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Taylor Giarrizzo
St. John Fisher College

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History Losing Its Value: Representation of Minorities within High School History Texts

Abstract

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History Losing Its Value:
Representation of Minorities within High School History Texts

By

Taylor Giarrizzo

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Supervised by

Dr. Joellen Maples

School of Arts and Sciences
St. John Fisher College

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Abstract

Textbooks have been viewed as unbiased and influential sources. This study posed the question: how does the representation of minorities in high school history textbooks impact student perception of those races? Research for the study was conducted in a Western New York State suburban high school within two classrooms: one 11th grade A.P. U.S. history class and one 9th grade AVID social studies class. Through textbook analysis, classroom observations, and student interviews, three findings appeared. Lack of information in textbooks caused students to question the source's validity, students gained more information through multiple perspectives, and accurate portrayals of minorities allowed students to form deeper connections and understandings. These findings call for teachers to offer additional sources to accurately portray minorities.

History Losing Its Value:

Representation of Minorities within High School History Texts

In Social Studies classrooms across America, the one book that has been turned to time and time again is the textbook. Regardless of the consistency of its usage, teachers and students alike “place great faith in textbooks as a means of providing . . . an understanding of American history” (Romanowski, 1996, p. 170). This faith compels people to accept all information provided by the text as truth and, to an extent, believe that everything that is important to know about history has been included. But at the same time, an additional factor to consider is how students’ perceptions of the portrayed races are impacted as a result of minority representation within textbooks. For example, one-sided portrayals of events, racial stereotypes, and the lack of critical details can all potentially affect the ways in which students create their own understandings and opinions of a race. By recognizing these factors, “It becomes very important to know what the textbooks contain,” or on the other hand, do not contain (Romanish, 1983, p. 1). Therefore, the topic for this action based research project is the representation of minorities in high school history textbooks.

Researching minority representation in social studies textbooks is critical if students are to ever receive an accurate portrayal of history. By researching the topic, students and teachers can become more aware of the overall content provided within the textbooks and if the information is skewed in any way. Any stereotypes or inaccurate portrayals of a race’s cultural can be acknowledged and addressed to students. In addition to culture, the overall representation of minority groups during events throughout history is another critical aspect to acknowledge. One-sided discussions and excluded details can create a picture of history which students take as truth, but in fact, are inaccurate representations of history and the minorities involved.

In addition, by limiting the amount of relevant information of minorities in textbooks, students begin to draw conclusions that these minorities must not be important. Romanowski (1996) explains, “To a significant extent, textbooks define and determine what is important in American history” (p. 170). By not including minorities, the message that these textbooks are sending to students is that minorities are not important enough to be included. Students are not being presented with an accurate description of society and their knowledge of others becomes skewed. As a result, the student’s skewed perceptions of minorities can create disconnected and ignorant inter-group relationships. Barriers are formed and tensions are created as a partial result of what is being taught through the textbooks.

If the topic of minority representation in history textbooks is not explored, a number of groups would be negatively affected. The first and most obvious group to be affected would be the students, both majority and minority groups. Majority groups would be negatively affected by learning inaccurate information about other races which could then potentially change their perception not only of the minorities being discussed in history, but of modern day descendants of those races. At the same time, minority groups would be given skewed information about their own race which could lead them to believe these incorrect details as truth or even that their races are not important enough to be discussed in history. Another critical affect for minority students which Wolf (1992) explains is that by not including minorities in textbooks, “Minority students will not have the positive role models they need to be visible” (p. 291). In other words, if minority students are only seeing members of their race, ethnicity, or sex portrayed in a negative or stereotypical manner, the students will not know what accomplishments or strengths other minorities have achieved.

Teachers would be another group which would be adversely affected if the topic of minority representation was not explored. In the classroom, teachers are looked to by students, parents, and administration alike as a leading figure, qualified to teach information to children and thus mold their knowledge of history. If teachers are using textbooks or other texts which are not accurately portraying information, specifically the representation of minority groups, then the credibility of the teacher is diminished as well as the students' trust in him or her. Part of a teacher's role in the classroom is to offer relevant, truthful, and unbiased information and if the textbooks hinder this duty, then the teacher is held responsible and thus negatively affected.

On a larger scale, society as a whole will ultimately be hurt if this topic is not researched. Various forms of racial conflict have occurred in society partially due to misunderstandings and ignorance. If the misrepresentation of minorities is being taught daily in high school social studies classrooms through textbooks, it will be nearly impossible for misunderstandings and ignorance to diminish in society. Content which is taught to students becomes viewed as truth to them and as these students grow up and become part of society, they bring these perceptions with them.

The same groups of people who would be hurt if this topic is not researched would also be helped if it was. To begin, Garcia (1993) explains as a result of his research that, "As students gained a more accurate understanding of one another, ignorance, misunderstanding, and racial conflict would begin to disappear from classrooms and society" (p. 31). It is crucial that all students are presented with accurate and unbiased information about minorities in their textbooks. By researching current representations in textbooks and teaching students to question what they are being taught, students will finally begin to gain an accurate picture of not just minorities, but of history as a whole.

The most obvious help that teachers will receive as a result of this research being conducted is that they will become made aware of the messages the textbooks are sending and the effects these messages have on students. Some teachers, like students, may also be under the impression that the information provided within textbooks is unbiased and accurate, thus worthy of being taught to their students. But once minority representation is researched within high school history textbooks, teachers can become better prepared to choose and teach accurate information to their students and at the same time, teach the students to always question the validity of texts they are presented with.

Finally, in the long term, society will be positively affected by this research. More students will be presented with unbiased information about minorities in history which will respectfully change any misconceptions they may have. Students will become better informed about the roles minorities played in history which will carry over into societal views. As a result of this, racial tension will decrease in and outside of the school and society as a whole will flourish more peacefully.

With these ideas in mind, the following research was conducted in order to further analyze how high school history textbooks represent minority groups and how this representation impacts the ways in which students perceive the discussed races. Ultimately, textbooks have done a poor job presenting information on minority groups and as a result, students have become aware that they need more information in order to draw accurate conclusions and interpretations. Research for the study was conducted in a Western New York State suburban high school within two classrooms: one 11th grade A.P. U.S. history class and one 9th grade AVID social studies class. Through the methods of textbook analysis, classroom observations, and student interviews, three findings appeared. Lack of information in the textbooks caused students to question the source's

validity, students gained more information when they were presented with multiple perspectives, and accurate portrayals of minorities allowed students to form deeper connections and understandings of the groups. These findings call for teachers to offer additional sources to accurately portray minorities.

Theoretical Framework

Literacy is created from a number of components and because of this, can be defined in a number of ways. For example, Gee (1989) defines literacy as “control of secondary uses of language” (i.e. uses of language in secondary discourses) (p. 23). Some individuals could interpret this definition as being able to effectively communicate through speaking and writing. Although these two components are key, the definition of literacy can go much further. Kucer (2009) explains that literacy has very strong social components as well, stating “Reading and writing are not simply individual acts of thought and language, but also patterned social acts and behaviors of the group” (p. 210). In other words, when people are practicing literacy by reading, writing, and speaking, influences from their culture or group are present. Individuals are so heavily influenced by the society which they live in that it is rare for them to ever speak or write privately.

Another way to better comprehend the definition of literacy is to understand that literacy is multidimensional (Kucer, 2009). Specifically, the four dimensions of literacy are the cognitive, linguistic, sociocultural, and developmental dimensions. When a student encounters a text, he or she should be utilizing each of these four dimensions in order to fully understand the text. For example, the student should first be able to understand the language of the text (linguistic), then the meaning of the words in the text (cognitive), then critique and question the text

(sociocultural), and finally grow or develop their literacy skills as a result of reading the text (developmental).

Once the definition of literacy is understood, it then becomes important to understand how children acquire language and literacy. A truly effective way that students acquire literacy is by thinking critically. Specifically, literacy involves the ability to think critically, ask questions, and recognize whose opinion is being heard while others are being silenced. This technique in particular is known as critical literacy. Compton-Lilly (2009) defines critical literacy as “A set of approaches designed to engage students in literacy practices such as questioning the author, proposing and identifying perspectives, and making connections between history and other social practices when reading texts” (p. 94). In other words, the practice of critical literacy allows students to question the author’s knowledge and motives, look at a text from multiple perspectives such as looking at who’s opinion is being heard while who’s is being silenced, and making connections between a text and other social practices.

A number of other authors agree with the benefits of critical literacy and agree that the theory helps students to improve their overall literacy skills. Specifically, McGregor (2000) explains that:

Critical reading aims to enable students to question and refute the given order of things, and it especially encourages them to dispute normalizing practices that define their identities and implicitly allot them a position on the grid of power relations within particular sites and ultimately within their own society. (p. 222)

Ultimately, critical literacy teaches students to not simply accept information that they are given as complete truth, but to challenge the authors and other characters, think about their positions and biases, and how identities are defined accurately or inaccurately. In addition, the four

dimensions of literacy offer insight into how students ultimately gain literacy knowledge. Each of these dimensions, cognitive, linguistic, sociocultural, and developmental, prove that literacy is multidimensional and dynamic in nature. Specifically, Kucer (2009) explains, “Becoming or being literate means learning to effectively, efficiently, and simultaneously control the linguistic, cognitive, sociocultural, and developmental dimensions of written language in a transactive fashion” (p. 5). In other words, in order to become truly literate, students need to be able to control each of these four dimensions. In relation to this study, it will be interesting to see if students are gaining information on minority groups through one specific dimension versus another or if each dimension plays a key role in their acquiring knowledge.

The concept of critical literacy will prove to be an effective tool while conducting research on the topic of minority representation in high school history textbooks as well as the effects these representations have on the students’ perceptions of those races. Critical literacy will make the students become active participants when using Social Studies textbooks by challenging the author’s information, asking questions, and analyzing different points of view. It would no longer be acceptable for students to open a textbook and regard the information as absolute and complete truth. The expectation of students through critical literacy is that they will consistently question the author’s point of view. In other words, the students will ask themselves where the author’s point of view may have come from, what biases may be apparent, whose story is being told and whose is being silenced, and what does author ultimately wants the audience to believe or take away from the text.

Critical literacy also allows students to take a deeper look into the overall content of the textbook. Regardless of the author’s message, students can begin to analyze the actual content of the text and ask questions about the minorities which are being portrayed. For example,

questions can focus on cultural characteristics of the minorities as well as the roles which minorities took in various events. By looking further into these topics, students can begin to gain a better understanding of minorities and recognize that perhaps they are not finding as much information on these simple topics as they would for other races.

Furthermore, the topic of minority representation in high school history textbooks can be linked to a number of issues in diversity, specifically the concept of critical race theory. Compton-Lily (2009) again offers a definition, stating, “CRT helps to reveal the importance of literacy in the lives of people of Color and illustrates how these literacies are distinctive from, and related to, Western European thought” (p. 35). In other words, critical race theory shows the importance of literacy for minority races and compares that literacy to those of Western European culture, mainly Caucasian people. This idea is important because it shows the similarities and differences between the two cultures regarding literacy, thus allowing people from both races to appreciate and recognize the relevance of the other race’s linguistic culture. It is important to note that even though Compton-Lily’s definition exclusively addresses people of Color, critical race theory can also include other races, as it will for the purposes of this research.

Another important focus of critical race theory is the concept of White privilege. Compton-Lily explains that “...society and the educational system privileges White people in an effort to retain power and control and disprivilege people of Color” (p. 37). Ultimately, critical race theory helps people to analyze how society, or in this case the educational system, privileges White people in order to keep power from the minorities. Several ways in which this power retention may occur, specifically within the educational system, are through textbook portrayals of minorities, teacher lectures, or any other form of information which students are meant to perceive as fact.

Specifically with this paper's research, high school history textbooks will be analyzed through the use of critical race theory. Within the textbooks, the researcher will be looking to determine the overall representation of minorities in pre-selected sections of two high school history textbooks. By utilizing critical race theory, the researcher will be looking to see how minorities are represented regarding distribution of power when compared to other majority races as well as how the author biases may or may not have affected the accuracy of the text. The next step for the researcher would be to then look into why minority representation is being presented in the way it is. This idea could be connected to the idea of White privilege regarding the distribution of power as described within the concept of critical race theory. Overall, the concept of White privilege will be an interesting concept to keep in mind while analyzing the representation of minorities in high school history textbooks; it may prove to be an answer as to why minorities are represented the way they are. If minority representation proves to be inaccurate and lacking in high school history textbooks, minority students will truly be affected negatively. Ultimately, minority students will not be presented with the same opportunities as the White students which in turn could affect the way they perceive their race as well as other races. If minorities are not being accurately portrayed in the history textbooks, White people are retaining all of the power and positioning themselves higher than the minorities.

Research Question

After compiling the above theoretical framework, society and social practices prove to be significant influences on literacy acquisition. The definitions of critical race theory as well as critical literacy address the influential role society plays on the way that students acquire literacy, and in a way, what they acquire. Understanding that children acquire language and literacy not

just from their culture at home, but from their societal surroundings, it becomes critical that people begin to address what children are seeing and being presented with, both in and out of schools. Thus, given that literacy is highly influenced by the society which one lives in, this action research project asks, how does the representation of minorities in high school history textbooks impact students' perceptions of those races?

Literature Review

In order to conduct research on any given topic, an appropriate place to begin is to review the work of authors who conducted previous studies. By reviewing these studies, common themes begin to emerge which offer starting points for further research. Specifically regarding the topic of minority representation in high school history textbooks, a number of authors have conducted studies on the topic in various forms. The forms include content analysis of textbooks, interviews of students from minority and majority groups, and in-class observations of teachers' delivery of information. Other research that was reviewed was based on the study of critical literacy as a possible technique for teachers and students to utilize while using textbooks. The studies involving critical literacy were conducted through classroom observation, student and teacher interviews, and quality of lesson plans. After each study within the 25 scholarly articles was analyzed, three clear themes emerged. Firstly, the majority of high school history textbooks represent minority groups in a biased, skewed, and stereotypical manner. Secondly, when information in textbooks is limited, biased, or inaccurate, both minority and majority students are negatively affected. Finally, critical literacy techniques help students to gain a more authentic view of a text by asking questions, challenging the author, and not accepting all information as absolute truth. Each of these themes clearly intertwines with one another to form one solid idea:

textbooks in solidarity are not efficient tools to be used in the classroom and it is the educator's role to challenge his or her students to critically analyze the text.

Inaccurate Representation of Minorities in Textbooks

For social studies teachers across the nation, textbooks have become a critical tool to utilize within the classroom. Textbook dependency has been encouraged by publishers everywhere by aligning the textbooks with newly introduced state standards as well as offering lesson plans, tests, quizzes, and primary sources within the text (Romanowski, 2009). If teachers have become so dependent on textbooks as a source for their teachings, it becomes even more important for the teachers to become fully aware of the content within the text and its validity. An important point to keep in mind is that when students are given a textbook, the information they are presented with is understood to be truth. Therefore, the quality of the content is critical. Unfortunately, the most common theme that appeared throughout the majority of articles researched was that high school history textbooks are representing minority groups in a biased, skewed, and stereotypical manner. Sanchez (2007) explains, "These distortions will be perpetuated as truth until educators teach otherwise" (p. 311). In other words, until teachers begin to help their students learn accurate information, the knowledge that students gain from the textbooks will be viewed as fact, no matter how inaccurate, biased, or stereotypical it may be.

Within the misrepresentation of minorities in high school history textbooks, a specific number of races and ethnicities are inaccurately portrayed. As a starting point, Good (2009) conducted a study on the representation of Native Americans in high school history textbooks. In order to gather an accurate amount of information, Good based her theoretical framework off of critical multiculturalism and studied six popular textbooks in addition to three other igneous texts. To

clarify, these igneous texts included histories of Native Americans written by tribal committees or state specific societies, thus making the information more personal and authentic. After analyzing the voice Native Americans were given in the textbooks, Good concluded that any references that were made regarding Native American origins were generic and descriptions of Native Americans culture variations were “vague, brief, decontextualized and immediately followed with the scientific explanation” (p. 55). In other words, the textbooks kept information on Native American origins to a minimal and instead focused on scientific analysis. By not offering specific, in depth information or personalized accounts of Native American culture, the textbook is portraying the race as unimportant. Sanchez (2007) would agree with Good’s findings and conducted a similar study. Sanchez also researched the depiction of Native Americans in high school history textbooks and, not surprisingly, found very similar results.

Understanding that the representation of Native Americans in high school textbooks has been inaccurate in the past, Sanchez (2007) conducted an updated study of history textbooks that were published in the 1990s and 2000s. In comparison to Good’s (2009) six textbooks, Sanchez (2007) reviewed 15 textbooks in order to accurately evaluate Native American representation and rated their accuracy on a scale of one to five. Although each author chose their own way to conduct the study regarding the number of textbooks they felt were sufficient, each author reached the same conclusions. Specifically, just as Good (2009) had concluded, Sanchez (2007) discovered that “there existed the paradox of brevity and lack of depth as major factors differentiating the higher and lower rated textbooks” (p. 314). In other words, the reviewed textbooks lacked in depth information about Native American values, which ultimately led to lower reviews from Sanchez. In addition to this idea, Sanchez also found that “the distorted connotation that Native American spiritualism and traditions are anchored in primitive

superstition and out of any context of societal or personal need” (p. 315). When authors are describing details of Native American spiritualism, they are not offering necessary explanations or insights regarding the logic behind these beliefs. The lack of understanding from textbook authors has been translated as a lack of respect towards Native Americans and their culture, which ultimately can be detrimental if passed onto a younger generation to be understood. Although Sanchez concluded that the top seven textbooks exhibited improvements regarding depth and accuracy, only three of the fifteen textbooks did an acceptable job depicting Native Americans in a truthful, accurate, and objective manner. Ultimately, further gains are needed from textbook authors and publishers.

Like Sanchez (2007), Morgan (2008) concluded within his study that biases and inaccuracies were frequent within high school history textbooks as well. For Morgan’s study, a number of textbooks were assessed regarding the portrayal of Arabs, Muslims, and other Middle Eastern peoples from four specific publication periods: 1970-1990, 1945-1965, 1920-1940, and 1898-1920. Although the author acknowledged that inaccuracies diminished overtime, Morgan insisted that “some of the later books contain very negative stereotypes as well as inaccurate descriptions of Islam, bias towards the Arab political system, and pictures that don’t reflect the everyday life of the majority of people in the Middle East” (p. 329). Morgan’s study confirms that even though improvements have been made as time has passed, biases and inaccuracies regarding minority representation still exist in textbooks. In addition, Morgan concluded that a number of textbook authors portrayed people of the Middle East as backward and unintelligent instead of focusing on cultural advancements and strengths. By representing people as backward or unintelligent, textbooks are taking away a group’s validity and stating that their advancements and strengths are not important enough to be mentioned. Like Morgan, Romanowski (2009) also

focused his study on the representation of Middle Eastern peoples in high school history textbooks and drew similar conclusions. In his study, Romanowski specifically focused on textbook omissions and inaccuracies regarding 9/11 by conducting a qualitative content analysis of six textbooks from the 2008 American Textbook Council (ATC) list of the most widely used American history textbooks in secondary schools. In addition to agreeing with Good (2009), Morgan (2008), and Sanchez (2007) that textbooks are misrepresenting minorities, Romanowski (2009) offers an insight as to why textbooks are omitting information on minority groups. Specifically, some information that describes minority groups could be viewed as controversial which could bring negative attention to textbook publishers and their companies. In return, the negative attention could decrease sales, which would be detrimental to the ultimate goal for publishing groups: making a profit.

Romanowski (2009) also discussed the connection of textbook bias with publishing companies and would agree with the results of the study which Britton and Lumpkin (1977) conducted. Britton and Lumpkin created a comparative analysis of 49 social studies textbooks. First, from the comparative analysis, the authors concluded that even though publishing companies acknowledged the biases in their textbooks and stated that changes were made, the changes were minimal and “the ‘new’ product appeared to be teaching the same ‘hidden curriculum’ as the preceding series” (p. 44). The lack of change, even after being acknowledged by the publishing companies themselves, was discouraging to Britton and Lumpkin, forcing them to ask why. Ultimately, Britton and Lumpkin concluded that “it appear[ed] as if resistance to change has been quite profitable from a financial point of view” (p. 45). The less the publishers need to change or update within the textbooks, the quicker they can sell the product to make a profit.

Perlmutter (1997) created an updated edition of Britton and Lumpkin's (1977) study of the connections between minority representation in high school history textbooks and publishing companies. By updating previous studies, authors are able to create a comparative analysis to monitor if any changes have occurred over time. Instead of creating a content analysis for his study, Perlmutter (1997) conducted open-ended interviews with 43 employees of six major imprints in order to gain an insider perspective on textbook bias; these employees included editor, editorial assistant, copywriter, photographer, graphic designer, salesperson, marketing assistant, archivist, and researcher. Perlmutter made the same finding as Britton and Lumpkin (1977) regarding the concept of controversy and explained that "the obvious norm of control, then, is for the textbook content to fit into accepted guidelines and avoid images that are 'unsafe', 'trouble', or 'controversial'" (Perlmutter, 1997, p. 76). Again, the idea of controversy comes into play and all three authors agree that publishing companies have not offered extensive, complete, and diverse information on minority groups because of their fears of creating controversy (and subsequent loss of sales). Also in his study, Perlmutter blatantly stated, "The editor combines personal judgment with manufacturing constraints" (p. 74). Specifically, when the editor is looking at the design and sections of the text, he or she is using personal judgment to decide what is important enough to be included and how it should be portrayed. Ultimately, Perlmutter concluded that the visual depiction of society in secondary school textbooks is constructed from industrial, commercial, and social influences. By realizing how many categories influences the content of textbooks, students can recognize the need to challenge these texts in order to gain a deeper understanding of the true content at hand.

Schramm-Pate (2006) was able to draw similar conclusions regarding the effects that societal influences have on the portrayal of information in high school history textbooks. For her study,

Schramm-Pate conducted a content analysis of two different textbooks, one published in a southern state of America and another published in a northern state. The purpose of her study was to determine how different regions of the United States portrayed the Reconstruction Era in their secondary textbooks. The dominant conclusion that Schramm-Pate made was that information within textbooks is highly influenced by the region and society in which it was written. For example, both textbooks discussed the ideas of carpetbaggers, but as the northern textbook simply referred to the group as “merely greedy opportunists,” Schramm-Pate explained that the author of the southern textbook depicted carpetbaggers as people who “came to the South with the express purpose of exploiting or dominating southern whites against their will” (p. 148). The two textbooks are offering drastically different representations of people and events during the Reconstruction Era which creates an inconsistency of information which is being taught to students. Thus, information in textbooks can be biased by authors based on region and other societal influences. Suh, Yurita, and Metzger (2008) discussed the effects of region and societal influences on the content of a textbook in their study as well. In the study, Suh, Yurita, and Metzger conducted a comparative analysis of the Korean War as depicted in Korean, Japanese, and American secondary school history textbooks. One main conclusion that the authors came to was that there is “an overall political purpose in American history books to relate the past as one grand narrative emphasizing patriotism” (p. 53). In other words, one main purpose of textbooks is to offer a view of the nation’s history in a positive and patriotic manner.

Patriotism played a key role in each of the textbooks analyzed to a point where minority groups were not even represented at all. For example, while analyzing several American history textbooks, Suh, Yurita, and Metzger (2008) discovered that when casualties were briefly discussed, focuses were on American casualties and they were the only lives that were even

accounted for. The authors explain, “In weighing the human costs of the war, the texts do even less in considering the impact on other nations. No figures are given for the number of Korean or Chinese casualties” (p. 66). By not discussing the casualties of the minorities, textbooks are sending the message to students that they are not important enough to include. Romanowski (2009) conducted a second study of minority representation within 9/11 descriptions which connects strong influences of patriotism as well. In this study, Romanowski examined nine secondary history textbooks to determine how they treated moral and ethical aspects of 9/11 and other related events. In addition to the continual exclusion of relevant information to represent minorities, specifically in this case that of Muslims, Arabs, or other followers of Islam, Romanowski also concluded that “Patriotism resulting in misplaced anger demonstrated toward Arab Americans, Muslims and South Asians failed to make the pages of these textbooks” (p. 38). By not discussing any negative effects of patriotism, not only are the authors portraying an inaccurate picture of history, but they are also misleading students to believe that Americans only focused their negative feelings towards groups physically in the Middle East and not innocent people living in America.

Commeyras and Alvermann (1994) conducted a content analysis study with three high school history textbooks and explored the representation of people from countries that are commonly referred to as “Third World.” The authors explain how the reviewed textbooks focused on negative aspects of Third World countries. Specifically, “By emphasizing problems and dashing good news with bad news, the textbook writers portray these countries as hopelessly mired in difficulties” (p. 7). By only focusing on the negative or poor aspects, the strengths and contributions of the countries have been left out, thus showing students that there is only one way to look these places. Like Schramm-Pate (2006), Perlmutter (1997) and Britton and

Lumpkin (1977), Commeyras and Alvermann (1994) discussed the influence publishers have on the content included in the text. The authors state, “Writers, editors, and publishers with a variety of viewpoints consciously and unconsciously convey messages in textbooks that reflect their own understanding of how the world works, what counts as knowledge, and whose knowledge counts” (p. 2). Understanding this reoccurring conclusion, it becomes slightly clearer as to why minorities are misrepresented in textbooks: the people that participate in the creation of the text include, consciously or unconsciously, their opinion in its publication. Puk (1994) came to a similar conclusion in his study. After collecting data through the interviews of 120 student teachers, Puk was able to conclude that each student had an understanding of history that did not completely align with accurate details. Thus, Puk concluded the following:

What it comes down to is that there is no single historical past; rather, history is composed of a number of stories, written from a number of different perspectives, each with different things to say, each influenced by different biases and sets of values. (p. 7)

In other words, Puk concluded that history is never portrayed in one way. There are too many stories, perspectives, and influences involved in order to draw a single, cohesive history.

Ultimately, all teachers, including those in pre-service, need to be aware of any biases within the content they are providing students.

The constant conclusion that appeared time and time again in each of the reviewed studies was that the majority of high school history textbooks represent minority groups in a biased, skewed, and stereotypical manner. When the studies were analyzed, the authors were able to offer a number of conclusions as to why textbooks would portray minorities in such a way. Common conclusions such as patriotism, fear of controversy, unconscious influences, and a lack of multiple perspectives appeared not just in one study, but consistently throughout the research.

These causes resulted in minority groups being portrayed as backwards, foreign casualties left unmentioned, and minority cultures left in a one-sided, inaccurate, and biased description.

Morgan (2008) explained that:

By exploring the biased descriptions of the past, educators can gain insights of what to look for in today's school textbooks to prevent these inaccurate descriptions from being used in our nation's schools again and to comply with new social studies standards that require diverse points of view. (p. 316)

In the end, all of the authors discussed the need for teachers to explore the content of textbooks in order to prevent any biases and stereotypical thoughts from being passed down to their students. Knowing that such content is biased, skewed, and stereotypical, the next focus researchers looked for was how these portrayals of minorities affects students' perceptions of those races and events.

Negative Effects of Textbook Inaccuracies

Once it has been determined that high school history textbooks are portraying minority groups in an inaccurate, biased, and stereotypical representation, the next step is to determine how these representations affect student perceptions of the discussed minority races. Through the use of these textbooks, students are essentially being taught biased ideas as fact and truth. Sanchez (1997) explains that "Negatively formed attitudes that are either strongly reinforced or unchallenged during the school years are difficult if not impossible to alter in adulthood" (p. 64). Thus, when students form negative attitudes which are reinforced in textbooks or go unchallenged in schools, the attitudes will stay with them into adulthood and affect the way that they impact society. It now becomes critical to understand what types of impacts high school

history textbooks have on student perspectives. Thus, the second theme that was found consistently throughout research is that when information in textbooks is limited, biased, or skewed, both minority and majority students are negatively affected.

When students enter a classroom, they are under the impression that the information which is being provided to them is accurate and truthful. But when minority student encounter information in textbooks which does not accurately depict members of their group and they recognize this, the students' trust of the textbook is significantly diminished. Saleem and Thomas (2011) draw upon this conclusion as well as others after conducting research on the representation of 9/11 in high school social studies textbooks. Instead of simply conducting a qualitative analysis of textbook content, Saleem and Thomas took their study a step further and conducted a number of interviews of students from Muslim descent. The most common conclusion that the authors recognized was that when minority students became aware that Muslims were being misrepresented in the textbooks, they began to reject the authority of the text as a whole. Saleem and Thomas explain that "Often, the Muslim children in the study rejected the 9/11 accounts in the textbook or questioned the credibility or logic of the arguments presented in the textbook related to the topic of 9/11" (p. 28). Specifically, the authors explain that the reason why the students rejected the text was because the textbook did not offer multiple perspectives or sides of the events and only offered the interpretation of the author. Endo (2012) came to similar conclusions in her study of six second-generation Japanese American students. In the study, Endo went to two public schools in the mid-west and conducted a number of interviews on six Japanese American students to conclude how the students remembered learning about their races and cultures in history class. Just like in Saleem and Thomas' (2011) study, the students in Endo's (2012) study recognized that their race was not being accurately portrayed.

While discussing the representation of Japanese internment camps within the textbook, one student explained, “They [the textbook authors] didn’t bother saying how many people went and the bad stuff that happened, like how families lost everything. They made it sound like the camps really ‘helped’ the Japanese people” (p. 9). By analyzing this quotation, the student’s disappointment and even perhaps anger becomes apparent. Not only was the described textbook excluding information, but it was presenting history in an inaccurate way which thus causes the student to not trust the text.

Another reaction which Saleem and Thomas (2011) found students exhibited was that they were insulted. Saleem and Thomas explained, “The constant labeling and generalizing that occurs in social studies textbooks on the topics of terrorism, Islam, and Muslims tends to distance the Muslim readers from their American identity; thereby making them feel insulted” (p.29). In other words, the reviewed textbooks were portraying Muslims in a way that made the students feel separated from their American identities; in a way, they felt that they were being generalized into the same category as the Muslim terrorists of 9/11. Students explained that they thought the authors of the textbooks needed to conduct further research before stating such “opinions” and that the textbooks should even be recalled until the information being presented is accurate and unbiased. Again, Endo (2012) was able to draw similar conclusions in her study with Japanese American students. After sitting through a lesson in her history class, one of the female students who was interviewed commented that “teachers should really check their information before actually teaching it” (p. 11). The student further commented that the information she was taught was “worthless” because of the information’s inaccuracy. By listening to this student’s comments, it truly becomes apparent that not only do minority students feel insulted when they are being presented with inaccurate and biased information in textbooks,

but they lose trust of those same textbooks and, even more interesting, in the teachers providing the sources.

Just like in Endo (2012) and Saleem and Thomas' (2011) studies, the idea of textbook rejection from minority students is also apparent in Almarza and Fehn's (1998) study with a number of Mexican American students in a high school history classroom. Numerous Mexican American students were interviewed by the authors after classroom observations were conducted in order to evaluate the quality of the content being taught through lectures, activities, and, of course, textbooks. The main conclusion which the authors were able to draw was that when minority students become aware they are not being presented with accurate and unbiased information, they will begin to resent the topic, the text, and the teacher. For example, Almarza and Fehn stated, "We found that the white teacher's failure to acknowledge Mexican American students' ethnic identity contributed to a tendency among the students to resist the historical content that the teacher offered them" (p. 3). The Mexican American students were not being presented with relevant information within their textbooks regarding their culture or participation in events and because the teacher did not acknowledge this fact, the students not only lost respect for the text and the content, but they lost respect and trust for their teacher. The significant attitude change will stay with the students throughout their schooling years and will follow them into society which ultimately will impact how they interact with others.

The idea that information gathered in textbooks impacts the way that students interact in society is also conveyed in Maiz, Freedman, and McCauley's (2010) study. The purpose of this study was to analyze how the representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in United States history textbooks impacts the ways which students view the even. In order to collect data, the authors created a qualitative data analysis where they analyzed and coded eight world history textbooks.

Maiz, Freedman, and McCauley explained that “treatment of the Israeli-Arab conflict in widely used U.S. high school history books is likely to affect U.S. high school students and, in the long term, affect public opinion in relation to this conflict” (p. 2). In other words, the information provided within high school U.S. history textbooks is likely to affect students’ opinions and knowledge which ultimately will affect general public opinion of the information.

Understanding this concept is critical for educators because not only is the information within textbooks impacting students in the short term, but it is affecting society’s perceptions and opinions of events and minorities in the long term. Sanchez (1997) also conducted a study with the intention of finding the effects that a unit or course which positively portrays minorities could have on the attitudes of high school students. In order to do this, Sanchez observed a high school history class, wrote a number of transcripts, and conducted interviews with the teacher and students. At the end of the year-long study, Sanchez was able to conclude that due to weak coefficients, there was “no relationship between knowledge acquisition of the African American experience as measured by the knowledge test and the racial attitudes of the White subjects” (p. 72). In other words, the White students did not appear to have been influenced in any way by the alternative portrayal of African Americans as seen through their results on the knowledge test. Ultimately, Sanchez’s conclusion differs from the ideas of Endo (2012), Maiz, Freedman, and McCauley (2010), and Sadeem and Thomas (2011). While the other authors concluded that textbook portrayal of minorities directly impacts student perception of the minorities, Sanchez (1997) concludes in his findings that a student’s prior knowledge has a more significant impact of his or her perceptions of a minority group. Although Sanchez’s findings are slightly different, it is important to understand that a student’s prior knowledge may still come from a textbook in school, simply perhaps from an earlier stage in the student’s educational journey.

Porat (2006) drew a similar conclusion in his study which also analyzed student construction of meaning from a textbook account of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Specifically, Porat aimed to determine the gap between the intended meaning of the author and the realized meaning of the readers by analyzing student responses of the text through interviews. Like Sanchez's (1997) conclusion, Porat (2006) concludes that "In all three processes readers' prior information—real, or imaginary, experienced or learned—affects the meaning they drew from the text" and that the readers' prior information "has an important role in formation of the meaning they end up drawing from the text" (p. 268). When each student encounters a textbook, he or she already has some amount of information, experience, or knowledge about the content that is being presented. Whether they mean to or not, the students call upon this prior knowledge as a tool in order to understand any newly presented information. Therefore, when a student is being presented with information about a minority group in a textbook, whether the information is biased or not, the student will draw upon his or her prior knowledge in order to better understand the text.

Almarza and Fehn (1998) also drew similar conclusions in their study. The authors' state, "Students bring to classrooms culturally based identities which influence whether they ignore, engage, accept, reject, or critically evaluate the historical constructions which teachers offer them" (p. 2-3). After understanding the role that background information and culturally based identities have when acquiring new information, specifically in textbooks, it is critical for teachers to make sure that the information within textbooks is unbiased and accurate because ultimately, this new information will become prior knowledge.

After reviewing numerous studies, a theme emerges that when information in textbooks is limited, biased, or skewed, both minority and majority students are negatively affected. Some students will begin to reject the authority of not just the textbook, but of the teacher who is

providing them with the information. Also, other students, specifically those in minority groups, will become insulted that they are being stereotyped into categories with other misrepresented people. In addition to this conclusion, when all students encounter new information in textbooks, they begin to recall previously learned knowledge that may or may not have been presented to them in a biased or inaccurate manner. Understanding this concept, it now becomes even more critical to make sure that all information that is being presented to students is accurate, unbiased, and truthful. Sanchez (1997) explains:

Unless some institution, namely the school, takes the responsibility for teaching accurate information about minority and ethnic groups and helps develop an understanding of and positive attitude toward those groups, it is quite likely that the young generation will develop racial/ethnic biases that persist into secondary education and adulthood. (p.64)

In other words, schools must take the responsibility of teaching all students accurate and unbiased information about minority groups so that they may be able to develop positive attitudes towards those groups. One possible way to do this was touched upon time and time again in the reviewed studies and offered positive results and ultimately becomes the third theme of this research: critical literacy.

Bridging the Gap with Critical Literacy

A third theme which emerged through the analysis of the studies was that critical literacy techniques help students to gain a more authentic view of a text by asking questions, challenging the author's purpose, looking at multiple perspectives, and not accepting all information as complete truth. Each one of these techniques allows the students to be in charge of deciding what knowledge they deem to be accurate enough to eventually be gained. For example, by

challenging the author's purpose, students are able to think about what the author is trying to get them to understand and why. By looking at multiple perspectives, students are not taking the first and sometimes only version of a story as the only account and are looking deeper into a topic to see how it may have affected other people. When students begin to challenge the text by asking questions, they are thinking critically analyzing the text for the truth. Sanchez (1997) explains that "The school is thus presented with an extraordinary opportunity to become the major instrument for attitude development and change" (p. 64). The technique of critical literacy was reviewed as being an effective tool to do just this.

The first main component of critical literacy which was described in various studies was having the students ask questions about the text. Pescatore (2007) developed a study in 2005 in which she utilized current events and critical literacy as a way to empower literacy in her classroom. The author posted questions on a board in the classroom for student to refer back to when they encountered a new text and challenged them to ask the questions. Pescatore explained that "Questions like these encourage my students to actively engage with text, going beyond simple comprehension" (p. 326). In other words, by asking critical questions when analyzing a text, students begin to move beyond simple comprehension and instead begin to develop skills which allow them to understand deeper meanings. By asking questions such as "What is the author's purpose?" and "Who's voice is being heard and who is being silenced?" students begin to think critically about a text and not simply accept information as truth. Maples and Groenke (2009) drew similar conclusions about the power of asking questions through critical literacy in their study. In their study, Maples and Groenke created six profiles of different people who might call themselves American and challenged their students to categorize them as who was the most American all the way down to who was the least American. Through asking questions,

discussions with fellow classmates, and debates, the students decision-making process helped to “expose students’ assumed understandings and beliefs and ultimately encourage students to rethink their original definitions” (p. 30). Ultimately, when students are asking questions and participating in discussions with their classmates, they begin to think critically and reconsider their original thoughts.

Au (2009) also agrees with Pescatore (2007) and Maples and Groenke (2009) about the power of asking questions through critical literacy. The author analyzes two separate lesson plans from social studies teachers to see how effective the use of critical literacy is within the classrooms. Specifically, both lesson plans placed the students in real life situations through role play activities which made them ask critical questions and participate in discussions with fellow classmates. Au concluded that both lesson plans were designed effectively to “make issues of social and economic inequality significant, as well as to compel students to ask significant questions about the human relations in and around these inequalities” (p. 33). By asking such critical and thought provoking questions, students are able to validate the importance of social and economic inequalities and address them with other students within their classrooms. In addition to this concept, asking these questions helped the students to make connections between events in history and their own lives. Forming connections between topics in school and a student’s life helps the student to understand the significance of historical events and how much more relevant they can be today.

Commeyras and Alverman (1994), who conducted a study on the portrayal of Third World countries in high school history textbooks as previously discussed, also drew conclusions on the importance of asking critical questions while using textbooks. After stating a number of questions that students should be thinking about while analyzing a textbook, Commeyras and

Alverman concluded that “Questions like these encourage students to challenge textbook interpretations that provide selective views of developing countries histories” (p. 4). In other words, when students are asking critical questions such as “Why are things portrayed this way?” or “How else could this be explained?” they begin to learn how information can be mediated through literacy. Romanowski (2009) also touched upon the topic of critical literacy and the importance of questioning the text in his study on textbook omissions 9/11. When Romanowski completed his qualitative content analysis of several high school history textbooks, he noticed that the sources failed to offer in depth questions for students to think about. Romanowski explains, “These kinds of questions are omitted when textbooks simply provide facts and never provide opportunities for students to critically think about the ethical and moral elements of a historical situation” (p. 294). If textbooks do not provide opportunities for students to ask critical questions, it is then the teacher’s responsibility to create such opportunities; if opportunities do not appear, Romanowski warns that students will be forced to accept the textbook information as fact and nothing else.

McGregor (2000) took different perspective in her study by focusing on the reaction of teachers and administration to students asking questions in class. Specifically, McGregor focused her study on if students who as asking questions are critically literate or simply being disruptive as the administration had previously seen them. In the diverse, middle class high school which McGregor was studying, a group of students had formed a Social Justice and Equity group and was surveying the student body on various aspects of the school with the intent of creating positive change. McGregor concluded that in this particular situation, the administration did not view the study body group as being a positive and productive force in the school and therefore did not take their requests, opinions, and questions seriously which

adversely affected the students. As a solution, McGregor concluded that “Rather than see their questioning as ‘disruptive,’ schools must ally themselves with an increasingly critically competent body of youth and begin to ‘reread’ and ‘rewrite’ the scripts of a bygone era” (p. 228). In other words, students truly need the support of teachers and other administrative figures in order to think critically, not just about texts, but more importantly about real-life social situations. By supporting the students, the teachers are practicing what they should be preaching in class and supporting the process of asking critical questions to create positive change in the world. Saleem and Thomas (2011) drew similar conclusions in their study of Muslim perspectives of the terrorist attacks on September 11th. The authors explicitly stated that teachers must “encourage students to engage and evaluate the sources of information they examine with regard to controversial current and historical events” (p. 17). In other words, teachers must stress the importance to their students of challenging a text by asking questions in order to begin thinking critically. Just as McGregor (2000) had concluded, Saleem and Thomas (2011) found that it is the teacher’s role not to hinder, but to encourage his or her students to ask questions and evaluate the sources they encounter. By asking such questions, the students will gain a deeper understanding of the text as well as how textbooks and additional sources may not always be completely accurate.

In addition to challenging students to ask critical questions, having students look at a text through multiple perspectives was proven to be another beneficial component of critical literacy. To begin, Connor (2003) discussed the importance of analyzing a text through multiple perspectives in her high school study. Within the study, the author provided 11th and 12th grade history students with a wordless picture book on the Middle Passage and offered a number of questions for the students to keep in mind, allowed them to participate in small group

discussions, and ultimately put their thoughts into an essay, letter, or poem. Connor explained in her conclusions that students began to recognize textbook bias on their own by looking at the Middle Passage through multiple perspectives (i.e. the picture book). In one student's response, a 12th grade male explained that "The textbooks never said anything about the women being pregnant while on the ship" (p. 242). Because this student was able to look at the event of the Middle Passage from the perspective of the slaves instead of only through a textbook, he was able to recognize that sometimes a textbook does not offer information in an accurate and complete manner. Pescatore (2007) would agree with Connor (2003) and also concluded that looking at multiple perspectives through critical literacy helped students to learn new ideas. After having her students conduct research on the Bush family during her 2005 study, Pescatore (2007) concluded that "Many of the students were surprised to learn about the Bush family's connections to the oil industry and Dick Cheney's previous job at Halliburton" (p. 333). The significance of this idea is that the students were not only conducting their own research, but recognized that they were learning new ideas which had not been previously mentioned in textbooks. In addition to this, students then learned to question why textbook authors would not include such information, what the motives were, and how the exclusion could affect the family's portrayal to students.

Furthermore, Connor (2003) concluded that by having the students look at an event through multiple perspectives, the students "consistently commented on how *The Middle Passage* added both to their intellectual and emotional understanding of the human side of slavery's transatlantic journey" (p. 244). Not only did the author recognize the positive effects of looking at multiple perspectives, but more importantly the students recognized that when they are looking at an idea, concept, or event through multiple perspectives, their intellectual and emotional understanding of

the ideas increase. DiCamillo and Pace (2010) agree with Connor (2003) about the positive effects of looking at texts with multiple perspectives can have on students. In DiCamillo and Pace's study, the authors observed a high school history teacher practicing critical literacy by offering students multiple perspectives within his lessons and then conducted interviews with both the teacher and the students. The authors concluded that the teacher's use of multiple perspectives "encouraged students to empathize with different ethnic groups, and made history interesting and relevant" (p. 75). In other words, the use of multiple perspectives allowed students to make connections with people within history, thus allowing them to better understand the events overall. DiCamillo and Pace further concluded that when pedagogical practice is combined with multicultural education, students become much more challenged and engaged. Ultimately, by utilizing the practices of multicultural education and critical literacy, students are able to better understand the content being taught and, more importantly, become better prepared to be democratic citizens.

A final component of critical literacy which a number of authors concluded was beneficial for students was that students are able to connect their own lives to those of other historical perspectives which eventually allows the students to better understand the historical content. Lesley (2008) comes to this important conclusion in her study which focused on the effects of critical literacy on "at risk" students. Within her study, Lesley conducted a number of observations of a high school literacy club, created transcripts of the sessions, kept reflective journals, analyzed student writing samples, and interviewed both teachers and students. After analyzing her data, Lesley was able to conclude that students responded better to the techniques of critical literacy because they recognized that they could connect their own lives to those of the people being discussed in class. Specifically, Lesley concluded:

Until we begin to read a text that the students identified with and had personal connections with through the popular media, the students did not begin to present non-school forms of discourse in response to the texts and the pedagogical bridge I was hoping to foster did not appear. (p. 187)

Even though Lesley explains that the students needed to be able to make connections through the use of popular media, the fact remains the same that students need to be presented with accurate information which they can relate to in order to be able to think critically. Saunders (2012) drew similar conclusions with Lesley's (2008) findings when she conducted a study in a high school English classroom. An interesting twist for this study is that Saunders (2012) was observing a student teacher implement critical literacy into her school based educator's 11th grade classroom instead of observing an already certified professional. In order to introduce critical literacy to her students, the student teacher implemented a multi-genre research project as the main activity of her overall time spent in the school. Saunders concluded that by offering the students a number of choices to write about, the students were able to discuss something that they could personally connect to, thus allowing them to think more critically. In addition to this conclusion, the author also concluded that "Students were able to act as agents in their own learning and not just as mere depositories of the information their young teacher proffered" (p. 20). In the end, students were creating their own learning while participating in the multi-genre research project because they were allowed to think critically about something which they could easily make connections to. Therefore, Saunders was able to conclude that critical literacy is an excellent tool which can be utilized to help students make greater connections and ultimately become more engaged.

Every study that was reviewed stressed that students need to have a better understanding of minority groups and historical events outside of what the textbooks offer. In order to do just this, critical literacy proved to be just the right solution to help students understand the deeper meanings of historical events as well as minority groups. Offering supplemental texts such as primary sources, biographies, first-hand accounts, and even historical fiction help students to see any historical event through multiple perspectives. In addition, by providing these supplemental texts, students are more likely to be able to make connections with the people being discussed which will, in return, allow them to make deeper connections and to think critically. Ultimately, when students are using textbooks in their classrooms, research has concluded that teachers must be challenging their students to look at the text with a critical lens and ask questions about purpose, points of view, and overall content accuracy. By asking these questions, students will begin to think critically as well as recognize that every source has an agenda which may or may not reflect biases and inaccuracies. Overall, to sum up the logic of critical literacy, Pescatore (2007) explains:

Teaching students to be alert to the power of language and aware that we all have an agenda or point of view can help them guard against being manipulated by what they see, read, and experience, in all aspects of the media. (p. 339)

Therefore, critical literacy is an effective tool which not only helps students to think more critically within the classroom, but teaches students to always ask questions, try to relate and make connections when they encounter new topics, and to always look at an idea from a different perspective.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of previous research and study, it has been determined that the majority of high school history textbooks have inaccurately portrayed minority groups through stereotypes, exclusion of information, and biases and that this representation negatively affects both majority and minority groups of students. By creating sole focuses on patriotism, good-versus-evil stereotypes, and one-sided portrayals, textbook authors and publishers are taking away legitimacy from minority groups and focusing students' attention on generalizations and portrayals of events which do not allow students to see the whole picture. Good (2009) explains that oftentimes, "History is depicted as something that *happened* to [the minority groups], not something they participate in constructing" (p. 57). Understanding Good's conclusion, both minority and majority students are therefore being taught that minority groups have not been an active part of creating history, which ultimately takes away their validity and importance. In order for educators to stop this detrimental theory from being passed onto students, the practice of critical literacy was concluded as being a strong strategy for teachers to utilize in their classrooms. Specifically, when teachers challenge their students to ask critical questions, look at multiple perspectives, challenge the author's point of view and motives, and to make connections to their own lives, students begin to think critically about the text and no longer simply accept all information as complete truth. Pescatore (2008) explained that "When students think critically, they interact with the text by skillfully analyzing the message, comparing that message with their previous knowledge, considering alternate positions, and synthesizing the information gained into a richer knowledge base" (p. 326). Ultimately, students need to participate in critical literacy, especially if they are going to be encountering the discussed high school history textbooks, in order to develop positive and well-rounded feelings about minority groups and their history.

Method

Context

The research for this study took place within a larger school district in Western New York. Specifically, the district resides within a suburban town and according to the 2010 census, includes 96,095 residents. Given the relatively large size of the town, it is compiled into three school districts. Specifically for the district within this study, the area contains three high schools, three middle schools, thirteen elementary schools, and one school which include grades six through twelve. For the purposes of this study, I collected data from one of the three high schools. The New York State District Report Card for the 2010-2011 school year indicated that the selected high school contained 1,137 enrolled students from ninth to 12th grade. The student population for the 2010-2011 school year was made up of 72 % Caucasian, 16% African American, 9% Hispanic or Latino, 3% Asian or Native Hawaiian, and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native students. Within this population, 47% were eligible for a free or reduced lunch. Although the annual attendance rate was 93%, the suspension rate was 25%. In addition, the average class size varied between subjects: 22 students per English class, 20 students per Math class, 23 students per Science class, and 23 students Social Studies class.

Specifically, the research for this study took place within two separate Social Studies classrooms within the same high school. One of the studied classrooms taught ninth grade World History and is considered an “AVID” classroom, meaning that it is specialized for students that could be placed into an A.P. social studies classroom in the future. The other classroom taught 11th grade A.P. United States History. The ninth grade World History classroom is made up of 11 boys and eight girls with a racial breakdown of nine Caucasian

students, six African American students, and four Hispanic students. On the other hand, the 11th grade United States History classroom is compiled of ten boys and 12 girls with a racial breakdown 22 Caucasian students, therefore, all of them were White.

Participants

All of the names of the participants have been changed to pseudonyms to protect identities and ensure anonymity.

Marie Smith is a high school social studies teacher who has taught in the district for over 12 years, all spent at the studied high school. Previously, she taught for two years in a separate district in another high school, also within the same county. Throughout these years, she has taught ninth grade World History, 11th grade United States History, Advanced Placement World History, and Advanced Placement United States History. In addition, Smith has supervised the Masterminds club and led them to several sectional competitions. She holds a Bachelor's degree in History as well as a Master's degree in the Art of Teaching. She holds strong rapport with her students and is a well-respected member of the faculty.

Michelle Hernandez is also a high school social studies teacher, but is currently a long term substitute teacher. She has taught in the district for 2 years, all spent in the studied high school. Before this, she taught high school in an urban New York City setting for six years. Throughout all of these years, she has taught various forms of history, including World and American. Although she is currently practicing as a long term substitute, Hernandez has developed great rapport with her students and is respected by other members of the faculty. In addition, Hernandez currently holds a Bachelor's degree in History and Secondary Education and a Master's degree in Special Education.

Billy Johnson is a sixteen year old Caucasian boy taking A.P. United States History in Marie Smith's class. He enjoys playing sports with his friends as well as listening to various kinds of music. In addition to this, Billy describes himself as outgoing and enjoys watching comedy movies. As for extra-curricular activities at the high school, Billy plays the Barry Saxophone in the symphonic band.

Adele Carlyle is a seventeen year old Caucasian female student, also in Marie Smith's A.P. United States History class. Although she describes herself as a very outgoing girl, in class she appears shy and reserved. Adele enjoys playing soccer for the high school's varsity soccer team and has a large amount of friends. She is very friendly and interacts well with the other students in her class. After school, she participates in the high school's symphonic band and enjoys traveling for various competitions.

Ernesto Jones is a sixteen year old Caucasian male student in Marie Smith's A.P. United States History class. Ernesto is very social in class and, although he may seem shy to talk to, has a very friendly and kind personality, but sometimes sarcastic. In his spare time, Ernesto enjoys playing lacrosse with his friends for the high school and has been playing for several years. Also, he enjoys listening to music with his friends, but does not participate in the school's music program.

Researcher Stance

I am currently a graduate student studying at St. John Fisher College and am working towards a Master's degree in Literacy Education, 5th-12th grade. Currently, I hold a Bachelor's degree in History and Secondary Education with a focus in Interdisciplinary Studies. As a researcher in this study, I acted as a privileged, active observer. Mills (2011) explains that a privileged, active observer can observe his or her students and still participate as an aide if desired. Although I

was not directly teaching the students, I was observing them during class time as well as conducting an experiment and interviewing the students afterward. Therefore, I observed the students “during a time when [I am] not directly responsible for the teaching of a lesson” (p. 75). As a result, I was able to not only collect qualitative data from classroom textbooks, classroom observations, and student interviews, but make any adjustments to the ways I collected data in order to gather the most useful information.

Method

During this study, I collected both qualitative and quantitative data in order to examine how high school history textbooks represent minorities and how this representation impacts student perceptions of the discussed races. Specifically, the research focused on how teachers utilize the information within their textbooks, or if necessary other sources, in order to represent minority groups and how these representations impact the students’ perceptions of the minorities. For the purpose of collecting comparative data, I collected data from two separate classrooms under the instruction of two different teachers. To remain consistent, I used the same methods of data collection while conducting research in both classrooms. The study took place over the course of four classroom visits for three weeks. The first classroom visit’s purpose was to sit down with both teachers, gather information on both of them, learn about the students, and learn about the lessons I would be observing. The remaining three sessions lasted the entire school day, approximately six and a half hours and were dedicated to classroom observations and student interviews (see Appendices B and C).

The first step of the research study was to collect qualitative data from the textbooks each teacher uses within their classroom. Each teacher provided me with the textbook they utilize

within their classroom and draw information from to compile lesson plans. In order to gauge what type of information is made available and, more specifically, how minority groups are being represented within the textbooks, I analyzed each source. While analyzing each textbook, I utilized a self-created check list (Appendix A) with an extensive collection of details which I was looking for.

Throughout the next three sessions, I observed each teacher within their classroom setting. For one day, I was exclusively observing in Smith's classroom while the next day, I was observing solely in Hernandez's classroom. While I was in each classroom, I was not interacting with the students, but focused on simply observing the classroom environment, content and delivery of each teacher's lessons, and student responses. In order to fulfill each observation completely, I utilized a self-created handout (Appendix B) in addition to keeping reflective journals. The purpose of the self-created handout was to ensure that I was looking for the same things in each classroom to ensure consistency as well as making sure that I was looking for specific characteristics within each setting. In addition, the purpose of keeping reflective journals was to allow myself to reflect and analyze various occurrences and details within each classroom as well as the fact that I had created a source which I could return to in order to recall information. While completing each observation, I audio recorded each teacher's lesson which I later transcribed for analysis.

The final session that I had at the high school solely focused on student interviews. During this time, I conducted one student group interview. This interview session was compiled of a group of students from Smith's class. The interview took place outside of class time, during the advisement period so that instruction was not missed. In order to see if the representation of minorities impacts student perceptions of races, I supplied the group with a chapter from the

textbook which they have been using in class, specifically focusing on Japanese Internment Camps. After being asked to read the text, I then asked a list of questions to the students during the interviews (questions are listed in Appendix C). While the interviews are taking place, I utilized both audio and video recording devices. By recording the interviews, I could use the recordings to create valuable transcripts as well as have a source to reference expressions, body movements, and conversations. Ultimately, all interviews were audio and video recorded which were then transcribed.

Quality and Credibility of Research

While completing any type of action research, it is critical for the researcher to evaluate and ensure the study's quality and credibility. In order complete these tasks, Mills (2011) draws on the work of Guba (1981) and offers four key components for researchers to utilize while collecting data. Specifically, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four essential components of a qualitative research study's trustworthiness. Understanding this concept, the researcher has thoroughly examined each one of these components and put them into place within the current research in order to ensure its trustworthiness.

To begin, Mills (2011) first defines credibility as "the researcher's ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained" (p. 104). In other words, the researcher must acknowledge and understand any complexities that become apparent while conducting research and address them appropriately, even if they are not easily explained. To help ensure credibility in this research, I collected a number of "slice of life" data items. These types of items include documents, films, video recordings, audio recordings, artifacts, and other "raw" data items. Specifically in this study, I

collected information from textbooks, conducted both video and audio recordings, and collected any other useful documents. In addition, I actively observed the students while they are in class via video recordings, collected descriptive field notes, and conducted audio recordings of student group interviews and responses.

In addition to credibility, I also ensured transferability within my research. Mills (2011) explains that transferability refers to “the researchers’ beliefs that everything they study is context bound and that the goal of their work is not to develop ‘truth’ statements that can be generalized to larger groups of people” (p. 104). Ultimately, the researcher needs to make sure that he or she is not making generalizations with the collected data and express that research within the study is exclusive to the context of the study. In order to ensure transferability within this study, I collected detailed, descriptive data on textbooks, teachers, and students which will allow for comparisons of the study to other contexts. By providing my descriptive and specific data, other researchers may then make their own judgments and compare the study to their own research.

Dependability is another component of the study which must be utilized in order to ensure trustworthiness. Specifically, dependability refers to the overall stability of the data collected through research (Mills, 2011). In other words, the data which is collected must be reliable and stable in the sense that the different forms of data collection must connect with each other in order to provide a steady and constant result. In order to ensure dependability in my study, I overlapped my data collection methods through the practice of triangulation. As previously stated, I used classroom observation, textbook analysis, and student interviews throughout the course of this study. By using these three methods of data collection, the weaknesses in one form are more likely to be compensated by the strengths of another.

Lastly, I must ensure confirmability throughout the course of my research. Mills (2011) defines confirmability as the “neutrality or objectivity of the data which has been collected” (p. 105). Ultimately, confirmability interacts with data collection to see how it is neutral or objective. The triangulation process within my study will come into play again to help me ensure the component of confirmability. By using a number of different data sources, the results can be compared to each other which allows for the cross-checking of the collect data (Mills). Additionally, I practiced reflectivity by writing down reflections throughout the course of my data collection. By keeping such reflective documentations, I was able to “reveal [any] underlying assumptions or biases” which may cause me to “present findings in a particular way” (p. 105). By completing the process of meeting these criteria, I firmly believe that the data to be collected throughout this qualitative study to be trustworthy, and as a result will offer valid insight into how the representation of minorities in high school history textbooks impacts student perceptions of those races.

Informed Consent and Protecting the Rights of the Participants

Before beginning to conduct my research, I needed to first ask for informed consent from all of the parties included. Specifically, the various parties included the two teachers as well as the parents of all students who were going to be involved in the study. In order to receive consent, I provided each parent with a permission form which described and explained the purpose of the study and asked for permission and signature to conduct research with their children. In addition, I needed to receive signed assent forms from each student following the receipt of parental permission. Specifically, I explained to each student the purpose of the study as well as what I would be asking him or her to do. In addition, both teachers were given a consent form to

sign in order to allow me to observe within their classrooms. Parents, students, and teachers were all notified that the names of every participant would be changed to pseudonyms and that any identifying marks would be removed from artifacts to protect all identities and ensure anonymity.

Data Collection

As previously stated, I collected three different forms of data while conducting my research in order to ensure triangulation. The first form of data that I collected was directly from the social studies textbook that were being used in each classroom. While collecting data from the textbooks, I was looking for certain information. Specifically, I was looking at three separate sections within each textbook. For the United States history text, I was looking at the representation of Native Americans during the late 15th century, African Americans during the 18th and 19th centuries, and Japanese Americans during World War II. For the world history text, I was looking at the representation of Muslims during the chapter on Islam, Africans during the Columbian Exchange, and the Japanese during Feudal Japan. While I was looking at each section, I utilized a self-created checklist in order to see how exactly each text is representing the minority groups. The checklist included looking for any stereotypes, how much space is dedicated to each group within the chapter, the historical accuracy of the information, if multiple perspectives are used, and if any important information is excluded.

The next form of data that I collected was from video recordings as a means to observe and collect field notes on each session of the study. I used my iPhone to record each classroom observation in order to see each classroom's physical environment (are the posters, books, documents, or other sources that represent different minorities in a positive and accurate

manner?) as well as how each teacher discusses and portrays minority groups. At the end of each day, I reviewed the recordings and took detailed field notes in addition to the ones I took during the classes, based on what I saw in connection to the portrayal of minority groups. After compiling the field notes from the video segments, I also kept a reflective journal of my own thoughts in regards to the sessions as a means of reflection and synthesis. In addition to the video recordings and reflective journals, I also collected a copy each teacher's lesson plans if they had created a set. Although each lesson plan's purpose was originally unknown to me, the logic behind collecting them was to see what each teacher's original purpose was in order to show what they thought was important enough to be included and how they portrayed minority groups to their students within the lesson.

The final way that I collected data was through one group interview with students from Smith's class. Specifically, I conducted one group interview with three students, two male and one female, from Smith's class. In order to see how the representation of minority groups in texts impacts student perceptions of the groups, I first asked the students several questions about what they think about textbooks, specifically about the reliability and accuracy in order to create a starting point. After establishing their original opinions, I then asked the students to read the section within their textbook about Japanese Internment Camps. This section was from their own textbook which is utilized in class and was approximately a page in length. When they completed the reading, I then asked them a number of questions about the reading, the pictures, and overall content to see if and how their perceptions of the specified race have been changed. These questions can be found in Appendix D. During this time, I utilized my iPhone to record all conversations which I later transcribed.

Data Analysis

At the conclusion of my data collection, the next appropriate step was to begin analyzing all of the collected data. Each of the three forms of data, specifically the textbook analysis, classroom observations, and student interviews, needed to be reviewed and each was initially analyzed individually. Once each source of data was analyzed, I was able to compare and contrast codes, themes, and general information. Ultimately, by analyzing my data, I was able to establish several overall concepts and themes within each form and eventually was able to make connections between the three sources.

To begin, I first chose to review my textbook analysis data which I had collected from two separate textbooks. First, I looked at the data I had filled in for the checklists for each of the three sections in Smith's text. In order to analyze the checklists fully, I looked at each checklist three times with three different purposes in mind. The first time, I simply highlighted ideas or phrases that stood out. Next, I began coding these ideas accordingly and created a key for these codes in the upper right-hand corner of each checklist. These codes focused on the amount of information each textbook provided, whether or not the information was offensive, if more perspectives or pictures were needed, and if any of the information appeared biased or stereotypical. For the final step, I looked for any data that would go against my research and wrote in any remaining questions I still had. Once I had completed the process with the three sections of text for Smith's class, I repeated the process in the same exact ways for the text Hernandez used in her class.

After analyzing the textbooks, I moved on to reviewing the information I collected from classroom observations. Again, I began analyzing the data I retrieved from Smith's class first. Unlike the textbook analysis, I had two forms of data to analyze: a self-created observation recording sheet and classroom transcripts. I first began analyzing the information I recorded on

the observation sheets. I used the same exact process I had used while reviewing the textbooks and looked at each sheet three separate times: first for highlighting important information, secondly for coding, and thirdly for additional questions and disconfirming evidence. While coding each recording sheet, I used similar codes that focused on the amount of information given, use of multiple perspectives, and use of primary documents. After looking at the recording sheets, I moved on to analyzing the classroom transcripts. Just like with the previous forms of data, I read through the information three times for what stood out, then coding and themes, and finally for additional questions and disconfirming evidence. The same codes utilized previously proved to be appropriate to be used with the classroom transcripts as well.

The final piece of data which I analyzed was the transcript which was created from the student interviews. Just as I analyzed the data collected from the textbooks and the classroom observations, I utilized the same process to analyze the transcript from the student interviews I had conducted. While I was reading the transcript for the first time, I simply highlighted anything that the students had said which stood out to me. Such information could include opinions, questions, and reactions to the textbook. Next, I reread the transcript and coded it accordingly. With this type of data, the codes were altered and had different focuses when compared to the codes from the textbook analysis and the classroom observations. Specifically, these codes focused on how the students gained their information, how the students felt, and what conclusions they drew from the text selection which was provided to them. The final step I took while analyzing the transcripts was to look for any disconfirming evidence or additional questions I may have had which had been answered during the interviews.

Once each of the three types of data was analyzed, I began to look for similarities and themes between the data in order to ensure triangulation. In order to create three themes, I looked

specifically at the codes I had utilized within each source of data. While creating the themes, I made sure that supporting evidence was present within each source of data.

Findings and Discussion

Ultimately, three themes emerged which connected well to each source: the lack of textbook information and details lead to questions of validity, more perspectives are needed for students to gain truthful understandings, and accurate portrayals of minorities allow students to gain deeper understandings of history. After the qualitative data collection and analysis were completed, the three themes which emerged appeared consistently throughout the findings from each source of data. Each piece of data which falls into one of the three themed categories can also offer tentative interpretations regarding its effects for teachers and students. In addition, connections can be made between the three themes and previous literature discussed by past researchers and authors.

Recognition of Lack of Details and Information within Textbooks

The first and perhaps most common finding which appeared is that there is a consistent lack of detail and information about the role of minorities within high school history textbooks. Romanowski (2009) confirmed through his qualitative textbook study that textbooks frequently leave out detailed information on minorities as well as controversial events and that “Educators must be concerned with not only the knowledge included in the textbook, but also the knowledge that is excluded” (p. 290). The lack of detail within my study became apparent not only to me through multiple textbook analysis sessions, but also to students when they began looking at their own textbooks with a critical lens. Once the students recognized that their textbooks were

lacking details about important information, specifically the roles of minorities, they began to question the validity of the text as well.

The first set of data which determined a lack of information on minorities was found from the textbook analysis checklists which were completed for the textbook utilized in Smith's 11th grade class. Smith used the 6th edition of the textbook "Out of Many" by Faragher, Buhle, Czitrom, and Armitage which was published in 2011 by Prentice Hall. After analyzing the three separate topics of Native American Beginnings, Slavery, and Japanese Internment Camps within the textbook (one in the beginning, one in the middle, and one towards the end), it became apparent that there was a significant lack of information and details about the role, culture, and overall representation of minority groups (Checklist for Textbook Analysis, 2013).

Table 1

Results from Smith Textbook Analysis

Analysis Components	Native American Beginnings	Slavery	Japanese Internment Camps
Text provides relevant visuals	X	X	X
A variety of visuals are present	X	X	-
Pictures/graphics are accurate	X	X	-
Text provides multiple perspectives	X	X	-
Text provides primary documents	-	-	-
First-hand accounts are cited	-	X	-
Overall content is accurate	X	X	X
Stereotypes or biases present	X	-	X

Essential information excluded	X	-	X
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Out of the three textbook selections, the section on Japanese Internment Camps had the most room for improvement. For example, within the two pages dedicated to explaining the Japanese Internment camps in World War II, the authors did not offer any primary documents, only one picture, one first-hand account, and failed to address what the camps were like, in detail, for the Japanese internees as well as what effects the camps had on them. By not providing students with a holistic and accurate account of the Japanese Internment Camps, students might not be able to fully understand what the event was like and could therefore conclude that the event was not that important. In addition, primary documents were also lacking from the chapter on slavery; photographs of paintings and an advertisement for slaves were present, but more are needed to fully depict the history of the time period for students. Additional primary sources could include notices for runaway slaves, official documents explaining the legality of slavery, or journal accounts from the perspectives of any person from the time period. Again, the lack of primary sources could be preventing students from fully understanding the historical events because the textbooks are only offering minimal details about the minority groups involved. If students are not being provided with complete details and primary sources, they might not be able to picture both the event and groups accurately. The remaining section on Native Americans confirmed the trend and also excluded primary documents as well as first-hand accounts. Throughout the entire selection, there was not one first-hand account from the perspective of a Native American and the few primary documents that were provided came from the perspective of Europeans. Just as with the previous two sections, the lack of primary documents and first-hand accounts could be sending a message to the students that the topics are

not important enough to provide more information which could therefore cause students to gain a warped view of history. Romanowski (2009) supports this theory and explains that teachers should provide students with primary documents when the textbooks fail to because the sources “move students closer to historical truth by creating dialogue featuring the multiple narratives of particular historical events” (p. 295). In other words, by providing students with primary documents, they are able to come closer to fully understanding historical truth because they are being provided with authentic evidence.

The textbook analysis checklists for Hernandez’s class also support the theme that there is a lack of information and detail being provided within textbooks. For her ninth grade classroom, Hernandez used the textbook “Ancient World History: Patterns of Interaction” by Beck, Black, Krieger, Naylor, and Shabaka which was published in 2007 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Table 2

Results from Hernandez Textbook Analysis

Analysis Components	Atlantic Slave Trade	East Asian Empires (Japan)	The Muslim World (Islam)
Text provides relevant visuals	-	-	-
A variety of visuals are present	-	X	X
Pictures/graphics are accurate	-	-	-
Text provides multiple perspectives	-	-	-
Text provides primary documents	-	-	X
First-hand accounts are cited	-	-	-

Overall content is accurate	-	-	X
Stereotypes or biases present	X	X	-
Essential information excluded	X	X	X

Just like in Smith's text, the lack of information was present throughout the three sections which were analyzed and included the Atlantic Slave Trade, East Asian Empires (specifically Japan), and the Muslim World (Checklist for Textbook Analysis, 2013). First, the two sections on Japanese history totaled twelve pages overall and offered minimal pictures, some which were not even accurate. As an example, Figure 1 below shows a cartoon found on the first page of the section about Japan's return to isolation. The figure is label simply as "A samurai warrior" and depicts an overweight, Japanese man with stereotypical features such as a stern look on his face, slanted eyes and his hair pulled back. Not only is the dress attire inaccurate, but the picture itself could be offensive to students, specifically those of Asian descent. By portraying a picture such as Figure 1 in the textbook, students could begin to conclude that Samurai warriors, or even all Japanese people, looked like the man in the cartoon, are typically angry, and are violent.

Figure 1. Drawing of a Samurai Warrior in Hernandez's 9th Grade Classroom Textbook

A samurai warrior ▼



Figure X. Drawing of a Japanese samurai warrior as seen on the first page of the chapter on Japanese history. Adapted from “Ancient World History: Patterns of Interaction,” by Beck, Black, Krieger, Naylor, and Shabaka, 2007, p. 542. Copyright 2007 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

In addition to the picture, the same section provided minimal primary documents with brief to no explanations and few details about overall Japanese interactions with other countries, their beliefs, and culture. Specifically, the primary documents that were given did include a haiku poem from the time period which does show Japanese culture, but the style or author was not explained. Just like the interpretations from the content in Smith’s textbook, by providing minimal to no primary sources, students could begin to draw inaccurate conclusions because they are not being provided with enough information. These inaccurate conclusions could include distorted versions of history as well as biases towards other minority groups. Similar data to this chapter was found in the section on the Atlantic Slave Trade where although the pictures portrayed were indeed accurate, more were needed. Specifically, the pictures which were present included the layout of a slave ship and maps which showed the trading routes, but pictures of slaves themselves only included two cartoons, one of which portrayed white men as slaves, as seen below in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Drawing of Early Slaves in Hernandez’s 9th Grade Classroom Textbook



Figure X. Drawing of two White slaves as seen in the Atlantic Slave Trade chapter of Hernandez's 9th grade textbook. Adapted from "Ancient World History: Patterns of Interaction," by Beck, Black, Krieger, Naylor, and Shabaka, 2007, p. 567. Copyright 2007 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Although Figure 2 is presented to represent the historical past of slavery, the text did not follow up the picture with other images of black people working as slaves, which the chapter is actually about. By not providing students with relevant images, the students may not be able to picture what life was truly like during this time in history. Specifically, the students may not be able to fully comprehend what slaves had to endure in the Americas. Furthermore, the distorted image of history could again be painted for students which therefore could create inaccurate understandings.

In addition to the pictures, minimal perspectives were offered while those that were given lacked details and explanations and were separated from the main text by being placed off to the side in the margin or in a small box (Textbook Analysis Checklist, 2013). As an example, during the section on the Atlantic Slave Trade, the majority of the information provided was from the perspective of Europeans and only once was the perspective of a slave listed. Specifically, when the text did offer the slave's perspective, it was separated from the general text in a box off to the side. Not only was the text separated, but it also was not explained in depth as the European perspectives generally were. Again, the lack multiple perspectives and details in textbooks could possibly be preventing students from fully understanding the discussed historical events because only a portion of the time is being portrayed. As a possible result, students could be learning a distorted version of history which adversely affects the ways they portray minority races. Sanchez (2007) supports these claims by drawing similar interpretations from the data he gathered on Native American representation in textbooks. Specifically, Sanchez explains that

omissions were common and that “The true contributions of Native cultures are also generally overlooked...and readily appear to be paragraphs that are awkwardly added on as fillers” (p. 315). In other words, past researchers such as Sanchez have seen the lack of detail and information appear in textbooks and agree that it could affect the way which students understand the described events or minority groups. If students are consistently not being presented with information from multiple perspectives, specifically from the perspective of a minority, the students may begin to think that the minority group’s perspective is not important enough to be included which could carry over into day to day interactions and beliefs.

In addition to the textbook checklists, the student interviews also offered data which supported the theme that textbooks are lacking information and detail on minority representation (Student Interviews, 2013). After providing the students with their own textbook and having them read the two pages about Japanese Internment Camps during World War II, I asked the students to look at the picture in their text (now provided below as Figure 3) and then asked them specifically how the picture made them feel about the camps (Student Interviews, 2013). Figure 3 was the only image provided during the entire section on the Internment Camps.

Figure 3. Photograph of Japanese Family in Smith’s 11th Grade Classroom Textbook



Figure X. Photograph representing the internment of Japanese American families during World War II, as seen in Smith’s 11th grade textbook. Adapted from “Out of Many” by Faragher, Buhle, Czitrom, and Armitage, 2011, p. 901. Copyright 2011 by Prentice Hall.

One student, Ernesto, responded “It doesn’t say anything about the camps, what so ever. It looks like a normal Japanese family” (Student Interviews, 2013). Although he did not go into detail, it is interesting that Ernesto referred to the Japanese family in the photograph as looking “normal”. His view of what a “normal” Japanese family looks like may have come from past photographs or textbook portrayals which have ultimately led him to draw this conclusion. If past textbook portrayals were the main source of information where Ernesto gained this perception, the claim that textbook representations of minority groups impact the ways that students perceive the minorities would, in fact, be true. In addition, Ernesto continued to explain that “it [the picture] doesn’t like, show like, the poor living conditions...It doesn’t, personify what the camps did”. In other words, Ernesto is recognizing the lack of details and explanation about what life was like for the Japanese within the internment camps. By recognizing this lack of detail, Ernesto could be losing his trust for the information within the textbook and become conflicted regarding what he can believe. Another student, Adele, supported Ernesto’s answer and stated, “You never really see a picture of a... Japanese Internment Camp. Like, we don’t show those” (Student Interviews, 2013). Although she did not explain who she meant by “we,” Adele was still offering her perception that pictures of Japanese Internment Camps are not shown. This moment could also have been a realization for Adele regarding the lack of details within textbooks. Both of these students acknowledged the fact that their textbook was excluding important information which could lead to questioning the text’s validity. Specifically, Ernesto stated that he felt like “they [the textbook authors] don’t actually want you to see what the camps actually... were like” (Student Interviews, 2013). Although Ernesto did not go into detail to explain why he had this perception of the textbook authors, he could have begun to draw the conclusion after realizing how many details and descriptions were absent from the text.

Towards the end of our interview, Billy explained that he would like to see “more, like, primary sources. Like direct—journals or reactions from the Japanese going through that time” (Student Interviews, 2013). In addition, when I asked Billy if he thought the text was an accurate account of what had happened within the Japanese Internment Camps, he simply replied, “I feel like there aren’t enough details” (Student Interviews, 2013). By not directly answering my question, it appears as if the lack of details in the text was forcing Billy to question whether or not his textbook was accurate. Overall, the responses from the students regarding their unease with the text could be a direct result of recognizing the lack of information the textbooks are providing them. Previous authors such as Connor (2003) would agree with this interpretation after referring back to her own research. As an example, during her research, Connor provided a class with a picture book about the Middle Passage instead of using the classroom textbook. After looking at the picture book, one of the male students responded, “The textbooks never said anything about the women being pregnant while on the ship” (p. 242). Just like Adele, Billy, and Ernesto, Connor’s student began to recognize the lack of detail and information on minority groups within textbooks. Connor confirmed this theory by concluding, “...the data suggested that many facts and details were left out of their [the students’] previous school-sanctioned study of slavery” (p. 244). In other words, in the past, the students in Connor’s study had not been presented with complete facts and details while learning about slavery in school. The results of Connor’s study confirms my interpretation that there is a lack of information on minority groups within high school history textbooks and that when students begin to recognize this fact, they too begin to question the source’s validity. Looking even further, some professionals, and perhaps even students, could begin to interpret the lack of information within textbooks as a conspiracy theory on behalf of the textbook authors. Specifically, one common interpretation could be that

textbook authors only want the students to see certain information in a particular and guided way which ultimately would influence the ways they understand history. If this theory is indeed true, it could be extremely detrimental to students because they are essentially being molded to believe information in a predetermined manner that aligns to someone else's beliefs instead of being offered complete information and being allowed to create their own beliefs.

Need for Multiple Perspectives within Textbooks

A second theme which became apparent after analyzing the research data was that textbooks are not providing students with information from multiple perspectives and as a result, teachers have to provide these views in other ways. Romanowski (2009) would agree with this statement and explains that "Teachers should provide activities that allow students to explore different perspectives when studying a historical event" and that as a result, "Students would have the opportunity to understand that a textbook's interpretation of an event is only one of many possible interpretations" (p. 295). In other words, it is important for students to view history from multiple perspectives because students will not only gain a more accurate view of the event and minority groups, but more importantly they will see that the textbook's interpretation is not the only version of history.

To begin, the Checklists for Textbook Analysis sheets were the first pieces of data which supported the theme that there is a lack of perspectives from both Smith's and Hernandez's textbooks (Checklist for Textbook Analysis, 2013). The bigger of the two offenders came from Hernandez's textbook, "Ancient World History: Patterns of Interaction" by Beck, Black, Krieger, Naylor, and Shabaka (2007). To begin, the chapter dedicated to the Atlantic Slave Trade offered a fair amount of information on the topic, but it was laid out as fact from the

authors' perspectives. For example, while describing the lives of slaves in the Americas, the text stated:

Upon arriving in the Americas, captured Africans usually were auctioned off to the highest bidder. After being sold, slaves worked in mines or fields or as domestic servants. Slaves lived a grueling existence. Many lived on little food in small, dreary huts. They worked long days and suffered beatings. In much of the Americas, slavery was a lifelong condition, as well as a hereditary one. (p. 569)

The passage was the only information provided in the text which described the difficult lives of slaves. This lack of information and perspective could be problematic to students because they could be taking away an inaccurate and distorted account of history. Students could begin to draw the conclusions that slavery may not have been the right thing to do and that slaves were mistreated, but that it was simply “unfortunate” and not unjustifiable abuse. Additional perspectives are necessary for students to fully understand the concepts of slavery and the text could have offered the perspectives of slave owners, people who attended the slave auctions, or slaves who may not have referred to various situations as simple “beatings.” By only offering the limited view on the ways slaves were treated, students might only think that there is only one way to view history or, specifically, the way that slaves were treated. In addition, students might not be able to empathize or form connections with the slaves which could allow them to better understand the history. DiCamillo and Pace (2010) would agree with this interpretation after reviewing their own research on the effects of multiple perspectives. After seeing the effects that teaching multiple perspectives had on students, DiCamillo and Pace explained that “It encouraged students to empathize with different ethnic groups, and made history interesting and

relevant” (p. 75). In other words, students were able to empathize with the various ethnic groups which were portrayed which in return made the lessons more interesting.

As for the textbook in Smith’s class, “Out of Many” by Faragher, Buhle, Czitrom, and Armitage (2007), the use of multiple perspectives was more complete, but still left room for improvement. The best example of this data would be from the two chapters on Native American culture and interactions. Again, after utilizing the Checklist for Textbook Analysis for the chapters, multiple perspectives were acknowledged from explorers from different countries, a black slave, and other European perspectives which proved to be fairly well rounded (Checklist for Textbook Analysis, 2013). But the main problem with these chapters is that the perspective from Native Americans is not present once. As an example, while the authors are describing Cortés and his overthrowing of the Aztec Empire, the textbook states, “Within two years he had overthrown the Aztec empire, a spectacular military accomplishment” (Faragher et al., 2007, p. 40). Instead of showing what the overthrow may have been like for the Aztec people, the textbook simply refers to the event as a “spectacular military accomplishment.” In both of these situations, the textbooks fail to show the event from the perspective of the minority group. By presenting information in this way and limiting the perspectives, students could be receiving the message from textbooks that these are the only ways to view the event (or at least, the only ways with value). As a result, students could possibly begin to think that minority views are not valuable and that there is typically only one way to look at a situation. Suh, Yurita, and Metzger (2008) drew similar interpretations from their data and explained that while they were conducting textbook analyses on the Korean War:

There is no textbook discussion about the role of public opinion or the agency of individual citizens. In weighing the human costs of the war, the texts do even less in considering the

impact on other nations. No figures are given for the number of Korean or Chinese casualties. (p. 66)

By not listing the number of casualties or showing how the casualties affected Korean or Chinese people from their perspective, the textbook is dehumanizing the groups and could be leaving the impression on students that their lives are not important enough to be recorded or discussed.

Due to the lack of multiple perspectives in her classroom textbook, Smith took it upon herself to make sure the views of minorities were seen by her students through discussions and lecture (Classroom Observation Notes, 2013). Smith was able to accomplish portraying multiple perspectives in two main ways: asking her students to think in the perspective of the minority groups as well as showing key minority characters from the time period that had a role in history. Specifically, while describing the Platt Amendment to her students, Smith explained:

So, why would the Cubans be upset with the Platt Amendment? What does it change?... Right they still can't make all of the decisions on their own. And why do you think the United States would do this? Billy? No, Billy, say that. Because we can! Right, because we did have business interests there and did want to make sure that no one else would take the area for themselves. (Classroom Observation Notes, 2013)

Not only did Smith ask her students how the minority group, the Cubans, would feel, but she followed up the answer by comparing it to why the majority group, the United States, did what they were doing. By presenting information in a way which shows multiple perspectives, Smith's students could gain a better understanding of the Spanish American War as well as how all sides were involved, not just from the perspective of the United States. Schramm-Pate (2006) would agree with Smith's teachings as seen through her own interpretations from research. Specifically, while analyzing the ways that both northern and southern United States textbooks

portray the Civil War, Schramm-Pate explained, “In order to understand southern identity we must also understand northern identity, for both have historically been involved in shaping each other” (p. 140). Ultimately, Schramm-Pate is confirming that in order for students to truly understand any historical event or group, one must look at it from multiple perspectives because all groups involved impact each other.

The final pieces of data which supported this theme came from the student interviews which were conducted (Student Interviews, 2013). Towards the end of the interview session, I asked the students what their overall thoughts were about the passage from the textbook. During the discussion, Adele responded:

It’s just like, most of it like, it was just explaining why they were in the camps. Like it was explaining in our point of view, why it was in the camps. Like it doesn’t say their point of view, like “They put us there because we didn’t do anything, but they feared us.” It just kinda said “we feared them.” It’s still in our point of view, even though it’s not. (Student Interviews, 2013)

One interpretation on Adele’s response could be that she was concerned with the fact that her textbook is only providing one perspective of the Japanese internment camps. By recognizing not only that the text truly did only show one perspective, but now students are recognizing this fact and are becoming concerned, teachers such as Smith would need to provide additional perspectives outside of the textbook and challenge their students question who’s voice is being heard in the text and who is being silenced. Romanowski (2009) suggested that primary documents would be a useful source for teachers to provide their students in order for them to be able to gain knowledge from multiple perspectives. Specifically, Romanowski stated that by providing students with primary sources, “These sources move the students closer to historical

truth by creating dialogue featuring multiple narratives of particular historical events” (p. 295). In other words, when teachers provide their students with multiple perspectives, the students are more likely to fully understand historical truths because they are seeing more than one portrayal of a story. Ultimately, because textbooks are not offering sufficient perspectives from minorities and students are recognizing this fact, teachers such as Smith and Hernandez must take on the responsibility of showing other points of view in order for their students to truly gain accurate knowledge on the historical events.

Effects of Accurate Portrayals of Minorities

The final theme which was derived from the collected data was that when minorities are portrayed in an accurate manner, students gain a deeper understanding of the historical event as well as the group of minorities. Evidence from the data to support this theme was found within the teacher observations as well as the student interviews. Previous researchers such as Connor (2003) and Pescatore (2007) collected data from action-based research and were also able to determine that students increased their intellectual and emotional understanding of minority groups and historical events when they were presented with accurate portrayals. When textbooks fail to present students with accurate information, it then becomes the teacher’s responsibility to provide accurate, meaningful, and unbiased information to his or her students so that they will be able to better understand the role of minorities as well as the historical events.

The first piece of data to support the theme came from the student interviews. After analyzing the data, it became clear that the majority of the information the three students responded with was from a first-hand account provided (Student Interviews, 2013). Specifically, the first-hand account stated:

There were no lights, stoves, or window panes. My two cousins and I, together with seven others, were crowded into a 25 X 30 foot room. We slept on army cots with our clothes on. The next morning we discovered that there were no toilets or washrooms... We saw GIs manning machine guns in the watch towers. The barbed wire fence which surrounded the camp was visible against the background of the snow-covered Sierra mountain range. "So this is the American-style concentration camp," someone remarked. (Faragher et al, 2011, p. 901)

After asking the students follow-up questions such as "What type of information in there (pointing to the textbook) made you think that?" Ernesto responded, "This little...excerpt. Right there" and pointed to the Japanese first-hand account (Student Interview, 2013). Even though the other information in the text did not describe the internment camps at all, Ernesto was able to gather information about it from the first-hand account:

We kinda like followed after what the Nazis did. Like not as the same thing as the concentration camps, but it's kind of the same basics as the fact that they had terrible living conditions. We weren't killing them off ourselves, but in those living conditions they were going to die obviously. (Student Interview, 2013)

The accurate, first-hand account from the Japanese man's perspective could have allowed Ernesto to form a better understanding of what life was like for the internees at the camps. He was able to pick out the relevant and accurate details from the text and made meaning and connections with it in order to better understand the overall historical event. Connor (2003) drew similar conclusions while conducting her research. She explained that while reviewing student responses to the text titled *The Middle Passage*, a picture book which showed accurate accounts of the transatlantic slave trade, the students "consistently commented on how *The Middle*

Passage added both to their intellectual and emotional understanding of the human side of slavery's transatlantic journey" (p. 244). In both situations, the students were able to add to their intellectual and emotional understandings of minorities as a result of the accurate and relevant information which was presented to them.

The second piece of data which confirmed the theme was found from the classroom observation recording sheet and transcript for Marie Smith's class. Instead of simply portraying information on the Spanish American War from the dominant perspective, perhaps from the textbook, Smith made sure that she showed accurate information from all parties involved, including the minority groups such as the Cubans and Filipinos (Classroom Observation, 2013). A strong example is when Smith introduced a key player from Philippines:

And the Filipinos had a hero. His name was Emilio Aguinaldo! Can you guys all say Emilio Aguinaldo! Aguinaldo. First, you guys see there, he liked the Americans and their military. He wanted to get rid of the Spanish. He fought right alongside of the American military. OK, but later guess what happens? Later he gets upset because after the Spanish American War is over, the 'Splendid Little War', did the Americans leave right away? No, OK, they stayed behind. And they did have good intentions, the Americans were going to build schools, they were going to build roads, ok? They were going to try to improve life in the Philippine Islands. But, if you're a proud Filipino, you know like Emilio Aguinaldo, do you want Americans still in the Philippines? ... It's similar today, not everybody wants Americans to be there. So Emilio Aguinaldo will eventually fight against the United States...He led Filipino fighters against the United States for three year and it cost the Americans thousands of lives... Not until 1946, the fourth of July did the Filipinos gain their independence. (Classroom Observation, 2013)

By introducing a key player from a minority group and offering accurate information on who he was, what he believed in, and how he was involved in the war, students may have been able to form deeper connections and understandings of the Filipino perspective of the war instead of simply what their textbooks may have told them. While Smith was discussing Aguinaldo, students began to write more notes, participate in the discussion by answering Smith's questions, and overall seemed more genuinely interested in the topic (Classroom Observations, 2013). Again, an interpretation of this response from the students may be because they were presented with accurate information from multiple perspectives which allowed them to see a holistic view of the war as well as the parties involved. Pescatore (2007) would agree that when students are provided with accurate and relevant information, they are more likely to understand the events and groups of people better as well as become more genuinely interested in the topic. Specifically, when Pescatore presented her students with relevant and accurate information which they previously had not seen before, "The students' desire to do research led to a discussion on the reliability of sources" (p. 333). In other words, the students' interest on the topic increased which gave them the desire to conduct their own research, ultimately leading them to questioning the reliability of sources. Just like these students, Adele, Billy, and Ernesto similarly questioned the validity of their source, the textbook (Student Interview, 2013). When the students become aware that they are truly being presented with accurate and detailed information, they not only show more interest in the topics, but are able to gain a better sense of what the historical events were truly like for all parties involved.

Implications and Conclusions

The previous research was conducted in order to further analyze how high school history textbooks represent minority groups and how this representation impacts the ways in which students perceive the discussed races. Ultimately, textbooks have done a poor job presenting information on minority groups and as a result, students have become aware that they need more information in order to draw accurate conclusions and interpretations. Theoretically, past research has shown students learn best while thinking critically through the concept of critical literacy. Compton-Lilly (2009) defines critical literacy as “A set of approaches designed to engage students in literacy practices such as questioning the author, proposing and identifying perspectives, and making connections between history and other social practices when reading texts” (p. 94). In other words, the practice of critical literacy allows students to question the author’s knowledge and motives, look at a text from multiple perspectives such as looking at whose opinion is being heard while who’s is being silenced, and making connections between a text and other social practices. Previous literature has confirmed that textbooks are not providing students with unbiased and complete representations of minority groups and that critical literacy is an excellent tool for teachers to use in order to offer students an accurate view of history.

In the above findings, three distinct themes emerged which allowed the researcher to draw a number of interpretations. First, there was a lack of information being presented within high school history textbooks on the representation of minority groups which was causing students to question the source’s validity. As a result, students could be learning a distorted and inaccurate view of history which could affect the way they view minority groups as well as history in general. Understanding this finding, teachers need to become aware that the textbooks they are using in class do not always present the whole story of historical events and as a result, additional sources of information should be utilized (Romanowski, 2009). Additional sources to

use could be, but are not limited to, primary sources, other expository or narrative texts, and even multimedia sources such as videos. In addition to providing other sources, teachers should begin teaching their students the concepts of critical literacy in order to counteract the lack of information in textbooks. For example, by having students ask questions about the authors, seek multiple perspectives, and question the overall validity of the text, teachers are having their students think critically and understand that presenting just the information from textbooks is not sufficient. Almarza and Fehn (1998) confirm both of these implications and explain that “history teachers should move away from a textbook-dominated form of history instruction and explore with students problems and issues of historical construction” (p. 8). In other words, teachers should help their students recognize this theme and teach them how to explore sources for accuracy.

Secondly, students gained more information through the portrayals of multiple perspectives which have not been consistently seen in their history textbooks. Since the textbooks were only portraying one perspective for a number of events, and not from the perspective of a minority, students could begin to think that the presented perspective may not necessarily be the only perspective, but that it is at least the most important one. Understanding these interpretations, teachers must present to their students multiple perspectives whenever they are teaching a topic. By explaining a historical event from the perspectives of each of the involved parties, students can begin see how different people had different, or perhaps similar, roles and can begin to create a holistic picture of what the event was truly like. Romanowski (2009) would agree with this implication and explained that when teachers provide their students with multiple perspectives, the sources “move students closer to historical truth by creating dialogue featuring the multiple narratives of particular historical events” (p. 295). Again, by showing students that there is

always an array of perspective to study an event from, the students can begin to truly see what has happened in the past and move even closer to fully understanding historical truth.

Finally, accurate portrayals of minority groups allowed students to form deeper understandings of both minorities and history. By presenting accurate portrayals of minority groups, students may be able to make connections with them which would allow the students to gain a deeper understanding of both the group and the historical event. Also, students might be able to understand the minority group's perspective on an event more accurately which would, in return, help them to understand that there is always more than one perspective on a topic. When textbooks fail to present students with accurate information, it then becomes the teacher's responsibility to provide accurate, meaningful, and unbiased information to his or her students so that they will be able to better understand the role of minorities as well as the historical events. Specific sources of accurate information most typically can be primary sources or documents. Other sources such as expository texts or multimedia sources can be used as well, but the teacher should always preview his or her sources first, not only for accuracy, but to create a sense of familiarity so that he or she would be able to accurately present it to students. Connor (2003) would agree with these implications and explained that accurate portrayals "effectively enhance[d] ethnically and culturally diverse students' understandings" and that the portrayals "add[ed] both to their intellectual and emotional understanding [of historical events]" (p. 244). Ultimately, students truly gain more information when they are presented with accurate portrayals of minorities and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that students are always being presented with accurate information in addition to how the students should decipher inaccurate accounts.

All of the previous research, findings, and implications have truly impacted me as a teacher and offers valuable information which I can utilize through my own teaching as well as for other teachers. After learning about the quality of information within high school history textbooks, I have discovered that it is crucial for teachers to preview all information they plan on sharing with their students. Before I teach a lesson, I need to determine which sources I will be implementing, why I have chosen them, and preview the sources for any biases, stereotypes, or lack of information. By reviewing my sources, I will become more familiar with the information and will also be able to determine which additional sources are required. Previewing textbooks and additional sources should help teachers to eliminate or at least minimize the amount of bias in the information being portrayed to students which will ultimately give the students the best chance at viewing accurate accounts. In addition, utilizing critical literacy is a second factor which I will be implementing into my classroom. By understanding that textbooks are not portraying minorities in accurate or holistic representations, I now need to challenge my students to think critically about how minorities are being presented and why. Specifically, we need to challenge our students to question the sources they are being presented with, look to see whose perspective is being heard while asking who is being silenced, and to look at an event or topic from multiple perspectives. If I took anything away from this research that I want to implement into my classroom (and that all teachers need to implement), it is that I want my students to understand that there is always more than one perspective to a story. It is critical for students to understand this concept and is possibly the only way that they will be able to fully and accurately understand history.

There were several limitations to the research conducted. First, time was the largest restriction. In order to fully see how the representation of minorities in textbooks impacts

students' perceptions of the races, extensive research would need to be conducted over an extended period of time, perhaps over an entire school year. In addition, Hernandez was a long-term substitute who was implementing another teacher's lesson plans. Although she implemented the lessons well and made strong connections with her students, it was difficult to set up times to observe and work with her students. If time allowed, I would have liked to conduct student interviews with her class as I had done with Smith's. If I was able to conduct interviews with more students, I feel that I would have been able to at least gain more information on my question.

After conducting the above research, there were multiple aspects of minority representation in textbooks which led me to ask further questions. My main question focuses on whether or not students would prove to be impacted from textbook portrayals of minorities in the sense of how they perceive other races if the research was conducted over an extensive period of time. Also, because the interviewed students recognized that textbooks were not portraying enough information and were being biased, I question if students will begin to reject the information they are being provided with in textbooks and perhaps even question the knowledge of their teachers, as they are the ones providing the information. Finally, I would like to see if students that are taught history consistently with the use of multiple perspectives gain a deeper understanding of history when compared to those who simply use a textbook. Each of these questions could be answered with further action-based research and would be valuable information to this research as well as for teachers in general.

In conclusion, it is critical to note that even though overall findings were inconclusive regarding how the representation of minority groups in high school history textbooks impacts student perceptions of those races, the textbooks are not doing a sufficient job portraying the

minorities and more students are recognizing this discrepancy on their own. It is encouraging to know that some teachers are trying to counter act the textbook problems and are being more proactive regarding what they are teaching in class and how. Teachers must continue to take responsibility of the information they are teaching and challenge their students to think critically whenever they encounter a new text, concept, or idea. The more teachers show their students the stories of history through multiple perspectives while teaching consistently with the concepts of critical literacy, the more likely our students will become intelligent, democratic, and empathetic members of society who recognize that everyone has an important role in history; we just have to listen.

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Appendix A

Textbook Analysis Checklists

Chapter Title/Minority Group:

Title of Textbook: _____

Author: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Year Published: _____

Grade of Class: _____

Question:	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Comments:
How relevant are the visuals to the text?						
Are a variety of visuals presented (maps, graphs, charts, etc.)?						
Are the pictures and graphics accurate?						
Does the text show multiple perspectives when describing an event?						
Are primary documents shown?						
Are first-hand accounts cited?						
Is the overall content accurate?						
Are stereotypes or biases present?						
Is important information excluded?						

Additional Comments:

Appendix B

Classroom Observation Recording Sheets for Smith and Hernandez

Date: _____ Teacher: _____

Class/Period: _____ Lesson Topic: _____

Describe the Classroom (posters, books, desks vs. tables, etc.):

What is the student make-up?

# of Boys	# of Girls	# of Caucasian	# of African American	# of Asian	# of Hispanic	# of "Other"

Describe the lesson (purpose and objectives):

How is the teacher going to accomplish the objectives?

What types of tools/resources does the teacher use and how?

How is the representation of minority groups portrayed during the lesson?

Are there any biases, stereotypes, or exclusions made? If so, explicate.

Are any components of critical literacy implemented during the lesson? If so, what?

Appendix C

Questions During Student Interviews

1. What was the section telling you about?
2. How do you feel after reading this, about the Japanese internment camps?
3. What type of information within the text makes you feel this way?
4. Do you think the government made the right choice to make the camps, and why or why not?
5. While looking at that picture on p.901, how does this make you feel about the camps?
6. Do you think that this is enough information to fully understand the topic of Japanese internment camps? Why or why not?
7. Do you think that this is an accurate account of what happened within Japanese internment camps? Why or why not?
8. Any additional comments or questions?