's Book Center [CCBC], 2019; Scroggins & Gangi, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 2017;). One of the issues we explicitly wanted to tackle in our unit was the lack of literature about diverse children by diverse authors themselves. To illustrate the gravity of this concern, we considered the latest data compiled by the CCBC. In 2017[6], the CCBC received 3,500 books from U.S. publishing companies: less than 4% were authored by African/African Americans, less than 1% by American Indians/First Nations, less than 8% by Asian Pacific/Asian Pacific Americans, and less than 4% by Latinx authors (see Table 1).

While Table 1 is specific to race/ethnicity of books in children's literature and their authors, the CCBC also surveyed the amount of diversity among publishing staff to further illuminate the lack of diversity within the children's book industry in general. The results of the survey included responses from 8 review journals and 34

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[6] Here, we reference the data collected in 2017 because this was what was available at the time of the study.

publishers across North America and demonstrated that most personnel in children's book industry are white, non-disabled, cis-gendered women. The results of this survey suggest that one of the reasons why it has been so difficult to diversify children's literature has to do with the stronghold of a lack of diversity among those who does the publishing.

Table 1

*Children's Books By and About People of Color and First/Native Nations Received by the CCBC**

Year	Number of Books Received at CCBC from US Pubs	African/African Americans		American Indians / First Nations		Asian Pacific/Asian Pacific Americans		Latinos	
		By	About	By	About	By	About	By	About
2017	3,500	116	319	18	44	256	300	108	205
2016	3,200	92	267	8	35	195	225	95	157
2015	3,200	106	244	9	28	156	107	56	79

*Note: *US Publishers Only, 2015*

Within the critiques about members from dominant groups writing about the experiences of persons/characters from marginalized groups, there are scholars who cite some situational appropriateness when dominant group authors write stories about groups of people with whom they do not identify. Regarding white authors writing about Aboriginal groups, poet Jennifer Martiniello (2006) proposes, "As long as white writers are aware there are boundaries they cannot cross when they are writing, and where or what the appropriate protocols are for dealing with Aboriginal people, their stories and their communities, then their work may be approved" (p. 200). Despite these notions of affirmation, we ultimately decided that *requiring* students to write from marginalized perspectives was likely to yield more harm than good. Thus, we opened the parameters of the assignment and required the students to write and publish a text about a topic they wanted to teach others.

This followed a focused study about representation in children's literature, including a guest workshop by an activist children's book author, Dr. Zetta Elliot, who raised attention to both the scarcity of children' literature about diverse groups, as well as the concern with members from dominant groups supplying those narratives. In essence, we wanted the students to make their own decisions from an informed

place about the need for more diverse stories and the challenges with dominant group members writing those stories (Howlett & Kindall, 2019; Sleeter, 2018). For the purpose of the research reported in this article, we were interested in better understanding the kinds of stories the students would produce and how their views of themselves as authors may have changed through the process.

Children's Literature as a Portal to Understanding

We believe that paying attention to silences, representation and access to diverse children's literature is one way to attend to issues of diversity in teacher education. We are not alone. Many researchers (for example, Metcalf-Turner & Smith, 1998; Howlett et al., 2017; Iwai, 2013) have explored the possibilities in using children's literature as a facet of multicultural teacher education in general. For example, Brindley and Laframboise (2002) posit that using drama techniques around children's literature can teach teacher candidates to challenge their own cultural beliefs. Colby and Lyon (2004) advocate for the importance of educating teacher candidates on how to obtain diverse children's literature by raising awareness of the importance of it for children. Scroggins and Gangi (2004) concur, "We must expose current and future teachers to children's literature that is culturally accurate and inclusive" (p.40). Iwai (2013) researched teacher candidates' perceptions of diverse children's literature and found they considered diverse literature important to foster children's awareness of diversity. Howlett and colleagues (2017) examined how three universities infused diverse children's literature into teacher education. They found that teacher educators have built literature reflections, discussions, and presentations of diverse children's literature into key assignments, deliberately taught students how to use diverse literature in reading instruction through read aloud, writing extension activities, and meta-cognitive reader response engagements. They also shared ways teacher educators have encouraged teacher candidates to use artistic responses to diverse children's literature to better understand their own personal connections to texts, as a way of building empathy, humanizing oneself and others (Paris & Winn, 2013).

Authorship and Self-publishing

Clearly, there are blueprints for how to use diverse children's literature in teacher education, but they do not speak directly to the fact that a deficiency of diverse children's literature exists in the first place and what teachers could do to

speak to this gap. It is precisely this critical lens upon which we framed our study. We were guided by Older's (2014) challenge:

> How can I use my position to help create a literary world that is diverse, equitable, and doesn't just represent the same segment of society it always has since its inception? What concrete actions can I take to make actual change and move beyond the tired conversation we've been having for decades? (para. 16)

While Older may have been speaking directly to the industries that publish children's books, we accepted this challenge as teacher educators and encouraged our teacher candidates to do the same. In our review of studies, we did not find any that engaged teacher candidates in authoring and publishing their own stories within a framework of critical multiculturalism. Yet, in a 2015 resolution proposed by the NCTE on the need for diverse books, a stark call was made for teachers to "advocate for more children's and young adult books from publishers and booksellers that reflect the culturally diverse lives and experiences present in the United States" (para. 3).
In response to this call, we developed a unit of study, corresponding lessons, and assignments to directly address the need for diversity in children's literature. Central to this unit was our plea for students to tell stories – as best as they could - that reflected a range of diverse experiences.

Theoretical Perspectives

Our work is predicated on drawing attention to issues of power, silence, representation, and voice (Howlett et al., 2017; Sleeter, 2018). As such, we found critical multiculturalism to be a helpful framework. Critical multiculturalism is a counterstrategy to the liberal multicultural education movement of the 1990s (Sleeter, 2018) that was underpinned by neoliberal economic philosophies with a conception of diversity as something to be addressed with a set of concrete practices, serving to endorse colonizing views of education (May & Sleeter, 2010). Within the umbrella of the liberal multicultural movement, awareness of diversity and tolerance toward it were generally seen as good, noble characteristics, but multiculturalism was hegemonized as something Others had, appropriate for dominant members to study and report on through cultural artifact collection. These celebrations of difference lacked attention to power and privilege and were critiqued by proponents of anti-racist education, critical race theorists, and critical pedagogues who argued that

attention to liberal multiculturalism ignored the larger structures of racism, sexism, classism, and discrimination that impact minoritized individuals (Gorski, 2006; Lee, 2009; May & Sleeter, 2010).

These critiques coalesced and ultimately led to the emergence of the conceptualization of critical multiculturalism that we draw upon in this work. Critical multiculturalism gives priority to structural analyses of power by centralizing institutional inequities across an individual's multiple identities – race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and religion. Its focus is on understanding how power is used and maintained and challenged, and it focuses attention back to the early days of multiculturalism of the 1960s and 1970s and their social movements (Sleeter, 2018; Zeichner, 2009). Extending these ideas to the analysis of literature, Botelho and Rudman (2009) note, "Critical multicultural analysis focuses on the reader as the midwife of meaning. The theoretical constructs of discourse, ideology, subjectivity, and power lead the reader to locating how the power relations of class, race, and gender are exercised in text" (p. 4). In suggesting a framework for the practical application of critical multiculturalism in relationship to an analysis of children's literature, Thomas (2016) suggests questions to diversity the metaphors drawn upon as we read (See Table 2).

Table 2

Questions to Diversify the Metaphors

- What (or whose) view of the world, or kinds of behaviors are presented as normal by the text?
- Why is the text written that way? How else could it have been written?
- What assumptions does the text make about age, gender, [class], and culture (including the age, gender, and culture of its readers)
- Who is silenced (and heard) here?
- Whose interests might best be served by this text?
- What ideological positions can you identify?
- What are the possible readings of this situation/event/character? How did you get to that reading?
- What moral or political position does a reading support? How do particular cultural and social contexts make readings available (e.g., who could you not say that to)? How might it be challenged? (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 4)

Note: (Thomas, 2016)

Methodology

Our commitment then, both theoretical and practical, stemmed from critical multicultural analysis within the practical applications offered by Thomas (2016). Our study was supported each year from an internal diversity grant. The teacher candidates with whom we worked were taking concurrent language arts and social studies methods courses in elementary education. We implemented the same study during one semester of each academic year, 2016 to 2018. In this manuscript, we present a small slice of data from 2018. Our guiding research questions and sources of data to analyze those questions are in Table 3.

Table 3

Research Questions and Date Sources

Research Questions	Data Used to Investigate Research Questions
To what degree, if any, do teacher candidates develop in their identity as children's literature authors?	Survey Questions: #7: Likert scale question about degree of confidence in incorporating multiple perspectives and texts to connect with the classroom diversity. #9: Likert scale question about the degree of confidence in addressing stereotypes and writing in inclusive ways.
What kinds of texts do candidates author?	Teacher candidates' published children's literature
To what degree, if any, do the candidates' texts align to the critical multiculturalism framework? If so, how?	Teacher candidates' published children's literature

Participants

In total, 68 teacher candidates participated in the study. Of the teacher candidates who participated, 54 identified as White (79%), 6 identified as Black or African American (9%), 5 identified as Latinx (7%), and 3 identified as Asian or mixed-race (4%). In terms of gender: 65 identified as women (96%), two identified

as men (3%) and one identified as transgender (1%). The participants also identified the primary location of their elementary school education. 25 identified a rural location (37%). 31 identified a suburban location (46%). 12 identified an urban location (18%).

Data Collection and Analysis

Upon receiving IRB approval to conduct the study, we gave a brief information session during our classes where we explained the study to the teacher candidates and invited them to participate. We implemented the study within two weeks of the beginning of each semester and students completed a survey entitled, "Connecting Teachers to Multicultural Texts" (see Appendix A). During the semester, we co-taught the integrated unit of study described in this manuscript with the end goal of supporting the students in the development of authoring and publishing their own picture books through StudentTreasures.com, an online publishing company. We administered the same survey again the last week of the semester to measure students' perceptions of their growth. For the purposes of this particular manuscript, we examined responses to item #6 ("I feel confident that I can incorporate multiple perspectives and text in order to connect with the diversity in my classroom") and item #8 ("I know how to address stereotypes in texts, including children's literature, and can present inclusive information about ethnic populations"). We also collected electronic copies of the books and analyzed the stories by a) identifying if they met the goals of a critical multiculturalism using the evaluation checklist authored by Howlett and Kindall[7] (2019; See Appendix B) and, if so, b) how this was done.

We organized our analysis using a three-pronged approach. First, the teacher educators responsible for grading the projects divided the stories into two groups: a) those which broadly addressed multiculturalism and b) those which did not (as a reminder, we decided not to r*equire* the students to write stories addressing multiculturalism). Approximately half (n=31) of the stories addressed multiculturalism broadly by including characters from marginalized cultural groups. Then, two members of the research team evaluated these stories using Howlett and Kindall's (2019) checklist to examine them for evidence of critical multiculturalism. The multicultural literature anti-bias checklist is based on Bennett's (2014) Multicultural Principles: (1) developing multicultural perspectives, (2) developing critical consciousness, (3) increasing intercultural competence, (4) combating racism, prejudice, discrimination, (5) developing awareness of the state of the planet and

[7] Used with permission by Howlett and Kindall (2019).

global dynamics, and (6) developing social action skills. After discussing common patterns and themes, the rest of the research team was invited to evaluate the books using the same critical multicultural checklist. We discussed inconsistencies in our evaluations and ultimately agreed on final scores for each book. The next section discusses these scores, our qualitative analyses of the books that were reviewed for multiculturalism, and the survey responses that were collected in more detail.

Methodology

Of the teacher candidates whose stories included multicultural content, we found that *none* of the books authored by the teacher candidates demonstrated evidence of critical multiculturalism. They fell within a range of perpetuating a naive view of multiculturalism to creating openings that could be used, with more scaffolding, towards the development of critical multiculturalism. Here, we selected four representative texts that fall within that spectrum. We briefly summarize the stories and then share our analysis of the stories in light of the aims of critical multiculturalism as outlined by Howlett & Kindall (2019).[8] Then, we extend the analysis by examining data collected from the surveys to look more broadly at our research goals. While we foreshadow that students did not meet the aims of the unit's instructional goals, we believe we generated critical insights about the pitfalls teacher educators may experience when authoring multicultural texts.

Perpetuating a Naive View of Multiculturalism

The stories fell within a range of perpetuating a lack of criticality towards multiculturalism to moving in the direction toward critical multiculturalism. The following stories feature people from diverse backgrounds, but the stories focus on the individual, rather than the social and political context that has created and supported individual struggles. It is important to note that we believe if the students had received the evaluation ahead of time, they may have scored higher. Below, we provide a summary of each story and include one page of sample text for each.

Gracie's Big Decision (Figure 1). This story begins with an introduction of the main character, a ten-year-old girl, depicted in the illustrations as a fair-skinned and brown-haired, who has just moved to a new school. The girl and her family are

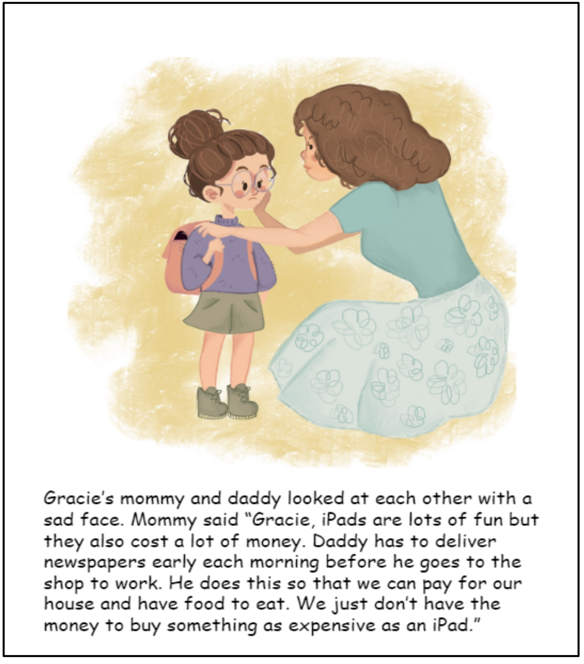
[8] We (the authors) were given permission by Howlett and Kindall to utilize their tool prior to the publication of their study.

portrayed as being poor. A conflict immediately arises on the girl's first day at school once her parents reject

her request to purchase a new iPad (so she can fit in with her new friends who own them) because the family cannot afford the device. The main character experiences a secondary conflict after she finds an unmarked envelope containing $200 while taking a walk later that day. After her family's failed efforts to find the envelope's owner, the main character is faced with decision: to spend the money on a desirable new iPad or to contribute to her family's budget by purchasing necessary school supplies. Using Howlett and Kindall's checklist criteria for critical multiculturalism, we rated this story a 6 out of 21.

Figure 1

Gracie's Big Decision



Note: (p. 7)

Journey to the Land of Milk and Honey (Figure 2). This children's book is autobiographical in nature as it shares the experiences of the author and her family when they moved to the United States from Belarus in 1990. The author shares her parents' perceptions of living in Eastern Europe after World War II (the driving force behind their emigration) and what her arrival in the United States was like as a young girl. The author includes multiple accounts about living in a new country as an immigrant from her point of view as well as her parents' and older siblings. Using Howlett and Kindall's checklist criteria for critical multiculturalism, we rated this story an 11 out of 21.

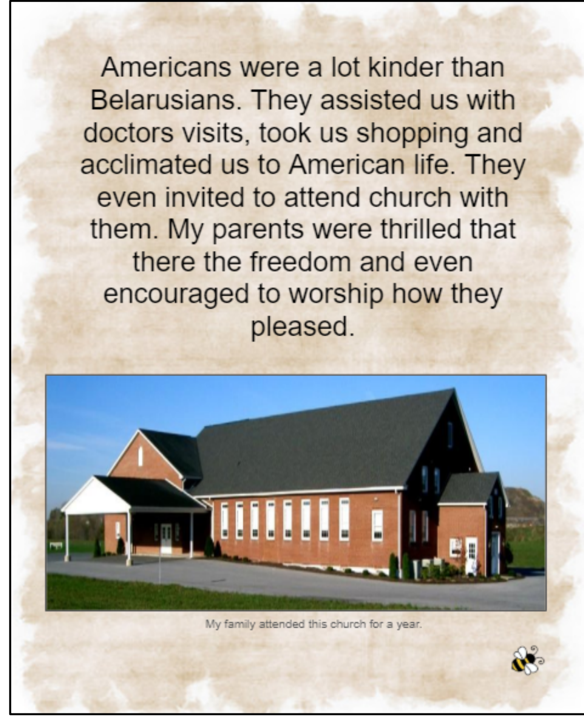
Both student-authored texts, while portraying characters from diverse cultural backgrounds, fail to meet the aims of critical multiculturalism. In *Gracie's Big Decision*, poverty is narrated as an individual not having money for material things (school supplies *and* a new iPad). Rather than examined as a system of oppression, poverty is reduced to the series of individual character decisions and the unique living conditions of a family. The danger in this story is the assumption that luck and good

moral character defined by dominant culture values can pull someone out of a difficult financial time.

While the *Journey to the Land of Milk and Honey* was authentic, it reveres the concept of the American Dream without considering the implications of the child and her family's ability to assimilate into whiteness. It also promotes negative stereotypes of other countries as well as oversimplifies issues experienced by immigrants. Both stories were told from the point of view of a white, female character living within a nuclear family unit, minimizing the complexity of the main characters' identities. We argue this lack of critical multicultural authorship illustrates the naive worldview of some teacher candidates as they enter the profession.

Figure 2

Journey to the Land of Milk and Honey



Note: (p. 14)

Moving Towards Critical Multiculturalism

Some stories demonstrated evidence of openings that could be used to develop critical multiculturalism, although they do not represent critical multiculturalism in their current forms. We believe, with revision circles and more content knowledge on critical multiculturalism, these stories would have scored higher on the checklist. Despite this, with the stories in their current format, they also tended to focus on individual narratives without attending to social and political contexts of oppression and marginalization.

Ed and Betty's Story (Figure 3). This children's book was also inspired by a student's own family. It is about the early life, courtship, and marriage of her paternal grandparents. We rated it a 12 out of 21 on the Howlett and Kindall checklist. However, this 1950s love story is unique in that both author's grandparents were deaf. This story explains their meeting (through events held at their respective

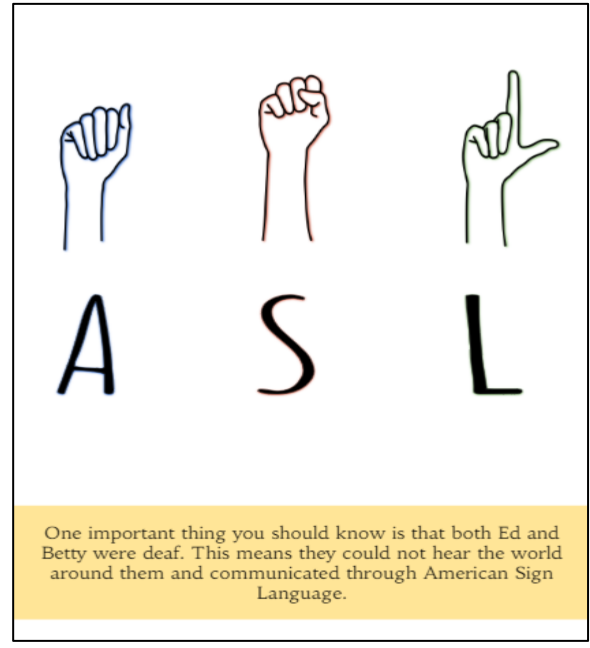
schools for deaf students), their marriage proposal, wedding, and teaching American Sign Language to their children (and grandchildren), all of whom were not deaf.

Sticky Rice (Figure 4). This author's memoir described her experiences growing up in a household that regularly celebrated their heritage by preparing Laotian food. As a child eager to assimilate to the mainstream culture characterized by American fast food, the author couldn't find the same appreciation for Laotian foods as her mother. Once she moved away from home as a young adult, however, she began to miss the flavors and smells that reminded her of home and quickly developed an appreciation and desire for her mother's home cooking once again. We rated this publication a 14 out of 21 on the Howlett and Kindall checklist.

Through their stories, these student authors revealed a developing level of multicultural awareness. Although the *Ed and Betty's Story* and *Sticky Rice* do not fully represent critical multiculturalism, the students' thematic writing about cultural tolerance and acceptance illustrates a higher capacity for developing critical multiculturalism than the previous two stories. *Ed and Betty's Story* normalized difference of ability. It

Figure 3

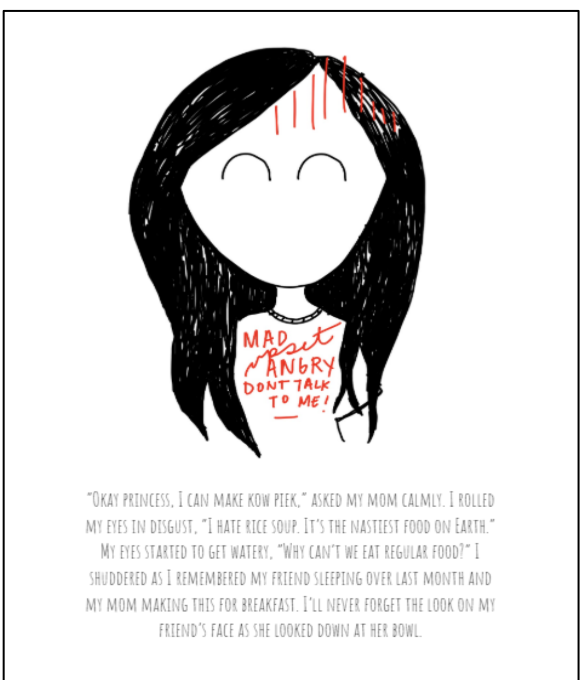
Ed and Betty's Story



Note: (p. 6)

Figure 4

Sticky Rice



Note: (p. 10)

celebrates the relationship between two people instead of their differences when compared to society at large. However, the text lacked other types of diversity and ignores mentioning the struggles experienced by the characters due to their adversities.

The memoir, *Sticky Rice*, is a coming-of-age story. The student author's personal account about developing an appreciation for her Laotian heritage illustrates the power of embracing cultural tolerance in celebrating one's own intersectional identity. Both texts focus on the everyday life of various cultural identities in contemporary settings, thus meeting two items on Howlett and Kindall's (2019) checklist. They also meet at least two of the Multicultural Principles: *Ed and Betty's Story* attempts to develop multicultural perspectives and combat prejudice while *Sticky Rice* develops multicultural perspectives and critical consciousness. These stories reveal developing levels of critical multiculturalism of some teacher candidates. With targeted support from teacher educators, these students have greater potential to enact change. Before we discuss implications for teacher education, we consider the candidates' perceptions of themselves as authors through this work.

Survey Data

While candidates demonstrated some evidence for the development of critical multiculturalism, they had a high degree of confidence in their ability to incorporate multicultural perspectives as authors. As we explained earlier, critical multiculturalism is the structural analysis of power through an examination of the institutional inequities across peoples' multiple identities (Sleeter, 2018; Zeichner, 2009). Critical multiculturalism further examines how systems of power are reified and the ways that such power can be challenged. In their open-ended responses to both the pre- and post-surveys, we asked the candidates to define Culturally Responsive Teaching in their own words. Here are some examples of the definitions they shared:

- *Teaching from culturally diverse perspectives so that students may understand that diversity is beautiful and necessary in our community and world.*
- *Being able to adapt and teach students of different cultures and lifestyles effectively.*
- *Being aware of the diverse students in your classroom and representing different cultures and people in your teaching.*

- *Teaching students to respect all cultures and seek for representation and understanding of differences.*
- *Culturally responsive teaching is making sure all students see themselves, this is especially important when teaching history.*
- *I think Culturally Responsive Teaching involves recognizing that there are a lot of different cultures and customs practiced not only in the world but within students in your own classroom. It is important for students to feel that they see themselves within a text and that no one culture is superior to another.*
- *Being able to provide an inclusive-based classroom environment where all cultures and ethnicities are given equal fairness on the path to learning.*
- *Being able to allow all students to share their culture and ensuring that there are no barriers in my classroom that would prevent students from different backgrounds from being able to succeed.*

Most of the candidates' responses focused on the appreciation, awareness, recognition, and respect for multiculturalism and the diversity represented in classrooms. Their definitions give us insight into how they understand multiculturalism. It may also provide a window into why the students rated themselves so highly regarding their confidence and ability to include multiple perspectives. However, candidates' definitions largely neglected to use a critical lens—one that analyzes the power dynamics often used to tacitly reproduce inequities.

Results

To report on the candidates' perceptions, we examined their responses of two survey items using a Likert scale:

a) Item #6: I feel confident that I can incorporate multiple perspectives and text in order to connect with the diversity in my classroom.
b) Item #8: I know how to address stereotypes in texts, including children's literature, and can present inclusive information about ethnic populations.

Table 4 compares the candidates' responses on the pre- and post-surveys to the statement in question 6 that states: "I feel confident that I can incorporate multiple perspectives and texts in order to connect with the diversity in my classroom." The candidates had a high degree of confidence about ways to incorporate multiple perspectives to connect with diversity. On the pre-survey, almost 90% of the

candidates either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement in question 6. On the post-survey, all the candidates either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement, with more than 58% strongly agreeing. Table 5 compares the candidates' responses on the pre- and post-surveys to the statement in question 8, which states: "I know how to address stereotypes in texts, including children's literature, and can present inclusive information about ethnic populations."

Table 4

Candidates' confidence in incorporating multiple perspectives

	Pre-survey responses n=68	Post-survey responses n=68
Strongly Agree	16.7%	58.1%
Agree	72.7%	41.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.1%	0%
Disagree	1.5%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%

Table 5

Candidates' knowledge in addressing stereotypes and presenting inclusive information

	Pre-survey responses n=68	Post-survey responses n=68
Strongly Agree	6.1%	38.1%
Agree	44.9%	60.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	47.8%	1.6%
Disagree	1.2%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%

As Table 5 shows, the candidates also perceived that they had a high degree of knowledge about ways to address stereotypes in texts and present inclusive information about ethnic populations. On the pre-survey, 51% of the candidates either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement in question 8. On the post-survey, all the candidates either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the question 8

statement, with more than one-third of the candidates' strongly agreeing to this statement.

Analysis

There are a couple of ways to read and analyze these survey data. One way is to triangulate the data with the earlier finding about the candidates' emergent understanding of critical multiculturalism when it comes to children's literature. Due to the lack of critical multiculturalism demonstrated in their stories, we conclude that the candidates project an overly confident perception of their ability to infuse multiculturalism in their writing and classroom perspectives. Again, this confidence could be related to the common definition that many candidates construct for multiculturalism, which is something akin to respect and recognition for diversity rather than critical multiculturalism. Another way of reading these data is with the limitation of reactivity in mind. Reactivity is a form of participant bias where candidates answer or score a survey in a way that reflects what the candidates believed the researchers are hoping to see (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). We do not have evidence that participants were doing this on the survey. Yet, it is still possible the participants only expressed what they thought the teacher educators wanted to read. However, the data are read, it seems that these findings reflect a need to be more explicit in the instruction and reflection of critical multiculturalism.

Discussion

We conducted this research to better understand the kinds of stories the teacher candidates would produce and how their views of themselves as authors may have changed throughout the integrated unit of study focused on critical multiculturalism. In writing their books, the teacher candidates were hyper-focused on individual narratives instead of broader cultural themes. In other words, while the teacher candidates *included* characters growing up in poor households, characters with different abilities and languages than those that are dominant, and characters whose families and traditions were from diverse cultures, the mere inclusion of these characters was not enough to qualify the stories as being critically multicultural. In many ways, the stories simply reiterated myths of dominance. These myths include stereotypical themes such as *a) if people save money, they will overcome poverty* and b) *culturally diverse people should love what makes them different from the "norm" and come to embrace those differences*. These myths are carried as if they are separate from the structural oppression that contributes to inequities in the first

place. They ignore how those with power perpetuate inequities. The institutional barriers that are behind the individual narratives are not considered through the books, nor are how dominant groups maintain power.

In an attempt to circumnavigate these existing barriers, we implemented some changes to the courses over time in order to increase students' awareness of critical multiculturalism. For example, we invited guest authors of color to share their experiences with writing and publishing children's literature; we read relevant articles about author authenticity and engaged students in civil discourse on a variety of topics related to voice and cultural representation in children's stories. We also introduced practical resources and texts for the teacher candidates to use in their clinical experiences, such as Swartz's (2019) *Teaching Tough Topics* and the website Learning for Justice (https://www.learningforjustice.org).

We also noticed how we, as teacher educators, were enacting and reinforcing dominance. For example, we provided much content on children's literature demographics - characters written by whom and about whom - but we did not take up the ways in which those books, even those with characters outside the dominant norms of society, may have only served to reify dominance through their contribution to the age-old trope of stories of goodness, perseverance, coming of age, and assimilation. It was clearly not enough to simply discuss lack of representation in children's literature because a lack of representation alone is not the only issue at play. Clearly, while representation and equity in children's literature matter so too are the ideological stances that literature conveys and how those stances are used in classrooms.

We also recognized the ways in which we could have increased our students' exposure to books that fit into the category of critical multiculturalism. For example, we could have engaged students in text analyses to discern literary features of critical multiculturalism from a sample of diverse books. We also could have encouraged our students to serve on book award committees to showcase diverse books by diverse authors and/or write book reviews to promote diverse books by diverse authors. In these ways, students from dominant groups could have used their positionalities to support the very social issues we explored.

This is not to say that the process of authoring multicultural books did not have meaning for the students or was not a fruitful exercise for exploring issues of diversity in teacher education. The very idea that writing is a way of advocacy and resistance is something we believe in. We want the teacher candidates to know they don't have to sit around and wait for change. We want them to have the confidence and self-efficacy to write as social action. Furthermore, this project seemed to at least

increase the students' perceptions of themselves as authors. But, alas, more is needed - on our part as teacher educators, and on their part as teacher candidates, to meet the goal of challenging inequitable systems by authoring multicultural books.

Implications and Conclusion

The opportunity to collaborate among language arts and social studies teacher educators was imperative in this project. In fact, the entire unit could have been strengthened more with integration of another class concurrently taught in our department that focuses on structural inequity. We could have changed the requirements so that interrogating systems was a requirement in their writing. More than that, time to draft and work with students to challenge ideological assumptions could have been a foundational component of this work. Using an inquiry stance, we could have asked the student authors more critical questions such as:

- Why is Gracie's family poor?
- How did Dina (the main character in *Journey to the Land of Milk and Honey*) assimilate into whiteness? What did the origin of her birth have to do with this?
- What does it say about America that Amelia's (the main character in *Sticky Rice*) coming of age and acceptance of rice was so hard? How could systems, like education, challenge this?
- What message does it send that Ed and Betty attended college at a school for deaf people? How could children who are not deaf have benefitted from their knowledge of sign language in a school that integrated, rather than segregated, children with various literacies and languages?

To ask such questions, we advocate for structures that support teacher candidates in thinking critically about their writing. We advocate for classes where writing creatively and revising that writing is recognized as the critical, rigorous work that it is for authors, including student authors. We advocate that administrators within colleges of education recognize that assignments such as authoring a children's book is a valuable indicator of learning because it contributes to their criticality of examining children's literature. We are aware that this suggestion comes at a time when teacher education is highly standardized and data driven (Krise, 2016); unless teacher education assignments result in higher scores on teaching performance assessments,

it is likely to be pushed to margins, at best, or openly patronized and eliminated, at worst.

Ultimately, while the teacher candidates and those of us teaching them have much progress to make in truly addressing the institutional marginalization of diverse perspectives in children's literature, we see much promise in thoughtfully integrating such units of study into teacher education programs. Teacher education must be brave enough to embrace the iterative process of - and necessary challenges within - teaching that is process focused, emergent, and critical to address pervasive societal issues such as the lack of diversity in children's literature.

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Computational Thinking Belongs in Social Studies Classrooms

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Social studies teachers cover an increasingly complex curriculum while enjoying access to more data than ever before. To harness the opportunities of these new datasets while engaging this complexity, we propose integrating computational thinking into social studies instruction. Drawing upon our work with in-service social studies teachers, we present a heuristic for computational thinking in social studies and three portraits of practice from our collaborating teachers. This combination of social studies and computational thinking can benefit both fields, simultaneously enhancing the use of data in social studies while also allowing all K-12 students to experience computational thinking.

Keywords: computational thinking, inquiry learning, integrated instruction, data-intensive social studies

Introduction

Under the best of circumstances, teaching social studies is a challenge. Teachers must integrate history, geography, civics, and economics, stay relevant to contemporary events, and help students engage as citizens in a rapidly changing 21st century. Consider a topic such as the history of white supremacy. In previous decades, a teacher building a lesson on white supremacy would likely focus on the Ku Klux Klan and draw upon resources such as the Library of Congress' photo archives

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(e.g., National Photo Company, 1926). Consider how different this topic is today. The teacher would want to address not just the Klan, but also organizations such as private militias and neo-Nazi groups. Then the teacher might want to include having students research political violence, FBI hate crime statistics, and organized political participation, redlining maps, archival documents and images, and contemporary hate speech and gestures (e.g., Fortin, 2019; Levenson, 2019; Quinn, 2019).

Alternatively, consider a lesson on the legacy of the Civil War. In addition to more traditional approaches such as identifying the conversion of battlefields to parks or examining monuments to military leaders (e.g., Percocco, 1998), a teacher might also draw upon data from the Department of Education's School Search. One school is named after Andrew Johnson, while 50 are named after Abraham Lincoln. What does this contrast say about the public regard for these presidents? One school is named after Jefferson Davis and five after Robert E. Lee. What geographic patterns do we see in the locations of these schools? What chronological patterns are in their dates of founding? Further patterns and questions can be explored by searching for abolitionist figures such as William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Tubman. In every domain of social studies, the same phenomenon applies: new information, new resources, and new understandings emerge faster than we can assimilate them into instruction.

As social studies teachers and teacher educators, we find this torrent of information dizzying but also inviting. These new datasets present new possibilities for teaching social studies. Lessons can draw upon databases of historical primary sources, spreadsheets of quarterly GDP data and Federal Reserve interest rates, geographic information systems (GIS) with visualizations of urbanization and internal migration, or dynamic graphs of recent political polling data. New specialty resources emerge constantly, such as the comprehensive "Electing the House of Representatives" resource from the Digital Scholarship Lab at the University of Richmond. Similarly, non-content-specific resources such as Google Trends and Ngram have become more powerful and accessible. What social studies teachers need is a framework for taking advantage of these opportunities and integrating new, data-intensive resources into powerful social studies instruction (NCSS, 2016).

Computational Thinking and Social Studies

As we consider the myriad possibilities of teaching social studies with new information and new access to data, we are inspired by a vision of social studies for the 21st century, one that features inquiry-oriented learning, draws upon the vast

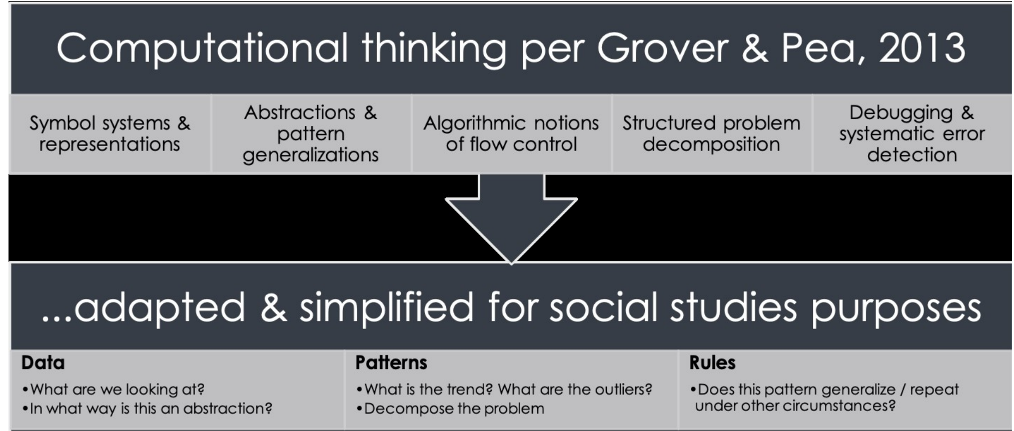
reach of technology, and employs *computational thinking*. Jeannette Wing, the computer scientist commonly credited with popularizing the term, defines computational thinking as "thought processes involved in formulating problems and their solutions so that the solutions are represented in a form that can be effectively carried out by an information-processing agent" (2010, p.1). Similarly, the Center for the Innovative Research in Cyber Learning (CIRCL) defines computational thinking as "a broad range of mental processes that help human beings find effective methods to solve problems, design systems, understand human behavior, and leverage the power of computing to automate a wide range of intellectual processes" (Basu, Mustafara, & Rich, 2016, p.1). Both definitions point to computational thinking as a set of *problem-solving skills* designed to *take advantage of computers*, while also being *mindful of their limitations*. The skillset includes the ability to think abstractly, engage in intellectually challenging tasks, and draw from a variety of knowledge domains to address complex questions.

The skills associated with computational thinking support the aims of the social studies. After all, the disciplines that make up the social studies rely heavily on data as evidence to develop claims of knowledge and inquiry. For example, the *College, Career, & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards* (NCSS, 2013) highlights "Evaluating sources and using evidence" as the third dimension of its Inquiry Arc (p. 12). Computational thinking can also connect with the democratic purposes of social studies education to prepare students to engage in inquiry and analysis for democratic deliberation (Gutmann & Thompson, 2002). Finally, computational thinking is a natural asset to decision-making, which social studies pioneer Shirley Engle places at "the heart of social studies instruction" (1960, p. 301).

Our collaborating social studies teachers recognize the relevance of computational thinking; several characterize it as a form of critical thinking. They are entirely correct—computational thinking is a sub-set of critical thinking. However, we can go a step further, describing the actions that take place during computational thinking and even clarifying and sequencing these actions for the purposes of social studies. To this end, we have developed a three-part heuristic of Data - Patterns – Rules to integrate computational thinking into the social studies (Figure 1, on the next page).

Figure 1

Computational thinking adapted and simplified for social studies purposes



Here, computational thinking has been adapted and simplified for social studies purposes. We start by framing data as an abstraction of reality, not the full reality. Next, we decompose the dataset to identify trends and outliers. Once a potential pattern has identified, we ask whether it forms a useful generalization (summarizing all of a dataset), provides a rule (holding true over other datasets as well), or neither. As students apply computational thinking in the social studies classroom, they develop a deeper understanding of content, while also developing more sophisticated reasoning skills.

Computational Thinking in the Classroom: Portraits of Practice

In order to explore the feasibility of integrating computational thinking into the social studies, we worked with eight social studies teachers in middle and high schools to develop portraits of practice. Some worked with us one-on-one; others participated in a summer institute for intensive study and planning. Collaborating with the teachers, we developed teaching and learning activities intended to activate computational thinking for students. Although the topics of the learning activities varied widely, they all had the following elements in common:

1. Employ the Data-Patterns-Rules heuristic,
2. Engage students in hands-on analysis and examination of a data set, and
3. Culminate with a student-created visual and/or written display of their conclusions.

Below we draw upon this work to provide three illustrative lessons or portraits of practice of computational thinking applied to social studies contexts. These "visions of the possible" (Shulman, 2004, 2011) illustrate the potential for social studies teachers to leverage computational thinking as an approach to support student inquiry. The variety of curriculum topics covered points to the transferability of computational thinking across curriculum topics and resources.

Dollar Street: How do people around the world live?

Dollar Street is a visual database produced by Gap Minder. It provides images of families and their homes from around the world and at a variety of income levels. The goal of the site is to make "stereotypes fall apart." Users can explore the database to focus on particular countries, economic strata, and/or topics, including "most loved items," "next big things I plan to buy," and "things I dream of having."

The teachers developed a variety of approaches to using the database in the classroom. They ranged from encouraging students to openly explore the site to narrowing the search to a few specific countries. For example, one teacher limited students to eight countries: Liberia, South Africa, China, India, France, Turkey, Haiti, and the U.S. Other teachers piqued student interest using the TED talk linked to the site. In common across all of the teaching activities, students were asked to select specific characteristics or physical possessions and to compare them across countries and income levels (for example, the number of beds or bathrooms, the room décor, and so forth). They were also asked to visually display the data by creating a chart, table, or diagram. In a few of the classrooms, students created PowerPoint slides which they explained orally. Teachers also prompted students to write about what they learned. For example a student wrote: "Families with the same amount of money on both extremes of the spectrum [high wealth and low wealth] around the world have similar lifestyles, whereas the lifestyles of people in the middle class varies in which country they live" (student work sample, 11/6/2019). Across the classrooms, student used computational thinking to identify patterns in the data to develop rules or generalizations.

Social studies instruction using the *Dollar Street* dataset has many possible permutations, but the Data-Patterns-Rules heuristic allowed teachers to structure students' work with the information to create an authentic inquiry. The process can be summarized the stages in this process in Figure 2 (on next page), with the caveat that the progression is not always linear; teachers and students can and should cycle across the three phases as they take their inquiry to a deeper level.

Figure 2

The Data-Patterns-Rules Heuristic Applied to the Dollar Street Activity

Data	**Patterns**	**Rules**
Dataset = Dollar Street images & accompanying text; can be constrained (only selected countries or topics) or unconstrained (open exploration) Contextualization: Who gathered these images and why? What is included? What is excluded?	Create a data display to detect potential patterns: chart, table or diagram Observe central tendency (where are most cases?) and variation (which are closer and which are further from the trendline?) Explore outliers – what are they? Why are they outliers?	Draw a conclusion that is based on your analysis. Does this rule apply to just this dataset or do you think it applies more broadly?

Global Terrorism: Who commits terror acts and why?

As part of a unit on Africa, an 8th grade class examined the *Global Terrorism Database* from the University of Maryland, which provides detailed data on nearly 200,000 terrorist attacks dating back to 1970. We imported the dataset into a GIS and showed students how to browse, sort, and filter the records. Several patterns began to emerge. For example, within Africa, students inferred contrasting motives behind terrorist acts, such as Islamist movements (e.g., Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab) vs. nationalist or ethnic movements (e.g., Fulani extremists). They also observed changes over time: in South Africa, for example, anti-apartheid groups such as the African National Congress committed acts of terrorism up until about 1994. Since that year, however, reactionary groups such as Boere Aanvals Troepe have committed more of the political terrorism. Why did this change take place? The students then learned about the end of apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela, events that reflected the altered trajectory of South African politics and an inflection point in the nation's political violence.

After examining and discussing Africa, the class then broadened the scope to include the case studies drawn from the rest of the globe. Students examined Northern Ireland during and after "The Troubles," domestic vs. international terrorism

within the US, and Tamil separatist attacks in Sri Lanka and India. The global terrorism activity simultaneously gave the students a broad view of world events and a deep dive into the specifics of the countries and time periods they examined through the provocative lens of political violence. For students who had grown up in the post 9-11 era, this inquiry challenged their preconceptions of when, where, and why terrorism takes place. Again, we can organize the instructional activities into the Data-Patterns-Rules heuristic (Figure 3), with the understanding that many different permutations are possible with such a broad and challenging dataset.

Figure 3

The Data-Patters-Rules Heuristic Applied to the Global Terrorism Activity

Data	Patterns	Rules
Dataset = Global Terrorism database, imported into a spatial display (GIS). Decomposition: First examine a specific region (Africa); then selected cases (Northern Ireland, USA, India and Sri Lanka)	Examine geographic variation—why the density of data points in South Africa? Southern India and Sri Lanka? Examine temporal variation—what explains the emergence and decline of terrorist acts (example: Good Friday Agreement) or shifts in perpetrators (end of apartheid)?	What do you know now about terrorism that you didn't know before? What new understandings (or questions) do you have?

The Story of Aaron: How do fugitive slave ads provide insight about the struggle for self-liberation?

"The Story of Aaron" draws upon the *Finding Aaron* activity in the Historical Scene Investigation database (see also Swan, Hofer, & Gallicchio, 2006): a sequence of six runaway slave advertisements from colonial Virginia. We reframed the instructional activity using the terms from our Data-Patterns-Rules computational thinking heuristic. Teachers prompted students to first identify key data in each of the ads: geographic locations, reward amounts, and physical characteristics. In many cases, students created charts to record these descriptors across the ads. As they

worked students looked for patterns and developed generalizations. For example, students noted that the ads highlighted the complexion of Aaron and distinguishing markings, including a brand on his cheek. They also noted that the ad focused on his skills or trade and that the awards grew over time. Since these six ads all referred to the same person, teachers then prompted students to compare the ads to other databases, including *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia* and *Freedom on the Move: Rediscovering the Stories of Self-Liberating People*. Here students were prompted to expand on their initial generalizations or rules to do further research about runaway slave ads, the Fugitive Slave Act, and efforts to legally emancipate slaves during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Figure 4

The Data-Patterns-Rules Heuristic Applied to the Fugitive Slave Advertisements Activity

Data	Patterns	Rules
Dataset = Fugitive slave ads, starting from a constrained set ("The Story of Aaron") and expanding to more comprehensive sets (*Geography of Slavery*, *Freedom on the Move*) Contextualization: Who is posting the advertisements? What information is included? What can we infer about the escaped persons?	What do the advertisements have in common (physical description, items of clothing, occupation, reward amounts)? What are the spatial and temporal variations—when and where are enslaved people escaping? What can we infer about escaped persons' motives? Goals?	How do these advertisements change what you know about enslavement? How can a document written by an enslaver unintentionally allow us to see the humanity of an enslaved person? What other historical understandings are hidden or excluded?

Similar to the work of Costa (2001), students noted many similarities across the slave ads – they seemed to follow a "formula," including listing a physical description, clothing, occupations, motives, and reward amounts (p. 39-40). The digital databases of runaway ads helped to "illuminate the hidden corners" of slave

society (p. 38) and the "real human tragedy that occurred when slaves were separated from their families" (p. 40). Ultimately, students grew to appreciate the life stories of the "self-liberating" peoples who struggled to reunite with family, escape abuse, and endeavor for freedom. Figure 4 (on previous page) summarizes the instructional moves with the fugitive slave advertisements within the Data-Pattern-Rules heuristic.

Implications for Teaching Social Studies

Across these examples, we found that, through careful scaffolding by their teachers, students were able to identify the significance of data, look for patterns, and develop tentative rules or generalizations about the data. These outcomes seemed to emerge from teachers being able to successfully situate the students in a new relationship to the data and their role as learners: data were now part of the 'substance' of social studies, and they were responsible for – and empowered by – analyzing these data and extracting meaning. The students were no longer passive consumers but active constructors of at-times competing understandings of the past. In all cases, our teachers were enthusiastic about integrating computational thinking into their instruction and could readily follow our sample activities. As digital collections and "big" data become more accessible, teachers will find more options over time. Students can even take part in developing and expanding databases, as crowdsourcing digital collections becomes more commonplace (Berson & Berson, 2019). As the concept of computational thinking as a co-curricular skill within the social studies takes hold, teachers may find it easier to make connections between data, the curriculum, and computational thinking.

As we engage in our teaching and teacher education work, we will continue to develop strategies for integrating computational thinking into the social studies. The portraits of practice presented here provide a vision of the possible for social studies teachers. For fellow social studies educators, we hope that our examples make an effective case for including computational thinking as a relevant procedural skill for social studies, just the same as historical thinking (e.g., VanSledright & Limón, 2006). For those in the STEM and computer science communities, we recommend broadening their vision to recognize social studies as a curricular area that allows for meaningful, authentic integration of skills such as computational thinking (e.g., Güven & Gulbahar, 2020). In a social studies classroom, students can learn and apply powerful computational thinking in non-coding or even "unplugged" forms (Brackmann et al., 2017; see also Tsortanidou et al., 2022) or more code-focused

approaches (e.g., Ray et al., 2022). The combinations that we propose, and that our collaborating teachers devised, provide students with opportunities to take on complex social science challenges while also developing requisite thinking skills and the literacies necessary for the new knowledge economy.

Furthermore, we anticipate that we are but at the beginning of uncovering the opportunities for connecting social studies instruction to data-intensive instruction. Consider, for example, the use of Google Trends to explore the social footprint of contemporary ideas. To illustrate, the search term 'Black Lives Matter' has three peaks: August 2015, July 2016, and June 2020; these peaks increase in magnitude and correspond with protests over the killings of Michael Brown (specifically the protests organized for 2015, the one-year anniversary of his death), Alton Sterling and Philando Castile in 2016, and George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020. Google Trends is one tool that allows teachers and students to explore the rising social prominence of this urgent civil rights issue. Teachers can use the Data-Patterns-Rules heuristic and tools such as Google Trends to engage students in inquiry-driven, open-ended approaches to a multitude of social studies topics.

Implications for Teaching Computational Thinking

Computational thinking is a contemporary idea with its own trajectory and periodicity. The Google Trends diagram for 'computational thinking' as a search term has developed a pattern that is typical of school-related topics (Figure 5a): searches spiked up in September and October (corresponding to the start of the school year), declined in December (winter holidays), rose again in the spring, and then hit low points in July and August. School-related search terms often demonstrated a pattern of peaks and troughs that correspond with the rhythm of the curriculum. Searches for 'stoichiometry', for example, rose dramatically in the spring (Figure 5b), when the topic becomes a focus in the typical, year-long chemistry curriculum. A broader, year-round term such as 'algebra' has the same fall and spring peaks as computational thinking (Figure 5c). Given that searches for computational thinking have, over time, begun to match the same pattern as other curriculum-linked terms, we infer that computational thinking is well on its way to becoming a regular component of the curriculum.

However, we question the reach of computational thinking as a stand-alone concept in the K-12 curriculum. At the moment, the term is most closely associated with computer science. Given that computer science is a generally an elective course, taken by a small minority of students, the curricular footprint of computational thinking is tiny. Figure 5d compares Google Trends data for 'computational thinking',

Figure 5

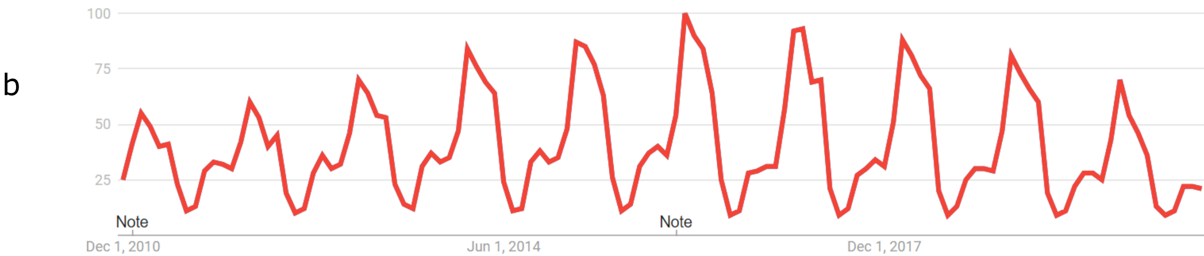
Google Trends output for the past ten years for (a) 'computational thinking', (b) 'stoichiometry', (c) 'algebra', and (d) all three terms simultaneously

Computational thinking

a

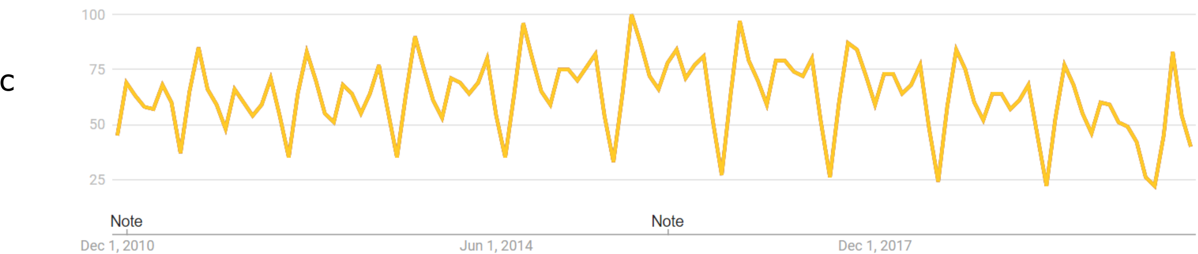
Stoichiometry

b



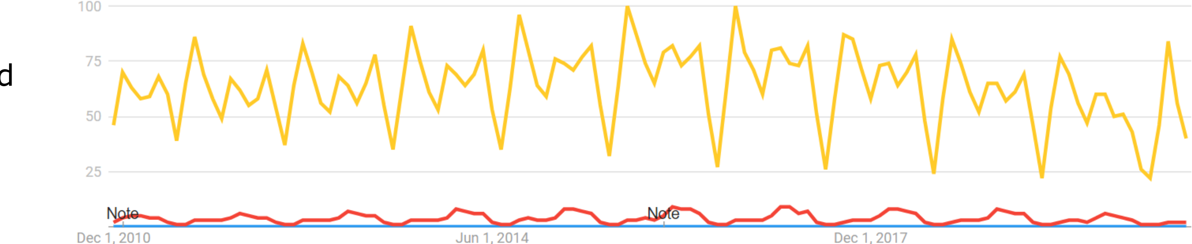
Algebra

c



Algebra vs. stoichiometry vs. computational thinking

d



'stoichiometry', and 'algebra' on a common axes. When viewed in this relative scale, the peaks and troughs of searches for computational thinking are completely flattened, indistinguishable from the x-axis. As long as computational thinking remains the sole province of computer science, and as long as computer science remains an elective subject, computational thinking will be limited to a niche; it is likely to remain a promising curiosity within the K-12 curriculum.

Conclusion

By linking computational thinking and social studies, we argue that both fields will benefit. Educators interested in computational thinking will have access to broad curricular arena and a chance to prove Wing's assertion that computational thinking is "for everyone, everywhere" (2006, p. 35). For their part, social studies educators gain a powerful tool for integrating data into their instruction the same way that they currently use primary sources or maps or timelines. Social studies prepares students for an increasingly complex world; computational thinking can help equip them to understand the issues we face and navigate the difficult choices we must make. The instructional routines and portraits of practice presented here provide one way to meaningfully combine computational thinking and social studies and help chart a path for social studies in the 21st century.

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Side bar - Websites/Digital Databases

Department of Education's School Search: https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/index.asp

Dollar Street: https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/matrix

Freedom on the Move: Rediscovering the Stories of Self-Liberating People: https://freedomonthemove.org/

Global Terrorism Database: https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

Google Trends https://trends.google.com/

The Geography of Slavery: http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/

University of Richmond's Digital Scholarship Lab: http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/congress/

Maintain, Destroy, or Transfer: Artifact Analysis and Role-Play to Discuss Controversial Issues

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This paper introduces our method for using monuments as primary sources to catalyze discussion of controversial issues in the social studies classroom through role-play. We present our work with middle school students investigating the Confederate Memorial, dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery in 1914, during Reconstruction. We offer a framework, using Pace's (2021) strategy for "contained risk-taking" for connecting history to our present context. In addition to analyzing the images, students debated what should be the future of the monument: maintain, destroy, or transfer it to another location? Our goal is for students to develop skills to articulate and consider multiple perspectives and become active citizens (McAvoy & Hess, 2013).

Keywords: teaching controversial issues, simulation, role-play

A social studies teacher, Ms. Bronze, stands before her high school students. She projects an image of a 32-foot-tall Confederate monument (Figure 1) with carvings including enslaved people loyal to their masters and soldiers parting with loved ones (Figures 2 and 3). Ms. Bronze tells students that this monument commemorates fallen soldiers and life during the Civil War but does not give the students details about whose stories are told. She asks them: "What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder?"

Inviting her students to explore the image, she begins by eliciting their descriptions of the monument. As students describe what they see, they are confused. They explain that they do not think that enslaved people would cooperate

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with their oppressors. The teacher uses this activity to launch a discussion of a controversial issue: What does such a monument represent? Should such images remain standing in a national cemetery?

This anecdote introduces our method for using monuments as primary sources to catalyze discussion of controversial issues in the social studies classroom, such as how the past shapes current challenges in society. The goal is for students to develop skills to articulate and consider multiple perspectives and become active citizens (McAvoy & Hess, 2013). In this paper, we present an investigation of the Confederate Memorial, dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery in 1914 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. This inquiry is intended to follow a unit on Reconstruction of the South after the Civil War and offers a framework for connecting history to our present context.

Figure 1

Confederate Memorial

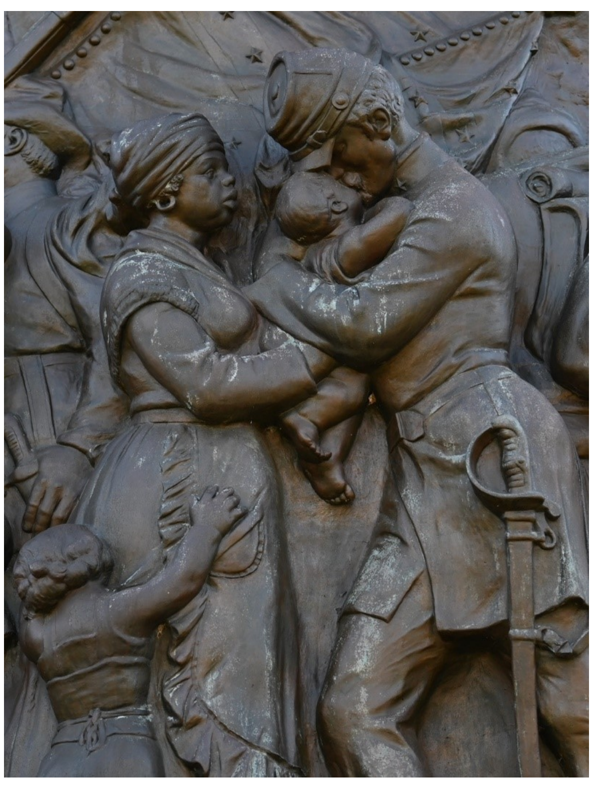
Note. The Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery sculpted by Moses Ezekiel (Wikimedia Commons, 2013).

Teachers scaffold students' investigation in two phases. First, they ask students to explore a monument using a protocol: a structured series of prompts to support a conversation (School Reform Initiative, n.d.). Students share their first impressions of the artifact and teachers share some background context. We use the protocol, "I see, I think, I wonder" (Project Zero, 2019) to direct learners' discussion of the object. In the second phase, teachers facilitate a discussion about the monument through a simulation. Students choose or are assigned a character relevant to the topic, research biographical information about the character, and respond to prompts about the primary source through the perspective of the

character. In our example, students opined in character about the messages of the Confederate Memorial and then debated its future. Discussing the primary source through the eyes of another

Figure 2

Enslaved Woman Holding Baby for Farewell to Confederate Soldier



Note. Detailed image from the Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, (Image credit: Joseph Stephen Russell and Aiden Spencer Clark).

Figure 3

Black Body Servant Marching with Confederate Soldiers

Note. Detailed image from the Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery
(Image credit: Joseph Steven Russell and Aiden Spencer Clark).

provides students with the opportunity to consider multiple perspectives and heightens the impact of the original primary source discussion. We will illustrate these two phases. For each phase, we provide a rationale and a set of teaching strategies; we then offer examples of student character selections and responses from a previous simulation.

Phase 1: Investigating Artifacts

Rationale

We believe that investigating artifacts provides access to learning history because the *visual* aspect draws in the learner. On the one hand, students are intrigued by symbols in need of interpretation; on the other hand, the challenge of decoding complex language is minimized. Teachers guide students to discuss the artifact and steer the discussion from description to analysis.

We recommend the study of public monuments because they are rooted in a particular time and place. They invite students to engage with history through the object and allow them to consider the beliefs, values, and messages projected by the artists and funders of the monument (Marcus, Stoddard, & Woodward, 2011). Many monuments present patriotic narratives by illustrating heroes and heroic acts. Moreover, monuments give students the opportunity to understand differences between their own perspectives and those of people who lived in the past. Monuments can and should be questioned, in terms of the narratives they were commissioned to convey and the messages they present today.

The controversy over Confederate monuments is part of a much larger debate about how the United States acknowledges its racist past and envisions its future (U.S. Army, n.d.). Following the 2020 murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at least 230 Confederate symbols, including monuments, have been renamed, relocated, or removed (Burch, 2022). Indeed, the public controversy over Confederate monuments remains a heated topic in the news (Hauser, 2022).

Within the debate about Confederate monuments, three perspectives dominate national discussion (Burch, 2022). First, those in favor of maintaining monuments in their present locations argue that monuments help people remember past events. Second, those who desire to destroy the monuments maintain that they are offensive and denigrating. Third, some advocate to relocate the monuments from the public square to a more neutral location, such as a museum, in order to preserve the history that the monument represents and to provide space for more nuanced contextualization for the viewer.

The Confederate Memorial

The memorial at Arlington National Cemetery (Figure 1) tells the story of the Civil War from a Confederate perspective. This sculpture, among many others, was part of a wave of works commissioned to commemorate Confederate participants in the Civil War and the way of life for which they fought. The Confederate Memorial

was dedicated about 50 years after the conclusion of the Civil War. Sculpted by Moses Ezekiel, a Confederate Civil War veteran and artist, the memorial was dedicated as part of the reunification effort to heal schisms between the Union and the Confederacy by burying the dead from both sides in the same cemetery. Confederate soldiers, including the sculptor, Ezekiel, are buried at its base (Moehlman, 2018).

Speaking at the monument's dedication, a Confederate veteran and southern politician named Hilary Herbert extolled the message that "the astonishing fidelity of the slaves everywhere during the war to the wives and children of those who were absent in the army was convincing proof of the kindly relations between master and slave in the old South" (Herbert, 1914, p. 77). From these words, we hear a Confederate myth glorifying the old South with a portrayal of enslaved people as happy in their servitude. This is degrading to Black people, who suffered and continue to suffer as the result of the institution of slavery.

In our artifact analysis with students, we highlight two particularly evocative images of enslaved people on the monument. One portrays a Black woman, tearful as she holds up a baby for a Confederate soldier to bid farewell (Figure 2). The second depicts a Black "body servant," an enslaved aide to White Confederate soldiers on the battlefield (Figure 3).

The memorial currently remains untouched in Arlington National Cemetery, despite descendants of Moses Ezekiel petitioning to remove it (Mador, 2017; Moehlman, 2018). Acknowledging injustices in the past, the Cemetery website states: "The history of the Confederate Memorial embodies the complex and contested legacy of the Civil War at Arlington… and in American culture generally" (U.S. Army, n.d.), thus projecting a message that the memorial is a vehicle for reflection and education about the Civil War, Confederate monuments, and the bigger themes they represent. Through the memorial's placement in a national cemetery, it raises unique questions about public memory of enslavement and its implications for the present day (See Appendix A).

Strategy for Investigating the Artifact

To facilitate investigation of the monument, teachers present the protocol "I see, I think, I wonder" (Project Zero, 2019). We suggest this protocol for students to articulate first impressions. This protocol prompts them to describe what stands out to them when viewing the entire memorial, to share what ideas the images evoke, and to raise questions. Ideally, each student shares a response to each prompt. Afterwards, students repeat the protocol as the teacher directs their focus to the images of the enslaved, tearful Black woman bidding farewell to a Confederate soldier

and of the enslaved Black body servant (see Figures 2 and 3). These images complicate typical slavery narratives and generate many student questions.
Here are the types of questions students raise:

- Why was the enslaved woman crying when she said goodbye to a Confederate soldier?
    - Wouldn't she be happy to see her owner leave the house?
    - What is the soldier's relationship to the baby and the child tugging on the woman's skirt?
- Is that soldier Black?
    - Is he being forced to march with the White soldiers?
    - Why isn't he carrying a rifle like the others in the picture?

After eliciting students' reactions and questions, teachers move the discussion towards the historical context in which the memorial was created, asking: "where is the memorial located?" and "when was it created?" Teachers also introduce broader questions relevant to public art such as:

- Who was responsible for the memorial's creation?
- Who wanted it at Arlington National Cemetery?
- Who objected to its presence?

Throughout this process, teachers reveal pieces of relevant historical background to help students make sense of the memorial. Teachers may also show other monuments dedicated at this time. Teachers should explain that the memorial was part of a wave of Confederate monuments produced in the early 20th century to show a glorified South. They could also talk about monuments that have come down recently.

Before moving on to the simulation, the class could brainstorm reasons to maintain, destroy, or transfer the monument. Teachers could write these three categories on an anchor chart for reference during the simulation.

Phase Two: Role-Playing in a Simulation

Rationale

Simulations provide students space to express ideas and raise questions while standing in a character's shoes, by comparing the character's perspective to their

own and learning different perspectives represented by their classmates. Simulations also give students creative license to speak in the first-person, demonstrating knowledge of their characters' life (Kupperman et al., 2010). When teachers position simulations in a particular time, they help students develop historical empathy, an understanding that people in different time periods had different beliefs and perspectives than we do today (Endacott & Brooks, 2013). While students may make inaccurate references to historical content as they portray their characters (Dack et al., 2016), these misstatements represent active engagement with content and can and should be corrected during debriefing. Role-playing melds play and critical thinking: a productive environment for discussing controversial issues, particularly one grounded in a primary source that students investigated together.

Strategies for Simulations

In phase two, students engage in a simulation where they are invited members of an advisory committee about the future of the Confederate Memorial. While the simulation could occur over a class period or two, important components of character preparation and debriefing extend the activity. Here, we address an issue with simulations and several steps to utilize them appropriately and effectively.

Contained Risk-Taking. Though simulations can be meaningful experiences, they are not without risks, especially when exploring controversy. In order to foster a supportive environment and preempt harm, we apply a "contained risk-taking" approach (Pace, 2021) to simulations generally and to the legacy of Confederate monuments in the United States specifically.

Pace (2021) identifies proactive strategies to incorporate when planning a discussion of controversial issues, including simulations. In addition to highlighting the need for teachers to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the material and to carefully plan a framework that structures conversations, Pace suggests that teachers clear the activity with administration and parents, anticipate how they will deal with conflict, and provide a space to share feelings in a debriefing lesson. Pace encourages novice teachers to consider beginning with less risky topics in small groups and progress to more contentious issues within a full group forum. She reminds us that a topic debated with enthusiasm in one school community might not fare well in another.

We recommend that teachers avoid planning simulations that recreate painful histories, such as slavery or the Holocaust (Shuster et al., 2018). Instead, we suggest setting simulations in the present, prompting participants to speak about the past

and debate its current impact, such as the contemporary debate about Confederate monuments. By shaping our focus around the memorial, we further limit the scope of the conversation about slavery and racism, posing specific questions such as "what do you think of the monument?" and "what should be the future of the monument?" Additionally, we recommend that teachers think carefully about how they set parameters for character selection. When considering ways to include unsavory perspectives important to the simulation, we encourage teachers to take these roles so they can handle them with nuance and limit inflammatory comments. The teacher can play more than one role; we recommend inviting colleagues to take part. Under no circumstances should a student be tasked with representing a character who endorses slavery and racism or other views that denigrate people.

In order to preempt hurtful speech, we suggest laying explicit ground rules. Students can disagree about issues but should not insult each other, even in character. Moreover, teachers should delineate appropriate and inappropriate categories of speech, for example not permitting racial slurs or threats to harm others. When characters do confront others, they could use sentence frames such as, "I beg to differ with you because…" or "I don't agree with your idea… Instead, I propose…"

All these strategies are applications of contained risk-taking; we side with Pace (2021) and others who argue that the benefits of carefully constructed and supervised simulations outweigh the challenges (Barton & Levstik, 2004; DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012; Schweber, 2003).

Character Selection and Development. The teacher plays a fictitious "General Arl," representative of Arlington National Cemetery who solicits advice from student characters. The teacher introduces the activity with the following: "Welcome to the Arlington National Cemetery Advisory Committee! You have been chosen to help decide the future of the Confederate Memorial." The teacher then assigns characters to students or sets parameters for student choice. The characters hold a variety of perspectives regarding whether to maintain, destroy, or transfer the memorial to another setting.

Next, students research their characters. Students investigate where their character lived, what captured their time and energies and, when possible, read primary sources in order to access the person's voice. We recommend that students compose a character profile where they strive to articulate an authentic voice for their character. For example, a student preparing to play Barack Obama would glean information from secondary sources but would also read or view one of Obama's

speeches. As they become familiar with their character, students imagine what perspective their character might take about the simulation topic. If time is a constraint, the teacher may provide brief biographical statements.

We recommend including a variety of perspectives. These could include both historical and contemporary figures; students often enjoy choosing characters in whom they have a personal interest. The challenge is for them to figure out how to connect their character to the topic at hand. They consider these questions:

- What do I really think?
- Do I agree or disagree with my character?
- What would my character really say about this memorial? How do I know?
- With whom in this class group do I agree or disagree? Why?

We have found that students successfully play roles including political leaders, revolutionaries, musicians, athletes, inventors, scientists, and innovators. Students can also be encouraged to select civil rights activists from the past and present. Because most of those characters have not commented on the Confederate Memorial, students have the opportunity to think imaginatively and creatively about their characters' responses.

*Implementing the simulation***.** The teacher, playing General Arl, outlines each option: maintain, destroy, or transfer the memorial to another setting. After introducing themselves via their character profiles, students write and present a brief opening statement outlining a position about the memorial. The teacher then divides the students into three groups: those who want to maintain the memorial, destroy, or transfer it. In these groups students interact in character as they brainstorm ideas; the goal is to create a group statement explaining their position. Moving among the groups, the teacher, in character, directs specific questions to each group as she elicits updates on their work. In a final full group discussion, members from each group present their statements recommending a future for the memorial; additional group representatives can pose and respond to inter-group questions. Ultimately, students vote in writing on a recommendation to Arlington. They explain their choices with evidence from their characters' life experiences or beliefs. They may change their position from the beginning of the simulation and are invited to explain these changes as well. This combination of individual and group prompts provides multiple opportunities for students to engage. After a vote and an announcement of the winning option for the memorial's future, the teacher leads a debriefing session where

she asks students to reflect on their thoughts and feelings after spending time representing a character. Some questions to guide debriefing include:

- Did you say anything in character that you agree or disagree with personally?
- What else do you want to say about this topic, speaking as yourself?

Examples of Students' Simulation Participation

We now turn to examples of how students might make sense of the monument while playing their characters. We share comments from a prior simulation, where students responded in character through a writing process, articulating their characters' opinions and reacting to others' comments. As they composed their comments, they strived to represent their characters' perspective; we reference this by putting character names in quotations.
Participants responded to these prompts:

1. Now that you had a chance to look at the images, what do you think this monument means to supporters of the Confederacy and what details make you think that? What does it mean to you?
2. Vote about the future of the memorial: Should it remain in place, be destroyed, or be relocated?

Opinions of the Confederate Memorial

Grappling with the memorial's juxtaposition of heroic images of Confederate soldiers next to its depiction of enslaved people, students found a tension. On the one hand, the memorial honored soldiers who died in the war, but at the same time it denigrated Black people. For example, the student playing Beyonce Knowles Carter, a famous Black singer, had to imagine what she would say about the memorial. In the simulation, "Beyonce" commented:

> This Confederate Statue is very important for some people. I think it was a sign of respect for the people who fought in the war. I don't …have a connection to this monument, but from what I can see I think this statue tells a lot of different stories that were important to these people – which I find very painful as a Black woman.

"Beyonce" demonstrated an awareness of clashing perspectives. While she acknowledged that Confederates valued the statue's stories, she also felt offended by its portrayal of enslaved people.

Similarly, the student playing Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel, a White Catholic leader who desegregated Catholic schools in New Orleans, wrote:

> The statue would have been special to the Confederacy considering it is honoring those who fought for the same cause as them. It is a reminder that they fought proud and hard…However, I see it as a glorification of the things slaves were made to do. The statue does not accurately express what really was going on. I understand that it honors those who died and to show us a part of our history, but if that's the case shouldn't we show the full picture instead of some sugar-coated version?

"Rummel" shared Beyonce's idea that the monument was meaningful to Confederates as it commemorated their soldiers yet offensive in its depiction of enslaved people. He criticized the monument's portrayal of slaves as "sugar-coated" because it inauthentically suggested that enslaved people agreed to their domination. By playing a White southern desegregationist who died in the 1960s, the student had the chance to imagine what his character would have said about the fate of the Confederate monument if he were alive today.

As they anchored their interaction around the memorial, students were able to access the broader issues of slavery and the causes of the Civil War. Students moved from describing their direct observations of the memorial – what they saw – to interpreting possible messages intended by those in the past. Seeing beyond images glorifying the Confederacy, they had opportunities to express their opinions about enslaving people.

Future of the Confederate Memorial

Participants continued to express their characters' opinions about the memorial's current impact while they debated its future. They explained their votes when choosing between maintaining, destroying, or transferring the monument. For example, the student playing civil rights activist Andrew Goodman commented, "I voted to destroy the statue because it is supporting slavery. As a civil rights activist I do not support slavery, so it should be taken down." The student playing former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg voted that the monument be moved to a museum. He defended his position: "…so that we don't lose part of our history even

though it is incorrect nowadays and was still morally incorrect then." Most participants agreed that the memorial needed to still stand, either at Arlington or in a museum, with a panel of contextual information explaining multiple perspectives about the stories it tells.

Teacher Sparks Controversy

In order to challenge this prevailing sentiment, a teacher playing the memorial's sculptor Moses Ezekiel took umbrage at the loud criticism of his work. "Ezekiel" proclaimed:

> As the creator of the monument... The statue…represents the heroism and sacrifices of the men and women of the South. I was there for the unveiling, and it seems only proper that I am buried at its base. If you take this away, how will you honor these sacrifices? Must all of those in a war be on the winning side in order to be remembered? Do the sacrifices of these people become less a part of the American story because they were on the "wrong side of history?"

Ezekiel presented his perspective in measured tones, defended his art, and calmly provided rationales for maintaining the memorial at Arlington. The monument not only commemorates history -- but is a place to honor veterans, even if they were fighting on the losing side. He modeled civil discourse and the incorporation of evidence in his comment. Perspectives such as Ezekiel's were crucial for laying out opposing viewpoints for consideration.

Conclusion

Integrating primary source investigation with role-play offers multiple opportunities for working with questions: students respond to prompts, frame their own questions, and ask questions of themselves and each other. By responding to the prompt of what to do with the Confederate Memorial from different viewpoints, students shared varied perspectives as they engaged in a controversy; an affordance of role-playing is that it can broaden the range of perspectives in a classroom to a scope larger than that of the class. This Confederate Memorial grabbed their attention as they grappled with what it means to remember slavery and whether or not such images created by Confederates are worthy of staying in a public place.

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APPENDIX A
Extending the Inquiry

Below we suggest approaches to extending our method as teachers make choices about appropriate areas of emphasis in their particular schools.

Incorporate additional primary sources about the Confederate Memorial

Throughout this paper we have incorporated information from primary sources related to the debate about the Confederate Memorial. Teachers could have students analyze excerpts from these primary sources:

- Hilary Herbert's History of the Arlington Confederate monument – as a spokesperson for the memorial at its dedication, he defended its images (Herbert, 1914).
- Descendants of sculptor Moses Ezekiel request for the memorial to be removed (Mador, 2017; Moehlman, 2018).
- A current official opinion about why the Memorial should be maintained in place on the Arlington National Cemetery website (U.S. Army, n.d.).

Make it Local

The national status of the Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery tells one part of the post-Civil War story; it illustrates efforts and tensions involved in reunifying the country. We encourage educators to use monuments to investigate local history. In a field trip to a local monument, students could use a thinking routine such as "I see, I think, I wonder" to begin to investigate local history. Teachers can guide them to consider the multiple contexts of the monument:

- What is the event or who is the person commemorated?
- What is the rationale of the artist? Whose story is being told?
- What are possible current interpretations of the monument?

"Update" the Artifact

At the time of the Confederate Memorial's dedication, southern politician Hilary Herbert lauded the Daughters of the Confederacy and sculptor Moses Ezekiel for their

efforts. He stated, “The leading purpose of the U.D.C. is *to correct history*. Ezekiel is here writing it for them in characters [i.e., pictures on the memorial] that will tell … [the Confederates’] story to generation after generation” (Herbert, 1914, p. 77).

Just as the Daughters of the Confederacy, in their day, sought to write history, many students in our simulation sought to alter the memorial’s narrative to reflect their 21st century sensibilities: they held deep convictions about societal responsibility for the inhumane injustices of slavery. The majority voted to add a placard, telling the memorial’s history in more nuanced terms.

A meaningful conclusion to students’ work with the Confederate Memorial, or with any contested artifact, could be to have the students compose the updated contextual information they believe viewers of the artifact should see. Alternatively, students might design new memorials or ways to commemorate events or people that are commensurate with their values. As part of these processes, students would continue to engage with multiple perspectives and contexts: those of the original artists and funders, those of the potential current audience, and their own. Their work could extend their voices in discussion of controversial issues. In these ways, students can use their study of the past to create new narratives for the future.

Making Social Studies Culturally Responsive for Asian American Adoptees: Exploring Their Perceptions

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As a field, social studies has committed itself to operating from a framework of social justice and inclusion (NCSS, 2023a, 2023b). As such, some scholars in the field have explored Asian American-specific issues, but Asian American adoptees remain invisible in the discussion. Adoptees' ethnic and racial identity (ERI) development differs from their non-adopted peers, so making social studies inclusive and culturally responsive to them might require a different approach. This article identifies social studies' potential role in adoptees' identity development by reporting on a study that explored how social studies might become more culturally responsive to Asian American adoptees' needs. The study analyzed case studies of five Asian American adoptees from different countries, raised in midwestern states. It found that participants experienced problematic and narrow constructions of Asian American history in their social studies experiences and that social studies' role in their identity development was small. The article concludes by identifying implications of the findings for daily teaching practice and the field overall.

Keywords: Asian American adoptees; social studies; culturally responsive pedagogy; ERI development

Introduction

According to the National Council for the Social Studies, the official goal of social studies is to create competent citizens who can navigate our multicultural society (NCSS, n.d.). However, among other reasons, persistent curricular issues have prevented this. The social studies curriculum in the United States erases the histories and current experiences of people of color, thus reinforcing the broader societal curriculum in which people of color are insignificant (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Loewen, 2018). As a result, social studies as a field has recently focused on diversifying its curriculum to honor people of color's experiences, to actively reverse problematic curricular portrayals, and to teach from a framework of social justice and

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inclusion (NCSS, 2022, 2023a, 2023b). This is situated in the broader context of the turn toward culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy in education overall (Gay, 2002, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2003, 2014; Muhammad, 2020; Nieto, 2000).

Several social studies scholars have explored the empowerment of Asian American students and teachers (An, 2020, 2022; Gao, 2020; Hsieh, 2021; Kim, 2021; Rodríguez, 2018, 2019). However, an underlying assumption of this research is that most Asian Americans are first- or second-generation Americans. None have yet examined how social studies can be culturally responsive to Asian American adoptees, whose needs and identity development are qualitatively different from their non-adopted Asian American peers (Baden et al., 2012; Godon-Decoteau & Ramsey, 2018; Lee, 2003; McGinnis et al., 2009; Tuan & Shiao, 2011). Most Asian American adoptees are raised by white parents and thus, as McGinnis and colleagues (2009) put it, "face the reality of integrating racial/ethnic identity without input from a family with this lived experience" (p. 12). Based on this gap and given social studies' and education overall's shift towards culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; NCSS, 2022), I explored how social studies might facilitate connection between Asian American adoptees and their ethnic and racial identities (ERI). It focused on the research question, "How do Asian American adoptees perceive the relationship between their social studies experiences and their own ethnic and racial identity development?"

Review of the Literature

Widespread adoption of children from abroad began after the Korean War, when Harry and Bertha Holt adopted eight Korean children. As a white Christian couple from Oregon, they received ample national and international attention for the adoption. Others soon followed their example, often motivated by a religious desire to "rescue" the Korean orphans and mixed-race, unwanted children from Korean women and American GIs (Doolan, 2021; Tuan & Shiao, 2011). Since the Holts' infamous adoption, many Korean and children from other Asian countries have been adopted to the United States. Approximately ⅔ of the half a million children that have been adopted internationally to the United States since 1971 are Asian (McGinnis et al., 2009; Vandivere et al., 2009). While international adoption was initially celebrated as a positive "rescue" of Asian children (Tuan & Shiao, 2011), scholars have since brought to light the identity struggles Asian American adoptees face from growing up in families racially and ethnically different from them (Godon-Decoteau & Ramsey, 2018; Lee, 2003; McGinnis et al., 2009; Tuan & Shiao, 2011; Wing & Park-

Taylor, 2022). Since Asian American adoptees are almost always raised by white parents (Hellerstedt et al., 2008; Vandivere et al., 2009), they often grow up without substantive connections to their ERI (Blair & Liu, 2020; Chang et al., 2017; Godon-Decoteau & Ramsey, 2018; McGinnis et al., 2009; Tuan & Shiao, 2011).

Lee (2003) called this identity struggle transracial adoptees face the transracial adoption paradox. In it, Asian American adoptees are unavoidably phenotypically people of color and viewed by society as such, but often are viewed by their parents and themselves as white (Lee, 2003). This is because they are socialized into their parents' culture, which is almost always the dominant American culture, rather than their birth cultures (Baden et al., 2012). Due to this, Asian American adoptees often struggle with their ethnic identities (Tuan & Shiao, 2011) and feel disconnected from their birth and hyphenated ethnic American communities due to a lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge (Baden et al., 2102; Godon-Decoteau & Ramsey, 2018; McGinnis et al., 2009; Tuan & Shiao, 2011).

Adoptees may feel a disconnect between their physical appearance and cultural practices and thus might seek to reclaim their birth cultures in a variety of ways (Baden et al., 2012). Tuan and Shiao (2011) found college attendance was a key factor in whether the 59 Korean adoptees in their study explored their ethnic identities. Additionally, McGinnis and colleagues (2009) studied 179 Korean American adoptees and found most shifted their identities from wanting to be white as children to Korean as adults. This shift was facilitated by access to more diverse environments and information on their birth cultures (McGinnis et al., 2009). While the literature has addressed how adoptees seek connection to their birth cultures, it has typically focused on how young and middle-aged adults have done or might do so (Baden et al., 2012; Godon et al., 2014; Tuan & Shiao, 2011). Some studies have addressed attempts at birth culture connection during childhood and adolescence but have focused on activities chosen by parents or on parents' perceptions of the activities (Baden, 2015; Pan, 2013; Tessler & Gamache, 2012; Zhang & Pinderhughes, 2019). No research has yet explored how K-12 schools, and specifically social studies classes, might connect Asian American adoptees with their ethnic identities and birth cultures.

While adoptive parents expose their children to their birth cultures to varying degrees, the literature has generally found that they avoid discussing race with them (Chang, et al., 2017; Dolan, 2015; Langrehr et al., 2019; Marcelli et al., 2020; Pan, 2013; Tuan & Shiao, 2011; Wing & Park-Taylor, 2022). Parents might underestimate their child's experiences with racism (Langrehr et al., 2019), lack the confidence to address the topic (Dolan, 2015), or avoid discussing the topic overall due to its

connotations of power (Chang et al., 2017). As a result, adoptees can struggle to understand and articulate race's role in their lives (Chang et al., 2017; Marcelli et al., 2020; Wing & Park-Taylor, 2022). As with ethnic identity, no literature has yet explored how K-12 schools and social studies classes specifically might facilitate racial awareness in Asian American adoptees.

It is worth pointing out that some literature in school counseling and English Language Arts has explored adoptees' needs in K-12 schools (Park-Taylor & Wing, 2020; Sempowicz et al., 2018). For example, Park-Taylor and Wing (2020) provided suggestions for school counselors to be more inclusive of transracial adoptees, including working with teachers and staff to avoid assignments and language that are triggering or micro-aggressive to adoptees. In addition, Sempowicz and colleagues (2018) studied the English and history curriculum in Australia and found that assignments related to family trees or history could be triggering for adoptees. Both studies, however, focused on how to avoid offensive assignments and curriculum rather than how to actively facilitate ERI development. As such, this study sought to begin to fill the gap.

Theoretical Framework

This study operated from two key theoretical frameworks: responsive and culturally relevant pedagogy, as conceptualized by Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2002) and Baden and colleagues' reculturation theory (2012). According to culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, teaching and learning must be rooted in students' cultures and use those cultures as pathways to learning (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings' theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (1995) included three tenets: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. According to the tenets, all students can and should experience academic success, their cultural skills should be honored and strengthened, and they should learn to identify and critique unjust social systems (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Later, Gay (2002) built upon Ladson-Billings' (1995) work and presented a theory of culturally responsive teaching with five domains: "developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students, and responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction" (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Gay (2002) believed that teachers must cultivate detailed understandings of different ethnic and racial groups' cultural practices, experiences, and histories. They must also diversify several types of curricula in their classrooms and actively challenge

problematic characterizations of marginalized people within them (Gay, 2002). Their conceptualizations of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy guide the discussion of the findings in this article.

In addition, this study operated from Baden and colleagues' reculturation theory (2012). The theory explains the process of how adoptees reclaim their birth cultures. The authors developed it because they felt that existing theories of cultural learning (like acculturation and enculturation) did not adequately fit adoptees' experiences. Reculturation includes three stages and five potential identity outcomes (Baden et al., 2012). An underlying assumption of this theory is that adoptees will and should seek deeper connection to their birth cultures and ERI (Baden et al., 2012). This study has the same underlying assumption, present in its quest to explore how social studies can help with this connection and exploration process.

Methodology

This study employed an instrumental case study design and drew participants from two midwestern states (Creswell, 2005; Johnson & Christensen, 2020). The case included five Asian American adoptees who were teenagers and young adults at the time of the study. The case study design allowed me to develop a deep understanding of the complex identities of a small group of people. I knew such a design would be necessary based on how complex the literature showed Asian American adoptee identity is. In addition, it was an instrumental case study (Johnson & Christensen, 2020) because I hope the findings can serve to make social studies more responsive to Asian American adoptees' identities.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews in which each participant was asked five open-ended questions about their conceptualizations of adoptee identity, connections to their specific ethnic identities, connections to a broader Asian American racial identity, and their social studies experiences related to Asian American history. The phrasing of the questions aimed to glean participants' personal meaning-making of these experiences. This was motivated by a desire to reverse the trend in adoption literature that Lee (2003) highlighted, in which adoptees are treated as passive recipients of experiences rather than active agents. Based on the participants' responses, I asked appropriate follow-up questions and adjusted the planned questions to fit the flow of the conversation. Four of the five participants (Mary, Bella, Olivia, and Arjun) were interviewed in person, at the participants' high school or college campuses. Ben was interviewed on Zoom. Each interview took from 30 to 40 minutes and was audio-recorded and manually

transcribed. I printed the list of interview questions and referred to it throughout the interviews. Additionally, I used the interview question sheet to record handwritten notes on participants' responses.

I completed an initial round of coding after I had conducted three interviews, with Mary, Bella, and Arjun. Using an inductive coding process (Johnson & Christensen, 2020), I analyzed transcripts for common themes between participants. The coding process was guided by my theoretical frameworks: culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995) and reculturation (Baden et al., 2012). Preliminary codes were created and applied to the last two interviews, with Olivia and Ben, appropriate and new codes were created when necessary. Finally, I compiled a master list of assertions and warrants (Erickson, 1986) and re-coded them as needed.

Limitations of this study included the small sample size and broad age range of the participants. Having a larger participant pool would have made findings more generalizable. Additionally, the age range of participants was broad; the youngest was in eighth grade at the time of the interview and the oldest was a third-year college student. Age can affect the depth of participants' identity development (Baden et al., 2012; Tuan & Shiao, 2011). Despite these limitations, participants provided rich stories and data to analyze. Several measures were taken to ensure the reliability of my interpretations. I used low-inference descriptors when reporting the findings and used two theoretical frameworks from different fields, both of which Johnson and Christensen (2020) stated increase reliability. Additionally, after each interview question, I summarized my interpretation of participants' words and asked them to correct any misconceptions I had. While not a traditional member check, I took steps during the interview to ensure I had interpreted participants' words correctly. Finally, I am a Korean American adoptee and thus have firsthand experience with the topic under study. While I only shared an ethnic background with one participant, my experiences gave me deeper insight into what participants shared.

Participants

Participants were all given pseudonyms. Below is a brief description of each participant.

Mary was 18 years old at the time of the interview and a first-year student at a midsize midwestern university. Mary is a Chinese American adoptee and was adopted at less than a year old. She grew up in a suburban setting and attended a large suburban high school. The area in which she grew up had few other East Asians. Both of Mary's parents are white.

Bella was 21 years old at the time of the interview and a third-year student at the same midsize midwestern university Mary attended. Bella is a Chinese American adoptee and was adopted from Fujian Province, China at four years old. Due to her age at adoption, she could speak some Chinese before being adopted but lost her language abilities after. Both of Bella's parents are white and raised her in a rural area of a midwestern state. Bella was homeschooled until college. Bella's older sister was also adopted from China.

Olivia was 20 years old at the time of the interview and a third-year student at the same midsize midwestern university Mary and Bella attended. Olivia is a Chinese American adoptee and was adopted from Hunan Province at less than a year old. She was raised in suburban settings and spent her K-12 years in private Nazarene schools. Olivia's two younger siblings were adopted from China also. Both of Olivia's parents are white.

Arjun was 15 years old and a sophomore at a large suburban high school at the time of the interview. Arjun is an Indian American adoptee. His dad is an Irish Catholic immigrant, and his mom is an Indian Hindu immigrant. Arjun was exposed to both of his parents' cultural and religious traditions while he grew up.

Ben was 13 years old and an eighth-grade student at a smaller suburban middle school. Ben is a Korean American adoptee and was born in Seoul. Both of his parents are white. Ben had traveled to Korea once, several years prior to the interview, and had participated in adoptee organizations when he was younger, along with his parents.

Research Questions

The research question for this study was, "How do Asian American adoptees perceive the relationship between their social studies experiences and their own ethnic and racial identity development?" For the purposes of the study, participants' social studies experiences included both K-12 and college-level courses that would fall under the umbrella of social studies.

Findings

Findings from the study are presented as they emerged by theme. Overall, this study found that participants connected with their ethnic identities in various ways but struggled to understand their Asian American racial identity. Social studies experiences were generally framed as insignificant in the participants' identity

formation. All the participants experienced problematic teaching of Asian and Asian American history, primarily due to the presentation of token, conflict-based events.

Participants' Ethnic and Racial Identities

All participants identified as members of their ethnic groups and conceptualized ethnic identity in different ways but were less certain about what racial identity meant. Participants' conceptualizations of ethnic identity included the following: Mary and Bella framed it as a trait rooted in one's birthplace or genetics and unrelated to the cultural practices into which one is socialized, Bella and Olivia as consisting of language and cultural skills, and Ben as a unique personal trait. In contrast, most participants were unsure what connection to a broader Asian American racial identity meant. Olivia, for example, said she was unsure due to the broadness of the label and the existence of many different Asian cultures. Bella also felt that she already naturally fit into the Asian label but did not clarify what she thought that meant. Additionally, Ben said he had never thought about it before. Arjun was the only participant who articulated a clear conceptualization of Asian American racial identity. He framed it as rooted in shared experiences, including being raised by immigrant parents, experiencing discrimination, and being racialized in the dominant American culture as hardworking and smart.

Problematic Social Studies Experiences

All participants described problematic social studies experiences related to Asian and Asian American history. Overall, Asian American history was taught mostly through token events that focused on conflict. For example, Mary and Olivia could only recall learning about select events in high school, including the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the incarceration of Japanese Americans, Cold War conflicts with China, and the Chinese Exclusion Act. Olivia pointed out the hypocrisy of only teaching conflict-based events. She said, "So the only involvement that Asian American history is mentioned in my history class, it's only when it has to do with wars really…That's what I've noticed with American history. Like, they say Americans learn geography through wars." Even when such events were taught, it was often only briefly, like Mary described when she said her history classes were very "touch and go." Similarly, Bella took a Chinese American history class in college that was conflict focused. She could only recall learning about the murder of Vincent Chin and the Chinese Exclusion Acts.

One participant, Ben, described Asian American history being given blatantly less attention than other minoritized peoples' histories. According to him, extensive

time was dedicated during each heritage month to studying the group being celebrated. Multiple lessons were taught on the group and full research reports were assigned. However, when Asian American history month came, Ben said it was discussed twice throughout the entire month and no research report was assigned. Even when it was discussed, the teacher only spent approximately 15 minutes on it.

Finally, Arjun noted his teachers' inability to manage his peers' racist and disrespectful behavior during lessons as problematic. He specifically described an incident where the class was learning about Indian history and watching Attenborough's (1982) film *Gandhi*. During a scene depicting the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, students made racist noises imitating the language being spoken and made fun of the shooting victims. While the teacher had set an expectation of respect, it was not enforced strongly enough in Arjun's view.

Social Studies' Minimal Role in Identity Development

While participants were keenly aware of when their social studies experiences were not culturally responsive, they seemed to view them as unimportant to their identity exploration journeys. Three participants clearly framed social studies' role in their identity formation as minimal. Participants were unsure how relevant the lessons about Asian American history they experienced were to them personally, because they failed to connect meaningfully to them. For example, Olivia felt like a "passive learner" during war-focused Asian history lessons, even going as far as saying she felt like she was "just one of all the other white kids in my school learning about this." Bella was similarly disconnected from the conflict-focused Chinese American history class she took in college, stating, "If I'm being honest, I feel like that's more for Americans to learn not to do that again. So, it's like, that's not relevant to me if I'm being honest." Even when discussing the possibility of more relevant teaching, participants were unsure of how impactful it could be. For example, Mary said the opportunity to take Asian American studies courses in high school would "not have affected too much" other than prompting her to explore her identity earlier than she did.

Recommendations for Change in Social Studies

In addition to recognizing when their social studies experiences fell short, participants astutely expressed what they would have liked to have seen done differently. Simply devoting more instructional time to teaching Asian American history was one overarching recommendation, highlighted by four out of the five participants (Mary, Bella, Olivia, and Ben). Overall, the four participants who

recommended this were disappointed by the paucity of instruction on Asian and Asian American history. Asian and Asian American history was discussed sparingly in these participants' experiences, and when it was discussed, it fell short of what the type of instruction that would have been empowering to them as adoptees. For example, Mary said she thought at least a few days should be devoted to teaching about Asian and Asian American cultures. Similarly, Ben thought schools should at least devote similar amounts of time to teaching Asian American history as they do other minorities' histories. Additionally, Bella had wanted to dive deeply into Chinese history for years but had never had opportunities to do so through her K-12 and college experiences. She wished opportunities to learn about Chinese history, culture, and language had been available to her during her K-12 experiences.

Arjun was the only participant who did not explicitly recommend that more instructional time be devoted to Asian American history. At his large suburban high school, he felt ample opportunities existed to learn about other cultures, including Asian and Asian American ones. However, he also felt that teachers needed to promote an active culture of acceptance rather than tolerance. He said,

> Because tolerance is someone saying, 'I don't like it, but I'm going to put up with it.' And that's a step in the right direction, but when you accept something, you're saying, 'Okay, this is not what I do but there's nothing wrong with it. And actually, why don't I learn from that?' So, I think accepting people for who they are is important, is what I would say.

While the foundation had been laid at his school, Arjun thought more teachers could take multiculturalism to heart.

Discussion and Implications

Overall, social studies' role in the participants' ERI formation was seemingly minimal because it failed to be culturally responsive and connect with participants' identities. One reason for this is it presented a tokenized version of Asian American history that reinforces the master narrative (An, 2022). Mary, Olivia, and Bella all recalled only learning about token events from Asian American history like the incarceration of Japanese Americans, Chinese Exclusion Acts, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and Cold War era tensions with China. When viewed through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy, this is problematic. The participants' teachers failed to heed Gay's call (2002) for culturally responsive teachers to actively deconstruct

stereotypical and problematic depictions of people of color found in mass media and school curricula. Deconstructing these images is important, because as An (2022) found, social studies standards in the United States portray Asian Americans in a narrow manner that ultimately sends the message that they are appropriate scapegoats when white Americans are upset. According to An (2022), social studies standards present Asian Americans either as *new arrivals* or *oppressed people*. The events participants recalled learning about certainly present the same message An (2022) found in the broader curriculum.

Beyond potentially leading to scapegoating, the narrow curricular depiction of Asian Americans that the participants experienced and An described is problematic because it erases Asian Americans' resistance, civil rights activism, and contributions to nation-building (An, 2022). Students need to learn about past and present Asian American activism to fulfill Ladson-Billings' call (1995) for the creation of critical consciousness in students. If students do not learn about past and present ways Asian Americans responded to issues affecting them, they will be unable to take action to empower themselves and other Asian Americans.

Ladson-Billings (2003) also suggested that social studies operate from a critical race perspective to create critical consciousness in students. In a similar line of thinking, Muhammad (2020) said that it is imperative students understand their identities' operation in broader sociopolitical contexts. Specifically, Asian American students must understand the various ways they have been racialized, such as *model minority*, *forever foreigner*, or *foreign enemy* (Museus & Iftikar, 2013). In the study, most participants did not, which makes sense given the adoption literature's findings that most adoptive parents do not prepare their children of color to deal with racism (Chang, et al., 2017; Dolan, 2015; Langrehr et al., 2019; Marcelli et al., 2020; Pan, 2013; Tuan & Shiao, 2011; Wing-Park & Taylor, 2022). Four out of five were unsure what connection to a broader Asian American racial identity looked like. Only one, Arjun, mentioned racial identity as shared experiences that included discrimination and racialization as smart and hardworking. The findings of this study suggest that Asian American adoptees may struggle to understand their racialization. As with other groups of students of color, social studies can help foster racial awareness and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2003) in Asian American adoptees. This might be exceptionally important amidst the recent rise in racialized hatred against Asian Americans during the pandemic (Li & Nicholson, 2021; Stop AAPI Hate, 2022), especially if adoptees are potentially not being prepared to navigate racism at home. Social studies must work to address racial realities in history and reverse the

problematic curriculum about Asian Americans scholars have found (An, 2022) and the participants experienced.

Social studies has the potential to engender racial awareness and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995) in Asian American adoptees. However, the findings of this study suggest that in their quest to do so, teachers should be careful to present a holistic picture of Asian American history that expands beyond racial conflicts. The participants felt disconnected from lessons that centered on racial conflicts, especially because they focused on token events. To paraphrase Bella, those lessons serve more to teach Americans lessons on what not to do again than to connect adoptees with their histories and cultures. To be clear, critically exploring past and present anti-Asian racism as well as Asian American resistance is crucial (An, 2022). However, these findings suggest that teachers looking to expand beyond token events in Asian American history should be careful to teach more than just conflict-based events. The adoptees in the study specifically discussed wanting to learn about their birth countries' histories and different Asian ethnic groups' cultural practices. In addition, based on An (2022), teachers should discuss Asian American contributions to nation building and activism.

Conclusion

Asian American adoptees face a difficult identity journey in trying to reclaim their birth cultures and figure out their place in both their adoptive and birth culture communities (McGinnis et al., 2009). Given social studies' recent focus on social justice, diversity, inclusion, and culturally responsive pedagogy (NCSS, 2023a, 2023b), it seems appropriate that the field explore its place in facilitating connection for Asian American adoptees to their racial and ethnic identities. This study aimed to begin that exploration by studying how five Asian American adoptees raised in midwestern states perceived the relationship between their social studies experiences and their own ERI development. The participants overall experienced social studies instruction on Asian American history that minimized the importance of Asian Americans or presented a narrow version of their history focused on token events. As a result, social studies role in the participants' identity development was minimal. However, it does not need to be this way. By operating from a framework of culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995), social studies can help adoptees connect with their ERIs.

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Social studies educators who have the desire to address issues of equity and diversity often struggle to find resources for themselves and/or their students that provide a framework to approach such important topics. For example, traditional social studies curriculum often neglects and/or downplays the role of racism in American history, causing many social studies teachers to search for materials that do not whitewash the nation's past. Dr. Sarah Radcliffe's work is a valuable resource in this regard, with applications across a range of social studies disciplines and levels. *Decolonizing Geography: An Introduction* is an engaging and powerful resource for K-12 social studies teachers and teacher educators who wish to historize and interrupt inequality in the United States and beyond. The author is one of the foremost experts on social justice issues in the field of geography and writes extensively on identity, politics, and international development. Radcliffe currently serves as Professor of Latin American Geography at the University of Cambridge.

Decolonizing Geography illustrates the influence of colonialism and its persistent ideology on the field of geography and social studies education. The book aims to illuminate the legacy of colonialism and connect decolonizing practices to aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The author uses concepts prevalent in critical pedagogy, particularly critical consciousness and praxis, to advance her arguments. The first, longest, and possibly most useful chapter is titled 'Why Decolonize Geography?' Radcliffe uses this section to describe key tenets of colonialism and emphasizes how they became (and continue to be) ingrained in global systems, including education. She uses the story of slave-trader Edward Colston's supplanted statue in Bristol, England to illustrate decolonial action. After George Floyd's murder in May 2020, the United Kingdom experienced Black Lives Matter protests and racial/colonial reckonings similar to those in the United States. In June 2020, Colston's statue, which had stood for over one hundred years, found itself at the bottom of Bristol Harbour and replaced by a statue of Jen Reid, one of the local BLM activists responsible for toppling Colston. Throughout the book, Radcliffe connects modern decolonial actions to concepts related to geography, equity, and critical citizenship. An especially powerful example is Radcliffe's use of the Mapping

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Indigenous Los Angeles (MILA) project to illustrate how students can engage in perspective-taking in geography education.

> Thinking about space from the perspective of subordinated groups turns Euro-American universalism into a partial and provincial life-world and knowledge system. MILA treats indigenous communities' place-knowledges as equal to western knowledge. As the project demonstrates, decolonizing geography brings together diverse ways of seeing and living in the world as equal but not equivalent. (Radcliffe, 2022, p. 42)

Radcliffe concludes the chapter with a compelling argument for reimagining the discipline of geography in a way that grounds the field in principles of social justice. She highlights the importance of building empathy, seeking diverse perspectives, confronting White supremacy and Eurocentrism, and transformational citizenship, all of which align with goals in social studies education (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013). At a time when social studies teachers who wish to center diversity, equity, and inclusion in their practice face opposition and/or skepticism (e.g., Farag, 2023), this chapter provides a compelling rationale for (and defense of) such work.

The remainder of the book expands upon the issues raised in Chapter 1. Each section uses the concept of *praxis* to frame its argument, meaning that Radcliffe connects theory with practice for each proposed dimension of decolonial work in geography. Chapter 2 introduces several frameworks useful in identifying and analyzing colonial structures. The frameworks offered include postcolonial theory, subaltern studies, Indigenous theories, and theories on settler colonialism, each of which are illustrated through modern practices or events. While Radcliffe illustrates the power of a decolonial lens, discussion of criticisms and/or limitations of the above frameworks were scant. Chapter 3 focuses on the anti-racist aims of decolonial efforts in geography, highlighting their importance to Black and Indigenous communities. Radcliffe views cosmopolitanism and global citizenship as aspirational notions, but effectively demonstrates how geographers have contributed to the Eurocentrism prevalent in these ideas. She offers the term *Southern theory*, which represents a range of thinkers and social theories in formerly colonized societies who challenge Western ideologies, as a way to approach anti-racism in geography. Chapter 4 ties key geographical concepts to recent decolonial developments. For example, *terra nullius* (Latin for 'land of nobody') and the Doctrine of Discovery are linked with recent developments in Oklahoma where, in July 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that a vast area of the eastern portion of the state, including much of Tulsa, is part of the

Muscogee (Creek) Nation reservation. Additionally, the lack of attention received by missing Native American and First Nations women, as well as mineral extraction on tribal lands in Alaska and North Dakota, are powerfully illustrated through vignettes connected to geography concepts. Chapter 5, titled Decolonizing Geography's Curriculum, focuses on how Western knowledge and other aspects of White supremacy have permeated social studies curriculum. To interrupt these hegemonic forces, Radcliffe recommends decentering traditional/canonical texts, learning through solidarity by establishing 'horizontal' teacher-student relationships, and promoting critical reflection on positionality. She also argues that critical race theory is important in interrogating racial hierarchies that continue to influence geography curriculum and pedagogy. While race and racism are certainly central to decolonial efforts, some readers may desire deeper analyses on issues of sexuality, religion, and ability. The final chapter outlines how geographical research can contribute to decolonial practices. Strategies include honoring diverse epistemologies, building collaborative and reciprocal relationships between the researcher and research participants, and researcher self-reflection on biases and prejudices. Most importantly though, research should prioritize decolonial and anti-racist agendas.

Decolonizing Geography is an excellent resource for teachers and teacher educators who wish to provide critical perspectives in social studies classrooms. The greatest strength of the book is how Radcliffe historicizes global inequality, dispossession, and discrimination through a geographic lens coupled with teaching strategies/curricular examples that can be adapted to a variety of ages and contexts. For example, the attention given to Native American presence in North America prior to Western colonization, illustrated by concepts such as *terra nullius*[2], is useful in elementary classrooms where local/state history is often taught without criticality. This connection addresses several components in the Geography section of Dimension 2 of the National Council for the Social Studies' (2013) C3 framework (Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools). Additionally, *Decolonizing Geography* uses sound reasoning to argue for a social justice imperative in social studies education. Many assertions, both theoretical and practical, are transferable across several disciplines. These arguments are elucidated by clear definitions of important concepts and terms, many of which are included in a convenient glossary at the end of the book. Furthermore, teacher educators may find the chapter on decolonizing geography research helpful.

[2] A Latin phrase meaning "land belonging to no one." The idea was used to justify invading places that were deemed uninhabited, either because there were few people there or the people were considered "uncivilized."

Possible weaknesses of this book include the theoretical nature of some sections and the presumption of content knowledge in regard to global and historical phenomena. For example, colonial histories and practices are often introduced (with little elaboration) to set up anti-racist and decolonial arguments. Radcliffe assumes that the reader has a deep understanding of these dynamics on a global scale, which some teachers or teacher educators might not have as much experience with. Additionally, Chapter 5, which focuses on decolonizing geography's curriculum, leaves room for more pedagogical interventions. While the author makes a convincing case for the need to reimagine curriculum, examples of what such instruction would look like were thin. Therefore, this dense text would not work well as a "beginner's guide" to critical social studies education and should be read in concert with more pedagogically focused literature.

References

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