Critical Historical Inquiry: How Might Pre-Service Teachers Confront Master Historical Narratives?

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In this qualitative case study, we examine pre-service teachers’ understandings’ of history as narrative. This analysis specifically explores the kinds of new historical narratives pre-service teachers create as a result of purposeful secondary social studies methods instruction that juxtaposes traditional narratives (e.g. individual achievement and motivation) and alternative narratives (e.g. those attentive to empathy and race, class, and gender) in an effort to help future teachers understand the nature of critical historical inquiry. In examining the understandings and initial efforts of young secondary social studies teachers, the study concludes that while troubling the traditional narrative is viable and likely event, the challenges of developing critical historical inquiry are clear and persistent.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, historical inquiry, history education, historical narrative, teacher education, social justice.

Introduction

There have been multiple calls to examine the school curriculum as one derived by dominant and oppressive ideologies in the name of the nation state and ultimately as a tool for cultural hegemony (Apple, 2004; Giroux, 2003; Stanley & Longwell, 2004; Van Sledright, 2008). As Catherine Cornbleth (1985) argues, knowledge is officially organized as a technical project of curriculum, one that adheres to a predetermined end product and premises falsely upon an apolitical and non-ideological assumption about the nature and the substance of knowledge. This critique of the school curriculum has long revealed knowledge is selected through mainstream values, perspectives, and ontological and epistemological traditions that become institutionalized in an official and problematic narrative (Banks, 1993).

The most flagrant offenses, perhaps, are reflected in the public school history curriculum that promotes a mythologizing and heroifying story of America, deliberately inaccurate and incomplete (Kohl, 1994; Loewen, 2010). The historical narrative transmitted in schools “is a particular bundle of silences” (p. 27) created by, “the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have unequal access to the means for such production” (Trouillot, 1995, p. xix). Left unchallenged, the heritage narrative selected and organized for teachers and students remains marginalizing and consequently problematic (Lowenthal, 1985).

We maintain history is “the major site for construction of collective memory in contemporary society” (Stearns, Seixas, & Wineburg 2000, p. 2) and accordingly, should become a contested space for teachers and students to consider. In this sense, we argue we should teach history to “uncover and confront the inconsistencies” (Tyson & Park, 2008, p. 37) of our democracy and to challenge and to call to action young citizens in ways vital to the goals...
of socially just democracy (Dilworth, 2008; Quijada Cerecer, Alvarez Gutierrez, & Rios, 2010). In doing so, we promote justice oriented citizens that demand a more complex history, one with “explicit attention to matters of injustice and to the importance of pursuing social justice” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 242).

In this project, we explored secondary social studies pre-service teachers’ understandings of the dominant historical narrative (Wertsch, 1998), including collective memory (Seixas, Fromowitz, & Hill, 2002) and majoritarian tales (Delgado, 1998) as they are imbedded in the history curriculum. We attended, moreover, to the secondary social studies pre-service teachers’ pedagogical development of more critical (linguistically and culturally relevant and consciousness raising) uses of historical inquiry as means of troubling, complicating, countering or resisting narratives that marginalize or omit others from the telling of history.

Troubling the Historical Narrative

The historical narrative, in and of itself, is neither good nor bad; rather, it reflects the multiple affordances and constraints encountered by agents and their use of this cultural tool (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Wertsch, 1998). For instance, Keith Barton and Linda Levstik (2004) note the historical narrative as a cultural tool used as a “constructed sequence of events that are both causally related and chronological…” (p. 132). At face value, the historical narrative is a judgement resulting in temporal order (Holt, 1995) or a chain of events (Bordwell & Thompson, 1990). Though there are several ways of representing history, as James Wertsch (1998), concludes, the narrative has a central topic, plot, pattern of beginning, middle and end, and “achieves closure, a conclusion, a resolution” (p. 80). In the history classroom, the narrative is a familiar tool for making sense of: what we know, what we want to know, and what we expect to know. The teaching of history through narrative and story is thus commonplace but seldom suspect.

The narrative schema entrenched in the official school curriculum, however, is often simplistic and void of complex, nuanced, and other perspectives. The content of the official school narrative, the covert and over knowledge included in the mandated school curriculum (Apple 2004), is characteristically a reflection of common nation building themes (e.g. individual motivation and achievement, and progress) that reflect collective memory and are principally the stories nations select to describe their victorious, progressive, and benevolent selves (Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1999). A nation’s official historical narratives rarely confess to atrocities (e.g. Indian Removal Act of 1830), self-serving agendas (e.g. Manifest Destiny or American exceptionalism), and bungles (e.g. Executive Order 9066) (VanSledright, 2008). A slew of scholars have cast significant doubt upon what is included and excluded in the story of history (e.g Loewen, 2010; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000).

Beyond inexactitudes, the narrative also typically ignores what Sam Wineburg (2001) describes as the metadiscourse or the presence (voice), process and positionality of the author who has constructed the narrative. “Historians don’t try to record the entire history of the world either in its breadth or depth…historians select some events as belonging together as a coherent sequence, and they arrange those events so that coherence is clear” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p.131). Creating a coherent narrative therefore requires a process of decision-making, of selecting events, participants, and revealing cause and effect (Trouillot, 1995). In sum, construction of a historical narrative involves the inclusion and rejection of primary sources or evidences instrumental in reflecting or deflecting a reality (Wertsch, 1998). To truly understand
the historical narrative, one must understand how an author’s historical positionality is instrumental in the developed interpretations and conclusions. Without recognizing the fact that narratives contained within textbooks are built upon authors’ epistemic stances, “any call for the development of a critical attitude toward history rings hollow” (Maggioni, VanSledright, & Alexander, 2009, p. 190).

Social studies education researchers have consequently attended to this inherent practice of interpretation and selection in examining the narrative patterns within textbooks (Paxton, 1999; Wills, 1996, 2001), raced, classed, and gendered representations of groups (Brown & Brown, 2010; Foster, 1999; Hughes, 2007; Wade, 1993) the ideological function of curriculum (Apple, 2004; Stanley, 2000), pedagogies of silence and avoidance (Epstein, 2009; Levstik, 2000), and historical inquiry and thinking (Salinas & Castro, 2010; Salinas & Sullivan, 2007). Scholars have explored the use of historical inquiry as a pedagogical tool instrumental to trouble the historical narrative (Blevins & Salinas, 2012; Bolgatz, 2006; Salinas & Blevins, 2013; Sexias, Fromowitz, & Hill, 2002; VanSledright, 2008).

**Altering the Selection and Organization of Historical Narratives**

A stern charge is provided in Prentice Chandler (2010) of his raced based examination of the teaching of Indigenous history in explaining:

> Race is the mirror into which we must gaze if we are to meet the credo of equality and justice for all. How is that most important social aspects of our history are downplayed, marginalized, and in some cases intentionally omitted? (p.155)

We argue deliberate and critical uses of historical inquiry can confront such negligence through a skilled and sophisticated reading of historical evidence that may construct nuanced, complex and sometimes contradictory historical conclusions than those found in the official history curriculum. The enactment of the curriculum—negotiated between the teacher and student (Ball & Cohen, 1996)—has most recently been facilitated by the growing availability of digitized primary sources or civic resources (Lee, 2006). The civic resources traditionally reserved for historians making their way through boxes with unknown contents and sitting on dusty library shelves are now commonly found in massive databases (e.g. The Presidential Timeline, The Miller Center or National Archives Record Administration). For teachers and students, these digitized collections of primary sources are a cache of opportunities to enact more critical historical inquiry. One cannot assume that unprecedented access will ensure the pursuit of valuable questions and historical reasoning (Sandwell, 2011). Teachers, for example, may make decisions regarding archives based upon a variety of rationales or a pragmatic meter of sorts emerges that guides each teacher in their pursuits and selection of primary sources (Salinas, Bellows & Liaw, 2011). This pragmatic meter is specific to the curriculum concept and includes a teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge as well as the temporal limits of their on line searches.

It is difficult to dispute Cheryl Bolick’s (2006) findings that digitized archives “enable teachers to engage in historical inquiry in a way they had not been able to in the past” (p. 128) and “[give] teachers access to historical accounts they had not previously been able to access easily” (p. 129). Teachers then become a decisive factor in how, when, and to what extent their students will learn to use the civic resources now readily available.

Expanding teachers’ and learners’ understanding of how to use historical inquiry to reason and develop historical conclusions, emphasizes actions are “situated in broader societal contexts…” and are “necessary to see how values, attitudes, beliefs and institutional structures
influenced the actions of people in the past and how such factors differed from those today” (Barton & Levstik, 2008, p. 357). In this sense, historical inquiry requires an insertion or promotion of enduring historical issues, and experiences and understandings often marginalized by official texts (Giroux, 2003; McLaren, 2003). Contextualizing the actions and values, attitudes, beliefs, and institutional structures, reveals tensions that bring awareness to inequities and ideological disagreements that are commonly ignored or silenced in the reading and teaching of history (Epstein, 2009; Tyson & Park, 2008; VanSledright, 2008).

**Conceptual Framework**

In emphasizing a more critical approach to historical inquiry, we attend to Levstik’s (2000) work, “Because of the potential disparity between the version[s] of history encountered….students in multicultural societies may be faced with reconciling widely varied accounts of the past” (p. 285). We argue the teaching and learning of history is marked by historical positionality, thus critical historical inquiry should shift attention to the worldview of the interpreter of the historical evidence at hand (Salinas & Castro, 2010; VanSledright, 2002). Historical inquiry is “a cultural act that teaches students about warrants, about the nature of understanding, and about their role in making historical knowledge” (Stearns, et al., 2000, p. 3). This guiding premise directs our attention towards historical inquiry and ways in which teachers can help learners understand the readily discernible, circumspectly nuanced, and inevitably uncertain events that may be articulated in a historical narrative.

Critical historical inquiry, with its roots in critical theory and pedagogy (McLaren, 2003), focuses on critiquing traditional forms of knowledge (Giroux, 2003), creating a dialogue between students and teacher, utilizing student experience, and introducing subjugated narratives into the curriculum (Blevins & Salinas, 2012). As such, critical historical inquiry offers an important pedagogical approach and route towards improving citizenship education by emphasizing the political nature of history curriculum. Through critical historical inquiry, students begin to understand, disrupt and challenge the official curriculum and explore new and diverse perspectives that recognize and honor the unique experiences of linguistically and culturally diverse communities (Franquiz & Salinas, 2011).

**Study Context**

This qualitative research study was conducted within a secondary social studies teacher education program centered on the practice of critical historical inquiry throughout pre-service teachers’ methods and fieldwork experiences. The authors served as instructors in this program. As part of the secondary education teacher education program, pre-service teachers matriculated through two social studies methods courses developed on the premise historical narratives should be created and recreated inclusive of highly complex renditions of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. (Blevins & Salinas, 2012). The course readings, discussions, and assignments served to reveal pre-service teachers’ attraction to the referential illusion (Barthes, 1970). The sources of evidence also divulged their lack of attention to the meta discourse as well as their mastery of a meta-narrative that failed to recognize other perspectives (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Wertsch, 1998).

Throughout these courses, we used primary source documents to present the dominant historical narrative through commonly found primary sources (e.g. a propaganda poster of Rosie the Riveter). We then followed with other primary sources that created nuances or contrasts to the narrative (e.g. women of color that filled the role of Rosie the Riveter). The pattern of
affirming and then complicating a dominant historical narrative was meant to promote
dissonance and the possibility of a more complex narrative.

To challenge the common racial binary (Black and White) as well as most male
narratives of the 1960s civil rights movements, the master narrative began with a somewhat
peripheral but familiar primary source photo collection of Cesar Chavez leading the United Farm
Workers of America. Introducing the Latino Civil Rights activist served to somewhat challenge
the traditional Civil Rights metanarrative, but the introduction of the common lunch counter
window sign “We Serve Whites Only. No Spanish or Mexicans” created a clear challenge of the
dominant middle class, White, male narrative. The movement was distinguished as el
movimiento. The additional second order primary sources that followed introduced Dolores
Huerta, an equally important Civil Rights advocate who stood side by side with Chavez. As a
way to demonstrate the continuous agency of the Latino community, primary sources were
introduced to produce a timeline for el movimiento that included historic litigation that began
long before the 1960s and continued into the 1980s (see San Miguel, 2005). In this disruption of
the metanarrative, pre-service teachers recognized the limitations of the Black and White binary,
positioning of women, and containment of el movimiento onto the history timeline. This pattern
of presenting a familiar narrative through primary sources and then introducing contrasting
primary sources that prompted the recognition of other histories and perspectives was
consistently used in the methods course in modeling critical historical inquiry.

Methodology

Ongoing since Fall 2005, this case study employed an instrumental collective case study
design (Stake, 1995, 2005) centered around the research question: What are pre-service teachers’
understandings of the master or dominant narratives and how are those sustained or altered
through the use more critical uses of historical inquiry? For this research study, class
observations, interviews with pre-service students, and artifact gathering were conducted during

Based on classroom observations, seven pre-service teachers demonstrated higher levels
of participation and commitment to more critical notions of the past; therefore, they were
purposefully selected for inclusion in this analysis. Demographics for each of our participants
are detailed in the table below.

Table 1
Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mike</th>
<th>Naureen</th>
<th>Carla</th>
<th>Juan</th>
<th>Charlette</th>
<th>Samanta</th>
<th>Cath</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Casey</th>
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To examine pre-service teachers’ shifting understandings about the use of critical historical inquiry as a pedagogical tool, we collected data from three sources: methods course observations, a course project, and interviews. Observations focused on three particular course sessions which contained activities regarding the existing ways of knowing history through the works of scholars like Herbert Kohl (1994) and James Loewen (2007), and teaching historical inquiry and thinking through the works of scholars like Peter Seixas (1993), Carla Peck (2004), and Sam Wineburg (2001). Each semester, we audio recorded the three course sessions. One of the authors also took extensive field notes.

Artifacts were gathered from the culminating course assignment The Student as Historian Project, which was a web-based collection of primary source documents and document based questions centered on a person, event, or persistent historical issue (Labbo & Field, 1999; Saye & Brush, 2005) that is commonly excluded from or misrepresented in the traditional history curriculum. Each co-constructed project contained a narrative written by pre-service teachers and included hyper linked primary sources and Document Based Questions (DBQs).

Each of the seven participants engaged in a 60 minute digitally recorded semi-structured interview and think-aloud session with the authors. This interview sought to understand participants’ intellectual biographies (Shulman, 2004), including their experiences learning history, as well as their views on critical historical thinking as a viable approach to classroom. In addition to the semi-structured interview, the authors conducted a think-aloud session using the participants’ projects as an artifact for examination. Think-aloud is a research method in which participants explain their thinking while performing tasks such as lesson planning or project creation (Shavelson & Stanton, 1975). This technique provided the opportunity to understand participants’ practical and thoughtful decision making in the design and creation of their Student as Historian narrative and their selection and inclusion of particular primary source documents. Think-aloud sessions allowed the participant to reason out loud, making it possible for us to understand their decision making process with more depth.

In instrumental-collective case studies in which particular cases and their cross-case comparisons help readers understand the phenomena or relationship within them, there exists a need for categorical data (Stake, 1995). All audio recorded data, including methods course observations and interviews, were transcribed and coded with participant pseudonyms. After coding the data, we utilized a recursive, constant comparative process of examining the data, noting evident similarities, differences, categories, concepts, and ideas. This inductive method ensured participants’ voices and ideas determined the patterns and themes and subsequently, the findings found in this paper (Glaser, 1965; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). Cross-case analysis was used to improve external and internal validity for this study. We employed cross-case analysis as tool, which allowed the researchers to analyze each case as a subunit (within case analysis) (Yin, 2013). This allowed analysis also between the different subunits (between case analysis), or across all of the subunits (cross-case analysis). The ability to engage in such rich analysis served to better illuminate each individual case (embedded) and all cases collectively (holistic). The patterns, themes, and comparisons of interviews, observation, and artifact data led us to the findings included in this paper. This data analysis process allowed us to compare the data to determine conceptual explanations of the students’ epistemological shift, and their mastery and resistance or appropriation of the narratives discussed in class and used in the final project.
Findings

In examining young teachers’ confrontation with traditional historical narratives through negating documents and curriculum projects like the Student as Historian Project, we first argue the irreducible tensions between teachers as agents and the cultural tools they are asked to promote within the official school curriculum are readily if not predictably revealed (Wertsch, 1998). As students take up opportunities scrutinize narratives through primary sources that provide other perspectives and complexities, dissonance emerges. The use of Loewen (2007) and other critical work, (i.e. Epstein, 2009; Kohl, 1994; Wills, 2001) to expose flagrant errors and equally palpable ideological motives within traditional historical narratives, is most likely a common practice in social studies methods coursework. The use of historical inquiry and the availability of digitized archives is most likely a widespread approach also found in social studies methods courses. These similarities make our findings familiar to many social studies teacher education programs.

I Always Knew the Story Was Wrong

The social studies methods course and the Student as Historian project purposively sought what Wertsch (2000) called “a pattern of ‘knowing but not believing’ in the case of the official history and perhaps even ‘believing but not knowing’ in the case of the unofficial history” (p. 39). Most pre-service teachers, as a result, disclosed during their interviews, class discussion, or within their own project narratives, an understandable discontent with what they had been taught in their experience in Kindergarten-12 social studies classrooms. Study informants, consequently, vowed to enact a transformative approach to historical inquiry that would expose their own high school students to narratives commonly neglected in the official school curriculum.

Pre-service teachers initially indicated a growing consciousness regarding the problematic nature of the official curriculum. Interrogating traditional historical narratives provided participants with a sense of how the official historical narrative was a politically and ideologically driven element of the school curriculum. During an early class session where we reviewed one of James Loewen’s (2007) chapters, Sara declared, “I’m mad. I cannot believe how much I know that is not true and why I was forced to learn all these untruths. We [the United States] are so obsessed with looking good regardless of what we have done” (Class Observation, October 4, 2008). She added later during an interview, “I have to admit that I went from being so mad to trying to figure out what I was going to do differently to wanting to know how we got to this place in teaching social studies” (Interview, December 10, 2008). Sara’s reflections are representative of what many of our pre-service teachers indicated, specifically the need to explore the ideas, values and politics that shape the official history curriculum and their desire to resist the appropriation of such erroneous and oppressive narratives. Without much dissention, the participants conceded to the selective nature of the official curriculum (Apple, 1992).

After gathering a fuller understanding of Helen Keller (see Loewen, 2007) and Rosa Parks (see Kohl, 1994), our pre-service teachers easily understood how the traditional historical portrayal of these women failed to describe their powerful role as civil rights activists. Cathy declared during a class discussion, “of course we don’t want to know that Rosa Parks was well trained by the NAACP or that Helen Keller supported the socialist movement of the 20s—what would be contrary to their perfect American image. As if being American, an American heroine
has to fit into only one portrait” (Class Field Notes, October 4, 2008). In encountering contrary and more complex histories, pre-service teachers came to acknowledge the ideological underpinnings of heritage narratives while also recognizing they had never been asked to question, to critique, or to dismantle these master narratives.

We noted, secondly, the repeated concerns and disappointment expressed by the pre-service teachers regarding the knowledge essential to constructing the new narratives included in their Student as Historian Projects. Pre-service teachers selected topics like the Alamo, the Lavender Scare, the treatment of the Romani, and Angel Island. These were topics on which they often had little knowledge. As one student, Juan, explained, “I always knew the story about the Alamo was wrong—I just didn’t know what to put in its place. So I had to do tons of research. I got that it was about who gets to tell the story and so I had to look for the other story” (Interview, December 2, 2007). Participants repeatedly expressed concern about having the content knowledge base necessary to introduce these alternative narratives.

**Historical inquiry as a Pedagogy of Action**

Once dissonance or Wertsch’s tension between the tool and the agent settled in, the acquisition of emancipatory knowledge seemed to be demanding and yet foundational to the project. Emancipatory knowledge, as argued by Peter McLaren (2003), exposes “irrationality, domination, and oppression” (p. 198). Samantha stated, “I knew the ‘standard’ story about Japanese internment camps but not how we had them in Texas. I also did not know there were also Italian and German camps. I guess no one was safe from persecution” (Interview, December 10, 2008). In selecting topics, pre-service teachers noted growing awareness of how the atypical (not normalized by the official historical narrative) topic, event or actor chosen meant also understanding the relationship between power, privilege, and the common historical narratives found in school curricula.

With a raised critical consciousness and newfound knowledge, the participants began to develop a sense of how to challenge the official curriculum through the pedagogical practice of historical inquiry. Guided by the selection of their own primary sources and development of document-based questions, the pre-service teachers worked to produce counter narratives that also highlighted their own historical positionality and metadiscourse. “The historian project,” explained Charlotte, “was my chance to finally put me in the curriculum. I remember you said African Americans only show up on the timeline periodically and so I thought I would make sure we showed up more” (Interview, December 2, 2007).

The use of primary sources also provided the historical evidence necessary to legitimize not just recognize other narratives and perspectives. Casey declared:

I feel kind of subversive using historical photos and materials to show that we logically—obviously—should be including these other pieces. I can’t imagine that a principal would walk in and be able to say I am not doing good teaching. (Interview, December 7, 2009)

Carla added, “It’s right there for you to find and to use in your classroom. Just two clicks and you find that the US was part of the Eugenics movement too. It may be a surprise but the evidence is there” (Interview, December 2, 2007). A final student, Juan, noted:

I did some secondary source reading first but it was easy to trace the evidence and then figure out how I could put the two stories side by side. I was just trying to show my students that there are two sides but that usually only one side gets told.(Interview, December 2, 2007).
Though the pre-service teachers experienced a sense of urgency in developing counter or more complex narratives, their class discussions and interviews revealed a hesitation on several levels. Pre-service teachers not only acknowledged the need to allow others’ perspectives to appear in the present historical narrative, they also recognized the continued effort required to ensure those silenced narratives are heard. Charlotte explained:

I have learned so much about how African American women were part of the war effort—though I did no learn it until now—but I am wondering what else don’t I know and how will I know it all. (Interview, December 2, 2007).

Charlotte was not alone. Casey also confessed, “Now that I question every story—I realize that I can’t just say it’s wrong without also providing my students with another story. I don’t think I can do that for everything I know or suspect is not inaccurate” (Interview, December 7, 2009).

The interviews tended to end on both an optimistic and worrisome note where the pre-service teachers recognized the importance and yet difficulty of introducing more complex or nuanced histories.

The Narrative is Still the Tool to Trouble

We must concede the nature of the assignment almost assured a topic selection that would confront the dominant narrative and present a unique, if not often ignored, narrative. A focus on America’s involvement in eugenics (“Eugenics Movement in America”), anti-Semitism (“Anti-Semitism in the U.S. Prior to World War II”), segregation (“Latino Segregation in Public Schools”), and homophobia (“The Lavender Scare (1945-1969)”) are just a short listing of the topics pre-service teachers highlighted in their projects as a departure from frequently embedded themes found in the teaching and learning of United States’ history. In analyzing pre-service teachers’ use of critical historical inquiry, we also sought to investigate the substance and structure of the newly produced narratives they wrote as part of their Student as Historian Projects. A piece, “Queen Liliuokalani and the American Take-over of Hawaii”, written by two of our students, Mike and Naureen (2005), followed an expected schema pattern. Their project included sections entitled “A Western Model Nation” describing the colonized history of Hawaii, “Queen Liliuokalani” detailing her rise to the throne, and continued with sections entitled “Coup,” “Repercussions,” “Rebellion,” and “Aftermath/Conclusion.” With plot and characters in hand, and a beginning, middle, and end, the verisimilitude and familiarity of narrative schema remained intact. In this sense, there was nothing new or necessarily disruptive about the telling of history via the narrative published by the student authors.

However, upon closer inspection, the authors of “Queen Liliuokalani and the American Take-over of Hawaii,” began with an overview that challenged a dominant narrative and theme of American history. Rather than ignoring the United States colonization of Hawaii and the impossible position of Queen Liliuokalani, the participants began their narrative by explaining,

On January 16, 1893, United States Marines from the U.S.S Boston surrounded the palace of Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii. The Queen was informed that a “provisional government” composed of American citizens had been established until such time as the island nation could be annexed by the United States. Queen Liliuokalani peacefully yielded power to avoid bloodshed and put her faith in the government of the United States to restore sovereignty to its peaceful Pacific trading partner. The story of how the U.S. came to invade this small island nation is a shameful but largely forgotten chapter in American history (Queen Liliuokalani Student As Historian Site).
Positioning the U.S.S. Boston as the invader ("surrounded the palace") and presumptuous ("The Queen was informed …") the pre-service participants presented a differing rendition of the United States. Queen Liliuokalani was associated with "peacefully yield power to avoid bloodshed" and the United States as "shameful." The choice of words set a context that was counter to the common narrative and emphasized the recognition of another perspective including, Queen Liliuokalani and some of the citizens of Hawaii.

The story was furthered through the select use of primary sources that provided an understanding of how the confrontation arose from the perspective of Hawaiians. In the next section entitled "Coup," the students used primary sources to advance their narrative in explaining the evidentiary trail,

In Participant Account #1, an excerpt from Liliuokalani’s autobiography, Liliuokalani describes a great upwelling of support among native Hawaiians for a new constitution. Supporters drew up a constitution that essentially restored the pre-1887 government. Word reached American interests and became the pretext for a coup. John L. Stevens, the American minister to Hawaii and an ardent supporter of annexation, called on troops from the U.S.S. Boston to enter the city and take control of Iolani Palace and various other governmental buildings. In Account #3, we see that Stevens justifies this action “for the protection of the United States legation and United States consulate, and to secure the safety of American life and property.” Yet in Account #2, Liliuokalani describes the city as peaceful that day. A provisional government was established with Sanford B. Dole, one of the leaders of the coup, as President. In Account #1 Liliuokalani describes the charges the revolutionaries made against her. The provisional government almost immediately sends a delegation to Washington to seek annexation, as Stevens describes in his letters in Account #3. (Queen Liliuokalani Student As Historian Site)

Through the transparent use of the first three primary sources (an excerpt from Liliuokalani’s autobiography; a photo of the soldiers on the deck of the U.S.S Boston; and excerpt from the Blount Report that included the American minister, John L. Stevens’, account of the events), the narrative revealed common facts of the master narrative regarding the U. S. occupation of Hawaii. The account continues by recognizing another perspective and argues the United States denied the rights and dignity of Hawaiians in pursuit of their own interests. One could again note the choice of terms that are aligned with the United States ("protection of the United States legation"); “enter the city and take control”; “justifies this action”) in contrast to Hawaii ("upwelling of support"; “peaceful”). The introduction of the Stevens’ letter to the United States (an excerpt from the Blount Report) is most telling of the United States’ intentions. The select use of primary sources in developing the master and resistant narrative by these teacher education candidates was measured and meant to complicate the common theme of progress found in teaching American history by providing a different point of orientation.

At least three additional points of examination are essential here. The first is that though the pre-service participants included a much more complex rendition of the colonization of Hawaii, there are many details still left unknown and yet the story reads as seamless. The participants failed to note that some Hawaiians’ opposed Queen Liliuokalani. Both of these omissions, highlight the ways in which even a new, seemingly more inclusive narrative can remain simplistic and mythologizing and heroifying. While the participants identified the primary sources they used in their interpretation, they were not entirely forthright in revealing
their meta-discourse and positionality, thus failing to reveal the essential nature of the author in relaying the interpretive nature of history.

**Discussion**

In proposing critical historical inquiry, we argue secondary social studies teachers can develop a deeper understanding of *othering*, or the process in which groups of people are marginalized based on race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. We also argue discomfort with the fallacious metanarrative continues to escalate given the growing practice of historical inquiry and availability of digitized primary resources. We contend that the intellectual biography of a history teacher will most likely witness a significant shift in the years to come. With a cache of primary sources now available at the touch of key, civic engagement will require greater attention to historical positionality, acts of interpretation and recognition of *other* perspectives. As a result, a teacher education program focused upon nurturing a more enlightened and participatory citizenry through more critical and social justice oriented practices might benefit from this epistemological shift and examination.

The potential of more critical uses of historical inquiry emphasizes the knowledge and dispositions or creative tensions Amy Gutmann (2004) notes as essential to civic equality. She argues a citizenry that wishes to foster civic equality emphasizes those tensions that help to create dialogues that are much more complex, nuanced, and inclusive of other perspectives. We maintain that challenging the master narrative through the use of critical historical inquiry will become ordinary for a generation of teachers and their students who find digitized databases promptly obtainable. These databases can democratize historical research - allowing for the potential to capture other perspectives (Bolick, 2006). At most, social studies educators can attend to how to best approach the potential of historical inquiry as a means not only to build the capacity of historical thinking but also to deliberately engage in perspective taking that addresses issues of racism, classism, sexism, etc. Social studies educators may consider the official curriculum promoted in textbooks and curricular materials will come under greater scrutiny by those members of our democracy most marginalized in the quest to secure citizenship (Parker, 2003).

The building of counter narratives must fall within those rules of evidence that are used to construct new knowledge in the field of history (Schwab, 1964). In this space, differing ontological and epistemological assumptions will guide deliberation related to the nature of primary sources (VanSledright, 2010) and the interplay between agency, empathy and significance as crucial in constructing a narrative that is worthy of consideration. Scholars (e.g. Seixas & Peck, 2004) also underscore other elements of historical thinking including continuity and change, and progress and decline. The pedagogical practice of historical inquiry remains influenced by the need for metadiscourse and for recognition of the historical positionality and epistemic cognition that authors bring to the construction of new knowledge. The challenges of building a resistant historical narrative rests then in recognizing the work ahead as intricate and in allowing teachers and learners the space to enact the curriculum in use.

**Conclusion**

The use of historical inquiry as a way to critique traditional narratives and introduce new forms of knowledge, inherently introduces interpretations that counter or complicate the common and troublesome themes enshrined in the official school curriculum. On a cautionary note, as many teacher education assignments and teacher development workshops seek to instill
culturally relevant and sustaining or critical pedagogies, only longitudinal studies would reveal if social studies teachers maintain the critical practices.

The success of these types of project also merits attention to Lilia Bartolome’s (1994) caveat— a methods fetish may accomplish the goal of creating teachers that execute technically correct and a mechanistic view of pedagogies but a generic or one size fits all instructional strategies will not move us towards a more socially just or humanizing pedagogy. In order to meaningfully enact critical historical thinking what must remain central is the “consideration [of] the sociohistorical and political dimensions of education (p. 176). In sum, “historical thinking/reasoning is the sine qua non of historical understanding.” (VanSledright, 2011, p. 159) but if we are to yield a citizen for our democracy, we argue other perspectives are more than an academic exercise in pursuing an evidentiary trial or a consideration of positionality and interpretation. Fundamental to more critical approaches to historical inquiry are dynamic considerations that yield narratives meant to disrupt well-entrenched ideologies and simultaneously promote a just and inclusive democratic society.

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