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Critical Thinking in a Culturally Responsive Classroom

By Joseph Cirello

An Action Research Project Submitted to Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Teaching

June 2021



**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

Action Research Project Title:

Graduate Student: _____

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Arts in Teaching: Initial Licensure

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment
of the requirements of this master's degree.*

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Abstract

This document is an action research project that follows my growth as an educator over my time in the Western Oregon University Master of Arts program. I wanted to see what the current best practices were for teachers and then analyze how I can best align my teaching to match those. First I researched the best practices in the field of teaching that related to culturally responsive pedagogy, discipline specific literacy, and sourcing in a social studies classroom. This gave me an understanding of how I wanted to teach once in a classroom, and what I wanted to focus on, and best practices, for improvement while there.

Once teaching in a classroom I recognized the need to focus on two questions: how can I get students to display critical thinking in their responses to questions, and how can I plan lessons to best display culturally responsive practices in the classroom? These were both aspects of teaching I prioritized in my philosophy of teaching and wanted to make sure I could excel at once in a career. During the process of research, I attempted different strategies that attempted to answer the first question with varied results. I eventually came to the conclusion that asking students questions about the factual information before asking them to respond to prompts with more in depth thinking provided better results than going straight into in depth questions. For my second question I found that I was far more inconsistent in making lessons that were appropriately culturally responsive. Although not entirely negative, I was disappointed in the consistency and depth of the culturally responsive pedagogy that I taught. Fortunately this was only one year of student teaching, and this project provided me with the ability to study and adjust my teaching for the better in the many years of my career to come.

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Chapter I

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

My philosophy of teaching, like most, started while still in school. Teachers in all subjects showed how they chose to captivate a classroom and water the garden that is their students' knowledge. Some were more likely to simply fill our brains with information not caring what happened to us after we left their class, but the ones I remember best tried to build a desire to learn. This passion may be beyond whatever topic they were teaching, but the fact that they could impart excitement about learning is the more important aspect. It is these teachers that I want to replicate in my future. One class, or even four years of classes, are not enough to make a student a genius in any topic, but if I can build the same passion for learning that my best teachers built in me I would be happy with the results.

Throughout this year new theories of teaching have been floating around my head. We started with the radical question of “is learning necessary for teaching to have occurred?” (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2000). Yes, there are agreed upon practices considered “good” teaching, but if students aren't learning with those you should adjust them for practices that work for the students you have. Although the authors made some interesting points, the overall theory of their article came up short once put to critical thought. The first true week of my licensure program, I was also introduced to Freire who enlightened me to a new school of thought that actually resonated in my brain. The idea that no matter what we are doing, teaching, cooking, typing a paper, or even something as passive as watching the tides, we are always learning. As teachers this means we are constantly both teaching and learning in our classrooms (Freire, 1968). Not only does this force one to have the same open mind that I would want in my

students, it also helps one evolve as a teacher. Up until now, as someone who has loved living the life of a learner, I cannot wait to continue my journey while simultaneously igniting the match for the next generations.

A quote in Davis' (2004) book by Montessori says "Education is not something which a teacher does... but a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being" (p.129). For this to happen a teachers' task is simply guiding their students to the information, the actual learning happens fully within the student. The easy access modern technologies give us to facts make the classroom a great place to compare how different perspectives and ideas can arise from the same information. With this in mind we should focus more on analyzing sources of information, and showing that there are many ways to interpret each one. Further, we need to ensure students become intelligent consumers of media. The spread of disinformation is rampant in our current society, and it is difficult to decipher fact from opinion or fiction from truth. As a future social science teacher, I am keenly aware that part of history and other social sciences is being able to identify a valid source, be it historic or modern. The first step in this process is questioning what you read and hear. This means questioning what story the source of the information is trying to tell as you are reading it. Teaching students to recognize what part of a narrative is missing and what part is highlighted, so they can properly question its biases, is just one strategy that will make students think more critically while retaining information throughout their lives.

As far as teaching methods in the classroom I was struck by the idea that we need to first teach our students to think like professionals in our subject, then teach them the more focused subject content. To accomplish this in social studies we need to make sure students don't always take what they are reading as gospel. Specifically in history, professionals are constantly arguing

about what has happened, and how to interpret primary sources. Tapping students into the idea that what they are reading, or learning in general, is an interpretation of evidence left from that time period changes how many will see the subject overall. Teaching students to think like this will both make the subject more fun and increase their critical thinking while learning. When you promote questioning of the texts, not just asking questions about the text, be it reading, listening, or watching a video, students look beyond the simple facts. That is what it means to think and behave like a historian, and that is what makes social studies such a fascinating subject. It has never been about the names, places, and dates even if some teachers tested that way. Social studies has always been about the questions of how humans and cultures act, and how similar situations can cause people to behave in certain ways over time. Teaching students to question everything they learn is the first step towards them learning valuable lessons that will carry on beyond the next test.

While teaching you need to be aware of the forces outside of the classroom pushing you towards a certain type of educating. In *What do Schools Teach?*, Apple and King (1977) wonder if the real lesson of our school system is how to fit into our society's social constructs. They argue that “the curriculum field has its roots in the soil of social control” (Apple & King, 1977, p. 344). The goal of creating a perfect worker once they reach adulthood is started almost immediately in schools. This issue carries on today and is an issue that, from my perspective, schools haven't made an effort to change. In the earliest years of education, you are told the most important things to do are quietly sit down and pay attention. Basically, you are trained to be a passive observer in your learning. Not only does this apply to how things are taught, it applies to what is taught. Schools I have attended and observed made it quite clear what they find important about the past, and that is often in contrast to creating a successful multicultural

society. Our country was founded by old white men, and so consequently students will learn almost exclusively about old white men. We whitewash what is being taught, and minimize the horrors of some of our cultural heroes. Schools start this at a young age, so the questioning of our current hierarchical social system is thought of as perfectly normal. Only seeing one group make every important decision, invent new technologies, and overall run the world has serious implications for every group of marginalized peoples' self perception. I am aware that I, as a white male, will need to emphasize the inherent biases that are present in all aspects of life more than others. Because I benefit from the dominant culture of power in America, going out of my way to demonstrate the system of power to a multicultural classroom should be a priority.

While teaching in a system of cultural domination like in America you are either educating against the system, or enforcing the oppressions that have formed our culture to this point. To break the cycle of oppression means showing the truths that are often hidden about how the men credited with creating America lived, while showing the struggle and fight that women and people of color went through to achieve every gain they have gotten. Rather than teaching about slavery as something that was of a bygone era, and forgive people of the past for not knowing any better, we should teach about how aware the people of the time were that what they were doing was abhorrent, and nations across the globe judged America for its actions. Rather than promoting the fallacy that Rosa Parks was just too tired to get up from her seat on the bus, talk about her as what she was: an activist who was willing to fight for her rights as a black woman in Alabama. Our oppressive society reduces movements to one or two figures who have stories that are easy to digest for the oppressors. We need to focus more on the people that have been willing to put uncomfortable truths into the ears of others before they were ready to hear it.

I know the curriculum is not something totally under my control, but this diverse style of teaching is what I would love to achieve. Having the ability to show the implied cultural biases in what is being taught through our system of oppression is still an option. People from all backgrounds have accomplished such fantastic things that history classes should have no trouble with a lesson plan that mirrors society. Teaching about the heroes of various struggles and the ways that powerful people have tried to maintain that power over time while connecting the themes of the civil rights and women's suffrage movements can show the consistencies in the way humans have dealt with oppression across cultures and time. Showing the themes across struggles, and how although no two moments are the same they all have similarities, holds more weight than if you told a boring linear story that has the “good guys” coming out on top. Social Studies is different from other subjects because it can be dry and boring if told wrong, but if framed correctly is one of the most exciting things in the world. Tales movie writers can only dream about such as Nat Turner's revolt, or the nationwide bombing campaigns of suffragettes in the United Kingdom can capture the minds of students regardless of their race and gender. Unfortunately, the connection between these harrowing histories are rarely taught in middle and high school classes. Educating students about the real discriminations that many women and African Americans endured fighting for the vote, and other similar situations, shows them the true world they enter once outside of school. My goals for teaching would be to promote this type of learning. Learning that doesn't promote the “hidden curriculum” as Apple and King (1977) call it, learning that engages students to think the world they see every day has massive flaws, but that with enough determination it is possible to change them. That's the type of education I would want to give students when I am a teacher.

Beyond the actual substance of what I teach, the culture I promote in the classroom should contribute to this type of thinking as well. To do this I need to be inclusive of every type of student, the experiences and thoughts they have. Promoting critical thinking is something that requires an entire classroom to be supportive of each other. This means accepting ideas, both good and bad, not putting them down, but focusing on why they may or might not work in a situation. Debate amongst the students can make this goal easier. Vygotsky theorizes that class discussion can both make students more interested in what they are learning and see a diversity of perspectives (Ormrod, 2016, p. 345). The importance of creating a classroom that is supportive of all types of ideas is hard to overstate when having these discussions. Students who may be shy or have anxiety will not share their opinions if they feel like it will be met with unfair criticism. It will be a delicate balance of accepting these ideas, and critically looking at ones that are not factual. Although the priority of social studies is understanding cultures and moments through time, acknowledging the basic truths of the world has its role in the classroom. The rise of disinformation coming from seemingly reputable sources shows that prioritizing what is a valid source and what information is accurate is as important as ever. It is crucial that all students are working from the same field of knowledge for class discussions like this to work. That is the first step in viable debates among students and without it what they learn will not be what was intended.

“To teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge” (Freire, 1968, p. 30). With this quote Freire makes the point that has guided me to this point in my life educationally. Simply transferring knowledge is underestimating the students you have in your classroom. It was a great contrast in those first weeks of the year to see such drastic differences in teaching philosophy. As we learned more, the

importance of a student centered classroom became more apparent. Freire's philosophies struck a chord with me beyond ideas of what should be perceived as a traditional teacher. His ideas of both teaching and learning being in step with each other is true for all aspects of life. As I stated previously it is impossible to do something new in your life without learning. For teaching this means every new class you get will be showing you something about the world. No matter how much you have changed personally, the students will educate you on life's new ideals. This results in teachers unfolding the world, with all its beauties and flaws, before them as they show you how each generation adapts and capitalizes on the changing world.

All subjects in school have the students that enjoy them, students who tolerate them, and students who seem to not care. I want all of these students to experience my class in a way that gives them a desire to learn more about history once out of my class. My mission statement hasn't changed dramatically since the beginning of this program: I want to guide students to new knowledge or ideas, I want to do this in a way that is broader than basic facts, I want them to learn the value of curiosity rather than the value of being right, and I want to do this in a way that is inclusive of everyone no matter their race, culture, or gender. It is with this curiosity that knowledge will really bloom. Students should not only have questions about the subject, but questions about what they are learning. Questioning the author, by your students, of what they are reading is not only essential to fully understand social studies, it makes the subject much more fun. Once out of my class, or even once the student graduates, most people will see the importance of knowledge. With history this can mean many things. If I guide the students to the knowledge that all people, regardless of who they are, have the ability to make drastic changes in our history, my students will go into the world believing that. I want my classroom to be inclusive of all cultures with lessons that highlight the ways all people have made the world, for

better or worse, what it is today. With this belief they may make the world better, or simply have a better understanding of the world around them.

Turning my philosophy of teaching into practical teaching strategies will require educating myself on the best practices relating to what I desire to do. To achieve this I will be completing a literature review in which I research strategies that connect to how I would like to eventually engage students in learning. In this review I will specifically focus on culturally responsive pedagogy practices, getting students to be discipline specific readers, and examining how different sources can be used effectively in social studies classrooms. I will use this research as the groundwork for promoting student learning while in a practicum setting.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purposes and Objectives for the Literature Review

My purpose in the review of this research was to discover what research has said about the best ways teachers and researchers have looked at effective teaching and teacher growth in their discipline. I looked for research on culturally responsive pedagogy because as a society we need to realize that throughout history we have mostly been teaching the story and culture of the white predominantly working class. This group has dominated the culture and educational landscape surrounding schools and the adults that come out of them for decades dismissing other cultures continuously. Culturally responsive pedagogy is a promising path for changing this focus and improving schools for all students. I also searched for studies on discipline specific literacy teaching strategies, and developing their skills in an academic discipline because understanding how to think and read like a professional in a discipline makes learning both more interesting and easier. Additionally, because I would be studying my own practice and learning new ideas in my endorsement area, I looked for studies to indicate the best use of different types of sources while teaching social studies.

This literature review will address my knowledge of these concepts as a foundation for the understanding I have gained to set goals and grow from in my own teaching. I especially looked for research that described effective strategies for each area and gave examples of how it might work in a classroom. Application of this research was an essential part in building my own knowledge base for this project.

Procedure for the Literature Review

I selected literature for this review based on several specific criteria. I initially researched articles given in various classes and looked through the bibliographies of those for more specific information. I also searched for other research through Google Scholar and the Hamersly Library portal at Western Oregon University's website. My initial search of culturally responsive pedagogy resulted in over 15,000 results. To narrow this down I focused on keywords, like aspects of power and funds of knowledge to get my research down to a manageable level. The two subsequent sections found similar results, and while narrowing them down I found good sub categories to focus on my own research.

In order to integrate the literature review, I developed a coding protocol with major corresponding separation of three major themes: 1) culturally responsive pedagogy 2) discipline specific literacy and 3) sourcing, particularly in a social studies classroom. I read each article to determine how it fit with these broad thematic categories, and then, through a process of reading and rereading for salient features of each study, I determined my subheadings for the literature review. My intent was to start with the broad treatment of each theme and then systematically narrow down my approach within my major themes. The three sub themes for culturally responsive pedagogy are: 1) differentiation 2) aspects of power and 3) LGBTQ students. The sub themes I found for discipline specific literacy teaching strategies are: 1) questioning 2) visual literacy, and 3) note taking. Finally, the sub themes while researching sourcing are: 1) primary sources 2) historical fiction, and 3) using current events.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), or teaching, is when educators utilize the relationship between home cultures and the culture present at the school with aspirations to make the difference in communities smaller (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.467). All students have different backgrounds and cultures which affect how they learn and “Culture profoundly influences the ways in which children learn” (Santamaria, 2009, p. 227). With this knowledge it would be senseless to only relate to one culture in a classroom. With culturally responsive teaching you are ensuring all students in the classroom connect to the lessons you are giving. This can come from making sure lesson plans teach about all cultures rather than the dominant white one, or by simply scaffolding new language with what is comfortable to your students before diving into the academic vocabulary. When contrasted with teaching that does not focus on cultural responsiveness CRP is more inclusive of students' lives by framing their cultures and references into the curriculum rather than forcing them to adapt to new ideas on the fly (Santamaria, 2009, p. 224).

Differentiation

When teaching a diverse group of students with a diverse group of learning needs teachers need to be able to differentiate their lessons accordingly. Differentiation is “a group of common theories and practices acknowledging student differences in background knowledge, readiness, language, learning style, and interests, resulting in individually responsive teaching appropriate to particular student needs” (Santamaria, 2009, p. 217). This means teachers need to be fluid in how they approach a new class of students. Understanding who they are as individuals and adapting an instructional strategy that will work for an entire class, as well as scaffolding curriculum to reflect the various starting points of each student as the class begins is crucial.

“Achieving the goal of maximum academic growth, however, is dependent upon effective instructional practices working in concert with an effective curriculum” (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013, p. 9). Combining instruction and curriculum within a culturally responsive setting will allow more students from various backgrounds to reach their academic peaks.

Managing a diverse classroom, utilizing the tools required to communicate effectively with every student, and making sure all cultures are appreciated is something that doesn't happen from only one approach. Differentiating instruction is something that should take place in all classrooms regardless of cultural differences, but integrating culturally responsive practices can benefit the classroom as a whole. “At the most basic level, culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Herrera et al., 2012, p. 3). With the increasingly diverse demographics of classrooms, being able to differentiate culturally is of the utmost importance. Further, “the assumption underlying CRP is that culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, even without being consciously aware of it” (Valiandes et al., 2016, p. 388). Traditionally differentiation focuses on how students develop at different speeds, and from different practices, and you need to be able to educate them regardless of what they knew prior to joining your class. “CRP draws upon differentiation to adjust learning to every aspect of a student’s culture, since differentiated instruction recognizes and expects that students are different and teaching needs to be adjusted to these differences” (Valiandes et al., 2016, p. 388). Connecting differentiated classrooms with culturally responsive ones is a natural step in ensuring all students get a thorough education, not just those of the dominant class.

Differentiation for culturally diverse groups depends on having deep funds of knowledge about the cultures you are teaching. “In a differentiated classroom the teachers aim is to make the

classroom work for each students' who is obliged to spend time there. Thus the teacher is attuned to the students' various needs and responds to ensure they are met." (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013, p. 4). So in a social studies classroom this means having lessons that educate students about a diverse range of cultures from the past to present that may be represented in your classroom is not enough. "For instructional planning to truly make a difference for all learners, educators must consider how students' differences affect learning, and align pedagogies that effectively address those differences" (Kieran & Anderson, 2019, p. 1203). You need to understand them as individuals so you can tell when their educational needs are met and they are internalizing what you want them to learn. From there, creating lessons that engage students with worthwhile tasks gives you a chance to know them better as well as holding their attention because that task seems more worthwhile. This leads to increased understanding for both teacher and student of the other (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013, p. 7). These activities are going to be more student centered as well which will result in both more enjoyment and better internalization of the materials.

While planning lessons, teachers need to be aware that students will all have their own cultures affecting how they act and learn in a classroom. How they adapt their lesson plans to reach the entirety of their students is the difference between each strategy. Well differentiated instruction should have cultural standards, and CRP should be well differentiated. Differentiated instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy are both designed to reach marginalized learners, with the difference being that differentiation sets out to do this academically, while CRP does it culturally (Santamaria, 2009, p. 240). If done well, the combination of the two can empower students of all cultures to achieve their best academic growth.

Aspects of Power

Power in the classroom comes from a variety of places. The teacher obviously is in charge of the room and the students, but more importantly the curriculum is designed in a way that highlights the culture of power white people hold over society (Delpit, 1988, p. 284).

Although schools are designed to empower students of all cultures, what they do more often than not is embolden the status quo. Rather than enlightening students from the dominant culture, schools will often fall into the trap of oppressing those that are marginalized (Yosso, 2005, p. 74). An idea that is prominent within the research on culturally responsive pedagogy is Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is the theory that racism is not an outlier, but rather ingrained in the culture of America in a way that makes it a natural part of our everyday lives (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). This affects students in the classroom by downplaying actions that challenge the dominant culture in society. For example, students learn of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King as peaceful individuals who protested for equality rather than driven fighters who had distinct goals in their cause (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p.18).

While teaching you need to be fully aware of this impact on your students. Delpit (1988) came up with the five aspects of power that will need to be worked through to teach culturally responsive pedagogy.

1. Issues of power are enacted in classrooms
2. There are codes or rules for participating in power, that is, there is a culture of power
3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power

4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power being told explicitly the rules of that culture make acquiring power easier
5. Those with power are frequently least aware of- or at least willing to acknowledge - its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence (p. 282)

These aspects are constantly at play with what, and how, a lesson is being taught. As a member of the dominant culture knowing how the power structure works allows me to recognize my own power. Further, having this knowledge allows me to make students aware of the implied rules of that power in our culture which makes their acquisition of future power easier.

For a lot of people, recognizing their power is difficult. Many individuals are willing to acknowledge that racism may be making lives more difficult for others, but not that it's making their own lives easier. "Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us." (McIntosh, 1989, p. 1). This is the power of privilege that needs to be unearthed in educational environments. The power of being in the dominant culture allows individuals to be oblivious to all the ways that they benefit from being included in what is considered normal, or neutral, while everyone else is viewed as outside that societal norm. Issues that are commonly taught as ways to be inclusive in classrooms, such as the importance of not stereotyping, marginalization of cultures not in power, and educating about past imperialism that created this culture in the first place are not sufficient. It is more important to understand the oppression and domination of cultural groups and individuals and how they are represented in society to this day (Cho, 2017).

For our education system, and my future classrooms, to be responsive to every culture I would want to start with the issue of power. Without getting to that students will never grasp the depth of how racism has truly been the driving force behind our country since its inception. Students should understand “the root problem... the self interest of racist power. Powerful economic, political, and cultural self interest.” (Kendi, 2019, p. 42) Kendi explains that this concept has been a tradition passed down since the 1400’s when the dynamics of race were first created, and how the powers at play are constant and a driving force in our society to this day. (Kendi, 2019, p. 42)

To even begin teaching in a culturally responsive manner you need to understand the students in your classroom and how your power affects them. In a multicultural society this can be a daunting task. Developing knowledge of cultures outside your own needs to be done in depth rather than by shallow assumptions that commonly bring inaccurate stereotypes into play. Teachers need to have a sophisticated understanding of who they are teaching, including how they communicate, how they show respect to authority figures, and what their lives are like in the time spent away from school—these concepts are commonly called “funds of knowledge” in educational research (Moll et al., 1992, p. 139). Without an in-depth knowledge of different cultures it is incredibly difficult to reach everyone in a diverse classroom to your best abilities.

Communication between teacher and student is key to student learning. Different cultures communicate in a variety of manners that teachers need to understand. When students are struggling they need to be able to recognize if it is an issue of communication or something deeper. The idea of teaching codeswitching is something that allows students to keep their cultural identities as well as learning the language of the classroom (Wheeler & Swords, 2004, p. 471). Standard English is the term for what is commonly spoken in professional and educational

settings, and is also that of the dominant white culture. Highlighting the differences between this and other styles of English is beneficial for students. Rather than telling students from different cultures how they speak is wrong, teachers should lift them up and accentuate how beneficial it can be to communicate with two diverse groups while adding standard English to their toolbox (Wheeler & Swords, 2004, p. 473). Delpit's definitions of aspects of power demonstrates that explicitly telling people who are not members of the dominant group the rules of power gives them an advantage. As students are all growing adults they will likely have picked up the differences between cultural vernaculars already, but it is beneficial to demonstrate the contexts in which they are needed and why it is beneficial (Delpit, 1990).

While doing this It is important to ensure students' cultures are not delegitimized. Teachers need to confirm that what they are learning is a different form of communication, not a better one, but one that will be needed beyond the classroom. In many cases having the ability to switch between languages is an advantage that others don't get (Wheeler & Sword, 2004, p. 471). This is crucial in guaranteeing students have the self efficacy needed to further their educational goals, empowering them. To achieve this task you cannot force students into speaking differently from how they would while at home, but allow natural communication to occur. Asking students to translate a conversation or an answer in their head before speaking will only slow down their growth. As Delpit says "All students invariably speak of the impossibility of attempting to apply rules while trying to formulate and express a thought" (1990, p. 240). Further, standard English is not a language that phonetically makes total sense as is. The language is full of silent letters and confusing pronunciations. Teaching students that spelling and pronunciation aren't connected in some words then rejecting that notion on others can be both confusing and detrimental to the learning of children who speak other dialects (Delpit,

1990, p. 258). When students translate what was read, or overheard from standard English to their cultural one it shows understanding of the material beyond simple repetition. It takes more levels of thinking to translate something while keeping the original meaning than simply repeating what was taught (Delpit, 1990, p. 257).

Power is a complicated issue while dealing with students. Teachers will always have some form of power while leading a classroom, but good ones should be aware of how their cultural representation relates to their students. For cisgender white males, such as myself, this means educating yourself on the multiple different cultures you will be teaching and how your cultural power will affect them.

LGBTQ Students

Culturally responsive pedagogy provides a framework for considering all of the ways that students may be marginalized from very narrow definitions of success that have traditionally been promoted in schools. The culture of power that is present when speaking about racial issues does not go away when the focus changes to sexual orientation. “LGBTQ+ is often deemed as controversial and forbidden in the curriculum because heterosexuality is the implicit norm” (Block, 2019, p. 1). This lack of inclusion ushers a far too common culture where LGBTQ students are harassed at a much higher rate than their cisgender peers. 36.2 percent of students who identify as LGBTQ report being physically harassed at school, and a remarkable 55.5 percent do not feel safe while at school. To make it worse, over ten percent of LGBTQ students said they were more likely to hear homophobic or transphobic comments in the presence of teachers than other students (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 139). A crucial part of culturally responsive pedagogy is the comfort and safety of the students, and LGBTQ students clearly do not feel comfortable or safe while at school. Teachers can start with the simple tasks of using

proper pronouns, and go beyond that by avoiding the heterosexual assumptions that perpetuate our society (Taylor, 2018, p. 57). Similar to students of color being held to the cultural standard of the white dominant class LGBTQ students are subject to heterosexual's hegemonic customs in society. Banks and Banks (2010) contend that,

Schools, like the rest of the social world, are structured by heterosexism—the assumption that everyone is heterosexual. Curricula, texts, school policies, and even mundane examples (such as illustrations of magnets showing males attracted to females but repulsed by each other) are most often constructed to reflect heterosexuality as not only the norm but also as the only possible option for students (p. 139).

Teachers need to include the best cultural practices in both how they teach and what they teach in the same way they would for other marginalized groups. Including LGBTQ topics in subjects such as civil rights, or landmark Supreme Court cases, can normalize these issues for students (Block, 2019, p. 3).

Many schools create clubs and groups that are designed to foster a more comfortable environment for LGBTQ students. These are commonly meant to reduce the discrimination these kids are subjected to throughout their lives and promote LGBTQ experiences in the school (Brockenbrough, 2016, p. 171). However, what do not do enough of is educating them beyond the heteronormative culture, and certainly not in a way that values their lived experiences. Introducing LGBTQ positive sexual education is something that is rarely gone into with much detail in traditional sex ed courses either but can provide incredible benefits towards confidence and health of these young students (Brockenbrough, 2016, p. 181).

Teaching about the history of LGBTQ culture is not done well enough in traditional curriculum. Often what will be taught is the history of discrimination that has been thrust upon

LGBTQ individuals. Doing this leaves out many positive cultural events that created the broad reach of their culture. One school I found in research by Brockenbrough (2016) taught in depth about the house ball culture of Black and Latino LGBTQ communities, and even held small scale balls in an after school club. Providing a more culturally based education proved beneficial in building a community among the LGBTQ students throughout that school (p. 185). This last point brings up the broader culture of the LGBTQ community. Many students will not only be LGBTQ, but will also be from other marginalized groups. Brockenbrough (2016) maintains,

Queers of color, like any cultural group in the United States, are not homogeneous, but they do share the unique challenge of finding space and voice in a society where their multifaceted otherness requires ways of being and knowing that resist systemic assaults on their humanity (p. 174).

Knowing these students and their cultures is paramount in making sure they are comfortable in your classroom, and with LGBTQ students that can require a broad range of knowledge of other cultures as well.

Despite the seemingly increased acceptance of LGBTQ culture in society the classroom still barely mentions their culture or the struggles they went through historically. Everywhere you look in popular culture there is LGBTQ representation, and a social studies classroom is a great place to get that representation in the classroom (Maguth & Taylor, 2014, p. 25). Adapting already made lessons to be inclusive of LGBTQ individuals comes naturally in many ways “LGBTQ people and their allies are everywhere in the curriculum, but we just do not acknowledge them as such” (Maguth & Taylor, 2014, p. 25). As easy as it is to teach about the Stonewall Riots and other major events in LGBTQ history, demonstrating that throughout the

events already being taught LGBTQ individuals and their allies already existed goes a long way in representation.

Making the classroom a place where these groups can thrive with lessons that accentuate the great things about a diverse range of cultures is crucial to enacting a culturally responsive pedagogy. Active teaching that is engaging and geared towards the students should always be prioritized, but focusing on underrecognized cultures will benefit them if it is more inclusive of their specific needs. Teachers can fall into the trap of boring teaching with these students as well, “when teachers have lower expectations for students, the instructional emphasis may be teacher-centered and teacher-directed with few requirements for students to engage in higher level thinking or problem solving” (Kieran & Anderson, 2019, 1204). It is hard to overstate the importance of connecting and working with students from these cultures that are far too often overlooked.

LGBTQ students can come from all different cultures and backgrounds. Despite their presence in all communities, they face discrimination far more than the average student. Connecting the LGBTQ culture, and representing them in curriculum goes a long way in legitimizing their issues and cultures (Block, 2019, p. 12). Although LGBTQ students can appear as part of the dominant group and thus have power in certain situations, heteronormativity creates a world in which they are still discriminated against. Teachers should educate themselves about LGBTQ histories and issues, like any other discriminated group, which would give themselves the ability to be culturally responsive in their teaching entire classrooms.

Discipline Specific Literacy

Students at the middle and high school levels traverse the world of knowledge every day. They may have to take science, math, and social studies classes in back to back succession with minimal time in between. Despite all three of these subjects being important for learners they should not all be taught and thought about in the same way. Social Studies, for example, is a subject where you are reading one interpretation of past events. There is rarely a correct way to interpret what happened in the past and students should be aware of that. When you compare this to math, which has a much stricter sense of right and wrong answers, the school day requires students to switch how they think repeatedly.

It is no surprise that different disciplines have different languages that need to be taught and learned. How we perceive our own academic identities of who we are as readers is important in how we learn in each discipline (Buehl, 2017, p. 4). As students learn how to identify themselves as insiders within the discipline they will see the need in how to ask questions in the right manner, how students should be interpreting visuals, and how note taking can be utilized most effectively in each discipline (Buehl, 2017, p. 7). Going back to the math and social studies examples, the visuals in a math class are in the design of equations, graphs, and geometric shapes. Compare this to social studies where you are looking at maps, photographs, and in some cases political cartoons. Even in the instances where the disciplines may share imagery such as a chart depicting information about an event they should interpret them differently. In math students will look at how to interpret the numbers, and social studies they should be looking at the events that lead to them. Getting students to think, read, and write about each discipline in the correct manner allows students to access the unprecedented amount of information that is

available, online and from other sources, in a way that can expand their disciplinary knowledge like never before (Buehl, 2017, p. 26).

Questioning

An important skill for building disciplinary literacy is teaching students to ask questions. Asking questions is an important part of understanding any subject. Learning how to phrase and ask questions is a key part of identifying oneself within a discipline. A sense of wonder not only shows students willingness to learn, but it implies that they care enough to engage with the material to think about it critically (Buehl, 2017, p. 176). Unfortunately, in many classrooms the main source of questions are asked by the teacher to the students, or worse from a textbook to the students. These questions have a tendency to be simple and only require the skimming of whatever text was in use to fill out an answer. Rather than teach for these skimming answers which generally do not dive deep enough into the subject, it is best to teach students to ask their own questions. “Teaching students to generate their own questions about texts can significantly improve their comprehension” (Buehl, 2017, p. 174). Building on this, it is more important to ask students what they were wondering about something, or what someone may wonder about it rather than what they learned from it. When doing this, some of these questions may not have an objectively correct answer, but don't worry---that is good! This gives students a glimpse into what it is like while being a professional in the discipline, and can lead to furthering their desire to learn more about the topic (Buehl, 2017, p. 183). If students are prepared for this line of thinking, inquisitiveness will become more natural which will in turn deepen their learning.

In some instances teachers will need to ask questions of their students. To keep away from the skimming and regurgitating of a shallow answer that is all too common, these questions should require critical thought about what students took from the writing, rather than specific

facts. Bloom's Taxonomy, which is a description of behaviors students demonstrate regarding the depth of their knowledge, has six levels that are designed to increase in complexity: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Ormrod, 2016, p. 118). A teacher's goal should be getting students to increase their levels in Bloom's Taxonomy from merely remembering, to understanding or analyzing. This requires students looking about text in its entirety, which can be analyzed, rather than finding tidbits of information placed throughout (Ormrod, 2016, p. 119). When teachers ask questions focusing on what the author is trying to argue it forces students into thinking in a way that creates knowledge through critical thought rather than simply have it fed to them (Buehl, 2017, p. 185)

One way in which questioning is accentuated in classrooms is the overall questioning of the author of the texts students are reading. In this instance, text can mean many things: speeches, images, podcasts, and yes, even readings. Students have a tendency to take what is being read or taught at face value which is not how subjects should always be viewed. My focus is going to be on social studies because that is what I know the most about, but this is applicable across disciplines. In social studies, the author of any source used in the classroom has a specific agenda that they are getting across to the reader. This is true for any form of text. Images may be a snapshot of what was happening at that moment in that time, but what they leave out or what is at the forefront tells a specific story. Following this if you have an image, it is important to teach your students to ask what do we know about this time that is not in the image (Wilson & Chavez, 2014, p. 104)? This forces them to recognize that they are only seeing one aspect of the subjects' life, culture that they come from, or other contextual clues found in the image. Further, while reading a traditional source, be it primary or secondary, it is crucial to recognize the authors' perspective in the writing. Biases are always present in what is emphasized and why, or what is

minimized. Noticing these take readers from simply accepting something as fact to being a part of the evolutionary way opinions can change through how information is interpreted.

Being better at questioning also makes students better at writing within their discipline. Again looking at social studies, students need to be able to persuade others of their opinions for why something may have happened. Without having the ability to question what they have learned students will not be able to explain their reasoning an adequate amount. Part of this is because narrative writing is generally prioritized in classrooms, but another is that students have never been taught how to question what is being taught. Developing this frame of questioning, searching for an answer, and defending that answer helps create learners that are searching for more knowledge than simply answers, building a student's sense of wonder, and their disciplinary literacy skills.

Visual Literacy

Disciplinary literacy research emphasizes that texts go beyond the traditional definitions of words on paper. Photographs, cartoons, movies, music, etc. all count as texts that students are challenged to comprehend in the classroom. While I touched on this briefly in the previous section, the ability to read images is an underappreciated aspect of today's classrooms. Visuals play as prominent of a role in our lives as words do, so why wouldn't they be as common in educational settings? Students should have the same capabilities in sourcing, analyzing, and evaluating images as they do with text sources (Mayer, 2014, 277). As teachers we should give our students as many different varieties of learning as possible and "Visual literacy brings new conversations to the disciplinary table and gives space for different learning styles." (Mayer, 2014, p. 280). No two students are going to learn the same, and with the prevalence of visuals in our society it makes sense that some of them would get more out of a classroom where they

focused on images rather than text. This learning will be important for them outside of the classroom as well when looking at media from other sources.

Beyond the meaning of specific images “Aristotle stated that, ‘without image, thinking is impossible’” (Stokes, 2002, p. 10). This means that even the words that we read take the form of visuals inside our head. Further the use of visuals in many ways is a more natural form of communicating information than text. For many, our first introduction to any literacy at all is in the form of picture books that have images taking up either the entire page, or the vast majority. Following this we innately create meaning to images before even learning the alphabet (Tillman, 2012, p. 13). Imagery follows us throughout our lives after this initial representation. People will intuitively assume a light bulb above a stick figures head means they have an idea. This and many other visuals we see in our lives every day represent literacy that can be utilized in the classroom.

In the recent past teachers have been increasing their use of visuals. This makes sense as the use of primarily text based lessons only focuses on one type of learner. As the use of computers has become the predominant form of communication in the past two decades using images has become faster and easier as well. “A culture's predominant mode of literacy depends on the technology and mass media it embraces” (Stokes, 2002, p. 11). With the internet and computers being the dominant form of mass media right now, communication can be in almost any form we have ever had, sending texts, pictures, and gifs that combine the two can all be done effortlessly. Memes which can be used for the most mindless jokes imaginable also provide the opportunity to convey issues in a lighthearted way that younger students will still have the ability to understand. Images can also be used to humanize aspects of a lesson and create emotional connections that are not possible under traditional text options. “Visuals can add appeal and

emotional impact, provide inspiration, and communicate information concisely” (Mayer, 2014, p. 282). Building empathy within lessons for characters either fictional or non fictional is a key element in understanding stories being told in English or social studies classes. Visual literacy in a discipline like social studies is also crucial in analyzing primary source images which are the easiest form of primary source to include in the classroom.

Visual literacy is another tool that should be in the tool box of a learner. For this to work teachers need to accentuate the importance of visuals in everyday life. Highlighting how to analyze an image for what is both shown, not shown, and to look for context clues that may be missing should be as standard as analyzing text. With the ease of visual communication in modern times, teaching how to be literate when it comes to images is an essential role for teachers to play.

Note Taking

Disciplinary literacy studies emphasize teaching that allows students to use different literacies to make learning their own. Taking notes may seem like a natural process for many, but students are historically bad at taking notes and will only record about half of the critical information (Katayama & Robinson, 2000, p. 119). When students take notes without any guidance they will either prioritize the information that you did not, take partial notes, or fail to take them at all if left to their own devices (Katayama & Robinson, 2000, p. 119). Knowing this, teachers need to either teach ways to take more productive notes, give guidelines that help students know what to prioritize, or have interactive notebooks that are designed for note taking and further studying afterwards.

Research suggests multiple methods of teaching note taking to students. First, looking at interactive notebooks which are a tool that is used directly as part of the lesson that is being

taught. They require the same tools that are needed for traditional note taking, but are manipulated to work for the students, and give them built in studying strategies. “Interactive note taking creates opportunities to understand the structure and function of informational texts. These activities also support the development of new vocabulary. By putting these interactive notes into notebooks, students create records of their learning and development” (Goodman, 2018, p. 6). These notebooks provide one half of the open notebook to function as the side for the lesson’s input and is filled with guided notes or lesson outlines. Ideally this side is used to demonstrate better ways to take notes for students to use in the future as “It is an excellent place to model various note taking strategies for students to grasp onto for future use.” (Endacott, 2007, p. 130). The other side of the notebook is destined for student analysis and exploration of what was taught (Goodman, 2018, p. 7). This provides an opportunity to internalize the knowledge further by going over the lesson and reorganizing it into your own format, or language. An example of this is having traditional notes on one side that are organized as an outline, then the other side of the notebook has a mind map that is designed by the student. You can also glue things within the notebook that were used in the classroom and build it into an all around tool to use while reviewing a unit (Goodman, 2018, p. 9).

When this form of note taking is not available it is best to at least provide some form of outline to guide students through the important information they will need to use later. Concept maps and outlines of the lesson are common strategies to get students focused on the pertinent points of a lesson, however using outlines that are partially filled has shown to be a useful strategy combining traditional note taking and full outlines. Katyama and Robinson (2000) contend,

when students are required to become actively involved in generating some of the information they will study later, the information seems to have more meaning than if the notes are merely provided for them to study. Actively generating notes results in better text comprehension (p. 130)

It is a middle ground that results in the most important information still being put to memory while keeping the function of writing down other important aspects for future use. Providing a full outline fails to give students the initial memory action of writing down the information while not providing anything has been shown as ineffective as students miss information so they cannot review it in the future. This combination blends the two aspects smoothly and in a way that works for students. Developing note taking skills is just one tool that can aid students in the transition into thinking like an insider of the disciplines by actively generating information for themselves to look at and study later (Katayama & Robinson, 2000, p. 130)

Literacy in a discipline comes from a variety of areas. If you are not asking the right questions, not highlighting the important information, and only following along to written texts you are missing a large part of disciplinary knowledge. These skills are all important beyond the classroom as well. Questioning what you see in the news, or from politicians is a habit that more people would benefit from in modern culture. Knowing how to parse important information from the static helps keep the daily bombardment of news organized. Finally, the importance of visual communication continues with the ease of sending pictures over text and the internet. Learning these within a discipline should make their implementation outside of a classroom easier.

Sourcing

While teaching social studies, how you use sources is pivotal to how the class perceives information. Thinking like professionals in the subject would mean using primary sources which the students interpret in their own ways. Although this is a great way to get students questioning what they read or hear, it is impractical to only use primary sources at a middle or high school level. Primary sources can be too dense with too much non pertinent information to have everyday use at that level, and they lack needed context that students may not have coming into the lesson. What is important, no matter the source used, is teaching students how to use them. As stated in the last section making sure students are questioning the texts in front of them they will get more out of them than rote memorization. And the reading of source materials should be scaffolded with as much attention as using the source materials themselves.

Primary Sources

Primary sources are vital in getting students to understand and enjoy social studies. They provide all of the most interesting aspects of cultures throughout time. The main drawback is they are not always succinct and students need to learn how to interpret them correctly. Using primary sources does not automatically make students think like historians either, and for some, especially younger students, they may not know what primary sources are and what their importance is compared to secondary ones. “Research on how students analyzed historical sources revealed their tendency to approach primary sources as they would any narrative and to simply accept the text at face value” (Hicks et al., 2004, p. 230). Getting the idea across that the two types of sources are approached differently can be difficult, but one way to differentiate between primary sources and secondary is to get students understanding that primary sources are the evidence of something happening, while secondary sources are the retelling of what

happened (Waring, 2010, p. 23). Demonstrating examples of primary vs secondary sources from students' own lives can clarify this to those who may struggle. Asking students what proof they have of their own existence as humans in the current era can provide a start to this training of thought. Most students will naturally reply by citing their interactions with other humans, once you can get them focusing beyond that to footprints, handwritten notes, and materials they have used recently is when they will start thinking about what primary sources really are (Waring, 2010, p. 23).

From this point it is crucial to teach students that there is more than one way to interpret a primary source, and for them to know that in some cases they can be blatantly misleading (Waring, 2010, p. 25). This is never more true than when learning about marginalized groups throughout history. It is far too common for primary documents relating to groups such as Native Americans to be written from the perspective of the oppressive culture. Beyond that “learners rarely develop a context for primary documents on their own, borrowing that context, instead, from their own contemporary social experience—an experience that is built upon decades of social stratification” (Stanton, 2012, p. 344). This relates back to creating a culturally responsive classroom in that building context about how cultures have interacted throughout history is a foremost aspect of social studies. Hopefully teachers will be building a culture of questioning prior to the introduction of these sources to ensure they are aware the author may have an agenda that is not stated in the text. “When guided appropriately, students in classrooms that incorporate primary documents can learn about often-neglected perspectives and develop “dispositions and strategies,” such as context building and empathy, which help them interpret both historical and contemporary events” (Stanton, 2012, p. 343). Overall properly scaffolding students through the

use of primary sources is a great way to get them into the mental framework of social studies professionals.

Historical Fiction

On the opposite end of the spectrum from primary sources is using historical fiction in the classroom. While at first this may seem counterintuitive, these fictions can provide insights into the cultures of various eras. Much like primary sources these need to be used with the proper front loading so students do not interpret them incorrectly, or worse only get their entertainment value. It can be difficult but “in the hands of an effective teacher, the double-edged sword of fiction can be a powerful tool in the teaching of history” (Clark & Sears, 2016, p. 621). More than anything the study of social studies focuses on the relations between people and cultures across time and place. There is nothing that restricts a work of fiction, if done well, from presenting this relationship as well as nonfiction. In many cases they can be used to provide context to students who may be new to learning about a historical moment. Novels in particular can be used as a form of primary source for the era in which they were written “Certain novels tell us more about a certain time and about certain people than even the best of histories” (Clark & Sears, 2016, p. 628). Think of Jane Austen, for example. From all accounts she wrote accurate descriptions of the class structure, and cultural needs of someone with her standing in life. Despite the stories being works of fiction they tell us similar details as would be found in primary sources.

In many cases, like it or not, the fictional or Hollywood telling of events will be the first thing students think about when a subject is brought up. Rather than run from this idea it is important to teach around it so students can properly separate truth from fiction. In fact, it can be argued that “a central role in school history is to engage prior knowledge in order to help

students acquire more complex and reflective understandings of the past” (Clark & Sears, 2016, p. 624). Using a nonfiction story, students are familiar with to prime students' memories can be useful in building these complex understandings. To separate fact from fiction in the stories it is helpful to have an activity that not only holds their attention, but helps focus them on the lesson you want to teach. “Without support by the teacher, students may commonly lack the understandings needed to discern important historical issues or the personal motivation to look for answers” (Neumann, 2010, p. 19). Further, students will come up with questions more naturally while critically watching or reading historical fiction than while reading primary texts. These will usually be about what is true and untrue, but it gives you an opportunity to dive into the realities of the depicted period (Neumann, 2010, p. 20).

One aspect of watching or reading fictional stories in class is how they build empathy with the people from the past. Going back a bit, Jane Austen’s novels not only provide the cultural stories of the era, they give them a human face. “Historical details build empathy and help students understand why characters in historical novels make certain decisions, thus humanizing historical periods and events” (Hinton et al., 2014, p. 23-24). It’s hard to overstate this importance, as empathizing with the past is key in how students think of other cultures, and relate to them as fully formed societies rather than simply something to be studied. Fictional stories allow us to see beyond the evidence left behind in primary sources to the implications of the era. As Clark and Sears (2016) state “Historians can’t invent in the gaps, so they wind up just building the structure all full of holes. Artists, on the other hand, invent in the gaps all the time” (p. 632). Humanization of the past, bringing entertainment to the classroom, and still providing the cultural touchstones that social studies should prioritize are all benefits of bringing historical fiction into the classroom if done correctly.

Current Events

Social studies is based on studying people throughout time and because of this it is important to take time to teach about current events and how these stories are portrayed in the media. In our current world the news media is a topic of contention among many parts of the population. As “the civic mission of social studies instruction provides a natural link to current events instruction and use of news media to understand political and social issues” (Clark et al., 2020, p. 264). The advent of “fake news” makes the trustworthiness of what should be credible sources of information dubious and this understanding more difficult. Rather than take everything at face value news media should be looked at like other sources that are used in a social studies classroom. “If educators want to create student learning opportunities that contribute to students’ capacities to think about complicated processes—like determining the difference between credible and unreliable sources—then teachers need to understand and acknowledge the complexity of making and interpreting news” (Clark et al., 2020, p. 263).

Looking at the media this way is only half of the issue present in the current political landscape. Just because something is truthful it doesn't mean that it is presenting the entire story. Biases in news media used in the classroom are difficult to get away from. Teachers come into each lesson with biases of their own that show up in how and where they get news. Getting to know their biases is only one part of the solution “As political scientists have shown, peoples’ investments in particular political positions will refuse or resist information contradictory to those positions” (Garrett et al., 2020, p. 5). So, if teachers are trying to present an unbiased example of news media they need to not only be aware of their own biases, but be able to overcome natural urges to resist information that opposes their own thinking.

The question of whether teachers should try to teach in this unbiased, neutral, manner is something that is debatable from the forefront. Tallon (2013) argues “An important element of critical theorists within education is that they see education as a political act; it is not a neutral exercise” (p.32). To accept the status quo that is presented in most major areas of news media is accepting the current power structure of our society “Similar to other social institutions, mainstream media can overlook systemic inequities or issues that impact disempowered groups in favor of “infotainment” that conveys trifling gossip or scandalized narratives” (Krutka, 2017, p. 27). In culturally responsive classrooms this power structure should be revealed rather than glorified which would mean highlighting what is often left out when watching or reading current events. Addressing these systemic themes can be difficult but when accompanied with a credible source of information students should be able to dive into the deeper issues in our country with factual information.

This brings us to the question of what even is a credible news source, and how do you tell when one is not credible? Is how truthful the information all that matters regardless of its presentation? Does presenting an obvious bias instantly make a news source untrustworthy? What should surprise few is that different teachers will come up with their own version of what credibility means. As mentioned earlier people will refuse to believe news that goes against their preconceived biases unless the evidence is clear (Garrett et al., 2020, p. 5). What is more important is that these biases will affect what news media sources we find credible. A teacher's ideology “makes them more likely to present a particular definition of credibility to their students” (Clark et al., 2020, p. 268). Research suggests that teachers who define credibility as a process of how the news was gathered rather than the results of what were presented were more likely to look past their biases when hearing information that went against them (Clark et al.,

2020, p. 267). Importantly, best practices in social studies teaching suggests that you need to look at the hows and the whys rather than the whats and the whens if you want a full idea of how to process the current media landscape.

Defining a credible source is a difficult job, and one that takes a lot of someone's own personal biases into play. While teaching how to separate valid and nonvalid sources you need to be aware of what that person is trying to say about a moment. Asking yourself, and your students, if the presenters have any biases, can gain anything from how they are presenting the information, or maybe if they have a reason to be untruthful can help get students to parse through the natural biases everybody has. For some events using fictional accounts that have been portrayed in pop culture can humanize the history for students who may not think about the past in that manner. How you choose the sources used in your classroom and how students are asked to interpret them provides a huge difference in what you are teaching.

Different facets of good pedagogy all have to connect to each other in teaching the diverse array of students seen in modern classrooms. To ensure all students adapt the desire to learn beyond the classroom you need to teach them to be learners rather than students. Getting students of all cultures to think like professionals in your subject, and asking the right questions creates the roadmap of educational growth for after they leave your classroom. Ideally their quest for knowledge will lead them to various methods and sources that create a breadth of knowledge and understanding beneficial throughout their adult lives. As an educator, putting all of the aspects of effective pedagogy together should be your goal. I will be working on that and seeing what methods of my own teaching work best in translating these goals into practice as I evolve in my life as an educator.

Blending all of the aspects regarding culturally responsive teaching, content specific literacy, and the use of a variety of sources while teaching social studies is complicated work that requires focused decision making in how to plan and execute lessons. It is important that when planning lessons to represent cultures that are marginalized you also promote their voices in the curriculum. While doing this the ability to encourage questioning through various methods including even questioning the author of what is being read, be that text or imagery is included in the goal. Finally, as a future social studies teacher, using sources that give students the perspective of a historian through primary sources, or drawing their attention in with more dramatized retellings will give them more intriguing lessons that will be committed to memory. During the time I will be in a practicum setting it will be one of my primary challenges to analyze how each of these aspects of teaching can be used in my own teaching.

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODS

The methods of inquiry for this study focused on the principles and practices of action research, using self-study aligned with professional teacher standards, teacher artifacts, lesson plans, personal journal entries, and keeping track of student questions in the best manner possible as means of data collection. I will begin with a review of action research principles to establish the foundation for this study's method of inquiry. Second, I will review the choices and purposes of data collection that helped to highlight my instruction and means for searching for improvement. Third, I will detail my context for the study, methods of data collection protocols, maintaining credibility and trustworthiness of the data, and acknowledge my limitations as a researcher. Finally, I will present the procedures used for studying my practice, while providing data and analysis that speaks to adaptations and adjustments made to my instruction as I implanted this study.

Research Questions

My focus for this research was getting students to think critically through answering questions that are prompted, both in class, and assignments. Specifically, I examined how my lesson planning through culturally responsive practices, and questioning evolved to promote more thoughtful answers beyond simple facts that they had memorized. This focus aligned with the following INTASC Standards for teacher professional development, learner development, learning differences, planning for instruction, and instructional strategies. Additionally, I considered how studying my own practice in line with INTASC Standards could improve my own instruction and therefore, student learning. My purpose of this study was to improve my

teaching of all students through culturally responsive practices with the goal of having the students asking better questions after the research process. The research questions for this study were:

1. What practices promoted critical thought in student answers to my questions about the lessons? I hope to build a classroom that inspires learning. And in social studies learning beyond the traditional facts requires critical thought that allows you to identify the broader themes that are at play throughout a lesson and dive deeper into the world of social studies that is so interesting.
2. How has my lesson planning changed to reflect culturally responsive practices the more I have taught? I hoped that as my comfort and knowledge improved I would be able to lesson plan across cultures, races, and genders more effectively. Data gathered from a focus on this question was used to test the best practices for differentiating culturally in a diverse classroom.

INTASC Standards

The INTASC standards are a group of professional standards that teachers should strive for while educating. They connect to aspects of teaching that connect to the different ways to develop learning in students, how to utilize content knowledge in your subject area, assessments, instructional strategies, and professional disposition to thrive as a teacher. As a developing educator you can use them to gauge your growth throughout your career. In this research I will be focusing on six of the ten standards that I will go through now. Standard 1 is learner development which I will be gauging through the improvement in student answers in regards to critical understanding as the study goes along. Standard 2, learning differences, will be looked at

by how differentiation in my lesson plans improves throughout the research, and how students react to those changes. For Standard 2, learning differences, I will be focusing on student reactions to how I present information and questions will allow me to see how different students react to a variety of prompts. Using student artifacts that are turned into me will also allow me to see their responses to these questions. Standards 7 and 8 are respectively focused on planning and strategies for instruction. I will use the lesson plans throughout this program, but mostly since starting practicum, feedback from my advisor and mentor teacher, and my own personal notes to see the improvement in best teaching practices overall, as well as those that reflect culturally responsiveness for my students.

Methods and Procedures

Because my purpose was to describe my own teaching practice as well as how I use data to improve my own practice in line with the INTASC professional standards, it was important to choose a method that could account for both what the standards are for teachers and how I was paying attention to my own practice through data collection to improve it. Accordingly, this study was designed as an action research study.

Action research studies are useful when educators want to improve their teaching through a planned, systematic method of gathering information on how to best reach students. Through action research teachers should strive towards successful teaching strategies that are repeatable over time to a diverse range of students. In a study such as this you will usually identify an area you wish to improve in pedagogically, then research that area to both see other methods that have been successful in similar studies as well as improve your knowledge of the topic. From here you will plan a systematic way to complete your study. This goes into what specific strategies you will use and how you will collect the data from these strategies such as student

artifacts, journaling, and videos taken in class. Finally you will put the plan into action following your pre thought out strategies to collect the data you need. The final step is analyzing that data and deciding how to best utilize it moving forward in your pedagogy (Preisman, 2007, p.103).

This kind of research is useful for teachers because it gives teachers a specific area, or areas, to work towards improvement, with a strict plan of how to reach their goals. Possibly most importantly action research allows teachers to work collaboratively with others in their school, district, or anywhere else, to improve pedagogical practices for all. Teachers who were not participants in an action research study can see what has worked in the past regarding potential practices they may be interested in. From there they can apply the work in their own teaching strategies, or evolve the practice further. The ability to work together in this regard is a great way for teachers to help each other as well as making education a collaborative process despite generally being alone in your classroom.

Data Collection

The basic steps in action research are 1) identify a topic or issue to study, 2) collect data related to the chosen topic or issue, 3) analyze and interpret the collected data, and 4) carry out action planning, which represents the application of the action research results. Data collection in an action research project typically is related to the topic or issues, and provides answers pertinent to the research questions. As Padak and Padak observe, “Any information that can help you answer your questions is data” (1994). Therefore, I used a variety of data collection tools related to my topic to ensure the validity of my results. Furthermore, I adhered to the following four characteristics in determining the data I would collect for my study, 1) anonymity of students, 2) comparison in data collection was built in so that the results could be judged against themselves both before and after the intervention period, 3) aspects of performance to be

examined were identified prior to data collection so that the information was relevant and connected to the research questions, and 4) a variety of data was collected so that different aspects of the topic could be brought to light (Padak and Padak, 1994). Finally, because I was studying my own practice while I was in the middle of said practice, I acknowledge the “spiraling nature” of data collection in action research (Padak and Padak, 1994). By focusing on data in connection to my research questions, my attention turned to other pieces of data that emerged in relation to my questions. These emergent data pieces were included as part of the study as they had relevance to my research questions.

Because my research questions focus on getting students to think critically while using culturally responsive practices, I chose to collect data that would provide information about how my practice and the interventions I identified aligned with the research topic. The types of data I chose to collect are described next.

Journal Entries

As soon as I started working in a classroom setting I immediately began reflecting on practices that seemed to work and not work when it came to getting student engagement in the classroom. I will document daily both how I attempted to get students to talk, or use the chat, Zoom lessons, as well as conversations I had with my cooperating teachers about how to promote engagement in more traditional settings. Through reflecting on these varied practices I will get a better idea of how to get students to communicate, and debate comfortably in my eventual classroom.

Lesson Plans

My lesson plans used throughout the self education process will go hand in hand with the daily reflections that I will be doing. I will connect actions that I thought would work while making my lesson plans with the reality of the situation when I taught. Looking at the development of my lesson plans will also tell me how well I adapted culturally responsive teaching practices which relates to the second research question I have been looking at. Through reading my lesson plans again with a more seasoned perspective I will be able to see where I accentuated the voices of different cultures, specifically BIPOC individuals, and where I fell into the trap of telling the dominant cultures perspective. I can connect this with my reflections and see how well I actually followed through with my goals while teaching the lessons.

Cooperating Teacher and Advisor Observations

These are stating how I actually represented myself while teaching each lesson. Each observed lesson saw me change how I was attempting to reach my students to varying degrees of success. Another aspect of these is my first formal observation came when I was freshly placed in a classroom setting and had only taught one lesson at the time. This gives me the opportunity to see how far I have grown from the beginning of my teaching journey through where I am today. Both my cooperating teacher and advisor through WOU have been very good at giving constructive criticism throughout the year and I will be able to read through their advice on how I can improve further going forward.

Context of the Study

My research was completed at a rural school that taught grades 6-12 outside of Eugene, Oregon. As an entire school there were approximately 650 students in all grades combined, with approximately 350 of those attending the high school. The school predominantly takes place

between two hallways, one for each the high school and middle school, with the connecting hall being the de facto science wing. This separates the grades well, and during this year in which social distancing is prioritized, the middle school has seemed like a completely different building to me. Class sizes were smaller than others that I have seen around this area with most having between 20-27 students which was a manageable amount for me to learn during this year.

I was lucky enough to be splitting my time between both of the social studies teachers at the high school level. Although one was only teaching a single class while I was there, I got to see two different perspectives on how to teach the broad subject of social studies. One of the teachers has both a masters in teaching as well as one in US history. This gives his classes a more debate-heavy atmosphere that accentuates the mindset of thinking like a historian I want to create in my future students. The start to my practicum happened at a much later point in the year, and I had to jump right into the teacher role with minimal observations. Despite predominantly teaching in one of the teachers classes, both of them have been extremely helpful when it comes to how I can lesson plan and prepare for a variety of circumstances that may arise.

It would be impossible to create context for this study without talking about it taking place during the global Coronavirus pandemic. The school I was working at was, like many others, figuring out the best way to combine the necessity of social distancing with meeting students' academic needs. As a latecomer to the school, only joining in February, I got to witness the changes taking place on the fly as regulations across Oregon changed quickly after my arrival. When I first began at the school they would teach Zoom lessons in the morning, then have individual or small group lessons or tutoring in the afternoon. Neither the Zoom lessons or tutoring were mandatory as long as you checked in with your teachers daily. After one month with this as the schools policy they opened for their hybrid model of teaching. In this model the

Zoom lessons would not be changed, but the afternoon sessions would involve each classroom having a cohort and teachers would move around to different rooms every forty five minutes. While in each classroom teachers were essentially doing the same as in the previous model and helping with homework rather than teaching full lessons. Slightly more than one month after that the school opened up as much as it will this year. In this final stage Zoom classes were still being taught in the mornings with students coming into the building after lunch. The final adjustment was that teachers would be teaching full lessons in this model because more students were allowed in each classroom. Teachers would still be moving from cohort to cohort, but the plan was to have a greater amount of students available so more traditional classrooms could be achieved. For lower grades this seems to have worked fairly well, but as I am working with juniors and seniors I have not seen a major improvement in student involvement inside the building.

Participants

Because this study was designed using an action research approach, the main participant in the study is myself, as the teacher. As my learning progressed throughout my student teaching program, I became interested in a number of ideas that would help me to improve my instruction. Ultimately, I decided to focus on the main research areas outlined in my research question. To lend credibility to the results I will share from my self-study of my practice, it is important to describe my role in the classroom where I teach. In this section I will focus on describing my own classroom and my role as the teacher.

This is my first foray into teaching. I have worked with kids before, but never in this role and was excited to finally lead a classroom. Because of issues surrounding the pandemic I did not get placed into a classroom until late february of 2021. Because of this I had to gear right into

the concepts of lesson planning, data collection, and general comfort in front of a group of students almost immediately. I am sure my early lessons were shaky at best, but I do think the trial by fire method has been good for me overall. After my first lesson taking place two weeks into my placement I have taken control of a US history course that meets every Tuesday and Thursday. Planning for the continued flow of a course over a series of weeks has been a great challenge, but gives me a better understanding of how to progress lessons and lead them into each other as I have improved. Most of my lessons are designed by me with little input from either of the cooperating teachers unless I ask for it. I have, however, seen ideas from their lessons and implemented them into what I do while teaching something similar on numerous occasions.

Designing this study was an interesting process. We were originally tasked with coming up with our research questions before I had a placement in a school. I had ideas in mind about what I wanted to research but was unsure of the practicality of them. Furthering the unknowns was the ever present concept of teaching over Zoom. I had an idea of what teaching in a classroom is like from past observations and my time as a student but the world of online learning was foreign to me. I quickly noticed students were not as likely to speak up in class and had to revise my questions to reflect that. My questions were devised more through what I found important in teaching from my learning throughout the Western Oregon MAT program than in class structure. Overall I am focusing on what I think makes students better learners and people who are thinking critically and learning about other cultures in a positive and exclusive manner.

How I Studied my Teaching

I studied my teaching through comparing and contrasting observations and work that was done at early stages in my teaching progressing onwards. Reading lesson plans, journal entries, and observations has led me to see the difference in practices that can reach my desired goals. Given my late start I immediately began gathering information from observing and conversing with my cooperating teachers. Once teaching I have adjusted what worked best in my lesson plans to get students to critically think in their own work returned to me. Through a process of trial and error I found what style of question works best in getting students to think critically beyond the simple factual answers in social studies.

When focusing on getting a more culturally responsive approach to pedagogy I will mostly be studying my lesson plans, and how I reflected on the lesson once taught. There will be a few instances of taking student feedback into account in this regard, because I attempted to ask students questions that made them focus their perspective on BIPOC individuals' perspectives. These are not common enough to play a major part in the research however, and will only be brought up to support existing evidence.

The data I am collecting will be qualitative so there is a subjective aspect in how it is read. As someone who is trying to improve their own practice I will be fair, but still critical of what I think my results show. I will be looking back on my past lessons and seeing how I have grown throughout my time teaching in hopefully beneficial ways that will continue going forward.

Chapter IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Overview

In this chapter I present the findings that came from my data collection in the action research project. I will be analyzing the findings to conclude if the questions I have about my teaching were answered either positively or negatively, in connection to the data I collected. The data I collected had to do with my two original questions that I was researching, which were 1) What practices promoted critical thought in student answers to my questions about the lessons, and 2) How has my lesson planning changed to reflect culturally responsive practices the more I have taught? My main goal in this research project was to answer the questions stated above about my own teaching through the process of action research, which is research conducted on one's own practice, especially in relation to teaching. During this project the research data which I analyzed was collected in four main ways: written lesson plans, observations from both my cooperating teacher and a Western Oregon appointed advisor, formal assessments I assigned, and a journal of my personal reflections that I wrote daily after either teaching or observing others teach. I sorted through and then analyzed the data to see if I have been successful in finding positive ways to get students engaged in critical thinking and using culturally responsive practices through my time in practicum this year. I also wanted to focus the data collection on my own actions as a teacher, rather than collecting student data, and so realized that this option would not work for my ultimate goals in understanding my own teaching.

When originally planning for the action research project my first desire was to include another question that focused on getting students to ask questions that showed critical thought

about the lesson. Unfortunately, at least partly due to school districts around me managing the Coronavirus pandemic, I was not placed in a school until late February. This meant I had little idea about how distance learning had been working over Zoom. When I first got into online classrooms for observations it was a small shock at the lack of questions that were asked, or general student engagement that occurred. With that late adjustment in mind I had to rethink what questions could be researched with this foreign school format. As a way to both streamline my research for a shorter timeline, and ask questions that were more applicable to online learning I only asked two questions instead of three, and asked about getting students to think critically in their response to questions made by me rather than questions they would ask in the classroom.

Through the evaluation of this data I will observe how my teaching changed over the time I have been in the classroom. It is not a guarantee teachers are always improving throughout their careers so going through the process of action research was a fantastic skill to develop in evaluating my own abilities moving forward. Once working in a professional setting this practice will aid my ability to constantly rework the strategies used to get either student engagement, critical thought, or many other practices that ensure I am getting the most out of my students.

I organized my data by first highlighting each research question, then focusing on the evidence acquired through these four things: teacher assigned work, observations from my cooperating teacher and Western Oregon appointed advisor, lesson plans, and my personal reflections from after teaching each day. I will look at the evidence from all four sources for both questions. The amount of pertinent data collected from each piece varies from question to question, so each section will primarily focus on a different part of the evidence I gathered.

Data Analysis Question 1: What practices promoted critical thought in student answers to my questions about the lessons?

My first research question asked “what practices promoted critical thought in student answers to my questions about the lessons?” I wanted to become a social studies teacher to ensure students were not learning about the boring parts of the past. Too many people focus on the names and dates that are neither exciting or, in reality, important. The major themes and events that connect them are not answered through rote memorization, but critical thinking about how people throughout time react to certain situations. Getting students to interpret and analyze information in a way that allows them to make connections across eras and cultures is a key to becoming a valuable citizen, and one that social studies should prioritize.

One misunderstanding I had regarding online Zoom school before starting this research was the flexibility that most teachers had adopted regarding late work. As I started teaching, a little over half way through the third term as an unknown teacher in a new space, it took longer than I would have liked to get any assignments turned in. This made adjusting my strategies for getting student thought more difficult than in a traditional setting. As a result the changes I made to my assignments started slowly, and without much guidance, but I eventually worked out the best practices for the situation I was in.

Another issue that I have that is harder to quantify, but I will try, is how my in-class teaching affected the understanding of the information. It would make sense that if my actual lessons didn't go as well as I planned the students wouldn't get a good enough understanding to give detailed answers that require the type of thinking that I am looking for. I will look at my lesson plans from the first lessons I taught and see if there were missed opportunities to develop this thinking. Luckily for me my first lessons were all parts of formal observations because of

my late arrival, and the timing of the end of Western Oregon's winter term. This will give me more evidence of my in class performance that may have affected the thinking of students.

Teacher Assignments

I probably came into the classroom a little too excited to try and form critical thinking in students. In my first lesson taught I attempted to tackle school segregation with a reading focusing on an example of how a small school in post WWII Texas handled the issue of school segregation. I had two prompts that students first worked on in groups then discussed in class. The answers to the prompts were not directly stated in the reading, but could be inferred by highlighted segments throughout. The prompts were,

1. Why would the recent ending of WWII impact Black residents of Hearne to be more vocal about their mistreatment by their own government locally”
2. What was the importance of previous court rulings, such as those in South Carolina and The University of Texas Law School, in regards to the lead up to the Brown v. Board case.

Although many of the answers did show an ability to think deeper into the reading than was stated directly they generally lacked substance in supporting their reasoning. Answers that made vague connections to the reading were common, but ones that made strong connections and showed an ability to think beyond what was explicitly stated were rare. Some students showed they were thinking in the manner I wanted by asking questions that connected to the reading which does demonstrate thinking beyond the surface level. As Buehl states in *Developing Readers in the Academic Disciplines* “Wondering implies curiosity” (2017, p. 176). So even though I was not primarily focusing on getting students to ask questions, the fact that some did shows that they were at least thinking about the topic in a meaningful way. If I focused on

having students think about, or respond with, questions rather than simple worksheets they may have taken more from each lesson, but this is something that I did not have time to fully research in a thorough manner.

I didn't have assessments like this after every lesson I taught so the progress on my questions was a slow transition. One thing that I found did help in creating critical responses to my questions was first asking questions about factual information regarding the lesson. I took this strategy from one of my two cooperating teachers, who consistently has assignments separated in two parts: first, a factual section that has answers based on the lesson he taught that day either through the slide deck, or his lecture, second is a part that requires putting the information taught into practice outside of what was strictly taught in the lesson. Although he teaches an economics class which I have not yet taught because my knowledge of the subject is not sufficient, this strategy has served me well in the US history course that I have primarily been teaching. In my teaching so far, this strategy has proven to be the most effective in getting students to provide in-depth answers that both show critical thinking outside of the stated information and a connection to what was taught in the lesson that day.

The best example I have of this is a lesson I taught about the Reconstruction period after the Civil War. It was one of my most recent so not every student has completed the assignment, but the ones I have received have had much better reasoning behind the claims that they are making. After asking these three fact based questions that were readily available in the slide deck that accompanied the lesson.

1. What were two laws put in place with the passing of the Reconstruction Act in 1867?
2. The recently allowed right to vote among Black Americans in the 1860's and 70's led to higher Black representation in politics until when?

3. Black Codes were laws that put unjust punishment for what small crimes? What were potential punishments as well?

After those three I asked a question that required the type of thinking that I was hoping for in my research, which was

1. What actions that were put in place, both through legal and illegal means, that limited the right to vote for people of color after the reconstruction era. (think about the lesson on the Jim Crow south)

The responses to this question were much better in regard to critical thought than from my earlier attempts. Demonstrations of critical thinking that focused on facts presented through the first three answers were more common than in the past assessments I had given. This led me to believe ensuring the understanding of essential information before diving into the type of critical thinking that I desire is a crucial first step.

Another aspect that I believe improved students' displays of critical thought was the comfort I had in teaching them, and they had with me. I will elaborate more on this in later sections that focus on my personal reflections after each lesson, but in my more recent lessons the in person engagement has been better and students have in turn given me answers that display an internalization of the lesson. I taught a lesson about the origins of World War 1 in which I focused on the complications about why an event like the assassination of one man could turn into a war that included the majority of Europe. I highlighted this as something students should be thinking about early in the lesson so they would be prepared to answer the question later. For this lesson I asked a simple exit ticket question at the end of class about what students believed the purpose of so many countries joining the war in the summer of 1914. Despite there not being as much build up to the question demonstrating factual information like in the other

examples, I got a diverse range of answers, including some that connected students' past knowledge about the issue in ways that I did not even prioritize in my lesson. This connects to the strategy of asking factual questions prior to ones that focus more on critical thinking. Checks for understanding during a lesson are hugely important in knowing when students have the ability to give detailed answers that demonstrate their understanding of the main themes of the lesson, and this is a more formal way to get those prior to an in depth question.

Lesson Plans

While looking over my lesson plans to see if those may have affected the student response in such situations you can see a clear growth with how much I assumed students would take from my lessons. In the first example lesson used above, in which I was attempting to get students to understand school segregation through a reading example about a small school district in Texas, my lesson plans are almost devoid of how I plan on getting students to actually think about the lesson. As you will see in figure A below I had a lot of generalities that I should not have included especially as an inexperienced teacher.

Figure A

Segment of lesson plan on school segregation

25 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Get into the meat of the lesson which is going over the reading that I have found from <i>Four Hundred Souls</i> with parts that I have found important highlighted. I want to focus on the issues of perception by the parents as they fought for a better school, and the disparity in funding/quality of the schools for black students despite being the majority of the district. I will ask students questions about the reading as we go	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Read along with the article. I will be summarizing most of it, but will have highlighted parts and will be putting the reading in the google classroom for students to access.	The responses in the assessment after the lesson is over
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In this I make a lot of assumptions about whether or not students are listening, comprehending, or internalizing anything that I am attempting to teach. As a result the student work did not show the type of critical thinking that I was hoping to achieve.

Not only did I fail to provide a formative assessment before the end of the class, I just assumed students would understand what type of answers I wanted in the questions. In future lesson plans, specifically the one focusing on reconstruction mentioned prior, I explicitly state what I want students to understand as a result of the lesson. That was clearly the most successful lesson I had taught in regards to getting students answering thoughts in a critical manner, so it will have my best examples for this section. Looking back on the lesson plan I gave the students a better idea of how to answer the question with information than in the other lessons I had finished. In figure B you can see how I lay out a much more detailed plan to give students the background information that I want students to know compared to the plan in figure A. When

combining my better planning along with more experience in class teaching, I was better at delivering the information in a digestible way for the students.

Figure B

Segment of lesson plan on Reconstruction

20 minu tes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Cover the actual reconstruction act that was passed through congress. Prioritize that after this act and the 14th amendment were both passed the amount of black men that could vote was higher than it was both before, but also after the immediate reconstruction era	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Follow along with the lesson, and how at one point after the Civil War the political rights of black men were higher than at any point in nearly one hundred years until the passing of the Civil Rights Act in the 1960's	This has to do with the second part of the worksheet given over Google classroom so I would like to see connections made during that.
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Observations

Although the observations for my first lessons did not have a direct result on the thinking that was displayed by students it does give me an insight into how I was managing the classroom and getting the important information across. One of the benefits of my late placement in the school was that I had to get my earliest lesson formally observed by the Western Oregon University official. This gave me a great starting point to know where I should grow from in the earliest stages of my teaching. Between the university advisor and my cooperating teacher I got excellent advice on how to get my teaching jump started right away in my practice.

After my first lesson, which was observed by my cooperating teacher, I got this feedback about the learning targets for that class: “They were communicated in the lesson plan but not clearly to the students. It would be a good idea for Joe to either display the learning targets on a document or on state them so the students have a clear plan of what historical context and academic arguments they will be getting into.” This clearly demonstrates my actual teaching was

not adequate for getting the important information across. This type of feedback is important when thinking about the responses in my earlier assessments. If students are not given appropriate teaching, then they will obviously have difficulty giving answers that demonstrate critical thinking.

For my first observation from my Western Oregon advisor, which was my second lesson overall, He gave me feedback on “the art of teaching” which was about the ability to let a lesson have some space built into it. Space between information gives students the ability to actually remember what you are saying rather than just having a bombardment of information for the entire lesson. In those early lessons I was very nervous which gave me a tendency to talk faster. When this is combined with the overwhelming awkwardness that persisted when I let silence fill the room, students never had a chance to actually internalize what I wanted them to. I will talk more about my personal reflections later, but want to look at what I said for this lesson in particular here. I talk a lot about how I need to slow down my thought process saying “I need to elaborate on the information more than I am. This is a thing that has been my issue in a lot of papers/projects throughout my educational life. I go too broad and don’t realize that people will not connect things that just happen in my head without thought. Remember to go into details and don’t be afraid to go off script. Trust myself with the knowledge that I have. I am working on these lesson plans for long enough I should be able to answer questions that the students are going to ask. I need to provide more information as well in a way that can enhance the lessons.” As you can see I was, and am, aware that I have a tendency to gloss over information because I do not fully understand the knowledge levels of my audience. I will give an explanation that makes sense to me, but when taken out of context and without my own personal perspective and background knowledge, does not give the reader the full range of information that I want.

One other issue that was consistent in my earliest lesson was the lack of informal checks for understanding. Without my knowledge of where students stood as far as understanding the lesson it should not have been a surprise when they didn't show the type of thinking that I was expecting in the assessments afterwards. The observation notes for my first three lessons all mentioned that I needed to work on informal formative assessments. From my cooperating teachers first observation they said I "Presented good information on the topic of Jim Crow laws but was lacking a measurable formative assessment to gauge student understanding of the information provided in the lesson. Needs to add oral checks for understanding throughout the lesson and a formative assessment to judge the student's ability to retain the information presented." Unfortunately this type of feedback continued into the next few lessons. My WOU advisor was generally very positive in his feedback because he knew was observing some of my earliest lessons, but in his first observation he said "However, with little to no student engagement, assessments were not formally or informally observable." and "Without observing student engagement connecting to assessments, it is difficult to say that any assessing took place". These are not horrible on their own, but considering these were not that long ago I remember the lessons clearly and can confidently say I got essentially no form of assessment done while teaching this lesson.

Overall my lack of ability in the classroom was clearly a factor in how my students responded in their post class assessments. With better informal assessments during the lessons I would have known how to teach towards the type of responses that I was trying to get. Unfortunately I have not had more formal observations since the earliest part of my teaching as I am trying to develop as much comfort while teaching as possible before another. From my own observations I am more patient in letting students make comments or letting them demonstrate

that they have learned something in other ways. The ability to utilize the chat aspect of Zoom has been a major factor in the informal assessing that has been done. Having students give quick one or two word responses essentially asking them if they have understood what you are teaching is hugely beneficial in giving you an idea of how well you are getting your main point across.

Personal Reflections

In a way these connect to the feedback from my cooperating teacher, and WOU advisor, but I have always found that I am an appropriately harsh critic of myself. Triangulating my own personal observations with theirs provided a strength to my evidence and helped me to know where I was being appropriately insightful, and where I was being too hard on myself. Considering that I have not had a full schedule of formal observations from either my advisor or cooperating teacher, these became an appropriate substitute. I have already discussed my thoughts after the second lesson I taught and how that affected the work my students turned in. Other lessons provided me with the chance to show how I had been working to develop in the “art of teaching” as my advisor said. A lot of the issues come from me not getting an appropriate amount of informal assessments while I teach. Without those I am not sure where I need to focus or change up my lesson to focus on the main learning target in a better manner.

Starting from my first lesson, on March 9th, which was only two days before the lesson mentioned in the last section, I knew I had to pause and elaborate more than I was. After that first lesson I wrote down “it’s okay to be redundant when giving information to the students, you never know which tidbit will be the one that sticks in their mind,” and in all capital letters I said “DON’T BE AFRAID TO STOP AND ELABORATE”. When this is combined with the notes left from my cooperating teacher about how I had difficulties communicating the learning objective to the

students during the class it shows how my lack of ability leads to students who would be unprepared for the assessments that followed.

As I continued working on my practice the disconnect between what I was hoping to teach, and what I was delivering to students continued to be a quandary for me. Phrases like this one on March 16th “I do think the actual lesson plans I am writing are solid, but actually translating them to the lesson is still a work in progress.” were not uncommon. I do show some improvement in this concept, especially in regards to getting informal formative assessments as I continued teaching. By my fourth lesson, on March 18th, I was giving myself specific feedback about how I can get students to understand the main focus of the lesson so they can actually demonstrate their learning, but still not getting consistent assessments during the lessons. First I talk about the need to review what I am going to assign before class, which primes the students for a way of thinking, but yet again do not set a strong theme for the lesson saying “I need to be better at expressing strong themes for my lessons and demonstrate an idea of what students need to know and understand. I drift between what I want the students to know and sort of aimless teaching. I also need to be better at giving them an opportunity to demonstrate this knowledge.”. This specific quote is kind of a catch all for how I felt my teaching was going at this stage. Each lesson was not nearly as focused as it should have been and the lack of assessments did not let me know if students were prepared to answer questions with the type of critical thinking that I wanted.

Fortunately I have worked to improve the main issue of not getting informal assessments. In one lesson that focused on John Brown I made sure to elaborate the main focus which was viewing his actions through different perspectives. I tried to do this in a couple different ways, the first was asking the class while teaching and hoping for responses. Although this was one of

the first times I felt like I gave the class time to stew in silence after getting asked a question, it still failed to get students to speak out in class. The lack of student participation over Zoom lessons is one part of my struggle, but for this I do think it would have been more successful if I specifically mentioned the chat which has been more useful in getting engagement. My second attempt was an exit ticket that asked for the students' personal opinion about the events that happened in Harpers Ferry. Now this is not as thorough of a question as the main theme of the lesson, but it did at least show that students had understood the question I was asking and gave me something to build on in future lessons. This was the first step in me really making progress towards getting students to show some understanding, and from there demonstrating some type of critical thought in their answers.

When I finally started getting students to engage in the classroom more is when I first started seeing improvement in the responses. I brought up the lesson on the origins of World War 1 while talking about student responses, but also feel like bringing it up here is a useful task. This was the lesson that I have gotten the best in lesson engagement so far. I utilized the chat better than in the past with simple questions that asked students to type a number only. I think doing this early in the lesson got them in the mood to engage more throughout the rest of the period. After teaching this lesson, but before looking at student responses to the exit ticket I wrote down "I did forget to mention the main theme of the lesson until a little into it, but I had more student interaction than I have had in any of my lessons prior. Now I have to wait and see how students handle the exit ticket". It shows I still was not perfect in how I taught the lesson, but saw improvement and was hoping to see how the class responded to the prompt. As stated earlier this lesson resulted in higher quality answers than previous attempts, and did so without the use of questions that asked the factual information leading into the more thought provoking ones.

Overall a large part of getting students to think in a critical manner after the lessons is to provide the appropriate amount of information during them. Without doing this I was never giving the students a chance to demonstrate the full extent of what they knew after the fact. Making sure I was providing a strong theme during the lesson about what I wanted students to understand afterwards provided a stepping block forward, then improving my in class formative assessments provided another. Providing strong themes lets students know what and how they should be thinking while the lesson is being taught. You can expand this to entire units in the form of essential questions that students should be debating while they are learning each lesson. Improving on getting quick informal formative assessments during the lessons was a major way to improve the teaching I have done. It let me adjust how I was teaching during each lesson to focus on the areas students may have missed or I neglected. Getting these two improvements is what I believe translated to better displays of critical thinking in the responses to my later assessments. Once I can get better at this practice I would want to use these practices to get students to be more open and showing this type of thinking within class engagement, but for now am pleased with how I have improved in getting students to show depth of thinking in my short time teaching.

Data Analysis Question 2: How has my lesson planning changed to reflect culturally responsive practices the more I have taught?

The other aspect of my teaching that I was researching during this time in the classroom was how I taught through a culturally responsive pedagogy. While analyzing my data for this question my lesson plans played a far larger part than the previous question. The use of reflections based on advisor critiques, and my own post teaching thoughts played a role as well. One thing that played a much smaller role in this area was teacher assignments. Although I

attempted to ask questions that would receive culturally responsive answers this was not as successful as I had hoped. I do have information that was useful in my analysis, but that will be a much smaller section compared to the previous question.

What was an unexpected aspect to this category was the fact I was placed in a school that is outside of my local community, and is far more rural and conservative than I was anticipating while framing this question. Although this did not affect how I ended up teaching in a major way I was always aware when giving lessons about things that could be seen as controversial, like the beginning of the Civil War, the potential for political ideologies that countered the truthful information I was teaching was possible. As you will see I did my best to use primary sources in these situations that would prove the validity of what I was saying rather than secondary ones that were up for more interpretation.

Teacher Assignments

In one early assignment I tried to get students to think about school segregation through the lens of Black citizens' treatment after WWII. The lesson had a reading which talked about how Civil Rights leaders were emboldened to fight for equality after seeing the nation claim the moral high ground when facing the Nazis in Europe. In an attempt to get students to focus on the cultural responsiveness of this lesson, I asked them to think about how what the nation claimed internationally affected how Black men and women would react within the country. The question "Why would the recent ending of WWII impact Black residents of Hearne to be more vocal about their mistreatment by their own government locally?" got minimal responses, as I was still dialing in how to get students to answer questions that required interpretation skills. Although this was a good question that focused on the empowerment of a marginalized culture, I had not

given students the information, or demonstrated the interpretive ability to answer it in a way that was suitable for the question.

For a lesson that focused on the civil rights movement I also tried to ask questions that prioritized the Black voices behind the movement. I have regrets about how I taught the lesson, but also how I tried to assess the lesson. I believed I was going far enough by simply asking questions about who Rosa Parks was in her life prior to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which I talked about during the lesson. Although it is important to give Parks some agency in her life this is not nearly far enough in regards to asking questions that promote culturally responsive thinking in students. It would be better to ask students questions about why she is commonly represented in a way that minimizes her role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This would get students thinking about historical figures from the past, who are often more than what they are initially shown as when teaching in a manner not reflecting culturally responsive practices.

During the previous section of this chapter, devoted to the question based on getting students to display critical thinking I noted how a lesson and assignment that focused on Reconstruction showed my best improvement. Unfortunately I did not have the same focus on promoting culturally responsive questions. Two of the first three questions, which were designed to be fact based, showed the desire to connect culturally responsive practices. However, the final question which I wanted to demonstrate more critical thought did not. This question was “What actions that were put in place, both through legal and illegal means, that limited the right to vote for people of color after the reconstruction era?” To answer this question students needed to look at actions by white members of society, and how they negatively affected people of color. A more culturally responsive question would have focused on the actual people that were being marginalized, and how they attempted to overcome that marginalization. I didn’t require students

to make connections about the realities of life as a Black member of society during the Reconstruction era, just recognize the terrors that white men and women caused them. This is in line with the other aspects of my journey towards teaching with culturally responsive practices, in that they were inconsistent in their implementation throughout my time teaching.

I did learn the importance of teaching in this manner during my time in the classroom. After teaching about the March on Washington in the same Civil Rights unit. There were students who showed appreciation for my inclusion of Bayard Rustin in the lesson in an exit ticket simply asking for something interesting they found about the lesson. The reward for giving students the chance to show an appreciation of other cultures was pretty great, and shows that attempting to teach in this manner is worth the extra effort required in making each lesson.

Lesson Plans

As this question focuses on how I have planned lessons in a manner that is culturally responsive, lesson plans played a major part in my data analysis. In my time teaching I wanted to prioritize the voices of BIPOC individuals and tell the history of the United States from their perspective. Many of the first lessons I wrote gave me great opportunities to try and implement these practices. In my first few lessons I got to teach about Jim Crow, school segregation, and Martin Luther King which provided me with opportunities to teach in a way specifically focusing on Black history and culture. I found that connecting the lesson to culturally responsive practices was more difficult than I had previously thought. During my literature review I talked about culturally responsive teaching, and how important it is to make lesson plans that prioritize the voices of marginalized groups, and connecting lessons to cultures other than the dominant white one that is commonly focused on. Bringing my own education into context, I was taught about most things from the perspective of white culture. This led to the initial places I searched for

lessons to be focused in the same way. Although I tried to find valuable primary or secondary sources that highlighted the history of Black Americans through their perspective it was not always successful in a way that directly translated to my lesson plans.

In the very first lesson I wrote, which was about Jim Crow laws in the South I made an effort to tell the history from a perspective empathetic to Black Americans, but could not find appropriate ways to integrate them into the lesson. In turn I showed a short video that talked about the institutionalization of the Jim Crow era that made having specific laws in place not necessary in parts of the South. I wanted my main theme to be focusing on the institutionalization of Jim Crow laws, and how they affected the voting rights for the huge numbers of citizens. However, I was not quite as thorough when it came to making my lesson plans, or allotting the time each segment of a lesson would take at this point of my teaching, so my lesson plan looked like this for this section (Figure C).

Figure C

Segment of lesson plan on the Jim Crow era

25 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Show the effects of Plessy that took place throughout the south. Start with a 7 minute video that talks about the institutionalization of the laws with a few pauses to highlight the moments I find important. From here go over some of the more notable issues that black people have to face including losing the ability to vote. Show students an example literacy test that is available online, ask them to go over the questions and answer them as best they can.	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Read the test and ideally interact with the class through either the chat or actually talking. If this lesson was in person we would go over the example as a class as well as individually to gauge the differences that are easily available with the questions.	If in class students would take the literacy test I found online and from there go over how they answered it in class as I would project it on the whiteboard.
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You can see I have not planned a proper amount of time to discuss the importance of either of my main goals. I talk about “a few pauses to highlight the moments I find important” but do not mention what those are. Further, these do not actually demonstrate culturally responsive issues. They are simply teaching the students about what I find important about Jim Crow. Figuring out a way to feature other voices was what I wanted to do and was not successful.

I was much better in the lesson I taught that focused on school segregation that was brought on because of the Jim Crow policies. For this lesson I used an excerpt from the book *Four Hundred Souls* which gives the histories of Black Americans through stories told by members of the Black community. I used an excerpt about integration from a small school district in Texas that had segregation become a major public issue after the school designated for

Black children burned down shortly after World War 2. The school district wanted to relocate the Black students to a literal POW shelter that was used for Germans during the war, and the parents of those students were appropriately furious. A wide range of issues highlighting the differences between how white and Black students' schools were covered in the reading. These ranged from the difference in funding for the schools, which was ten times more for the white school despite the majority of the town being people of color, to the simple aspect of how ugly the proposed school was as an educational building. It also went into the negative perception of the students' parents which I tried to connect to the modern day protests happening around the Black Lives Matter movement. My struggles to get students to engage with even simple prompts early on made this lesson a hard one to get much in terms of assessing student learning, but I do think this was a good idea for a culturally responsive lesson plan. It brought in the perspective of members of a community that was being marginalized during Jim Crow forced school segregation. I wasn't quite as thorough in my lesson plans yet but for this lesson I had this as the plan. I used this image earlier in the chapter, in figure A, talking about how I struggled with promoting critical thinking, but here it shows my attempts at promoting a culturally responsive classroom, which I think it demonstrates much better. (Figure A.)

Figure A.

Segment of lesson plan on school segregation

25 minutes	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Get into the meat of the lesson which is going over the reading that I have found from <i>Four Hundred Souls</i> with parts that I have found important highlighted. I want to focus on the issues of perception by the parents as they fought for a better school, and the disparity in funding/quality of the schools for black students despite being the majority of the district. I will ask students questions about the reading as we go</p>	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Read along with the article. I will be summarizing most of it, but will have highlighted parts and will be putting the reading in the google classroom for students to access.</p>	<p>The responses in the assessment after the lesson is over</p>
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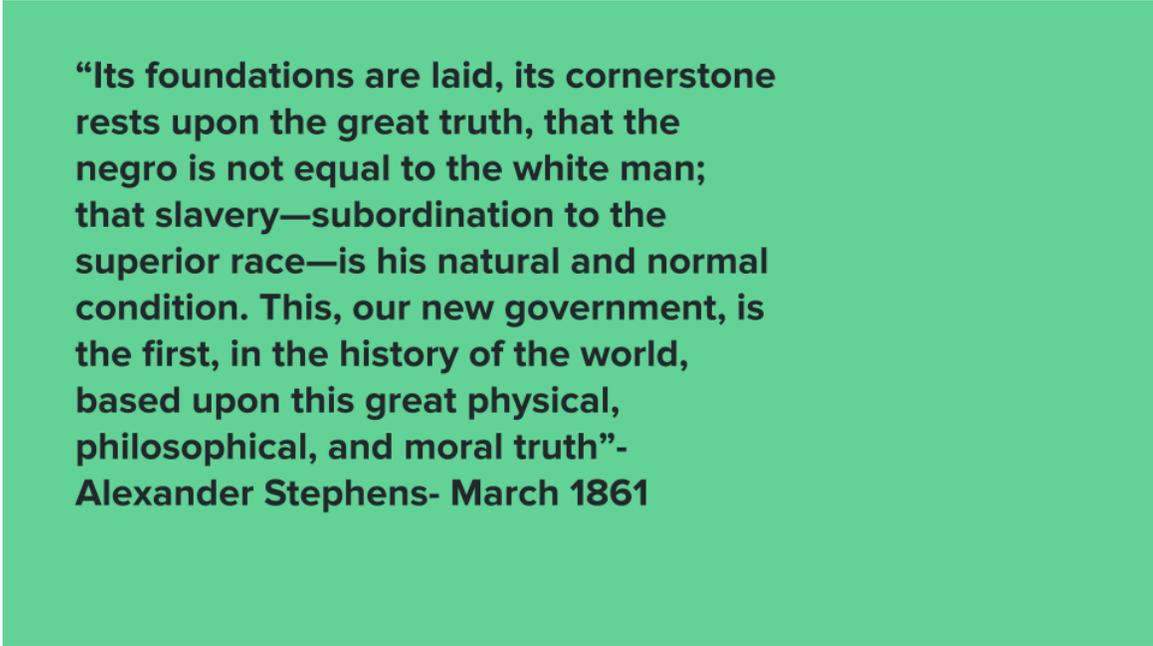
In some instances where I could not find appropriate sources that showcased the perspective of marginalized groups I tried to show that common narratives about past events are not showing the realities of the past. While teaching about the build up to the Civil War I made sure to showcase the fact that slavery was without a doubt the driving factor behind the Southern states seceding. I also taught an entire lesson about John Brown, who is someone that never even came up while I was in school, to demonstrate that the issue of slavery was a moral issue that the country knew it had to reckon with. I wanted to dispel the myths that the Civil War was about anything other than slavery and showing how passionate people were in opposition was the first step.

What showed this theme in a stronger way was the actual lesson I taught about the early days of the civil war. In this I showed the exact reasons the states seceded using their declarations of secessions. After establishing the clear goals of the first 7 states that left the

United States I used a quote from the Vice president of the Confederate States of America as a bold quote taking up an entire slide in the presentation which is shown in figure D.

Figure D.

Excerpt from presentation during lesson on the Confederate States of America



“Its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth”- Alexander Stephens- March 1861

My goal in this was to demonstrate without a doubt that the Southern states were seceding and in turn starting the Civil War to uphold the institution of slavery, and starting a new country based around a false racial hierarchy. Using this strategy is not perfect, and in something like the early stages of the Civil War I probably should have found a source from either an emancipated Black person or other document that gives agency to the enslaved people building up to, and during, the war. In lieu of that I do think this strategy shows the forced prosecution of Black men and women that was ingrained into white society from some of the earliest points in our country.

Following the lessons about the civil war I went into the Reconstruction era. I mentioned this lesson a little earlier about how I finally started getting more details into my lesson plans that guided me towards better lessons. In this I wanted to show that the rise of terrorist groups like

the KKK were major reasons for the lack of Black representation in politics. Similar to the last lesson I talked about I struggled to find good sources that were not from the white perspective to go over in class. I want to believe that giving students the history of how the white power structure was willing to change laws, and committee groups dedicated to terrorizing the Black community was adequate culturally responsive teaching, but am not sure it is. The pertinent information in the lesson plan focuses on how America didn't get Black representation in either the Senate or House of Representatives at a level even near reconstruction levels until the students' lifetimes. Figure E is how I displayed that in my lesson plan

Figure E.

Segment of lesson plan on reconstruction

15 minu tes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Focus on how the era immediately after the Civil War was a time where more black men were in politics in a way that was not replicated until recently, if it even has been in modern times. Mention the representation in the senate, and house of representatives specifically. Talk about the rise of the KKK and how the terror that they caused nearly eliminated voting among the black community	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Follow along and filling in the worksheet that goes along with the lesson. This part will connect with a question in the first section. Asking questions when appropriate.	I will either ask about questions that may have had or read the assessment that goes along with the lesson.
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You can see how my goals were to showcase the disparities and terror that were present at the time. This does connect to the displays of white dominance that continues throughout the country today, but is still told through that same white cultural power structure more than is ideal.

Despite trying to make sure all my lesson plans had at least some culturally responsive strategies I was not always successful. I found that this did not have to do with the stage I was in regarding lesson planning either. Some of the earlier lessons I made integrated culturally responsive practices better than the later ones. I fear that as I got more comfortable making lessons the routine took over and I would just make what felt like a good lesson rather than consistently thinking about ways to provide culturally responsive teaching. You can see this on some of my lesson plans about things that should have had culturally responsive activities, but I really only taught about things that I believed are good to learn about. I taught a broad lesson about the Civil Rights movement which should have easily had empowering elements included throughout. Instead I merely thought talking about how Rosa Parks was not a passive observer when she refused to give up her seat on the bus was adequate. Although giving someone everybody has learned about some form of agency is important it would have been easy to go further than I did. You can see in figure F. that I concluded that a simple telling of Park's story was enough to get students to think of her as an activist instead of a woman too tired to give up her seat.

Figure F.

Segment of lesson plan on the Civil Rights movement

10 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Rosa Parks section. I will go over how I perceive the common telling of Parks to be lacking in not giving her any agency in her own life. Then show the students a 5 minute video that goes into more detail about her activism prior to and after the moment she refused to move seats. This is where I would connect this moment to Plessy v. Ferguson	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: I have one question that specifically requires attention to the video that was played. I am making sure the answers are readily available for students who may not be in the meeting	I will know what they have learned as responses on the short worksheet that I am having them fill out during the presentation
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I clearly had assumptions about what students would take from the lesson but didn't give them enough time or information to internalize it.

In that same lesson I also tried to teach students about activists that are not as commonly talked about. I had a short section on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) which was geared towards the events on Bloody Sunday when police violently beat the protestors. This was caught on cameras and displayed across the country providing a swell of support for the Civil Rights movement in the nation. Rather than focusing on how police brutality is something that has persisted throughout the history of the country I focused on the importance of imagery and video in growing support for causes. I wanted to connect the events on Bloody Sunday to the protests last summer in how having clear video of an event can both breed support, or help kick off protests over an issue. I think that it would have been a better idea looking at the events as one that relates to how communities have been mistreated by authority

figures over time breeding mistrust. You can see in my lesson plan for that day (Figure G.) I was focusing on the media aspect rather than the cultural one.

Figure G.

Segment of lesson plan on the Civil Rights movement

10 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: This is the SNCC/bloody sunday portion of the lesson. I will introduce the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and how they used freedom rides and other tactics. I will also first bring up John Lewis who plays a role in bloody sunday. I want to connect that to the role media plays in building empathy for movements like this and from last summer.	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: As this has more connections to today I would hope for more student engagement. I will ask questions about how it connects to today trying to prod it out of some of the students. If not I will be looking at the worksheet that is given to the class.	Again I will get the evidence of student work, and what they have learned through the lesson from the worksheet that is on the google classroom.
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Overall my culturally responsive lesson planning was an inconsistent goal. I tried to implement the strategy in most of my lessons, but in many, failed to go far enough to make a difference in how students interpreted the ideas. When I did manage to get my lesson plans to align with my goals I believe that I made plans that were successful in showing students what common historical events were like from the perspective of the marginalized groups in this country. If I was making some of these plans over again I would focus more on getting perspectives of the BIPOC people that we are learning about, but in cases where that was not applicable finding narratives that do not showcase the dominant white power structure should have been the focus.

Formal Observations

In a similar vein to the student work my observations did not mention specifically culturally responsive aspects of my teaching. They did, however, comment on the lesson plans overall. Building from this can be a good way to know if the lessons that they did provide feedback on followed good concepts of lesson planning, and then connect those to how I perceived my lessons regarding their cultural responsiveness. I do not have the largest bank of lessons that have provided feedback from either my Western Oregon University appointed advisor, or my cooperating teacher, but should still be enough to provide me with good feedback on my lessons.

The first lesson my WOU advisor observed was the lesson in which I taught about school segregation. Personally I felt that this was one of my better lessons when it came to teaching in a culturally responsive way. I utilized Black voices to tell the story of school segregation in a small Texas town in which whites were the minority. The reading that we did in class was one that demonstrated the struggles in getting funding, safety, and presentation of a new school for the Black students after their former school had burned down. In the section on lesson plans I go into more detail about this specific lesson, as I do believe it to be one of my more culturally responsive.

In my advisor's feedback for this lesson he was overall positive. He praised how I differentiated the lesson for students through highlighting the significant parts of the reading we went over in class saying "For differentiation, Joseph visually (w/highlights) displayed the reading article as well as orally read the article". He also mentioned that after reading aloud, and attempting to discuss the reading I at least tried to assess the students in a breakout room to discuss the worksheet that went along with the lesson. Unfortunately I have a clear memory of

this lesson and although I did try and talk to the students in the breakout rooms they were dead silent with the students simply doing the worksheet independently. Although that is specifically something that I believe has more to do with practice than the lesson plan it is still disappointing.

When combining how I felt towards this lesson plan with what the overall feedback was from my Western Oregon advisor I feel good about how this lesson plan worked overall. The aspects that focused on being culturally responsive were some of my better ones, and the actual lesson plan had positive feedback. This was one of the lessons I was most positive about in this regard so it is not unexpected to get positive remarks about the lesson.

In my second observed lesson from my WOU advisor I did not get much as far as feedback on the actual lesson plan. As my first days of teaching came at a slightly rushed pace because of my late placement, these two observations were on back to back lessons that I taught. With this in mind I think my advisor was trying to avoid giving similar feedback while still being positive because of the rushed nature of the observations. The only thing that was said explicitly about my lesson plans was “The lesson is sequenced and scaffolded appropriately”. Most of the feedback was about my actual teaching practice rather than the planning. With that information it is hard to say how culturally responsive my lesson plans were.

My observations from my cooperating teacher had more to say about the lesson plans that were used, but as they were also still early in the process focused more on my improvements in the classroom. From my first formal observation my cooperating teacher said “The lesson plan was very detailed and contained good information” and “Learning targets were communicated in the lesson plan but not clearly to the students”. With that feedback it does seem like the lesson plan was not all together horrible. In my own review of this lesson in the section on how my lesson plans were culturally responsive I was disappointed with how I portrayed the Jim Crow

era in the south. Having feedback that at least says I organized the materials in a way that was useful to the students can help in how I organize them once they are more culturally responsive.

Similar to my Western Oregon advisor's second observation feedback, my cooperating teacher focused on how I could improve in the classroom. Part of this did connect to the lesson plan in how I stated my overall objectives better in the plan than while teaching the lesson saying "All stated goals objectives, standards and targets were appropriately stated in the lesson plan. In the future Joe should try to present those elements to the students in order to provide them a map and ideology of the different elements that would be included in the days lesson plan.". This is something that I worked on early in my teaching a lot. When using this strategy in a culturally responsive manner being abundantly clear about the main theme is important. In my lesson, that was not observed, about the origins of the Civil War I made sure that I clearly repeated how slavery was the reason for the war to make sure that is what students took out of the lesson. Enforcing that with evidence using primary sources created a lesson that although not perfect, was a good lesson in making sure the representation of the war is not told through the narrative of white cultural heroism about the actors in the southern states.

My advisors were not completely clear about how culturally responsive teaching played a role in the lessons they observed. It is important as someone always trying to improve at what they do to take feedback in many ways. Being able to implement what was said into improving my culturally responsive teaching will undoubtedly be useful throughout my teaching career. What the observations did give me was a good idea that how I was planning these lessons would still benefit the students. Once I improve my ability to find resources that the culture of marginalized groups, as I plan on doing, the result should be complete lessons that make other cultures the centerpiece rather than observers in history

Personal Reflections

My reflections about how I perceived my culturally responsive practices showed the inconsistencies that I saw while looking at my lesson plans, but put into my thoughts at the time. From these reflections it becomes clear how I either completely forgot to mention the fact it was a goal of mine, or how I felt like I could have put more work into teaching in a manner that was culturally responsive.

While reading these I also realized other ways of teaching to cultures that surround the school. In reflections from classes I was observing, my cooperating teachers showed how to teach to cultures beyond the range I was thinking about. Students in the area I am working are overwhelmingly rural, and have a culture that reflects that. One of the early classes I observed the teacher talked about the concept of eminent domain. He connected this to the area we are teaching in how some of the students, who have large areas of property may have the government asking to put a cell tower, or widen the highway near their homes a lane into their property. This does not have a lot to do with my main goal in researching this type of pedagogy, but I found it useful as a reminder that there are countless different cultures that can be taught in a specific way. As I started teaching and putting my own efforts into creating culturally responsive practices I did tend to focus on those that related to marginalized groups over those that dealt with the local culture of the school. I did put in effort to try and localize some of the lessons, but that was more in regard to comments made during the lesson, not overarching themes of them.

After the first lesson I taught I did not mention the goal of cultural responsiveness in my reflection, it was more about the relief of finally teaching. My second lesson, which is the one I have mentioned multiple times so far about school segregation, did provide a good barometer of

how I was feeling at that point in time with me saying “One thing that I think I have done well with the two lessons I have taught so far, and the one I am working on, is teaching through a culturally responsive practice. This doesn't seem to be super prioritized at the school, which isn't particularly surprising as it is a small rural school that is overwhelmingly white from what I can tell”. As I progressed in my observations I saw that the teachers would provide lessons that were responsive to other cultures when the situation was appropriate, but it was not a prioritized goal.

I continued to have similar reflections about how my own culturally responsive practices were going for most of my early lessons. One worry I had when finding out I was placed in a school that is much more rural than the area I was familiar with was how students would respond to lessons that may counter their held beliefs. This did not seem to be an issue either with me or my cooperating teachers. I recognized this in some of my earlier reflections saying “The culturally responsive aspect does seem good for now despite being in a small, conservative, school the students seem to respond to the practice”. To be fair, this was not after a lesson that is particularly risky looking back on it, but that is a sentiment that remains unchanged through my varied efforts to teach in this manner. Although the school is much more conservative than the area I am familiar with, the lessons have gone without a hitch to this point.

As mentioned earlier my lessons became more culturally inconsistent as I continued to make them, and I did not feel like I was making enough of an effort on the ones that were designed to be. The next few lessons I taught there were no mentions of how well I felt I planned the lessons in a culturally responsive manner in my reflections. After the lack of referencing one of my main goals in this project, my reflection after a lesson about the Civil War was “I probably haven't been doing as well as telling the story of the civil war from the black perspective as I would like. This could be for many reasons including me trying to get more streamlined in how

long it takes me to make the lessons, or that finding first hand black perspectives of enslaved people is more difficult than it is to do during the civil rights movement”. Whether these are valid excuses or not this shows that I clearly did not believe I was making enough of an effort in regards to teaching how I wanted to.

Unfortunately this type of reflection came up more consistently when attempting to speed up my lessons planning process. In the next series of reflections I made were all critical of how culturally responsive the lessons were. After teaching about the emancipation proclamation I said “I could have tried harder to find a black perspective on the emancipation proclamation as it did obviously affect enslaved people more than anybody else.”. And another comment in a continuation of the civil war “I need to teach from a culturally responsive perspective. The civil war should not be difficult to find black perspectives on while teaching, but I did not and probably didn't look hard enough for that specifically while making the lesson”. It worries me that as I progressed in my teaching and planning I got more absent minded about how I focused my lessons.

Some of those lessons may have been better than I gave them credit for at the time. All of those lessons specifically relate to when I was teaching about the Civil War, and while looking at those lesson plans earlier I was far less critical. I still saw that there was ample room for improvement, but recognized that the focus of the lessons was good. Knowing myself this is not incredibly surprising, I have always had stronger emotions about my own capabilities in the moment and then been able to look at them with more objectivity later on. It is good to be able to have critical assessments of yourself, but realize when you may have been too harsh as well.

During my relatively short time in a practicum I had desires to teach every lesson possible with a mind towards culturally responsive practices that I had researched in the past.

Although I started out with a consistent approach the more I taught the less I prioritized the culturally responsive aspect. I found myself willing to take less time in making my lessons rather than finding ways to highlight different cultures and how they have thrived in many ways despite being oppressed by the dominant white culture. Going forward in my teaching, I will have to make sure that I put aside the time to make lesson plans that are demonstrating the values I want to show while teaching. If I do this I hope I can become the teacher I aspire to be. One who makes sure all students have an understanding of the history of all cultures and how that relates to the world today.

Looking at the data I collected and analysed I recognized how I have grown, or not grown in my time teaching. Through trial and error I have developed some strategies that helped get students to show critical thinking in their responses to assignments given by me. I still need to focus on better ways of checking for understanding so I know students have the base knowledge to show signs of critical thought when the time comes, but progress is being made. My other focus, teaching in a culturally responsive manner, was not as linear in how I have grown. At times I showed promise, but in future lessons that promise faded away. In the final chapter of this project, I will be looking at how I will use this knowledge to develop my future lessons, and classrooms as a middle or high school teacher.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

When I set out on this journey of action research I was unsure what I would find. I didn't know what I would be able to make from my growth, or lack thereof, as a teacher. One thing that I did expect when first sitting down to focus on the research is that I would learn the best ways to develop my teaching strategies for the rest of my career. I clearly have room to improve in getting students to think critically when they are responding to prompts, and planning lessons that focus on critically responsive practices, but this research has helped give me the tools to study my own teaching in the future. As someone that aspires to always be learning and improving as a teacher this is a skill that cannot be understated. Although I did see how to incorporate strategies that would help students answer questions with more critical thought involved, and how to recognize culturally responsive practices in my lessons, the skill of self analysis is the most important thing I gained from this research.

From here I will look at the research I have collected and go over the results, implications, limitations, how I will use this information going forward, and finally I will provide some words of conclusion for the research I have done.

Results

The results of my first question, which was what practices promoted critical thought in student answers to my questions about the lessons? Through trial and error I did show some promise as I progressed through my research. At first getting students to answer questions with more than short responses that only connected to the basic facts of the lesson was common among all students in the class. As I improved my in class teaching responses improved slightly,

and including better checks for understanding than I am currently would help this more. Beyond that what made the biggest differences, albeit in a small sample size, was having students respond to factual questions before asking them ones that required more critical thought. Having short, fact based, questions guarantees students have an understanding of the necessary information to make their own interpretations of events. Without that, students are essentially guessing at how to answer a question that claims it is opinion based, and you are assuming an ability to interpret information that may not be there.

My second question was how has my lesson planning changed to reflect culturally responsive practices the more I have taught? And my research showed that this did not have a clear answer about whether I improved throughout my time teaching. I had some lessons that showed good progress, while others lacked responsive practices when making a lesson using them should have been easily manageable. Overall it was an inconsistent process that at times showed growth that regressed by the next lesson, and then improved again the one after that. After looking over my past lessons I did see the attempts to teach in a culturally responsive manner more often than not, but the execution left a lot of room for growth. As stated in the overview of this chapter I think the ability for me to recognize areas of growth in an organized manner was the largest outcome of this project. The fact I was trying to make lessons that focused on culturally responsive practices is a good start, and now that I have more knowledge in how to recognize areas I can improve in, developing strong lessons in this manner should be on the horizon.

Implications

My data showing that I could improve the quality of critical thinking in the answers of my students through first asking them more factual questions has serious implications for my future teaching. In my philosophy of teaching I mention how I want students to recognize the hows and whys of history, not the whos and whats, but this shows that first guaranteeing the simple facts are understood goes a long way in leading to the how and the why of an event. Rather than solely focus on major themes that make history and social studies important, it is beneficial to students to get the base information that can help guide them to those themes.

I believe the implications for my second question are far greater. The fact that I was inconsistent in how well I made culturally responsive lessons tells me about the consistency required to teach as well as you can all the time. More than simply not teaching in a culturally responsive manner for a lesson or two is the implication that you are losing focus on teaching as a whole. Falling into the routine of teaching, planning, and grading is easy, but won't give students the focus they deserve. Recognizing that this was a lack of focus in how I wanted to teach is important in being able to see when I am stumbling into this mindset in the future.

Limitations

Like many people going through their practicum this year my limitations were centered around the inability to get students into the classroom due to the Covid Shutdowns. One thing that I had to deal with that others did not was a drastically shortened timeline in which I could get acclimated to distance learning and start my research for the project. The school districts directly surrounding me were not actively taking placements for student teachers as a result of how distance learning had affected their teachers. As a result of this I was not placed in a classroom until February 22nd. This was well into the winter term, and about as late as I would

feel comfortable in getting this amount of hands on research done. Starting this late limited the amount of observations of teaching I was able to complete as well. My first lessons came only two weeks after my first day. Getting thrown into the fire in a style of teaching that I had minimal experience with made my early lessons as much trial and error as anything. I was aware of the difficulties of online learning from talking with others, but still had different expectations than what was shown to be the reality when I started.

The second major limitation that I incurred was how to adjust to distance learning. I knew going into the lessons that student engagement was much lower than in person lessons, but how much so came as a surprise to me. My placement was split between two teachers and neither of them could get much in regards to student interaction. In the latter part of my placement the school started initiating some form of in person lessons, and both teachers got much better interactions with the classroom. One of the teachers was so excited when he saw enough students to get some form of class discussion started that it showed me how clearly they had made adjustments themselves throughout the year. Considering how important it is to get students engaged and asking questions in traditional classrooms this was a huge shake up from how I had been planning my teaching process in the year long lead up to my placement.

Combining my late start with my lack of understanding about how distance learning had affected the school year had the effect of limiting the questions I could ask in research. My original plan, before I was placed, was to focus on getting students to ask engaging questions rather than ones that dealt with factual information. Once I came to the realization that any serious questioning was incredibly rare during online lessons I had to adjust the goal of my research. To try and manage this while keeping the same goal in mind I adjusted that question to be one that focused on how students responded to prompts that I gave them. I had to make this

adjustment early on in my placement and was still unaware that students turned in work with less consistency as well. Luckily that did not end up costing me dramatically, but I would have had more clarity in my results if more students had turned in the various assignments that I used for evidence in chapter IV.

One final limitation that I consider important enough to include in this section was that I was not placed in a community that I was familiar with before entering the school. When I first heard the school district I was placed in I had to look up where and how big the district was. Although teachers should be able to teach any students no matter if they are familiar with the community they are living in, it was hard for me to get accustomed to the culture of the surrounding area. I had goals of teaching in a culturally responsive manner during my action research process and was placed in an overwhelmingly white and rural Oregon community. I tried to make sure that didn't affect my lesson planning when it came to issues that may have had political implications, but do think I would have taken slightly stronger positions on connecting racial issues of the past to modern times if I had more familiarity with the area. Teaching issues of equality should not be shied away from as it is one of, if not the, most important issues in society. However, arriving to the school on such a weird timeline, and not having as good of a chance to know the students as individuals as well as I would like, made me hesitant to commit to showing my classes how the issue of racial equity is one that is still a major ongoing struggle rather than something that only occurred in the past. I was confident in how my two cooperating teachers would react, but beyond that I was unsure if the school administration, or parents would feel the same way.

Future Use of Information

To connect my findings with what I desire for my philosophy of education I need to see the places I can improve from the results of my research and work towards making them strengths in my teaching. For the two questions I have focused on during this project this means continuing to work towards making sure my lessons are culturally responsive, and that I can elicit responses from students that display critical thinking and interpretations based on the information presented in class.

Making sure my lessons are prioritizing cultures beyond the dominant white one that is commonly taught in history classrooms is something that will always need to be kept in mind while planning lessons. Even if I saw consistent improvement while researching for this project I would be far from complete in regards to a full curriculum and what I have would still be available for improvement. Teaching this way also requires constant updating of my own knowledge of cultures and the literature highlighting them that is available to use in the classroom. Gaining the ability to consistently reassess my own lessons through a culturally responsive lens is one of the major things I am taking away from working on this project. It also showed me how rewarding it can be when students acknowledge that you tried to teach them something that represented them as individuals. I got a response from a student talking about how they liked the inclusion of an LGBTQ member of the Civil Rights movement, and that was one of the most rewarding moments for me in my time teaching. It only to make me aware how important it is to get students to see themselves represented in work, attempting to teach this way was beneficial to me and I will make sure to improve this as I go forward in my career.

I still have a long way to go in getting students to answer my prompts with more critical thinking, but in this area I made more progress that can be repeated and built upon. Starting with

basic checks for understanding happening more often during my lessons would be a big first step. From there I think making sure students have some grasp on the factual information that is required to understand and provide an answer that requires critical thinking. As understanding is required before interpretation and analysis can be made, finding other ways to check for understanding will be prioritized in both my immediate lessons and those that I use throughout my life. For now that will be something that is used in my assessments moving forward, but I will still be looking for other ways that could improve on this idea as I continue teaching.

Eliciting critical responses is something that will help students develop the type of critical thought that is useful as a learner throughout their lives beyond school. As this is what I want to get out of the students that pass through my classroom Making it a priority in my earliest days of educating should not be a surprise. After unsuccessful attempts in my early lessons, my in class teaching and how I approached questioning the student responses improved to the point where they would show critical thinking in how they interpreted the lesson. Similarly the constant growth in learning that is required for ensuring all lessons are taught in a culturally responsive manner has the ability to make teaching as rewarding as I had hoped when initially aspiring to the profession.

Conclusion

As I stated in the overview of this chapter the main takeaway for me in the action research process was the ability to analyze my own teaching in a way that can guide my improvement. Focusing on how well I got students to answer questions, and planned for lessons culturally responsively is a positive that can be used in the future, but what is more beneficial for my long term success as an educator is the ability to assess my own teaching. A long teaching career will have many changes in what is seen as best practices, and new strategies will arise.

The ability to see how well I can adjust to these practices and continue as an effective educator is a necessity rather than a privilege. Going forward that will be how I use this information more than anything, as a way to gauge my improvement as a long term educator.

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Appendix A**Lesson Plan****Teacher Candidate:** Joseph Cirello**Date of Lesson:****3/11/2021**

Lesson Title/Description: School desegregation		
Lesson #2 of 3	Time Allotted for this Lesson: 45 minutes	
Standards:HS.61 Analyze and explain persistent historical, social and political issues, conflicts and compromises in regards to power, inequality and justice and their connection to currents events and movements. (History)	Central Focus: Analyze the realities of black americans that were forced to live in a segregated society	Learning Targets: Understand what separate but equal actually meant Get to know who Thurgood Marshall as an important figure in the history of Civil Rights Compare and Contrast the differences between Plessy and Brown cases
<p>Pre-Requisite Knowledge and/or Skills: I am expecting students to know what Brown v. Board is. I will give a brief recap of it before getting into the meat of the lesson about what black students were forced to go through under the name of separate but equal. We will have gone over the beginnings of Jim Crow laws in the previous class as well.</p> <p>How I know the students have this: I have no proof of their knowledge, but they are seniors in this class and the Brown decision is famous enough that most students will have some frame of reference.</p>		
<p>Academic language that will be used in lesson: Integration, Brown v Board, school desegregation</p> <p>Strategies and opportunities for supporting academic language:</p>		

<p>Connections to students' "Funds of Knowledge"/assets, prior knowledge, and or/interdisciplinary connections that will be made during the lesson: I will try and connect the lesson to the previous one and hopefully guid this to the next part of the lesson which will be more focused on the civil rights movement</p>		
<p>How have you addressed the needs of diverse learners ? (Ex: IEPs, 504s, linguistic & cultural diversity, students without prerequisite knowledge, etc.) I have no real life knowledge of these students, I have only seen them on Zoom and am unaware of any IEPs or other linguistic or cultural demands</p>		
<p>What technology supports or integration is included in this lesson? It is a Zoom lesson so I will be using that as well as a reading that is in my Google drive</p>		
<p>Materials/Equipment/Supplies/Technology/Preparation: Reading and A few short answer questions that I will be asking about the reading. If time permits I will be going over the questions with the class</p>		
<p>Procedure: Teacher Does.....</p>	<p>Procedure: Students Do.....</p>	<p>What will I watch for to know students are engaged, or what they learned?</p>

Time 5 minu tes	Motivation/Hook: Start the lesson by going over a brief overview of Brown v. Board and what the ruling was compared to Plessy v. Ferguson that was talked about in the previous class	Motivation/Hook: Take notes, listen to the short recap and comparisons to Plessy	
25 minu tes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Get into the meat of the lesson which is going over the reading that I have found from <i>Four Hundred Souls</i> with parts that I have found important highlighted. I want to focus on the issues of perception by the parents as they fought for a better school, and the disparity in funding/quality of the schools for black students despite being the majority of the district. I will ask students questions about the reading as we go	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Read along with the article. I will be summarizing most of it, but will have highlighted parts and will be putting the reading in the google classroom for students to access.	The responses in the assessment after the lesson is over

15 minutes	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application:</p> <p>Depending on class make up, have students answer questions in breakout rooms or go over them as a class together if students want to do that compared to individually. This is dependent on time remaining as well.</p>	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application:</p> <p>Discuss answers to questions in breakout rooms that provide smaller groups for class discussion. And discuss with class as a whole after that if time allows</p>	
<p>Assessments</p> <p>1. <u>Evidence</u> collected during/as a result of this lesson:</p> <p>I will be creating a short 2 or 3 short answer question assessment about the reading that we went over and how it affects communities of color to be represented in such a manner.</p> <p>1. Summative assessment is _____ days after this lesson</p>			
<p>Theoretical, Pedagogical, and/or Lines of Research that Justify Your Instructional Choices:</p> <p>This lesson uses culturally responsive practices that gives students the idea of what school segregation, and segregation as a whole, was like from the perspective of the marginalized Black americans of the time</p>			

Appendix B and E**Lesson Plan****Teacher Candidate:** Joseph Cirello**Date of Lesson:****4/14/2021**

Lesson Title/Description: Reconstruction		
Lesson # of	Time Allotted for this Lesson: 45 minutes	
Standards: HS.61 Analyze and explain persistent historical, social and political issues, conflicts and compromises in regards to power, inequality and justice and their connections to current events and movements.	Central Focus: Students should understand the short lived era of progress after the Civil War called reconstruction. They will see how it arose and how and why it ended after a short period of time	Learning Targets: Understand what the 13th and 14th amendments were designed for. Analyze the improved progress of Black men in regards to politics and how that progress ended as a result of both legal and illegal practices
<p>Pre-Requisite Knowledge and/or Skills: We will have gone over the civil war, Lincoln's politics, and the era of slavery that was prior. In previous lessons we have gone over the Civil Rights movement and Jim Crow era which shows that the rights that were gained after the war were short lived.</p> <p>How I know the students have this: As just stated we have gone over many of the surrounding issues in class previous to that students will be able to make connections to</p>		
<p>Academic language that will be used in lesson: Reconstruction, 13th and 14th amendment, and black codes</p> <p>Strategies and opportunities for supporting academic language: We will be talking about the amendments, and reconstruction explicitly at multiple times through the lesson which should give students an understanding of those definitions. I will give a short description of what the black codes were in the middle of the lesson.</p>		

<p>Connections to students’ “Funds of Knowledge”/assets, prior knowledge, and or/interdisciplinary connections that will be made during the lesson: As mentioned earlier we have gone over a lot of the surrounding issues in class previously so students have a good understanding of them. This should have created a good fund of knowledge that they can make connections to while learning.</p>			
<p>How have you addressed the needs of diverse learners ? (Ex: IEPs, 504s, linguistic & cultural diversity, students without prerequisite knowledge, etc.) I provide both visual and auditory ways of taking in this lesson which helps students who struggle with either following along visually or hearing. I also give students the chance to follow along on their own after the class in the google classroom page.</p>			
<p>What technology supports or integration is included in this lesson? This is an online lesson and will be taught on Zoom, I also will be using a google slide deck</p>			
<p>Materials/Equipment/Supplies/Technology/Preparation:</p>			
<p>Procedure: Teacher Does.....</p>		<p>Procedure: Students Do.....</p>	
<p>What will I watch for to know students are engaged, or what they learned?</p>			
<p>Time 5 minu tes</p>	<p>Motivation/Hook: Go over the initial ending of the Civil War and the main issue of the 13th and 14th amendments being passed.</p>	<p>Motivation/Hook: Follow the worksheet that accompanies the lesson that has the factual questions at the top of the sheet, and one more critical thinking inspired question at the bottom</p>	<p>Either asking questions, or following along with the worksheet</p>
<p>20 minu tes</p>	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Cover the actual reconstruction act that was passed through congress. Prioritize that after this act and the 14th amendment were both passed the amount of black men that could vote was higher than it was</p>	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Follow along with the lesson, and how at one point after the Civil War the political rights of black men were higher than at any point in nearly one hundred years until</p>	<p>This has to do with the second part of the worksheet given over Google classroom so I would like to see connections</p>

	<p>both before, but also after the immediate reconstruction era</p>	<p>the passing of the Civil Rights Act in the 1960's</p>	<p>made during that.</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Focus on how the era immediately after the Civil War was a time where more black men were in politics in a way that was not replicated until recently, if it even has been in modern times. Mention the representation in the senate, and house of representatives specifically. Talk about the rise of the KKK and how the terror that they caused nearly eliminated voting among the black community</p>	<p>Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Follow along and filling in the worksheet that goes along with the lesson. This part will connect with a question in the first section. Asking questions when appropriate.</p>	<p>I will either ask about questions that may have had or read the assessment that goes along with the lesson.</p>

Assessments

1. Evidence collected during/as a result of this lesson:

There is a worksheet that I will be providing with this lesson that will provide me with a formal assessment

1. Summative assessment is _____ days after this lesson

Theoretical, Pedagogical, and/or Lines of Research that Justify Your Instructional Choices:

I scaffold this lesson throughout and give students connections to modern times with the change in representation by Black men and women in US politics in the century plus since reconstruction

Appendix C

Lesson Plan**Teacher Candidate:** Joseph Cirello**Date of Lesson:** 3/8/2021

Lesson Title/Description: Jim Crow		
Lesson # 1 of 2	Time Allotted for this Lesson: 40 minutes	
Standards: HS.12 Examine the power of government and evaluate the reasoning and impact of Supreme Court decisions on the rights of individuals and groups (such as Marbury v. Madison, Roe v. Wade, D.C. v. Heller, Loving v. Virginia, Plessy v. Ferguson, Obergefell v. Hodges, Brown v. Board, Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, Reed v. Reed, Oregon Employment Division vs. Smith, Korematsu v. US, Dartmouth v. Woodward, Mendez v. Westminster, etc.). (Civics)	Central Focus: Understanding the origins of Jim Crow laws in the south and how they affected the black population	Learning Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the difficulties in voting for people of color and how this affects the population - Understand the significance of Jim Crow laws on the southern states
<p>Pre-Requisite Knowledge and/or Skills: Students will have an understanding of reconstruction that leads into the era of Jim Crow, I will be picking up after Plessy V Ferguson in 1896 which does leave a hole in the timeline.</p> <p>How I know the students have this: The lesson prior my mentor teacher will be giving a lesson on reconstruction that should give the students an idea of background information that leads me into the plan</p>		
<p>Academic language that will be used in lesson: disenfranchisement , Jim Crow,</p> <p>Strategies and opportunities for supporting academic language: For this lesson I will be giving a quick definition of disenfranchisement and give the students a rundown of jim crow throughout the lesson</p>		

<p>Connections to students' "Funds of Knowledge"/assets, prior knowledge, and or/interdisciplinary connections that will be made during the lesson: I should be connecting to reconstruction and maybe the lesson prior of chattel slavery and indentured servitude depending on what is covered in the reconstruction lesson</p>				
<p>How have you addressed the needs of diverse learners ? (Ex: IEPs, 504s, linguistic & cultural diversity, students without prerequisite knowledge, etc.) I am unaware of these issues in the class at this time as I haven't been told of any, and all the students are in Zoom calls with their cameras turned off.</p>				
<p>What technology supports or integration is included in this lesson? Zoom, like all the lessons this year.</p>				
<p>Materials/Equipment/Supplies/Technology/Preparation: Google slide deck, Zoom, and two videos that are of varying length</p>				
<p>Procedure: Teacher Does.....</p>		<p>Procedure: Students Do.....</p>		<p>What will I watch for to know students are engaged, or what they learned?</p>
<p>Time 5 minu tes</p>	<p>Motivation/Hook: Introduce myself and talk to the class for a little bit about how I am teaching today, that I am in school and this is my first lesson but will hopefully be teaching many more.</p>	<p>Motivation/Hook: Listen through the Zoom and hopefully interact with me in some manner to avoid total awkwardness.</p>	<p>Ideally the students will ask me questions about who I am and if I will be teaching them more going forward.</p>	

5 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Introduce the idea of Jim Crow that many students should be familiar with. From there show a short video on Plessy V Ferguson to show students how	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Watching the video and hopefully asking questions that are in connection to it.	Again with cameras off this is difficult, but students should be engaged in the video and possibly asking questions
25 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Show the effects of Plessy that took place throughout the south. Start with a 7 minute video that talks about the institutionalization of the laws with a few pauses to highlight the moments I find important. From here go over some of the more notable issues that black people have to face including losing the ability to vote. Show students an example literacy test that is available online, ask them to go over the questions and answer them as best they can.	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Read the test and ideally interact with the class through either the chat or actually talking. If this lesson was in person we would go over the example as a class as well as individually to gauge the differences that are easily available with the questions.	If in class students would take the literacy test I found online and from there go over how they answered it in class as I would project it on the whiteboard. Over Zoom I will hope they try and answer questions that are on the test as I go over them
5 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: If time allows talk about the rise of the KKK as a result of people of color having various freedoms	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Ask questions and potentially take notes through the lesson about the rise of the Klan.	

<p>Assessments</p> <p>1. <u>Evidence</u> collected during/as a result of this lesson:</p> <p>Informal assessments ideally. This is my first lesson with the students so I might need to gauge how well I am performing these</p> <p>1. Summative assessment is _____ days after this lesson</p>			
<p>Theoretical, Pedagogical, and/or Lines of Research that Justify Your Instructional Choices:</p> <p>Using primary sources such as an example literacy test will both surprise students about how ridiculous the questions are and give them an example of how unjust the tests are.</p>			

Appendix F and G**Lesson Plan****Teacher Candidate:** Joseph Cirello**Date of Lesson:**

3/16/2021

Lesson Title/Description: Figures in the Civil Rights Movement		
Lesson # 3 of 4	Time Allotted for this Lesson: 45 minutes	
StaHS.61 Analyze and explain persistent historical, social and political issues, conflicts and compromises in regards to power, inequality and justice and their connections to current events and movements. Standards:	Central Focus: I want students to recognize the importance of a variety of figures and organizations beyond Martin Luther King that played a role in the Civil Rights movement.	Learning Targets: Understand the agency that actors such as Rosa Parks carried into their work as Civil Rights leaders Compare and contrast the differences in how certain civil rights leaders are represented in the mainstream public
<p>Pre-Requisite Knowledge and/or Skills: Jim Crow era laws that were persistent in the 1950's, I will also expect them to have an idea about the march on Washington which although we haven't covered in class directly</p> <p>How I know the students have this: Over the past two classes we have discussed the Jim Crow South. One lesson went over the origins of the laws, and how that affected people in their everyday lives. The other discussed school segregation, the extent of it affected students, and the build up to Brown v. Board.</p>		
<p>Academic language that will be used in lesson: Personal agency, nonviolence, boycott, freedom rides, sit ins, SNCC</p> <p>Strategies and opportunities for supporting academic language: Most of the strategies will be giving short explanations of the language throughout the process of the lesson.</p>		

<p>Connections to students’ “Funds of Knowledge”/assets, prior knowledge, and or/interdisciplinary connections that will be made during the lesson: I will connect the history of “bloody sunday” and how having video of the atrocities shown to millions across the country to the events of last summer and the role video plays in creating empathy for movements</p> <p>I am also making connections with what they know about Rosa Parks and attempting to give the students a fuller view of her as a person. In my experience she is rarely taught about as an activist, and gets called a tired woman on the bus too often. This will also be brought back to the Plessy v. Ferguson case because they both have to do with someone not moving from there seat on public transport (train car/bus)</p>				
<p>How have you addressed the needs of diverse learners ? (Ex: IEPs, 504s, linguistic & cultural diversity, students without prerequisite knowledge, etc.) I am still figuring out all the IEP issues of the class, but it is good to know that two students have issues with anxiety when asked to speak in public so I will have to make sure and use the chat feature on Zoom in the situation that I am seeking class discussion</p>				
<p>What technology supports or integration is included in this lesson? Zoom, google slides, I will be using videos from online as well</p>				
<p>Materials/Equipment/Supplies/Technology/Preparation: A google slides presentation, and a short worksheet that should be answerable with the resources provided in it and the video on Parks as the attendance is generally low in the Zoom meetings.</p>				
<p>Procedure: Teacher Does.....</p>		<p>Procedure: Students Do.....</p>		<p>What will I watch for to know students are engaged, or what they learned?</p>
<p>Time 5 minu tes</p>	<p>Motivation/Hook: Introduce myself the class and give a short review about what we talked about on the previous tuesday and thursday regarding Jim Crow and school segregation.</p>	<p>Motivation/Hook: If they have any questions that arose from the previous lessons that they didn’t have in the moment they can ask them,</p>	<p>Since this is a short review section I will be looking for questions from previous classes</p>	

	Guide them to the google classroom that will have a sheet to go over that		
10 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Rosa Parks section. I will go over how I perceive the common telling of Parks to be lacking in not giving her any agency in her own life. Then show the students a 5 minute video that goes into more detail about her activism prior to and after the moment she refused to move seats. This is where I would connect this moment to Plessy v. Ferguson	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: I have one question that specifically requires attention to the video that was played. I am making sure the answers are readily available for students who may not be in the meeting	I will know what they have learned as responses on the short worksheet that I am having them fill out during the presentation
10 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Getting into the Montgomery bus boycott and how that affects the movement. This also gives us a time to introduce MLK who is someone they should know about, but it is still important to create more knowledge.	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: Following along with the worksheet that goes with the presentation. Again the answers should be directly in the slide deck for easy reference	I will have evidence of students following along with the assessment that will be back to me later
10 minutes	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: This is the SNCC/bloody sunday portion of the lesson. I will introduce the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and how they used freedom rides and other tactics. I will also first bring up John Lewis who plays a role in bloody sunday. I want to connect that to the role media plays in	Teaching OR Group OR Independent Application: As this has more connections to today I would hope for more student engagement. I will ask questions about how it connects to today trying to prod it out of some of the students. If not I will be looking at the worksheet that is given to the class.	Again I will get the evidence of student work, and what they have learned through the lesson from the worksheet that is on the google classroom.

	building empathy for movements like this and from last summer.		
5 minutes	Closure: Go over the two questions that require more critical thinking with the students that are still there, and if time is still available they can work on those.	Closure: If time is still available in the class period the students can work through the two questions that require a little bit more critical thinking.	
<p>Assessments</p> <p>1. <u>Evidence</u> collected during/as a result of this lesson:</p> <p>I will be collecting a formative assessment that will be worked on throughout the lesson. The beginning part is mostly simple fact based lessons, but the second part will have more critical thought inspired ones that should connect themes from similar movements across society.</p> <p>1. Summative assessment is _____ days after this lesson</p>			
<p>Theoretical, Pedagogical, and/or Lines of Research that Justify Your Instructional Choices:</p> <p>I am trying to tell the story of the Civil Rights movement with more culturally responsive practices than I at least got while in school. Depending on time I would also like to look closer at the image of bloody Sunday which is a primary source that can easily be connected to other images that were commonly seen last summer.</p>			