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Representation of Historical Events within Social Studies Textbooks
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Abstract

This study aims to examine the representation of historical events within two social studies textbooks. Data was collected through a questionnaire, student written responses to the textbook, textbook evaluations, field notes, student led discussion, and teacher led discussion. The study reveals textbooks may not provide students with a well-rounded representation of historical events, students might be able to critically view the textbook but may not internalize the same skills used, and students may struggle with connecting historical events and the world today. Students and teachers, alike, need to recognize the impact of the social studies textbook. In addition, a critical literacy approach to the classroom can provide opportunities for students to question, analyze and redefine their beliefs through social interaction.

Representation of Historical Events within Social Studies Textbooks

Using Critical Literacy to Enhance the Social Studies Classroom

Within the social studies classroom, the textbook plays a fundamental role. According to Santoli and Weaver (1999) "...the primary tool used by teachers to convey an understanding...is still the textbook" (p. 34). Therefore, it is imperative to view various textbooks to understand what message our students' are receiving about important historical events. When a student is reading a textbook, he/she is to believe the historical facts and figures explained are the most essential pieces of knowledge in America's history.

In addition, much of what is taught within the social studies classroom through the textbook is to prepare students for a final or state test. Unfortunately, the questions students are forced to answer focus on discrete facts, but do not address the deeper, multifaceted meaning of these facts (Bigelow, 2009). Students are taught to memorize the world rather than critically think about the world. In addition, these tests do not give the history or the viewpoint of all those diverse backgrounds involved. For those students that are not considered the majority, their perspective is lost and because it is not on the test, it seems not important to know. Therefore, our textbooks are sending a message, if you are not widely represented in the textbook then your culture and perspective are not valued enough for the student population to learn. Schools promote diversity and stress tolerance, yet students of various backgrounds are not seeing their history depicted within the textbook or classroom.

Throughout this study, two social studies textbooks were evaluated to investigate how the textbooks present the discovery of American/Christopher Columbus and the attacks of September 11th in the United States. Students read and provide written responses to compare how each text portrays the historical content. A student led discussion provided students with an

opportunity to compare and contrast their viewpoints of the texts. A teacher led discussion provided students with an opportunity to critically view the contents. According to Barton and Hamilton (1998), “literacy is essentially social, and is located in the interaction between people” (p. 3). In order to assess how students comprehended the textbook material, two discussions allowed students to immerse themselves in social interaction to understand the topics. Lastly, there is a need for students to develop a critical consciousness through discussion in order to foster creativity and empowerment (Freier 1972; Freier & Macedo, 1987). While reading texts, students should have the mindset to question the text and the texts affect on them as a reader and the world. Therefore, students were challenged to recognize the questionable textbook content through a teacher led discussion based on the four dimension of critical literacy. As a result, the research helped to identify if students were able to recognize the power textbook content have within the social studies classroom and how the content affects the students’ view of themselves, the community, and the world.

The goal of this action research project was to discover how social studies textbooks represented historical events. Another purpose of the study included examining the textbooks through the four dimensions of critical literacy, including disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociocultural issues, and taking action and promoting social justice. Based on the theories, New Literacy Studies and Critical Literacy, students benefit from interacting with others and the textbook. By communicating with others, students are exposed to various viewpoints and facts to help build their understanding of the content. The knowledge students gain from interacting with others can help questions the world around them and develop a critical view of the world. Many studies have stressed the impact of textbooks on students. Specifically the misrepresentation of historical events and precise

discourse used, influences how students interpret the event, and shapes their views and beliefs of the world yesterday and today. A critical literacy approach to viewing textbook, is a beneficial option for students to question the misrepresentation and discourse. In this action research project, it was found textbooks struggle with providing students with a well-rounded representation of historical events. Students were able to critically view the textbook and identify the issues, however, revealed they do not truly believing misrepresentation and lack of multiple perspectives is an issue when learning history. Lastly, it appears students find it difficult to make connections between the historical content they read and the impact it has on the world today.

Theoretical Framework

Literacy is defined by Gee (1989) as a “control of secondary uses of language (i.e. uses of language in secondary discourse)” (p. 23). Discourses are the certain languages used by certain groups of people. For each group someone belongs to (man or woman, soccer player, student, teacher, religious affiliation, etc), it requires a person to think, act and speak like others that also belong to that group. A person can belong to multiple groups, which require knowledge of multiple discourses. Within the classroom, a student may belong to various groups, which requires different discourses, and each group provides the student with unique experiences and knowledge that can be beneficial to others in the classroom. The secondary discourses that are attained outside the home (i.e. school) through learning impacts the person as well. Learning refers to developing knowledge consciously through direct instruction (Gee, 1989). In a well-constructed classroom, the primary and secondary discourses mesh together. By interweaving the home culture with the school culture, students can begin to identify their role in the larger community and discuss what that role means with others who share the same or different

backgrounds. It is important for students to be able to bring their knowledge and experiences from all the groups they belong to into the classroom. When the two come together, students are able to learn about themselves, the community, and the world by encountering various perspectives. Therefore, the classroom needs to be equipped to support all the cultures. Textbooks are one instructional tool that is highly used and should be a piece that includes multiple perspectives. Additionally, the instructor is an essential component in incorporating home and school cultures. It is vital the instructor helps students understand the importance of the students' cultures and how each students' knowledge and experiences help others obtain a better understanding of themselves, the community they all live in, and the world.

Throughout this study, the New Literacy Studies (NLS) theory will guide my research. As stated by Larson and Marsh (2005), "NLS helps us understand that literacy learning does not simply occur in formal or informal settings, or in or out of school, but also in-between in everyday interaction as tools for building and maintaining social relations" (p. 18). Literacy acquisition seems to be most beneficial when conducted through social interaction because students are able to use what they know, find out what others know, and work collectively to find the most powerful and effective ideas. Another key tenet in NLS is to understand being literate involves being communicatively competent across multiple discourse communities (Barton, 1994; Gee, 1996; 2001). It is vital for students to be able to discuss the various perspectives that surround a topic to help build a better understanding of the literacy events that are involved in. In this study, this theory is important because it becomes clear that students learn best when immersed in social interaction. In addition, so much of what students are learning not only takes place within the classroom but outside of the classroom. The knowledge students gain from these two settings is brought to the surface when students are immersed in social interaction.

When surrounded by others, students can discuss a topic within the social studies textbook and bring their knowledge to inform others, and in turn, helping to build everyone's comprehension of the world around them.

In addition to NLS, critical literacy theory also guides my research. Critical literacy can be defined as “learning to read and write as part of the processes of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations. The goal of critical literacy...is to challenge these unequal power relations” (Anderson & Irvine, 1993, p. 82). Therefore, when students are reading historical content within the social studies textbooks, students need to be aware of the issues that lie within the text they read and begin to critically think about the content. When students observe, question, and take action, they are developing critical literacy. It is important to understand reading consists of reading the words and the world, simultaneously. As a result, critical literacy is concerned with building the critical conscious of learners. (Freire & Macedo, 1987). When students are reading their social studies textbooks, it is essential to understand the words but more important, students need to understand what they are reading gives them additional information about the world around them. In critical literacy, students are looking into real life issues that concern and affect their lives. Within critical literacy, teachers and students work in a partnership within the learning process rather than participating in hierarchical models of power (Shor and Freire, 1987b). Therefore, students play a key role in the issues that need to be investigated, rather than the teacher, who typically develops the topics to be discussed. Critical literacy is essential to reading social studies textbooks because it allows students to question, redefine, and act on issues that are usually silenced in their own world. Reading a social studies textbook with a critical eye helps students become aware of issues that may not have been apparent. Furthermore, critical literacy

practices can foster political awareness and social change (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Freire & Macedo, 1987). When students become more aware of the world, it allows students to realize that they are part of a larger community where they can have a great impact.

Overall, New Literacy Studies and critical literacy theories work together in this study to help guide my research. When reading the social studies textbook, students do not gain a complete knowledge by simply reading the text. Rather, students need to be immersed in social interaction, filled with others with various discourses, to help question, redefine, and take action to what they have learned about the world around them.

Research Question

Given that literacy is a social practice and learning occurs during social interaction, this action research project asks, how are historical events represented in high school social studies textbooks and how do students perceive historical events in social studies textbooks?

Literature Review

In order to produce a well-round and informed action research study, it is imperative to view the previous research that has helped set the foundation for this particular study. In the following literature review, an examination of three distinct themes will be unveiled. The first theme investigates the powerful role textbooks play in our classrooms. Students who are reading their classroom textbooks are reading material that was designed with publishers with a political agenda. Next, the second theme continues to build upon this knowledge by examining how historic events in social studies textbooks are misrepresented. Textbooks have a tendency to present only one dimension of a historical event, rather than presenting the content from a variety of perspectives and presenting all the relevant factors that occurred during the past event. There

is a constant push for using multiple perspectives and critical thinking, yet textbooks continue to present content that reflects the opposite. In turn, textbooks seem to have negative results on students reading the text. Within this theme, two subheadings are included to examine how textbook language and omissions contribute to historical misrepresentation, as well as, the affect content misrepresentation has on students. Lastly, critical literacy will be examined as an approach to help build student's critical skills when viewing textbooks, and in turn, the world around them. Critical literacy is a teaching method that can help reach the goals of integrating multiple perspectives and questioning biased content. The skills developed in a classroom that promotes critical literacy will help students view not only the textbook with a critical eye but the world as well.

The Power of Textbooks in the Classrooms

Textbooks are a major instructional tool that play an important role in content-area teaching and learning at all grade levels (Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Moore & Murphy, 1987). With so much influence in the classroom, it has been noted that textbook selection is more a political process rather than an educational process. The adoption criteria for textbooks are a result of various political groups that determine what is relevant for the textbooks and what it not.(Currey, 1998; English, 1980; Jorstad, 1988). It becomes an issue when textbook content is determined a political agenda rather than with educational goals with mind. The political groups involved seem to be keeping their own self-interest in mind, rather than the educational goals for the nation's students. In contrast, Grant (2003) reports that policy factors, personal, organizational, and political, do not influence textbooks, curriculum standards or tests. In 2009, Perlmutter studied the visual images of European Jews in the Holocaust during World War II in secondary high school history textbooks. He located one world history textbook and one

American history textbook and evaluated the message each Holocaust image was sending to students. After viewing 6,553 images, it was clear textbooks were being produced to convey certain information and provoke specific emotions towards European Jews in the Holocaust. In addition, Perlmutter (2009) found the tradition of selecting images of the Holocaust for the use in textbooks was swayed by politics and the requirements to fulfill aesthetic needs of the textbook. Despite the discussion of the textbook process, it is important to note, the one goal of a textbook editor is not to cause anyone to feel offended by a text's content (Perlmutter, 2009; Bigelow, 1992). It may not be the intention to offend the reader, but based on research, it is much more common than most would hope.

There is also little disagreement as well that in today's social studies classrooms the primary tool for instruction is the textbook (Santoli & Weaver, 1999). For many classrooms, the textbook serves as the source for deciding what content, vocabulary, and activities that should be taught. Textbooks continue to play a major role in determining what our students will learn about their own country and other countries (Berghahn & Schlisser, 1987), and textbook versions of events are often accepted without question (Parsons, 1982). As a result, the facts within the textbook are the only facts students are learning about their own country and other countries. The issue becomes how accurate and unbiased historical facts within the textbook. In addition, students are reading the material within textbooks and not questioning the validity and trustworthiness of the source. It is not uncommon for students to read from the textbook and then continue their learning through textbook-based activities, rather than incorporating supplemental material to build upon the textbook content and incorporate various perspectives on the specific content. Textbook related activities occupy 70% to 95% of class time in American schools (Wade, 1993). When examining the goal of textbooks, it has been found that they do not

simply present the content. Rather, it is clear textbooks are designed for a specific purpose. In American history September 11th is an event that changed the course of history, much like the bombing of Pearl Harbor. On September 11, 2001, a terrorist group hijacked American planes and direct them into the Twin Towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and a third was brought down in Pennsylvania. Romanowski conducted a study in 2011 that examined history textbooks portrayal of September 11th. During the qualitative content analysis of nine textbooks were evaluated with a specific set of questions to help guide the study. The purpose of these textbooks is to provide a generation of citizens with a sanctioned version of America's past. Among other findings, Romanowski (2009) found, with this purpose in mind, "textbooks can be seen as ideological and political weapons that shape the thinking of the majority of American" (p. 290). Similar to the previous studies explained, Saleem and Thomas (2011) examined social studies textbooks, as well as resource books. Their specific goal was to identify the representation of the September 11th attacks in textbooks from a Muslim perspective. In regards to the power of textbooks, Saleem and Thomas also indicate textbook publishers pay large amount of money to make sure certain texts are adopted into the national curriculum for schools to use in their classrooms. Saleem and Thomas continue by indicating one company, the American Textbook Council (ATC) claim 80% of the national textbook market from grades 8-12, therefore, is making it highly politicized.

History textbooks have for years aimed to instill in children a sense of pride in their collective identity (Naveh, 2007). As a result, students may view the United States as superior to other countries and dismiss the need to view historical events through the eyes of others. When textbooks present their content to instill a sense of pride, it suggests to students that the American way of life and view of the world is the only one that matters. In addition, textbooks

impart the values, goals, and myths that society wants to instill in each generation (Apple, 1979; Bourdieu, 1973). Through the years, those creating the textbooks determine what it is they want to instill within the students. Therefore, every generation of textbooks might present different values and beliefs that were reflective of that time. Suh, Yurita and Metzger (2008) conducted a study in which they evaluated the Korean War in textbooks in South Korea, Japan and the United States. Within this study, the authors reviewed the power of textbooks within the United States and determined textbooks are used to teach young generations to develop national identity and patriotism. Spring (2006) further explains that in Texas, an important state in textbook adoption process, has implemented laws that govern textbook selection and require texts to promote democracy, patriotism, and free enterprise. Therefore, it appears textbook publishers approach creating textbooks with specific goals in mind other than accurately representing historical events, including, democracy patriotism, and/or free enterprise. Fitzgerald (1979) points out that history textbooks are written not to examine history, but rather to instruct students about what they should and should not know about their country. Consequently, students are not presented with all the accurate content to determine their own thoughts and feelings about history. Rather, textbook publishers have taken control over what material is need and important for readers to learn about history and use that information to support specific ideas and beliefs about their countries and other countries. The result is a version of U.S. history that is fixed and cloaked in certainty (Romanowski, 2009). It is important to note that all the previous findings just noted, makes it clear that textbooks are being produced to instill certain values and beliefs amongst the readers. With this information comes the problem for researchers and educators to find the solution. Students who read these textbooks are reading information that contains a hidden agenda and many are not aware.

Textbooks are conveyed as sources of historical facts. In 1996, Coman (1996) conducted research on school textbook representation of Germany's role in the war with Britain. Twenty-two texts were investigated to understand how Germany was presented in British textbooks. Not only was the rhetoric examined but the images contained in the textbooks were looked at as well. In this study, Coman addressed how powerful the words and images of a textbook can be over students who are reading them. Coman argues, "it is probable that pupils regard texts as definitively authoritative. Their influence in this respect should not be underestimated" (p. 329). Students are reading the textbook and holding truth to all its contents. When students believe all that they read, it becomes a major issue because textbooks are created to not only inform students on history, but to convey beliefs, values, and ideas that are deemed vital for that generation of people. Coman maintains his argument by indicating, primary school teachers who are working across 10 subjects the textbook may represent the only source of knowledge. When that textbook is the sole source of information, students receive one dimension of the curriculum that is produced with specific agendas. Lindaman and Ward (2004) in *History Lessons*, state,

Textbooks are a quasi-official story, a sort of state sanctioned version of history. In nearly all countries, the government takes some role in setting the standards from an acceptable culture, political and social history- i.e. what the authorizes want the next generation to learn about its own heritage- enfolding them, as it were, into a collective national identity. (p. xvii).

It seems the contents in the social studies textbooks is merely a tool to present a government approved historical story that is partial rather than a full representation of historical events.

Furthermore, textbooks will only be approved if the textbooks contain information that will help shape the next generation. Textbooks are not written and assembled by one person. Rather, it is

a compilation of writers, designers, editors, etc, who are responsible for this instructional material. One of the key selling determinants of the book is its aesthetic attraction, that is, its “eye appeal” (Farr & Tulley, 1985). The team of creators all understands the textbook needs to look appealing in order for schools to adopt their product within their social studies’ classrooms. If their creation is aesthetically pleasing then the company has a better chance to instill the beliefs and values they have produced within the textbook. To meet editors’ and marketers’ definition of the requirements of eye appeal, textbooks must contain a large number of images, use as much color as possible, be anthropocentric, be action oriented, and, most of all, be ‘socially redeeming” (Perlmutter, 1992a). This information is valuable when reviewing the various factors that influence the production of textbooks. Thus, it is not only the text that is under scrutiny, but the overall presentation of the textbook as well.

With the authority textbooks seem to have in the social studies classroom, it is necessary to investigate how the influential textbook content is affecting students. For instance, Porat (2004) claims students may bring to the textbook account previous historical perceptions, views they absorbed from the culture in which they live and think, and a context that is liable to shape their comprehension of what they read. In 2004, Porat conducted a study that aimed at examining the relation between textbook content of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the student’s formation of historical perceptions. Students selected were in 12th grade and lived in Jerusalem. After completing the research, Porat (2004) found student textbook comprehension is influenced by previous knowledge and perceptions from their cultural and social surroundings. A student’s prior knowledge, beliefs, values, and historical perceptions are one condition where the students hold more power than the textbooks content. A student’s background knowledge is an aspect that plays a fundamental role in their interpretation of the textbook content. As well, students

have consistently been exposed to textbooks and have used their previous experiences to identify the issues within the social studies textbook. Students have noticed textbooks could do a better job of creating a textbook that is engaging for the students reading the text. In accordance with the research previously stated, Beck and McKeown (2002) indicate,

Student perception and point of view are integral ingredients in understanding textbooks' connections to learning engagement in the content areas. Therefore, students and their perceptions may aid in resolving this textbook dilemma. Perhaps students, without prompting, may assist educators by revealing their general thoughts and ideas of what a quality social studies books is when allowed to evaluate social studies textbooks. The data indicated all participants' desire individualized textbooks that may allow learning engagement to be more individualized and manageable in social studies. (p. 88).

It becomes clear students can express their opinions about the social studies textbook within their classroom. Students are aware the textbook plays a key role in the social studies classroom, yet have disagreement on how it is currently being used. Therefore, students are aware of the power and influence of the textbook and want the content to be more engaging. If students' perceptions and point of view are taken into account, then their engagement will likely increase. If students are more engaged in what they are reading, there is a better chance students will recognize the bias that lie within the textbook. Despite the heavy influence, it is important to remember textbooks are only one piece of the teaching curriculum. Students recognize the social studies textbook.

Misrepresentation of Content in Social Studies Textbooks

Through the following previous research, it is believed that history textbooks give students a false representation of various historical events. A study conducted by Tom Puk (1994) indicates how textbooks misrepresent social studies content. Puk studied the historical accuracy of Christopher Columbus. During this study, students discussed what they knew about Columbus, his voyage, and his “discovery”. In essence, it was determined that students were learning facts that were inconsistent with accurate historical events in social studies textbooks and are only being presented with one side of the story. Nowhere in the textbooks was there a mention of the Vikings or the impact on Native Americans (1994). Bigelow (1992) also found the depiction of Christopher Columbus was not accurate. In this study, Bigelow evaluated eight widely used children’s books on Christopher Columbus. Bigelow examined each biography and determined how historically accurate the event was depicted. Additionally, he analyzed the influence these portrayals may have on the young readers. Much of Bigelow’s findings included a misrepresentation of Columbus and provided young readers with inaccurate historical facts on Columbus. According to Puk (1994), it would seem that “knowledge is often naively yet fraudulently misrepresented as ‘fact’” (p. 232). As a result, students are reading these texts on Columbus and instinctively believing what was read. For instance, when discussing the motive for Columbus’s journey, Bigelow (1992) found the eight biographies conveyed the true motive was Columbus’s deep faith in God, yet his true motive for sailing was his want to become very rich. These are two very different findings, and it is the later that is historically accurate, and yet not the facts students are learning from these books.

Howard Zinn, author of *A People’s History of the United States*, addresses the misrepresentation of Columbus and gives an accurate portrayal based on historical documents, such as Columbus’s journal he kept while on his voyage. It is in an additional work, *The Zinn*

Reader, in which Zinn truly realizes the profound affect this misrepresentation has on students. One student who read *People's History* wrote him and stated, "I am wondering if there is such a journal, and if so, why isn't it part of our history. Why isn't any of what you say in my history book, or in history books people have access to each day?" (1997, p. 484). This student's reactions indicates two important notes: (1) when students are presented with accurate portrays, it gives them a better chance to identify the bias and misrepresentation and (2) students are not provided with enough available resources that allows them to obtain an accurate representation of historical events. Overall, students were reading materials that helped shaped their understanding of Christopher Columbus. Unfortunately, this information was not represented of the truth and was instilling students with ideas and beliefs that are detrimental to their understanding of the world around them.

Evans and Davies (2000) also conducted a study and found there is an issue of misrepresentation within students' texts. In this study, a thorough break down of gender characteristics, specifically males, within elementary school reading textbooks was conducted. In this study, the authors conducted a content analysis of two major reading textbooks basal series. Low and Sherrard (1999), also investigated gender stereotypes within textbooks, yet focused on the portrayal of women. After Evans and Davies examined each text, it was found that males were portrayed with traditionally masculine traits, such as being aggressive, argumentative, and competitive. In general, it was found the elementary reading textbooks were implying males to engage in a variety of behaviors, however, the masculine ones would be the only ones accepted within society. Therefore, it is seen that textbooks representation can influence how students view themselves and their place in society. In addition, how males and females are portrayed in texts are reinforcing gender stereotypes. Low and Sherrard (1999)

would agree with these findings based on their research of the portrayal of women in photographs within twelve college-level textbooks. It was found that women were consistently portrayed in traditional roles through the various textbooks. This information is valuable because it is clear how the misrepresentation within texts, from elementary school to college level texts, can have a profound effect on how students view themselves and others around them. Despite these findings, it is believed that publishing companies understand the importance of equal representation within textbooks and have printed guidebooks to stress the impact of textbook content on children (Evans & Davies).

However, textbooks continue to present questionable content. For example, in a study written on the representation of the September 11th attacks, one student exclaimed that these books (social studies textbooks) should be recalled and rewritten because most of it sounded like opinions (Saleem & Thomas, 2011). Students were reading social studies textbooks and believed the content represented the truth. However, the research conducted by Puk (1995, Bigelow (1992), and Saleem and Thomas (2011) have indicated how misrepresentation can be an issue within the social studies classroom. By not presenting the content as facts, is much closer to myth, possibility and probability (Puk, 1994). As a result, students read the inaccurate textbook content and place a high value on the content. Misrepresentations within social studies textbooks is an issue because the information students are learning and the knowledge they are carrying from grade to grade is closer to myths than the actual truth of historical events. In addition, Santoli and Weaver's research continues to build on this argument of questionable textbook content through their examination of textbooks from Japan, France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States. Depending on which country a student was in, the content they read was swayed. Through their research, it was found the majority of the textbooks

selected, inadequately provide students with comprehensive, bias-free information (Santoli & Weaver). As a result, students receive historical events with little accuracy and remain to hold the information as truth.

The different ways in which texts treat historical times and events signal whose perspectives are valued (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994). These authors evaluated textbooks and the hidden agendas and meanings they convey, particularly the representation of “Third World” nations. Specifically, three high school world history texts were examined and a content analysis was conducted to evaluate them. Commeyras and Alverman found that textbooks do little to support, respect, or understand people of various countries. In addition, the researchers found these nations (indicated as Africa, Asia, and Latin American) were consistently under-represented; there was parallel coverage across the three textbooks, the coverage of each country varied with each textbook. The authors also found that European imperialism was heavily emphasized and the countries were portrayed as “hopelessly mired in difficulties” (Commeyras & Alvermann, p. 272). The textbooks did not represent the countries in a way that allowed students to draw their own conclusions on Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Instead, the content provided, under represented the countries and students were not provide with enough accurate information to receive a quality understanding and respect for the three countries. When students are reading their textbooks, they are only reading the material that supports the specific agenda of that textbook and those that published it. For example, Clawson (2002) researched the representation of Blacks in an economic textbook; it was found “more than sixty percent of poor people pictured in these textbooks are Black. This is a gross representation of the true proportion of Black among the poor” (p 355). When students are only given a small portion of information, their opinions and beliefs are limited because the opinions and beliefs are only based on the

small piece of content. It is likely students could develop opinions of Blacks based on one statistic in a textbook that seems to accurately represent this particular race of people.

Unfortunately, the information was inaccurate and biased, which may led students to develop a stereotypical opinion of Blacks. When textbooks are the only material students are reading from, misrepresentation of information can be damaging to a student's understanding of the world around them. In addition, the study led by Lee (2011) on the representation of globalization in South Korean textbooks maintains this argument. The country of South Korea highly promotes globalization and publishing houses help instill this through their "representation" of their own culture and western cultures. When discussing this concept, Lee states:

People in western countries are presented as being law-abiding, capable of getting things done, living in a society that respects equality and educated in a way that gives them a sense of personal responsibility. On the other hand, people in non-West are described as being less respectful of the law, incapable of getting things done, resigned to social inequalities, and lacking in personal responsibility because of poor education. (p. 55).

The content within the South Korean textbooks misrepresent America, yet are provided to students by the government to fulfill a nationwide goal of globalization. South Korea wants their citizens to transform into a westernized nation. Textbooks in South Korea are constructed to downplay the culture of South Korea and overemphasize American culture. Unfortunately, by providing students with this misrepresented information of the United States, South Korean students are not receiving a well-rounded and accurate education that impacts the view of their country and others, specifically the United States. Much like Romanowski (2009), Evan and Davies (2009) and Commeyras and Alverman (1994), Lee utilized content analysis of textbooks to conduct his research, more specifically Critical Discourse Analysis. Using this method helped

expose the unique social context of the textbooks contents and the ideological basis.

Specifically, this study “exemplified skewed textbook contents” (Lee, 2011, p. 59). These two examples of Black representation in economic textbooks and South Korean representation of the United States and their own country help support how the textbooks are misrepresenting content to help push their own agendas. As a result, students are receiving a social studies education filled with bias content. Furthermore, the specific discourse a textbook uses and the information they omit about historical events are two methods textbooks use to misrepresent social studies content.

Textbook Content Discourse. The discourse, or language, used within a textbook plays a large role in how a historical time, event, or person is interpreted by the reader. Carretero, Jacott and López-Manjón (2002) explored the textbook events in 1492 within textbooks from Mexico and Spain. Included in this study was the examination of the portrayal of Christopher Columbus in each and comparing the various views. The study helped to provide insight on how various textbooks choose to present the same historical event. In particular, it was the language used within each textbook that provided the readers with a different representation of Christopher Columbus. Bigelow (1992) would support these researchers based on his previous research in 1992 on the representation of Christopher Columbus in children’s literature. Within these studies, the authors dissected the language used to discuss the events of 1492. After examining the texts, it was clear that each text’s language was used to convey a certain message to the reader, specifically how each text labeled events. In this case, the most debatable word amongst historians is the term “discovery” when discussing the voyage of Christopher Columbus (Carretero, Jacott & López-Manjón, 2002). This one word accompanied with others such as “great man”, “brave” and “adventure”, helps perpetuate “the right of white people to rule over

people of color, powerful nations to dominate weaker nations” (Bigelow, 1992, p. 106). These are the values textbooks are trying to instill in readers when they use specific language such as this language. The specific language used to describe Columbus, portrayed him as a positive figure in history. Columbus certainly made a mark on history but texts do not present all the facts on Columbus. The languages used within these texts have masked the serious beliefs and values the textbooks have introduced to readers.

The history of Christopher Columbus and his voyage is an event that nearly all children can identify and describe and Bigelow sought to investigate how Columbus was depicted within specific children’s literature. With this knowledge, Bigelow investigated the values and beliefs these eight textbooks had conveyed to the readers. These beliefs and values include the ability for the stronger to rule over the weaker and the power of religion. This study found, much like Carretero, Jacott and López-Manjón (2002), the specific terms and labels used to describe the 1492 event of Christopher Columbus helps instill beliefs of accepting concepts such as colonialism and racism.

Furthermore, a clear example of various textbook languages is apparent when examining an Israeli textbook and a Palestinian textbook in the study carried out by Steinberg and Bar-on in 2009. The specific language used to describe the same content is drastically different. For example, Steinberg and Bar-on (2009) found when discussing the first Jewish immigrants to Palestine, Israeli texts refer to them as “the prisoners,” while the Palestinian texts call them “gangs” and “terrorists” (p. 106). In these same texts, the Israeli text titles the 1948 war as “the War of Independent”, while it is titled “the Catastrophe” in Palestinian textbooks. The textbook is referring to the same event, yet the language used in each country’s textbook conveys a very different message to students. However, it is not only the students who are affected by this

language. When this language is used in the textbook, it is found that teacher perpetuate these beliefs because they are situated to teach the discourses (Apple, 2000).

Textbook Content Omissions. There are times when specific content is omitted from social studies textbook. As indicated earlier through the study by Romanowski (2009), which found when an author omitted particular information, perspectives that students considered are limited, which shapes their understanding of American history and the world. Regardless of the specific content, when authors decide to omit information it has a significant effect of how students interpret the content and its effect on them, their country, and the world. (Spring 2006). It becomes unfair to the students because the student is not provided with all the necessary information to build their own thoughts and opinions about the content. As stated earlier in the power of textbooks, students assume the information contained in a textbook is fact and has significant importance to their life (Coman, 1996). This misrepresentation within social studies textbook is damaging to the students' education because students are developing beliefs based on textbook content that seems to be biased. As a result, students will carry on those biases. In contrast, Romanowski (2009) states that "most people would argue that these omissions are inevitable and unavoidable...textbook authors will include some knowledge and omit other information" (p. 296). However, the issue that lies in this statement is, if information is omitted from a text, it implies the event or person has no importance in history. The issue of who is making these decisions comes into question.

When discussing the representation of September 11th in textbooks, Romanowski (2009) found the current textbooks used in social studies fail to provide critical information regarding the September 11th attack. These omissions limit the perspectives from which students can view 9/11 and the war on terror. In comparison to content covering the Korean War, Suh, Yurita &

Metzger (2008) also found “U.S. textbooks do not offer any conclusive interpretation of the war. What did the US fight in this particular war? What impact did it have? What was lost and what was gained?” (p. 66). Therefore, the students are not able to receive a full understanding of a war that is still influencing the world today. When textbooks fail to provide the full scope of a person or event, students are receiving a disservice. For teachers, it is not only the knowledge included in the textbook they should be wary of, but also the knowledge that is excluded (Permuter, 2009). It also means, “acknowledging that history is always incomplete, but that there is a great deal which can be learned from its exploration” (James & McVay, 2008, p. 348). Students need to recognize textbooks do not provide all the information on a historical event. Rather, students can learn additional and vital information by exploring supplementary sources. By reading additional sources, students can gather more content to build a well-rounded opinion of history. Puk (1994) would support the statement and indicates a need for secondary sources to change the manner in which they present these “facts”. If textbooks do not present accurate historical facts, students will continue to “shuffle” myths without realizing and understand they are learning myths. There may or may not be an easy way to alter the presentation of historical facts in textbooks, but there is a way for educators to teach students to identify biased textbook content and discuss the implications.

Critical Literacy Improves Students’ Social Studies Knowledge

From previous research, critical literacy is not a term that is simply defined. The term critical literacy is difficult to define because it lacks a distinctive instructional methodology (Behrman, 2006). The first aspect to understand is that critical literacy is not an activity. You do not “do” critical literacy. Rather, it is a way of thinking and requires time for educators and students. McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004) conceptualize it as a “process” that involves

“developing...pedagogical repertoires; changing with time and circumstance; engaging in self-critical practices; and remaining open possibilities repertoire” (p. 55). Students need to realize that critical literacy is a progression of thinking skills. Developing a critical eye of the world is constantly evolving and the student is always obtaining new knowledge and viewpoints of the world. Critical literacy looks to develop skills for students to view their schoolwork and the world critically. It challenges the inequalities and injustices of the status quo by pushing the definition of literacy beyond the usual concerns of decoding (reading) and encoding (writing) to asking questions that challenge why things the way they are how to make change (Shannon, 1991). More specifically, Luke (1991) identifies critical literacy as an approach that provides marginalized students with an increased opportunity for talking, reading, and writing about significant events in their own lives. Critical literacy also encourages them to focus on their own culture histories and to extend their worldviews to other cultures as well. In becoming critically literate, Luke (1991) maintains, students learn to reposition themselves as speakers, readers, and writers so that they become producers of valued knowledge and not merely consumers of textbook “facts.” Critical literacy allows students to reevaluate how they obtain knowledge from texts and gives them a deeper understanding of the world around them. Rather than accepting what is read within the textbook, students can view the texts with a critical eye to start to understand what the social studies text is teaching them about the world around them.

In addition, Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) examined years of previous research on critical literacy. The finds in this study provides a solid foundation for utilizing critical literacy pedagogy within the classroom. Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys synthesized their findings of critical literacy into four dimensions: disturbing the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action and promoting justice.

Disrupting the commonplace can be seen as developing a language that questions how the text is trying to position the reader and how it shapes the readers identity (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). In this dimension students are challenged to seek the out the issues and complexities of which they do not regularly recognize. Popular culture is regularly used within this dimension to help students view how media shapes their views.

Interrogating multiple viewpoints helps students view experiences and texts from various perspectives (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). This dimension helps to expand a student's thinking to discover various beliefs and viewpoints. By exploring multiple viewpoints, it is important to question whose voices are missing or are being belittled.

Focusing on sociopolitical issues pays attention to “how sociopolitical systems, power relationships, and language are intertwined and inseparable...” (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 383). This dimension allows students to examine the sociopolitical system that affect how they view an experience or text. Students are not necessarily focusing on their personal opinions but the sociopolitical systems and power relationships that help shape their understanding of the world.

Lastly, taking action and promoting social justice allow students to reflect on the issues that arise and begin to take action to help transform the world. Students have to be willing to speak up and understand that their voice can make changes to the issues they discovered within the previous three dimensions. This dimension makes critical literacy vital because student are helping to develop a more socially just world (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002).

The researchers examined teacher's knowledge and use of the four dimensions of critical literacy within their classroom . It was found that there are some dimensions that can be

integrated more easily than others can. These dimensions include disrupting the commonplace and interrogating multiple viewpoints. It is most important to note that these dimensions are connected and cannot stand-alone. In other words, students are not benefitting from critical literacy if they are only viewing multiple viewpoints and not taking action and promoting social justice. The last dimension of taking action and promoting social justice seems particularly vital to critical literacy because it is what sets it apart from critical thinking (Delaney, 2007).

Based on various researches, the role of the teacher plays an integral role in students' development of critical literacy skills. As stated by Steinberg and Bar-on (2009), "textbooks are providing students with only one side of the story, which is considered to be the right one" (p. 105). Students are reading textbooks and believing it contains all the necessary and correct content that is needed to develop a solid understanding of history. However, textbooks typically provide only one aspect of history and not providing other aspects that contain valuable. It has been indicated multiple times, through various research findings, that there is no doubt textbooks play an integral part in the social studies classroom. However, Saleem and Thomas (2011) claim it is how the teacher utilizes the material and the interaction between students and the textbook is vital for the students' construction of knowledge. When teachers decide how to utilize the textbook and create discussions to discover the aspects of the textbooks that are not present, educators can identify the bias and inform students. In 2011, Stevens and Brown explored the use of technology, specifically blogging, in combination with the Holocaust to promote critical language. The teacher participants would "use the blog as a space to identify and share specific, concrete ways to address the blending of critical literacy and multicultural education in their practice" (2011, p. 44). The teacher participants found the importance of critical literacy within the classroom. Participants were able to understand the impact critical literacy can have on

students when learning controversial historical contents, such as the Holocaust. At this point, educators need to encourage their students to think about what they have read, question, and analyze, rather than absorbing and accepting the statements made by the textbook's authors. Bigelow (1992) would agree to this suggestion and based on Bigelow's study of the representation of Christopher Columbus, the author suggests encouraging students to ask critical questions in their reading. When students question textbook content, it will help to challenge the bias content that is portrayed in social studies texts, "instead of merely absorbing the author's words, children can begin to argue with them" (p. 120). When teachers challenge textbook content and critically discuss text with students, they begin to identify biases, the impact of biases on themselves and others, as well as, the steps students can take to bring social issues to light.

Critical literacy theory has been researched to help students become actively and critically involved in what they are reading. Bigelow (1992) has found active student reading seems necessary due to the authoritative power textbooks have over students, implying the text is everything, and the reader is nothing. Lee (2011) would agree with the findings and explains students need to be engaged in their reading when they come across content that implies stereotypes, students need to be able to recognize and discuss perspectives that counter those stereotypes. It is important that students recognize the bias information and be able to discuss the effect the textbook content has that affects their interpretation of the textbook content and the world.

In addition, information within a textbook "is often oversimplified, incorrect, biased, and/or hard to interpret" (Maples & Groenke, 2009, p. 29). In turn, there is a need for a critical literacy approach to the social studies classroom. The content presented in textbooks may not

accurately reflect the world today and critical literacy can help guide students to look beyond the incorrect or biased content. In the study by Suh, Yurita, and Metzger (2008) on content of the Korean War, they found a deep need for students to investigate the textbook content because “identifying and testing such historical generalization are essential to powerful history learning” (p. 70). When students are able to locate the questionable content, learning history is becomes more about learning facts but understanding the diverse community and world that surrounds them, and dismiss those historical generalizations.

In the study conducted by Maples and Groenke (2009), they noticed their predominately-White middle school students were unable to understand and accept their developing diverse community. As a result, the researchers incorporated a critical discussion scenario activity to help broaden the students’ view of the world. Shor and Freire (1987b) would agree with this activity because discussion is at the heart of learning. Students and teachers need to work together to help uncover the bias content contained within a social studies textbook. In the study by Maples and Groenke (2009), students were able to recognize the difficulties in their community and critically view their beliefs about certain social and political issues within their community and the United States. Students were also able to achieve another key goal of critical literacy with this discussion. Freire and Macedo (1987) explain, “reading does not consist merely of decoding the written word of language’ rather, it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world” (p. 29). In other words, critical literacy is developed by not only reading the words on the page but understanding those words are giving students valuable information about the world. Maples and Groenke (2009) have indicated that through critical literacy, students can begin to break down bias content and question how students view themselves, others, and the world. When reading social studies textbooks this is a valuable skill

because as stated by Bigelow (1992), Puk (1994), Saleem and Thomas (2011), Evans and Davies (200), Maples and Groenke (2009), and many more, social studies textbooks seem to produce content that is questionable and students need to be equipped with the skills to identify the uncertainties.

When addressing these issues, Laman, Jewett, Jennings, Wilson and Souto-Manning (2012), would support these finding based on their study in which they have found it (critical literacy) can be potentially transformative for individuals and society. Laman, Jewett, Jennings, and Souto-Manning build on this argument with their research on critical dialogue in educational settings and with diverse populations. The various authors focused on different topics that were relevant to their students. The individual studies had their own methods but all studies concluded critical dialogue, much like Maples and Groenke (2009) conducted in the classroom, allows students to develop an understand of social injustices. Both studies indicated how critical literacy has the potential to broaden students' view and understanding of themselves, others, their communities, and their country.

It is ideal that students develop a critical eye when, and in turn, use this skill view the world. As stated by Romanowski (2009), "schools should be sites where students move beyond traditional understandings of American history and develop the critical thinking skills need to analyze the past and critique the future" (p. 296). Viewing social studies mainly through the textbook does not help students develop a critical eye of the world. When educators promote questioning, they are implicitly inviting them to question the injustices embedded in the society itself (Bigelow, 1992). For instance, the Columbus stories encourage a passive relationship between reader and text. The books never pose choices or dilemmas for children to think through. As indicated by Suh, Yurita, and Metzger (2008), when discussing the Korean War

students are left wondering why the textbook depicts the Korean War in certain ways. These textbooks do not raise important questions to help students develop a comprehensive view of the event. As a result, it is the teacher's role and responsibility to address the issues that are contained with these social studies textbooks (Stevens & Brown, 2011).

Through many research findings, integrating multiple perspectives is essential in helping students develop a critical eye. The study conducted by Delany (2007), helped adolescents gain critical literacy skills. Specifically, students were exposed to various methods to identify textbooks authors' values and goals. Moreover, students were exposed to the skills needed to recognize that not every perspective is represented with the classroom textbook. By examining texts and identify multiple perspectives, or the lack of, students were able to "use literacy as a tool for achieving different goals" (Delany, 2007, p. 34). Saleem and Thomas's (2011) findings continue to build on his necessity for multiple perspectives. The United States is compiled of various nationalities and ethnicities. As diversity within the United States increases, it is imperative that social studies textbooks reflect this growth (Saleem & Thomas, 2011) and educators include multiple stories from other countries to provide a wide scope of history for the students (Puk, 1994). In essence, providing this type of education for student helps to provide them with a more global perspective. When students view a historical event through a single dimension, there are severe limitations to the various viewpoints the student is exposed to. Through Coman's (1996) research of German representation in British textbooks during World War II, three factors much be taken into account to provide a wider and richer coverage of history. Coman (1996) states

"Firstly, it is necessary to look at academic texts to see if a wider historiographic menu is available from which school texts might choose. Secondly, it will be useful to look at the

educational realities of publishers and teachers...Thirdly, the political context in which both publishers and teachers work must be examined. (p .336).

Overall, there are many factors that must be examined before choosing a text that will build their knowledge of historical events. All available resources must be examined to be sure the right text is chosen for students to read. Texts chosen for students to read should be carefully chosen because textbooks have a large impact on how students interpret the content. These recommendations, including all the previous research, allow students to view history in a wider scope and view the text and the world more critically.

In general, through analyzing past findings, the textbook is a highly relied on instructional tool for social studies classrooms. Classrooms continue to depend solely on the textbook to develop students' knowledge of historical events. By using the textbook as the main source of information, students are exposed to the political agenda developed by the textbook's publishers, writers, and editors. When textbooks are developed, there are certain beliefs and values that they want to instill within that generation's students. With that, it has become apparent the extent to which historical events are misrepresented within the content. Depending on the specific agenda of the publishing company, the social studies content varies from one textbook to another. In this regard, Evans and Davies (2000) found, despite their own guidelines, textbooks are not producing adequate content that is free of bias information. In addition, in a study conducted by Douglas (1998) it was found students' exposure to inaccurate and biased information about their faith or culture can be devastating to the development of their identity and personality. As a result, a critical literacy method of instruction has been supported to use in the social studies classroom. This type of thinking amongst the teachers and students helps to develop a classroom that is critical of what they are reading. The various components

are designed to help empower students to view textbooks and the world through a critical lens. Rather than accepting what they read, critical literacy promotes students to be actively thinking and analyzing to better understand the world that they live in.

Method

Context and Participants

Research for this study took place at the library of Ericson College in upstate, NY. Students who participated in this study attended various schools surrounding the college. Ericson College served as a central location for all students to meet in order to conduct this study.

This study included four high school students and was mixture of boys and girls, one fourteen year old boy, one sixteen year old boy and two sixteen year old girls. Each student attended a different high school and there was a mixture of private school and public schools.

Harriet Styles is sixteen-year-old White female who attends an all female private school located in a large suburb. This private school educates students in grades seven through twelve. A total of 655 students attend the high school with 71 students in seventh graders, 74 students in eighth graders, 140 freshman, 141 sophomores, 118 juniors, and 111 seniors (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). In terms of races/ethnicity, 1% of students are American Indian/Alaska Native, 3% of students are Asian, 8% of students are African American, 3% of students are Hispanic, 84% of students are White, and .5% of students are two or more races (NCES, 2011)

Harriet is an energetic and enthusiastic speaker when discussing historical topics. In the Fall of 2012, she will be going into her junior year. In past, Harriet has taken upper level history courses, including Advanced Placement European History. Her favorite subjects in school

include history or art. Her least favorite include math or science. In general, she describes her grades as fair.

Peter Parker is a fourteen-year-old White male who attends an all-male private school located in a large suburb. This private school educates students in grades seven through twelve. A total of 843 students attend the high school with 74 seventh graders, 110 eighth graders, 172 freshman, 159 in tenth grade, 175 juniors, and 153 seniors (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). In terms of races/ethnicities, less than .5% of students are American Indian/Alaska Native, 5% of students are Asian, 3% of students are African-American, 3% of students are Hispanic, 86% of students are White, and less than .5% of students are two or more races (NCES, 2011).

Generally, Peter Parker is a quiet individual but actively participates in groups with other students. In the Fall of 2012, he will be going to be a freshman at his high school. His favorite subjects include science and his least favorite is language. Peter Parker's grade average is ninety percent and takes Regents Level history classes.

Stumbles Down is a sixteen-year-old White female who attends a public school. A total of 1,541 students attend the school, grades 9-12 (New York State Education Department, 2012). The school contains 364 freshman, 390 sophomores, 387 juniors, and 400 seniors (NYSED, 2012). In terms of the racial/ethnic origins of the students, 4% of students are Black or African American, 3% of students are Hispanic or Latino, 4% of students are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, 88% are White, and 1% are Multiracial. (NYSED, 2012). When looking at Global History and Geography Regents exams, a total of 392 students were tested and 95% scored at or above 55, 90% scored at or above 65, and 59% scored at or above 85 (NYSED, 2012). As for the U.S. History and Government Regents exams, a total of 392

students were tested and 98% scored at or above 55, 93% scored at or above 65, and 69% scored at or above 85 (NYSED, 2012).

Stumbles Down is friendly individual who listens and respects others. In the Fall of 2012, she will be going into her junior year. Her favorite subjects include science or math and her least favorite subject is Spanish. In general, Stumbles Down grades are good; she receives As and Bs in school.

Brick Pot is a sixteen-year-old White male who attends a public school. A total of 1,177 students, grades 9-12, attend the high school (New York State Education Department, 2012). There are 289 freshman, 306 sophomores, 274 juniors, 306 seniors and 2 ungraded secondary students within the high school. The breakdown of racial/ethnic origins of students include 7% of students are Black or African American, 13% of student are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and 80% of students are White. (NYSED). In addition, a total of 313 took the Global History and Geography Regents exam and 98% scored at or above 55., 93% scored at or above, and 61% scored at or above 85 (NYSED, 2012). When taking the U.S. History and Government Regents exam, a total of 272 students were tested and 99% scored at or above 55, 98% scored at or above 65, and 79% scored at or above 85.

He is a quiet individual but does not have a problem with disagreeing with others in a group when discussing historical events. In the Fall of 2012, he will be going into his junior year at his high school. His favorite subject is social studies and his least favorite is English. Through his sophomore year, his grade point average is 3.2/4.0.

Researcher Stance

In this study, my roles consist of passive observer and privileged, active observer. In my role of a passive observer, my focus was on data collection rather than the responsibilities of the

teacher (Mills, 2011). I was a passive observer when I read students' written work and observed students in their discussion of the textbooks. However, my role and responsibility changed to privileged, active observer when I lead the discussion on textbooks based upon the four dimensions of critical literacy. In this role, I observed the group at a time when I was not necessarily responsible for the teaching (Mills, 2011). I participated in the discussion; however, I was not responsible for teaching the dimensions of critical literacy, only observing their reactions to questions based on the dimensions. Each role will help provide valuable insight to the study because I can view student behavior from two perspectives.

In 2010, I graduated from St. John Fisher College with my Bachelor of Arts. My initial certification includes Adolescent Education, grades 7-12 with a middle school extension, grades 5-6, and History (social studies). At the time of this study, I am pursuing my Master's Degree at St. John Fisher College in Literacy Education, birth through grade twelve. I work as the Assistant Director for a tutoring company in upstate, NY. I have worked in this educational setting since May 2012 and work with students from ages five to adult. This profession also gives me the opportunity to instruct and guide the certified teachers working the students at the center.

Method

The goal of this study is to determine how historical events are represented within social studies textbooks. To fulfill my objectives, I will collect both quantitative and qualitative data (Mills, 2011). I also practice triangulation by using the three qualitative data techniques, experiencing, enquiring, and examining (Mills, 2011). After students have signed the child assent form and the parents have signed the parental permission form, students could participate in the research.

To begin, students were given a questionnaire (Appendix A) to fill out to provide information about themselves and their experiences and beliefs about textbooks in the classroom. The questions required students to write a response. In addition, a Likert scale (Appendix B) was given to students to determine their how students feel about the use of social studies textbooks in their class. The questionnaire and the Likert scale were attached when given to the student. Students assigned a letter to indicate how frequently the statement occurred in their social studies classroom. For instance, (N) for Never, (R) for Rarely, (O) for Often and (A) for Always. In addition, specific set of questions (Appendix C) were designed based on the four dimensions of critical literacy. These questions indicated if students were displaying characteristics of critical literacy. For example, the statement, “I question the content of my social studies textbook” represents the dimension of disrupting the commonplace. In addition, the statement, “When reading about social studies, my class talks about how society and political shapes our view” represents the dimension of focusing on sociopolitical issues. Once the Likert scale was completed, I determined how many (N) s, (R) s, (O) s and (A) s were stated by students. Once this information was gathered it helped design what questions I would ask during discussion to help get a better understanding of student’s thoughts on the use of the textbook in social studies, their attitudes about the use and impact of the textbook, and if students currently display certain characteristics of critical literacy.

The qualitative data technique of experiencing was carried out through observation and field notes. After students read and responded to the excerpts of the social studies text, they had a discussion on their findings. During this time, I observed the interaction between the students and recorded field notes. My field notes were written expression of my observation. When completed I reflected on my observation and field notes to determine how I would lead my

discussion and further understand students' attitudes, thought and opinions about social studies content in textbooks. Additionally, I observed students while leading the second discussion in the group. Questions asked were developed based on the previous data collected (i.e. Likert scale and questionnaires). The second discussion contained questions built around the four dimensions of critical literacy. These four dimensions were based on Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002). The researchers reviewed thirty years of research and synthesized the information on critical literacy into four dimensions: (1) disrupting the commonplace, (2) interrogating multiple viewpoints, (3) focusing on sociopolitical issues, and (4) taking action and promoting social justice (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002).

Disrupting the commonplace encourages people to view the events of the day-to-day world in a different lens. It is important to develop language that involves analyzing in order to uncover injustices. In addition, this dimension helps examine how popular culture and the media play an integral role in developing someone's position about a certain topic (Lewis, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002).

Interrogating multiple viewpoints allows readers to view the text from various perspectives. It is important to recognize your own perspective, but think about the contradictory perspectives and reflect upon those (Lewis, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). Furthermore, interrogating multiple viewpoints allows the reader to look critically at a piece and reveal whose voices are not being represented. This dimension allows the reader to look at a piece of text from all angles and develop a deeper understanding.

Focusing on sociopolitical issues may be hard for many teachers to implement within their classrooms. However, there needs to be special attention given to "how sociopolitical systems, power relationships, and language are intertwined and inseparable from our teaching"

(Lewis, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 383). In this dimension, students begin to look at the sociopolitical systems in which they are a part of and analyze how those systems affect their lives and the view of others. Students need to know there are other factors, other than personal, that affect how they view a text and the world.

Lastly, taking action and promoting justice is the dimension that seems to define critical literacy. This step separates it from critical thinking (Lewis, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). In this dimension, students are encouraged to reflect and take action on views they believe are strong. By going through the previous three dimensions, students have this opportunity to take steps towards transforming the world (Lewis, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). Students need to understand how their own voice can be a powerful tool to make change and promote social justice.

Next, I used the enquiring qualitative data technique by collecting questionnaires. Students were given questionnaires in the beginning of the group's session. The questionnaire was used to build background knowledge of the student and his/her family. In addition to answering questions about themselves and their family, students answered open-ended questions. The questions addressed the students' experiences with textbooks in their classrooms (both current and in past experiences). This information was helpful to understand how students generally felt about textbooks, not just social studies.

To complete the third and final qualitative data technique, enquiring, textbook comparisons, written student responses, and video recordings were completed. Students in the group read one event at a time from three different textbooks. Once they finished students wrote a response on their overall thoughts of how the event was represented. A set of questions was provided for the students to think about while they were writing. This information provided written explanation of the students' thoughts while reading. Their responses also provided me

with additional information when I led the discussion around the four dimensions of critical literacy.

The three selected textbooks were examined to evaluate their representation of the three historical events. Each excerpt was read and evaluated based on a set of questions developed derived from the four dimension of critical literacy. Once each textbook was examined, I was able to determine how each textbook conveys each event and the characteristics of critical literacy. The data collected will be used as the basis for how each student is able to evaluate each textbook.

Lastly, video recording were used when students discussed their responses to the textbooks. This data method was used in addition to field notes to ensure all valuable data is collected, especially when I led the discussion.

Quality and Credibility of Research

There are four aspects of research that help ensure a study is valid. Mills (2011) defines validity as “how we know that the data we collect...accurately gauge what we are trying to measure...” (p. 102). The four aspects of qualitative research will help fulfill validity and includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Mills, 2011). According to Mills (2011), credibility refers to the researcher’s ability to consider the complexities within the study and manage any patterns, which are difficult to explain. Several strategies can be used by a researcher to ensure credibility. In this study, I participated in peer debriefing as a way to test my insights and interactions with another professional (Mills, 2011). My critical colleague offers insight while working through my research by listening and reflecting on my study. In addition, I practiced triangulation will use six forms of data, which included a mixture between

quantitative and qualitative methods: Likert scale, questionnaires, group, visual recording, student written response, and textbook comparisons. Lastly, I will use video recordings of the students in discussion to help capture the “moment”.

When discussing transferability, it is important to understand that the study and all its components is context bound and generalizations from the study should be used when discussing a larger population of people (Mills, 2011). It is important that the researcher identifies with the context of the study to help. To ensure transferability, I kept detailed field notes that allow others to know the details of my surroundings and use them to compare my setting to other settings (Mills, 2011).

I was able to ensure dependability, or the “stability of the data” (Mills, 2011, p. 104), through two strategies. First, I used multiple sources of data that allowed me to compare the data from one sources to data from another source. For instance, I used the information gathered from the questionnaires to understand the responses from students while in the group. By using two or more methods of data collection, the weakness of one is compensated by the strength of another method (Mills). In addition, I created an “audit trail” to help ensure dependability of this study. My process of data collection, analysis and interpretations was kept in written form to allow an external “auditor” to examine the study (Mills). Moreover, there will be access to my original data sources (i.e. field notes, textbook comparisons, Likert scale, etc) to ensure dependability.

Lastly, there are two steps that can be taken to ensure confirmability, or “the neutrality or objectivity of the data collected” (Mills, 2011, p. 105). First, I practiced triangulation by using a multiple data sources and methods. Within this study, I used data sources from each of the three qualitative data collection techniques: experiencing (through observation and field notes),

enquiring (through questionnaires) and examining (through written documents, video recordings, artifacts, and field notes). In addition, quantitative data collection will occur through an Likert scale. Secondly, Confirmability was ensured by practicing reflexivity. Reflexivity revealed any underlying bias or assumption I might have had when formulating questions or presenting data for this study (Mills).

Informed Consent and Protecting the Rights of the Participants

In order to begin data collection, all students needed to have informed assent to protect their rights. Students were presented with a written assent form that provided the objective of the study and their rights for participating. By signing the assent form, students agreed to participate but could decide to remove themselves from the study if desired. I explained to each student that their names would remain anonymous and all other aspects of the study that might be used to identify them will not be used. All students were under the age of eighteen; therefore, their parents needed to agree for their child to partake in the study. It will be up to the student to provide an appropriate pseudonym name to be used within the study.

In addition to the child written assent form, students needed a parental permission form. All students were under the age of eighteen and needed signed permission from their parents/guardians. Much like the child assent form, the parental permission form provided the adult with the purpose, risks and benefits, and the rights granted to the parents. I made sure the adult that their child will remain anonymous and no aspects of the study that might be used to identify them will be used.

Data Collection

The goal of this study was to determine how historical events were represented within social studies textbooks. To fulfill my objectives, I collected both quantitative and qualitative

data collection (Mills, 2011). I also practiced triangulation by using the three qualitative data techniques, experiencing, enquiring, and examining (Mills, 2011).

The first method of data collection included the questionnaire and the Likert Scale, which discussed the students' experiences with textbooks and their attitudes and opinions about the use of social studies textbooks in their class, respectively. The comments were gathered under each question to view how each student responded to each question in comparison to each other. By reading each comment individually and then compared with other comments, it provided valuable data to determine the experiences students' were having in the classroom with textbooks. In addition, to determine students' attitudes and beliefs about the social studies textbook, students responded to questions based on how frequently the statement occurred. Students responded to each questions with rarely (R), sometimes (S), often (O) or always (A). Once completed, the number of each response for each question was totaled and converted into a percentage. For example, 100% of student responded to question one with (A) always. This data provided me with insight on students' views and experiences with the social studies textbook. The questions developed based on the four dimensions of critical literacy provided me with familiarity on the students' abilities to use the characteristics to evaluate textbook content.

After students were given copies of the textbook passages on the discovery of America/Christopher Columbus, students were instructed to read each passage. Once the student finished, the student began writing their thoughts and opinions on how each textbook represented the historical event. This reading and writing process was repeated once more with the attacks of September 11th in the United States. The writing prompts written on the whiteboard by the researcher were provided to help students start writing. All written responses were collected and compared to view the similarities and differences on how each student

responded to the events. The comparisons of written responses provided valuable information on how each student viewed each particular textbook event. Specifically, by comparing the work, it allowed me to view patterns among the responses. For example, students felt the first passage read was the least unbiased and the second passage had the most details about the event. In addition, when students were reading and responding to the two events, I took field notes to record my observations. I did not have any specific goal in mind when observing students in this fashion, in order to not missing anything that may latter have importance.

When students completed reading and responding of an event, students had time to discuss their views on how each textbook represented the specific historical event. Students could use their written responses and the prompts on the whiteboard to guide their discussion. These discussions allowed students to explain, in depth, their thoughts and opinions about the textbooks and the representation of each event. Students were encouraged to discuss how they felt the textbooks portrayed the event and how the textbooks represented the event. Once the student led discussed concluded, I began the discussion designed around the four dimensions of critical literacy. I asked questions that covered each dimension and students responded and discussed their views with each. This discussion provided me with knowledge on how students were able to meet the criteria for each dimension. During the discussion, students were tape-recorded and video recorded.

Lastly, the three textbooks were evaluated to identify how each textbook presented the discovery of America/Christopher Columbus and the attacks of September 11th in the United States. The textbooks were examined based on a set of questions, which were derived from the four dimensions of critical literacy. Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) compiled several possible criteria for each dimension and questions were developed based on the previous

synthesized research to determine how accurate the textbook presented the information to the reader. The evaluations were compared to understand similarities and differences between the presentations of historical events within these three textbooks. Much like the Likert scale statements based on the dimension, I totaled the number of times a passage was able to meet the criteria for each dimension.

After all the research was complete, the tape recordings were transcribed and the video recording was watched. The tape recording allowed me to find patterns within the student responses that indicated their thoughts and opinions on textbooks and historical representation. The knowledge gathered through the transcribed tape recordings were compared to the previous data, such as the questionnaire comments, Likert scale answers and the written response to the readings. By comparing the tape recording to the previous data, provided me with additional insight on whether or not their views on social studies textbooks and their ability to view texts critically is consistent. Specifically, when reading the discussion based on the dimensions, I indicated how many times a student was able to meet the criteria of the four dimensions of critical literacy. This information allowed me to indicate which dimensions were more easily accomplished and which dimensions students struggled to understand. Lastly, the video recordings were viewed to build upon my observations during the study. Observations focused on student understanding of the textbook content, attention, motivation, and participation while reading and discussion the representation of the events within the textbooks. Furthermore, the field notes taken while in the study were typed.

Data Analysis

Numerous forms of data were collected for this action research project. These pieces included my field notes, video recording, tape recording of student led discussion and teacher led discussion, Likert Scale, and my evaluation of the textbooks. I began the process by reviewing all data pieces I collected with my specific research question in mind. I first read through my field notes, student led discussion and teacher led discussion to familiarize myself again with the data collected. In the second read through, I underlined and starred any aspects of data that helped prove or disprove my research question. When completed, I tallied how many times students were able to enter in each dimension in both discussions. In addition, I watched the video recording and recorded any additional observations not included in my field notes. Within these two data sources, I looked for information that would correspond or contradict my research question. For the Likert Scale, I chose questions that would give me insight on my topic and tallied the student responses. In addition, I underlined and noted how many times students were able to enter each of the four dimensions of critical literacy within the two discussions. I also looked for patterns or reappearing aspects within the data to help answer my research question. During this process, I also reviewed literature that would help prove or disprove my data.

Findings and Discussion

Textbooks play an important role in the social studies classroom and has an effect on student learning. The goal of this study is to find out how historical events are represented in social studies textbooks. The experiences students have with the textbook has an impact on how they view their social studies textbook. This section is comprised of student responses on their experiences with the social studies textbook, as well as, student responses to questions grounded from critical literacy. In addition, given that literacy is a social practice and is learned through

social interaction, data is presented on the student’s abilities to enter each of the four critical literacy dimension during the student led and teacher led discussion, to help determine how social studies textbooks represent historical events. The findings suggest that textbooks may not provide students will a well-rounded representation of historical events. In addition, students may have the skills to critically view the textbook and the world around them but perhaps have not internalized these beliefs. The content within textbooks perhaps limits the students ability to make connections between the content within the textbook and the world around them.

One data collection focused on students thoughts/opinions on social studies textbooks and/or how frequently the statement occurred in their social studies classroom. Students were presented with the Likert Scale once, prior to working with the textbooks and discussing the content.

Table 1

Student Responses on Social Studies Textbook from the Likert Scale

Likert Scale Question	%Nr	%Rr	%Or	%Ar
Social studies textbooks accurately represent history	0	0	100	0
Our social studies class only uses the textbook for learning	0	25	50	25
I depend on the textbook to shape my views	75	25	0	0

Note. %N= percentage of Never response; %Rr= percentage of Rarely responses; %Or= percentage of Often response; %Ar= percentage of Always response. A total of 4 students took the Likert Scale.

Table 1 displays the percentages of responses for questions relevant to the research topic. One hundred percent of students have indicated they feel their social studies textbooks accurately represents history. This data may mean students are reading the textbooks and feel the majority of information is accurate; however, sometime students may feel the content is questionable. According to the questionnaire on textbook experiences, students have had experiences where they have felt like “there was a time when you believed the textbook content was wrong or biased” , which led them to question the content (Questionnaire, July, 2012). This data would support Santoli and Weaver’s research, which found the majority of the textbooks inadequately provide students with comprehensive, bias-free information.

In addition, seventy-five percent of students indicated they never depend on the social studies textbook to shape their views. This large percentage of student may indicate student place low value on the content within their social studies textbook. It is possible students are reading the textbook for the purpose of following instructional procedures, but not allowing the content to influence how they view the world. In addition, this information may indicate other factors influence how students develop their views of the world. The research conducted by Perlmutter, (2009) Bigelow (1992) would be disproven by this particular piece of data. In their studies, the authors found the textbook serves as a major source of information that influences a student’s view of the world. Interestingly, there is possibility that the textbook may have a heavy influence on students beliefs and opinions about the world, yet students do not realize how much influence the textbook has had on their views. This possibility may be true considering most students indicated their social studies textbook is the only material used for learning content.

Lastly, Table 1 indicates there is a mixture of results for how many students use only the social studies textbook for learning. Interestingly, a total of seventy-five percent responded Often or Always to using only the textbook for learning. Therefore, it seems classrooms are basing their social studies content from the information portrayed within the textbook, and not supplement it with additional sources. Alvermann and Moore (1991) and Moore and Murphy (1987) would support this data based on their findings of the textbooks are a major instructional tool that play an integral role in content-area teaching and learning. With so much time spend teaching and learning from the social studies textbook, the representation of content becomes the utmost important topic. Based on the data, it is possible teachers relay on the textbook to provide content approved by the school. Therefore, teachers know the content in which they are teaching will not be questioned, especially when their teaching needs to meet state standards.

Table 2

Student Responses to Critical Literacy Questions in Likert Scale

Likert Scale Question	Critical literacy dimension	%Nr	%Rr	%Or	%Ar
It's important to view history through different viewpoints	Interrogating multiple viewpoints	0	0	0	100
My social studies textbook is making me think a certain way	Disrupting the commonplace	50	50	0	0
When reading about social studies, my	Focusing on Sociopolitical Issues	75	0	0	25

class talks about how society and politics shapes our views					
I wonder how I can help make the world a better place	Taking Action and Promoting Social Justice	75	0	0	25

Note. %N= percentage of Never response; %Rr= percentage of Rarely responses; %Or= percentage of Often response; %Ar= percentage of Always response A total of 4 students took the Likert Scale.

Within the Likert Scale, students were presented with statements, which were developed with four dimensions of critical literacy. Table 2 indicates one hundred percent of students are aware of the need to view history through multiple viewpoints and display characteristics of the critical literacy dimension, interrogating multiple viewpoints. Therefore, it seems students are receiving a well-rounded social studies experience. It is possible the textbook, which is the main source of social studies information, is providing students with multiple viewpoints. Coman (1996) and Puk (1994) would agree with this data based on their research’s findings of the need for multiple perspectives to build knowledge within social studies content. However, this possibility would contradict my findings when evaluating textbooks, which rarely provided students with multiple perspectives of an historical event (Textbook evaluation,2012). If the textbook does not provide students with multiple viewpoints on a topic, teachers may be recognizing this within the textbook and providing students with the additional content.

According to Table 2, fifty percent of students indicate their social studies textbooks “never” position them to view a historical event in a particular position and fifty percent of student responded “rarely”. This information implies that students feel their social studies

textbooks are representing historical events accurately, which coincides with their responses on textbook accuracy (Likert scale, 2012). The research conducted by Bigelow (1992) would not support this finding. In Bigelow's study of children's books, it became clear the content was not portraying historical events accurately. For those students who responded "rarely", the research points to the possibility that they have noticed, but generally believe textbooks do not position the reader to think in a particular way. Therefore, students are not displaying characteristics of the critical literacy dimension, disrupting the commonplace. This data is interesting because during group discussion, one student discussed how she felt textbooks contained American beliefs and the authors wanted students to believe those same beliefs (Field Notes, 2012). Even so, it reveals students may view the textbook content critically but do not have the skills to view how the text might be positioning the reader.

In addition, seventy-five percent of students have revealed their classes rarely talk about how politics and society have influenced how they view the world, as well as, how they can make the world a better place. According to Table 2, seventy-five percent of students are not displaying characteristics of the two critical literacy dimensions, focusing on sociopolitical issues and taking action and promoting social justice, respectively. The data perhaps indicates that students struggle to see how the context surrounding historical events has an influence on how they view the historical event. In addition, it is possible students struggle to see how they can make change in the world for issues that had risen from past events. For instance, when asked how to make change based on the issues these events brought up, Harriet Styles responded, "one thing that I always think is a good idea...I think they should have to take an American government course, you know, something that educates them on voting" (Teacher led discussion, 2012). In this instance, Harriet was able to find a deficit in education and develop a solution in

order to make a change. However, her response did not seem to correlate with the subject of Christopher Columbus or the September 11th attacks. With more prompting, there is a possibility Harriet could have made a connection between her statement and the discussion topic. According to the transcribed dictation of the teacher led discussion (2012), students were able to identify a way to make change in the world but could not connect that change to the issues that arise from Christopher Columbus or the attacks of September 11th in the United States. Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) would support these findings because in their research students (and teachers) struggled to fully enter and engage within the two critical literacy dimensions, focusing on sociopolitical issues and taking action and promoting social justice.

Another form of data that was collected was how many times students were able to display characteristics of critical literacy within the student led discussion and the teacher led discussion. Before the student discussion began, students read three excerpts, from three different textbooks, of the same historical event. Afterwards, students provided a written response comparing and contrasting the event within the three textbooks. During the student led discussion, student brought up points that stood out to them while reading the three excerpts. Once finished with each event, the teacher led discussion began. The goal of the teacher led discussion was to ask students questions based on the four dimensions of critical literacy. The students were encouraged to respond to the questions based on what they have previously read in the three textbooks and their experience with the social studies textbook. During the student led discussion, I remained silent and allowed the students to explore aspects of the reading that they felt were important or interesting. It was during the teacher led discussion in which I controlled the topics discussed. As key tenets of New Literacy Studies and critical literacy, literacy is a social practice and learning occurs during social interaction, students were instructed to talk

about how they felt each textbook represented the particular historical event. Student responses are divided into the four dimensions and illustrated below:

Table 3

Student Responses Within the Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy

Critical literacy dimension	Student led discussion	Teacher led discussion
	#SR	#SR
Disrupting the commonplace	3	6
Interrogating multiple perspectives	4	7
Focusing on sociopolitical issues	1	3
Taking action and promoting social justice	0	3

Note. #SR= number of student response. A total of 4 students participated in the discussion.

Table 3 exhibits that students were able to enter in critical dialogue within each dimension more frequently during the teacher led discussion. This result may have occurred because I was asking specific questions related to the four dimensions. From this data, it is possible that students have the ability to critically view the representation of historical events within social studies textbooks. In the study conducted by Maples and Groenke (2009), it was also found that students could use critical literacy to benefit their understanding of the world around them. However, because students encountered each dimension less often during the student led discussion, it might mean that students have not internalized the skills needed for critical literacy. Rather, they are able to critically view the text with guided support.

In both the student led discussion and the teacher led discussion, students were able to enter the dimensions of Disrupting the Commonplace and Interrogating Multiple Viewpoints with more success. Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) also found participants of critical

dialogue were more successful in entering the dimensions of disrupting the commonplace and interrogating multiple viewpoints.. As supported by the student responses in the Likert Scale (2012), students seemed more successful in interrogating multiple viewpoints during both discussions. Students were able to notice which perspectives were represented within the text and which were not represented. For instance, during the student led discussion on the attacks of September 11th, Brick Pot stated, “the thing is, none of these say anything about terrorist point of views. They don’t really go into what they thought, why they did that” (2012). Within passages of the September 11th attacks, the Muslim point of view was often missing or was lacking in representation (Textbook evaluation, 2012). On the other hand, students entered focusing on sociopolitical issues and taking action and promoting social justice the least amount of times in both the student led and teacher led discussion. Taking action and promoting social justice seemed to be the most difficult for students in each discussion. This data is not surprising because majority of students indicated they rarely think about how they can make change in the world (Likert Scale, 2012). The students’ inability to engage within these dimensions might indicate the students struggle with connecting historical events with the world today. Each of these dimensions require students to look beyond the content written within the textbook and make connections to their world. In the following data, I illustrate the student’s ability to enter each dimension. To begin, Table 4 illustrates the students’ ability to enter the dimension of disrupting the commonplace.

Disrupting the Commonplace

Table 4

Student Responses to Disrupting the Commonplace

Line	Speaker	Turn	Critical literacy dimension
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39	Harriet Styles	<p>I think the media is really what our view is because I think the media represents on what the people think because it's really one extreme or another. But then it's also, I guess if you look at politics there's two parties, but then there's so much in between and there's so many shades of grey when reading stuff.</p>	Disrupting the commonplace
40	Peter Parker	<p>Someone like me, I was only 3 years old when 9/11 happened. But I can still remember that day that it happened. Sitting downstairs and watching TV.</p>	
41	Stumbles Down	<p>I thought with the biased stuff, like I'm sure it's like someone like in the Middle East was reading. Like number two they, I think it was in here where they talked about um, Israel and the Palestinians state and stuff like that, I think that like if they were reading something like this, they would have a totally different view on this because in school like a month ago we studied um, like all about the division of the Jews having their own state and stuff. So I think that if they were reading something like that they would have a totally different opinion on it and stuff.</p>	Interrogating multiple viewpoints

42	Harriet Styles	<p>I think that the other thing is how accurate the information is, because that also helps you know, it also creates the bias. If you have more accurate information in the article on one side than the other, that also causes <i>(inaudible)</i></p>	
43	Peter Parker	<p>You want to have the same amount of information on each side</p>	
44	Mary	<p>Do you think that they text you read for both Christopher Columbus and September 11th did that? Do you think one piece contained all of that?</p>	
45	Stumbles Down	<p>I think that each piece may have left out a little bit of each side here and there. But obviously I find that in our textbooks like in these textbooks they obviously want to make like America or the people who lived here look so much better. Because, I mean we're Americans. Everyone thinks that they are better than other countries and other countries think they are better than Americans. Stuff like that, so I think maybe in the textbooks they try and like kind of imply that Americans are better.</p>	<p>Disrupting the commonplace</p>

46	Peter Parker	Like the way that you view the world, like if you view the world one way, you are going to take the textbook information and twist it one way than another person would that sees it a different way	Disrupting the commonplace
47	Mary	Do you think that has a good effect?	
48	Stumbles Down	I think that sometimes that effect can almost be bad because then it's like our young minds kind of get shaped thinking like "Oh yeah, American's. We're great!" And then like we'll grow up and then it's like, I mean it sounds weird but our generation someday will be president, and leaders of the country. So then it's like then you have leaders who obviously are like "I think this country is great" like, and like leaders of the country think it's but then sometimes that can lead to arrogance and like how in the Middle East..	Disrupting the commonplace
49	Peter Parker	Everybody hates us	
50	Stumbles Down	Like not a lot of people like Americans. We learned in school, I forget who it was, but someone was saying that	Disrupting the commonplace

		<p>Israel should be wiped off the map. I forget who it was. Anyone remember... anyway... it's like stuff like this shapes our minds now, and when we grow up and we are leaders, then if we still have that mindset, that could be really bad for the whole world.</p>
51	Harriet Styles	<p>I feel like no matter what you are reading, the author of the text usually knows there's going to be some independent thinking on the reader's part. I don't think anyone does, or should at least just read a story and take it for straight how it is, because that is not realistic. I don't think anyone reads anything just be like "okay, yup that's how it is," ya know</p>
52	Peter Parker	<p>It's like somebody that watches the news and just believes everything they see</p>

Note. This excerpt is taken from a larger teacher led group discussion. A total of 4 students participated in the discussion.

Within this chat, students were able to display characteristics of the critical literacy dimension of Disrupting the Commonplace. Harriet Styles states, "I think the media is really what our view is because I think the media represents on what the people think because it's really one extreme or another" (line 39). She is able to recognize the impact of the media has but struggled to see how media tries to position her on a particular topic. Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys(2002) would agree with this statement because disrupting the commonplace includes

looking at how people are positioned by media and popular culture. Stumbles Down was able to fully enter the dimension in line 45 when she states, “But obviously I find that in our textbooks like in these textbooks they obviously want to make like America or the people who lived here look so much better. Because, I mean we’re Americans.” Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002) might support this statement because Stumbles Down was able to interrogate the textbook by asking, “how is this text trying to position me?” (p. 383). It is later in line 48, where Stumbles Down was able to recognize how the representation of the historical content might affect the reader, by stating, “I think that sometimes that effect can almost be bad because then it’s like our young minds kind of get shaped thinking like “Oh yeah, American’s. We’re great!” (Student led discussion, 2012).

In line 49, Peter Parker states, “everybody hates us” and Stumbles Down begins her response in line 50 with, “Like not a lot of people like Americans.”. These responses imply students have beliefs about how others view Americans. The discussion might have evolved into identifying students have these beliefs and trying to discover where these beliefs might have originated from. By discussing these beliefs, students might have entered the dimension of focusing on sociopolitical issues. In other words, student perhaps would have demonstrated their understanding of how outside factors have an influence on students’ beliefs and values of the world. Porat (2004) further illustrates this point by finding other factors that come into play when students are interpreting the social studies textbook. These factors might include prior knowledge, beliefs, values, and historical perceptions. The students’ inability to recognize outside factors is supported by data found in the Likert Scale (2012) where seventy-five percent of students never discussed how society and politics have influenced their views of the world.

During this portion of the discussion, the comments made by Peter Parker and Stumbles Down provided the other students the opportunity to question, critique and redefine their beliefs. Rather, the other participants seemed to agree with these statements due to their continued conversation on the topic. This discussion might have evolved into the issues that arise because of this issue and what they can do. By discussing these issues, it would lead them into another dimension of critical literacy, taking action and promoting social justice.

Within the discussion, Stumbles Down entered another dimension, interrogating multiple viewpoints. In line 41, Stumbles Down indicates how others, from the Middle East, might have a different opinion of September 11th attacks. The topic of multiple perspectives redirected back to the critical literacy dimension of disrupting the commonplace when Stumbles Down begins to critique and questions the representation within social studies textbooks. The statement made by Stumbles Down might have moved the discussion into addressing if textbooks represent multiple viewpoints. The discussion might have also evolved into how the multiple viewpoints or the lack of multiple viewpoints within social studies textbooks influences how the reader views a particular historical event.

Students' statements are interesting because they contradict their responses on the Likert Scale. Fifty percent of students responded "never" and fifty percent responded "rarely" that they felt like the textbooks were trying to position them in a particular way (Likert Scale, 2012). By comparing these two results, the data perhaps indicates that students may struggle with independently viewing how texts try to position the reader. However, during social interaction, students are able to analyze the representation of historical content. This would be supported by the theory, New Literacy Studies, which stresses the importance of discussion, which involves various perspectives to help build a better understanding of the literacy events involved.

Interrogating Multiple Viewpoints

To continue my analysis, I focused on how many times the students were able to enter the critical literacy dimension of Interrogating Multiple Viewpoints. According to Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002), interrogating multiple viewpoints is trying to understand experience and texts from our own perspectives and the viewpoints of others to consider these various perspectives concurrently” (p. 383). Therefore, the section of the teacher led discussion that focused on this dimension is illustrated below:

Table 5.

Student Response to Interrogating Multiple Viewpoints

Line	Speaker	Turn	Critical literacy dimension
64	Harriet Styles	I feel like we don't have a direct source from the Islamic people on the 9/11 source. We don't have them saying "this is how we felt about it... we don't feel like we are being represented accurately." You know you don't get that, and you don't get the Native Americans side in the Christopher Columbus source. Don't get "We don't really like them because they treated us like this." You don't have those two sides but you have how they were affected from the actions of who you are reading about.	Interrogating multiple perspectives

65	Mary	Anymore on this topic?	
66	Harriet Styles	I know I said this earlier, but I have foreign exchange students in my class, you know that from China and Korean, and we will just be talking about their history, and they will cut in and be like “Uhh, no that’s not how we see it.”	Interrogating multiple perspectives
67	Mary	Do you think that is helpful to you?	
68	Harriet Styles	I think it is helpful to a certain point, because you know you do need that other opinion, and you need to know what they think about us and you need to respect that but I don’t think... if you are planning on living in America the rest of your life and it’s nice to hear that other opinion, but I don’t think you necessarily need to because it’s not going to affect you, being that “oh well, this isn’t how it happened, we really like Mao.” If you are going to live here, you are not going to be affected by that.	
69	Peter Parker	You learn to view things as Americans view things. If you are going to live here, you should learn to speak	

		English, otherwise you aren't going to fit in with society.
70	Mary	What does that mean: "Fit in with society?"
71	Peter Parker	People have moral and social standards, so like if you live here and you don't see things as Americans see it, you don't speak English, and you just go against everything that America stands for, you aren't going to be like here in America.
72	Brick Pot	I disagree. I think that you should teach history as the truth, not from any one perspective, you should give all the perspectives and let the person draw their own conclusions, because we are all part of the world, not just America. And we really shouldn't be creating our own history of other places and things, see it like this, that just doesn't really seem right to me.
73	Harriet Styles	If you are going to go major in American studies you need that one standpoint. You do go into it given all the sides, but essentially what you're studying is the American standpoint. In learning that American view, you will get the rest of it, from other

		sources and independent learning.
74	Peter Parker	You can be taught all the different viewpoints and if you are going to go somewhere else in the world you know what their viewpoint is, but if you are going to be in America, you should view things the American way, like patriotic, pro-America.
75	Harriet Styles	Or you are making your time difficult

Note. This excerpt is taken from a larger teacher led group discussion. A total of 4 students participated in the discussion.

Illustrated in Table 5, students were able to recognize certain perspectives were not represented within the social studies textbooks. Many researchers, including Saleem and Thomas (2011), Bigelow (1992), and Commeryras and Alvermann (1994), found within their evaluations of historic content, there is a major issue of misrepresentation of people and events. In line 64, Harriet Styles indicates the Islamic perspective and the Native American perspective was not present within the attacks of September 11th and Christopher Columbus, respectively. She has also experienced others in her class, foreign exchange students, who have recognized their social studies textbooks were not accurately representing content (line 66). The data exhibits that students are able to critically view the textbook and question the content.

However, further data indicates student may not understand the importance these multiple perspectives might have on their understanding of the historical content and the impact it has on

their view of the world. Students turn to an American point of view as the most necessary when reading historical events. In line 68, Harriet Styles states, "...if you are planning on living in America the rest of your life and it's nice to hear that other opinion, but I don't think you necessarily need to because it's not going to affect you". Peter Parker validated this statement in line 69 when he states, "If you are going to live here, you should learn to speak English, otherwise you aren't going to fit in with society". The data may exhibit that these students have deeply rooted beliefs that may affect how they view historical events. Porat (2004) further illustrates this point by finding other factors that come into play when students are interpreting the social studies textbook. These factors might include prior knowledge, beliefs, values, and historical perceptions. In addition, it is possible that the textbooks students encounter support this belief and authors of their textbooks may represent and emphasize the American viewpoint within historical events. In previous statements, Harriet Styles had claimed that she believed there should be some independent thinking when reading the textbook. However, this independent thinking may possible be viewed through only one perspective.

When challenged by Brick Pot in line 72, students do not take his point of view into consideration. In actuality, Brick Pot was the only student to fully enter into the dimension of interrogating multiple viewpoints. In his statement he claims, "I think that you should teach history as the truth, not from any one perspective, you should give all the perspectives and let the person draw their own conclusion." It seems possible that Brick Pot might be the only student to "imagine standing in the shoes of others..." (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 383). This discussion may have led students to stop and critically think about how they view the representation of historical events, in terms of multiple viewpoints. The discussion might have also turned to students questioning what the American viewpoint is, how these beliefs might

impact how they view textbooks and the world, as well as, questioning what outside factors might have influenced their beliefs. In particular, Peter Parker states, "...if you are going to be in America, you should view things the American way, like patriotic, pro-America". This statement could have led students into wondering what it mean to be patriotic and pro-American. In addition, how textbooks may or may not represent these ideas.

Focusing on Sociopolitical Issues

Next, I analyzed the teacher led discussion to find out how students entered the third critical literacy dimension, focusing on sociopolitical issues. According to Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys, this dimension pays attention to how sociopolitical systems, power relationships and language are intertwined (2002). The data of the teacher led discussion within this dimension is illustrated below:

Table 6

Student Responses to Focusing on Sociopolitical Issues Dimension

Line	Speaker	Turn	Critical literacy dimension
80	Mary	Are there certain events in history that sort of help shape your view on September 11 th ? For example, everyone has certain biases or stereotypes and those may be affected by certain events in history. Are there any events like that, that you can think of that would help shape that view of how you look at September 11 th or Columbus?	

81	Harriet Styles	<p>Not necessarily September 11th or Columbus, but I know certain prior events in American history have impacted my belief and views on other countries, like Cuba. I'm a big JFK Fanatic, so that whole era has really impacted my opinion on Cuba. So, it's not necessarily September 11th or Columbus, but it's still another part of life that has impacted my view and I think that everyone has different things like that.</p>	Focusing on sociopolitical issues
		<p>Mary: So have those events impacted your view of how you look at the world or how you see daily life or certain groups or people or something like that?</p>	
82	Mary	<p>So have those events impacted your view of how you look at the world or how you see daily life or certain groups or people or something like that?</p>	
83	Harriet Styles	<p>Yeah, I think it's impacted my view on Cubans, but that probably more the bias thing with JFK, and his conflicts with them many times, so therefore that creates my bias, but I don't think its necessarily right. I know it's not the most politically accepted, and I understand that it's different for every person, but that's how I see it.</p>	Focusing on sociopolitical issues

Note. This excerpt is taken from a larger teacher led group discussion. A total of 4 students participated in the discussion.

During this section of the discussion, there was very little response to the first questions I posed. In the beginning, students sat and thought about the question for a little over thirty seconds and would look to each other with puzzled faces (Video tape, 2012). As illustrated in Table 6, Harriet Styles was able to speak to the dimension but not specifically on the topic. In line 81 Harriet Styles states, "...I know certain prior events in American history have impacted my belief and views on other countries, like Cuba". In addition, she continues to recognize that because of prior historical events, she has certain bias against particular groups (line 83). Harriet Styles was able to demonstrate her ability to focus on sociopolitical issues. However, the data perhaps exhibits that students are unsure of how to enter into this dimension. Equally, the data suggests teachers may be unsure of how to enter into this dimension, as well. Much like the students, teachers may not identify their beliefs and prior knowledge that influence their interpretation of the social studies textbook and the world around them. Therefore, if teachers are not able to recognize these influences they are unable to teach students to do the same. This dimension required students to think about the context that surrounds historical events in a textbook and students seemed to struggle with making those connections. There is also a possibility that the textbooks students are reading and teachers are teaching from, do not make connections between historical events and the context surround the event that might influence a student's and teacher's opinion.

Taking Action and Promoting Social Justice

Lastly, I focused on whether or not students were able to enter into the dimension of taking action and promoting social justice. This dimension, described as “the definition of critical literacy” (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 383). This dimension forces students to reflect on the world around them and look for ways to change the world. Students’ ability to enter this dimension illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7

Student Responses to Taking Action and Promoting Social Justice Dimension

Line	Speaker	Turn	Critical literacy dimension
84	Stumbles Down	One of my friends at school, I don’t know if she is Islamic, but she wears one of the head scarves and um, she was telling me how she was flying somewhere and she was saying how her entire family, all the girls wear the head scarves, they got pulled into another room for security, even though they have lived in America their entire lives, it’s just what they believe, and that kind of stereotyping, like, it’s wrong, but I understand it at the same time. I don’t want to say that the security officials have to do it, but I see where they are coming from.	
85	Peter Parker	Judging someone on how they look isn’t a good thing. But when you are essentially only getting attacked by people, like not only, like there are white people who attack America, but like when Muslim radicals, when like its mainly them, they looks just like any other Muslim, like you can’t tell who is who, so you should be cautious, and check everyone.	
86	Brick Pot	But that is kind of a slippery slope because if saying in a city, more black	Taking Action and Promoting

		people do crimes, should we start pulling over black people and ask them if they are doing crimes. Just because one demographic, certain people do something, that doesn't mean everybody is involved and that we should all suspect them.	Social Justice
87	Mary	So what should we do?	
88	Brick Pot	The terrorists haven't tried to crash a plane into a building since 9/11 because of the security, so I don't think we should even do the airport thing anymore, because it's not really stopping anything. It's all we have ever done, is once they do something, all we do is react to that. Shouldn't we look at what they might do next to try and stop that in the future, instead of look what they already did in the past?	Taking Action and Promoting Social Justice
89	Harriet Styles	I know that earlier during the republican debates this is the subject that they debated on. And it was whether or not it is correct to racially stereotype people. Because if you are racially stereotyping people then now that they know that you are expecting the Muslim race, does that mean they are going to be sending those people you least expect to do the crimes now? Are you going to send the blonde hair blue eyed girl that you don't know? I think it ends up being that you just have to be cautious and you can't worry about anybody else but yourself. I mean, you can't tell what other people are doing when they are at home, ya know, just worry about yourself.	
90	Mary	So you have pointed in a direction of a	

possible problem that we might be seeing, but are there certain things, certain steps that we can take in order to transform the world that we have now? Are there certain issues around September 11th or what we have discovered in Christopher Columbus that we can shape?

91	Harriet Styles	One thing that I always think is a good idea is that in American at least, when people are in their senior year, I think they should have to take an American government course, you know, something that educates them on voting. So that way when they do get into...so that way they know the power they have as Americans. The reason we are so patriotic about things is that they know the power they have when they get into that voting booth. They know at least what they can do to make the changes that they see and want.	Taking Action and Promoting Social Justice
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Note. This excerpt is taken from a larger teacher led group discussion. A total of 4 students participated.

Within this portion of the discussion, students were able to identify several issues surrounding the attacks of September 11th, yet not from the historical event of Christopher Columbus. For instance, Stumbles Down and Peter Parker reveal the issue of stereotyping of Muslim Americans as a result of the attacks, line 84 and 85 respectively. Brick Potter was able to recognize the issue that lies within stereotyping in line 86 and made a suggestion in line 88 when prompted. The data presented in Table 7 perhaps exhibits that students are not able to recognize the steps that can be taken to address the issues presented within the social studies textbook. Even within the issues present, it is possible the students did not fully comprehend the issues they presented as indicated in Stumbles Down statement in line 84, “I don’t want to say

that the security officials have to do it, but I see where they are coming from”. In this statement, she does not fully commit to a position and recognize stereotyping as an issue of the September 11th attacks. Interesting, Harriet Styles was able to enter into the dimension when suggesting voting education for Americans. In line 91, Harriet suggests voting education so “they know at least what they can do to make the changes that they see and want”. In general, the data in Table 7 suggest that students are able to critically view the representation of historical events.

However, perhaps students are not completely prepared to view how they can start to make those changes they see are needed from the issues that arise within the representation of historical content. As indicated in the Likert Scale (2012), the social studies textbook is mainly used for instruction. If the textbook is the primary instructional tool, students may not be provided with enough sources and viewpoints to develop critical literacy skills. Romanowski (2009) would support this data based on the research findings of social studies textbooks. Within this study, Romanowski found viewing social studies through a textbook does not represent historical content well enough to help students develop a critical eye of the world.

Overall, multiple forms of data produced valuable information on how historical events are represented within social studies textbooks. In terms of textbooks, it is possible students are not consistently presented with a well- rounded representation of events. Additionally, students were able question and critique the text they read, however, students may not internalize these beliefs. Lastly, how the textbooks represents historical events may limit students to make connections between the content and the world. These findings each serve an important purpose when examining what this data means to the practice of teaching.

Implications

Through a questionnaire, student written responses to the textbook, textbook evaluations, field notes, student led discussion, and teacher led discussion, several implications can be made. After collecting and analyzing all the data, it was discovered that textbooks may not provide a well-rounded representation of historical content. In addition, the data revealed students may have the skills to critically view the textbook, yet have not internalized these critical viewpoints. Lastly, due to the lack of multiple perspectives and representation within textbook, students tend to struggle with connecting the content within the textbook and the world around them.

The first implication includes a need for teachers to re-evaluate the textbook content in which they are teaching. Much of the content represents a specific viewpoint, and students are not being provided with information from all perspectives. Evans and Davies state, “it is important that the content of our children’s textbooks be studied to reveal what messages are being conveyed through the authority of textbooks in the education of our youngest citizens” (2000, p. 256). It is important for teachers to recognize the lack of perspectives and misrepresentation within the textbook. If the textbook is a necessary tool for the classroom, teachers need to provide students with supplemental materials. The additional content should provide students with more than one viewpoint. It is vital that the additional materials provide students with contrasting viewpoints, rather than extra sources that support the status quo. These materials should challenge the students’ thinking and beliefs about the historical content. Bigelow (1992) recognizes the questionable content and believes there should be encouragement for students to ask critical question rather than simply absorbing the information. The more information given to students gives them a chance to build and determine their own opinion of the content.

Another option for teachers is to research ways in which they can help influence the content taught within the classroom. For instance, teachers can join textbook selection committees to help provide others with insights and advocate for the education students are receiving. If the textbook provided in the classroom seems to provide inaccurate information and/or a bias viewpoint, it can be used not as an instructional tool to learn history, rather an instructional tool to teach students the impact of the textbook and to build the skills needed to recognize bias content.

In addition, the findings suggested students' contained the skills to critically view historical events. However, when discussing their beliefs further, students' responses suggested their previous answers may not represent their true beliefs. Teachers and students, alike, need to recognize their beliefs and bias toward the historical content and confront them. Using a critical pedagogy will help develop the skills needed to recognize bias and the impact they have on how students view the world. A classroom is made up of students with various backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives in which influence their view of historical content. Teachers need to provide ample opportunities for students to interact with others to help discover how their beliefs might contradict with beliefs of others. According to Luke (1991), a critical literacy approach gives students opportunities for talking, reading, and writing about significant events in their lives. It also encourages them to focus on their cultural histories and to extend their worldviews to other cultures as well. It seems that students are only regurgitating historical content to answer the question the teacher poses. Students may comprehend the information given in order to answer all the test questions correctly, but students do not comprehend how the content influences how they view the people and places that surround them every day.

Therefore, teachers need to be comfortable asking the difficult questions to help students question their beliefs and open their minds.

Lastly, the data suggest students seem to struggle with connecting the historical events within the social studies textbook to the world they live in today. It is perhaps the textbook does not provide that connection clearly. Teachers might consider a critical literacy approach within their classroom to help student delve into this skill. The issues that arise from historical events have an impact on our world today, and students struggle with viewing this connection. As teachers, it is imperative that students understand their place and impact in the world. Students need to realize that they can make change today for issues that rose long ago. Bigelow (1992) states, “to invite students to question the injustices embedded in the text material is implicitly to invite them to question the injustices embedded in the society itself” (p. 120).

Conclusion

The goal of this action research project was to discover how social studies textbooks represented historical events. Another purpose of the study included examining the textbooks through the four dimensions of critical literacy, including disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociocultural issues, and taking action and promoting social justice (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). Based on the theories, New Literacy Studies and Critical Literacy, students benefit from interacting with others and the textbook. By communicating with others, students are exposed to various viewpoints and facts to help build their understanding of the content. The knowledge students gain from interacting with others can help questions the world around them and develop a critical view of the world. Many studies have stressed the impact of textbooks on students. Specifically the misrepresentation of historical events and precise discourse used, influences how students

interpret the event, and shapes their views and beliefs of the world yesterday and today. A critical literacy approach to viewing textbook, is a beneficial option for students to question the misrepresentation and discourse. In this action research project, it was found textbooks struggle with providing students with a well-rounded representation of historical events. Students were able to critically view the textbook and identify the issues, however, revealed they do not truly believing misrepresentation and lack of multiple perspectives is an issue when learning history. Lastly, it appears students find it difficult to make connections between the historical content they read and the impact it has on the world today.

The research conducted for this study contained several limitations. Time was a major constraint in collecting and analyzing data. During the summer months, there is only a short period to complete these takes. Therefore, much of this action research project was under strict time constraints. Given more time, I would have conducted additional student and teacher led discussions to gain further insight on the historical representation within social studies textbooks and the impact of critical literacy. In addition, the development of question, used for the teacher led discussion, was based on the short exposure I had with critical literacy. During the teacher led discussion, the discussion could have evolved into a deeper more critical period, if I had more experience with the critical literacy approach. Lastly, the students who provided assent were in a similar age range, 15-17, and only four students participated. This limitation left me with a small population of a specific age range, rather than a larger population consisting of a larger age range, which would have provided me with additional insight on students' beliefs and opinions on the historical representation in social studies textbook.

Findings from this action research project provided good insight into the representation of historical event within social studies, yet there remains unanswered questions. For instance, this

project was built around student volunteers, therefore, how would the findings alter if conducted within a larger classroom setting during the regular school year? As a result, I would like to examine students responded to the representation in a larger group. In addition, this setting would examine how comfortable and capable teachers were in conducting a teacher led discussion around the four dimensions of critical literacy. In addition, how do students of younger ages view social studies textbooks and how do they respond to questions based around the four dimensions of critical literacy? This information could be used to compare the results to find out how students at different educational stages respond to the same questions on textbook content and critical literacy.

For many classrooms, the social studies textbook provides a foundation for teaching historical content. It is important to realize the content within the textbooks is skewed with many messages and may be unfavorable for those reading the content. It is vital for teachers and student become aware of the misrepresentation and bias that lie within the bindings in order to receive a well-rounded representation. The classroom can be a useful resource for teachers and students to gain knowledge on multiple perspectives on historical content. Lastly, a critical literacy approach to teaching gives many opportunities for students to question, analyze, and redefine previous beliefs in which influence how they interpret the content within the social studies textbook and the world around them.

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Appendix A

Title of study: *Examining the historical accuracy of textbooks*

Name(s) of researcher(s): *Mary C. Dougherty*

Purpose of study: *Examine the representation of historical events in textbooks, as well as identify student's ability to critically view these events through the four dimensions of critical literacy.*

Please fill out the following survey. The following questions will provide valuable information about you and your schooling experiences, both past and present. It would be helpful if you filled out all necessary information but **if you do not fill comfortable providing certain information, you may leave it blank.**

About School:

What school do you attend? _____

What grade are you in? _____

In general, how are your grades in school? _____

What is your favorite subject? _____ Least favorite? _____

Experience with textbooks

Indicate how many of your classes use textbooks out of the total number of classes (i.e. 3/5) _____

How do your **teachers** use the textbook?

How do **you** use your textbook?

What additional classroom materials do your teachers use in class?

Are these materials more or less helpful for your learning? Why?

Have any of **your teachers** challenged the content of your textbook? _____

If yes, please describe:

Was there ever a time when **you** believed the textbook content was wrong or biased? If yes, please explain.

Why do you or don't you think textbooks are important?

Additional comments:

*You are not obligated to answer this question

Appendix B

Please give each statement a ranking. Each ranking indicates your thoughts/opinions on social studies textbooks and/or how frequently these statements occur in your social studies classroom.

N: Never R: Rarely O: Often A: Always

- _____ Social studies textbooks accurately represent history.
- _____ I believe what I read in my social studies textbook
- _____ My teacher uses the textbook heavily to teach us
- _____ The textbook is vital to my learning
- _____ Our social studies class only uses the textbook for learning
- _____ I depend on the textbook to shape my views on my country and the world
- _____ It's important to view history through different viewpoints (IMP)
- _____ My teacher mainly uses the textbook to teach us social studies (IMP)
- _____ I question the content of my social studies textbook- (DC)
- _____ I think my social studies textbooks is trying to make me think a certain way (DC)
- _____ When reading about social studies, my class talks about how society and politics shapes our views (SPI)
- _____ When learning history I make connections to other events in history I learned about (SPI)
- _____ I wonder how I can help make the world a better place (TAPSJ)
- _____ My social studies teacher tries to challenge our thinking about today's world (TAPSJ)
- _____ In social studies, my class talks about how history has impacted our world today (TAPSJ)

Additional comments:
