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HOW CAN TEACHERS INTEGRATE THE HISTORY OF WOMEN INTO THEIR MAINSTREAM SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES?

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Abstract

Women are often underrepresented in traditional social studies courses. In this qualitative study I sought to understand how current teachers were integrating the history of women into their mainstream social studies courses. I interviewed five teachers who were recognized as being inclusive of women in their social studies curriculum. Four instructional methods prevailed. They were creating student engagement, using primary documents, encouraging collaboration, and creating safe environments. Using Parker Palmer's *A Courage to Teach* (2017) as a theoretical framework, I concluded that although the teachers' instructional methods and curriculum choices were important, the reasoning behind their curriculum choices and methods and the inner selves of the teachers were also instrumental in the creation of balanced classroom experiences. This study lends support to the idea that educators should seek within themselves to reach beyond traditional avenues of teaching and create classroom environments that are equal to and reflective of all of our students' identities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2016 the United States spent $706 billion on public education. That equals $13,847 per student (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). This did not even account for the additional funds spent by parents to help their children ‘gain an edge’ in today’s society. American spending was only second behind Norway on education expenditures per student (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). In an era of large spending there were many concerns on how this money was being allocated. Many politicians, researchers, parents, and community leaders debated what our students should be learning. This led to many different ideas about the purpose of education.

Education can look different depending on the person’s background. For some it could mean learning how to read Latin or how to find the limits of equations. For others it could mean understanding the structures of atoms or how to write essays. It may also entail being able to replace a generator on an aircraft engine. While there are multiple perspectives on what education should focus on, they all share a common theme: to give our students the skills and knowledge for their futures.

How we best prepare our students for the future can cause contention. For example, there were massive national education movements such as No Child Left Behind and the Common Core Curriculum. Common Core was developed by 48 state governments in order to “ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life” (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2020). Additionally, there are head start learning programs and educational toys. There are also books, movies, shows, and podcasts. All with one goal in mind, to educate our youth. These programs and products create a whirlwind of

information, threatening to overwhelm our society with their varied solutions to education's perceived shortcomings.

Within the storm of education are also the voices of teachers. We are the professionals that dedicate our lives to the education of children. Through our choices of curriculum and instructional approaches, we become the gatekeepers for our students' learning (Thornton, 1989). We are in the trenches every day, making an impact on students' lives, and through our instructional choices we influence the knowledge and power of our students, "The operational curriculum – the curriculum that is actually provided in the classroom – is, on a daily basis, constructed by the teacher... the teacher makes the crucial decisions concerning content, sequence, and instructional strategy that determine the social studies experiences of students" (Thornton, 1989, p. 4). Through our curriculum choices, we can empower our students to face the world.

Our ability to create a classroom that empowers students are regularly at risk. It could be at risk from our personal motivations, from mandated curriculum and textbooks, or perceptions based on comparisons with the international community that our children are falling behind. All these pressures put our students at risk of not receiving a full and balanced education. An education that was promised to them for simply being a child living in the United States. An education that will allow them "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness". As teachers we owe our children our full attention and effort.

One of the ways we can create full and balanced educations for our students is through greater focus on social studies. With increasing educational demands from society, our

classrooms have become battlegrounds for both curriculum and instruction. With increased pressure to teach math and reading skills, the perceived importance of social studies has eroded, relegating it to a second tier behind STEM and literacy subjects (Pascopella, 2005). These subjects are important, but they are increasingly consuming classroom time that allows little room for students to study the important skills that are learned in social studies.

Social studies can be an essential glue that holds our students' educations in balance. In other subjects, our students learn the mechanics or their world. Through social studies, they can gain an understanding of the world's relationships. Their understanding of social relationships empowers them to shape their presents and futures. "Educational decisions must be made on the basis of educational values, and there is a long tradition in the United States of educating our students for democracy" (Levstik & Barton, 2015, p. 9). In a word, social studies can help to prepare our students for life.

Social studies could prepare our students for life in multiple ways. One of those ways is to give them skills to successfully navigate their social and physical worlds. In order to become citizens of any community, individuals must understand their roles within their communities and how those communities function. Through the study of history and civics, students learn how their societies function and how they may participate in those communities. This can both preserve the good aspects of our communities and allow for citizens to see how they may improve the functions of society.

One of the important aspects of being a citizen is knowing and understanding fellow community members. As Levstik & Barton (2015) note, "Education for democratic citizenship

requires that students learn to take part in meaningful and productive discussions with people of diverse viewpoints" (p. 10). This allows our students to better communicate and work together to find solutions to societal concerns. Social studies can also allow students to explore their world in a safe environment that helps them to learn who their fellow citizens are. By learning about the people in their community, students will better be equipped to confront future problems. This allows them to grow into more responsive and responsible adults who are willing to work for community solutions.

For students in United States classrooms, there are hundreds of years of history and hundreds of people and cultures to understand. The importance of the histories they learn in classrooms are not limited to the past, never impacting people today. In fact, they are the backdrop of how people today think and behave and where they may come from. They give context to the many different lives that exist today. Students studying history can encounter their fellow human beings in ways that would otherwise not be possible. It is imperative that our students know who their neighbors are. This gives them the tools to successfully navigate their communities and their world. Students should know their communities. They should know where they came from and how they got here so that we can better navigate through their future.

How do we teach our students well enough to prepare them for the future? As social studies teachers, one way is to commit ourselves to teaching a fully inclusive curriculum. What we teach in our social studies classes has an implicit message for our students. When we select our topics, we are showing that the people/cultures/ideals we select are important to history. Similarly, the topics we leave out implicitly tell our students that those are not as important. If we follow the traditional social studies narratives found in many textbooks, we may notice how

simple they are. These general narratives consist of great men and great events (Jackson-Abernathy, 2013). While this is part of our history as a nation, it is not the entire story. History is far more complex with an intricate web of connections between people and events. If teachers solely follow the traditional great narrative story, their students can walk away with the impression that in order to make an impact on this country, one must be wealthy, white, and male. Contrary to this narrative are an unlimited amount of histories and examples from people of all walks of life. Howard Zinn's (2015) *A People's History of the United States* (2015) shows how history can look when we step away from the traditional narrative.

Zinn provides an excellent example of expanding our understanding of historical narratives in his description of Christopher Columbus's story. According to traditional narratives, Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean and discovered a minimally populated land. This feat continues to be celebrated with Columbus as the central hero. What is often overlooked are the consequences of his voyage on the millions of people who were living in the western hemisphere. There was a literal genocide of the Native populations. "Thus, began the history, five hundred years ago, of the European invasion of the Indian settlements in the Americas. That beginning...is conquest, slavery, and death. When we read the history books given to children in the United States, it all starts with heroic adventure – there is no bloodshed – and Columbus Day is a celebration" (Zinn, 2015, p. 7). This view and attitude towards the people who already lived here has carried well into the 21st century. The histories and contributions of Native Americans and numerous others to Western society has been largely ignored or erased. Through the work of people like Zinn and numerous others (e.g., Deloria, 1999; Storm, 1972), these histories are finally being acknowledged.

Zinn's example of Columbus's voyage is just one instance of how history can be viewed from different perspectives. His work and dedication to providing additional narratives has created greater, more diverse and comprehensive historical understanding. This understanding of others' cultural pasts can help lead towards better cooperation in solving current and future issues. For this reason, the creation of better representation within our social studies curriculum is essential? for our students. One of the consequences of the traditional message was that white, wealthy, land-owning men were the agents of change and growth in United States history. While the intention of this narrative is still under debate, this does not allow for us to ignore the consequences the lack of inclusion it creates. We should improve the representation of all in our historical curricula.

Greater representation in the curriculum could prevent knowledge gaps underlying problematic situations such as one experienced by Debbie Reese. Debbie Reese was a Pueblo Indian who grew up in New Mexico. In pursuit of her doctoral degree, she moved to Illinois with her daughter to study at the University of Illinois. She described one of her experiences: "For the most part, children of [my daughter's] age see stereotypes of Native Americans that lead them to believe either that Indians don't exist anymore, or that Indians are very exotic people who wear feathers and live in ways vastly different from their own" (Reese, 1998). Inclusive curriculum and instruction could assist in developing a more accurate understanding of the cultures and identities of our neighbors, past and present, thus preventing experiences such as those described by Debbie Reese.

Greater representation in the curriculum could also help empower students. Students who see themselves represented in the historical narrative may better be able to see themselves as

movers of history. Bishop recognized this in regard to children's literature, "When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part" (1990, p. ix). Parallels can be drawn for social studies. If students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, they are more likely to engage with society and seek to shape it. This could help to meet the main goal of National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), which is stated as follows:

> The aim of social studies is the promotion of civic competence – the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required of students to be active and engaged participants in public life. (National Council for the Social Studies, 2020)

Teaching a single story in social studies allows for only a partial understanding of history. According to Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor (2014), "It is only by disrupting single stories with narratives told from other perspectives that we form a more nuanced picture of the people, issues, or ideas at hand" (pp. 30-31). The more perspectives of history students encounter, the greater the likelihood they will acquire a more complete understanding of history. While no historical narrative can encompass the complete truth, multiple viewpoints allow for a fuller understanding of historical events. Take the history of Native Americans as an example. The dominant narrative consists largely of absence and western conquest. In contrast, it is estimated that there were at least two-million Native Americans living on the North American continent in 1492 (Thornton, 1990, p. 26). This information challenges the traditional narrative of an empty continent free for colonialist expansion.

Contrary to the traditional narrative, Native American lives and perspectives have been deeply entwined with the development of the United States. Among their numerous contributions are the model for our government, our forms of trade, and the winning of the World Wars. All these and more have taken place despite sustained attempts to erase their contributions from our official history. Oftentimes, due to this erasure, Native Americans have been relegated to the fringes of United States society. As a result, they have been colonized and oppressed (Treuer, 2019). In spite of these tragedies, there have been moments of victory and determination, testaments to the endeavoring human spirit. In his historical novel *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, David Treuer expressed the motivation for writing his book. "This book was written out of the simple, fierce conviction that our cultures are not dead and our civilizations have not been destroyed. It is written with the understanding that our present tense is evolving as rapidly and creatively as everyone else's" (2019, p. 17).

Imagine if our history and society were more inclusive for everyone. Perhaps the tragedies of the past could have been prevented. More people of the present might not live in the shadow of our society. Although we cannot change the past, we can shape the future to not repeat those mistakes. Social studies can be an avenue of change for this reality, but we must continue to be thoughtful in our choices of curriculum and instruction. As Zinn (2015) notes, the reason our history is narrow is that is has been written by the "winners" in ways that represent their values and perspectives, often to the exclusion of others. This narrows our students' access to a more complete and inclusive history. As teachers, we may be in a position to help create a better balance.

As demonstrated by Zinn, Reese, and Treuer, Native American contributions and accomplishments should be known to all the students. Unfortunately, they are not the only group that is often overlooked in history. Women (including Native Americans and others) represent 50.8% of the American population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), and an equal percentage of our student population. If gender representation were proportional in our social studies curriculum, the history of women would represent 50% of the historical curriculum. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Traditionally women are largely absent from historical content. Many of the achievements of women being relegated to women's suffrage of the 1920s or the Feminism movement of the 1960s (Sklar & Dublin, 2009). This continued lack of representation implicitly paints a picture that continues to promote ideas of domesticity within the United States. The consequence is the continuous push of women to the sidelines of history and society. In order to help inspire our young women, they should be able to see themselves in the history books.

Traditional narratives still place women as housewives, supporting their husbands in their daily lives. We can understand from the study of history that women have had vibrant and world-changing roles. Women are interwoven into the historical fabric of our society. They have changed lives through discoveries, leading nations, and founding organizations. They have influenced science, medicine, math, and politics. Women have also written novels, poems, and music. They have contributed as much to society as men, but their voices are often absent. Often the causes are under debate, but regardless of the causes, we as teachers can make sure that their stories are told. "Women's roles should not be viewed as something to tack on if there is time in the schedule, but rather as a central element with the social, political, and economic context of all human history" (Blair, Williams & Fralinger, 2008, p. 175). We can add to the great stories of the

past by voicing their perspectives. This would give all our students a more enriching and balanced education.

Change is often slow; the women's rights movement took seventy years to achieve suffrage. "This does not mean that women's history lacks turning points or that it forms one long progression of achievement. Rather, it shows us that when turning points do occur, they usually involve multiple causes that have deep social roots and extend across more than one generation" (Sklar & Dublin, 2009, p. 4). It takes generations to enact change, and generations more to keep fighting for their successes. In 1976, not long after the 1960s feminist movement, Mathews expressed her hope for women in the future:

> These historiographical trends of the present are now shaping future historical accounts in general and educational histories in particular prominent as well as average women are likely to receive greater coverage in historical accounts by both social and intellectual historians (1976, p. 52).

How well has this statement held up? Many would say that we have yet to reach that vision. Within the last 15 years, Jackson-Abernathy, Woodburn, and Blair, Williams, and Fralinger have all lamented how the great man/great deed narratives still prevail in the social studies classrooms. Many of the challenges of the past have been overcome, but as teachers we must continue to make sure these gains are not eroded. Even if it is only individual educators maintaining awareness of the victories of the past.

Several researchers have advocated the inclusion of women in traditional history courses. One example is *Clio in the Classroom* by Berkin, Crocco, and Winslow (2009). The authors

collected articles from various experts to help teachers include women into their United States history classes. They state, “Our major goal in this book is to offer history instructors at the high school and college level the key content, concepts and teachings strategies that have proven successful in teaching this subject [women’s history] to students” (2009, p. 4). While these resources exist, they are not always implemented in classrooms. In a review of current academic literature on the subject, Bohan writes, “Certainly, gender and social studies education research should reach a broader audience” (2017, p. 246). Unfortunately, the academic work that Bohan reviewed in her article seldom makes it to the classroom.

The need for the inclusion of women in history could not be made clearer than by Kocurek. In her article *Women’s History for Games: A Manifesto and Way Forward* (2017), she explains the importance of introducing women into the conversation from day one. She investigated a relatively new field of study in history: the history of video games. The video game industry appeared to be dominated by men, and these images have been adopted into popular consciousness. After further investigation it was revealed that women were integral. She cited three women who were instrumental in the early development of the video game industry. Her article is an attempt to correct that misconception of women in the industry prior to becoming ingrained in society:

> We have countless examples before us of failures not of history, but of historiography, of our own inability as professional historians to separate ourselves from cultural systems of value that make us disinclined to look closely enough to see the work that, by design or by neglect, goes unseen (2017, p. 55).

As teachers we can illuminate the varied contributions of women throughout history. By making sure that our students are presented with multiple perspectives, we can open them to a fuller vision of history. In doing so, we may perhaps prevent the mistakes of the past from reoccurring as evidenced by Kocurek:

> The process by which women's accomplishments are minimized and women are denied professional recognition is itself historical-a result of complete cultural and socioeconomic issues-but it is also historiographic, because it is often constructed through the work of historical research. If we want to find the histories of women, we must look for them, both in the archives and in our communities (2017, p.66).

Kocurek's words resonated with me as an educator. They go beyond the historical realm in which she works. The problem could be boiled down to how people view each other. As she stated, it may even be a result of our cultural systems of value. As a teacher I want to uplift students and to bring value to their contributions to society. This led me to ask: As social studies teachers, how can we better include women? The standards given to us often support the traditional narratives of great men and great deeds. Usually these men are white, and rarely are the contributions of *any* women mentioned throughout history (State of Oklahoma, 2019). How can we navigate the current curriculum to bring in more voices in an already limited time frame? These are the questions that I seek to answer. Connecting with current classroom teachers, I wanted to know how social studies educators can better represent women in mainstream history courses?

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

For my study, I have chosen to use Parker Palmer's thesis as a theoretical framework. According to Merriam and Tisdell, a theoretical framework is "an underlying structure, the scaffolding or frame of your study" (2017, p. 85). This scaffolding informed my study and assisted with the development and pursuit of the findings. Through Palmer's thesis I was able to illuminate the meanings of my findings.

Parker Palmer originally wrote the *Courage to Teach* in 1998. In this book, he proposed it was not simply the instructional methods that were important in understanding successful teachers, but also "the inner landscape of the teaching self" (Palmer, 2017, p. 5). In other words, we should understand not only the *how* but also the *who* of teaching. This understanding was essential in interpreting my findings.

Palmer's argument was developed to explore the importance of the inner self of teachers. While he did feel that exploring instructional methods and curriculum was essential to teaching, and therefore worthy of pursuit, he also felt that the *who* also should be explored. Palmer developed a taxonomy of inquiry that explained his reasoning. For Palmer, the *what* and *how* gave way to the *why*, which in turn gave way to the *who*. Palmer observed that most research inquiries involving teaching revolve around the *what* and *how*, and only occasionally explore the *why*. He wanted to take his inquiry further, investigating not only the *why* but also the *who*. For this reason, he sought to understand the inner selves of good teachers. He stated:

> In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula, and

> revising texts if we continue to demean and dishearten the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends (Palmer, 2017, p. 4).

Palmer understood it were teachers who taught from their inner selfs that created success for students in classrooms. He reflected, “the human heart, that is the source of good teaching” (Palmer, 2017, p. 4).

Palmer argued that teaching from the inner self consisted of two important aspects: identity and integrity. He saw identity as, “the evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of the self” (Palmer, 2017, p. 13). This inner self may include nature, nurture, culture, and community. Integrity, on the other hand, was “whatever wholeness I am able to find within that nexus as its vector form and re-form the pattern of my life” (Palmer, 2017, p. 14). For Palmer, the root of “integrity” was integration. Therefore, integrity included understanding and living honestly within one's identity. Integrity was creating external realities that reflected the inner self. Understanding both our identity and integrity were essential in the success of teachers. Palmer continued, “When I succumb to [the] temptation [to hide behind the barricades that hide my inner self], my identity and integrity are diminished – and I lose the heart to teach” (Palmer, 2017, p. 17).

In addition, Palmer proposed that education had followed an objective myth. This myth laid education in a liner fashion with a hierarchal distribution and knowing truth. Truth is then passed down to the expert and further to the amateur, never to rebound up that chain (Palmer, 2017). He stated instead truth was based more on communities. A community of truth “does not reside primarily in propositions, and education is more than delivering propositions about objects

to passive auditors. In the community of truth, knowing and teaching and learning look less like General Motors and more like a town meeting, less like a bureaucracy and more like bedlam" (Palmer, 2017, p. 104). Palmer illustrated that the construction of "truth" could be full of give-and-take. This requires places where information and feedback can be allowed to exist. He understood truth was built upon the interaction between the knower, the subject, and other knowers. He argues education should reflect this model of knowing truth.

Palmer's argument of the importance of the inner self of the educator and the construction of truth resonated with my research. As the findings took shape, it became clear that they reflected the arguments that Palmer laid out. The *how* and the *why* of education are certainly important, but it is the *who* of teaching that became the central answer to my question. How my participants constructed their classrooms was a reflection of the community of truth described by Palmer. As a result, Parker Palmer's thesis became a valuable interpretive framework for my study.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

In my search for insight I had to determine the most appropriate research methods for my study. In order to gain the answer to my questions, I decided I would ask those that are currently teaching in the classroom. I approached seasoned social studies educators to learn from their experiences. I wanted to know, first-hand, how they adapted their curriculum to be more inclusive of diversity, in general, and of women, in particular. For this reason, I felt a qualitative study was the best approach for my topic.

According to Merriam and Tisdell in *Qualitative Research: Guide to Design and Implementation*, qualitative research was "how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (2017, p. 15). I wanted to gain insight into how educators were successfully including women in their social studies classroom. Merriam and Tisdell further describe four traits that described or characterized qualitative research: (1) searching for meaning and understanding, (2) the researcher as a primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data, (3) use of an inductive process, and (4) providing rich description (2017).

These descriptions all played a role in how I conducted my research. For example, the characteristic of seeking understanding fit my research because I sought to gain insight into how teachers created an inclusive curriculum. Another characteristic of my study was that I, as the researcher, was the main instrument of data collection and analysis. In addition to formulating the research question and designing the study, I needed to seek out the data and analyze the information for interpretation. This developed into a recursive process. The third characteristic, induction, was also illustrated in the approach I used for my research process. Inquiry led to insights, from which I developed further inquiry questions and gathered and analyzed further

data that were found. Unlike quantitative research that focuses on hypothesis testing, this study focused on building concepts and theories based upon participants explanations of their work. The final characteristic was that this research required rich descriptions. In order to really explain how women can be incorporated in mainstream social studies courses, the study required rich description of the information both to gain insight from my participants and then to share these insights with my readers.

Within qualitative research, there are multitudes of technical variations. I felt this inquiry best fit the basic qualitative research design described by Merriam & Tisdell. This design allowed me to get to the heart of my research question by asking teachers how their experiences illustrated or reflected their understandings of the *how* and *why* they incorporated women into their history teaching. As a beginning, I asked my participants for their experiences in how they generally approached inclusion in their curriculum. I was interested in learning how they interpreted their experiences and constructed their worlds, and in their creation of meanings from their experiences (2017). My primary goal was to "uncover and interpret these meanings" (2017, p. 25). I wanted to identify the most current trends and contemporary data, so I interviewed contemporary educators.

For this study, I used purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling "is based off the assumption that the investigator wanted to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (2017, p. 96). For this research question, it was important to define or characterize what I considered "inclusive" teachers. For me, inclusive teachers are educators who go beyond their current educational standards to represent voices from all people. In this study, I was interested in educators who were known for

their incorporation of the history of women in mandatory history courses. I felt the highest priority for this research was that the participants were identifiably inclusive in their classroom. The educators I selected were identified by their communities. Through their experiences, I was able to gain insight into how teachers can navigate the present educational climate and bring balance and representation into their classrooms. From this study, I identified clear pathways to more inclusive teaching.

To gather the required data, I selected five teachers to interview. Each was a woman, and each was recognized in her field as being a conscientious educator. They were all teachers who had previously or were currently working on Masters degrees, and their experience ranged from 6 to 20 years in the classroom. The participants taught grades 6-12 social studies in public education settings. Their classes included a variety of subjects, including world history, government, United States history, and Oklahoma history. Through their collective experience, I was be able to answer the question: How can we better include women into all mainstream history courses?

Five social studies teachers agreed to be interviewed. All were from the Oklahoma City area. The first teacher interviewed was Eleanor. She spoke with confidence and understanding that reflected her 18 years of teaching experience. She had taught most high school social studies subjects, including world history, U.S. history, Oklahoma history, international studies, 20th century history, and government. She struck me as an individual who had a clear vision for education and worked tirelessly to see it come to fruition.

The second teacher, Catharine, was a kind-hearted social studies teacher. She started her career in elementary schools and then taught for 6 years at an Oklahoma high school. Her quiet

demeanor hid a deep knowledge that she exercised in her world history classes. Catharine had a deep sense of enjoyment from teaching that was expressed by her quick smile when she shared memories of her classroom. She also carried hope for the future and felt that it was a privilege to help prepare youth for their places in the world.

Marie was the third participant. She exuded creativity and freedom. She had 6 years of experience split between a rural Oklahoma school and a suburban school district. Marie had taught across multiple social studies subjects, but her passion was world history. Her creativity was seen in how she approached her class. She found new and exciting ways to engage her students that sparked their interest. She felt history consisted of more than names and dates, and should include care and art. She felt that her job was to show her students the human side of history.

The fourth teacher, Abigale, was in her seventh year of teaching U.S. history at a suburban school district. At this school she had expertly led her students through their middle school experiences. It appeared that no detail escaped her attention. Her classroom was well thought out and was organized to help her students learn. Abigale recognized the capacity of her students' to understand, and she loved to challenge them.

The final teacher was Elizabeth, who had spent the past eight years sharing her energy and passion with her high school AP world history students. She was the personification of energy and professionalism. Her passion was most evident when describing what she felt was the most important aspect of teaching. She believed in authenticity and building trust with her students. Despite her youthful appearance, she exhibited the wisdom to understand that trust and respect take time and work.

Each participant was interviewed separately and in person for approximately 30 minutes. The questions were developed beforehand and sent to each teacher ahead of time. This was in order to standardize the interview process and maintain consistency in the data collection process. The interviews would be considered semi-structured because although a script was used to guide the questions, it was not strictly followed. The purpose was to create open conversations and comfortable atmospheres between myself and the participants. The interviews were recorded digitally then transcribed for data analysis.

The first step after conducting each interview was to transcribe the information. The interviews were digitally recorded. They were transcribed via a computer program and supplemented by manual transcription to ensure accuracy. Furthermore, they were verified by comparing the transcriptions and the recordings. Once complete, the information was coded and categorized.

After transcription, I began data analysis. First, open coding occurred. Here, as the researcher, I "identified any segment that might be useful" (2017, 204). The data were open to any code that would bring structure or meaning to them. Here I found that two overarching patterns emerged from the information. All five teachers responded not only to the question of *how* they included women, but also to *why*. As a result, this coding provided partial or potential answers to the two questions: *how* and *why*. The 'why' category sought to determine why some teachers went beyond the traditional curriculum to include women. The 'how' category tried to understand *how* they included women into their classroom curriculum and instruction.

After open coding, axial coding occurred. Axial coding is the "process of grouping the open codes" (2017, 206). Within these overarching categories, the data was compared to create

themes across the interviews. These themes where categorized and analyzed to further compared to Parker Palmer's theoretical framework. This created the shape for the interpretation of the findings.

Finally, as a researcher, I think it is important to acknowledge my positionality. My interest in this topic stems from my choice in the subject of study. I was University of Oklahoma graduate student who pursued a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in Social Studies Education. I hold deep interest in education and the role social studies plays in our students' lives. As a woman, I saw little representation of women in the historical curriculum through my public school experiences. This was something that I felt was important to change. I wanted to see women have greater representation in history classes. I felt that they should not be relegated to suffrage movements; there are a greater variety of examples of women who have contributed to society. For this reason, I wanted to learn from teachers who were currently making inclusive choices in their classroom. Several of the teachers I interviewed were individuals who I had met in class and shared similar viewpoints on inclusion. All the teachers were recognized by the faculty within my department as expert social studies teachers who were dedicated to creating inclusive spaces.

Chapter 4: Findings

All five teachers that I interviewed revealed unique ways they approached their classrooms. Through their thoughtful answers, I was able to gather and code valuable data. As a result of this process several overlapping themes emerged, connecting the ways these teachers included women in their mainstream history courses. The themes that arose involved engagement, the use of primary documents, collaboration, and creating classroom environments that were conducive to learning.

Engagement

Engagement was one of the strongest themes to emerge from the interviews. All of my participants sought to create interest in their topics. They felt that if they could capture their students' interest, they would be able teach about historical contributions of women more effectively. Each teacher used a variety of methods to improve her students' engagement. One of the common engagement techniques shared by these teachers was the use of visual media.

The visual media included a variety of formats, including art, music, videos, pictures, maps, and political cartoons. The most common method was to use media to capture the students' attention. Once this was achieved, the teachers would ask students questions about the media. Through this technique, they piqued their students' curiosity and then explored the topic for the day. I initially felt this was a simple path: Show the students a picture, ask questions, and start exploring the topic. Upon further discussion, I realized it was more than a simple formula. It

required finesse to steer students through interesting and thought-provoking discussions of the specific topics. For this reason, I dug deeper with my interviews.

Eleanor, the high school U.S. history teacher with 18 years of experience, brought up several examples of how she engaged her students with media. One illustration, in particular, stood out. The lesson she discussed was to explore international boundaries in the Arctic. I could tell through her excitement that she was able to capture the students' attention early. She stated, "I started the whole lesson with this picture; it's an underwater picture of like a robot arm and it's got a little Russian flag in it, and it's like staking the Russian flag on the floor of the ocean." However, Eleanor did not simply show the picture to her class and talk about it. Rather, she used the picture to get the students' thinking. She challenged them by asking, "What do you think is happening in this picture? You have three minutes to figure it out?" According to Eleanor, by the end of the three minutes the students had figured out that it was a Russian flag, underwater at the north pole, and that Russia was expanding its national borders by planting the flag.

Eleanor stated that the students were amazed that national boundaries were still expanding in 2007 because this fact challenged their preconceived notions that national borders were fixed. Upon reflection, I saw the mastery of what Eleanor demonstrated. She was able to engage her students in a topic by starting with a simple picture and making it a focal point of a mystery for her students to solve. Through this inquiry, Eleanor was able to lead her students down the paths of thinking about international borders and how they are developed. The students inquired further, "Is that like putting a flag on the moon?" From that point, Eleanor knew she had achieved her goal of engaging her students.

Eleanor used this example to demonstrate how she was able to engage her students. She introduced topics through interesting photos, then followed up with questions for her class. Her students would get immersed in the mysteries she created for them. While the Arctic illustration was a favored example of this approach, Eleanor used similar techniques when she introduced women in her history courses. It was clear that for Eleanor, student engagement was an important step in the teaching process.

A second example of using media to promote student engagement came from Marie, the high school world history teacher who loved to use art in her history classes. She felt that art connected students to the emotions of artists and, by doing so, helped to bring them closer to historical periods. She also loved to find female artists to share with her students, "I mean there are a lot of amazing female artists that convey so much emotion through art because of the timeframe."

I asked Marie if there was anyone that she or her students felt was particularly impactful. Unhesitatingly she responded, "You have like Frida [Kahlo] and it's, like wow, what am I looking at, but when you look at the context of what was going on at that time, it is pretty impactful." From Marie's responses, it was more than introducing female artists; it was about avoiding cold and static history. She wanted history to be full of life and color and emotions. She tried to create a living history that everyone could relate to. Part of that endeavor was to include female artists in her curriculum. She felt when she connected students to artists, the students became more engaged with history.

Using media was more than simply showing students pictures. As demonstrated by Eleanor and Marie, there were additional elements that were important to them. These elements included inciting their students' curiosity and excitement and generating emotion. Through engagement, these teachers were able to ignite their students' interest in women's history.

Eleanor and Marie challenged their students to expand their knowledge about women by introducing them to new ideas. However, they were not the only teachers to do so. Catharine, the elementary teacher who switched to high school, also loved to challenge her students. She revealed to me that one of her favorite ways to get students interested in women's history was to challenge their historical assumptions. She found that her students felt the suffrage movements happened a long time ago and were therefore no longer relevant. She discovered several ways to challenge their ideas. One of her favorite examples was she liked to discuss the chronological order of countries granting women's suffrage. "We [American Women] get the right to vote right after World War One… in the United States, but many countries preceded us, so you know…. Which is, you know, an interesting conversation where you're hopefully confronting students with questions of preconceived ideas of what it means to be progressive or western." Confronting students' own ideas of historical narratives created a sense of challenge and engagement in Catherine's history courses.

Catharine was not the only teacher who liked to use provocative narratives to engage her students. Abigale, the middle school teacher, used similar techniques. She often introduced documents that " would say something that they just can't believe it was a real thing... like a specific list of policies or customs or laws that were acceptable in like the political norms….

[but] that would shock them. [These things] seemed like a long time ago, but it wasn't that long ago." Using documents she knew would confront her students' preconceived ideas she challenged them further into discussions about the role of women in history.

Abigale first challenged her students to think about social norms, then further engaged them by helping them see connections between historical ideas and current events. She led her students down a path to connect history to current events:

> [In] a particular unit we talk about The Declaration of Sentiments. Kind of taking some of these past things with our concerns for women, [and asking] how have they improved or not improved? [We discuss] some of the modern issues that affect women even now. We talk about gender pay gaps and then things like that.

Abigale wanted her students to understand society's need for continued progress. Through these questioning techniques, they started to connect how the events of the past were still relevant today.

Helping their students create connections was one of the common themes expressed by my participants. During the interviews I noticed that every teacher would make a connection between the past and the present. Abigale mentioned that she needed her students to understand their world wasn't created in a vacuum. One way she did this was by "looking at themes that are still relevant today, [and helping them realize] these didn't just come out of nowhere because these have been ongoing historical narratives that kind of repeat in various ways."

Similarly, Eleanor mentioned that when she taught AP US history, she spent a significant amount of class time exploring the cult of domesticity. She asked her students to compare United

States gender relations of the 1800 to the present. Her students described how many past expectations are still expected today. Eleanor explained that she "wanted to always bring it back to what's happening right now and, in their life, as a high school kid. I think that helped both boys and girls see the relevance of those things in their lives as [both] historical and relevant."

Throughout my student, engagement was a key. Every participant seemed to love to create engaging classrooms. They described helping their students find connections and build upon their knowledge. Whichever techniques these educators relied on, their goals always started out the same: To get their students engaged. Once engaged, they weaved the stories of women alongside those of men to create a greater understanding of history.

Primary Documents

In addition to engaging their students' interest, each of my participants described the importance of using primary documents. In fact, the use of primary documents was one of the the ways they wove the stories of men and women together in order to engage their students. All five teachers named primary documents as an indispensable tool for adding women into their curriculum. They felt that primary documents were indispensable because the provided curriculum left voices out. Primary documents were tools to easily add those missing voices in order to help their students fill in the gaps.

Catharine stated that she sought out primary documents because she needed to "essentially go outside of that provided curriculum." Abigale admitted that she struggled with identifying individual women within the standards. According to her, the standards are "not

terrible but they're not super inclusive." Abigale further mentioned that "just finding primary sources that are from the perspective of a woman is my go-to." She wanted her students to "hear their voices alongside the men that are prominently displayed."

Marie also found primary documents to be essential. To create engagement, she used them to develop mysteries for her students to solve, "I use different quotes from people, and they are trying to figure out who this person was just based off of the quotes that they heard." In developing these mysteries her students investigated different eras and challenged their understanding historical narratives. Marie observed that when she would reveal who the mystery person was, the students were often surprised. She further discussed the importance of providing historical context, describing how she expertly pieced together narratives that included a variety of perspectives.

Collaboration

In addition to engaging students and using primary documents, another significant theme was collaboration. Having students work together to solve problems was another way my participants brought the history of women into their classrooms. For Abigale, bringing in different perspectives meant creating more empathy between her students. She facilitated discussions in which the voices of the female students were encouraged. For example, she had her students review "The Declaration of Sentiments." She described her students' responses, "They really respond to that because they kind of all have different answers…. There is a dynamic between the young women in class and the young men in the class, where some of them

will be like ‘hey that’s not a problem’, and the girls will be like ‘well have you ever had that happen?’” As a result, all the students gained better understanding of these historical issues because they would empathize with their peers who related to these historical women.

Marie also used groupwork in her classes, but with a unique flare. She gave her students a choice in what they learned and allowed them to collaborate as they chose. She felt giving her students autonomy created better learning environments. Her students were able to decide for themselves who they wanted to learn about. They often focused on women. According to Marie, “When they have project-based learning, they get to pick a lot of information that they want to learn. A lot of the time they will pick women.” I was deeply intrigued by the idea of student choice and asked why she initially took the risk to try it. Marie stated:

> I mean, it’s like a buy-in for my class, and I feel like they respect me more because I take their thoughts into consideration rather than listening to whatever…. They don’t feel like it’s forced on them, and they feel like it’s more valuable to them, so it makes the curriculum more real to them and more personal.

For Marie the benefits of creating autonomy for her students paid many dividends. One of those dividends was that her students often chose to learn about women.

Classroom Environments

The final theme involved the creation of classroom learning environments that were conducive to learning and growth. Like the other participants, Elizabeth, the AP world history

teacher, also loved the use of collaboration and group work in her classroom, “I teach primarily through groupwork or collaborative learning. I use a lot of simulation and seminars in class, I just get them to talk to one another.” Much like Abigale, Elizabeth used collaboration to help increase empathy between her students. Creating spaces for these conversations increased the awareness of the issues that were important for all genders represented in her classroom. Additionally, through collaboration she “used the content to develop the skills.” Skills, Elizabeth felt, were what students needed from her classroom. She wanted her history class to be more than learning content; she wanted her students to develop life skills.

The desire for her students to develop life skills delves to the heart of Elizabeth's classroom. When she discussed the importance of her work, I sensed a level of dedication to her students that drove her desire to give her students the best education possible. She wanted a classroom for everyone, and she felt that it was her job to create that environment. “I honestly think that good teaching begins with strong relationships with your students in a safe environment for them to explore”. Once she established that safe environment, Elizabeth led her students to explore history. From that point, her goal was to create inclusive classrooms for all her students. For this reason, Elizabeth made additional efforts to include the voices that were often excluded from traditional narratives.

Although Elizabeth spoke most explicitly about the importance of creating a classroom environment that was conducive to learning and development, it was clear that each of my participants paid careful attention to this dimension of teaching. Abigale did it through grouping her students in ways in the students would hear and learn from each other’s genders, and Marie

created an environment of choice and intrigue. Each participant in her own unique way created a classroom environment that was conducive to achieving greater integration of the history of women.

Moving from the How to the Why

Woven throughout these interviews were my participants' underlying motivations for the inclusion of women in their curriculum. Every teacher gave details of *how* they included women in their classroom, but they also explored *why* this was important for them. Each of the participants had to reach beyond the provided materials to bring women into their history courses. Going beyond the curriculum required additional effort in their already demanding professions. They had to hold firm convictions in order to spend their already limited time to seek out additional resources. If they did not have these basic convictions, there would not have been a *how*.

During the coding process, themes arose for *how* these teachers included women in their curriculum. Similarly, themes also arose for *why* they included women in their curriculum. To my participants, the *why* was just as important as the *how*. Two sub-themes of *why* the inclusion of women was important to my participants were representation and positive community change.

With regard to seeking representation, Marie was quick to explain why she worked to include women in her classroom: "I mean half of our classes are girls, so when we're just talking about men the whole time we're not representing everybody." She acknowledged that within the

standards and textbooks she was provided, there was a lack of gender representation. For Marie, providing additional information was a way to balance the scales towards equal representation.

Catharine felt the same way, stating “I think students, half of which are young women, are needing to see their own experience reflected in the world because history, essentially, is recorded human history. It’s unfortunate that so often we present history as just the purview of largely white landed men.” She further explained her thoughts: “In ways in which it’s important for young women, it’s also important for our young men. I think because it’s a richer world when more of our voices, more of our experiences, more of our values are incorporated into the curriculum.” Catherine felt that if students were limited in their perspectives, they often failed to obtain a full sense of history.

Elizabeth also felt representation mattered from a personal level. She stated:

> I also felt like the experience of women was really downplayed…. It made me really realize how impactful it would have been if I had myself represented in the curriculum in a positive way. So, when I approach teaching in my own classroom, I think about what I would’ve wanted as a student.

She empathized with the students in her class. As a result, she sought representation through their eyes, “I want to make sure that I’m honoring all of the different stories of my students that come to my classroom, and I want them to see their history in world history.”

Representation was a starting point. Most of the interviewed teachers indicated that they needed greater inclusion because they felt women were being underrepresented. For these teachers, underrepresentation was simply the tip of the iceberg. It seemed to me that there was a

greater purpose behind their motivations. Elizabeth alluded to it first when she mentioned she wanted her students to have a fuller educational experience. What many of my participants wanted to create within their classrooms reflected what they felt society needed. They voiced there were people of the past who needed their voices to be heard. They wanted to show this past to their students to help prevent future injustices by giving women more visibility in their classrooms. This, they felt, would help their students to shape a better future.

Abigale stated that she wanted to help her students grow as future citizens. She didn't want them to leave her classroom without an understanding of the past. She did not want them to perpetuate its mistakes: "We have these ideals that we claim of individual liberties and freedom and equality, and we struggle to make these a reality historically for various groups of people." Abigale asked her students to think critically about the past. She asked, "In what ways have we improved those things, and in what ways have we not?" Her goal was to help her students see how we have changed as a society and where we still can grow:

> I think it's important to realize that when we tell stories culturally, that's what our history is…. We talk about the revolution increasing liberties and things for other people, but did it for everyone? No, and not for a while, and even now we still struggle with some of those things.

For Abigale, her students needed to hear the voices of the past to see the realities of the present.

Along with Abigale, Eleanor had similar views, "Instead of just reproducing society, we are transforming it. It's like citizenship for social change and to improve whatever situational issues we have that we still need to work on." Eleanor also felt history was not relegated to the

past and that, as a society, we haven't yet arrived at our destination. She wanted to inspire her students to keep on pursuing liberties and freedoms for themselves and their fellow citizens.

Like Abigale and Eleanor, Catharine also found inspiration when she reflected on her classroom. She stated:

> Working with young people like my 10th grade world history students, they are so hellbent that they can make things better, and they have so many ideas on how to do that. I think it is really inspiring to be around young people, and it gives me a lot of hope.

The determination expressed by her students provided Catharine with a sense of purpose. Like the others, Catharine felt it was her responsibility to create a space, an environment, for her students to develop their ideas. She recognized that helping her students make positive community changes required her to step outside of the curricular norms. She stated that she wanted to share unique voices: "It's the same with how history is so often just the story of men. I don't want to just treat women [differently]. I just want to insert them into that narrative. In March we have Women's History Month, and we can do more than talk about suffrage."

Like Catherine, Marie and Elizabeth wanted women's history to be the norm. Marie stated, "I wouldn't want a separate class just for female historical figures because I want them to be mixed in with the curriculum as much as possible…. It separates them, and that bothers me. I want it to be an equal playing field." Similarly, Elizabeth wanted her students to see that women have shared roles in history. She often had to look outside of the traditional narratives to show her students how women have influenced the world. According to Elizabeth:

> I look at what role do women play. In the spread of religion we look at monastic community that's where women can have a lot of power is in religious monastic communities because [it is a] community of women making rules about women so we look at that. We [also] look at the role that women play in the spread of religions, or in influencing like social change because there's a lot of power in that women hold in promoting social change within society.

Like the others, Elizabeth thought that having the students in her classes see how women have made changes would help empower them in their own communities.

Facilitating positive community changes through education was a significant motivator for my participants. They felt their students deserved someone who wanted the best for them, someone who would advocate for them. These teachers became those advocates within their students' lives. They filled a need to help their students, but they also went beyond that need. They wanted to help their students develop the skills to advocate for themselves. During the interviews, my participants described classrooms that were places of safety and comfort for their students. Places where they could ask questions, seek truth, grow as citizens, and see each other as equals. Those classrooms were not accidents. Each teacher deliberately created those spaces from a desire to help their students grow. During every interview I observed an unspoken passion these teachers held for their students.

It seems to me the passion I observed can only be described as a love for all students. The extra time, the constant evaluation of their lessons, the detailed creation of their classrooms, their fostering of relationships, their choices in curriculum, and the sharing of their experiences with

me in their interviews all pointed to a deep-set desire to help all students. They wanted to see them grow and prosper in their world. I had such a deep sense of this during the interviews that I decided to take a moment away from my focus on the curriculum, and I asked each of my participants what they loved most about teaching.

Every teacher immediately brightened, and with the biggest grin imaginable explained why they loved teaching. Eleanor explained, “I really love getting to know young people and keeping up with them after they graduate, seeing them become an adult in this world and being a part of that, especially when they express gratitude for the work that you have done.” For Eleanor, what she loved was seeing her students grow and take their place in their communities. For Catharine, enjoyment came with the fulfillment of teaching: “I always joke that I love teaching because kids are so funny and so smart and so passionate. I think it is good for the soul to be around young people, and in some ways it’s a little selfish to be in the profession because I get so much from it.”

Another example of the joy of teaching was expressed by Abigale: “What I love most about [teaching] is having the opportunity to give me meaning in my life. It gives me some fulfillment… Today it is rough, and sometimes you forget why you love it. Then you have one of those moments where instead of being concerned about them having like a specific answer or you know, which standards did [you] cover today, you have this organic, like a real conversation with them.” It was clear that Abigale loved to engage in meaningful conversations with her students.

Finally, Elizabeth's passion was seeing her students succeed. "I authentically want to know about their days, and I will listen to their problems and, you know, I just try my best to show them I care. Like it's not an act and it's not a front. Like I authentically care, and I want to authentically see them succeed. I am authentically on their side and their advocate." Central to Elizabeth's joy in teaching was being available to her students.

It seemed clear to me that all five teachers loved being in the classroom. They loved to spend time and help their students grow. They loved to see how they shaped their students' lives and to know that they had played a part. Each teacher shared different ways in which she connected with her students. What started as an inquiry into how to better include women in the classroom led to the exploration of the heart of a successful teacher.

The *how* of teaching is important, but there cannot be a *how* without a *why*. But by the same token, there cannot be a *why* without a *who*. And, as Palmer (2017) rightly observed, the *who* was the central piece of the puzzle. That person must have passion and care for their students. They must have the motivation to continue to reshape their curriculum to best help their students. Without compassion and love for their profession, there is no reason to seek the *how*. These teachers who brought their hearts and souls into their classrooms are the ones who continually mold their curriculum to better reflect and serve their students. This care, in turns, helps prepare their students for their roles as citizens within their communities.

Returning to the theoretical framework described in Chapter Two, I would like to conclude this chapter by drawing comparisons between the findings of my study and Parker Palmer's thesis in *The Courage to Teach* (2017). My analysis followed a similar path to Palmer's

taxonomy of inquiry and his idea of the community of truth. As Palmer observed, I initially sought the *what* and the *how* in my questioning. I wanted to know what instructional methods were being used to incorporate women into today's history classrooms. I found a sufficient amount of information related to this question. My participants used primary documents and engagement techniques, encouraged collaboration, and created classroom environments to help bring women into their curriculum.

However, also like Palmer, I felt there was a deeper question to be asked: *Why* was it important to include women? Through the coding process, several distinct themes also emerged to the question of *why* my participants believed it was important to include women. Each of them wanted to see greater representation and to assist their students in growing as citizens. They also wanted to help their students create positive changes for society. Their words and their stories gave insight and motivation into *why* they believed it was important to include women in the classroom. Also, like Palmer, I felt that there was even more to the inquiry than the *what*, the *how*, and the *why*. Sensing an underlying similarity shared by the five teachers, late in the process I realized that while the *what*, *how*, and *why* were certainly important, it was really the *who* of the teacher that made the difference.

Additionally, the teachers in this study seemed to represent and to promote in their teaching what Palmer (2017) calls the community of truth. The tools and instructional methods they used reflected Palmer's model of knowing. My participants used their knowledge, but they also included additional resources (e.g., primary documents, media) and invited and valued their students' voices to build the collective knowing of truth in their classrooms. None of the

participants believed they were the sole owner or authority of truth, and each developed a space that reflected the value of considering multiple perspectives.

Every teacher I interviewed taught from her inner-self, as described by Palmer. Each of participants understood her identity and taught with integrity. Each had developed a passion for a profession that assisted young people in finding who they were. Without this connection and motivation, these educators may have followed the similar paths of many other teachers who have lost the love of their profession. They could have started seeing their work as a job rather than a vocation, a calling (Palmer, 1917), and they could have become satisfied with the status quo. Perhaps even settling for the mediocre and condemning their students to experience just another lifeless classroom. Instead, they maintained their professional integrity and continually sought to overcome the challenges they faced. They created educative experiences worthy of their students. Part of this included expanding narrow-sighted curricula. It involved challenging their students to seek beyond themselves and the world as it was presented to them. They hoped their students could see as they did: A world that was worthy of beauty and notice.

Since my participants taught who they were, they became successful in their educational endeavors. For each of them, inclusion was important. Not simply the inclusion of women, but of all student identities. They wanted for their students to see themselves reflected within the historical curriculum. As noted by Palmer, without the *who*, there can be no *why*. and without the *why*, there can be no *how* or *what*. Teaching with integrity to oneself was crucial in the development and success of each of these teachers' classrooms.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implications

This study has been both enlightening and empowering. Through this research, I was able to gather a multitude of answers to my questions. I discovered that social studies teachers who were currently incorporating women into their mainstream courses were using a variety of methods to do so. Although I felt that I had found practical answers to my research question, there was an underlying current that propelled me to investigate further. By digging further into the information, I uncovered teaching was more than simply the *what* and *how*. I found it also required an understanding of the *why* and the *who*.

The *how* and *what* required the teachers to reach outside the given curriculum. They were required to seek out additional tools to help them incorporate women for their history students. They used current media and introduced students to the voices of the past through primary documents. Additionally, they purposely set up classroom dialogue and created a classroom environment that allowed for safe sharing of experiences. They hoped and believed that this helped their students develop empathy for each other. They also believed these instructional methods helped their students gain better pictures of women in history. I saw there were reasons my participants expended the additional effort to include women in the curriculum.

My participants also felt that their students needed to see themselves represented more in the curriculum. As a result, they endeavored to create classrooms that reflected who their students were. They thought it was important for their students to see themselves reflected in history. By doing so it may have helped students feel more empowered to act within their own lives. Thus, they could have power to construct their own lives within their communities. It

seemed that this desire to have positive impacts on their students' lives was intrinsic to my participants' identities.

Teaching for the inner self described by Parker Palmer was a central theme in the success of my participants. They understood *who* they were as teachers and held the integrity to teach to their inner self. Based on their descriptions of the classroom, their students greatly benefitted from this because each participant authentically taught from her central core. Because they taught from their inner self, these teachers were motivated to go beyond the standards and provided their students with educations that resonated with the students' lives. Within this resonance, my participants felt their students were more likely to feel empowered to address the challenges within their communities.

Teaching from the inner self required two important aspects. It required for educators to understand their identities and to have integrity to live to these identities (Palmer, 2017). Through my interviews, it seemed clear that these teachers knew who they were. They were confident in stating their instructional methods and why it was important for them to pursue them. Their integrity was a critical aspect for generating successful learning environments. My participants taught because they authentically cared. I believe our students need these types of teachers, and they need more of them.

Teaching can be an intimidating career because of the responsibility that is placed on our shoulders. We are expected to guide young people into better futures by giving them skills they need to navigate the world. It can be difficult because our self-hood is put on the line every time we enter the classroom and interact with students. Acceptance and rejection can be a daily reality

that has to be faced. What my participants showed in their interviews was an acceptance of these challenges. They faced them because there was an inner desire to help their students; they truly cared about their students' futures. For these teachers, those risks were worth it because they understood how one teacher could make a difference. They wanted to let their students know that someone cared for them. My participants answered that call of service and have been successful in filling the role that have taken on.

In fulfilling that role, my participants sought to create inclusive classrooms that honored all perspectives. They felt history should reflect everyone, and they worked to create lessons that upheld those beliefs. Their students benefited from curriculum that were inclusive of all individuals and respectful of their pasts. In particular, they sought to make sure women were fairly represented within history. They were successful in doing so because their drive to create the best learning spaces for their students granted them motivation to create those classrooms. They recognized a need for young women to be represented more in the classroom and acted upon that recognition.

Women have long been left out of the history books. Even though much of the battles of the past have been won, there was always a risk of losing ground. Since the feminist movements of the 1960's and 1970's, there have been incremental pushes to incorporate more women into the historical curriculum, but unfortunately it often falls to individual teachers to make these changes. It is important for us, as educators, to recognize that need and act upon it. These five teachers recognized this need and refused to stand idly by and wait for someone else to improve representation. They took the initiative and changed to their own classrooms. By doing so, they

have introduced their students to perspectives rarely recognized in regular history courses. This is what is required to make changes within classrooms. It takes recognition, initiative, courage, and heart. Without these traits, classrooms could become static, and students become lost within an uncaring society. But with a little care and passion from teachers, classrooms can become vibrate centers of learning.

This research has presented me with several implications. One implication was it takes teachers who are dedicated to helping their students. My participants demonstrated that their central selves played significant roles in the outcomes of their classrooms. For them, creating representative classrooms was essential to their need to see changes in the historical narratives. They wanted to empower their students by having them represented in the curriculum. If I want to create a learning environment that is representative of our students, I personally must have that inner desire to do so. This is because there are few resources that are given to educators to assist in that endeavor, so I must reach out to bring resources into classrooms. For this reason, teachers should continue to care, not lose heart, and continue to evolve their classroom into an ideal learning environment. By this path they can create more equal and engaging classrooms.

Another implication are the multiple avenues for educators to bring greater representation of women in history courses. These include: Creating student engagement through media; using primary sources; creating collaborative learning spaces; and developing safe classroom environments. Through these instructional methods and curriculum choices my participants were able to create a more representative environment for the young women in their classrooms.

Others may consider this when contemplating what they would like to see in their classroom. Many subjects would greatly improve with the inclusion of women. I make a case for the need for more women representation, but there are a lot of other groups that deserve equal representation. These techniques found in my study can be applied across many educational topics as ways to reach beyond the given curriculum, thus creating a space that is more representative and respectful of all our students' histories.

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