U.S. History Interpretations of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

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Teachers’ understandings of content affect their abilities to develop creative instructional strategies for learning. The authors investigated understandings of United States history among a convenience sample of pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in social studies methods and multicultural education courses at two institutions of higher learning. They employed a 30-item survey concerning events and topics from all 10 United States historical eras, involving both conventional and revisionist interpretations. The authors found very low percentages of correct responses. Respondents taking more history courses generally answered more items correctly. White students answered more revisionist items correctly than underrepresented students. The findings are generally consistent with previous interpretations of pre-service and in-service teachers’ United States history understandings. The authors provide suggestions for teacher preparation and future research.

Introduction

In an increasingly multicultural society, the preparation of effective social studies teachers requires that teacher educators acknowledge the multiple interpretations of history that occur. These different understandings prompt curriculum and instruction dilemmas for which student achievement depends upon standardized historical interpretations.

Identity development represents an important aspect of teaching students in grades K-12. Understandings of history represent key facets of individual identity because they enable realization of place in one’s societal family. Absent such insights, citizens lack the critical understandings of the societal “stories” that contextualize interpretations of citizens’ relationships to each other and to other societies. As part of preparing responsible citizens for society, teachers should help their students to interpret the historical events in manners that both validate their own identities and respect the identities of others.

The design and delivery of programs that prepare social studies teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners should (1) interpret teachers’ understandings of history, (2) clarify and remedy these understandings where necessary, and (3) facilitate their awareness of methods enabling their students’ understanding. In doing so, they work towards the development of future citizens who have both common understandings of historical events and interpretations of these events that connect with their backgrounds.

As effective teaching requires competent understandings of content, the first step in this sequence consists of measuring understandings. Yet, as history represents a matter of fact and interpretation, such measurement should respond to the possibilities of different historical construal. This paper interprets such efforts, describing how pre-service and in-
service teachers at two institutions responded to a survey that measured their knowledge of United States history. The survey contained items representing two different historical interpretations — one conventional and the other revisionist.

**Literature**

**Knowledge and Nature of Subject**

Knowledge of subject matter represents an essential component of K-12 teacher education and is neither a new nor a controversial goal. Since teaching itself requires reciprocal learning, it is paramount that the understanding of taught content is the central requirement of teaching. Literature supports knowledge of content as a central component of teacher quality (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; Buchmann, 1984; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995; Fritzer & Kumar, 2002; Graeber, Tiros, & Glover, 1986; Grossman, 1990; Lampert, 1985; Mansfield, 1985; Parker & Jarolimek, 1997; Wilson, 1988; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988; Wineburg, 1987). Nevertheless, research on teacher education (Ball & Feiman-Nemser, 1988; Chapin & Messick, 1999; Featherstone, 1993; Florio & Lensmire, 1990; Grossman, 1990; Kagan, 1992; Turner, 1999) has overwhelmingly focused on teachers’ role conceptions, work beliefs, and knowledge of students, curriculum, and pedagogy. As Buchmann (1984) explains:

It would be odd to expect a teacher to plan a lesson on, for instance, writing reports in history and to evaluate related student assignments, if that teacher is ignorant about writing history, and does not understand what student progress in writing history reports might mean. (p. 32)

Helping K-12 teacher education students learn subject matter involves more than the delivery of facts and information. According to Conant (1963), Ball and Feiman-Nemser (1988), Ball and McDiarmid (1990), and Fritzer and Kumar (2002), the goal of teaching is to assist students in developing intellectual resources that enable their participation in the major domains of human thought and inquiry. These domains include the past and its relation to the present; the natural world; the ideas, beliefs, and values of our own and other peoples; the dimensions of space and quantity; aesthetics and representation, etc. Thus, if a teacher is largely ignorant or uninformed, he or she can do much harm to students’ learning.

When K-12 teachers possess inaccurate information or conceive content knowledge in narrow ways, they socialize these ideas to their students, which in turn, fail to challenge them intellectually or motivationally. A K-12 teacher of United States history not only needs detailed knowledge about events and people of the past, but also must understand the definition of history: the nature of historical knowledge and the meaning of finding out or knowing something about the past.

Self-knowledge appears to be a major fruit for early teaching (Kagan, 1992), and as Scheffler (1973) explains, “This kind of subject matter understanding strengthens the teacher’s powers and, in so doing, heightens the possibilities of their art.” (p. 89). In what Featherstone (1993) calls “The journey in, the journey out,” novices begin to construct a professional identity through their struggles with and explorations of students and subject matter. Whether we choose to call these teachers “masters” or “experts” depends on how we define mastery and expertise. Beliefs about subject matter support views of teaching and learning sketched above. Most often, educators tend to consider subject matter as a fixed collection of facts, concepts, and skills that must be “mastered” before they can be “expertly” applied.

Critics of teacher education tend to overlook the fact that prospective teachers take most of their courses in liberal arts departments, not in much-maligned colleges of edu-
cation. The professional training they receive in colleges of education is also not centrally concerned with their subject matter knowledge. Elementary teachers generally take half of their courses in the liberal arts and half in colleges of education in addition to student teaching, while secondary teachers generally take three-fourths in the liberal arts and only four or five classes in colleges of education in addition to student teaching (Fritzer & Kumar, 2002). While secondary teachers usually major in a specific discipline, elementary teachers take a range of survey and introductory courses across a variety of disciplines.

However, unlike most K-12 English or mathematics teachers, elementary social studies and United States history teachers are responsible for teaching content well beyond the scope of their college disciplines. This situation typically occurs because they have to teach civics, geography, economics, history, and culture; however, as university students, they majored in single subject areas such as history, political science, or geography (Turner, 1999). Finally, to limit the exploration of prospective K-12 teachers’ subject matter preparation to their university education might miss the point. Although teachers usually spend 13 years in school prior to entering college, United States history in most states is included in the 5th, 8th, and 11th grade curriculum with only its elements included in other grades (Fritzer & Kumar, 2002).

Wilson and Wineburg (1988) suggest that social studies teachers’ background knowledge develops because college disciplinary specializations may dominate (inappropriately) representation of other areas; they also explain:

What is interesting about our findings is the way in which teachers’ undergraduate training influenced their teaching. The curriculum they were given and the courses they subsequently taught were shaped by the way they did and did not know. Thus, student A’s United States history course became the study of political science organized around political themes and student B used their knowledge of the structure of anthropology and archaeology to make sense of the social sciences simultaneously learning and teaching. (p. 534)

Wilson and Wineburg’s findings (1988) could suggest that socioeconomic variables affect patterns of teacher candidates’ interpretations of history.

Stanford University’s Knowledge Growth in Teaching Program explored beginning teachers’ subject matter knowledge. According to Wilson (1988), teachers must critically understand a set of ideas, a piece of content, in terms of both its substantive and syntactic structure (e.g., the causes of the American Revolution, World War I, and World War II). Scheurman and Newman (1998) reemphasized the Stanford University findings. This understanding of the subject matter is a precondition for students to understand their subject matter in a new way for teaching. In short, they develop a new understanding of the content informed by their new knowledge known as pedagogical content knowledge.

Deemphasizing Social Studies

Naylor and Diem (1987) described the increasing emphasis in teaching reading and mathematics, the two subjects most often the focus of elementary schools during the 1980s. A Southern Association for Credentialing Schools (SACS) self survey (1994) reported, “Administrators and faculty proudly announce that they do not teach any social studies in elementary school because they focus all their attention and energy on reading and math.” Many states conducting “standardized tests” virtually ignore social studies in lieu of improving reading and mathematics.

In the short term, these foci on mathematics and reading may help raise the test scores (which schools are under extreme pressure to do). However, in the long term, they produce
generations of students who, more often than not, have never heard of significant elements of United States history, putting them at an embarrassing disadvantage in or out of the classroom (Chapin & Messick, 1999).

**Understanding**

Wineburg’s (1987) research began from the perspectives of her teachers’ undergraduate majors (anthropology) and moved toward a broader view under the influence of social studies textbooks. She argued that teachers’ practices increase understanding of their social studies subject matter and substantive knowledge. Ball and Feiman-Nemser (1988) and Ball and McDiarmid (1990) also supported examples of elementary teachers learning from textbooks.

The nature of the country’s future relies on the knowledge and selection of its historical heroes. If teachers lack a critical understanding of United States history, they depend heavily on their textbooks for both historical facts and explanations of the meanings within the storied explanation of its society. Literature documents the challenges prompted by these learning environments. Parker and Jarolimek’s (1997) report of citizens’ meager knowledge about significant U.S. History events represented a national embarrassment. This disclosure is supported by Fritzer’s and Kumar’s (2002) finding that pre-service teachers scored 54% correct on their tests of basic United States History facts.

This problematic situation holds true for elementary as well as high school teachers. Since most colleges and universities have *United States History to 1877* and *1877 to the Present* courses for general education requirements, these courses should refresh pre-service teachers about their understandings of America’s past. If candidates possess weak understandings, perhaps it is important for the history departments to reconsider their instructional methods and explore processes that prompt longer-term understandings of these important events.

James Loewen’s (1995) review of history textbooks found the almost mythical portrayal of American “heroes,” along with the appallingly vague or inaccurate representation of key historical periods, such as Reconstruction. When employed in schools requiring instruction based on textbooks possessing inaccuracies and historical bias, teachers who possess informed historical understandings face a professional dilemma that concerns both instructional method and content accuracy, the reconciliation of which involves potential for community and administrative conflict. This situation presents a particular concern in a climate of which such challenging history texts may be considered unpatriotic.

Absent basic understandings of history, teachers depend on the heroes that textbooks uphold as models for behaviors their students emulate. Nevertheless, heroism represents a contextual concept. Both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X represent heroes of the Civil Rights Movement; however, their approaches to pursuing civil rights differed because of each figure’s background. Textbooks emphasize King, Jr. because his actions emulate the ideals of the mainstream dominant culture better than Malcolm X. Without critical understandings of United States history, teachers lack the knowledge to discuss the heroes textbooks portray and the contexts in which this heroism occurred. In other words, teachers represent the disseminators of the information textbooks contain, not necessarily the teachers of knowledge and values children should practice.

The purpose of this study was to interpret understandings of United States history among pre-service and in-service teachers at two universities. In particular, we were interested in measuring respondents’ patterns of understanding conventional and revisionist interpretations of various events and ideas and in comparing patterns based on respondent characteristics. The results of this study add to a crucial body of knowledge concerning interpretation
and communication of the societal stories that shape the minds of American youth.

**Methodology**

**Sample**

The study involved a convenience sample of 194 undergraduate and graduate teacher education students at two higher-education institutions: a Southern urban institution and a Midwestern institution in a mid-sized community. There were 126 respondents from the Southern urban institution who enrolled in one of three elementary undergraduate social studies methods classes, a graduate secondary social studies methods course, or graduate multicultural instruction course. There were 53 respondents from the Midwestern institution enrolled in either one section of an undergraduate elementary social studies methods course or one section of a graduate course concerning multicultural education. Fifteen students did not disclose their institutional affiliation.

The sample consisted of 95 undergraduate students and 84 graduate students with 15 students not disclosing their academic level. The racial/ethnic composition was 135 White; 42 were listed Other and 17 Undisclosed.

Of 176 students who disclosed their intentions or current practice, 90 taught or expressed a desire to teach in grades K-3, 42 in grades 4-5, 26 in grades 6-9, and 18 in grades 10-12. Of the 168 students responding to the item, more than two-thirds (111 or 66.10%) had taken one or two courses in United States history. Less than one sixth took 3-4 courses (26 or 15.50%) or took no courses (25 or 14.90%).

Of the 167 students rating their confidence in knowledge of United States history, more than one-half (91 or 54.50%) expressed a low knowledge with more than one-third (61 or 36.50%) indicating satisfactory knowledge. Only three (or 1.80%) of those responding indicated that they possessed an excellent understanding of United States history.

**Instrument**

Data were collected using a survey developed by the authors. It consisted of 30 multiple-choice items that interpreted respondents’ understandings of United States history. Each item contained four alternative response choices. There were three items associated with each of the 10 eras of United States history, recognized by the National Center for History in the Schools and representing the following periods:

- **Era 1**: Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings to 1620)
- **Era 2**: Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763)
- **Era 3**: Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)
- **Era 4**: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)
- **Era 5**: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)
- **Era 6**: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)
- **Era 7**: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)
- **Era 8**: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)
- **Era 9**: Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)
- **Era 10**: Contemporary United States (1968 to the present)

The items drew from material in The Elite College History Survey (Center for Survey Research and Analysis, 2000), from surveys posted at an Internet resource for History Teachers and from Loewen (1995). The researchers excluded one item from analysis due to its deceptive wording. The instrument also contained items that measured respondents’ gender, age, race/ethnicity, academic level, professional status, location, grade taught (or intended), coursework, knowledge confidence, and teaching confidence.
Procedure and Analysis

Respondents completed the surveys anonymously. The researchers selected students in their respective classes to administer the surveys and implied consent disclosures to their classes. Surveys and consent forms were distributed in numbered envelopes with 156 respondents that responded to all 30 survey items that concerned U. S. History. The researchers were outside the classrooms at the time of survey administration. For this paper, descriptive analyses interpret patterns of correct scores among respondents and patterns of correct responses to survey items.

Findings

The Findings portion of this paper consists of two sections. In the first section, we communicate the mean scores on the survey, making comparisons among groups. The comparisons only include those cases where respondents provided information about requested traits, experiences, or intentions. The second discloses the patterns of correct responses among particular survey items.

Means and Maximums

The descriptive statistics associated with respondents’ survey scores are presented in Table 1 (see Appendix A). Regardless of the historical interpretation or historical period, respondents answered low percentages of items correctly. Although conditions (discussed below) may have negatively affected results, no respondent would have received higher than a “C” grade (using a standard 90, 80, 70, and 60 grading scale) on conventional understandings of history.

Table 2 (see Appendix A) compares the average scores of respondents from the two institutions. The results indicate that similar patterns for lack of knowledge occur. Although, on average, students at the Midwestern institution correctly responded to more items than did students at the Southern institution, students at both institutions performed poorly.

Table 3 (see Appendix A) contains the average scores of respondents based on their race/ethnic identities. While White respondents averaged higher numbers of correct responses among all categories, the percentages of correct responses to items based on Loewen were interesting. White students averaged more correct responses to these items than did students of other ethnicities. Although these data may challenge understandings of revisionist interpretations as minority originated, the sample contained greater than three times more White respondents than those of other ethnicities. Broader samples need to confirm or deny these patterns.

A comparison of the average scores by respondents’ gender found higher scores for males for all measures except for one. Males and females averaged the same percentage of correct responses to items concerning Pre-1877 topics. The pattern of higher average scores for males may result from their preparations in content to teach higher grades. Over one-half (54.84%) of responding females disclosed intentions or practice of teaching in grades K-3. An even distribution of men occurred among the grade categories.

Comparisons by History Courses Taken

Tables 4 and 5 (see Appendix A) depict comparisons of the average respondent scores based on content preparations. The results indicate that the average number of correct responses increases with number of high school history courses taken; however, for three of the five measures, an anomaly occurs in the trend. The average number of correct responses for Total, Loewen, and Pre-1877 items decreased for students taking one and two college courses from those who took none.

Because 90 (51.13%) respondents disclosed intentions or practice of teaching in grades K-3 and were not seeking endorsements
in teaching social studies or history, it is possible that many of these students took elective history courses to fill program requirements; hence, they selected history courses of personal interest (or prior knowledge), rather than content they expected to teach. As students took more history courses at the college level, they learned more content and were more likely to study U.S. history.

Finally, a noteworthy increase occurs in Post-1877 scores from students taking three to four college courses compared to those taking five or more college courses. Because teaching Post-1877 United States history generally does not begin until high school, learning processes have not imprinted related content in most learners. Students taking five or more college history courses have likely had this information reinforced.

Patterns of Item Responses

We now consider patterns of responses to individual items. First, we look at the five items that most respondents answered correctly. Then, we interpret the five items that the least number of respondents answered correctly. Each of these interpretations describes the item and the percentages of answers for the alternative responses.

Most correctly answered items. Information concerning the items correctly responded to the most is provided in Table 6 (see Appendix A). All of these items were factual questions that required respondents’ recognition of information. Most of the students recognized The War of 1812 as the second American Revolution and the Articles of Confederation as the first congressional effort to govern the country. Two of the items (12 and 27) derived from Loewen’s (1995) work. Item 12 related to his observation that early United States based domestic policies on slavery and that absence of this information in texts challenges students’ abilities to understand the basis for the Civil War. Item 27 concerned his observation that textbooks are silent about U.S. efforts (including Operation Mongoose) to assassinate Fidel Castro during John F. Kennedy’s presidency.

Least correctly answered items. Information is provided in Table 7 (see Appendix A) concerning the items least correctly answered. All of the least correctly responded to items were factually based questions that required respondents’ recognition of information. No student interpreted Columbus’ voyage as for exploitation (as interpreted by Loewen (1995), and a small percentage knew the first settlers in the New World. Two of the items (the two aforementioned) derived from Loewen’s work. Item 2 measured how students understood Loewen’s (1995) account of Columbus’ exploration motives. Loewen discloses that several conditions in Europe (i.e., development of military and social technology, development of wealth-based control, adaptation of religion as a basis for social control, and previous successes of societal explorations) prompted Columbus’ voyage. “… his purpose from the beginning was not mere exploration or even trade, but conquest and exploitation, for which he used religion as a rationale.” (p. 45).

Item 3 included a response alternative associated with Loewen’s (1995) research of colonial immigration. Only 13 respondents knew that slaves in South Carolina predated the arrival of the Spanish. Most respondents were familiar with the Pilgrims’ arrival at Plymouth in 1620; however, either their familiarity with the Pilgrims obscured the chronology of events or the respondents lacked awareness of the other alternatives and could not evaluate their accuracies. Loewen (1995) uses these dates to explain how textbooks exclude or deemphasize information to depict a history of European purity:

Starting the story of America’s settlement with the Pilgrims leaves out not only the Indians but also the Spanish. The very first non-Native settlers in the country that we now know as the United States were African slaves left in South Carolina in 1526. (p. 77)
Item 14 sought respondents’ knowledge about a critical amendment to the constitution. Only 22 respondents knew that the 14th Amendment guaranteed equal protection under the law for every American citizen. It is possible that the historical timing of the amendment confuses respondents somewhat. Most respondents recognized that it involved equality issues that related to politics surrounding the Civil War; however, their ignorance of its specific content may have limited their abilities to understand its implications.

**Discussion**

**Limitations**

*Convenience group/sampling.* The authors recognize that conclusions are limited because of the convenient nature of the sample and its narrow range of setting. To verify results, survey data from beyond convenience sample populations and larger group samples should be considered for future research.

*Instrument.* The nature of the instrument arguably affects the outcomes of the study. Such a limitation results from the difficulty of items selected. Most items came from a website designed to help teachers prepare their high school students for U.S. history tests and therefore may have been too specific for respondents. It is possible that a survey of basic historical facts could have prompted more responses that were correct. In the future, researchers could enhance such instruments by including open response items that ask for explanations of particular historic events. Finally, while we recognize that the difficulty and nature of the items may have affected the outcomes, we point out that results are similar to previous measures of United States history interpretations such as Fritzer’s and Kumar’s (2002).

*Understanding.* Although students generally scored better on items concerning conventional understandings versus revisionist, they fared poorly on both measures. The lower scores on our survey result from (1) selection of topics that history courses do not emphasize, (2) employment of items interpreting historical events rather than factual dates and names, and (3) a balance of items from all eras in United States history.

**Recommendations**

The study found that a higher percentage of correct responses to revisionist items occurred among White respondents rather than respondents of other ethnicities. Literature shows (Loewen, 1995; Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1980) and argues (Banks, 1979; Freire, 1970) that revisionist comprehension of United States history presents a “minority” or “underrepresented” view. However, our findings may indicate that interpretations of history are not matters of ethnicity, but matters of education and access to information. A simplistic argument, nevertheless, it suggests that additional studies are needed to explore this new possible paradigm. Of particular interest were the higher scores among students who reported taking more history courses in high school and college. While the solution to historical illiteracy among pre-service and in-service may require additional history courses within teacher education processes, the results may indicate that instruction methods may not prompt students’ long-term knowledge retention and/or course content may not emphasize topics or interpretations presented within the survey items. In either case, pre-service and practicing teachers do not demonstrate strong understandings of items on this survey, regardless of the historical time or interpretation.

**Conclusions**

Research (Mathers & Oliva with Laine, 2008) indicates that teacher assessment represents a multifaceted process. Part of this process requires an interpretation of content knowledge. Art Wise, president of the National
Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education — the national professional accrediting body for schools of education, recently stated “A new generation of teachers is being formed, and they are, by traditional academic measures, stronger than they were eight years ago” (Toppo, 2007, unpaginated). The results of our survey indicate that Wise’s comments are inaccurate as they relate to understandings of United States history. Our study found that this convenience sample, on average, scored very poorly on this survey. If history represents an interpretive field, preparations should inform teachers about the various historical interpretations in sufficient depth to engage in knowledgeable conversations with students. Our findings suggest that teachers are not well informed of either conventional or revisionist views, hence such dialogues do not occur. Since the design and delivery of social studies teacher preparations should interpret teachers’ understandings of history, clarifying and remediating these understandings where necessary, these findings suggest that much effort is needed to address teachers’ misperceptions of U.S. History.

Furthermore, because history awareness supports individual identity development, our findings raise concerns about teacher preparation and the effects on patterns of future citizenry. A recent report (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2007) indicates that poor preparation of history teachers occurs nationwide, reporting that “States’ content standards and coursework requirements for elementary teachers fall well short of the mark, omitting critical areas of knowledge. For example, ... 42 states make no mention of United States history” (p. 9). Teachers who lack this knowledge and depend on text-based traditional instruction are prone to condition students who lack critical understandings of the societal stories that shape their interpreting foreign and domestic relationships. Such conditions are carcinogenic to the longevity of a fully participatory democratic society.

References


**Websites Listed**

**History Teachers**
http://www.historyteacher.net

**National Center for History in the Schools**
http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/toc.html

**About the Authors**

**Thomas A. Lucey** joined the faculty of Illinois State University in August of 2005 as an assistant professor in social studies education in the College of Education. He holds an Ed.D. in instruction and curriculum leadership from The University of Memphis. His textbook (co-edited with Kathy Cooter, Bellmere University) *Financial Literacy for Children and Youth* is available from Digitaltextbooks.

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**Email:** tlucey@ilstu.edu
Appendix A

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics (n = 156)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items (number)</th>
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<th>µ %</th>
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<th>Max. %</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
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<td>Total (29)</td>
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<td>65.52</td>
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<td>.42</td>
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<td>77.78</td>
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<td>-.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventional (20)</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>35.25</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>75.00</td>
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<td>.81</td>
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<td>Pre-1877 (14)</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>33.71</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>64.29</td>
<td>1.69</td>
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<td>-.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-1877 (15)</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>35.67</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>73.33</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.24</td>
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Table 2

Average Number (and Percentage) of Correct Responses by University

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<th>Midwest (n = 41)</th>
<th>Southern (n = 110)</th>
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<td>Total (29)</td>
<td>10.31 (35.55%)</td>
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<td>2.97 (33.00%)</td>
<td>3.05 (33.89%)</td>
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<td>7.44 (37.20%)</td>
<td>6.92 (34.60%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-1877 (14)</td>
<td>4.66 (33.29%)</td>
<td>4.78 (34.14%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-1877 (15)</td>
<td>5.76 (38.40%)</td>
<td>5.18 (34.53%)</td>
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### Table 3

**Average Number (and Percentages) of Correct Responses by Race/Ethnicity**

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<tr>
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<td>(n = 35)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total (29)</td>
<td>9.97 (34.38%)</td>
<td>8.91 (30.72%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loewen (9)</td>
<td>3.14 (34.89%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventional (20)</td>
<td>7.15 (35.75%)</td>
<td>6.57 (32.85%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-1877 (14)</td>
<td>4.78 (34.14%)</td>
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<td>Post-1877 (15)</td>
<td>5.15 (34.33%)</td>
<td>4.43 (29.53%)</td>
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### Table 4

**Average Number (and Percentage) of Correct Responses by High School History Courses Taken**

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<td>(n = 9)</td>
<td>(n = 100)</td>
<td>(n = 33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total (29)</td>
<td>8.78 (30.28%)</td>
<td>9.78 (33.72%)</td>
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<td>2.77 (30.78%)</td>
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<td>Conventional (20)</td>
<td>6.56 (32.80%)</td>
<td>7.05 (35.25%)</td>
<td>7.15 (35.75%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-1877 (14)</td>
<td>4.67 (33.36%)</td>
<td>4.72 (33.71%)</td>
<td>4.91 (35.07%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1877 (15)</td>
<td>4.67 (31.13%)</td>
<td>5.00 (33.33%)</td>
<td>5.21 (34.73%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Table excludes one respondent who disclosed taking five or more high school history courses.
Table 5

*Average Number (and Percentage) of Correct Responses by High School History Courses Taken*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None  (n = 24)</th>
<th>1-2  (n = 90)</th>
<th>3-4  (n = 24)</th>
<th>5+   (n = 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.70 (33.44%)</td>
<td>9.50 (32.76%)</td>
<td>10.29 (35.48%)</td>
<td>12.50 (43.10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loewen (9)</td>
<td>3.29 (36.56%)</td>
<td>2.89 (32.11%)</td>
<td>3.08 (34.22%)</td>
<td>3.67 (40.78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional (20)</td>
<td>6.63 (33.15%)</td>
<td>6.96 (34.80%)</td>
<td>7.33 (36.65%)</td>
<td>8.83 (44.15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1877 (14)</td>
<td>4.88 (34.86%)</td>
<td>4.56 (32.57%)</td>
<td>5.29 (37.79%)</td>
<td>5.33 (38.07%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1877 (15)</td>
<td>5.04 (33.60%)</td>
<td>5.29 (35.27%)</td>
<td>5.13 (34.20%)</td>
<td>7.17 (47.08%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

*Five Items that the Highest Percentage of Respondents Answered Correctly*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item and description</th>
<th>Percentage responding correctly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 10: What war was known as the second American Revolution?</td>
<td>62.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 8: What document represented Congress’s first effort to provide for laws; however, did not provide enough authority to collect taxes, regulate interstate business, or enforce laws?</td>
<td>57.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 27: Operation Mongoose was….</td>
<td>55.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 24: While there was a large gap between what Harry Truman said about civil rights and what he was able to do, his greatest accomplishment was in ...</td>
<td>52.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 12: During the United States’ first 70 years, domestic policies were motivated by. . .</td>
<td>52.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Five Items that the Lowest Percentage of Respondents Answered Correctly*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage responding correctly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 2: The purpose of Columbus’ voyage to America was. . .</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3: The area which is now the continental United States was first settled by the non-indigenous…</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 14: The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution was important because it…</td>
<td>14.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 22: One effect of the Great Depression on women was to…</td>
<td>20.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 16: This corporate giant grew from low-income beginnings.</td>
<td>21.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>