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Walden University
2011

Abstract

Approaches and Perceived Barriers to Teaching History

by

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MA, University of Texas at San Antonio, 2000

BS, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1998

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Teacher Leadership

Walden University

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Abstract

Researchers have found that elementary classrooms can spend as little as thirty minutes per week on history instruction due to curriculum demands in reading and math.

Nationwide, students are failing to perform at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress history exam. At the school where the research was conducted, the students are not performing successfully on district curriculum benchmark assessments in history and often score below the district average.

This project addressed the barriers that prevent teachers from teaching history through the strategies current research recommends. A qualitative approach involving interviews with fifth grade teachers in an urban school district was used to determine how they are currently teaching American history and what they believe needs to be done to maximize student learning. All interview data were transcribed and coded for themes to show current approaches to teaching American history, and barriers that impede teaching.

Based on the analysis of the interview data, teachers reported that time, high stakes standardized assessments, and curriculum demands impeded their ability to teach history the way they believe it should be taught. The findings were used to design an integrated history curriculum to maximize instructional time in the face of high stakes testing. The project was based on a constructivist framework approach to provide teachers with a method to actively engage students in historical learning. Implications for social change include teaching history in a way that could improve student test scores to at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress history exam.

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Dedication

This doctoral project is dedicated to my parents, William and Teresa. Without my father's encouragement and support I would not have gone for this dream. He has always encouraged and supported my education. Without my mother's encouragement, support and editing skills I would not have finished this dream. She was there every step of this long journey. I love them both and they made this degree possible. I cannot imagine accomplishing the things I have without their love and support.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

As early as the 19th century, educators and researchers called for a change in history education in the United States (Bolinger & Warren, 2007). These recommended practices since the 19th century have called for more student interaction with history, authentic primary source analysis, and experiences that will allow children to connect with history. However, despite these recommendations history education remains stagnant and taught primarily through the reading of textbooks and the memorization of names and dates.

In 1917, Bell and McCollum, tested over 600 high school students in Texas on what were considered basic historical facts. Their research showed that most students failed the exam. In 1986, the first U.S. History National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Exam was given to students in the fourth, eighth, and 12th grades. These results were as dismal as those from 1917. Students were unable to recall basic facts or demonstrate higher order thinking skills at a proficient level. The government and researchers expressed concern over these ratings, yet no reforms were passed. In 2001, the NAEP exam revealed that fewer than 20% of all tested students scored at or above the proficient level (Lapp, Grigg, & Tay-Lim, 2002). This time the government responded.

Following the 2001 NAEP results that showed how weak American students were in U.S. history and the lack of emphasis being placed on history studies even at the university level, the U.S. House and Senate adopted a concurrent resolution.

“\$50,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of Education to award grants to

develop, implement, and strengthen programs to teach American History (not social studies) as a separate subject within the school curricula” (P.L. 106-554). This decisive action led the Department of Education to create the Teaching American History (TAH) Program to improve teacher content knowledge and instructional strategies for U.S. history.

This program allows school districts to apply for three year-long grants of up to one million dollars. During the grant period, representatives from school districts partner with higher learning institutes (universities, museums, or libraries) to create programs to positively affect the teaching of American history. Typically teachers are either recommended by an administrator or volunteer to participate in the program, which often involves an after school, weekend, or summer time commitment.

Evaluation of the beginning of the TAH program showed projects “may not have reached those teachers typically considered most in need of additional professional development, and that the training provided did not always match research-based definitions of effective professional development” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 2). The participants were often teachers who were already enthusiastic about teaching American history. The projects “tended to follow traditional formats (workshops and courses) rather than incorporate reform structures (teacher networks, internships, and research projects)” (p. 35). The TAH projects also did not involve teachers observing one another, there was little feedback provided to teachers, and there was little to no classroom based follow up (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). This study was

designed to develop a new approach to teaching American history that addresses the changes recommended by current classroom teachers and existing published research.

Definition of the Problem

In the state of Texas, history instruction continues to be an area of concern. While high-stakes testing scores are on the rise, the number of students who are above a mere proficient level is lacking (Texas Education Agency, 2008). Students must only answer 50% of the exam questions correctly to earn a passing score on the state standardized assessment in history, compared to the 75% to 80% of correct answers required to pass reading, math, and science state assessments. In the elementary school years, history instruction is often pushed off due to a need to teach the subjects measured by standardized testing (Ravitch, 2003; Rentner, 2006; Zastrow & Jan, 2004). United States history is not the focus of social studies curriculum in Texas elementary schools until the fifth grade.

At the local elementary school where the research for this study was conducted, fifth grade students were performing even lower than the school district average on grade level history exams called Curriculum Developed Benchmarks or CDBs (Northside Independent School District, 2009). On this exam, students must score 75% or more correct to be considered passing. While this district is offering more training for teachers in the area of history instruction, schools are not improving in performance. Student performance at the selected school continues to be limited at best. The students at this school struggle to score a passing rate of 75% or higher on the two history CDB exams.

On the first exam, only 76% of the fifth graders scored a 75 or higher and on the second exam only 71.5% scored a 75 or higher (Northside Independent School District, 2009).

As students enter high school, they are described by the state and district to be performing well on the state standardized assessment. However, this state assessment utilizes a multiple choice format and only requires 50% correct to score a passing rating (Texas Education Agency, 2008). According to the district, these same students are unable to score well on advanced placement exams in history. These tests require students to write essay responses based on document analysis and higher order critical thinking skills and score significantly higher than the state assessment. There are many factors which may be contributing to this problem of students' difficulties in demonstrating achievement on advanced placement exams in history. These factors include: a need for more instructional time in other subjects, a lack of authentic materials and training to use those materials, and a lack of a thematic approach that integrates math and reading with the history content (Bolinger & Warren, 2007).

Passe (2006b) warned that leaders in the field "may not be paying attention to the underdevelopment of elementary social studies and its contribution to problems in secondary social studies" (p. 189). Due to this lack of instructional time, he concluded, "The ultimate result is that our students are poorly prepared for secondary school, grievously unprepared for university courses in the social sciences, and overwhelmed by the responsibilities of democratic citizenship" (p. 190). This research substantiates the need to improve the quality and quantity of elementary social studies teaching.

According to Wineburg (2001), efforts to understand children's historical knowledge have followed the same pattern since 1917. Adults decide what children should know, a test is administered, children do poorly, and no effort is made to understand why. Too much emphasis is placed on memorization and precise recall instead of a sense of history. Wineburg emphasized that researchers should experiment with pedagogical strategies that may enable teachers to produce such knowledge.

Researchers have acknowledged that students need to do history and actively engage with events, not just memorize key dates, people, and events (Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Levstik, 1996; National Council for History Education [NCHE], 1996; Roser & Keehn, 2002; Smith, 2001; Von Heyking, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). However, in the current research few studies have attempted to interrelate history instruction to student learning (Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Wilson, 2001).

This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address this problem in several ways. First, I examined how teachers are currently teaching fifth grade history and how they think they should be teaching. I also looked for factors that impede teachers from effectively teaching history at the elementary level. Using this information, an integrated curriculum was designed as a method of teaching history for elementary teachers. This method of history instruction could help teachers to overcome the barriers to teaching history at the elementary level while still meeting curriculum needs in high stakes testing areas.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The research was conducted at a school where I am a fifth grade teacher. In the school district, integrating instruction is becoming more and more critical due to the changes in high stakes standardized testing requirements. In the fifth grade, students take a standardized test in reading and math that is required for promotion to the sixth grade. In addition, students must also take a standardized assessment in science. These three high-stakes testing subjects mean that history instruction is often minimized to allow for more instructional time in these subjects that will be tested by the state.

At the school where the project was designed, there is a need for indepth instruction in reading and math with the students who are entering the fifth grade each year. These students performed lower in the standardized testing areas as fourth graders than students had previously. For the 2007-2008 school year, only 82% of the enrolled fourth graders passed the math standardized assessment, and 87% passed the reading assessment. For the 2008-2009 school year, these scores fell again to 77% in math and 84% in reading (Northside Independent School District, 2009). The growing need in this area has resulted in a stated understanding that reading and math instruction become priorities for the fifth grade teachers. Additionally, students are accountable for taking a state assessment in science for the first time during their fifth grade school year and the test can cover science material from kindergarten through fifth grade standards with a primary focus on Grades 3 through 5.

High stakes testing mandates have led the district and campus administration to encourage teachers to integrate curriculum to prevent language arts and history instruction from disappearing as students prepare for the standardized assessments. These standardized assessments often lead to these subjects being overlooked and undertaught as the instructional emphasis is placed on the fifth grade high stakes testing subjects of reading, math, and science. It is essential that history and language arts be taught in the fifth grade because in the seventh grade students take the language arts standardized assessment (the first testing of this is in the fourth grade) and in eighth grade students take the history standardized assessment for the first time. In addition to the future high stakes assessments, the students in the fifth grade take two social studies CDBs.

The first CDB occurs in January and tests United States history from the colonial period to the formation of the new government as an independent nation. The students are given a 20-question multiple-choice exam to test their knowledge in this area of U.S. history. The students record their answers on Scantron sheets and the testing department for the school district scores the tests and reports on student performance by teacher and campus, and then ranks the campuses. Regarding students performing with 75% correct or higher, the targeted school was in the bottom rankings for the district 2008-2009 and ranked fourth out of the five neighborhood schools. The targeted school only had 76% of the fifth graders score a 75 or higher on the first CDB. The other neighborhood schools had 89.8, 83.6, 82.8, and 68.7% of students scoring in this targeted range (Northside Independent School District, 2009).

The second CDB is administered in May. This exam tests student knowledge of westward expansion, Civil War and Reconstruction, and immigration. Like the first test, this CDB is also composed of 20 questions in a multiple-choice design. This test is administered after the high stakes testing has occurred in reading, math, and science. However, this means that the content to be covered is from the period that curriculum emphasis is placed on the high stakes testing needs. Once again, the targeted elementary school fell in the bottom half for students, scoring 75% correct or higher. On this test, the school fell fifth out of the five area schools with only 71.5% of the students scoring in the 75 percent or higher range. I did note that all schools decreased in the number of students meeting the targeted scores: 83.8, 75.5, 76.1, and 75.2 (Northside Independent School District, 2009a).

Unlike other subjects, which are tested monthly by CDBs and by state set standardized assessments, history is only tested twice by the district during the school year. History is not tested by the state except in eighth and 10th grade. This leads to history being overlooked and undertaught as the instructional emphasis is placed on the fifth grade high stakes testing subjects of reading, math, and science.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Researchers have noted “social studies education has been endangered for a long time, with no aspect more threatened than the elementary program” (Passe, 2006b, p. 189). “Social studies, as a content area, struggles to attain a place of prominence in the elementary curriculum. Reading and math continue to reign supreme in the elementary classrooms” (Hinde, 2005, p. 105). Research in history education has “proceeded at a

slow pace, but nearly every state has undertaken limited measures to develop student academic standards in history or social studies” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 2). However, existing research on teaching American history has focused on defining “good” teaching and the impact that high-stakes assessments have on instruction (Brophy, 1992; Grant, 2001; Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Vogler & Virtue, 2007; Wilson, 2001; Wineburg & Wilson, 2001). The current research lacks sufficient explanatory power, and few studies have attempted to connect history instruction to student learning (Wilson, 2001). Gains have been made in increased scores on high-stakes testing; however, in 2001 fewer than 20% of fourth, eighth, or 12th grade students scored at or above the proficient level. Critical thinking and analysis skills were dismal (Lapp, Grigg, & Tay-Lim, 2002).

It is necessary to understand why history instruction has lost its place in education especially at the elementary level. “History, once a core subject of study in every grade beginning in elementary school, lost its pride of place over the years” (Ravitch, 2003, p. 1-2). Nichols and Berliner (2007) found that high stakes testing required by NCLB has led to the reduction of time previously allocated to social studies education in elementary schools. Cawelti (2006) referred to the decline in social studies education in elementary schools as a side effect of NCLB.

Further studies (Leming, Ellington, & Schug, 2006) found that 70% of elementary teachers spent fewer than four hours a week teaching social studies. Other studies presented more dismal numbers in which teachers reported that they spent approximately 30-60 minutes each week teaching social studies (Burstein, Hutton, & Curtis, 2006;

Hutton & Burstein, 2008; McGuire, 2007). A qualitative study of fifth grade teachers in California found that not only was social studies education declining, but that there was an even greater demise in low performing schools with large minority populations (Pace, 2008). A study by von Zastrow and Janc (2004) found that nationwide principals reported a decrease in the instructional time for social studies or history instruction since 2000. Van Fossen (2005) also noted a decline in social studies instruction and attributed it to the time requirements necessary for increasing student achievement in the areas of reading and math. Passe (2006b) warned that because elementary social studies is not a required state mandated competency test for most states, “the entire subject area of social studies is disappearing from the school day” (p. 189). The Center on Education Policy conducted a survey in which 71% of elementary districts reported a reduction in instructional time for social studies to make more time for reading and math (Rentner, 2006).

One of the most prevalent barriers to the teaching of history that emerged from the research is the emphasis that is placed on state standardized assessments. Volger and Virtue (2007) reported:

High-stakes testing has served as a catalyst for a movement away from constructivist, student-centered approaches such as discussion, role play, research papers, and cooperative learning. Teachers tend to ask students for ‘just the facts’ because that is what will be tested. (p. 56)

To address this downfall, researchers examined what good history instruction in the elementary school looks like. McCall (2006) noted that “finding examples of exemplary

social studies teaching in elementary schools is often challenging due to teachers' responsibilities for teaching many different subjects" (p. 161). The four teachers whom McCall (2006) found to be exemplary had different methods of teaching but all integrated reading and social studies to meet school standards. Bolinger and Warren (2007) examined strategies teachers used in teaching history. They found that teachers did not use the strategies that they knew to be more effective teaching practices for history instruction, often due to time constraints and greater emphasis being placed on reading and math curriculums.

Research continued to show that history or social studies was found to be the least most important subject in elementary curriculum. "One of the most formidable barriers to powerful social studies teaching is social studies' low status within the elementary curriculum" (McCall, Janssen, & Riederer, 2008, p. 136). This has led many teachers to view the teaching of social studies as trivial and irrelevant when compared to other core subjects (Boyle-Baise, et al., 2008; Hutton & Burstein, 2008; Wills, 2007). Further obstacles to history instruction include the following: (a) elementary teachers are subject-matter generalists, (b) teachers lack the professional development opportunities needed to become more proficient, (c) there is a misperception that nontraditional teaching approaches are too difficult for elementary students so teachers rely on textbooks and worksheets, and (d) teachers use time allotted for history instruction to remediate students in reading and math to prepare for high stakes testing (Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere & Stewart, 2008; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Grant, 2007; Heafner, Libscomb, & Rock, 2006; McCall, 2006; Myers & Savage, 2005; Rock,

et al., 2006; Tanner, 2008; Zhoa & Hoge, 2005). “One solution that continually is posed is to integrate social studies content with those areas that the teachers are already teaching” (Hinde, 2005, p. 106). The idea of integration is further supported by Hirsch (2006).

In 2001, Smith found that "the strongest effect of the history curriculum is tied to the nature of instruction" (p. 33); yet, current research does not focus on the connection between history instruction and student learning (Wilson, 2001). In 2001, Grant explored the relationship between the methodology a teacher uses and what the student understands of history. This research emphasized the need for future studies because “few studies explore the intersection of teacher’s practice and students’ understandings” (p. 66). Other researchers have found that “very little research exists which correlates the use of historical inquiry with improvements in students’ historical understanding” (Hartzler-Miller, 2001, p. 673; Von Heyking, 2004). “Study after study suggests that we lack that understanding and suffer from a severe historical illiteracy that bodes ill for the future of our Republic” (American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2002, p. 1). Students must be prepared to become responsible citizens, and this cannot be done without effective history instruction in the early years (Passe, 2006).

Definitions

Critical thinking skills:

Critical thinking consists of seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth. (Willingham, 2007, p.8)

Curriculum integration

An effective teaching practice in which core curriculum (history or science) is taught through reading and writing instruction. This form of instruction results in deeper and more meaningful experiences for students (McKee & Ogle 2005).

Document based questioning (DBQ)

Document based questions assess the ability of each student to work with historical sources in multiple forms “The DBQ requires many of the same skills used in developing a research paper: interpreting primary and secondary sources, evaluating sources, considering multiple points of view, using historic evidence, developing and supporting a thesis” (Pappas, 1999, p. 1).

National Assessment of Educational Progress History topics

Eight chronological periods that overlap and vary in depth of coverage are included in the assessment: Beginnings to 1607; Colonization, settlement, and communities (1607 to 1763); The Revolution and the new nation (1763 to 1815); Expansion and reform (1801 to 1861); Crisis of the Union: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850 to 1877); The development of modern America (1865 to

1920); Modern America and the World Wars (1914 to 1945); Contemporary America (1945 to present). (NAEP, 2006, p. 3)

National Assessment of Educational Progress scores

The NAEP has identified three achievement levels. Students scoring at the *Basic* level demonstrate partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade. The *Proficient* level represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter. The *Advanced* rating signifies superior performance for a given grade. (Lee & Weiss, 2007, p. 8-10)

U.S. History National Assessment of Educational Progress exam

This exam is a standardized test given nation wide to students enrolled in fourth, eighth, and 12th grades.

The assessment is organized around three concepts or dimensions: major themes of U.S. history, chronological periods of U.S. history, and ways of knowing and thinking about U.S. history. The themes and periods of U.S. history function as a matrix, with the assessment addressing the role of the themes across the periods. Questions include multiple-choice, short constructed-response, and extended constructed-response formats. Constructed-response questions make up approximately 50% of the assessment. The cognitive dimension of historical thinking is measured by the inclusion of test questions divided between those measuring historical knowledge and perspective (40%) and those measuring

historical analysis and interpretation (60%). Many questions in the assessment are based on visual or textual stimuli. (NAEP, 2006, p. 6)

Significance

This research examined why history instruction has remained unchanged despite decades of research showing the importance of student knowledge and understanding in this subject area. The 2006 Nation's Report Card in U.S. history showed that gains are being made in fourth grade performance in history. Nevertheless, the number of students at the *Basic* level increased from 64% in 1994 to 70% in 2006: this change is not acceptable, considering that there has been no significant gain in the percentage of students performing at the *Proficient or Advanced* levels (Lee & Weiss, 2007). This research also explored how history instruction is occurring in fifth grade classrooms and how it could be improved. A series of teacher interviews were used to explore what is occurring in the classroom and what teachers think should be occurring. Based on this information, a project was developed that attempts to improve current classroom instruction in U.S. history. The design of the project used an integrated approach with an emphasis on higher order and critical thinking skills. The goal of the research is not only to increase the performance of students on their CDBs, but to develop a foundation so that when these students take the NAEP exam in eighth grade, the number of students who are performing in the higher domains of *Proficient or Advanced* will increase. Given increasing curriculum demands on teachers, this proposed project could allow teachers to teach effectively a subject that has historically been ignored and forgotten as highstakes testing demands more classroom time be spent on reading and math.

Guiding/Research Question

Researchers have focused on how history is taught and how they think it should be taught. However, little research has focused on students' understanding of history (Bolgatz, 2007; Grant, 2001; Wilson, 2001). While gains are being made in other academic areas, history instruction and historical knowledge in the school system remains inadequate (American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2002; Lapp, Grigg, & Tay-Lim, 2002; Passe 2006a). *Education Week* (2006) reported that in the entire nation, only 12 states have elementary standards in history that are “clear, specific, and grounded in content,” and the number of states that test elementary social studies declined from 30 to 12 over the last decade (2009).

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the curriculum could be changed to allow students at the targeted school to become more successful on district benchmark exams in history. The research project addressed the following question: “How can current elementary history instruction be changed in fifth grade classrooms, in the school district under study, to maximize student learning in high stakes testing curriculum while still teaching American history?”

Review of the Literature

After seeing the lower performance on the district social studies CDBs and after participating in the Teaching American History Cadre (the district TAH program), I felt that United States history instruction was a targeted need for the school and district where I currently teach fifth grade. Informal conversations during cadre meetings showed that teachers wanted to teach history differently but were limited by the high stakes testing areas that demanded their focus and time.

The research project began with a complete review of current research on teaching history. Using the local university library and the Walden University online library, I searched the research databases: ERIC, Education Research Complete, and SAGE. I pulled all journal articles written using the key terms of *history instruction* and *elementary education*. This literature research directed me to examine approaches to teaching history, and why history instruction is failing in the United States. Many of the articles and theories led to the further examination of the concepts of *integration* and *constructivist learning*. The findings of this search are presented in the next section of this study.

Approaches to Teaching American History

History has the power to change classrooms and enhance student understandings, yet, often “the history classroom falls short of its potential when students do not think critically about history and its communicative texts” (Colby, 2008, p. 60).

Social studies has used the same scope and sequence approach to elementary education for more than a half century. Considering the obvious technological

changes and transformations of American society since its adaption and with the advent of the standards-based education, it is time for a new approach. (Duplass, 2007, p. 137)

In today's classrooms, "when students learn about history in elementary schools across the United States, they take tests and write essays explaining what happened in the past. It is not clear, however, that students necessarily think about history" (Bolgatz, 2007, p. 1). However, according to the historical standards for NAEP, an elementary school student with an "advanced level" of understanding is able to:

understand relationships between people, places, ideas, and documents; knows where to look for information; can use historical themes to organize and interpret historical topics; can incorporate insights from beyond the classroom into their understanding of history; understands and can explain the role of invention and technological change in history; and can explain how geographic and environmental factors influence life and work. (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. 39)

Despite these higher order thinking skills, teaching in the early grades often neglects historical studies and historical literature and focuses on memorized facts and dates (Vogler & Virtue, 2007). "All our students can and do think. But many, too many it often seems, do not think as well as they could or should in many school subjects, including social studies and history" (Beyer, 2008, p. 194). This lack of thinking has led "to many students perceiving history as an inert subject. They believe that historians merely report facts and assume their questions about the past are irrelevant" (Hartzler-Miller, 2001, p.

691). Most history instruction occurs in a conventional classroom in which the teacher lectures and the students are expected to absorb the information being orally presented. History is seen as a single story about what happened a long time ago and the textbook is the method in which knowledge is provided. “The increased emphasis on standardized tests has led to greater emphasis on the information found in textbooks” (Myers & Savage, 2005, p. 18). In this paradigm, historical knowledge consists entirely of facts, and these facts are indisputable. Students do not have the opportunities to form their own opinions or pass judgment on the knowledge provided (Levstik & Barton, 2001; Sexias, 2000; Van Sledright, 1999; Wineburg, 1996). This approach leaves little room for understanding the nature of history or its uncertainty. Contrary to this form of teaching, effective research shows that students need a more hands on approach in order to synthesize, construct, and understand history.

In education, teachers are essential to the learning that occurs in the classroom. “Depending on how a learning experience is organized and administered, two teachers teaching the same grade level and the same topic can provided substantially different forms of education” (Jadallah, 2000, p. 223). Current researchers have recommended that history instruction focus on the use of historical inquiry (Fragoli, 2005; Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Levstik, 1996; McCall, 2006; NCHE, 1996; Roser & Keehn, 2002; Smith, 2001; Tanner, 2008; Von Heyking, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). “Historical inquiry can be viewed as an instructional approach which brings together new understandings about the discipline of history as well as recent developments in cognitive research, especially in regard to children’s historical thinking” (Hartzler-Miller, 2001, p. 672) It allows students

to actively interact with historical knowledge and begin to construct their own understanding of historical events and themes.

Historical inquiry entails a shift from an emphasis on ‘a story well told’ (or, the story as told in a textbook), to an emphasis on ‘sources well scrutinized’. In other words, students do history – pose questions, collect and analyze sources, struggle with issues of significance, and ultimately build their own historical interpretations. (Levstik, 1996, p. 394)

This requires students to become active rather than passive learners.

Research shows that “standards stress an active, hands-on, constructivist perspective for teaching social studies” (Bolinger & Warren, 2007, p. 74). However, educational practices revolve around the skills measured by high stakes standardized testing that students are required to pass. These tests do not focus on or measure higher order thinking skills because “the need to keep these exams efficient often discourages the use of many subjective question forms which may be better suited as assessments of the social studies curriculum and students’ learning” (Bolinger & Warren, 2007, p. 75). The increased pressures of teacher accountability have led some educators to “teach concepts and facts as a body of knowledge to be memorized to pass the test” (Jadallah, 2000, p. 224). They believe that this is acceptable, especially when considering that most state standardized assessments test student knowledge through a multiple choice format.

Student knowledge of history is lacking at many levels. Research has examined not only what students need to be proficient in history, but also what they need to know. Currently, students in the United States show a surprising lack of understanding of, even passing knowledge of, the nation's history. Recent examinations of the history achievement of high school seniors reveal that few are able to place significant dates accurately, identify key figures in America's past, or trace the evolution of critical developments in our nation's history. (Smith & Niemi, 2001, p. 19)

This has led to the development of district, state, and federal standards in an attempt to improve student performance in history. "An important purpose of education is to have students develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will help them successfully participate in a constantly changing society" (Jadallah, 2000, p. 224). Knowing what students need to know then led researchers to ascertain how to best achieve this knowledge.

Historical Inquiry

Current research recommends that history instruction focus on the use of historical inquiry (Barton & Levstik, 2005; Colby, 2008; Fragnoli, 2005; Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Levstik, 1996; McCall, 2006; NCHE, 1996; Roser & Keehn, 2002; Smith, 2001; Von Heyking, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). Hartzler-Miller (2001) suggested that current literature shows that "students in conventional, transmission-style classrooms tend to view history as static facts to be memorized. They believe that there is a single story about what happened, that teachers and textbooks are neutral sources of information, and

that their own judgments about the past are irrelevant” (p. 675). She argued that historical inquiry allows students to construct personal meaning about the past and to articulate their interpretations.

Colby (2008) developed an instructional model that allows students to engage in a variety of activities combining historical thinking, historical empathy, and the understanding of the historical narrative. She argued that her model “empowers students to challenge historical truth” (p 77). Colby claimed that this model fosters critical analysis of perspectives and deepens student knowledge. However, there is no evidence in the paper to show that the model has actually been implemented with students or that its effectiveness has been evaluated through data collection.

Fragnoli (2005) conducted a study on the use of historical inquiry as an instructional strategy. This study introduced the strategy to preservice teachers and then gave them time to practice and reflect on the use of the strategy as if they were elementary students. The preservice teachers noted that they “enjoyed the experiences of using primary documents, object-based instruction, and simulations, but they lacked the confidence in their abilities and content knowledge to be able to create a historical inquiry activity” (p. 250). The study showed that historical inquiry is a strategy that leads to greater student engagement and requires students to “question, explore, test, and argue their thoughts and opinions” (p. 247). This supports the idea of using direct and systematic teaching to instruct students in thinking skills (Reagan, 2008).

McCormick (2008) conducted an action research investigation using historical inquiry with fifth grade students. She noted that “traditional approaches of teacher-led

lectures often leave students with little motivation to learn history” (p. 119). She used a mixed methods approach to data collection through pre and post student surveys and observational field notes. Her research found that by using a historical inquiry approach, “fifth graders demonstrated a motivation to learn history for the sake of learning rather than superficial rewards or achievement goals” (p. 127). More importantly, her research showed “students became intrigued with wanting to know more and initiated their own research and independent reading” (p. 127). By taking responsibility for their learning, students are more likely to internalize the knowledge and take away a deeper understanding of the historical concepts learned.

Critical Thinking in History

Beyer (2008a) reported that the job of educators is to help students understand and develop a knowledge base of the history taught. The activities necessary to accomplish this “involve more than simply processing subject matter. They require application of various, frequently complex mental operations, or thinking skills” (p. 196). Beyer argued that if we really want to improve the quality of student thinking then we must explicitly and directly teach them how to think. Beyer (2008a) proposed four guidelines that are research based to teach students how to think while teaching history at any grade level. First, teachers need to teach students that thinking has procedures and rules. Second, these procedures need to be explicitly taught through modeling and reflection. Third, new skills should be taught in a lesson that focuses on only that specific skill. Finally, students must continue to practice the skill with guided practice and scaffolding. Research shows that teachers can successfully implement these thinking

lessons while using the regular social studies subject matter without interrupting the flow or sequence of their class (Beyer 2008a; Swartz et al., 2007).

Reagan (2008) used a direct instruction approach with fifth grade students to teach them the thinking skill of determining source reliability. She used Beyer's recommended practice to instruct her students in the thinking skill strategy. Her research concluded that not only did the students learn the context of the thinking skill as it related to the social studies curriculum, but also they were also able to make connections to their personal lives. The students reported many examples of when they might need to be able to determine the credibility of a source. Swartz (2008) conducted a study teaching students how to evaluate arguments. Using Beyer's (2008a) direct instruction guidelines, these students were able to apply the thinking to history and to their own personal lives.

A review of historical thinking in elementary years, (Von Heyking, 2004) showed that:

children as young as second grade can distinguish between 'history' and 'the past'. By grade six they are able to explain and support their definitions with examples, suggesting that historical events are often rooted in conflict and result in social change. (p. 3)

This research showed that young children can compare and contrast different versions of fairy tales and make interpretations because they are familiar with the basic story. They need to engage with historical stories in a similar manner to see that there is no "one story" of the past. Students need to engage with primary source material and practice comparing and contrasting historical fiction with nonfiction accounts. In order to

understand how change over time is essential to historical thinking, children must have an understanding of time. However, even very young children can begin with an understanding of “then” and “now” or “past” and “present”.

Constructing Meaning

Children develop historical understanding as they reconstruct the meaning of events. “Unfortunately history is not always taught to elementary students as a problem solving activity” (Fertig, 2005, p. 2). They need to interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources and form a historical belief based upon this historical evidence (Fertig, 2005).

In the early 1980s, the New York City Board of Education published the *Making Connections* program (1996). This program began to meet a need for authentic teaching and learning. The program is a “multicultural core curriculum program based on social studies that meets both the goals of multicultural education and state curriculum mandates without relying on textbooks alone” (p. 7). In it, students from kindergarten through sixth grade are immersed in picture books, novels, and biographies that focus on a specific culture or time period. This allows students to experience the historical events through a child character allowing them to make more meaningful and memorable connections. “Immersed in the thoughts, feelings, and relationships of the main character, students develop a personal commitment to learning more about a people’s culture and history” (p. 7). McCall (2006) further supported the integration of reading and social studies to meet standards. This study identified four teachers found to be exemplary social studies teachers. The teachers all “used trade books, both fiction and nonfiction, as

well as other written sources such as newspaper articles to teach reading strategies and help students understand challenging primary and secondary historical sources” (p. 163). This integration of reading and social studies allows students to construct a stronger understanding of historical events.

Bolgatz (2007) examined discussions in a fifth grade classroom studying colonial history. The researcher used a variety of data collection methods including audio and videotaped discussion, a researcher’s observation notebook, and interviews with students and the teacher. This research showed how teachers can effectively teach students to think historically and increase critical thinking skills. The researcher noted that the teacher often provided students with a “best story” of historical events. The “best story,” according to Sexias (2000), is a fixed narrative of history in which students do not construct historical interpretations they simply accept the account of the past as told to them. Following the “best story”, the students were involved in discussions and historical thinking about the events they were told. The researcher used a coding method on these discussions to indentify when the speaker made a connection, offered evidence for an argument, hypothesized about the events, or when the teacher pursued the thinking with a question. Following the “best story” practice, the students then engaged with a historical text relating to the same subject. The teacher repeated the discussion process. Finally, the students explored multiple perspectives on the topic. Discussions also occurred on these perspectives as well. Throughout the lessons, the students were encouraged to make connections between what they already knew and what they were studying. Results from this research:

demonstrate that all students can practice solid historical thinking skills. City and state measures had determined the students in the class to be weak learners. Yet, the discussions in the class make clear that these students were perfectly capable of higher-level thinking. (Bolgatz, 2001, p. 15)

The researcher concluded that telling a “best story” does not prevent students from developing historical thinking skills. In addition, teachers need to teach historical thinking skills not assume they will just happen. “The shared process of talking together about the complexity and moral ambiguity of history is an important building block for cultivating sophisticated historical thinking skills” (p. 19). The idea of direct instruction in thinking skills was explored and supported in more recent research as well (Beyer, 2008, 2008a, 2008b; Reagan, 2008; Sperry, 2006).

Grant (2001) used classroom observations of two high school history teachers to explore the “intersection of teachers’ practices and students’ understandings” (p. 66). One of the teachers had been identified in another study as being an innovative teacher. Both teachers held masters degrees in history. The teachers were selected because they considered themselves to have totally opposite teaching approaches. One teacher used narrative storytelling to address issues and events as they arrive in the textbook reading. The second teacher designed her teaching around units of learning that require students to read, write, listen, view, and interact in a variety of instructional activities. The textbook was used, but it did not drive instruction or planning. Grant used teacher interviews, student interviews, and field notes from classroom observations. The researcher focused

on three key elements from the student interviews: historical knowledge, significance, and empathy.

The students from the first class viewed historical knowledge as a set of nondisputable facts; whereas the students in the second classroom saw “historical knowledge as complex, tentative, and open to reinterpretation” (p. 83). Both sets of students saw the significance of history to the past and present. However, the students in the second classroom had clearer and more critical connections. When examining empathy, Grant was looking for the ability to view “multiple perspectives on peoples’ actions and on historical events and the ability to take an empathic stance” (p. 70). The students in the first class were able to see multiple perspectives, but they did not see alternative points of view nor did they place themselves within these perspectives. Grant points out that while prior knowledge and experience influence students there is also a need to examine “the role of teachers’ practices in shaping, supporting, and or extending students’ conceptions of history” (p. 102). Teachers cannot assume that students will learn what they need in any subject without some direct instruction.

Integration

One way teachers can improve their teaching of history is through subject integration. “Teaching school subjects for understanding, appreciation, and life application can be difficult even for teachers who possess clarity of goals and adequate subject matter knowledge” (Brophy, 1992, p. 143). According to Brophy, “fifth-grade teachers who want to teach U.S. history for understanding, appreciation, and application cannot do so by simply leading students through textbooks” (p. 144). A detailed case

study followed a fifth-grade teacher who used a form of storytelling, children's literature, and historical artifacts to teach history. The teacher also integrated art and writing topics into the history curriculum. The researcher used teacher and student interviews, audiotapes of classroom discussions, field notes, and copies of student produced work to gather data. The researcher found that although there was a limited amount of material covered the students truly understood and were able to apply what they had been studying. The study found the approach taken by the teacher to be ideal for teachers seeking to increase curriculum integration.

Historical Thinking

To date, perhaps the most comprehensive research has been the work of VanSledright. VanSledright (2002) published an account of his work with 23 fifth-graders in an elementary school over a 4-month period. The researcher began by stating, "Learning history is no simple task. It demands some fairly sophisticated thinking processes" (p. 5). Students must classify and categorize information, build interpretations of events, determine what is and is not historically significant, and reconstruct and recreate the past. Often it is believed that these skills are too advanced for elementary aged children. However, if students are taught how to do history they can be quite successful (Barton, 1997; Beyer, 2008; Levstik & Barton, 1996; McCormick, 2008; Reagan, 2008; VanSledright, 2002; VanSledright & Kelly, 1998).

VanSledright's (2002) research was undertaken in part because "the literature is largely devoid of design experiments that systematically study the teaching of historical thinking and investigation and what children learn (and do not learn) as a result"

(VanSledright, 2002, p. 25). While the researcher used all 23 students as sources, eight students were selected by the researcher and the classroom teacher to serve as primary informants. The students represented the ethnic diversity of the room and a gender mix of four boys and four girls. Since the researcher was relying on textual based learning, the students represented a mix of reading abilities as measured by the district criterion referenced reading test.

VanSledright worked with the students on the units of study “English Colonization” and “The American Revolution” period. Students were told that they "were going to become history detectives and were instructed in steps for “Questions Historical Detectives Ask to Solve the Mysteries of the Past” (p. 40) and in the differences between primary and secondary sources. After the initial instruction in how to examine a source and the discussions that followed from a practice lesson, the students were engaged in their first project of examining life in the colonies. Students created projects, which were published on a web site. Assessment of the unit occurred using a researcher developed quiz show in which questions were selected from the student projects and the students themselves wrote bonus questions to test other groups.

As the students moved into their next unit of study, the researcher realized the need to focus on working with students in regards to multiple perspectives and interpreting documents. The students continued to engage in a variety of learning methods to work their way through understanding the multiple perspectives of the causes of the Revolutionary War. The results of the study showed that despite the difficulties and challenges that arose, the students had some limited success with learning to use

investigative processes and critical intertextual reading practices. The students also expanded their strategic knowledge repertoires and developed vocabulary for discussing and analyzing as they read and examined primary and secondary sources. The researcher concludes with a cautionary note that this is just one teacher-research designed experiment and calls for more teachers and researchers to chart “novice-to-expert” learning trajectories in history.

Until more systematic research occurs and additional studies such as this one and those with longitudinal designs begin to populate the literature, we will continue to tinker at the margins of history teaching practice. In the meantime, many of our children will likely miss out on the powerful advantages that those encounters with history can produce. If nothing more, of course, history teaches us that we can choose, if we wish, to have things differently. (p. 155)

Cognitive Approach

The time has come for history curriculums to close the gap between what research recommends as effective teaching practices and actual classroom practices. “The persistence of instructional methods and activities that do not encourage students to see history and the social studies as investigative, open-ended, and research-based discipline is a central paradox in social studies education” (Cuban, 1991, p. 203). Educators can no longer ignore what research says should be done to continue teaching the way we always have.

Bolinger and Warren (2007) showed effective history instruction uses a constructivist perspective in which students actively engage with events. Since 1894

researchers have “stressed that history should be taught as analytical, inquiry-based discipline” (p. 68). However, “when students learn about history in elementary schools across the United States, they take tests and write essays explaining what happened in the past. It is not clear, however, that students necessarily think about history” (Bolgatz, 2007, p. 1). It is time to move past a “just the facts” learning style in order to foster thinking skills in students.

In order to understand ways to improve and increase historical understanding researchers must explore the best teaching approaches to foster this growth. Research has shown that the cognitive approach can be directly associated with historical understanding. In history, the cognitive approach considers students' thinking as they interpret images about the past. Current research shows that when using historical inquiry, "students actively and imaginatively develop their sense of the past through a wide range of experiences, including television, ethnic identity, family stories, and history textbooks" (Hartler-Miller, 2001, p. 673). In addition to examining the topic through a cognitive approach, a constructivist approach will also be used. According to Gould (1996) and Jonassen (1991) constructivist classrooms have common features. First, learning focuses on ideas not just facts. Second, learning is a process that is a series of interactions between teachers and students. Third, the focus is on constructing knowledge not replicating it. Finally, students' interests determine learning and there are multiple representations of their learning. All three of these features directly relate to the use of primary source analysis and historical literacy clubs to improve student learning.

At the school where the project will be implemented, there is a need for indepth instruction in reading, math, and writing with the students who are entering the fifth grade. These students performed lower in the state standardized testing areas as fourth graders than students have previously. The growing need in this area has resulted in a stated understanding that reading, math, and language arts instruction become a priority for the fifth grade teachers. However, CDB scores show that due to this increase in instruction in high stakes assessment areas, students are failing to perform satisfactorily on U.S. history benchmarks.

Implications

The local problem discussed previously was addressed throughout this research project study. The data collected during interviews with fifth grade history teachers were used to answer the research question: “How can current elementary history instruction be changed in fifth grade classrooms, in the targeted school district, to maximize student learning in high stakes testing curriculum while still teaching American history?” Using the information gathered, I designed an elementary history curriculum that can be implemented by elementary teachers to maximize student learning in high stakes testing areas without giving up history instruction.

The literature review shows the need for a change in how social studies is taught. Due to time constraints from high stakes testing integration of subjects, it is essential for teachers to be able to teach all of the necessary subjects and standards. From the literature review conducted, it was anticipated that teachers would express a lack of time to teach history and a lack of hands on materials as barriers to more effective teaching of history.

Using the existing research on history instruction and the anticipated findings from the study, it was predicted that the project designed would be able to influence the effectiveness of classroom instruction in history and reading. More importantly, the designed curriculum would help elementary teachers to maximize instructional time.

The themes that emerged from the teacher interviews were used to compare how teachers are teaching American history and how they believe instruction can be improved to maximize learning. The themes that emerged were then used to create a curriculum that combines how current research says history should be taught and how the teacher participants believed instruction can be improved. Based on anticipated results, I first planned on developing a project that was based on recommended research practices and participant themes and was an integrated curriculum in which history and reading would be taught together using a hands-on, active learning approach.

In addition to the integrated curriculum that was designed, a guide for implementation for the classroom teacher was also included in the project. This guide provides a brief synopsis of the research that supports the need for this project and the advantages to using the developed curriculum. The guide explains each component of the student activities and provides examples of what the activity may look like in the classroom. Finally, the guide includes ways to assess student participation in the activities and provides the teacher with possible methods of assessment.

The project has the potential to result in social change for many teachers. The teachers who participate in the interviews and have a voice in the creation of the integrated curriculum will be the first group to receive the final product that could alter

the way in which they teach history in their classrooms. The potential for change to be far reaching is a possibility because the researcher will share the final product with all fellow colleagues in the Teaching American History grant program and with the district social studies curriculum specialist.

Summary

While limited progress is beginning to be made on the NAEP exam in U.S. history, there is still a long way to go. Research must begin to explore the connection between how teachers teach and what students learn. History is not a set of facts and dates to be memorized in chronological order, rather, history needs to be the building block for teaching critical thinking and analysis skills to students. If students can be taught to understand history, they could be able to make a remarkable impact on the future. In order to facilitate the teaching of American history, researchers need to explore not only the best pedagogical theories, but the most efficient learning styles. The school system today should not continue to teach subjects in isolation. Rather, educators must teach children to find and make connections across the curriculums. The local data showed that students are failing to perform at an acceptable level on district developed history exams. The research also shows that district wide, the performance on history benchmarks decreases in the spring time as teachers concentrate on the subjects with high stakes standardized assessments.

The second section of this paper explores the research questions associated with the project, the research design, and the plan for implementation of the designed project. Section 3 justifies and explains the development of the project based on the outcomes of

the teacher qualitative interviews and reviews the existing literature on the themes that emerged. The final section is a reflection of myself as a learner throughout this scholarly journey.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

In this doctoral project study, the research addressed the question: “How can current elementary history instruction be changed in fifth grade classrooms, in the school district, to maximize student learning in high stakes testing curriculum while still teaching American history?” The purpose of this doctoral project study was to help fifth grade elementary teachers meet the needs of teaching history in a high stakes testing environment that often seeks to exclude or limit history instruction in exchange for additional time in subjects assessed by state standardized assessments.

The local problem has been substantiated through an analysis of student performance data on the two history CDBs in the fifth grade, an informal review of fifth grade teachers’ schedules, conversations of history teachers participating in a Teaching American History grant program, and grade level monthly meetings. To further document the local need, fifth grade teachers were interviewed to develop an understanding of how often they teach history, how they teach history, and how they believe that history should be taught. These interviews were used in conjunction with the existing literature to design a project that specifically meets the needs of the teachers in the participating district.

Research Design

A qualitative approach was used to address the research question. According to Creswell (1998), a researcher who conducts a qualitative study is looking to answer how a phenomenon is going on in the research topic. To examine the research question effectively, it was necessary to describe what is going on in the classroom setting at the

targeted school. A qualitative approach also allows for the “study of individuals in the natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 17). This approach was the most pertinent to the research question because it was essential that the participants were able to respond openly and honestly about how they are teaching and how they think they should be teaching history in the elementary classroom. The use of personal interviews allowed for the acquisition of a firsthand account as to what teachers are doing in the classroom and what they believe they should be doing.

The research question supported the local problem and helped guide the creation of a product that could specifically meet the needs of the targeted population. By allowing teachers to have input into the changing of instruction, this project could help them become contributors to the final curriculum. This level of participation should allow for a greater willingness to try implementing the new curriculum by the participants.

Setting and Sample

The research was conducted at a south Texas elementary school. At the time of data collection, the students at this school were predominantly Hispanic (65.68%) or White (21.89%). Students ranged in age from 3 years to 12 years. Forty-nine percent of the students qualified for the free or reduced lunch program and 53% were labeled economically disadvantaged by state and federal guidelines. The school served as the English as a Second Language (ESL) cluster campus and as the Bilingual Cluster School for five area elementary schools, and almost 22% of the student population is limited English proficient (Northside Independent School District, 2009b).

The participants in the study consisted of a nonprobability or convenience sample (Creswell, 2003) of 10 fifth grade teachers. The teachers were selected because they were fifth grade teachers at the school where the research was conducted or they participated in the district Teaching American History grant collaborative. The focus of the research was on fifth grade teachers because this grade marks the first time that students are instructed in American history in the state of Texas. I had no authority over any of the participants because neither I nor the participants had any administrative powers. Therefore, there were no expected issues between me as the researcher and the participants in regards to our working relationships. All participants were assured that their participation in the study was voluntary and that it would be understandable if they chose not to participate.

After receiving approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB approval # 04-26-10-0294056) to conduct this research, permission was received through written official approval from the district to conduct the study. The participants were then solicited through email and written letters asking for their participation.

Participants were all given a written letter ensuring:

1. Participation will be strictly confidential and neither the participant's identity, the identity of their school, nor the identity of the district will be made known. All names will be given a pseudonym to protect participant identities. As the person conducting the research, I will be the only one with access to identities.

2. Participation in the study is strictly voluntarily and the participants have the right at any time to revoke their consent to participation.

3. Participation in the study will in no way interfere with participant's employment or working relationships with the researcher.

Ten participants were solicited to participate in the research, and I received 100% participation. The sample consisted of four male teachers and six female teachers. Seven of the participants were Caucasian, and three were Hispanic. All 10 teachers were certified in elementary education and had 10 or more years of teaching experience. All participants had taught fifth grade for at least five years and two of the participants had taught fifth grade for more than 10 years. Convenience sampling was used because it provides a general idea about a phenomenon of interest and allowed the research data to be gathered from an easily accessible targeted population (Fridah, 2008).

Data Collection and Analysis

Methods to Collect Data

The research question in this study was designed to explore how teachers are currently teaching American history in the fifth grade and how they believe that history should be taught to maximize student learning. The data were gathered in this qualitative study through the form of transcribed interviews. I debated between using focus groups of fifth grade teachers or one-on-one interviews. The advantage to focus groups is that they are flexible, provide opportunity for the researcher to interact, and produce speedy results (Berg 2004). However, in the focus groups, there is a higher possibility for individuals to be influenced by their peers or hesitant in their answers. According to Berg, focus groups do not offer the same depth of information as interviews or as much observational data. "Traditional interviewing styles permit a more detailed pursuit of

content information than is possible in a focus group session” (Berg, 2004, p. 127). Due to the nature of the responses necessary to address the research question and the limited population sample, I decided that traditional interviews would yield richer data collection for the study.

I conducted one-on-one interviews with each of the 10 participants. The teachers were selected because either they were fifth grade teachers at the targeted elementary school or they participated in the Teaching American History Cadre. The majority of the interviews lasted about 30 minutes with one interview lasting 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted at the participant’s convenience for both time and location.

The interviews were conducted one-on-one with each participating teacher. An interview guide (Appendix B) was used to serve as a tool to keep the interview on topic and focused while still allowing the participant to speak freely and share their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs. The interview guide also helped to keep me from guiding through leading statements (Hatch, 2002).

I was a direct colleague of the participants in this study. The participants were either teachers who taught at the same grade level as I did or colleagues in the Teaching American History grant collaboration program. However, I had no direct or indirect authority over any of the participants. Therefore, the researcher-participant working relationship should not have influenced the study. There was a possibility that some participants may not be entirely forthcoming or may try to provide answers they thought I wanted to hear. However, all participants had a working relationship with me, which I

believe allowed the teachers to speak openly and honestly as they addressed the interview questions.

With permission, all interviews were videotaped. By videotaping the interviews, I was able to adequately transcribe the interviews. The transcription of the interviews provided me with written data to analyze. All interviews were transcribed within 5 days of the interview occurring. After the interviews were transcribed, a copy of the transcription was provided to the participant. The participant was asked to review the transcription for accuracy of their expressed ideas, opinions, and concerns. All 10 participants agreed that the transcription of their interview accurately reflected their expressed opinions and beliefs.

After reviewing their transcription each participant was assigned a number to protect his or her identity. The interviews were saved as Microsoft Word documents on a password protected computer and a thumb drive. I am the only one who can access the interview data. The thumb drive with the saved transcribed interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years.

Data Analysis of Interviews

Following the transcription process, a coding process was used to analyze the written data. Coding is an important process in qualitative studies. “Coding allows you to sort statements by content of the concept, theme or event rather than by the people who told you the information” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 219). The transcriptions were color coded and then analyzed for emerging themes. The coding was then used to generate categories and themes for analysis. According to Berg (2004) codes are often “created

using the constructs shaped by certain questions asked during the course of the interview process” (p. 281). The themes will be interconnected (Creswell, 2003).

The categories that emerged from the interviews were: flexibility with teaching (blue), approaches to teaching (green), barriers to teaching (red), and supports to teaching (yellow). As each transcribed interview was read, the statements were color coded to the categories. For example, one participant responded:

My principal allows us to adjust our class schedules daily as needed. So if I need more time in an area I can use it because a change in my schedule does not effect anyone else on my campus. This allows me to reteach topics as needed as long as I stay on the district timeline for each subject.

On the written transcription, this statement was color coded blue because it related to the participants flexibility with their teaching.

The color coded data were then studied against the themes to see what did and did not support the initial research question (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Finally, the data were interpreted by looking at relationships between the interview data and the existing research. “Conclusions drawn from patterns apparent in the data must be confirmed (verified) to assure that they are real and not merely wishful thinking on the part of the researcher” (Berg, 2004, p. 40). By connecting the themes studied to the current literature on the topic, credibility can be lent to the conclusions reached.

Validity and Reliability

The use of a published interview protocol was not used in the data collection procedure. Instead, the existing literature was used to format questions in the interview

guide (Appendix B) that specifically addressed the needs of the research question and the targeted population. Follow up questions were then used as needed to enhance the quality or depth of the participant's responses. The current existing literature that showed history instruction is pushed off due to the need to spend more time on high-stakes testing subjects (Ravitch, 2003; Rentner, 2006; Volger & Virtue, 2007; Zastrow & Jan, 2004) and research that showed history's low place in curriculum (Hinde, 2005) was used to format several questions. Literature exploring different methods of history instruction (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Von Heyking, 2004; Wineburg, 2001) also guided the formation of the interview guide. I relied on existing research to lead credibility to the development of the questions in the research guide.

According to Creswell (2003), research conducted in the "local environment" can introduce bias and lead others to question the data gathered. Several strategies were employed to support the quality and validity of this study. First, the participants received a copy of their transcribed interview and were given an opportunity to refute or clarify any statements made. Any clarifications were documented in the research. Second, a coworker, not involved in the study, perform random checks of the transcriptions against the videotapes. Finally, I openly presented any possible researcher bias and all data was shared even if it goes against the research questions.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

This study assumed that teachers in elementary school were teaching the American history curriculum in fifth grade. It is also assumed that the teachers in this study were certified and highly qualified to teach the fifth grade. Finally, the research

assumed that the classroom teachers had the content necessary to successfully guide and instruct fifth grade students in U.S. history.

This study was limited to a nonprobability or convenience sample of 10 fifth grade teachers in a south Texas elementary school. There was a possibility that this sample could introduce bias into the study, and Creswell (2003) recommended a random sample as the preferred population. However, due to the nature of this research and the fact that I am a fellow classroom teacher on the campus, this approach was not possible, and this situation is yet another potential source for bias. The data from this study were difficult to generalize due to the small sample size.

The Findings

This section contains a summary of the findings for the data collected from the teacher interviews. The participants were assigned pseudonyms that began with AHT for American History Teacher. Additionally, each participant was assigned a number from 1 to 10. Table 1 includes the background of each participant.

Table 1

Background of Participants

Participant	Years Teaching	Years Teaching 5 th Grade	Ethnicity and Gender
AHT 1	33	9	Caucasian Female
AHT 2	15	9	Caucasian Female
AHT 3	10	5	Hispanic Female
AHT 4	20	20	Caucasian Male
AHT 5	13	6	Caucasian Female
AHT 6	21	8	Caucasian Male
AHT 7	19	8	Caucasian Female
AHT 8	12	8	Hispanic Male
AHT 9	35	15	Caucasian Female
AHT 10	11	7	Hispanic Male

Interviews were conducted on-on-one using the interview guide (Appendix B) and lasted 30-45 minutes. Each interview was taped and then transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. The only identifying information was the pseudonym assigned. I am the only person who knows the true identity of each participant. After transcribing the interviews, the participants were given a copy and asked to verify the accuracy of the transcription. All participants stated that the transcribed documents were accurate. Each participant's transcription was read multiple times, a standard approach recommended by Creswell (2002), to locate and code all statements surrounding the four themes of: flexibility with teaching, approaches to teaching, barriers to teaching, and supports to

teaching. Statements that were related to each theme were then color-coded (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

As the transcripts were analyzed, four major themes began to emerge: flexibility with teaching, barriers to teaching, supports to teaching, and finally ideal approaches to teaching. Each of the prevalent themes will be explored in depth with interview data, in section 3 each theme is also explored through the existing literature that supports the theme.

Theme 1: Flexibility of Teaching

The first theme was flexibility of teaching in individual classrooms. All of the teachers reported that they had some degree of flexibility within their classrooms.

Participant AHT 1 reported:

The administration always has a more rigid eye on the district timelines and teachers are always trying to meet them. But, the teacher also has to take into consideration the varying needs of the students in their class who may not fit the timeline parameters that are set by those outside the classroom.

This idea of limited flexibility was shared by six other participants. Whereas, participant AHT 7 expressed a greater amount of allowed flexibility through the statement:

My principal allows us to adjust our class schedules daily as needed. So if I need more time in an area I can use it because a change in my schedule does not effect anyone else on my campus. This allows me to re-teach topics as needed as long as I stay on the district timeline for each subject.

Regardless of how much flexibility the individual teachers believed they had, all ten reported that district mandated timelines controlled what they taught and when they taught it. This district level of control also at times fell into a second prevalent theme of barriers to teaching.

Theme 2: Barriers to Teaching

All of the teachers reported that lack of time and standardized assessments were the biggest barriers to being able to teach in a manner that they believed was most effective. Participant AHT 3 reported that time constraints are always a barrier because she often has to spend more time on subjects that are tested by the state standardized assessments. In fifth grade, this would be reading, math, and science. When it comes to barriers, participant AHT 6 stated:

I can't go too deep into any time period because the states sets what standards need to be taught and our district benchmark tests are driven towards this. I will go as deep as I can and allow my students to explore topics further through independent study projects. Our textbooks also lack information relevant to many time periods. I always have to be searching for external sources to assist my teaching.

Another participant, AHT 5 believes that because history is not tested on a regular basis, there are only 2 district benchmarks for the whole year and no state standardized assessment, that the administration does not believe it is a priority subject. She said that if they need to cut time in a subject, history is the first thing that they are told to not teach. She believes that until there is a standardized assessment in elementary school for

American history it will “remain the step-child of education that no one wants to deal with.” Participant AHT 7 shared that “American history, because it is not assessed formally, is the first thing to be left out when the schedule needs to change.” Participant AHT 1 supports these opinions when she says:

I think there are those in the position to dictate what is important to be taught and those individuals do not necessarily value the importance of history. This results in it being one of the areas (at least in elementary school) to fall by the wayside first. Funding for history material is always short and so students are stuck using old textbooks and little else unless the teacher funds outside items. This makes kids have a mindset that history is dull and boring and not important.

Knowing that these barriers exist, the next theme to emerge were the existing supports to teaching the participants felt existed at their schools.

Theme 3: Supports to Teaching

The primary support reported by six of the participants was the participation in the Teaching American History Collaborative. They said that this has given them the opportunity to form a network of other teachers who want to improve history instruction at the elementary level and that they share many of the materials they have located through their own funds or through online searches. Participant AHT 10 shared:

I think we need a stronger history teacher network. A lot of us are doing lots of good things so we need to have easy access to share ideas and materials. We often don't have time to meet with our colleagues and when we do the focus is never on history.

Three of the participants wrote and received district grants to fund history primary sources, artifacts, and historical fiction novels in their classrooms. However, even with these supports the teachers reported that there is often not adequate time to implement all the things they would like to be able to do. “There is just not enough time to implement all my ideas or students ideas that come up during discussions” (Participant AHT 8). While the theme of supports did appear, there was a greater prevalence of the other three themes throughout the interviews. So while supports to history do exist, they are limited in the eyes of the participants.

Finally, the last theme, and perhaps the most prevalent, was how teachers would teach American history if they could get past all of the barriers and have an ideal classroom setting.

Theme 4: Ideal Approaches to Teaching History

When asked about how they would like to teach history, the participants shared a wealth of ideas and suggestions. Their ideas are shared below and represent what they said were the key approaches they would take if they taught in the ideal classroom. The first strategy that many participants said they would use in an ideal setting would be the use of primary sources and historic artifacts. Participant AHT 1 shared:

If I had a perfect classroom situation it would be an environment rich in pictures, print and artifacts. They would be everywhere. There would be things to make it come alive and be relevant to kids. There would be easy access to varied technologies that would enable students to be hands-on with their learning, give them the ability to share their learning with others, and I would be able to provide

immediate feedback. They could see how things in the past have impacted the present, and how what they do now will impact the future. I think that history could be the base from which all other subjects are taught. It would not be the subject that gets cut to save time for something else.

Participant AHT 5 agreed with the idea of using primary source and artifacts with students as an effective means of teaching. This participant stated:

I would teach hands-on. This could be activities like keeping a history journal, observing historical artifacts, creating their own artifacts, learning to locate and analyze primary source documents, learning to evaluate historical fiction and nonfiction, and participating in independently selected research topics to further their own understanding. All of this would allow students to truly learn and understand and not just memorize long enough to take a test.

In addition to the idea of using hands on artifacts and primary sources, the practice of integration was discussed by several of the participants. Participant AHT 2 stated:

I would integrate language arts, reading and social studies time. I have access to many wonderful historical fiction novels and I think this is a great way to get kids to understand history. I would have them participate in book clubs or literature circles so that they can read stories and relate to them. This would help them retain more information than just having them memorize facts and dates. I find it to be the best way for kids to learn if they are having fun while doing it.

This practice was further supported by the Participant AHT 3. This participant replied:

I would also use history notebook more where the children are given a topic that we have covered and they have to create a way to show what they have learned. I would try to integrate other subjects when teaching history. For example, using a rubric to grade an assignment for both language arts and social studies grades. I also think we should integrate our overhead projectors, flip videos, and other related technology so that the children learn to flourish not only technologically but academically as well.

Participant AHT 4 voiced that the best way to teach would be “to have textbook content supported during reading time through the use of trade books or novels”. Participant AHT 5 believes:

The best way to teach is through integration. As teachers we do not have time to reinvent the wheel everyday. We need to take an integrated approach to maximize our time. Math, science and reading could be integrated in the morning and history, language arts, and reading could be integrated in the afternoon. Once the time constraints were met through integration teachers could then focus on engaging lessons that students want to do.

Participant AHT 10 also expressed that curriculum integration was key to becoming a more effective teacher. The participant shared:

We need to find a way to incorporate several subjects effectively so that we have more time to do the types of activities that students find engaging. We also need to revisit what is important for fifth graders to learn about American history.

Right now we are expected to cover exploration (1500s) all the way to the present day or at least late 1900s. That is a lot of information for a little amount of time.

Finally, the participants also shared throughout the interviews that instruction needed to incorporate higher order or critical thinking skills and allow students the opportunity to take an active role in their learning. Participant AHT 8 expressed how students need to take an active role in what they learned and how they demonstrated their knowledge. The participant said that students should be given time and opportunity to express themselves in a variety of ways of their choosing. The participant said:

If I had a perfect classroom, my students would put on plays, act out historical events, research their choices of events and present to the entire class in a format of their choosing. I would also have students select improvement projects that they could do in their community so that they can make their own history and see the impact of their actions. I would have students dress up in time period outfits by creating their own costumes from their own recycled materials. I would continue to use hand-on or pictorial documents as much as possible to try to get students connected as much as possible as to how things were in the past.

This active historical thinking was also expressed by Participant AHT 9. This participant commented:

Right now, I use the 5E model and incorporate as much hands-on as possible. I use primary sources, artifacts, novels, writing, video, audio, theater, and as many simulation experiences as I can. I love having students actively engaged and busy. The only things I would change in a perfect classroom is more time for history

instruction, more field experiences so students can see and learn first hand, and more money to purchase novels and primary sources.

Conclusion

The research project focused on how American history is currently taught in fifth grade classrooms, in the targeted district, and how this instruction can be improved to maximize student learning. I selected this focus for the project because there is a growing need for students to be emersed in history and not just memorize people, dates, and events. The teacher interviews support the need for a change in how American history is currently being taught. The four primary themes that emerged from the interviews were: the flexibility that teachers had within their classrooms to meet student needs, barriers to teaching history the way participants want, supports to teaching history, and the approaches teachers would take if all barriers could be removed or minimized.

Researchers (Fragoli, 2005; Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Levstik, 1996; NCHE, 1996; Roser & Keehn, 2002; Smith, 2001; Tanner, 2008; Von Heyking, 2004; Wineburg, 2001) showed that students need to actively engage in historical inquiry in order to learn and understand history. With increasing curriculum demands on teachers, integration of subjects could allow teachers to effectively teach a subject that has historically been ignored and forgotten as high stakes testing demands more classroom time be spent on reading and math (Hinde, 2005; Hirsch, 2006; McCall, 2006; Tanner, 2008) .

This section has been a review of the research methodology used in this project. During the interviews, a majority of the teachers noted that there was a need to maximize instructional time and that a more effective approach to teaching history needed to occur.

Many participants also noted a lack of time to develop the types of activities they would like to be able to use. Teachers receive little to no inservice training on teaching history after they become certified teachers. There is a need for a program that would help teachers overcome the barriers to teaching history at the elementary level while still meeting curriculum needs in high stakes testing areas. As a result of these findings, the research product for this doctoral study was an integrated curriculum in which history, language arts, and reading are taught together using a hands-on, active learning approach (Appendix A). In addition, I designed an easy to use teacher implementation guide. This guide explains the different student activities and provides examples of what they may look like in different historical units of study in the classroom. The guide also describes ways that teachers can assess student participation in activities and provides the teacher with a possible method of assessment (Appendix A). Section 3 justifies and explains the development of the project based on: the outcomes of the teacher qualitative interviews and a review of the existing literature as it relates to the themes that emerged. The section then describes the proposed project that emerged from the findings and provides an overview of all activities that were developed.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

During the research, qualitative interviews were conducted with 10 fifth grade teachers. Based on the data collected from the teacher interviews, it was determined that there was a need for an elementary history curriculum that can be implemented by elementary teachers to maximize student learning in high stakes testing areas without giving up history instruction. Teachers often have to:

prioritize the curriculum they teach according to the subjects they will be held most accountable for. Subjects that are tested receive the most instructional attention, and the content areas not tested, like social studies, fall below them on the list of priorities. (Hinde, 2009, p. 122)

As the interviews were analyzed, four prevailing themes emerged: flexibility of teaching, barriers to teaching history, supports to teaching history, and ideal approaches to teaching history. Within the theme of barriers to teaching, lack of time, standardized assessments, funding, and available materials all impeded the way teachers would like to teach history. All participants reported that there were things that they would do differently in teaching American history if they only had more time and resources. Teachers also reported that the closer to the date for standardized testing came during the school year, the less often they taught social studies.

Concerning how teachers would like to teach history, the concepts of historical artifacts and primary sources, curriculum integration, higher order thinking and critical thinking, and active learning were all methods that participants would like to use more

often. Some teachers responded that they were trying to integrate subjects, but that the reality of the classroom often prevented this from occurring. The teacher interviews provided insight as to how teachers were currently teaching American history and how they believed it should be taught. The themes that emerged showed that teachers wanted to teach differently but that many barriers often interfered with their ability to alter how they were teaching.

From the information gathered, it was determined that the best method to meet the teachers' needs would be through a project designed to effectively integrate reading, language arts, and history curriculums. This would allow classroom teachers to maximize their instructional time. The curriculum designed would also need to take into account student interest, use a hands-on approach, and facilitate active learning. In addition, the program needed to be designed in a way to be user friendly for the teachers. Time is one of the greatest barriers for current fifth grade teachers, and the designed program needed to show how it can help teachers not be another task added to their to-do list. Finally, the program needed to include types of formative and summative assessments to allow teachers to meet grading expectations.

Description and Goals

The product for this project study was an integrated curriculum in which reading, language arts and history are taught together using a hands-on, active learning approach. In addition to the lessons that can be used across history topics, a guide for the classroom teacher was included. This guide has a brief synopsis of the research that supports the need for this project from both the teacher interviews and published research and explains

the advantages to using the developed curriculum. It also explains each component of the student activities and provides resources where teachers can obtain more assistance if needed. There are sample descriptions of what the activity may look like in an actual classroom. Finally, the guide has suggested ways the teacher may use to assess student participation in the activities and provides the teacher with possible methods of assessment.

Rationale

This project was designed in response to the students' lower performance on the district social studies CDBs and after interviewing the 10 participants. The interview data showed that teachers at the targeted school and in the targeted district identified time, resources, funding, and high stakes standardized testing as barriers to their ability to teach history the way they would like to. Further, teachers cited that they would like to use more primary sources and historical artifacts in their teaching of history. Many of the participants felt that they could more effectively teach history if they were able to take an integrated approach and use lessons that would require students to do more than just memorize dates and facts. Finally, teachers reported that to better prepare students for the demands of standardized testing, they needed to be able to teach students to think critically and to take an active role in the responsibility for their own learning.

Based on the interview data, there was an obvious need to alter the way in which history was being taught at the targeted elementary school. After reviewing the literature addressing approaches to teaching American history, an integrated curriculum approach was selected to best benefit the teachers at the targeted elementary school. The goal of the

project was to maximize instructional time while still effectively teaching American history and meeting the needs of students in high stakes standardized testing areas (especially reading). The literature showed this could best be met through an integrated, hands-on, active learning approach (Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere, & Stewart, 2008; Hinde, 2009; Sekeres & Gregg, 2008; Sunal & Sunal, 2008).

Scholarly Rationale for How the Problem is Addressed Through the Project

Teachers are preparing students for jobs that may not have even been invented yet. Students must learn to think logically and critically. They must become proficient at thinking critically and creatively to meet the demands of the future. Educators must move beyond merely teaching students the basic skills necessary to pass the state standardized assessments. Students need to “be able to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, compare and contrast, and manipulate and apply information. We will erode our children’s and world’s future by limiting our vision to teaching only the skills and knowledge presented in our state assessments” (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2010, p. 14). In order to bring about a difference in the education of children, teachers must move beyond a one size fits all approach to education and be willing to move from what has always been done to what is in the best research based interest of students.

However, it is not clear if today’s students are thinking about history (Bolgatz, 2007). Researchers and educators know that students memorize static dates and facts and they often view history as boring. However, research has also shown that effective teachers of American history, help students develop a historical understanding, engage in meaningful activities, and think critically (Grant, 2003; Grant, 2005; Yeager & Davis,

2005). “Understanding is a matter of being able to do a variety of thought demanding things with a topic – like explaining, finding evidence and examples, generalizing, applying, analyzing, and representing the topic in a new way” (Perkins & Blythe, 1994, p. 6). With this research in mind, the project was developed to provide activities that would allow students to truly show their understanding of a historical topic and not just regurgitate memorized facts.

Review of Literature

Barriers to Instruction

Throughout the interviews with the teacher participants, many stated that the demands of the curriculum timelines, time for instruction and standardized testing demands all impeded their ability to teach the way they believed would best meet the needs of the students they service. They cited time and resources as being barriers to why they did not use or often use tools such as primary sources and student centered learning projects in their current classrooms. Many teachers reported that they did not have an effective means of covering all of the material that was expected while still preparing students for the high stakes testing that occurs in the fifth grade. These barriers are also examined in much of the existing literature.

Standards and testing movements are largely responsible for the increased attention to literacy and mathematics at the expense of the social sciences (Heafner, et al., 2007; Volger, et al., 2007). Other researchers argue that testing is not the problem, but rather the overwhelming amounts of material that must be covered in short amounts of time (Olwell & Raphael, 2006). At the targeted elementary school, fifth grade teachers

must provide students their first experience with American history and their curriculum covers everything from early 1500s exploration through the end of the 20th century. Olwell and Raphael (2006) refer to this as “curricular sprawl”. This phenomenon forces teachers to focus on material coverage not student learning (Tanner, 2008). Many studies have shown that students enrolled in grades K-5 receive less than one hour of direct social studies instruction per week (Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006; VanFossen, 2005; Volger et al., 2007). All interview participants cited lack of time as a barrier and many also discussed the hardship of covering so much material with little attention to detail or true learning. Regardless of why social studies is not receiving adequate attention at the elementary level, the researcher decided to focus on an integrated approach to help overcome the time barrier.

Integration of Curriculums

The analysis of the interview data for the fourth theme of ideal approaches to teaching history showed that many of the participants stated that they would like to maximize instructional time by integrating reading, language arts and history curriculums. The idea of integration is nothing new; however, the term has been used to describe many different approaches to teaching. Integration is not a new concept. The concept emerged in the early 1900s as part of the progressive movement (Hinde, 2005). Many researchers have found integration to be a powerful and useful instructional tool in an educational system where time is of the essence (Bailey, Shaw & Hollifield, 2006; Hinde, 2005; Kinniburgh & Byrd, 2008; Pederson, 2007; Sorel 2005). Researchers caution that to be effective, the connections made must not be superficial. Teachers must

“ensure that the lessons and units that are created are effective in meeting social studies goals and objectives, not just strengthening literacy skills” (Heafner, Libscomb & Rock, 2006, p. 475). Furthermore, teachers must focus less on independent subject times and more on the integrated outcomes for all subjects (Thomas & Jones, 2006). The lessons designed in this project study will ensure that teachers are able to quickly and accurately integrate subjects without just making surface connections.

Hinde (2009) described three different approaches to integration. The first is a “fractured” approach in which students receive bits and pieces of content information related to reading and language arts activities. No real connection of the content is made to the students’ lives and the content is not covered in any depth. The purpose of the integrated content is to enhance the reading and language arts curriculums.

The second approach she described is from Sekeres and Gregg (2008) and is referred to as “stealthy” integration. In this type of integration the content is covertly infused into reading and language arts activities. Teachers can bypass administrative requests to not teach content due to time necessary for high stakes testing subjects like reading and math. They are able to meet these increased time demands while still covering content without being explicit in the teaching of the content subject. Once again, the curriculum revolves around reading and writing and the content is just an enhancement to those subjects. Critical thinking or in-depth analysis of the history content is not necessary in this approach.

Her final approach is “healthy” integration. In this approach,

students learn to think historically, spatially, civically, or economically throughout the school day. Integration helps students adjust their way of thinking so that when they conduct their reading activities, they are able to access their knowledge of social studies content to help them make sense of the reading.

(Hinde, 2009, p.123)

In this form of integration, students can see the connections between their lives and the content they are studying. In this form of integration, students are motivated to learn, and no content or discipline is seen as inferior to others. “Truly integrating curriculum will result in students who are able to access disciplinary knowledge and modes of thinking so they can effectively participate in a democratic society” (Hinde, 2009, p.126). Knowing that this third form of integration was the goal of designing this project study, the literature review focused next on ideal approaches to integrating reading and history.

For decades, research has shown that the use of children’s literature can extend the experiences of students, foster enthusiasm, encourage rich classroom discussions, and provide a critical approach to understanding social studies curriculum (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2008; Davis & Palmer, 1992). More recent research has shown that critical literacy asks students to be active readers, to questions, critique, and challenge the accuracy of the material they are reading. Students reflect on the impact of issues and how they relate to their lives (Chafel, Flint, Hammel, & Pomeroy, 2007; Sperry, 2007). Essentially, students are asked to read, reflect and respond to what they have read. Current research encourages teachers to look at historical fiction as a literacy integration tool. The use of historical fiction has been found to increase student motivation,

engagement, and retention of social studies skills while reinforcing literacy skills (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2008).

This important skill was applied to the project through the use of the students being involved in differentiated reading “book clubs”. Activities for the students and instructions for the teacher are included in the actual project. These book clubs meet several needs as identified by the interview participants. The use of these book clubs can allow teachers to appropriately integrate reading and history which was a concern that was presented in the teacher interviews. This integration will allow teachers to create more time in their day which was a noted barrier. The use of book clubs can also meet the need of interview participants who wanted more ways to encourage their students to think critically and take responsibility for their own learning. By following the teacher’s guide in the project, teachers can efficiently introduce the use of book clubs in their own classrooms.

First, the book clubs are leveled for every topic by reading level. Teachers can assign students to a book club by reading ability to provide a true independent reading activity. Allington (2007) argued that struggling readers do not make gains because they are often taught with texts that they cannot read. By using leveled trade books, various reading levels that exist within a classroom can be accommodated to lead to successful reading gains for all students (Allington, 2007; Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2008; Frye, 2009; Gelzheiser, 2005; Olness, 2007). Teachers can also assign students to a guided book club in which the material is at their instructional level instead of their independent

level. By using the leveled groups, all students are able to experience history through literature and also acquiring essential reading skills.

Tomlinson (2001) recommends that teachers incorporate a variety of appropriately challenging learning experiences to ensure that they match content, process, and product to students' readiness, interests, and talents. In the project, enough book titles are listed to offer students some choice as to which novel to participate in. This choice will foster a sense of ownership with the students in that they have had a say in what they are reading.

Finally, the use of children's literature allows students to explore historical learning from multiple perspectives. For example, while studying the Revolutionary War students can engage in several different book clubs written from the perspectives of children their age that lived through a specific time in American history. There is no textbook or lecture that can compare to that perspective. Kinniburgh and Byrd (2008) found that children's literature provides natural ways to integrate social studies into other content areas. Understanding that integration is to the successful learning or all, the concept of differentiated instruction was examined through the existing literature.

Differentiated Instruction

Although the concept of differentiated instruction did not specifically arise from the participant interviews, it was a reoccurring concept in the existing literature on effective integration. For this reason, I chose to further investigate what current research had to say in regards to differentiating instruction since this may be an essential

component to designing an integrated curriculum that would meet the needs of all students in a classroom.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences enables educators to meet the many different learning styles of the unique individual students who make up their classes. These learning styles can be directly linked to the current instructional focus of differentiated instruction. Gone are the days of one-size fits all education in which if the child acquires the knowledge the teacher has done well and if the child fails then the child must have a learning or behavior problem. The idea of differentiating instruction is targeted at reaching a diverse student population who come to the classroom with a variety of different backgrounds and ability levels (Levine, 2002; Tomlinson, 2003; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). It is a method of looking at instruction from the individual student perspective. Students are prescribed a pace and scope of learning that fits their individual needs. Teachers must understand their individual students, be proficient at the curriculum they teach, and understand the need for flexible teaching to maximize the learning and potential of all students in their class (Gartin, et al., 2002; National Research Council, 1999; Tomlinson, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000; Wolfe, 2001).

Differentiated instruction takes into account four student traits: readiness, interest, learning profile, and affect. Activities and lessons can be differentiated for all four traits or just one trait depending on the lesson. When an assignment is differentiated by readiness, the teacher takes into account student background knowledge and the student's ability in an individual topic or subject. It is important to understand that a student can

have a variety of readiness levels depending on subject area and that readiness levels are not fixed (National Research Council, 1999; Sousa, 2001; Wolfe, 2001). The teacher must therefore provide scaffolding to support students while also providing activities that will challenge all learners to push themselves further in their knowledge. Differentiating by interest allows students to have a voice in expressing what they learn and how they demonstrate their knowledge. It can also help develop new interests for the student. Learning style goes hand in hand with Gardner's multiple intelligences. It focuses on how the student learns the best and how their preferences can influence their learning. Finally, affect is how students feel about themselves, their work, and their classroom as a whole. Teachers must be tuned in to what encourages students and what may discourage or be a barrier to learning. If the teacher is able to connect with a student's emotions, the child is more likely to learn and be successful (Wolfe, 2001). When taking these four traits into account, teachers can maximize the learning for all students.

Historical Artifacts and Primary Sources

During the participant interviews, many of the teachers had expressed the use of primary source documents and artifact usage as the most effective way in which they would like to be able to teach American history. "Various reports on the state of American education have found that our young people suffer from historical amnesia, geographic disorientation, and civic ignorance" (Cotton, 1997, p. 3). If this is the case, then teachers have a challenge ahead of them to find new ways to capture student interest and motivation to increase learning. Teachers will need to engage students in activities

that are meaningful and will excite students to learn about history. The use of historical artifacts and primary sources is one way to meet this challenge.

Historical artifacts and primary sources provide students with the ability to learn about history in a more meaningful way. “Integrating cultural artifacts, such as photographs, films, and music, allows teachers to create new entry points, new ways for students to connect to, and take ownership of, their learning” (Swafford & McNulty, 2010, p. 120). The National Council for the Social Studies (2008) says that the use of artifacts is an effective way for creating and advancing students’ understanding of history. The use of primary source analysis or artifact analysis can show students multiple and at times conflicting viewpoints of history (Albers & Harste, 2007). This allows students to begin to see history as multidimensional and not just a list of facts and events to be memorized (Volger & Virtue, 2007). As students see history unfold from authentic and multiple perspectives, they will become genuinely engaged and motivated to learn (Joseph, 2008; Wiersma, 2008). This intrinsic motivation for learning will mean they are more likely to retain subject matter (Smith, 1998). As students become trained to use primary sources and artifacts, they will become more actively engaged in making their own personal inquiries (Dutt-Doner, Cook-Cottone, & Allen, 2007).

Historical Inquiry and Critical Thinking

Current research recommends that effective history instruction focuses on historical inquiry (Fragnoli, 2005; McCall, 2006; Tanner, 2008; VonHeyking, 2004). In this method of instruction, students actively interact with historical knowledge and begin to construct their own understanding. Students who engage in a variety of activities that

combine historical thinking, historical empathy, and the understanding of historical narrative are more likely to be motivated to learn history in order to have a true understanding instead of just memorizing data to pass a test (Colby, 2008; Mayer, 2006; McCormick, 2008). The brain is not efficient at rote memorizing information. Rather, the brain wants to make connections to prior knowledge and it seeks to make meaning out of the new information or learning (Guccione, 2011; Sousa, 2001; Wolfe, 2001). In 1996, the National Council of History Educators stated that students will not learn history unless it is taught. They recommended that history classes become more lab based, classroom practices should go beyond the textbook to include multiple materials, appropriate artifacts and primary sources should be used to show multiple perspectives, and programs using historical resources should be the result of collaboration (NCHE, 1996).

Implementation

The doctoral project consists of two parts. The first is an integrated curriculum in which reading, language arts and history will be taught together using a hands-on, active learning approach. The project curriculum was built around the topic of revolution and shows classroom teachers ways to teach the theme of conflict and change in the fifth grade classroom. The main focus is on the American Revolution time period, but also shows the classroom teacher how to make connections to other conflicts throughout history. In addition, the lessons could be manipulated to be used across history topics. The second part of the project is a guide for the classroom teacher. This guide has a brief synopsis of the research that supports the need for this project from both the teacher

interviews and published research and explains the advantages to using this curriculum. It explains each component of the student activities and provides resources where teachers can obtain more assistance if needed. Sample descriptions of what the activity may look like in an actual classroom are also provided. Finally, the guide has suggested ways the teacher may use to assess student participation in the activities and provides the teacher with possible methods of assessment.

The first student activity is the introduction of the theme of conflict and change. These activities are aimed at activating student prior knowledge and also creating the buy in factor for students. They need to have a reason to want to learn about this historical theme. These activities center on student discussions. The discussions encourage students to explore what kinds of conflict exist in their lives and how these conflicts are similar to the historical figures they are going to learn about.

The next activity is analysis of primary document related to conflict and change. The included documents all center on the time period of the American Revolution. Students will engage with multiple sources in a variety of formats (engravings, paintings, newspaper clippings, diaries, journals, replica documents, artifacts, ect.) to form an opinion about the time period. The teacher's guide includes an outline of why primary source documents are essential to historical understanding. In addition, the teacher's guide provides many website links in which the classroom teacher can find additional resources to those provided or replacement documents to meet the needs of their classrooms.

While involved with analysis of primary source documents, the students will also participate in leveled historical literature book clubs. These book clubs will be differentiated based on student reading ability and to some degree student choice. The students will participate in independent and guided reading activities based upon the historical novel. This will allow students to acquire additional knowledge of the time period and the emotional side of the conflict as they study the historical characters in their novels.

The final activity is the culminating assessment piece where students will create a history scrapbook page. Students will be taught how to integrate their historical knowledge and their writing ability to create a scrapbook page of their knowledge. The teacher's guide will provide the classroom teacher with steps for setting up scrapbooking in the classroom, samples of student created sample pages, and a rubric for assessing the project. This is an important part of the learning because it provides students with a creative outlet in which they show what they found important from the unit of study. The teacher's guide will also include websites if the teacher does wish to use the scrapbooking concept in other areas of study.

Necessary Resources and Existing Supports

The resources necessary to implement this project first consisted of teacher participants willing to be interviewed about how they teach American history. Based upon the concerns that emerged from the participants, I turned to existing literature on the most effective way to teach history. The concepts of integration repeatedly occurred in both the interviews and the literature. Due to the prevalence of this topic in both the

interviews and the existing literature, integration was the focused concept for developing the project.

The only resources that will not be provided in the developed curriculum are the historical novels necessary to conduct the historical literature clubs. This is a resource that the teacher's guide will discuss affordable ways to obtain (grants, half-price book stores, PTA funds). The teacher's guide will also talk about ways to use the books currently available to the classroom teacher through the existing district curriculum and the school libraries as an alternative to the novels.

Primary sources documents will be provided in the curriculum and the teacher will just need the resource of a copy machine to reproduce the images. The teacher's guide will also provide internet links to all images so the classroom teacher can project the images, create a slideshow, or print color images if they chose.

Potential Barriers

A potential barrier for implementing this project will be the challenge of persuading the elementary school to purchase the necessary historical novels for the book club activities. The cost of these materials and the time necessary to obtain them may delay some teachers from being able to fully implement the research project curriculum. A second potential barrier is the willingness of the classroom teachers to shift the way they are currently teaching and attempt the integrated curriculum. Both of these barriers could influence the effectiveness of the project curriculum.

Additionally, the barriers that the participants shared during the interview process could also still impede the success of this project. Administrators may still be reluctant to

allow teachers to teach history even through this integrated approach. The district required timelines will still be required in all subjects. While this project is designed to overcome the time barrier, it is possible that some teacher participants will still not be able to effectively implement the project with the other curriculum demands they face. Finally, high stakes standardized assessments and district created curriculum benchmarks will continue to be required. Teachers will be faced with the task of preparing the fifth grade students for state assessments in reading, math, and science. This could be especially challenging during the upcoming school year because the state of Texas is in the process of changing the standardized assessments to be more rigorous and test students' college readiness as young as third grade. Teacher participants have reported great apprehension about the changes that will be occurring to the standards, curriculum, and testing over the next year.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The curriculum and teacher's guide will be provided to each of the ten interview participants. The participants will be asked to review both items and provide feedback as to whether or not it is user friendly. If corrections or adjustments are necessary they will be made. The participants will then be asked to use the curriculum with their students in the upcoming 2011 school year. Upon completion of the unit, I will meet with all participants to discuss how the unit went and whether any adjustments or changes need to be made. Once revisions have been made, the curriculum will be shared with the district fifth grade teachers on a wider scale through social studies facilitator meetings that are held monthly in the district.

The curriculum and guide will also be shared with the district social studies department head. If she feels the curriculum could be beneficial to teachers throughout the district, the materials could be placed on the district social studies website. District staff development could also be provide in the summer during the elementary institute offered by the district, after school, or on weekends during the district offered Super Saturday training events. This would allow for widespread use of the project throughout the district.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

The curriculum designed for this project was intended to address the needs of teachers in fifth grade to maximize their instructional time while still addressing the needs of teaching American history. The need for the project was substantiated through both the participant interviews and the existing research. Each teacher expressed a desire to teach history more effectively and cited time constraints and high stakes testing as two of the greatest barriers. The participants are crucial in determining the effectiveness of the project study. Each teacher will need to be willing to try implementing the new curriculum for the allotted time to the unit of study. Their attitudes toward the new activities will play an important role in guiding the attitudes of other teachers in the district. If the curriculum is not positively received then it will be difficult to generate interest from other teachers within the district. However, if the curriculum is well received it may generate interest from others within the district. It will be essential for the ten original participants to generate interest in the new curriculum.

Project Evaluation

In order to establish the effectiveness of this project study, evaluation after the lessons have been attempted in the classroom is essential. Knowing that time is a barrier for all educators, it is important that the evaluation is simple and easy for the participants to complete, yet at the same time provides valuable feedback about the project. To accomplish this, I chose to take a formative approach to evaluation. Formative evaluation includes “all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (Black & William, 1998, p. 10). The use of formative evaluation will allow the project to be critiqued from several different aspects.

Both the project curriculum and teacher’s guide will be evaluated through different types of formative evaluations that the ten participating teachers will be asked to complete as they are implementing the project with their students during the 2011 school year. The participants will be asked to complete all evaluation forms as they are conducting the various activities with their students.

First, the participants will be asked to identify any areas of the project curriculum or the teacher’s guide that they had difficulty following or that was not easy to understand. The participants were provided the draft of the project to provide feedback on and reported that there were no necessary changes. However, often as things are implemented in an actual classroom with students, questions or changes may be necessary in the wording of the two components. This feedback can be either verbally communicated by the participants to me or in written form such as an email. This form of

feedback could be provided either after the participants prepare for the lesson or after they teach the lesson. This should minimize the amount of time that this first evaluation requires of the participants. As the participants provide feedback, adjustments, corrections or revisions will be made based upon the suggestions received.

The second form of evaluation will occur as the participants teach the lessons in their classrooms. As the participants attempt the activities, they will be asked to collect student work samples or digitally record the lessons as they occur. The activities are designed to provide teachers with a way to formatively assess the students as they work through the lessons. Formative assessments are planned processes in which the teacher uses activities designed to monitor student progress to adjust ongoing learning and instruction (Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002; Popham, 2008). Based on student performance on the activities, teacher's can adjust the pacing and depth of the lessons to fit their specific students. By providing work samples or recordings of the lessons, the participants will allow me the chance to see how the students are actually engaging with the integrated curriculum.

Finally, the participants will be asked to either provide a written formative evaluation of the curriculum and the teacher's guide or agree to be interviewed to assess the effectiveness of the overall project. First, the participants will also be asked to provide their opinions and beliefs on the effectiveness of the lessons. They will be asked to address what worked well for their class and what needs to be refined. Then, the participants will be asked to compare their previous year's teaching experience with the subject of American history and the current year after using the project curriculum. They

will be asked to examine whether the integration provided them more time to meet all academic needs in their classroom. They will be asked to take a critical look at what worked well and what could be improved upon. This information will be used to make any necessary revisions of the curriculum.

In addition to the feedback from the participants, the scores for the targeted campus will also be examined from the first Curriculum Developed Benchmark exam (CDB) for the 2011-2012 school year. This data led to the initial development of the research question and started the formation of the research that resulted in the developed project. While it will be important to keep in mind that the students in the current year are different from the ones that took the test to initiate the research question it will be a positive sign if the targeted school's scores show an increase after the project has been implemented.

After all of the participant feedback has been gathered and the current CDB results examined, final revisions to the curriculum and teacher's guide will be made. The revised copies will then be redistributed to the participants. The revised copy will also be provided to the district social studies department head. If she approves the curriculum, then arrangements for providing district staff development can be made to further promote the use of the integrated curriculum within the district.

All of the information gathered will be used to determine if they project study met the goals it was developed for. The project was written to provide teachers with an integrated approach to teaching history with other curriculums in order to effectively teach history will still meeting the demands of high stakes testing subjects. The goals of

the project include providing teachers with more time to teach and a more effective way to engage their students with history curriculum. If the project meets its goal, then the teachers should report a belief that compared to the previous year they had more time to teach, they covered the history curriculum in an effective way, and their students were actively engaged in the learning of history. At the targeted elementary, if the goals of the project were met then there should also be an overall increase in the student level of performance on the first curriculum developed benchmark in history. This test is not administered until December of each school year, so it will be the last piece of the evaluation data to be gathered. A successful project that meets the goals it was designed for will make a difference for all of the essential stakeholders: the participating teachers, the students in those classrooms, and the administrators on the campuses.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

The purpose of this project was to provide fifth grade classroom teachers with a curriculum that would allow them to maximize student learning in high stakes testing curriculum while still teaching American history. The data collected from teacher interviews were used to create an integrated approach to combine reading, language arts, and history instructional to increase student learning. The methods used in the curriculum reflect the most current research on effective learning in social studies. The current research on effective history instruction was integrated with research on reading and subject integration to prepare a curriculum and teacher's guide that would not only allow

for the teacher to integrate subjects but to differentiate for the ability differences that exist within their classrooms.

The activities in the designed project are explained in-depth and are supported with material that will allow for easy implementation in the fifth grade classroom. This helps meet the teachers' needs as expressed within the interviews that there is enough to do in too little time to accomplish everything. The activities are then further supported with Internet resources and novel lists for teachers who want to extend beyond the materials in the provided curriculum.

In addition to the curriculum, a teacher's guide was also developed and included as part of the project. This guide provides teachers with a brief summary of the research that supports this project and the advantages to using the developed curriculum. It describes each activity in depth and provides examples of what the student generated work may look like. Finally, the guide provides the teacher with possible ways of assessing student performance on the activities. The use of this research-based project curriculum and guide has the potential to change the way history is taught within the targeted school and district. The integrated approach increases the time that teachers are able to spend in high stakes testing subjects while still preserving the teaching of history. Research shows that nation-wide there is a need for a more effective approach to teaching history since it is often skipped to allot more time to other subjects.

The curriculum was designed as a direct result of the ten participant interviews and the four prevailing themes that emerged as the data was analyzed. Existing literature was then reviewed to lend credibility to the emerging themes. When designing the

curriculum, I took into account the barriers that teachers reported to teaching American history the way they would if there were no time or materials constraints. The stakeholders are the participants who helped design the curriculum through their interviews and the district social studies department head. They will all receive both the curriculum and the teacher's guide to use in their classrooms during the 2011 school year. There could be more stakeholders if the district social studies department head decides to offer training in the curriculum district wide.

This project has the potential to reach beyond the targeted elementary school. The curriculum could be used by any fifth grade teacher within the district. All students could benefit from this integrated approach to learning. Current research calls for a change in the way social studies is taught at the elementary level (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Colby, 2008; Duplass, 2007; Passe, 2006; Von Heyking, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). If the project is presented at the district elementary summer institute for teachers, many more fifth grade teachers could receive the integrated curriculum. This project study maximizes classroom education through integration and differentiation while allowing students to engage in active, hands-on activities that promote higher level thinking. Based upon existing research, this type of curriculum can lead to greater student achievement and academic success (Frye, 2009; Hinde, 2009; McCall, 2006; McCormick, 2008; Moss, 2005; Olness, 2007; Swafford & McNulty, 2010). If allowed to present at the district level, I could reach many more classrooms teachers thereby effecting many more district students.

Conclusion

This project was intended to promote social change by assisting teachers in integrating reading, language arts, and history curriculums to maximize student learning in the face of high stakes standardized testing demands. Data were gathered through 10 teacher interviews. The four most prevalent themes that emerged during the data analysis of the coded interview data were: flexibility of teaching, barriers to teaching, supports to teaching, and ideal approaches to teaching history. In the theme of flexibility, teachers expressed that they had limited flexibility in teaching, and instruction was often driven by district mandated timelines and campus monitoring of where teachers were on the timeline for each subject. The barriers to teaching according to the participants were no time to explore content in depth, lack of funding for materials, the timelines, and the focus of preparing students for the state standardized assessments. Teaching supports were the most limited theme. Participants did credit the Teaching American History Collaborative, discussions with colleagues, and the availability of grant funding as possible supports. The most discussed theme was ideal approaches to teaching history. The participants shared a wealth of ideas and most shared that they would like to see more integration of content areas, greater use of primary documents and historical artifacts, and teaching students to think critically and take an active role in their own learning. These themes were then examined in the existing research to see what was or was not supported by current literature.

Using the participant themes and the existing research, a project was developed to assist classroom teachers in altering the way they teach American history to maximize

student learning in all content areas. The emerging product was an integrated curriculum that allows for differentiation of reading ability and student interest. This curriculum can be used by the fifth grade teachers at the targeted elementary school as well as other fifth grade teachers throughout the district. The goal of the curriculum at the targeted school is to increase student performance on the district CDBs in history while still meeting the administration's requirements that most of the academic day be focused on reading, math, and science because these are the subjects tested by high stakes state standardized assessments.

The first three sections of this project study described the problem at the local setting, examined the existing research and the participant data that led to the creation of the curriculum and teacher's guide, and explained the final product that emerged from the research. The final section is a reflection on the project, its strengths and limitations, and what the research learned as a result of this project.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In elementary school, history instruction is often neglected or overlooked completely due to subjects that are measured by high stakes standardized assessments (Passe, 2006b; Ravitch, 2003; Rentner, 2006; Zastrow & Jan, 2004). There are many factors that contribute to history's low place in the educational curriculum, including the need for more instructional time in other subjects, a lack of authentic materials, teacher knowledge and training on more effective instructional methods, and the lack of an approach that integrates reading and math with history (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; McCall, Janssen, & Riederer, 2008).

This doctoral journey began with a simple question: Why did my students have no historical understanding and view history as the most boring subject in school? I love history, and I could not understand why my students had no interest in learning about the past. No matter what I would try or the simulations we would conduct, my students had no interest in history. There were usually collective groans when it was time for social studies, and students often asked me why they had to learn "boring old history." The fifth grade scores on most tests were the highest on our campus and above or equal to the district. However, this was not the case with history. In history, the student test grades were the lowest I had ever seen, and often were not even at the district average on curriculum developed benchmark exams. Not only did my students dislike history, most of the teachers at my school expressed a similar dislike. I could not understand why so many of my colleagues said they tried not to teach social studies any more than they had

to. This section reflects the insights gained during the journey that came from my search to answer this simple question.

Project Strengths

This doctoral project addressed the need of providing an integrated approach that would enable teachers to integrate reading, language arts, and history instruction. A strength of the project is that it was created based on a need from a local problem. After the need was established, interviews were conducted with teacher participants at the targeted school and within the district. These participants became stakeholders in the project. They were given the opportunity to voice their concerns and to discuss how they would like to ideally teach American history. Their ideas were then reviewed in the existing literature. The proposed solution was a combination of the participant suggestions and the current literature on curriculum integration and effective methods to teaching history. By grounding the project in literature and incorporating the suggestions of the participants, there is a stronger sense of ownership for the teacher participants. This sense of ownership could encourage the participants to try the curriculum in their classroom.

The strength of the project lies in the curriculum developed. This curriculum provides classroom teachers with a hands-on, integrated, differentiated approach to teaching. Through the authentic integration of curriculum, teachers can meet the time demands of high-stakes testing subjects while still effectively teaching non-tested content such as history (Hinde, 2009; Thomas & Jones, 2006). All four lessons designed provide instruction in history, reading, and language arts curriculums. The lessons are designed

around the topic of the revolution and demonstrate an effective way to teach the theme of conflict and change to fifth grade themes. While the focus of the project is the American Revolution, it would be possible for the classroom teacher to alter the assignments and use the same design to teach any topic or theme in history. Teachers are provided with ideas in the teacher's guide as to how they could assess all four lessons and, if necessary, take grades for all three subjects.

Another strength of this project is its ease of implementation for the classroom teacher. The project includes four lessons addressing ways to teach the theme of conflict and change through the study of the American Revolution. However, the resources and materials provided will be able to serve as a template for teachers to use with all history themes. With the exception of the novels for the third activity, teachers are provided with all of the materials they need to implement the project. In regards to the third lesson, the teachers are provided with an extensive literature list that meets the needs of all readers in their classroom from a second grade to an eighth grade reading level. In addition, the teacher's guide provides teachers with ideas on how to obtain funding or obtain novels from library systems.

A third strength of the project is that the lessons provided address the need for students to actively engage with history and historical inquiry to meet the need for greater historical understanding (Colby, 2008; Fragoli, 2005; Tanner, 2008; Von Heyking, 2004). The first lesson asks students to participate in student led discussions to make connections to their own personal lives. The concept of conflict and the changes can easily lead to this personal connection because all students have experienced some degree

of conflict either with a friend, sibling, or parent. This activity serves two purposes: First it creates a “buy-in” factor for why students should care about learning the upcoming history lesson, and second, it activates their prior knowledge and encourages them to start making connections between their lives and historical knowledge. The second activity engages students with primary sources and historical artifacts. The use of this activity allows the students to view history from multiple perspectives. The artifacts make history come alive for students, and they can begin to see it as more than just names and dates to be memorized (Joseph, 2008; Volger & Virtue, 2007; Wiersma, 2008). The literature activity continues the study of history from multiple perspectives and helps students, no matter their reading ability, to become active participants in the study of historical characters (Allington, 2007; Crawford & Zygoris-Coe, 2008; Frye, 2009).

This project is intended to help teachers more effectively teach history while maintaining the time needed to teach high stakes testing subjects, especially reading. Teachers will be able to engage their students in differentiated activities that facilitate active learning and higher order thinking. The integrated reading activities and historical literature book clubs will require students to read, reflect, and respond to what they have read. This approach could lead to the development of critical literacy (Chafel et al., 2007; Sperry, 2007). The final activity serves as a formative assessment for the knowledge that students have gained throughout the study. The use of formative assessment could allow teachers to adjust ongoing learning and instruction based on student performance (Popham, 2008).

Project Limitations

One limitation of this study is that it was based on a localized problem. More specifically, it was based on a need of one elementary school in a large south Texas school district. The participants were five fifth grade teachers from the targeted elementary school and five additional fifth grade teachers within the same school district. These participants recommended how they would ideally teach American history. Existing research supported the concerns, barriers, and methods that the participants reported. However, this grounding in scholarship does not mean that all fifth grade teachers in the district, state, or nation have the same concerns or willingness to try an alternate method of teaching history. Therefore, the curriculum that was created as a solution to the localized problem may not be applicable to other schools or districts.

The next limitation is the time barrier. Researchers have shown that time is one of the greatest barriers to teachers teaching history in the way that research recommends (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Burstein, Hutton & Curtis; McGuire, 2007; Passe, 2006b; Zastrow & Janc, 2004). The implementation of this project will require the teacher participants to spend time to read the guide and understand that various activities that are being taught before trying them with their students. The teacher's guide provides the classroom teacher with samples of what the activities may look like in the classroom, but the teacher will still need to have time to read and familiarize themselves with the activities. The lessons are not scripted, and the teacher will have to be willing to take a risk and try a new approach within their classroom. For some teachers, this change will

require them to have a willingness to try a new approach to teaching for this project to be successful in their individual classrooms.

Another limitation is the limited scope of the curriculum portion of the project. The activities can be used in all themes that are taught in history; however, the guide is focused on the theme of conflict and change through the topic of the American Revolution. The student activities are explained thoroughly and the teacher's guide provides descriptions of what the activities may look like in a classroom. However, some teachers may require more information than what is in the manual. This situation could especially be the case if the teacher has limited background knowledge in history.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

While the doctoral project has several limitations that may affect its usefulness, I have recommendations to overcome the possible limitations. In order for the findings to be generalized, additional research across the district could be completed. This research could use a larger population of fifth grade teachers from the district or the state. The use of a larger population would allow for a random sampling of fifth grade teachers to be used instead of the convenience sample used in this project. This larger sample would still be asked the same interview questions to see if there is a relationship to the findings in this study compared to teachers throughout the state. Another possible direction for future research would be to use a population of teachers from different grade levels. This would allow for data to be collected to see if similar barriers and ideal approaches exist across grade levels. By collecting data from these larger population samples the data collected could be generalized to larger populations.

The limitation of time can be addressed in two ways. First, I will be available by phone or email for the teachers if they have any questions or concerns. I will make sure to answer as many questions as I can when I meet with the teachers before the school year starts. All teachers will be provided with my contact information for both home and work so that if any problems arise I can attempt to help them solve them. The second will be making sure that the teachers realize what they and their students could gain through the use of this curriculum. Teachers will be provided with a copy of the literature review that shows the need for this type of instruction to occur in the classroom. They will also be shown how they had an active role in the development of the project. Since the participants had an active role in the creation of the curriculum they should have a sense of ownership of the project that was ultimately developed. This sense of ownership should equate to the teachers being more likely to incorporate the strategies despite the time commitment. To help teachers who need more information on a topic or activity, the teacher's guide has a list of resources and web sites where the teacher can go if they need additional assistance, especially if their background knowledge in history is limited. This provision will eliminate teachers from having to track down the additional resources on their own time.

Finally, to address the limitation of the scope of the curriculum project, concepts from all areas of social studies could be considered. Rather than focusing on the American Revolution, the teacher could just get comfortable with the four activities in the guide. The teacher could then start out by focusing on the larger concept lens of conflict and change instead of the theme of the American Revolution. Using this larger concept

lens would leave teachers more freedom with the activities. For example, the concept conflict and change could be used to study a variety of themes such as: the American Revolution, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, etc. Once teachers are comfortable with the four primary lessons, the potential for their use could be endless.

Authentic integration of subjects and time management of the instructional day are barriers to the teachers at the targeted school as well as the larger educational arena. The purpose of this qualitative project study was to allow classroom teachers to share their experiences and frustrations with teaching American history at the elementary level. From the shared experiences and beliefs of ten fifth grade classroom teachers at the local school, this project study was created.

The teachers shared that they would like to spend more time teaching primary sources and using historical artifacts, but that they were often impeded by not enough time in the educational day or a lack of knowledge and resources. The teachers cited that they did not have an effective way to cover all the material they were responsible for. This curriculum overcomes this barrier for teachers by providing them the tools and resources to provide documents and artifacts for their students to actively engage with and learn from. The second lesson in this curriculum allows the most novice teacher to use primary sources with their students. The additional resources in the teacher's guide allow the more experienced teacher to have a wealth of documents at their fingertips.

The major goal for this project study was to create a curriculum that would allow teachers to integrate reading language arts, and history curriculums while allowing students to participate in authentic, hands-on activities that facilitate active learning. A

possible alternative to the project designed would be to create an electronic version of the project study. This would cut down on the cost of producing the activity guide and teacher's manual for classroom teachers. It would also enable the project to be placed onto the district website if approved by the head of the district's social studies department. Another alternative would be to present the project as a teacher in-service sponsored through the district. This would help with the time barrier limitation because teachers would not be left to learn the manual on their own. This alternative would also require the approval of the head of the district's social studies department.

Scholarship

When developing this project, I learned the importance of scholarly writing at all levels. Prior to embarking on this experience, I had very limited research experience and it had been eleven years since I had completed my master's degree. One of my greatest fears before embarking on this journey was my ability to scholarly write. I had been told by past professors that I had a good style to my writing. However, a fifteen to twenty page paper was the largest I had ever written and it only included twenty to thirty resources. Once I overcame my fear and began the coursework some of this concern disappeared. The course work required before beginning the doctoral project was helpful, and it did prepare me for the research to come. However, even it did not fully prepare me for the challenges to come.

When this journey began, I was focused in a very different direction. After the first year of course work, I made the change from a special education classroom to a fifth grade general education classroom. I observed the lack of involvement at my school by

parents and families and that was my initial dissertation topic. As I conducted the beginning stages of research and wrote the initial two chapters, I found that the phenomenon I thought I was going to address did not exist in the way I initially thought from my experiences. I was unable to find the existing research to support the need for my initial topic. This resulted in a total change of dissertation topic three and a half years into the program. The journey progressed from initial course work that was challenging but rewarding to at times total frustration with the dissertation process.

During this journey, I learned the importance of the research topic being something that was not only necessary based on existing research, but also of importance to the researcher. If your heart and soul is not in the topic it becomes a more tedious journey. Once that topic was determined to exist both at my school and in the existing research, the research aspect became easier. However, the frustration now became the lack of current research available on the selected topic. Over the two years of writing the current project study I was amazed to see the growth in the published research increasing. This often provided me with a validation of the need for the project study to be complete and a sense that I was headed in the right direction with my work.

When looking back and reflecting on this journey, I am thrilled with the final project of scholarly work that has developed over the time spent at Walden University. The project will continue to be enhanced as the body of existing research grows and as classroom teachers have an opportunity to try the lessons with their fifth grade classes. This project truly shows the extent of my ability to produce scholarly work.

Project Development and Evaluation

This project study evolved from a need that I saw at my own school. I knew that performance in social studies was not where I thought it should be. I love history, but no matter what I did my students only saw history as boring and a set of non-important facts they were forced to memorize. On classroom inventories, social studies was always voted as the students' least favorite subject. Through a review of literature, it was obvious that best practices in history education were not a part of our current curriculum. Teachers on my campus and in the Teaching American History Collaborative reported informally a feeling of frustration at history instruction being placed as the least important subject to be taught. They said at times they were even being told not to teach it by campus administrators. High stakes assessments were driving instructional practices and student needs were not being met or even considered.

Data collected from ten fifth grade teacher interviews was used to compile data on how history was or was not being taught and how teachers thought it should be taught. The majority of the interviewed teachers reported that there was a need for instructional time to be maximized. They cited that little training in history was received before becoming elementary teachers. They also cited the demands of high stakes assessments as a barrier to being able to teach history how they believed would be best. From the four prevalent themes that emerged from the interviews, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to explore best instructional practices in history instruction and essential concepts that emerged from the interviews such as integration and using primary sources and historical artifacts. This literature review provided the necessary background to

design a project study curriculum that would maximize history instruction in the elementary classroom.

The final project was an integration of reading, language arts, and history practices that could be authentically integrated into a comprehensive curriculum. During the time I spent working on this project, I have also spent three years as part of a federally funded Teaching American History grant collaborative to further my own knowledge of history and to gather research based best practices. This experience, along with information gathered from an extensive review of existing literature and research, and the feedback of the interview participants led to the creation of the final project study.

To measure the project's effectiveness, I needed to develop a plan to have participants evaluate the activities after implementation. The project has not been implemented in classrooms at this time, so the evaluation will occur after the project study is finished. Therefore, it was essential for there to be a plan for feedback to occur months after completion of the study. After completion of the project study, the participants were asked to review both the curriculum and the teacher's guide and provide feedback either written or through personal interviews. I did not receive any initial feedback requiring corrections or adjustments to the curriculum or the guide. The participants were then asked to commit to teaching the curriculum in the upcoming 2011 school year. All ten participants agreed. Once the teachers have completed the teaching of the curriculum in October 2011, I will meet with them again. This meeting will include a discussion on what worked well and what needs improvement in either the project or

the teacher's guide. If any changes or revisions are necessary, they will be made after the October meeting.

This evaluation of the curriculum and teacher's guide is crucial in determining the impact the project has on maximizing student instruction. The most valuable feedback I can receive is the feedback from the classroom teachers after they have used the project.

Leadership and Change

Throughout this doctoral process, I realized the importance of working as a teacher leader within the school. By being a classroom teacher as well as a researcher, I have a true understanding of the hardships and barriers faced daily by classroom teachers. When teachers talk of obstacles I understand what they are going through on a personal basis. By living in both worlds, I do not have the perfect world bubble surrounding me as I conduct research. At the same time, I am also more open to trying to apply some of the research that I read to my actual classroom environment. This has led to a greater ability in my roles as both a classroom teacher and a researcher. The need to be a teacher leader on my own campus comes with its own set of challenges as well.

First, a teacher has no authority to ask teachers to make a change. Using the role of a researcher, I can show fellow teachers different ways to work with students, but ultimately I have no say in whether teachers change their instructional approaches. This has shown me the great need for patience. Often I heard colleagues say, "that won't work in my classroom" or "I don't have time to do things differently". I am amazed at the wealth of excuses that my colleagues try to use to justify as to why they cannot change their way of teaching. To be a teacher and a researcher on my campus, I will have to

work hard to maintain a positive attitude even when faced with the greatest “nay sayers”. I will also need to continue to provide an example and be available when teachers ask for assistance. To further my leadership role, I continue to serve on the school advisory team, as a grade level team leader, and as the campus social studies facilitator. I also continue to offer my experiences in Super Saturday district in-services as requested by the social studies department and summer trainings. I also continue to be available for my fellow teacher that asks to meet to discuss curriculum or possible lesson plans. I hope that this will lead to an increased awareness in how teachers can effectively change their approaches.

As developer of the project, I am hoping to be able to present the curriculum in an elementary summer training session in August 2011, to reach more teachers for the upcoming school year. This would allow me to personally train teachers in the designed curriculum and answer any questions before teachers try the activities with students.

As a result of the doctoral process, I have realized the importance of maintaining a leadership role not only in the target school but within the district. I plan to continue these leadership roles as well as be available to facilitate the revising of the new curriculum as feedback becomes available. This will not only allow me to continuously improve the project but will also demonstrate a commitment to my fellow teachers to continue to serve as a leader. Throughout this journey, self reflection has been a valuable tool for reflect on my growth and improvement as a researcher. I have come to learner an amazing amount about myself as a learner and a leader. I have grown not only as a scholar, but also as a classroom practitioner and a project development.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I have always considered myself to be a life-long learner. As a classroom teacher for 13 years, I have always looked for ways to not only improve my knowledge and understanding but also for ways to reach all of my students, no matter how diverse their backgrounds. I have had 8 years experience working with special education students in Grades Kindergarten through 5 and I have spent the last 5 years as a selfcontained fifth grade teacher. Prior to embarking on the doctoral journey with Walden University, I did not pay much attention to research. I would skim research articles but would not critique what I had read.

Since beginning my doctoral journey, I have begun to question everything that I read. I am a harsh critic of published articles and am constantly examining them for potential bias. I now question new buzz words and topics in education instead of trying them right away as I used to. I look for research based methods when trying to solve a problem or issue within my classroom. I am widely read in all subjects that I teach now instead of keeping my focus on reading and math as I used to.

My scholarly writing ability has increased since embarking on my journey. I have not only seen an improvement in my own writing ability but also in my ability to give and receive constructive criticism. I used to become frustrated when multiple rewrites and revisions were necessary, and I am now aware that this is all part of the scholarly process. I have found the ability to expand my writing and provide detailed explanations. Before this journey, I would write at a very simplistic level, and details were often lacking.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

My experience as an education practitioner for 13 years provided valuable insight and complemented my efforts throughout this project. I have always sought ways to improve on what I am doing in my classroom, and my journey with Walden University has allowed me to further that desire. I have joined many professional organizations, and I am now constantly seeking out peer reviewed, research based methodologies to improve my teaching instead of whatever was new at the teacher supply store in town. I question much of what I read, and I am no longer comfortable with reading one or two articles and deciding to try some new practice. I now turn to the research databases and search for as much information as I can find on a topic before trying something new in my classroom. This approach has caused my teaching to become more effective.

After I was able to settle on a topic that had a strong personal connection for my school and me, I was able to see a connection between my research and what I was trying to accomplish as a classroom educator. This connection allowed me to see the importance of my study and made the research more worthwhile because I had a vested interest. My goal is for my role as a research practitioner to not end with this doctoral project. I already envision continuing to revise and improve on the current study. Research in history education is slowly increasing, and I will continue to keep up to date with all new studies related to this field. Additionally, throughout this journey, other topics have arisen that I hope to investigate when my time is not all focused on this one study.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

The experience of preparing this curriculum and project study has been one of the most rewarding for me. I have enjoyed every step of the journey, from the initial research to conducting the interviews. These interviews and knowledge from the current research led to the development of a project that I am very proud of. I believe it will meet the needs of many of my colleagues and in doing so will provide a better education for many students.

I am eager for the time when I will be able to share the final approved product with the participants. Already, I have received positive feedback from the participants, many of whom say they are excited to teach this unit in the fall. I hope that after the initial implementation of the project I will receive feedback that will make it even stronger and that it will be distributed on a greater scale. This curriculum and teacher's guide could greatly impact the way in which history is taught at my school and within my district.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

This project was intended to promote social change by assisting teachers in integrating reading, language arts, and history curriculums to maximize student learning in the face of high stakes standardized testing demands. The use of this research-based project curriculum and guide has the potential to change the way history is taught within the targeted school and district. The integrated approach increases the time that teachers are able to spend in high stakes testing subjects while still preserving the teaching of history. Research has shown that nation-wide there is a need for a more effective

approach to teaching history because it is often skipped to allot more time to other subjects.

The curriculum was designed as a direct result of the participant interviews. I took into account the barriers that teachers reported to teaching American history the way they would if there were no time or materials constraints. The stakeholders are the participants who helped design the curriculum through their interviews and the district social studies department head. They will all receive both the curriculum and the teacher's guide to try with their classrooms in the 2011 school year. There could be further stakeholders if the district social studies department head decides to offer training in the curriculum district wide.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project study only addresses the need for maximizing instructional time and integrating reading, language arts, and history curriculums for fifth grade teachers and students. The curriculum and teacher's guide is only written for the theme of conflict and change as studied under the topic of the American Revolution. After the feedback is received from the initial implementation phase, I plan to extend lessons and rewrite them for all of the themes studied in fifth grade American history.

One area of concern that arose from the participant interviews that was not addressed in this project is the lack of teacher preparation at the university level to prepare future teachers for teaching history. Many teachers do not have the background necessary to teach history, and so they rely on the textbook as their primary source of information. I would like to meet with individuals at the university level to see about

altering the way elementary teachers are prepared to teach history. Already changes are being made at the local universities, and students are required to take a methods course on teaching social studies. I have had four undergraduate students from the program spend time in my classroom over the past 2 years. The professors at the university have been very open when we have had informal discussions and have expressed in interest in seeing my finished doctoral product.

In addition, I would like to work with the head of the district elementary social studies department to plan ways to help current teachers. The district needs to have ways to provide more background knowledge to teachers already in the classroom who do not feel like they have enough background knowledge to adequately teach history without simply relying on the state textbook. In order to teach any subject effectively, the teacher must have a solid understanding of the knowledge they are trying to teach. I have heard too many teachers report that they are not comfortable teaching history because they themselves do not really know history.

Conclusion

This doctoral project was written to address the local problem of providing elementary educators with a way to effectively teach American history in a high stakes testing environment in which history is often neglected or ignored altogether. The project began with data being collected from ten teacher participants through individual interviews. The data showed that time barriers, lack of authentic materials, and limited knowledge contributed to not teaching history the way they desired. The district provided some opportunities to expand teacher knowledge but campus administrators did not often

encourage history instruction due to the demands of standardized assignment in all other subjects. I developed this doctoral project to provide teachers with an easy to implement, ready-made curriculum that integrates reading, language arts, and history instruction in order to maximize the instructional day and provide students with engaging hands-on activities.

While writing this doctoral project, I gained insight into myself as a scholar, a practitioner, and project developer. I found a new comfort level with finding, critiquing, and using existing professional research. This has led to new practices to be implemented in my own classroom. Through self reflection I have been able to examine my own growth throughout this doctoral process.

The final product has the possibility of creating social change in the local school and school district and could be extended to larger populations of teachers. A true integration of subjects through an effective curriculum could change the day for many educators and allow students to participate in active learning experiences that will increase their ability to think critically. As the project is implemented with students in the fall of 2011, I will continue to gather data and feedback on the usefulness and effectiveness of the activities. Once feedback is received and revisions are made, the findings will be shared with the district elementary social studies department. If used this curriculum could reach all fifth grade teachers in the district and be modified for other grade levels. The potential for change could be far reaching. The underlying focus throughout this project has been how we improve student learning in the classroom. It is my desire and goal that this curriculum provides teachers with an easy to use way to

change their teaching to provide students with the kinds of activities and learning experiences that could change their educational experiences and impact their futures.

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Appendix A: The Project

The Doctoral Project

As with all amazing journeys in life, this one began with what was believed to be a simple question? Why history? As a life-long learner and educator, history was a passion for me. I loved to visit historical places, read historical documents and literacy, and immerse myself in how our country had become the great nation that we are. I would bring back artifacts and pictures to my classroom to share with my students and would be greeted with the same “so what” smile by their twenty-six eager faces. I would tell stories and anecdotes and they would politely try to stay awake. I would provide them with hands on experiences and simulations and they would ask how long we had to do history for the day. My students had no idea why history impacted their lives and they were all too eager to skip it for the day when curriculum needs were greater somewhere else. In attempt to believe this was a youth struggle I turned to peers that were and were not history buffs.

Those of us that loved history had a similar sense of lacking from the history instruction we were trying to teach. We would get glimmers of interest occasionally, but no real captivated students. Teachers who did not share the history passion had very similar views to the students. They would talk about history being boring, there being no time to teach it, there were no interesting textbooks to use, and the list went on. When looking at past teacher education programs, our exposure to history is limited to the basic classes that were required for all majors, that centered on historical data from a textbook but with no emphasis on how to teach history in the classroom. Our district offers many

in-service opportunities for educators but they seldom relate to history education and those that do are often the least attended courses. For whatever reason, history had taken a back seat in education and was in danger of disappearing altogether. I set out on this doctoral journey to find out what was going on with history education and was there anything I could do as a teacher leader to help my students, my colleagues, and my district fill a critical need.

I began with a look at history research in the nation as a whole and then examined current history research at the local level. This next section is an overview of those findings.

Evidence of the Problem

As early as the nineteenth century, educators and researchers have called for a change in history education in the United States (Bolinger & Warren, 2007). These recommended practices called for more student interaction with history, authentic primary source analysis, and experiences that will allow children to connect with history. However, despite these recommendations history education remains stagnant.

In 1917, Bell and McCollum, tested over 600 high school students in Texas on what was considered basic historical facts. Their research showed that most students failed the exam. In 1986, The first U.S. History National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Exam was given to students in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. These results were as dismal as those from 1917. Students were unable to recall basic facts or demonstrate higher order thinking skills at a proficient level. The government and researchers expressed concern over these ratings, yet no reforms were passed. In 2001,

the NAEP exam revealed that fewer than 20 percent of all tested students scored at or above the proficient level (Lapp, Grigg, Tay-Lim, 2002). This time the government responded.

Following the 2001 NAEP results, that showed how weak American students were in U.S. history and the lack of emphasis being placed on history studies even at the university level, the House and Senate adopted a concurrent resolution. “\$50,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of Education to award grants to develop, implement, and strengthen programs to teach American History (not social studies) as a separate subject within the school curricula” (P.L. 106-554). This decisive action led the Department of Education to create the Teaching American History (TAH) Program to improve teacher content knowledge and instructional strategies for U.S. history.

This program allows school districts to apply for three year long grants of up to one million dollars, that will partner them with higher learning institutes (universities, museums, or libraries) to create programs that will positively effect the teaching of American history. Typically teachers are either recommended by an administrator or volunteer to participate in the program which often involves an after school, weekend, or summer time commitment. Evaluation of the beginning of the TAH program showed projects “may not have reached those teachers typically considered most in need of additional professional development, and that the training provided did not always match research-based definitions of effective professional development” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, pg. 2). The participants were often teachers who were already enthusiastic about teaching American history. The projects “tended to follow traditional

formats (workshops and courses) rather than incorporate reform structures (teacher networks, internships, and research projects)” (pg. 35). The TAH projects also did not involve teachers observing one another, there was little feedback provided to teachers, and there was little to no classroom based follow up (U.S. Department of Education).

Passe (2006) warns that leaders in the field “may not be paying attention to the underdevelopment of elementary social studies and its contribution to problems in secondary social studies” (p. 189). He goes on to address the lack of time in elementary years teaching social studies. Due to this lack of instructional time, “the ultimate result is that our students are poorly prepared for secondary school, grievously unprepared for university courses in the social sciences, and overwhelmed by the responsibilities of democratic citizenship” (p. 190).

According to Wineburg (2001), efforts to understand children’s historical knowledge have followed the same pattern since 1917 and continue to date. Adults decide what children should know, a test is administered, children do poorly, and no effort is made to understand why. Too much emphasis is placed on memorization and precise recall instead of a sense of history. Wineburg emphasizes that researchers should experiment with pedagogical strategies that may enable teachers to produce such knowledge.

Current research acknowledges that students need to do history and actively engage with events, not just memorize key dates, people, and events (Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Levstik, 1996; NCHE, 1996; Roser & Keehn, 2002; Smith, 2001; Von Heyking,

2004; Wineburg, 2001). However, in the current research few studies have attempted to interrelate history instruction to student learning (Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Wilson, 2001).

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In the state of Texas, history instruction continues to be an area of concern. While high-stakes testing scores are on the rise, the number of students who are above a mere proficient level is lacking (Texas Education Agency, 2008). The passing score required on the state standardized assessment in history is only 50% correct compared to 75% to 80% required on reading, math, and science assessments. In the elementary school years, history instruction is often pushed off due to a need to teach the subjects that are measured by standardized testing (Ravitch, 2003; Rentner, 2006; Zastrow & Jan, 2004). United States history is not even in the curriculum until the fifth grade.

At the local elementary school where the research project was completed, fifth grade students are performing even lower than the school district average on grade level history exams (Northside Independent School District, 2009). While this district is offering more training for teachers in the area of history instruction, schools are not improving in performance. Student performance at the selected school continues to be limited at best. As students enter high school, they are performing well on the state standardized assessment which utilizes a multiple choice format and only requires 50% correct to score a passing rating. However, these same students are unable to score well on advanced placement exams in history. These tests require students to write essay responses based on document analysis and higher order critical thinking skills. There are many factors which may be contributing to this problem to include a need for more

instructional time in other areas, a lack of authentic materials and training to use those materials, and a lack of a thematic approach that integrates math and reading with the history (Bolinger & Warren content, 2007).

Evidence of the Problem from the Teacher Interviews

Based on the data collected from the teacher interviews, it was determined that there was a need for an elementary history curriculum that can be implemented by elementary teachers to maximize student learning in high stakes testing areas without giving up history instruction. The teachers involved in the interviews were all fifth grade educators with a wealth of information to share. All participants reported that there were things that they would do differently in teaching American history if they only had more time and resources. Some teachers responded that they were trying to integrate subjects, but that the reality of the classroom often prevented this from occurring. Teachers also reported that the closer it came to standardized testing the less they taught social studies. The teacher interviews provided insight as to how teachers were currently teaching American history and how they believed it should be taught. The themes that emerged showed that teachers wanted to teach differently but that time and available resources often interfered with their ability.

Based on the themes that emerged from the interview and a review of existing literature, I determined the best method to meet the teachers' needs would be through a project designed to effectively integrate reading, language arts, and history curriculums. This would allow classroom teachers to maximize their instructional time. From the findings, it was also noted that the curriculum would need to take into account student

interest, use a hands-on approach, and facilitate active learning. In addition, the program needed to be designed in a way to be user friendly for the teachers. Time is one of the greatest barriers for current fifth grade teachers and the designed program needs to show how it can help teachers not be another thing added to their to-do list. Finally, the program needed to have an aspect of formative and summative assessments to allow teachers to meet grading expectations.

Conclusion

This doctoral journey was completed to contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address this problem in several ways. First, qualitative interviews were conducted to examine how teachers are currently teaching fifth grade history and how they think they should be teaching. The one on one interviews were conducted with ten teacher participants some who reported that they loved teaching American history and some who reported they disliked the subject. After the interviews were completed, I looked for themes to emerge that showed where we are in history education and where we needed to go from our current point to enhance education for all students. The study then looked at factors that impede teachers from effectively teaching history at the elementary level. Using this information, I then revisited existing history research and recommended methods to design a method of history instruction for elementary teachers. This method of history instruction will help teachers to overcome the barriers to teaching history at the elementary level while still meeting curriculum needs in high stakes testing areas. The next section of this manual is a description of the project that arose from the above research.

Description of the Project

The doctoral project consists of two parts. The first is an integrated curriculum in which reading, language arts and history will be taught together using a hands-on, active learning approach. The curriculum was built around the topic of revolution and shows classroom teachers ways to teach the theme of conflict and change in the fifth grade classroom. The main focus is on the American Revolution time period, but also shows the classroom teacher how to make connections to other conflicts throughout history. In addition, the lessons could be manipulated to be used across history topics. The second part of the project is a guide for the classroom teacher. This guide has a brief synopsis of the research that supports the need for this project from both the teacher interviews and published research and explains the advantages to using this curriculum. The guide explains each component of the student activities and provides resources where teachers can obtain more assistance if needed. The guide also has sample descriptions of what the activity may look like in an actual classroom. Finally, the guide has methods the teacher may use to assess student participation in the activities and provide the teacher with a possible method of assessment.

The first student activity is the introduction of the theme of conflict and change. These activities are aimed at activating student prior knowledge and also creating the buy in factor for students. They need to have a reason to want to learn about this historical theme. These activities center on student discussions. The discussions encourage students to explore what kinds of conflict exist in their lives and how these conflicts are similar to the historical figures they are going to learn about.

The next activity is analysis of primary document related to conflict and change. The researcher chose to center the included documents on the time period of the American Revolution. Students will engage with multiple sources in a variety of formats (engravings, paintings, newspaper clippings, diaries, journals, replica documents, and artifacts, ect.) to form an opinion about the time period. The researcher has included in the teacher guide an outline of why primary source documents are important to historical understanding. In addition, the researcher provided many website links in which the classroom teacher can find additional resources to those provided.

While involved with analysis of primary source documents, the students will also participate in leveled historical literature book clubs. These book clubs will be differentiated based on student reading ability and to some degree student choice. The students will participate in independent and guided reading activities based upon the historical novel. This will allow students to acquire additional knowledge of the time period and the emotional side of the conflict as they study the historical characters in their novels.

The final activity is the culminating assessment piece where students will create a history scrapbook page. Students will be taught how to integrate their historical knowledge and their writing ability to create a scrapbook page of their knowledge. The researcher will provide the classroom teacher with steps for setting up scrapbooking in the classroom, samples of student created sample pages, and a rubric for assessing the project. This is an important part of the learning because it provides students with a creative outlet in which they show what they found important from the unit of study. The

researcher will also include websites in the teacher's guide if teachers wish to use the scrapbooking concept in other areas of study.

The Integrated Lessons

The next section will take a look at each individual lesson in the integrated approach. This project was chosen after seeing the lower performance on the district social studies CDBs and after interviewing the ten participants. The researcher saw there was a need to alter the way in which history was being taught at the targeted elementary. After reviewing the literature addressing approaches to teaching American history the researcher decided that an integrated curriculum approach would best benefit the teachers at the targeted elementary school. The goal of the project was to maximize instructional time while still effectively teaching American history and meeting the needs of students in high stakes standardized testing areas (especially reading). The lessons were designed to encourage students to begin thinking like historians as they integrate concepts and knowledge for a deeper understanding. All too often, we keep students at a just the facts surface level and do not provide them with the opportunity to enrich their understanding of ideas and concepts. These lessons are designed to be integrated with existing curriculum to foster greater knowledge not to serve as the only lessons or form of instruction.

These lessons have been put together so that as teacher comfort and understanding of the lessons increase, the themes can be used throughout all of history instruction. As much assistance, as possible, has been provided to show what the lesson should look like when conducted in a fifth grade classroom. Lessons have been given a flexible time

format to allow teachers and students to focus on making meaningful connections and reaching a true knowledge state not just memorize facts and details. In the final Teacher's Guide section some additional tips have been included. The Teacher's guide also explains the lessons in stages based on teacher comfort level with history instruction. The most basic lessons are presented and ready to use straight from this guide. The Teacher's guide then tiers the educator toward extension activities and more ideas as they become experts within their classrooms. It is important to remember that teaching is not reading from a manual. This guide is a starting off point that all teachers can be successful with and as their knowledge grows their comfort level will also improve. Teachers must remain always vigil as to the needs of each group of students and each set of activities. No two children are alike and no two classrooms will ever run the same. This is simply a guidebook to a new journey for the educator ready to try something new, motivating, and rewarding in the end product.

Lesson 1

Introduction to Conflict and Change

Student Expectation: Students will be introduced to the theme of conflict and change using the topic of the American Revolution.

Student Objectives: Students will activate prior knowledge about the theme of conflict and change, students will obtain a “buy-in” factor for why they should care about the themes of conflict and change, and students will experience an overview of how conflict and change shape our world.

Student activities: Students will participate in student led discussions and paired activities. Students will generate a list of how conflict and change occurs in their lives. The class will brainstorm a list of how the conflict in their lives may compare or contrast to historical figures they will be studying.

Student Materials: Discussion Questions, butcher paper or chart paper,

Lesson Details:

1. Begin by asking whole class what happens when you have a fight or misunderstanding with your friends or family. Students should be given a few minutes to create a list of times that they have experienced conflict and what has happened as a result of this. After several minutes allow students to share with a partner or small group and compile a list they wish to share with the class. Finally, invite groups to record their answers on butcher paper for the entire class. (Allowing the students to share in multiple ways may increase their willingness to supply answers and help minimize embarrassment or centering of individual

students). This activity works well using the carousel of colors explained in the teacher's guide.

2. Discuss as a class what the cause and effect relationships are that emerged from their discussion. Discuss the different levels of conflict that arose. Is it the same to get mad and not talk to your parents for a day as it is to no longer want to be friends with someone? Lead students to see how some events cause more conflict and change than others.
3. After establishing the cause and effect relationships have students examine how the different problems are resolved. Can they always resolve their problems without conflict? Are there some problems that lead to more change than others?
4. As a class discuss, what would make you decide to completely change your life as you know it and fight for something bigger? Would you be willing to do this even if it meant loss of your freedom, your family, or your life? Allow students to talk in pairs and small groups to examine what would they be willing to fight for. (This is a hard concept for students to see because their world view is very narrow and some guiding may be necessary. However, try to limit how much teacher info is given at this time). Let students know that they will come back to this last discussion question after the next lesson.
5. Wrap up – in their student journals, have students record the most relevant cause and effect relationships to themselves and what concept they felt create the most conflict and led to the greatest change. (Sample student response is included in teacher's guide section)

Lesson 2

Analysis of Primary Source Documents

Student Expectation: Students will be introduced to primary source documents in the form of pictures, artifacts, official documents and representations of the theme of conflict and change using the topic of the American Revolution.

Student Objectives: Students will engage with multiple sources in a variety of formats (engravings, paintings, newspaper clippings, diaries, journals, replica documents, and artifacts, ect.) to form an opinion about a time period in American history.

Student activities: Students will participate in student led discussions and paired activities. Students will generate a list of what the sources are and how they could have led to conflict and change during the lives of the historical figures. The class will brainstorm a list of how these items could have led to the American Revolution.

Student Materials: Discussion Questions, butcher paper or chart paper, multiple sources of documents as listed in the student objectives.

Lesson Details:

1. Provide students with Primary Source documents and replicas that they can interact with. Many of these materials can be printed from a computer and used throughout the unit. The Teacher's guide provides recommended images to locate and websites where these materials can be obtained for free. In addition, the teacher's guide provides other suggested material to have available to the students.

2. Allow students to examine the items collected. Have them handle the images, documents, replicas and write sticky notes about what they think the items may be. Allow students to study an item of interest and record all the information they can about the item (What might it be, why might it have been important, describe the physical description of the item, how could it have led to conflict and change, ect?).
3. Allow students to share their findings with the class. Allow other students to examine the artifacts as well as add to the wanderings about the objects.
4. Create a chart for the artifacts and how they could have led to the American Revolution. Ask students to share what they would like to learn about the objects as they continue in the future lessons. Create a class chart of wanderings that students want to understand before completion of the unit of study.
5. The activate investigation of the artifacts is key in this portion of the lesson. This is a lesson that would work best if transferred to a center area for students to continue to explore the items as the unit progresses. Advanced students can even be taught how to use some of the websites in the teacher guide to further add to the sources available to the class. A flash drive is an easy management tool to allow students to save their primary sources too and the teacher can preview before making them available to the class as a whole. This lesson will serve as the springboard for the cultivating activity of a History Scrapbook Assessment.

Lesson 3

Differentiated Historical Literature Clubs

Student Expectation: Students will participate in independent and guided reading activities based upon a historical novel addressing to the theme of conflict and change using the topic of the American Revolution.

Student Objectives: Students will acquire additional knowledge and points of view on the time period and the emotional side of the theme conflict and change as they study historical characters within their selected novels during the time period of The American Revolution. Students will connect their prior knowledge about the theme of conflict and change and compare it to the characters within their novel. Students will compare and contrast points of view on the topic of the American Revolution. Students will make connections between their lives and the lives of the characters in their novels in regard to how conflict and change shape our world.

Student activities: Students will participate in independent and guided reading activities based upon a historical novel addressing the theme of conflict and change using the topic of the American Revolution. Students will keep a reading notebook showing how events talked about in class, in primary source document, and within their novels relate to the theme of conflict and change. Students will lead guided book club discussions with classmates to examine characters, story events, and points of view.

Student Materials: Discussion Questions, historical novels, guided reading notebooks.

Lesson Details:

1. Using the list in the Teacher's Guide section, teachers will need to assign students to appropriate leveled text based on reading level and when possible some degree of teacher choice. If novels are not readily available, the teacher guide recommends some other options for teachers to keep this key element of the unit.
2. After students are placed into groups they need to be taught how to use the guided reading notebook as explained in the teacher guide section. This is best used by modeling a whole class picture book and walking everyone through a modeled lesson of how to keep their notebook. This is also part of the teacher's guide section.
3. Have students work to create a reading calendar. This should allow them to set achievable goals, set up discussion meetings, and have set dates that their guided reading notebook will be ready to share with the classroom teacher.
4. Provide students will an inviting place to read. Depending on the classroom set up this could be as simple as sitting around the room on the floor or wherever they are most likely to stay on task.
5. READ, READ, READ. I discovered that a three week window was the best for most readers in my room to complete their novels but this could change with each group of students and each group of novels. The key here is teacher flexibility and the calendar that the student sets requires them to take ownership as well.
6. Based on calendar dates, students need to be given time to discuss their novels in different ways. They should have some days in which they talk with people

reading the same novel and sometimes in which they meet in mixed reading groups. This allows students to also hear experiences of characters that they may not be ready to independently read but from whom they may find interesting.

Sample student discussions are included in the Teacher's Guide.

7. When students finish their novels, they will determine a way to represent their findings to their classmates. This could be through a variety of self selected projects and some ideas are included in the Teacher's Guide. This project will be shared at a book day celebration at the end of the unit.

Lesson 4

History Scrapbook Culminating Assessment Activity

Student Expectation: Students will integrate their historical knowledge and their writing ability to create a history scrapbook page demonstrating the knowledge they have gained throughout the unit on the theme of conflict and change using the topic of the American Revolution.

Student Objectives: Students will design a history scrapbook page that synthesizes the information they have discovered from all unit lessons to demonstrate their knowledge about the theme of conflict and change. Students will be able to explain how the theme of conflict and change led to the American Revolution and how the events shaped our world.

Student activities: Students will construct a history scrapbook page showing all of the knowledge they have gained throughout the unit. Students will present their pages to the entire class.

Student Materials: History Scrapbook Notebooks, Primary Source Documents, colored paper, markers, other art supplies as available.

Lesson Details:

1. Students will be shown sample scrapbook pages for history and other subjects.

Sometimes these are also called interactive notebooks. The Teacher's guide has a list of websites that can show history pages as well as resources from within the community. This is a good time to see if any parents scrapbook as they can become a wonderful resource.

2. Students will be given time to construct a page that demonstrates their knowledge of the theme of Conflict and Change and the topic of the American Revolution.
3. Students will synthesize the information they learned from their own lives, from the primary source activities, and from the historical novels to create a page they shows their understanding of how conflict and change led to the American Revolution and how the American Revolution shaped our world today.
4. I have found that most students require about a week to complete this assignment and it often occurs as they are working on their book project from the previous lesson.
5. Students will present their pages to the classroom on the cultivating day in which they share their book projects and scrapbook pages. The Teacher's guide provides a sample rubric for the teacher to score the page as well as one for the students. Often times, the students are asked to score each other as well. This leads to more accountability on their part.

Teacher's Guide

This is the second part of the project and is written to serve as a guide to help the classroom teacher progress through the four main lessons. The information in this section was compiled as various parts of the dissertation journey occurred. Some information is provide solely as an additional resource for teachers to go if they need more assistance with a given lesson or topic. As the one on one teacher interviews were conducted during the data collection procedure, many classroom teachers cited time and materials as barriers to the ways in which they would like to teach history in the classroom. This is my attempt at helping with time and material constraints that educators are faced with.

Lesson 1: Introduction to Conflict and Change

This lesson is designed to get students to start thinking about things in their lives and the connections that can be made to the lives of others. From a reading perspective this is having students make connections to self and to the world. While scribing and note taking will occur within this lesson, the focal point is good classroom discussion. This requires that the teacher have established class discussion rules. There are many available resources for teachers to learn how to lead classroom discussion, but often times good teaching practices and knowing one's students are the most powerful components of this lesson. This lesson is best begun by asking students to brainstorm when they have had conflicts in their life. If students are unaware of the idea of conflict some preteaching may need to be covered. Normally, just asking students what makes them fight with their siblings, family, and friends is enough to get the discussion ball rolling. Sticky notes are a wonderful tool for students to brainstorm their ideas on that will allow for grouping and

combining topics as the discussion proceeds. As the students post their ideas, have them look for cause and effect relationships that emerge. For instance, if I get an F on my progress report, my parents ground me for the weekend. Have students decide which event led to the other and what possible outcomes could then occur (I bring up my grade, I stay grounded, I get in more trouble, ect). Allow students to work in cooperative groups to choose three or four cause and effect conflicts and determine possible outcomes.

Once all groups have had discussion time they can use a Carousel of Colors Technique to share their opinions. In this technique, each group is assigned a color marker that is representative of their group for the assignment. They must use their color to record all of their group ideas on the class butcher paper. This ensures that all groups are actively participating in sharing opinions and ideas and allows the teacher a quick visual check as to what groups still need to report their findings. Groups become accountable for the information that is shared in their color and they are more likely to stay on task and focused.

This discussion may last over one or two class periods depending on student needs and participation levels. Afterwards, discuss as a whole class as to how problems are resolved. Are there ways that their conflicts can be resolved peacefully and when is more action needed. Discuss with students how problems and solving problems can change their lives. This will lead the discussion into the next level. Ask students what if anything would they be willing to make a complete change to their life. Is there anything that they would be willing to fight for even if it means loss of their freedom, their family, or their life? This is where the discussion can sometimes get tricky and need a little bit of

leading. Students in fifth grade are often in a very concrete world in which they have no great difficulty to overcome. This is a time when I often have to visit with my students about equal rights. Would they be willing to be slaves today, why or why not? Is it ok for boys and girls to be treated differently just because of gender, why or why not? These two topics usually lead to enough sparks. With a really low class, I sometimes have to provide more guidance and leading, but this is limited because I am just setting up the stage for later lessons. We often repeat the Carousel of Colors Techniques with these new discussion topics. Students end this part of the discussion knowing that we will be revisiting the discussion questions throughout the upcoming weeks and that we will be adding as we make new discoveries.

The final stage is to have students transform the group information into reading notes that work for their level. In their guided reading notebooks, they record the most relevant cause and effect relationships from the classroom discussions and at this stage are able to add in writing anything they did not get to share. In addition, the students have to choose what concept that felt created the most conflict and led to the greatest amount of change from the discussion. Once again, students are allowed to add to their notebooks anything personal that they did not feel like sharing with the whole group because as the teacher I am the only one with access to their reading notebook. When needed, I have taken an informal reading grade on their ability to identify the cause and effect relationships and the identification of change.

Depending on what is going on in the classroom, this lesson has lasted anywhere from three to five days in length. There are some days when we may only have a ten or

fifteen minute window to discuss for the day. Instead of putting a time constraint on their discussions, it is more valuable to stretch the lesson and revisit periodically. This lets the kids know that the idea of conflict and change needs to be staying in their minds throughout the process. It also validates the students' prior knowledge and experiences and allows them an opportunity to share connections in various ways to lead to critical thinking in the future.

Students could also use a graphic organizer such as the one below to keep their notes: Sample student responses to the graphic organizer

Conflict (Cause and Effect)	How is disagreement resolved (Problem Resolution)	What happens if conflict is not resolved (Change)
I get an F on my progress report and my parents ground me.	I spend the weekend grounded and get my work finished raising my grade	The conflict is resolved
I fight with my best friend about picking on another friend	We decide we can't be friends anymore because we don't get along	I lose a friend but have changed how I feel about an issue important to me
I always miss my recess because I am tardy to class	I decide to get an alarm clock and wake up 20 minutes earlier	I get to school on time so I get to go to recess because I am not tardy

Lesson 2: Analysis of Primary Source Documents

This lesson is the cornerstone of the entire integrated method. If students can truly engage with and learn from primary source documents they will internalize learning and go beyond "just the facts". This lesson will be the longest in preparation time for the classroom teacher. However, this section includes a snapshot of the published available research to show the necessity and the power behind this style of lesson. This section of the guide is aimed at taking the classroom teacher step by step through the primary

source data collection process to make it as easy and hassle free as possible. Tips will then be provided as to how to manage and maintain material throughout the years.

Current research recommends that effective history instruction focuses on historical inquiry (Fragoli, 2005; McCall, 2006; Tanner, 2008; VonHeyking, 2004). In this method of instruction, students actively interact with historical knowledge and begin to construct their own understanding. Students who engage in a variety of activities that combine historical thinking, historical empathy, and the understanding of historical narrative are more likely to be motivated to learn history in order to have a true understanding instead of just memorizing data to pass a test (Colby, 2008; McCormick, 2008). The brain is not efficient at rote memorizing information. Rather, the brain wants to make connections to prior knowledge and it seeks to make meaning out of the new information or learning (Sousa, 2001; Wolfe, 2001). In 1996, the National Council of History Educators stated that students will not learn history unless it is taught. They recommended that history classes become more lab based, classroom practices should go beyond the textbook to include multiple materials, appropriate artifacts and primary sources should be used to show multiple perspectives, and programs using historical resources should be the result of collaboration (NCHE, 1996). With this knowledge in mind, it is time to tackle the process of finding historical sources.

Historical sources are anything that tells us about history. They can be primary or secondary in nature and exist in multiple formats. With the internet capabilities of many public classrooms, this journey has become easier and more affordable as a way to enrich student learning experiences. At the end of this section, I have created a beginning list of

searchable public domain websites that grant educators access with primary and secondary sources. There truly is no limit as to what a teacher will be able to discover and share with students on this phase of the journey. The key to this journey is to start with a baby step and see where you land from there. The easiest websites to begin pulling primary documents from are either the National Archives or the Smithsonian sites. I would recommend beginning with one of the following three links: Smithsonian Education (www.SmithsonianEducation.org), You Be the Historian (<http://www.si.edu/harcourt/nmah/hisotry/00intro.htm>), or Within These Walls (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/house/>).

Before beginning to the website, develop a list of key concepts from the topic of the Revolutionary War that will demonstrate the theme of concept to your students. Keywords to research would include: Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party, Committee of Correspondence, Constitutional Convention, Daughters of Liberty, Declaration of Independence, George Washington, Intolerable Acts, John Adams, King George, Liberty, Parliament, Patriots, Paul Revere, Stamp Act, self governing, Sons of Liberty, Tea Act (the list can and should be refined based upon individual state or district expectations). With a starting list of words in mind, the object is to go hunting for historical sources in a variety of formats (engravings, paintings, newspaper clippings, diaries, journals, replica documents, artifacts, ect). With the exception of replica documents and artifacts all of these materials can be obtained online and require nothing more than a colored printer.

It is my recommendation that teachers create a PowerPoint file and placing all located sources with their citation as individual slides. These slides can then be printed in

color and laminated so that students can handle the historic documents. If paper or printer availability is limited the slide show could be shown so that students can at least get an up-close look at the sources located. If you are just starting out, stay small and focused. Try to find ten to fifteen sources that really communicate conflict to your students. As you become an expert you will find your source file filling quickly. For my classroom collection, I actually use a USB storage device that is reserved for nothing but historical documents. In addition to the documents found online I have also created or purchased some artifacts and replica documents. Objects included in my collection include: a small tea pot, a small plastic baggie with loose tea leaves in it, a quill pen, a small glass vial, a wooden dice with only dots, a recreated deck of cards with no numbers only pictures, and an assortment of old stamps. These items increase student interest in life during the time period and some of them are enrichment activities that we create as class artifacts. Once the documents have been found the classroom fun begins.

The most important part of this lesson is student discovery. The students need to be able to actively manipulate and interact with all documents found. The teacher can use magnifying glasses, jewelers' loupes, hand lenses and other tools to allow students to really study the artifacts and documents. The students should work either independently or with a partner to study and object or document. While examining their object they need to record observations about the object (what might it be, why might it have been important, what is the physical description of the item, why would someone have saved this item all these years, what could have led this item to be part of conflict and change).

Sticky notes are a great way for students to record their observations or the teacher could use a Graphic Organizer.

Sample Student Graphic Organizer

Physical Description	What might it be?	Why might it be important?	Why would someone save this?	How could this have led to conflict and change?
An engraving of a grave site from long ago, shows several tombstones, can't read the writing	A picture from a cemetery	Someone important must have died in a battle or something	Maybe the family of whoever died saved it to remember their loved one	Maybe who ever died was important and helped cause the war

Students can use either the Carousel of Colors Technique or a class data chart to record the findings from all of the artifacts studied. As the students share their findings with the class, allow other students to add to the wanderings about the objects. From the artifacts gathered, have students discuss how these things could have been important enough to make people back them willing to change their lives through conflict. Ask students to share what they would like to learn about these documents and others as the lesson progresses. Create a class list of questions or wanderings to revisit as the study proceeds. When the students have finished exploring these documents they need to stay available throughout the duration of the unit. Active investigation and inquiry of historical document are essential, so these items should easily be stored in some form of center area for students to continue to be allowed to access and investigate with. For students who really become motivated by this activity, they could be taught to use the websites include to look for class resources during free time. Students who find resources

are responsible for saving the image, citing where the image came from, and explaining why they found value to selecting the image for the class document station. This free exploration can be a powerful tool for students to really get hooked in by the past and being to question all that they see.

Remember, start small and grow over time. Ten to fifteen really powerful documents can be just as powerful, as or more so than a hundred selected to just have a lot of stuff. Historical inquiry should focus on understanding the document, not how many documents can be located.

Possible Websites:

<http://www.siarchives.si.edu>

<http://www.siris.si.edu>

<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/index.htm>

<http://www.150.si.edu/siarch/guide/start.htm>

<http://americanart.si.edu/images>

<http://rnc.library.cornell.edu/7milvol/>

http://postalmuseum.si.edu/educators/4b_curriculum.html

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/learn/lessons/primary.html>

<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/idealabs/ap/index.htm>

<http://www.georgewashington.si.edu/>

<http://www.npg.si.edu/collect/colonial.htm>

<http://www.npg.si.edu/collect/signers.htm>

<http://npgportraits.si.edu/eMuseumNPG/code/emuseum.asp>

<http://www.loc.gov>

<http://www.archives.gov>

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov>

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org>

<http://www.academic.brooklyn.curry.edu/history/virtual>

<http://www.historyplace.com>

<http://www.videos.howstuffworks.com>

http://www.memory.loc.gov/learn/features/songs_times/flash

<http://www.bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/documents/constitution>

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/reform>

<http://www.history.org>

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects>

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com>

<http://www.kidlink.org>

<http://www.ellisland.org>

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline>

<http://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/archive/time>

<http://www.constitution.org>

Lesson 3: Differentiated Historical Literature Clubs

The third component to the integrated approach is for students to participate in independent and guided reading activities based upon a historical novel addressing the theme of conflict and change using the topic of the American Revolution. Students will

acquire additional knowledge and points of view on the time period and the emotional side of the theme of conflict and change as they study historical characters within their selected novels. Students will connect prior knowledge about the theme of conflict and change from the previous lessons and compare it to the characters within their novels. Students will compare and contrast view points of the American Revolution and make connections between their lives and the lives of the characters in their books. They will use the novel to form an opinion as to how conflict and change have shaped our world. There are many resources available for teachers who struggle with guided reading techniques or novel studies. However, I have also included some of the most current research on differentiation as a background snapshot.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences enables educators to meet the many different learning styles of the unique individual students who make up their classes. These learning styles can be directly linked to the current instructional focus of differentiated instruction. Gone are the days of one-size fits all education in which if the child acquires the knowledge the teacher has done well and if the child fails then the child must have a learning or behavior problem. The idea of differentiating instruction is targeted at reaching a diverse student population who come to the classroom with a variety of different backgrounds and ability levels (Levine, 2002; Tomlinson, 2003; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). It is a method of looking at instruction from the individual student perspective. Students are prescribed a pace and scope of learning that fits their individual needs. Teachers must understand their individual students, be proficient at the curriculum they teach, and understand the need for flexible teaching to maximize the

learning and potential of all students in their class (Gartin, et al., 2002; National Research Council, 1999; Tomlinson, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000; Wolfe, 2001).

Differentiated instruction takes into account four student traits: readiness, interest, learning profile, and affect. Activities and lessons can be differentiated for all four traits or just one trait depending on the lesson. When an assignment is differentiated by readiness, the teacher takes into account student background knowledge and the student's ability in an individual topic or subject. It is important to understand that a student can have a variety of readiness levels depending on subject area and that readiness levels are not fixed (National Research Council, 1999; Sousa, 2001; Wolfe, 2001). The teacher must therefore provide scaffolding to support students while also providing activities that will challenge all learners to push themselves further in their knowledge. Differentiating by interest allows students to have a voice in expressing what they learn and how they demonstrate their knowledge. It can also help develop new interests for the student. Learning style goes hand in hand with Gardner's multiple intelligences. It focuses on how the student learns the best and how their preferences can influence their learning. Finally, affect is how students feel about themselves, their work, and their classroom as a whole. Teachers must be tuned in to what encourages students and what may discourage or be a barrier to learning. If the teacher is able to connect with a student's emotions, the child is more likely to learn and be successful (Wolfe, 2001). When taking these four traits into account, teachers can maximize the learning for all students.

Title	Author	Book Type	Interest Level	Guided Reading Level	Grade Level Equivalent
Revolutionary War on Wednesday	Mary Pope Osborne	Early Chapter Book	3-5	M	2.2
The American Revolution: A nonfiction companion	Mary Pope Osborne	Informational	3-5	N	3.3
Judy Moody Declares Independence	Megan McDonald	Early Chapter Book	3-5	N	3.2
The 18 Penny Goose	Sally Walker	Easy Read Chapter	K-2	N	2.8
The Big Tree	Bruce Hiscock	Nonfiction	3-5	O	4.8
Molly Pitcher: Young Patriot	Augusta Stevenson	Fiction	3-5	O	4.3
Buttons for General Washington	Peter Roop	Fiction	3-5	O	2.8
And then what Happened, Paul Revere?	Jean Fritz	Biography Informational	3-5	0	4.1
The Woodshed Mystery	Gertrude Chandler Warner	Fiction Series	3-5	O	3.1
John, Paul, George, & Ben	Lane Smith	Biography	K-2	P	3.5
Redcoats and Petticoats	Katherine Kirkpatrick	Historical Fiction	K-3	P	4.2
We are Patriots: Hope's Revolutionary War Diary	Kristiana Gregory	Diary	3-5	P	3.9
When Freedom Comes: Hope's Revolutionary War Diary	Kristiana Gregory	Diary	3-5	P	3.9
Heroes of the Revolution	David Adler	Biography	3-5	P	4.9
The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Poetry	3-5	P	5.1
Hannah's Helping Hands	Jean Van Leeuwen	Fiction	3-5	P	3.5
Paul Revere: Boston Patriot	Augusta Stevenson	Fiction	3-5	P	4.2
Changes for Felicity: A Winter Story	Valerie Tripp	Historical Fiction Series	3-5	Q	5.1
Felicity Learns a	Valerie Tripp	Historical	3-5	Q	5.4

Lesson		Fiction Series			
Daughter of Liberty	Robert Quackenbush	Nonfiction	3-5	Q	3.9
Megan's Masquerade	Trisha Magraw	Series Fiction	3-5	Q	4.3
Will You Sign Here, John Hancock	Jean Fritz	Biography	4-6	Q	4.8
If You Lived at the Time of the American Revolution	Kay Moore	Informational	3-5	Q	4.5
Can't you Make them Behave, King George?	Jean Fritz	Biography	3-5	R	4.6
Phoebe the Spy	Judith Griffin	Historical Fiction	3-5	R	4.2
The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson	Ann McGovern	Biography	6-8	R	4.3
Samuel's Choice	Richard Berleth	Historical Fiction	3-5	S	5.2
George Washington: The Man Who Would Not be King	Stephen Krensky	Biography	6-8	S	5.9
Ben and Me: An Astonishing Life of Benjamin Franklin as written by his Good Mouse Amos	Robert Lawson	Historical Fiction	3-5	S	4.5
The Journal of William Thomas Emerson: A Revolutionary War Patriot	Barry Denenberg	Diary	3-5	S	4.8
The Winter of Red Snow: The Revolutionary War Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart	Kristiana Gregory	Diary	6-8	S	4.8
George vs. George: The American Revolution as See from Both Sides	Rosalyn Schanzer	Nonfiction	6-8	T	8.6
Kings Mountain	G. Clifton Wisler	Historical Fiction	6-8	T	5.9
The Rifle	Gary Paulsen	Historical Fiction	6-8	T	7.9
Toliver's Secret	Esther Wood Brady	Historical Fiction	3-5	T	5.5
George Washington's Socks	Elvira Woodruff	Historical Fiction	3-5	T	5.9
George Washington's Spy	Elvira Woodruff	Historical Fiction	4-7	T	5.9
Sons of Liberty	Adele Griffin	Fiction	6-8	U	5.6
The Scarlet Stockings	Trinka Noble	Historical	3-5	U	5.4

Spy		Fiction			
Mr. Revere and I	Robert Lawson	Biography	6-8	U	6.8
War Comes to Willy Freeman	James Lincoln Collier	Historical Fiction	6-8	U	4.8
The Keeping Room	Anna Myers	Historical Fiction	3-5	V	5.9
Give Me Liberty	Laura Malone Elliott	Historical Fiction	4-7	V	5.8
Love Thy Neighbor: The Tory Diary of Prudence Emerson	Ann Turner	Diary	6-8	V	4.9
The Fighting Ground	Avi	Fiction	3-5	V	6.4
Guns for General Washington: A Story of the American Revolution	Seymour Reit	Historical Fiction	6-8	W	5.8
You Wouldn't Want to Be at the Boston Tea Party!: Wharf Water Tea You'd Rather Not Drink	Peter Cook	Informational	3-5	W	6.8
Traitor: The Case of Benedict Arnold	Jena Fritz	Fiction	6-8	X	7.1
The Winter Hero	James Lincoln Collier	Historical Fiction	6-8	X	7.1
Just Jane: A Daughter of England Caught in the Struggle of the American Revolution	William Lavender	Historical Fiction	9-12	Y	6.8
My Brother Sam is Dead	James Lincoln Collier	Historical Fiction	6-12	Y	5.8
George Washington, Spymaster: How the Americans Outspied the British and Won the Revolutionary War	Thomas Allen	Biography	3-7	Z	8.6
Johnny Tremain	Esther Forbes	Historical Fiction	6-8	Z	5.3

With this background in mind, teachers will first want to use the list in this section to try and pair students with the best matched text. The barrier to this lesson is the availability of materials. Not all schools are able to provide historical literature so the

teacher has several options to attempt to build their collection. As always, start small. If embarking on the journey early enough, the internet can be a life saver. Many bargain book stores have their inventories online and sometimes a personal phone call can get shipping reduced. I am also very fond of putting out a wish list to parents for books we would like in our classroom. In the past, I have even had parents reach out to others through social face booking which has required no work on the part of the teacher. When trying to build a classroom, don't be afraid to ask anyone and everyone you can think of you. You would be surprised at what can surface. Other affordable ways to obtain novels include grants, half-price book stores, PTA funds, your district or campus library, and at times even the city public library can be of assistance.

The table below is a list of books that I use with the study of Conflict and Change as examined through the American Revolution. The interest levels, guided reading levels, and grade level equivalents were obtained using the Scholastic Book Wizard website. This website allows you to enter the name of any book and it will provide a summary of the book and a leveling. This would be the easiest way to narrow down the selection of what books to start with in an individual class.

This lesson provides the teacher with a great amount of freedom depending on how reading is conducted at the teacher's campus. The campus where the research was conducted uses a guided reading approach and so the students keep a guided reading notebook as they read their novel. The first section of the notebook is a book log. In this section, the student records the title and author of the book that they are reading. They then keep track daily of the reading that they do. This is recorded either by page number

or chapter number depending on the book and may sometimes include the amount of time the student read. At the end of each reading day, students enter a written response about what they have read. Some days, this is open ended and other days it may try to a specific reading skill or strategy being studied. The essential element is that students write some type of reflection to their reading. This is not an easy task for students, and will require modeling at the beginning of the year. To teach students this skill, I will often use historical picture books to model reflections and the process that students should be thinking through during their independent reading time. This allows all students to have a feeling of shared success as part of their reader's notebook and provides a scaffold tool for strugglers to look back as they practice individual reflections.

This lesson usually lasts around three to four weeks is length as the students engage with their novels. The key is to give students plenty of time to read, reflect, and discuss. The discussion needs to occur in a variety of formats. Sometimes students need to share with each other, sometimes with the teacher, and sometimes as a whole class. In my classroom, we often use the last ten minutes of the day for anyone who wants to share something about their novel with the entire class. By utilizing multiple times and ways for the students to discuss, students hear about many books that they may want to read as their upcoming book and struggling readers get to learn about good literature that they may not be quite ready for.

Lesson 4: History Scrapbook Culminating Assessment Activity

This lesson is the final integration and synthesis of everything the students should have learned about the idea of conflict and change. This lesson allows students to show

more than just a mastery of dates and facts and moves history instruction away from being dated and boring. This lesson is the most powerful at showing teachers and students the power that can come from historical understanding. Students begin their scrapbooks usually with a limited amount of historical knowledge and the page reflects this limited knowledge. As we make progress throughout the year, the growth in the student's historical understanding is documented in the progression of their scrapbook.

Bolinger and Warren (2007) show effective history instruction uses a constructivist perspective in which students actively engage with events. Since 1894 reports have "stressed that history should be taught as analytical, inquiry-based discipline" (pg. 68). However, "when students learn about history in elementary schools across the United States, they take tests and write essays explaining what happened in the past. It is not clear, however, that students necessarily think about history" (Bolgatz, 2007, pg.1). With historical scrapbooking, I am looking to change how my students view and think about history.

In order to understand ways to improve and increase historical understanding we must explore the best teaching approaches to foster this growth. Research shows that the cognitive approach can be directly associated with historical understanding. In history, the cognitive approach considers students' thinking as they interpret images about the past. Current research shows that when using historical inquiry, "students actively and imaginatively develop their sense of the past through a wide range of experiences, including television, ethnic identity, family stories, and history textbooks" (Hartler-Miller, 2001, pg. 673). In addition to examining the topic through a cognitive approach, a

constructivist approach will also be used. According to Gould (1996) and Jonassen (1991) constructivist classrooms have common features. First, learning focuses on ideas not just facts. Second, learning is a process that is a series of interactions between teachers and students. Third, the focus is on constructing knowledge not replicating it. Finally, students' interests determine learning and there are multiple representations of their learning. All three of these features directly relate to the use of primary source analysis and historical literacy clubs to improve student learning and historical scrapbooks show all of the learning that occurs throughout the integrated approach. As with the previous three lessons, teacher flexibility is key and no two finished products should look the same.

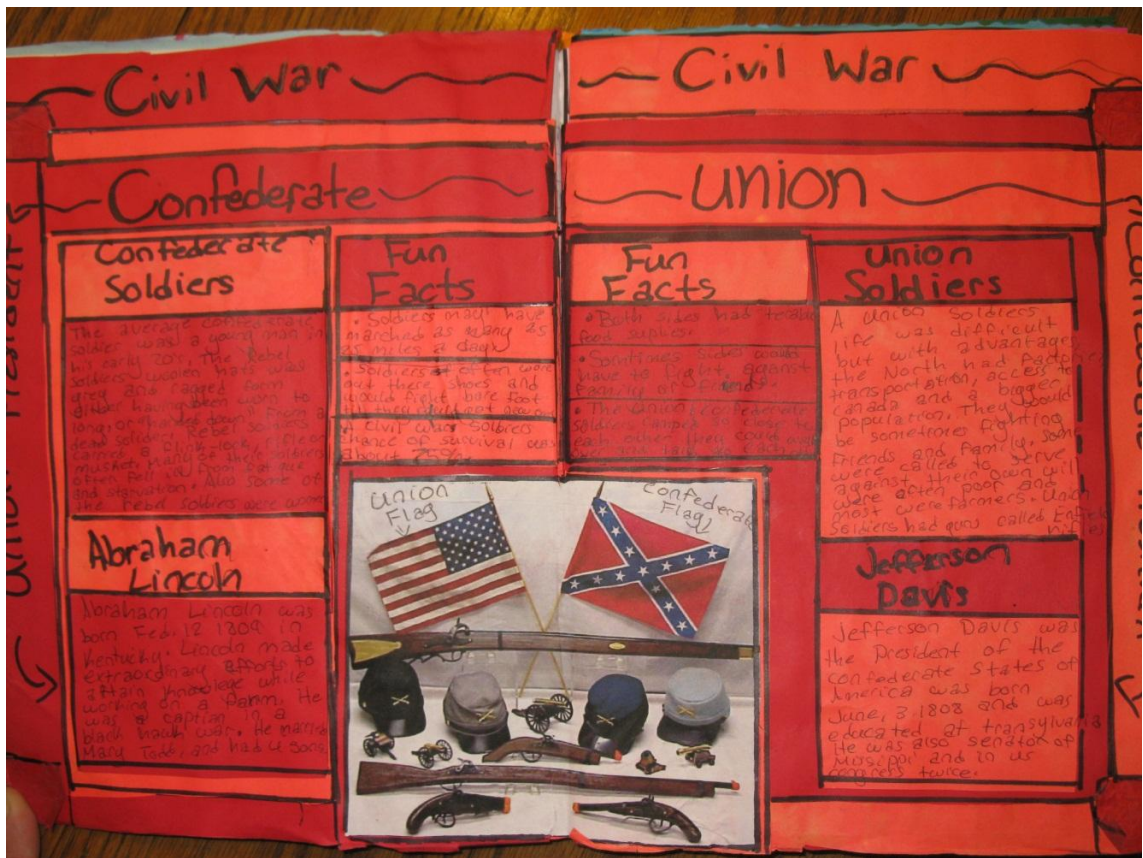
The teacher needs to start out this lesson by showing students what a scrapbook page looks like. Many of the websites in lesson two have links to history scrapbooks and this is also a time when your community can get involved. If you have a local scrapbook supply store go in and talk to the owner. Often you can get samples to show students and sometimes you even find a resource for classroom materials. Arts and crafts stores are also willing to help and some even have volunteers that can come into your class and show basic scrabooking skills to the students. If nothing else, buy a scrapbook magazine and let your students explore. Don't forget to check with parents and see if you have any untapped resources waiting to come to your aid. You do not have to be creative yourself to unleash the creative power behind your studnets, you just have to be ready to take the leap.

Once your students understand what a scrapbook page should look like, it is time to decide on the requirements. We always do this as a class. We talk about what we have learned and how we need to tell others about our learning. The minimum requirements for all of our class pages are as follows: at least five understandings about the topic, at least one primary source document explained, at least 2 connections to things you have read about, must be the best of your best work. This is our working baseline and with each unit of study we tweak the expectations to fit what we have been doing in class.

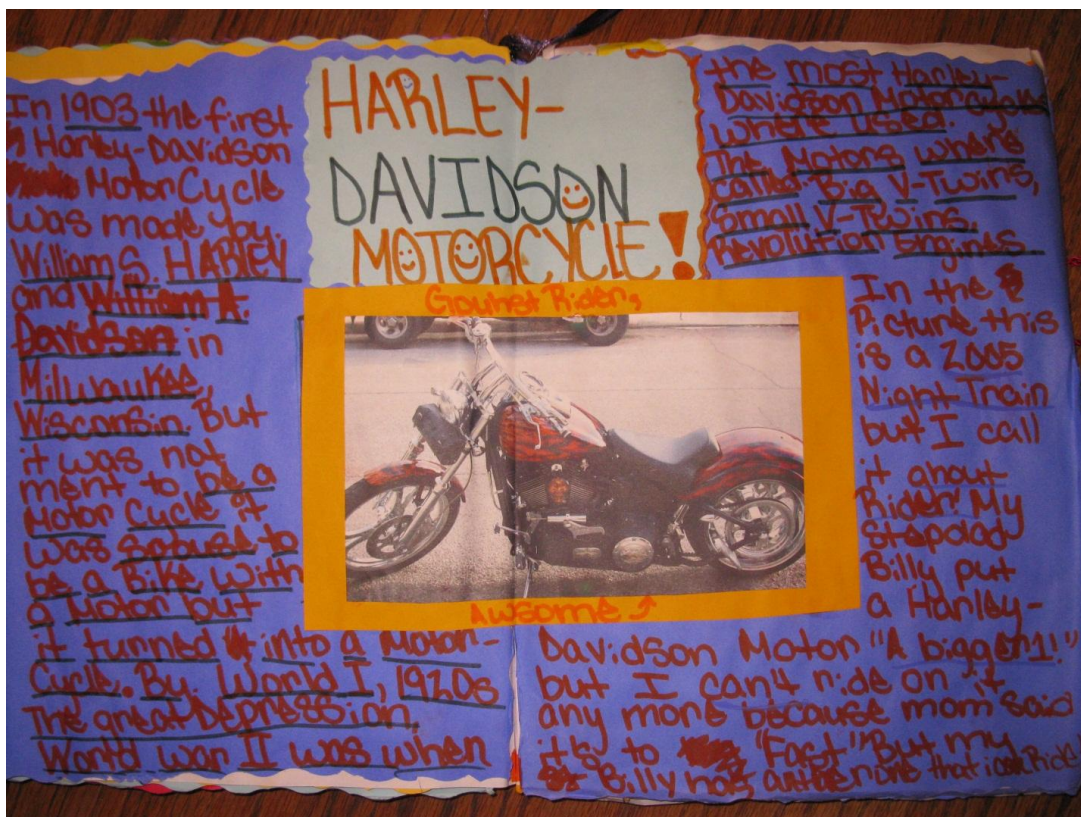
The five understandings allow me to truly assess what each individual student has learned about the theme. When looking at Conflict and Change I am looking for evidence that the students understand cause and effect relationships and problem resolution. It is imperative that they understand degrees of hardships. When we start the unit, the students have not normally stopped to consider the freedoms that they have or how those freedoms can be. I want students to be able to make at least a baseline connection to their own personal life that there are things they are willing to fight for and that there are other things that are not necessarily worth a fight. The primary source can come from one of two places. Some students will always use the materials that are readily available in the classroom and their task is to explain the historical purpose and how it illustrates the theme. For more advanced students, the primary source may be a document that they have located and preapproved with me before beginning their analysis. They must revisit all of the key investigative questions from Lesson 2 regardless of where they obtain the document. Finally they must make two connections to literature. For some students these connections may both come from their novel in Lesson 3. These connections can also be

made from whole class literature discussions, book club discussions, and additional historical selections that students may choose to read. The importance of the literature connections is that the students make connections between their world, the world their characters are involved in, and the historical time period that we are studying. Depending on the sophistication level of each individual student depends on if I am looking for text to text, text to self, or text to world connections. This allows for some freedom in how to grade the level of connections the students make based on the level of sophistication of their reading. Finally, published product is everything. Each individual student has to be able to say that this is their best work. All students are required to share their finished project on the classroom projection system to hold them accountable for the effort that they put into the project. Some sample scrapbooks are included below and explained.

Student Example 1: Was designed to review the civil war. Student explained how the Union and Confederacy were similar and talked about how families fought each other and were torn apart. The student related this to a divorce that was occurring in their family and were torn apart. The student related this to a divorce that was occurring in their family at the time. Primary source was a photo showing artifacts from the war. The student explained how finding artifacts showed how real the war was. Student was very taken with the leaders and compared Lincoln and Davis from two biography books they had read during the unit.



Student Example 2: Was designed to show how inventions have changed our way of life. The student was very interested in motorcycles and focused her research on the Harley Davidson. Her literature study was focused on World War 2 novels and she kept track in her reading log of how often motorcycles appeared in fiction and nonfiction stories from the time. Her document was a picture of a bike her step dad had that she was very personally connected to.



Appendix B: Interview Guide Questions

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How long have you been teaching fifth grade?
3. Who sets your schedule? (you, your team, your administration, the district)
4. How much input do you have in what your daily schedule looks like?
5. Describe what your normal day looks like? How much time is spent on teaching each subject?
6. Does the amount of time you spend teaching each subject change throughout the school year? If so, why?
7. What approach do you use when teaching American history?
8. Is this similar or different then how you teach other subjects?
9. In a perfect classroom, how would you teach American history?
10. What barriers keep you from teaching American history the way you believe it should be taught?
11. Where are you on the American history timeline for the district? What has caused you to be where you are at on the timeline?

Curriculum Vitae

Teacher Certificates

- Elementary Self-Contained (Grades 1-8) May 1998
- Generic Special Education (Grades PK-12) May 1998
- English as a Second Language (Grades PK-12) May 2002
- Social Studies (Grades 4-8) May 2011

Education

Walden University
EdD Teacher Leadership, August 2011

UTSA
M.A. in Education with a Special Education Concentration, 2000

UTSA
B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies with a specialization in Special Education, 1998

Experience
Professional Experience

NISD, 2006-Present

- 5th grade Teacher
- Self-Contained classroom teacher, 5th grade Team Leader since 2008, Social Studies Campus Facilitator since 2010

NISD, 1998-2006

- Academic Mastery Teacher
- Working with students with special needs in Kindergarten through 5th grade, Campus Coordinator from 1999-2003

UTSA, 2002-2003

- Adjunct Professor in the College of Education

- Taught Intro to Special Education Course in the summer semesters to prepare students in the Region XX alternative certification course

Professional Accomplishments

- 2007-2010 Participated in the Teaching American History Grant Collaborative
- Winner of 5 NEF Grants totaling approximately \$4,500 (Reading Fluency, History Literature Clubs, Hands-On Science Stations, Lunch Reading Book Clubs, FLIP Video Camera Technology)