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Examining Teacher Decision Making in Teaching About the Civil War Era in Middle
School Classrooms

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

by

Wayne Jason Shapiro

December 2011

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Acknowledgements

As I complete my dissertation, I want to take a moment to thank the friends and family members who helped along the way. First, I need to express my gratitude to my parents, Roz and Phil Shapiro, for their love and support throughout my life but especially during my graduate school career. Their encouragement as I made my journey from coursework through the writing of the dissertation has meant the world to me, and although I don't say it enough, I love you both more than I could ever express. I consider myself so fortunate to have you as my parents. My sister Jennifer's belief in me always boosted my spirits. Spending time with my brother Brian, his wife Regina, and my nieces Alexandra and Julia reenergized me throughout the writing process. Conversations with my niece Felicia kept me grounded along the way. In addition, I want to thank Regina's parents Bella and Rafail Lyando for their interest in my graduate studies. Having a chance to talk about my research was always a fun and frequently enlightening experience.

When I entered graduate school, I never thought that I would meet the love of my life. Elizabeth, your love, sense of humor, and perspective have enriched me in ways beyond words. My father in law Robert Lyons frequently enquired about my research and writing. Our conversations were a source of encouragement. My late mother in law Paulaann Lyons' courage throughout her fight against cancer was simply an inspiration. Whenever I doubted myself, I thought of her strength.

In addition to my family, I want to thank the members of my dissertation committee. Judith Sandholtz, thank you for staying on my committee even after moving on to UC Irvine. Your courses in research on teaching opened my eyes to the complex and

important work teachers do on a daily basis and influenced my thinking about teacher decision making. Margaret Nash, your encouragement was above and beyond the call of duty. Furthermore, I want to thank you for pushing me to think more deeply as I wrote and reflected on the meaning of my research. Additionally, your classes in educational history gave me the first opportunity to undertake research related to teaching and learning about the Civil War. For that, I am grateful. The History Writing Group provided support and a place to explore my thinking. Finally, John Wills—adviser, chairman, mentor—your guidance, support, and patience throughout this undertaking served as a model of extraordinary teaching. In the words of the late Rex Barney, the Baltimore Orioles announcer, “Thank y-o-o-o-u-u-u-u-u.”

Throughout my childhood and into early adulthood, I frequently saw one or both of my grandfathers reading books, magazines, or the newspaper. Their quest for knowledge was never satiated. Their curiosity about their community, their country, and the world has always inspired me to keep on learning. It is in their memory that I dedicate this study.

To the memory of my grandfathers

Martin Shapiro

and

Joseph Julius Wiener
life long learners

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Examining Teacher Decision Making in Teaching About the Civil War Era in
Middle School Classrooms

by

Wayne Jason Shapiro

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate School of Education
University of California, Riverside, December 2011
Dr. John S. Wills, Chairperson

This study investigated the influence of teachers' historical perspectives, their beliefs about instructional methods, and the impact of contextual factors in shaping the enacted curriculum and the instructional methods utilized by three middle school teachers in teaching about the Civil War era. Data gathered included interviews with teacher-participants, administrators, and non-participant teachers, field notes from classroom and school-wide observations, and curricular, departmental, and faculty documents. These data were analyzed to understand the factors that influenced teacher decision making regarding their representations of actors and events in the antebellum period, the Civil War, and Reconstruction and their choice of instructional methods. Analysis of the enacted curriculum indicated significant differences in the three teachers' representations of the antebellum period, the Civil War, and Reconstruction as a result of their varied

perspectives on these historical events. However, the importance of slavery as one cause of the Civil War was evident in all three teachers' accounts of the Civil War. Analysis of teachers' decisions regarding instructional methods indicated that all three teachers viewed direct instruction as the most appropriate method for teaching history to their students, although this was also informed by the need to conform to the district's pacing guide for 8th grade history and to convey historical content to their students as efficiently as possible. In this way the pacing guide, a subtle yet important influence on all three teachers' practice, demonstrated the significance of high stakes accountability as a context that shaped teachers' curricular and instructional decisions. Main findings include the significance of all three teachers' presentation of the complex nature of Reconstruction as the extension and then denial of rights to African Americans, which served to reinforce the idea that the Civil War was tragic and provided a context to better understand the Civil Rights Movement of the mid twentieth century. Additionally, all three teachers' use of direct instruction resulted in presenting history as factual and inevitable. The absence of contingency, the notion that historical events could have had alternative outcomes, represented the history of the Civil War era as part of a preordained narrative of progress.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

History educators such as James Loewen (1995) and Patrick Rael (2006) along with historians like David Blight (2002) and James Oliver Horton (2006) have argued that teaching students about the Civil War era can be a valuable tool for understanding racial issues both historical and in the present. In fact, Horton has made the case that one must understand the history of slavery before one can discuss race matters in twenty-first century America. Related to this, Holt (1990) has claimed that the African American experience is a central part of the nation's history; therefore, it is imperative that students have some understanding of African Americans' participation in the events of the mid-nineteenth century in order to appreciate the severity of the conflict between the nation's ideals and reality that existed since the founding and was resolved, to some extent, through the events of the Civil War and its aftermath.

The Importance of Teaching about the Civil War Era

In addition to advocating the benefits of teaching about the Civil War era, these same history educators and historians along with many others have suggested both particular curriculum and instructional approaches designed to aid teachers in providing their students with the historical content that will help them to better understand racial issues in the United States. For example, Sobottke (2010), Loewen (1995, 2010), and McPherson (2007) promote students learning how the institution of slavery created conflicts both moral and political between the North and South. Sobottke goes so far as to claim that, as an act of moral principle, contemporary historians must proclaim

slavery's central role in causing the Civil War so that it is no longer disputed.¹ Although Sobottke's assertions may seem an anathema to fellow historians, it is testimony to the importance he places on understanding the impact slavery had on race matters (West, 1993) in the nineteenth century and how issues of race continue to effect the present.

To illustrate the suggested content and instructional methods teachers should use, Briley (2008) and Loewen (2010) recommend that teachers incorporate scenes from *Gone with the Wind* with excerpts from historians' writings on Reconstruction. With this material, teachers can guide their students in analyzing the changing historiography of the postwar years as well as examine how historians of the 1920s and 1930s influenced popular culture. On top of this, students can consider how historians were influenced by the racial attitudes of their times in their historical depictions of African Americans in Reconstruction and the ways in which changing racial views inspired new historical interpretations and vice versa. That is, how the present impacts views of the past and how the past effects the present. A lesson such as this demonstrates how historians' interpretations change over time and not only reflect the discovery of new evidence but also reflect the attitudes of the historians' own time. This runs counter to most educators' view in which "history is the most accurate story" (Sandwell, 2005, p. 9).

Adding to the controversial nature of slavery (as well as Reconstruction) and its depiction in schools and such cultural institutions as museums (Vlach, 2006) is the characteristic approach to history in schools. In part because of how students are commonly taught reading comprehension, students and teachers frequently view the

¹ Sobottke endorses this idea only for the issue of slavery and its connection to the Civil War. He does not extend this to such controversies as the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

textbook as the final arbiter of what is correct within a given subject (VanSledright, 2002). This belief carries over into history classes (VanSledright, 2002). Along with this is the notion that there is only one correct answer, or at least one “best” answer, to any question put forth within a lesson (Cuban, 1991; Goodlad, 1984/2004; Loewen, 2010; Wineburg, 2004). Furthermore, many teachers’ view history as “a story about people, events and trends that constitutes a strong and linear nationalist narrative of progress from the past to the present and future.” (Sandwell, 2005, p. 9).

Framing history as a nationalist story makes it difficult to depict the Civil War era as a complex period because it raises the question of which nation—the Union or the Confederacy—should be portrayed in the best light. This quickly became an ongoing dispute in the years after the war. Both Union and Confederate veterans fought for the inclusion in textbooks of a recounting of the war most favorable to themselves (McPherson, 2007; Moreau, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002). Along these lines in his centennial essay, *The Legacy of the Civil War*, Robert Penn Warren (1961/1998) addressed how the war was used by both sides to support future social policies, criticizing both Southerners’ “Great Alibi” and Northerners’ “Treasury of Virtue” for their simplified depictions of the issue of right and wrong regarding the war (p. 54). Although most Northern Whites were happy when the war ended, they were not all pleased with slavery’s abolition. Part of the Treasury of Virtue was a tale that claimed all Northerners reacted positively to elimination of slavery. Similarly, the South’s Great Alibi and its fiction of Southerner’s near victory disguised most Southerners’ sadness at the immense

destruction of their region. In both instances, these self-deceptions concealed future racism in the North and South.

Related to the nationalist interpretation of history is its representation as a narrative of progress in which the United States is always finding solutions to problems, meeting challenges, and overcoming difficulties (Barton & Levstik, 1998; Sandwell, 2005). While the abolition of slavery fits into such an account of the past, how do the years following Appomattox fit into such a sequence of events? During Reconstruction, African Americans faced immense hardships that were often life threatening. Fitting this historical content into a narrative of progress seems exceedingly difficult. Furthermore, an accounting of racist Whites' actions at the same time does not seem to fit any contemporary definition of progress.

This, in turn, raises another issue for the history teacher. "Presentism" occurs when one judges the historical actors being studied by the standards of today (Fischer, 1970, p. 135). Presentism makes it difficult for students to develop historical empathy where students come to understand historical events from the perspectives of those who took part in them because the students cannot recognize the differences between how people acted in the past versus today (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Of course, this is not entirely up to the student. For instance, as Loewen (1995) suggests historical empathy can aid students in appreciating Abraham Lincoln's growth vis-à-vis his perspective on African Americans' capabilities; however in order for students to understand this, the teacher would likely have to guide the students through an analysis of primary source documents from Lincoln and his contemporaries to demonstrate Lincoln's evolving views.

In considering the suggestions of history educators and historians as well as the challenges faced by history teachers, it is easy to overlook the concerns of education scholars such as Mary Kennedy (2005) who focus on issues surrounding curricular and instructional reform. She contends that most classroom-level reforms are implemented unsuccessfully because those seeking to improve the schools do not understand teachers' practice. Kennedy argues that if we understand teachers' curricular and instructional decisions as well as the rationales behind those choices, curricular reforms can be better shaped to fit within teachers' conditions and make it more likely that said reforms will be successfully implemented.

However, there are only two studies that have been conducted related to the teaching of the Civil War era (Lipscomb, 2002; Wills, 1996). Both of these, however, concentrated on students' historical understanding and had little to say as far as teacher decision making in regard to historical content, instructional methods, and the reasoning behind those choices. Furthermore, while Lipscomb and Wills's research points to some of the difficulties teachers may encounter, this was largely outside the purview of their work. Undertaking a study of teachers and their Civil War instruction would also allow for the assessment of these challenges in terms of whether they are present and how teachers addressed them. Given the variety of suggestions as far as curriculum and instructional techniques and Kennedy's recommendation that scholars strive to understand teachers' current practice before attempting to apply reforms, I undertook this study to further our understanding of teacher decision making in general and in particular as to teaching about the Civil War era. Four questions guided this study:

- What do teachers teach their students about the Civil War era?
- How do teachers teach their students about the Civil War era?
- Why do teachers make the decisions they do regarding teaching their students about the Civil War era?
- How does the context of the classroom influence teachers' practice?

In the remainder of this introduction, I provide some background on the historiography of the Civil War and summarize the research findings. In addition, I give an overview of the study's remaining chapters.

Overview of the Findings

The research findings can be divided into two groups. The first consisted of the factors—both internal and external—which most prominently shaped the three teachers' decision making regarding their teaching of the Civil War era. The second set of findings emanated from the historical content taught as well as the instructional methods employed. Three features influenced teacher decision making. These were: each teacher's historical perspective, the teacher's beliefs as to instructional methods, and the district's pacing guide. Although presented in this order, I am not suggesting that one factor was more influential than another. In fact, the teachers had to balance the three issues throughout their teaching practice (Grant, 1996). The three influenced each teacher differently depending on specific contextual concerns; however, the three factors were consistent in that they impacted all three teachers throughout the entirety of their Civil War era instruction.

An examination of the historical content revealed five important discoveries. First, all three teachers taught about slavery in their lessons on Civil War causation, but each portrayed slavery's significance differently depending on their historical perspective. Second, two of the teachers focused on the war's hardships for soldiers as a means of demonstrating that war is brutal and often tragic.² Third, the teachers taught that Reconstruction was a complex period in which African Americans made some gains in terms of human rights but also suffered the indignities of Jim Crow laws and the violence of the Ku Klux Klan. Fourth, the three teachers' history curriculum was heavily weighted towards facts and factual recall on the part of the students. Fifth, the pacing guide was an unsettled feature in that its impact resulted in both positive outcomes as well as negative ones.

The teacher's historical viewpoint influenced how he or she framed the historical content taught to their students. For instance, one of the teachers stated to his students that states' rights was the primary cause of the Civil War and only spoke of slavery incidentally. Another of the teachers told her students directly that slavery because of its immorality was the central issue that led to the Civil War. While the third teacher believed that the war had multiple causes, within his historical content he spent more time teaching about slavery than any of the other reasons he mentioned. The three teachers held fairly similar views about the Civil War in that they believed it should not be depicted in a sentimental or romantic way. As for Reconstruction, the three teachers

² The third teacher returned to teaching about Civil War soldiers' experience following the completion of state testing and after I had completed my study. Evidence of this was found on the class website and through conversations held with the teacher after state testing.

viewed it as a period in which African Americans made gains as in new rights but also suffered devastating losses at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan and through segregationist legislation. Furthermore, while there was a greater degree of similarity in the historical content during their Reconstruction units, each of the teachers framed his or her unit differently in alignment with their respective historical points of view.

The teachers' beliefs about instruction were an equally important factor that influenced the historical content taught and the manner in which it was conveyed. Two of the teachers from the outset explained that they thought direct instruction was the most effective way to teach the required material so that the students would be prepared for the content standards test. While the third initially favored an instructional approach that allowed for more student autonomy than his two compatriots favored, over time he turned to greater use of direct instruction to the point that his teaching closely mirrored that of the first two. The change in the third teacher's instructional style was due, in part, to his reexamining the appropriateness of his teaching technique for eighth graders and coming to the conclusion that his students would perform better academically if he oversaw their classroom activities more closely.

Just as essential an influence was the pacing guide. Its purpose was to ensure that the teachers taught the historical content in a timely manner so that they could convey all of the historical information the students needed to perform successfully on the state social studies test. Two of the teachers conceded that the pacing guide was a valuable tool that could assist the teachers in making certain that they taught all of the required material; however, another was frustrated by the pacing guide because she believed it forced the

teachers to emphasize parts of the curriculum that she did not view as being as significant as did the guide's authors. The pacing guide also influenced the teachers' definition of success which became, in part, how easily one moved through the curriculum at the rate set forth by the guide. These three factors would shape the historical content the teachers taught.

As far as historical content, although the three teachers taught about slavery within their antebellum units, each of them spoke of it relative to his or her historical perspective. As discussed earlier in this introduction, and more thoroughly in the second chapter, for much of the first hundred years after the war, slavery was largely absent from any discussion of Civil War causation (Blight, 2001, 2002; Fitzpatrick, 2002; Loewen, 1995; Novick, 1988). Earlier explanations included that the war "was caused by Northern aggressors invading an independent Southern nation" (Von Drehle, 2011, p. 40). Leading historians of the 1930s blamed the blundering generation of politicians of the 1850s for the war (Schlesinger, 1949; Von Drehle, 2011). Charles Beard framed the war as an economic conflict between the industrial North and the agrarian South (Novick, 1988; Von Drehle, 2011). A recent scholar wrote that the war, America's greatest tragedy, resulted from conflicting evangelical religious denominations (Goldfield, 2011).

Interestingly, Civil War participants acknowledged slavery's role in the war (Dew, 2002; Gienapp, 2002; Manning, 2007). Abraham Lincoln spoke of slavery's significance in bringing about the war in speeches such as his Second Inaugural Address. All the legislation the three teachers discussed in their lessons during their respective antebellum era units dealt with the slavery issue. One of the teachers spent most of her time in her

antebellum unit discussing the horrors of slavery including quite graphic accounts of fearful incidents like masters raping female slaves. Like one of the teachers in Wills's (1996) research, this teacher was determined to show her students the immorality of the peculiar institution. However, the teacher who believed in multiple causes for the war was much more circumspect in discussing slavery's significance, referring to it as "a key factor," twice in lessons but never calling it *the* key factor. And the teacher who viewed states' rights as "the number one cause" of the Civil War spoke of slavery as though it was the same as any other political issue.

Related to this was the depiction of the Civil War in gory detail. This framing of the war enabled the teachers to undercut the sentimental portrayal of the conflict that had dominated textbooks through much of the twentieth century (Moreau, 2003). Two of the teachers described the lack of sanitation, the limited medical technology, and the horrible conditions in prisoner of war camps. Although the third teacher did not spend as much time on the soldiers' experience of the war, by downplaying it, he depicted the war less as a conflict marked by bravery and courage and more as a struggle marred by tragedy as in the resulting huge loss of life.³ The same teacher who spoke most directly as to slavery's impact on causing the war also spent the most time teaching about African Americans' role in helping the Union and the effect that this had. As might be expected, the teacher who advocated states' rights as the main cause had the least to say about Blacks' involvement in the war. Interestingly, the three teachers returned to the racial matters during their units on Reconstruction. In fact, all three, again, chipped away at a

³ In part because he hurried through his unit on the war, this teacher returned to the topic after state testing during which he showed the film *Glory* and taught about the difficulties Civil War soldiers experienced.

sentimental portrayal of the war's conclusion at Appomattox by explaining to their students that there would still be tension between the North and South because of the incomprehensible loss of life and the massive destruction of property throughout much of the South (Neff, 2005).

Building on this view of the war's end, the three teachers framed Reconstruction as a period of great complexity in that African Americans both earned new political rights but then had much of this taken away at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan and through the adoption of Jim Crow laws which established the segregated South and denied most Black males the right to vote. Although two of the teachers saw Reconstruction as more of a tragic period for African Americans than the first teacher who viewed Reconstruction as a small step forward even in light of the negative outcomes, the three teachers taught their students about the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments—the so-called Civil War amendments—as well as the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, paying special attention to the organization's work establishing schools for African Americans. As she had during her antebellum unit with her attention to the immorality of slavery, the same teacher highlighted, to a greater degree than the other two, the injustices Blacks suffered during Reconstruction.

In the greatest contrast from his antebellum views, the teacher who believed states' rights was the primary cause of the war and was the most traditional in that he spent the most time on political historical content, focused the most on the government's efforts to protect African Americans rights won in the post war era. Unlike the other two teachers, this teacher explained how President Grant worked to pass legislation to stop the Klan's

acts of intimidation and violence. In addition, he emphasized the increased literacy rate among Blacks as a result of the efforts of the Freedmen's Bureau and other philanthropic organizations. During his Reconstruction unit, this same teacher demonstrated how African Americans benefited during the period in such areas as education and increased business ownership. This was one of the few times any of the teachers portrayed African Americans as taking control of their situation in response to the circumstances of Reconstruction. In contrast and given their perspectives on Reconstruction, the other two teachers spent a bit more than half of their instructional time drawing attention to the negative aspects of Reconstruction.

Barton and Levstik (2004) have advocated for history education as a means of fostering participation in governmental and political affairs. Additionally, they suggest that history instruction must be more than the memorization of facts and dates. Although the three teachers did not push their students to memorize many dates, much of the content that they taught was straight-forward historical facts without the rationale for historical actors' behavior. If their students learned more about the role people played in shaping history, the students might eventually take a more active role in society, but whether or not they chose to become involved in politics, the pupils would learn that ideas and motives are what drive people to act. Learning this concept would allow students not only to better understand the perspectives of different historical actors, but they could also apply this in their own lives as far considering, say, their friends' point of view. Related to this, one of the teachers spoke of trying to teach history with multiple perspectives in mind; however, in his actual lessons, he would discuss Abraham Lincoln

and Stephen Douglas, assuming that through mentioning the two politicians and their opposing positions on an issue he had taught historical content in consideration of differing points of view. Yet, this was not the case because he did not discuss the historical actors' motives or rationales behind their actions or beliefs, respectively. Perhaps one reason this teacher felt he could not go into the kind of detail in his lessons required to examine historical figures' motives was because he was overly aware of the rapidity with which he had to teach so that he could try to keep up with the pacing guide.

The pacing guide, which was designed to ensure that teachers taught all of the content standards that could potentially be tested on the content standards test, was a problematic tool. It was effective in that all three of the teachers conveyed the designated historical content within their lessons; however, the teachers were so concerned about the need to move forward through the content that they could not explore topics in much depth. From the teachers' perspective, if they did not do this, they ran the risk of falling behind the pacing guide's schedule. Two of the teachers acknowledged the pacing guide's stated purpose and believed it could serve that purpose. The other teacher did not like the pacing guide because it directed her to emphasize historical topics that she did not believe were as important as the guide's authors viewed them.

Issues connected to the pacing guide were most plain in two of the teachers' practice. In one teacher's words, he constantly had to "move, move, move," and "put the pedal to the metal" so that he could teach the content standards as quickly as possible. As a result of this, he had more time to teach about Reconstruction than he had in eight years of teaching. In this case, he created lessons that enabled his students to take charge of their

learning to a greater extent than at any other time I observed. Another teacher's experience of the pacing guide was a mirror opposite of this. He explained that the pacing guide made him more aware of time. This was especially true during the latter stages of his Civil War unit. Because he was falling behind the guide's dictates, this teacher switched his instructional approach from one that had provided students with the greatest opportunities to participate during his antebellum unit and to one that allowed for limited participation during his Reconstruction unit. Although the second of the teachers saw little merit in the pacing guide, she was able to follow its strictures quite closely so that she did not experience the swings of being ahead or behind the guide's schedule the way the other two did, but with the exception of one lesson, she was unable to stray from her direct instruction anchored lessons. Therefore, while the pacing guide served its purpose by ensuring that the teachers taught all of the required content standards, it tended to dissuade the teachers from experimenting with instructional methods that might have allowed students to think critically or, at the least, participate in a more active fashion than recitation. Having summarized this study's findings, the last part of this introduction gives a brief summary of the dissertation's remaining chapters.

Outline of the Dissertation

Immediately following this introduction, chapter two features a review of the relevant literature and explains how it was used to analyze the data on which this study is based. In addition, this chapter describes the context of the school in which the study was conducted. After this, I profile the three main participant teachers and describe the key

factors which shaped their teaching pedagogy and review the study design, including the data gathered. After this chapter, I move into an investigation and analysis of the data which runs over the next three chapters.

Specifically, chapter three examines the historical content the three teachers taught on the antebellum period. Within this chapter, I demonstrate that while the three teachers discussed slavery in relation to Civil War causation, each of them did so with a different take. While one of the teachers viewed slavery's immorality as the primary cause of the war, another saw states' rights as the war's main cause so that he spoke incidentally about slavery. In the case of the third, although he viewed the war as having multiple causes, slavery as an unjust institution emerged in his lessons as the "key factor" in causing the war as he spent more time on slavery than any other cause. Moreover, the chapter describes how this same teacher's practice evolved over the course of his unit when his thinking about meeting his students' need changed. Finally, I consider how the teachers interpreted the content standards and structured their units on the basis of their understanding, and I reflect on the meaning of their respective historical content for their students.

In chapter four, I analyze the teachers' Civil War historical content. As in chapter three, I demonstrate how the teaching in these units was similar and different as far as the historical knowledge the teachers sought to convey and the instructional approaches employed. I investigate how current events, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, impacted two of the teachers' curricular decision making and the messages about war conveyed in their lessons. Additionally I explore the seemingly contradictory decision to incorporate

an essay assignment as a means of catching up to the pacing guide. Following this is chapter five, the last of the data chapters.

Chapter five consists of an investigation of the teachers' Reconstruction units. Within the chapter, I examine how the historical content on Reconstruction represented the most complicated taught in the teachers' three units as well as the most similar across their respective practices. Furthermore, I analyze the content to show how it was connected to the material taught in the two prior units and how it added to the meaning of the Civil War the three teachers conveyed. In addition, I consider how the teachers' curriculum and instruction compares to that suggested by historians and history educators. After this, I bring this study to a close in chapter six, the final chapter.

In chapter six, I present my concluding thoughts on this study. I examine the similarities in the nature of the historical content the three teachers taught. In order to do this, I place the teachers' content within the historiography of the Civil War era, considering how their content parallels past histories of the period. I demonstrate similarities between the three teachers' historical content differences with that of earlier historians and that advocated by history educators. Additionally, I consider how their instructional approaches which initially appeared poles apart were actually quite similar. Finally, I suggest areas for future research on teachers teaching about the Civil War era.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The historiography of the Civil War era can be viewed as a movement to interpret the events of this period in a manner that accounts for their inherent complexity. That is, in the last fifty years, historians have sought to tell the story of the war with a greater degree of intricacy by considering the role of women and, especially, African Americans (Fitzpatrick, 2002; Kolchin, 1998; Novick, 1988). Prior to this period, the history of the Civil War era was greatly influenced by the myth of the Lost Cause (Gallagher, 2000, 2004; Nolan, 2000). The myth of the Lost Cause removed African Americans as participants in the events of the Civil War era, and instead highlighted the gallant efforts of Confederate and Union soldiers (Nolan, 2000). Certainly there were historians, such as W. E. B. DuBois, who interpreted the Civil War in a manner that ran counter to the myth of the Lost Cause (Fitzpatrick, 2002); however, the views of William A. Dunning and the historians he mentored would continue to hold sway amongst many academics until at least the 1950s, and amongst some segments of the general public down to the present day (Davis, 1997; Gallagher, 2000; J. O. Horton, 2006; Novick, 1988). While there have been several changes in the way in which the history of the Civil War has been written, the historiography of the Civil War era in the last fifty years has been transformed to the greatest degree by the reintroduction of race in the interpretation of these events (Novick, 1988).

Shaped in part by the changing historiography of the Civil War era, historians and history educators have advocated teaching lessons that are designed to promote students'

deeper understanding of the war's complexity and the ideas that motivated people to act in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition to meeting this goal, the suggested lesson topics are intended to overturn misconceptions about the Civil War era such as the "great myth" of the Lost Cause (Blight, 2002, p. 154; Gallagher, 2000, 2004; Nolan, 2000). Through the consideration of African Americans' participation in the events of the period as suggested in their proposed lessons, history educators believe that these objectives can be met.

Furthermore, historians and history educators promote the study of the Civil War era as a valuable tool for exploring contemporary racial issues (Blight, 2002; Loewen, 1995). In fact, J. O. Horton (2006) points out that one must understand the history of slavery as a precursor to meaningful conversation on race in the twenty-first century. In considering Frederick Douglass, a key figure of the Civil War era, Blight (2002) writes, "In his autobiographies, Douglass left many enduring invitations to engage in conversation about slavery and race, about oppression and its transcendence....[W]e ought to...take him up on the invitation" (p. 12). Learning about other eras of American history such as World War II or the Civil Rights Movement can also serve as vehicles for the consideration of current race relations; however, part of what makes knowledge of the Civil War era so fundamental is that one cannot comprehensively analyze the issues of the latter two periods without having a grasp of this earlier time. Interestingly, while lessons on the Civil War era are potentially valuable for students, teaching about the Civil War period has received little attention from educational scholars (Lipscomb, 2002; Wills, 1996). One of the goals of this study is to add to this existing, albeit limited, knowledge base

Toward a Complex Interpretation of the Civil War

For most of the one hundred years following the Civil War, the Lost Cause interpretation of the war was predominant. This perspective, although having some basis in fact, emphasized the efforts of southern soldiers, who often fought against superior Union forces, while ignoring the political, constitutional, and moral issues that lay at the root of the Confederate states' decision to secede (Gallagher, 2000, 2004). In addition, the Lost Cause version of the Civil War downplayed or completely ignored slavery's role in causing the war (Nolan, 2000). Slavery was not deemed a factor in causing the war because, according to the Lost Cause point of view, slavery was beneficial for both Blacks and Whites (Nolan, 2000).

Beginning in the years following World War II, historians would make their greatest shift in perspective from one based on the scientific racism which had undergirded much of American historians' writing to one based on "the objective truth of scientific antiracism" (Novick, 1988, p. 348). Several factors brought this about. First, the recently concluded Second World War was fought, in part, to stop the Nazis from spreading their racist beliefs. Second, the study led by Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, which was published during the war showed the gap between America's ideals and the reality of African American life. Third, and most importantly (Novick, 1988), the historians that challenged this earlier scholarship (based on scientific racism) had come of age in the 1930s when both Blacks and Whites in America were suffering through the Great Depression. Notably, this paradigm shift would result in a more complex interpretation of the Civil War period.

In support of this new perspective, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (1949) called on historians to recognize the moral issues—namely slavery—that lay at the center of the Civil War. Kenneth M. Stampp (1956) responded with his book, *The Peculiar Institution*. This work directly countered the work of Ulrich Phillips as Stampp argued that slavery was brutal and repressive (Novick, 1988). Stampp's work was also important as he drew from slave narratives and the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass in laying out the case for slavery's viciousness. Almost a decade later, in a follow-up to this study, Stampp (1965) would write that the tragedy of Reconstruction was not that it was oppressive to Whites, as Dunning had claimed, but, instead, that it did not go far enough in supporting the freedmen as they sought to make their lives anew.

The Civil War would return to the public eye in the post war years in September 1957 when President Dwight Eisenhower signed into law a bill passed by Congress, creating the Civil War Centennial Commission (CWCC) which was charged with preparing activities to commemorate the Civil War beginning in 1961 in Charleston, South Carolina, and lasting through 1965 at Appamattox Courthouse in Virginia (Cook, 2003; Wiener, 2004). From the very start, the CWCC was intent on portraying the war as a tragedy which resulted in the reconciliation of the north and south (Cook, 2003); however, many southerners agreed with one centennial critic who said, "If the south has lost the Civil War, it is determined to win the centennial" (Wiener, 2004, p. 237).

Events came to a head in April of 1961 during the commemoration of the firing on Fort Sumter. Following the ceremony, one of the members of the CWCC, an African American woman, was refused lodging at the hotel where the CWCC was to meet to plan

future activities (Cook, 2003; Wiener, 2004). President Kennedy had to respond as the CWCC was a federally sanctioned body and this act of defiance was directly connected to one of the issues—federalism and states’ rights—for which the Civil War was fought. Eventually, arrangements were made for the CWCC to meet at the naval base in Charleston.

Three months later, during the reenactment of the first battle of Bull Run, those portraying Union soldiers were greeted by spectators’ jeers while the faux-Confederates heard cheers and rebel yells as they routed the northerners. The reenactment led to complaints that Southern Civil War leaders were being put on par with those of the north and that the evil of slavery which was central to the cause of the war was being ignored in the commemoration (Cook, 2003). The controversy over this reenactment led to the resignation of the leaders of the CWCC and their replacement by Allan Nevins, a historian who was in the midst of writing an eight volume study of the Civil War era. Nevins would act to bring about the solemn tone commensurate with the war’s overwhelming suffering. Nevins, the members of the CWCC, and the Pennsylvania Centennial Commission insisted on “the equality of opportunity...in connection with Civil War Centennial observances” held at Gettysburg (Wiener, 2004, p. 250). The events were designed to recognize the agony that all soldiers and civilians experienced one hundred years earlier.

The activities created to commemorate the centennial of the Civil War as well as the events of the civil rights movement were to have a lasting impact on the Civil War historiography that was written during and after the first half of the 1960s (Blight, 2001,

2002; Cook, 2003; Davis, 2005; Harding, 1983; Novick, 1988; Wiener, 2004). In addition, the fact that a number of historians such as C. Vann Woodward and Richard Hofstadter took an active role in participating in the civil rights movement would influence the kinds of questions asked and the types of studies undertaken in the years to come (Foner, 2003; Novick, 1988).

Especially since the Civil Rights Movement, scholars have focused on investigating slavery's centrality as a moral and political issue in causing the war (Blight, 2001, 2002; Davis, 2005; Dew, 2002; Harding, 1983; Manning, 2007; McPherson, 1989, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2007). The dispute over slavery's role as the main cause of the Civil War actually started during the war itself (Blight, 2001, 2002; Dew, 2002; McPherson, 1989, 1996, 2007; Novick, 1988; Oates, 1978).⁴ However, historians' debate over slavery's role in the war's causation had been largely stifled in the name of national unity in the years prior to World War II (Novick, 1988).

Perhaps the most powerful explanation of slavery's impact on the war comes from the work of Charles B. Dew (2002). Dew, a historian who grew up in the south and proudly displayed the "stars and bars" in his prep school dormitory room, had, as a youth, learned that states' rights caused the war. However, when he, later as a professional historian, analyzed the documents of the southern secession commissioners (representatives of the first seceding states intent on persuading other southern states to join the movement to leave the Union), he came to the conclusion that white supremacy and the preservation of

⁴ Abraham Lincoln, in his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865, spoke to the issue of slavery's centrality when he said, "One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war" (Gienapp, 2002, p. 220).

slavery were the central forces motivating the states that would form the Confederacy (Dew, 2002). In *Apostles of Disunion*, Dew (2002) also writes of the personal difficulty he experienced in writing the book as he came to realize that his parents, grandparents, and other authority figures had misled him when he was an impressionable youth with an interpretation of the war that could not hold up in the face of the evidence he uncovered.

Dew's experience is reflected in Blight's (2002) statement on Civil War historians' move to interpret slavery as the central cause of the war: "Academic historians are well advised to remember that paradigms may change fundamentally in their interpretive discipline, but in the larger realm of public history and memory, great myths have durability beyond their control" (p. 154). The idea that slavery was a mutually beneficial system for master and slave still survives to this day as well as the belief that slavery as a political and moral issue was a minor factor in the coming of the war (Blight, 2002; Horwitz, 1999). Furthermore, as Gallagher (2000) has pointed out, works of literature, history, and art supportive of the Lost Cause interpretation of the war continue to be popular and often outsell works that counter this myth.

In addition to focusing on slavery as the cause of the Civil War, academic historians, building on the work of Stamp (1956), John Hope Franklin, and Benjamin Quarles continued to examine the topic of slavery through the use of newly discovered documents as well as the reexamination of documents which historians such as Phillips had discredited (Blight, 2002; Fitzpatrick, 2002; Novick, 1988; Kolchin, 1998). Through the use of these materials, historians moved from an interpretive stance that viewed slaves as passive actors to a more complex perspective in which slaves were significant figures

(Kolchin, 1998; Novick, 1988). With the recognition of slaves' agency, historians sought to explore slaves' responsibility for hastening slavery's demise (Blight, 2002; Kolchin, 1998; McPherson, 1965/1991).

This research would give rise to a debate amongst Civil War scholars as to who was most responsible—Lincoln or the slaves themselves—for ending slavery (Blight, 2002; Fields, 1990; Foner, 1989, 2003, 2005; Harding, 1983; J. O. Horton & L. E. Horton, 2002; McPherson, 1996, 2007). Barbara Fields (1990) spoke most directly for the position that the slaves themselves were most accountable for their freedom during the war. Like the American Revolution, which Gary Nash (2006) has termed, “the first mass slave rebellion in American history” (p. 1), Fields held that slaves took it upon themselves to flee in the midst of the Civil War's chaos. On the other hand, James McPherson, “who had previously been instrumental in recognizing black agency but now concluded that the argument was being pushed too far” (Kolchin, 1998, p. 248). Although acknowledging that some slaves had escaped from slavery, McPherson advocated the more traditional and, in his mind, more accurate position that Lincoln, through the Union Army's efforts, freed the slaves. Eventually, this dispute would cool as both sides would, on the whole, come to realize that it was the Civil War itself which brought about a climate in which both Lincoln and the slaves could act. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did not free the slaves, but “it marked a crucial change in the nature of the Civil War, from a war for Union to a war for freedom” (Kolchin, 1998, p. 250).

This was, of course, the Civil War's greatest impact: the end of chattel slavery (Blight, 2002; McPherson, 1996; 2007). However, historical scholarship has also examined how the war affected women in both the north and south and how women affected the war, for instance, in terms of how the war would be remembered (Faust, 1997; Oates, 1995; Zimmerman, 2002). In addition, recent research has documented over 240 cases of women soldiers serving on both sides of the war (Blanton & Cook, 2003; Burgess, 1995).

The latest controversy in Civil War historiography has its roots in the civil rights movement and the Myth of the Lost Cause (Levine, 2006a, 2006b). It is the legend of the Black Confederates; that is, the dispute over whether or not African Americans served in the Confederate military. The legend's neo-Confederate propagators claim that "black southerners in great numbers, slave and free alike, fought voluntarily and loyally as soldiers in the ranks of Confederate armies" (Levine, 2007, p. 41). The legend features echoes of multiculturalism in its claim of uncovering Black participation in the war in a manner not widely documented as well as supporting the Lost Cause's claim that slavery could not have been so brutal if Blacks volunteered to support the Confederate cause. If there were indeed Black Confederates, then this would show that African Americans' participation in the war was more problematic than previously thought.

Numerous debates continue to surround various aspects of Civil War historiography including, in addition to those discussed here, disputes over military strategy. These disagreements may never be definitively resolved; however, it is most important to realize that these controversies are the natural result of historians' efforts to develop more complex and, therefore, more comprehensive interpretations of the Civil War era.

The quarrels that have arisen throughout Civil War historiography have also influenced history educators' suggestions as to Civil War topics that students should study with the objective that the study of these topics will enable students to develop a nuanced understanding of the Civil War period. In the next section, I review Civil War issues that history educators endorse as valuable for students. I also discuss the limited research on teaching about the Civil War.

Teaching about the Civil War

History educators propose a variety of lesson ideas that will enable teachers to assist students in mastering Civil War content as well as developing social studies skills that will be useful to them as adults. These lessons are designed to promote students' deeper understanding of the war's complexity and the ideas that motivated people to act in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition to meeting this goal, the suggested topics are also intended to overturn misconceptions about the Civil War era such as the "great myth" of the Lost Cause (Blight, 2002, p. 154; Gallagher, 2000, 2004; Nolan, 2000). Further, these teaching suggestions are intended to foster an understanding of "the human meaning of the war in the lives of soldiers, free blacks, slaves, women, and others" (California Department of Education, 2005, p. 104).

What should we teach about the Civil War, and why?

Building on the work of academic historians, social studies educators have designed suggested lessons which aim to convey five significant understandings of the Civil War era: First, slavery was the central cause of the war, and was an integral part of antebellum

American life which benefited Whites in the north and south (Chesebrough & McBride, 1990; Rael, 2006; Waller & Edgington, 2001). Second, while slavery was no longer practiced in the pre-war north, racism was prevalent throughout the north and south (Blight, 2002; P. Horton, 2000; Loewen, 1995). Third, the Civil War was the most cataclysmic event in American history (Bilof, 1996; Cimprich, 2005; P. Horton, 2000; Hutchinson, 2005; Waller & Edgington, 2001). Fourth, Black participation in the war was instrumental in securing the Union's victory as well as countering some of the racism of the era (Cimprich, 2005; P. Horton, 2000; Loewen, 1995; Manning, 2007). Fifth, racism, however, would remain an issue for America even after the abolition of slavery and this discrimination would keep African Americans in a position of second class citizenship for the next one hundred years until the modern civil rights movement would lessen racism's hold (Blight, 2001, 2002; Foner, 1989, 2003, 2005; Green, 1991). The suggested lessons steer away from teacher-centered instruction so that students can come to recognize the importance of these five understandings through the use of primary sources. Scholars believe the use of these sources will facilitate the development of historical empathy and will assist students in understanding the multiple perspectives of Civil War era participants.

History educators propose a variety of ways to help students understand the centrality of slavery in American life as well as in causing the Civil War. Studying the sermons of Henry Ward Beecher through the use of Chesebrough and McBride's (1990) "Sermon Analysis Guide" can show students how Beecher as a barometer of public opinion, initially saw nothing wrong with slavery's existence but would come to view it as the sin

of the nation that must be abolished as a means of repentance. Similarly, analyzing songs of the Union and Confederate armies can show slavery's role in causing the war (Waller & Edgington, 2001). A lesson on Black activism in the antebellum north in which students analyze essays written by Frederick Douglass and other African American abolitionists would enable students to see how Blacks sought to end slavery and the difficulties faced by the abolition movement in general and Black abolitionists in particular (Rael, 2006). Through these lessons students would also understand how unlikely it was that slavery could be abolished by any means short of war. This would counter the Lost Cause myth which claims that southerners would have eventually eliminated slavery on their own. Moreover, it would enable students to comprehend part of the history of racism in the United States and how an issue like slave reparations is salient in the twenty-first century.

Slavery was widely accepted in both the north and south because of the racism that existed in all parts of the country. An examination of the New York City Draft Riots would allow students to understand how lower class Whites in New York saw free Blacks as a threat to their jobs and how conscription caused class tensions to boil over (P. Horton, 2000). Blight's (2002) suggestion that students learn about Frederick Douglass's life after slavery through his writings would reveal the prejudice that Douglass would continue to face even in the "free north." Learning about the racism that existed in the antebellum north and south would show students that racism was a national problem, and not merely an issue in the South (Blight, 2002; Loewen, 1995).

By studying African American soldiers' role in the Union cause, students can understand how battlefield exploits could lessen northern racism. In addition, students can appreciate at some level the horrors of war in the nineteenth century, countering the popular, sentimental portrayals of warfare (P. Horton, 2000; Manning, 2007). Examining the Fort Pillow massacre through soldiers' letters and battlefield reports allows students to see African American soldiers' gallantry, but also how their efforts led to Confederate atrocities and how these cruel acts were covered up (Cimprich, 2005; P. Horton, 2000). Students can recognize the horrible nature of war by reading the novel, *The Killer Angels*, and historical monographs (Bilof, 1996). Additionally, students can analyze Union and Confederate songs that convey the hardships of the war (Waller & Edgington, 2001). Many Union soldiers, even after seeing African American soldiers in battle, continued to view Blacks as inferior, but acknowledged that Blacks deserved an equal opportunity to succeed in America once the war was over as an analysis of soldiers' letters reveals to students (Hutchinson, 2005; Manning, 2007). Studying how racism was lessened as a result of Black soldiers' participation in the Union cause would invite students to consider ways to address racism beyond legislation in twenty-first century America.

Finally, history educators advocate students understanding that racism would continue to be a problem in American even after slavery was abolished (Green, 1991). By analyzing historiography of Reconstruction as well as the primary sources on which that history is based, pupils can learn that the abolition of slavery did not eliminate racism in the United States (Foner, 1989, 2003, 2005; Green, 1991). They can see how historians' own biases influenced their interpretation of the post war era (Blight, 2001, 2002; Green,

1991). Furthermore, the historian Richard Nelson Current (1987) argues that Reconstruction must be considered in studying the Civil War because he views Reconstruction as a continuation of the Civil War. Current makes the case that given the level of violence and the Union's occupation of much of the South Reconstruction represents the concluding part of the war. Thus, the war really ends with the Compromise of 1877 when the last Union troops leave. Students can use their understanding of this period and its historiography to consider such timely issues as the meaning of Barack Obama's election as president for contemporary racial issues (some pundits believe that Obama's election means racism is less of an issue in America). In addition, students can reflect on how their own biases shape their interpretation of modern society.

History educators' proposals for studying the Civil War are important in three ways. First, their suggestions offer ways to counter the weaknesses common in many textbooks such as the absence of an explanation for how slavery motivated historical participants to act, the description of racism as being solely a southern issue, and the limited discussion of African Americans' participation in the war (Loewen, 1995). Second, their plans provide methods that enable students to uncover the Civil War's relevance in understanding contemporary America. Third, these ideas illustrate the importance of teacher decision making. That is, in order for students to learn about the Civil War in a meaningful way, teachers may need to choose methods that are more difficult to manage than traditional teacher centered instruction (Rossi, 1995; Rossi & Pace, 1998).

Just as significant, however, is the fact that social studies educators' recommendations, while potentially valuable for students, tell us little about how teachers actually teach about the Civil War. Nor do these teaching proposals tell us why teachers teach what they do about the Civil War; therefore, our ability to adopt and successfully implement any of these suggestions is premature and potentially doomed to failure (see Kennedy, 2005, on the mistake of implementing reforms before understanding teachers' practice). We need to understand what teachers teach about the Civil War and what factors and forces shape their curricular and instructional decisions so that curricular reforms may be better tailored to fit teachers' circumstance and, thus, ensure the likelihood of successful application.

What do we teach about the Civil War, and why?

The research on what is taught about the Civil War is limited to two studies which focus on student outcomes (Lipscomb, 2002; Wills, 1996). Additionally, if textbooks are any indication of what is taught about the war, Loewen's (1995) investigation of twelve United States history textbooks may also provide a sign as to what is taught.

Within his larger study, Loewen (1995) examines textbook content concerning the Civil War era. In his analysis, he does show how textbooks of the late twentieth century are more accurate in their portrayal of slavery when compared to books written prior to the civil rights movement. In addition, slavery's role in causing the Civil War is acknowledged in all of the books examined. Yet, the tone of the texts, which contain facts but little or no content about how the issues surrounding slavery motivated people to act, makes it difficult for students to understand what stimulated northerners and

southerners to take sides in the growing crisis. This is one of the reasons Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn (1997/2000) propose the use of multiple perspectives in studying the Civil War, so that students can understand how ideas were the impetus to action and that the Civil War era was a time, just like the present, of great complexity.

In addition to not demonstrating how slavery provoked the Civil War, none of the texts show how slavery is relevant to understanding the present (Loewen, 1995). Presenting the history of slavery in the manner the texts do neglects the fact that racism is still a problem in America. Similarly, the texts do not discuss the belief in White supremacy that lay behind the enslavement of African Americans. In this way White complicity in slavery is minimized. The history of slavery is told in a solemn tone, but no explanation is offered for its existence; therefore, there is no one to hold responsible (Loewen, 1995). Revising texts to incorporate newly uncovered facts about slavery, while commendable, is not sufficient (Gitlin, 1995). Students are still denied the opportunity to see how slavery became a divisive issue that caused people to act (Loewen, 1995).

Furthermore, the racism of the 1860s is not described in the textbooks (Loewen, 1995). The absence of this historical context gives students a simplistic understanding of the Civil War era when in point of fact the vast majority of Whites—north and south—believed that Blacks were inferior. For example, the texts simplify Abraham Lincoln's views regarding African Americans. While he believed in Blacks' basic humanity, Lincoln did not see African Americans as the equals of Whites. Through the war years, Lincoln's views on race would change, and he would come to support African American

soldiers having the right to vote in light of their sacrifices for the Union (Loewen, 1995; Neely, 1995). However, students cannot see how Lincoln was able to transcend the popular views of his era because Lincoln's beliefs are largely absent from history texts (Loewen, 1995). Lincoln's growth is what Frederick Douglass and W. E. B. DuBois found most admirable about the sixteenth president (Blight, 2002). For students, reading about Lincoln's development would not only humanize him but demonstrate that people can overcome prejudice (Loewen, 1995).

Similarly, in discussing African American participation in the war, all of the books mention that nearly 200,000 blacks fought for the Union cause, and many of the texts highlight the heroic actions of the Massachusetts 54th Infantry. This is the sort of celebratory history that Schlesinger (1991/1998) advocates; however, only one of the books makes the point that the success of black troops in the war led to a decrease in white racism (Loewen, 1995).

The failure to link ideas and actions as well as connecting events to changes in historical actors' thinking is also absent in how the texts speak of other motivational factors in the war, namely, states' rights (Loewen, 1995). Many supporters of the Confederacy made the argument that slavery was not the cause of the war since the majority of southerners did not own slaves, but instead states' rights was the cause (Manning, 2007). That is, southern states believed that they had the right to regulate their internal matters without interference from the federal government.⁵ As the Civil War

⁵ Fehrenbacher (1990) makes the point that southerners and northerners had used the states' rights argument in previous disputes over the tariff and other disagreements, such as the when New England threatened to leave the Union during the War of 1812; however, it was not until southerners perceived that

continued and the Confederate government required states to make greater sacrifices for the cause through the conscription of soldiers, North Carolina and Georgia, for instance, used the states' rights concept to question the legality of the draft (Tindall & Shi, 1999). These internal Confederate conflicts weakened the southern cause; however, only five of the texts reviewed explain how the states' rights theory was harmful to the south during the war (Loewen, 1995). This is another case where the ideas that motivated actions are absent from the history that is presented. Similarly, studies on students' historical understanding revealed that they often did not recognize the rationales driving historical actors.

In addition to Loewen's research, there are two qualitative studies of the teaching of the Civil War (Lipscomb, 2002; Wills, 1996). Both studies focus on students' historical understanding and the uses of this understanding. Therefore, this body of research provides limited insights as to teacher practice and what factors shape teacher practice.

Wills (1996) found that African American participants were not continuously present in U. S. history. In the history of the Civil War era, instruction focused on the brutality of slavery, that is, a moral discourse, which resulted in a history of limited use to students. This history revealed the difficulties African Americans faced but did not demonstrate how African Americans fought to overcome them. This finding echoes Loewen's (1995) analysis which showed that textbooks emphasized the horrors of slavery but did not explore the political conditions that allowed slavery to exist. In another study, half of the eighth grade student participants developed a strong historical understanding of the Civil

their right to own slaves was threatened that the states' rights argument came to the fore. Thus, the states' rights rationale was merely another way to advocate for the right to own slaves.

War era through the use of a WebQuest (Lipscomb, 2002). That is, half of the students were able to understand the historical context and chronology of Civil War era events, and of greater significance, were able to explain the factors which motivated various historical participants to act during this time period.

Research on the teaching of the Civil War is limited to these two studies. Further, while Loewen's (1995) criticisms of textbook content on the Civil War are well-argued, he bases his criticism on the analysis of twelve textbooks, but he does not investigate how the textbooks are actually used by teachers because even if the text is the anchor of history instruction, it does not predict the content of history produced in classrooms nor is it the only resource teachers employ. Moreover, teachers may skip sections of a textbook that counter their interpretation of the past (Wills, 1994). In addition, with only two qualitative studies of the Civil War being taught in actual classrooms, we are able to say very little regarding what role schooling might play in providing students with specific, public memories of the Civil War and the potential value of that history in addressing contemporary race relations in the United States. In order for history to serve as a tool for analyzing current racial issues, teachers must make curricular and instructional decisions that support students' use of their understanding of the past to consider race matters (West, 1993) in the present. These two studies (Lipscomb, 2002; Wills, 1996) reveal little about teachers' decisions regarding Civil War curricular content and instructional methods or the forces that shape said decisions. Examining previous research on history-social studies teachers' practice may reveal the factors behind

teacher's curricular and instructional decisions. In the section that follows I look at these investigations.

Understanding Teacher Practice in History-Social Studies Education

Studies of teacher practice often explain teacher decisions regarding curriculum and instruction as reflecting teachers' philosophy (Cohen, 1990; Lortie, 1975/2002), or, in history-social studies education, teachers' conception of history (Brophy & VanSledright, 1997; Evans, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1994) or teachers' beliefs about instruction in history-social studies (Doppen, 2007; Wilson, Konopak, & Readence, 1994).

Evans (1988, 1989, 1990, 1994) devised a typology for social studies teachers based on their conceptions of history. The teachers displayed a dominant proclivity towards one of five types: "storyteller, scientific historian, relativist/reformer, cosmic philosopher, or eclectic" (Evans, 1994, p. 178). Building on Evans's work, Brophy and VanSledright (1997) found excellent teachers who fit the storyteller, scientific historian, and relativist/reformer typology. Similarly, Grant's (2003) study of two high school history teachers uncovered a "master storyteller" and a relativist/reformer that pushed her students to think deeply about the past and its connections to present problems (p. 16).

Studies of teachers' beliefs about social studies curriculum and instruction have also shed light on how teachers formulate their practice (Doppen, 2007; Wilson, et al., 1994). Doppen (2007) and Wilson, et al. (1994) both examined how pre-service social studies teachers' beliefs were influenced by their methods courses. Student teachers reported an

increase in their willingness to—as well as an increase in the actual—use of student-centered instruction due to their beliefs about instruction (Doppen, 2007).

Another approach in the effort to understand history-social studies teachers' practice has been to study the examples of outstanding teachers. Wineburg and Wilson's (1988/2001) study of two history teachers demonstrates that teachers may use different instructional methods based on the purpose of a given lesson. The two teachers used teacher-directed lessons when they thought those techniques would be most effective given the content of the lesson, and they used student-centered methods when they deemed those most effective. Therefore, these teachers who were more seasoned than student teachers (Doppen, 2007; Wilson, et al., 1994) had developed sophisticated beliefs about instruction in which they considered the purpose of a lesson within their decision making process.

In considering the research on teachers' conceptions of history (Evans, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1994) and history-social studies teachers' beliefs about instruction (Wineburg & Wilson, 1988/2001), Thornton (1991) states that history-social studies teachers are curricular-instructional gatekeepers. That is, the teacher, in the end, decides what content will be taught and how it will be taught as a result of their beliefs about content and instruction. Thornton (1991) adds that “the decisions that teachers make about curriculum and instruction are heavily influenced by contextual factors...” (p. 238). In other words, teacher decision making is complicated by context. Teachers' conceptions of history and beliefs about instruction might explain, in part, teachers' practice, but I theorize that practice is mediated by contextual factors. History-social studies teachers' instructional

decision making consists of a complex amalgam of teachers' conceptions of history, teachers' beliefs, and contextual factors.

Context refers to the circumstances in and out of the classroom that can influence the enacted curriculum, or, as Talbert, McLaughlin, and Rowan (1993) define it, context means:

any of the diverse and multiple environments or conditions that intersect with the work of teachers and teaching—such as the school, subject area, department, district, higher education, business alliance, professional networks, state policies, community demographics (p. 46).

Further, they add, “The notion of *context effect* (italics in original) implies the influence of particular context conditions—values, beliefs, norms, policies, structures, resources, and processes—on teaching practice, and, in turn, students' educational outcomes” (Talbert, et al, 1993, p. 46).

Given the breadth of Talbert, et al's (1993) definition of context, there are a variety of factors that could be considered contextual in nature. Because of this, researchers studying the influence of context generally focus on one or two aspects of context to investigate (Heilman, 2001; Palonsky & Nelson, 1980; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988)

A range of studies on the influence of contextual factors on history-social studies teaching can be categorized into two areas: school structure and its effects on instruction and how teaching dilemmas which result from matters of context affect teacher decision making. Research on school structure has focused on how teachers respond to the tone set by the administration and community in making curricular and instructional decisions (Cornbleth, 2002; McNeil, 1986/1999). Another body of research has focused on the impact of teaching dilemmas, which are shaped by contextual factors, on teachers'

curricular and instructional practice (Rossi, 1995; Rossi & Pace, 1998; VanSledright & Grant, 1994; Wills, 2006, 2007; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009).

The work of Cornbleth (2002) and McNeil (1986) shows how factors outside of the teacher's control can influence what occurs in the classroom. Using the metaphor of climate, Cornbleth (2002) found that there are six types of climate, which were grouped in pairs, that could constrain meaningful social studies instruction; "climate" is defined as "prevailing conditions that affect the life and activity of a place" (p. 186). The three climate groups are: "stifling, chilling, and drought-stricken" (p. 186). Stifling climates are the result of a bureaucratic emphasis on law and order or rigid conservatism intent on maintaining the status quo. Under these conditions, "teachers try to survive by doing as little as possible" (p. 186). Chilling climates are quite common in social studies because, as Cornbleth points out, "Curriculum in general—and perhaps social studies more than other school subjects—is an area of continual contest..." (p. 188). Chilling climates can be those in which material is censored or when teachers are ordered to include certain content. Drought-stricken climates are those in which "the prospects for meaningful learning and critical thinking are slim..." (p. 188). These climates are characterized by a hyper-competitive atmosphere or one in which impoverished students, for instance, are blamed for their condition and teachers respond by expecting less from these students. Cornbleth's work shows how contextual factors outside the classroom can impact what occurs within.

In discussing stifling climates, Cornbleth (2002) cites McNeil's (1986/1999) seminal study, *Contradictions of Control*, as demonstrating the impact of an administration which

emphasizes law and order. McNeil's ethnography looked at social studies instruction in four different high schools with a curricular emphasis on how economic concepts were taught. In all four of the schools, McNeil found that teachers taught defensively. That is, they "choose to simplify content and reduce demands on students in return for classroom order and minimal student compliance on assignments" (p. 174). While defensive teaching was seen in all four schools, it was most prominent in the two schools where the administration was most distant from curricular and instructional matters and, instead, emphasized adherence to rules and procedures. The findings of Cornbleth (2002) and McNeil (1986/1999) support Thornton's (1991) point that teachers' beliefs and circumstance influence teachers' actions as curricular and instructional gatekeepers.

Limited instructional time is a common dilemma that teachers must manage (Cuban, 1992). Wills's (2007) research demonstrated how a teacher's management of this dilemma, exacerbated by state testing in language arts and mathematics which reduced instructional time for social studies resulted in a shift in instructional method, specifically abandoning discussion to engage in the efficient delivery of knowledge. While Mrs. Matthews's goal was to provide students with opportunities for higher order thinking that would result from active student participation, in a lesson on the Bill of Rights, a complex discussion in response to the question, "How does the Bill of Rights, or the first ten amendments, affect our lives today?" she was forced to end discussion and shift to lecture as the class ran out of time. Although time is an issue for all teachers, in this instance time became an incorrigible teaching dilemma due to the limited period available for social studies, resulting in curricular and instructional decisions that were

necessary though undesirable for the teacher in this study. Through the use of the concept of teaching dilemmas, Wills (2007) is able to capture factors that teachers must continually manage in making curricular and instructional decisions and how in responding to dilemmas teachers may act in ways that run counter to their goals for students.

In their study of citizenship education in elementary schools, VanSledright and Grant (1994) found that teaching dilemmas were so persistent that the researchers doubted that citizenship education of the type called for by curricular reformers could be achieved (Ciodo & Byford, 2004). Like the work of Rossi (1995; Rossi & Pace, 1998), the researchers learned that in managing dilemmas teachers may prioritize content coverage over stated instructional goals, in this case, concerning citizenship education. In other words, because a teacher feels pressured to cover a certain section of content, she/he may decide to teach in a manner that efficiently delivers knowledge but runs counter to her/his stated goals regarding students learning to be good citizens.

Similar to these cases, Wills's (2006) analysis of another fifth grade teacher demonstrates how history instruction is shaped by contextual factors. The teacher sought to facilitate her students' development of deep historical understanding because she thought her students not only needed to learn a body of historical knowledge, but they needed to use that knowledge to construct a deeper understanding of the past. Using a technique called "methodical outlining" (Wills, 2006, p. 44) which consisted of outlining key points from the textbook chapter being studied while stopping periodically to elaborate on the historical period or event being discussed, and answering student

questions that indicated their level of understanding, she sought to capably meet both of her goals. However, when time was short, due to the demands of state testing in language arts and mathematics, the teacher resorted to reducing or even eliminating time for discussion so that she could efficiently cover the content. This case shows how the more time-consuming goal of developing student historical understanding can be compromised for the goal of content coverage as a means of managing time dilemmas that exacerbated by state testing.

Gerwin & Visone (2006) found that high school teachers teach differently in classes that are tested by the state in comparison to classes which are not tested. At the elementary level in which teachers are generally responsible for a wider range of content, testing in language arts and math can intensify the dilemmas teachers face in social studies instruction, even though social studies is not tested (Wills & Sandholtz, 2009). In this second article on Mrs. Knight, the authors demonstrated that while she had autonomy over curricular and instructional decisions, her authority vis-à-vis social studies was curtailed due to the emphasis on language arts and mathematics instruction which was prioritized because these subjects are tested by the state and the results are used to rate the school's overall performance. Because of her reduced control over social studies curriculum and instruction and in an effort to cope with teaching dilemmas, Mrs. Knight could only meet the less complex goal of imparting history content and not the more involved goal of cultivating historical understanding in her students.

History-social studies teachers' conceptions of history (Evans, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1994) and beliefs about instruction (Doppen, 2007; Wilson, et al., 1994) are useful in

understanding teachers' curricular and instructional decision making. Previous research on school structure also demonstrates that the school climate can influence teachers' curricular and instructional decisions (Cornbleth, 2002; McNeil, 1986/1999). When all of this is taken into consideration with the historiography of the Civil War, it is possible to conduct a rich analysis of teachers teaching about the Civil War era. With that in mind, I proceed to lay out the context of the study I conducted. I begin by providing background on the school. Following this, I profile the three teacher participants. After this I review the study design. Finally, I discuss the factors that shaped their pedagogy.

Context of the School

Sunny Lake Middle School is located in the Southwestern United States in a large urban school system. It serves grades 6 through 8. During the 2008-2009 academic year when this study was conducted, the student population was 1732. This was a decrease from 1754, the year prior to this research. Of that 1732, about 80% of the students are Hispanic. Approximately 10% of the students are Asian American, many of these are Armenian or from the Middle East. Roughly 6% are Caucasian and 4% are African American.

Sunny Lake Middle School is a Title One school. At Sunny Lake, this means 90% of the students come from low income families and qualify for the free lunch program, although Ms. Martin, the assistant principal who oversees the guidance and the social studies departments, informed me that only 75% of the students usually take advantage of

the program.⁶ She explained that for the eighth graders “There’s a little stigma with [the program]. It depends on what they’re serving [in the cafeteria].” Being a Title One school, Sunny Lake receives additional federal and state funding. She predicted that the school would continue to remain Title One on account of the downturn in the economy that began in 2008.

I chose Sunny Lake for my study because of its improvement in the state testing program. In responding to a question about why the school’s performance improved, Ms. Martin explained that Dr. Alexander, the principal, emphasized this as a goal. “Secondly, it’s the teacher’s awareness of data and analyzing the data and coming up with ways to address the needs of the students, and part of it is the awareness of the students of their test goals.” Additionally, she said that the school had to get away from the mentality of “this too shall pass.” When asked about the improving test scores, Dr. Alexander singled out his assistant principals. He said he tries to set the tone for the school and work with the assistant principals to set the agenda, “and then give people the responsibility of carrying certain things out, and get out of their way.” I noticed this at social studies department meetings and at faculty meetings where teachers and the assistant principals, respectively were in charge of most sessions within these meetings.

Besides the improvement in test scores, one characteristic stood out at Sunny Lake and that was the school’s organization into houses. The school’s five houses were built on the principle of small learning communities. Under this model, in essence, Sunny

⁶ Ms. Martin is a former social studies teacher, having taught elementary through high school. She taught Advanced Placement United States history and is an active member of the National Council for Social Studies.

Lake had five schools within the school. This arrangement was created so that teachers and students could work together during the entirety of a student's middle school career. The aim of this approach was to make the school feel smaller for the students. Although there were some students who took courses across houses, especially in the case of singletons (classes only offered during one period of the day like an advanced math course, for instance), most of the students and teachers interacted primarily with those students in their corresponding house. Although officially the school no longer tracked its students, Ms. Martin admitted that there was a certain degree of tracking in the school because of the progression of the math courses. As far as the teachers in this study, Mr. Hobart taught in the second highest academic house. Ms. Newbury primarily taught in the fourth highest house, although the class I observed was in the second highest house, and Mr. Gaines taught in the third highest house. Having reviewed the school's organization and the placement of the teacher participants, I provide some background on each of the teachers in the section that follows.

Teacher Profiles

Several criteria were used in choosing the teacher participants. First, I wanted to select teachers of diverse ethnic or racial backgrounds. Previous research had shown that a teacher's ethnicity or race could influence the goals they had for their students (Grant, 2003). Second, I wanted to select non-probationary teachers who might have greater autonomy in decision making regarding historical content and instructional methods. Third, I sought teachers who thought the Civil War could potentially be a good topic for

teaching about racial issues. Many scholars (Blight, 2002; Loewen, 1995; Rael, 2006) view the Civil War as being especially valuable as a content area for discussions of racial matters. In the profiles which follow, I provide background on each of the study's teacher participants.

Mr. Hobart

Mr. Hobart, a White male, had been teaching for nine years at the time of this research. He had taught at Sunny Lake for eight years, six of those years teaching eighth grade United States history. Mr. Hobart had taught for one year at a middle school in a nearby district. In addition, he served as the social studies department chairperson for four of those years. He had earned both his bachelors in history and masters degree in secondary education with an emphasis on computer technology from a local public university as well as his teaching credential at the same institution. He explained that he viewed history as a subject that could show students how the past is attached to the present. Mr. Hobart explained that the Civil War was either the second or third most important topic he taught.⁷ He said that race was a bit of a factor in the Civil War, but that the principle of states' rights was "the number one cause of the war."

Ms. Newbury

Ms. Newbury, now a U. S. citizen, was born in England and was in her fifth year of teaching when this study was undertaken. She had taught at Sunny Lake for the entirety of her career as well as taught eighth grade American history for five years. Ms. Newbury went to college at a private liberal arts college where she earned a bachelors

⁷ Mr. Hobart said that the Constitution was the most important topic and that either Andrew Jackson or the Civil War was second or third.

degree in history and her teaching credential. She was also certified to teach English language learners and taught in that house for four of her five classes. Like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury said that the Constitution was the most important topic she taught. She said that slavery and the Civil War were the second most important. Additionally, Ms. Newbury explained that the Civil War was a good topic for teaching about racial issues and she explained that she connected it to local gang rivalries in a unit she taught after state testing was finished.

Mr. Gaines

Mr. Gaines, a Hispanic male of Mexican and Irish ancestry, was in his ninth year of teaching when I conducted this study. He had taught at Sunny Lake for eight years and taught eighth grade United States history for seven of those years. He went to the same university as Mr. Hobart where he earned his bachelors degree in Chicano Studies and his teaching credential. Prior to coming to Sunny Lake he taught elementary school for one year. He had also served as an instructional assistant at an elementary school for seven years while completing his degree and credential. Like Mr. Hobart, Mr. Gaines named the Civil War as one of his three favorite topics in the curriculum. In addition, he said that the Civil War offered “a great introduction to racial issues.” Like Ms. Newbury, he said that he often connects the war to the issue of gangs in the area. In the section that follows, I describe the shape of my study.

Study Design

To examine the topic of teachers and the historical content taught about the Civil War era, this research was guided by four questions:

- What do teachers teach their students about the Civil War era?
- How do teachers teach their students about the Civil War era?
- Why do teachers make the decisions they do regarding teaching their students about the Civil War era?
- How does the context of the classroom influence teachers' practice?

Given Kennedy's (2005) warning that implementing curricular and instructional reform before understanding the content teachers taught as well as the rationales for decisions regarding subject matter and instructional techniques was likely doomed to failure, I sought to understand the content teachers taught about the Civil War era, the instructional methods they used, and the reasoning underlying these choices. I observed three teachers at Sunny Lake Middle School. By focusing on this one school, I was better able to control for issues of context while at the same time analyzing for the impact of context issues. As mentioned in the previous section, the pacing guide was a contextual factor that influenced the teachers' instructional decisions.

Additionally, I conducted my research in a school with an ethnically and racially diverse student population because I wanted to see how students' racial and ethnic diversity could influence a teacher's curricular and instructional decisions. Finally, I chose to conduct my study in a middle school that while performing below state testing standards was improving because I wanted to find a school in which the teachers had a

greater degree of autonomy as far as curricular and instructional decisions than in a school that is performing poorly and showing no signs of improvement in which it was possible that scripted lessons were employed. Although teachers may decide not to use the scripted lessons, the fact that school administration expects teachers to use scripted lessons is likely to curtail teachers' authority vis-à-vis curricular and instructional decision making. Because I want to understand how teachers make decisions in teaching about the Civil War, it was imperative that I conducted my research in a school in which teachers have a level of autonomy greater than that to be expected in a school featuring scripted lessons. In other words, since I sought to investigate teacher decision making regarding Civil War curriculum and instruction, I needed to be in a school where teachers had the freedom to make those decisions.

In order to gather the data I was at Sunny Lake for a total of three months. I conducted five preliminary observations of each teacher over a two week period about three weeks before any of the teachers began their antebellum units. Once Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury began their instruction on the Civil War era I carried out observations of the three teachers every school day over the next ten weeks. I observed Mr. Hobart's lessons a total of 48 times (including preliminary observations), Ms. Newbury 47 times, and Mr. Gaines 47 times. In addition, I attended four social studies department meetings and four faculty meetings held while I was on the campus for observation of the three history teachers. During all classroom observations and meetings that I attended, I wrote field notes which were transcribed usually immediately after the encounter and no more than six hours afterwards.

I received copies of every handout the teachers used within their lessons. These included worksheets, unit outlines, and material on their class websites. As well as this, I obtained a copy of the textbook, a copy of the *District Assessment Workbook*, which included activities designed to prepare students for the district's periodic assessments, and a copy of the *California Standards Enrichment Workbook*, a publisher-produced collection of exercises that reviewed the history content standards from sixth through eighth grade as these were the subject of the eighth grade social studies content standards test.⁸ I also collected copies of each agenda from the faculty and department meetings I attended and copies of any additional materials given to teachers at these gatherings.

I collected data as well through three formal interviews with each of the teacher-participants. The first interviews took place on one of the last two days during the initial observation period. The second interviews occurred as the teachers were about to begin their Civil War units, and the third interviews were conducted at the conclusion of each teacher's Reconstruction unit. Additionally, I spoke informally with each teacher after each lesson that I observed. To gather background information about Sunny Lake Middle School, I interviewed Ms. Martin, the assistant principal, who supervised the history-social studies department and attended all faculty and department meetings for which I was present. I also interviewed Dr. Alexander, the principal. Moreover, I interviewed Ms. Raymond, the librarian, who formerly taught history at another middle school in the district and attended all department meetings. Finally, I observed two of Ms.

Thompson's eighth grade history lessons. Ms. Thompson taught the honors level classes,

⁸ Although the teachers called it the *District Assessment Workbook*, its actual name was *Eighth Grade Student Workbook*.

and I conducted a formal interview with her after my second observation. Through my observation, I came to realize that there were three issues that impacted the teachers' practice. I discuss those features below.

Factors that Shaped their Pedagogy

In studying the teaching of Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines, I discovered three central factors that influenced their teaching of the Civil War era. First, the teachers' perspectives on history influenced the content taught as well as the instructional methods employed (Evans, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1994; Grant, 2003). Second, the teachers' beliefs about how best to meet their students' needs impacted their decision making regarding the instructional methods each employed (Grant, 2003). Third, the teachers' decision making was influenced by the district pacing guide, which was created to ensure that all teachers completed the curriculum in a timely manner so that all students would be exposed to all of the content standards that might appear on the California content standards test (Wills & Sandholtz, 2009). In addition, I saw how each of the three teachers had to balance these competing demands (Grant, 1996). Depending on the context, each teacher might consider one of these three issues to a greater degree than another; however, if the circumstances changed, the teacher would have to reprioritize.

The three teachers' historical perspectives had some bearing on their decisions regarding content choice and instructional methods (Grant, 2003). Mr. Hobart explained that history could be used "to show how the past touches the present." In his lessons, he did this often through references to popular culture, current events, or recent history that

he used to elaborate the textbook passages students read predominantly in his class, although his allusions usually were the reverse of his stated goal. That is, he was more likely to draw from recent history to make a point about the past. For instance, in talking about the 1860 presidential election, he related it to the 1992 election to clarify a point about Abraham Lincoln's victory. Ms. Newbury elucidated that history could be a tool for helping her students, who were predominantly Latino and, in many cases, immigrants or the children of immigrants, learn about discrimination that previous immigrants faced and how past immigrants eventually overcame bigotry. After Mr. Gaines told me that history was "great tool to kind of create a great mind," he added that it would depend on the teacher's perspective. Providing further detail, Mr. Gaines said that some teachers taught "just straight from the book;" however, other teachers showed students "the different perspectives of different eyes." In other words, Mr. Gaines wanted to use his history lessons to show his students multiple perspectives of the events they studied.

Second, the teachers' views regarding the needs of their students impacted the enacted curriculum as far as the instructional techniques employed (Grant, 2003). All three teachers viewed history as the story of the past that had relevance for the present. That is, they did not have students engage in document analysis to examine how various historical interpretations came into being in the way Evans's (1988, 1989, 1990, 1994) scientific historian would. Instead, the three teachers used teacher-centered, narrative-based lessons as their primary method of instruction. Like Evans's storyteller, the three teachers explained American history as a story in which they highlighted what they viewed as interesting events and important people. This conception of history reflected

Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines's perspective of history and also influenced the instructional methods they employed.

The teachers utilized instructional methods that they thought would be most effective with their students. For instance, Mr. Hobart told me that the best way to prepare students for the California Standards Test was through teacher-centered instruction. He added that he could not teach all of the required material in the time given through the use of projects. Similarly, Ms. Newbury employed teacher-centered lessons because she believed this approach was a more efficient and effective means of imparting course content than cooperative learning or small group activities in which, she explained, students had a greater tendency to be off task. Of the three teachers, Mr. Gaines changed his instructional methods to the greatest degree. Initially, he gave his students the most autonomy because he wanted his students to learn to be self-determined. However, after attending a conference specifically targeted for middle school teachers, Mr. Gaines reflected on his practice and came to believe that the degree of self-rule he allowed his students was developmentally inappropriate. As a result, he supervised his students more closely to increase the likelihood that they completed the activities of a given lesson. Furthermore, aside from the portion of the period in which students worked independently, Mr. Gaines applied direct instruction techniques. As Mr. Gaines fell behind the dictates of the pacing guide near the conclusion of his Civil War unit, he used direct instruction throughout the entire lessons. This approach continued throughout his brief Reconstruction unit.

The district pacing guide was an equally important factor that influenced the content and instructional decisions made by the teachers. Thornton (1991) described the teacher as “the curricular-instructional gatekeeper” in social studies (p. 237). That is, the teacher “makes the day-to-day decisions concerning both the subject matter and the experiences to which student have access and the nature of that subject matter and those experiences” (Thornton, 1991, p. 237). While describing the teacher as having this level of decision making power, Thornton (1991) acknowledged that contextual factors influence how teachers wield this authority in their classrooms. The pacing guide was such a contextual factor. Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines had to consider the course of action outlined in the pacing guide before making any decision regarding their teaching of any topic.

The pacing guide functioned as a tool of standardization in that it was designed to ensure that all of the social studies teachers were teaching the course content at such a rate of delivery that they would complete their eighth grade United States history instruction with ample time remaining so that teachers could review for the content standards test (Wills & Sandholtz, 2009). Wills and Sandholtz (2009) explained that “standardization aims for uniformity of goals, curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment” (p. 1069). Therefore, while the eighth grade U. S. history content standards served as one level to ensure that students were taught a similar curriculum derived from California Content Standards, the pacing guide performed at a second level to make certain that teachers taught said curriculum at a comparable speed so that students would

have been taught all of the subject matter that might appear on the Content Standards Test prior to the admission of the test.

The rationale underlying the use of the standards and the pacing guide was one of fairness. It would be unreasonable to expect the students to perform satisfactorily on the state content standards test if they were not taught material—the California content standards—aligned with that which appeared on the test. Similarly, it would be improper for the students to complete the California’s content standards test if they had not been taught all of the material that might appear on the exam. This situation would result if the teachers did not teach all of the content standards that could potentially be tested.

Therefore, the pacing guide was created to make it certain that students did not face this difficulty. Both Mr. Hobart and Mr. Gaines explained that the pacing guide served this function in their curriculum planning by making them more aware of the amount of instructional time available for each unit as well as the importance of teaching each unit as much as possible within the pacing guide’s prescribed timeframe.

Although the teachers were not held to strict adherence to the pacing guide; that is, teachers might be as far as a week to one and a half weeks behind one another. The strictures of the pacing guide were informally enforced through social studies department meetings. At every department meeting I attended, the first item on the agenda was teacher progress reports. During this time, each teacher told the other members of the department and Ms. Martin, the assistant principal who oversaw social studies, what unit they were currently teaching for each grade level they taught and when they believed they would complete each of the units they were currently teaching. While there was good-

natured teasing amongst the teachers as to who was ahead and who was behind in their teaching, the reports reinforced the teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching their curriculum at a rate as closely aligned with that called for in the pacing guide as they were capable.

The district's periodic assessments functioned as a formal means to ensure teachers' adherence to the pacing guide. The district mandated three periodic assessments to be given in January, March and June. The social studies district assessments consisted of 15 multiple choice questions and two short constructed response questions in which students might interpret a political cartoon, a diagram, a graph, or a chart and write an answer of two to four sentences.⁹ The teachers would grade the short constructed response questions and then send the answer sheets to the Educational Testing Service for the scoring of the multiple choice questions and the totaling of students' test results. The tests' subject matter consisted of material the students should have covered in the units preceding the admission of the test. For each of the assessments, teachers were given a two or three week window within the designated testing month in which to administer the test. This time frame in which to administer each of the tests gave teachers some flexibility in the strictness with which they followed the pacing guide. Thus, they were not expected to be teaching the exact same standard on the same day; however, teachers could not fall so far behind that their students would not be ready for the periodic assessment within the designated window. While the district periodic assessments were

⁹ The district's periodic assessments were given in the four core subjects—English, math, science, and social studies and at all three grade levels. I did not inquire as to the format of the periodic assessments in the other subject areas.

not used to evaluate the teachers or the students (during the academic year I observed, although the potential for such use existed), according to Mr. Hobart, the teachers did not share this information with the students because they did not want to send a mixed message in which students were told the district assessments did not count but the state's content standards test did count as far as evaluating the school's performance. In fact, Mr. Hobart explained that the district's greatest concern was with the social studies department's rate of student test completion as he displayed a certificate from the regional office awarded to the school for having achieved the highest percentage of students taking the district assessments for the previous year. Assuming teachers would not administer the test if the students had not covered the material, the district used the student rate of assessment completion as a measure of teachers' observance of the pacing guide.

However, the pacing guide also had the unintended consequence of lessening the likelihood that teachers would use teaching methods that required more instructional time than direct instruction, even though assistant principals and subject supervisors were strongly suggesting that teachers use methods supportive of greater student participation (Sandholtz, Ogawa, & Scribner, 2004). That is, at the same time that administrators and district officials were encouraging teachers to employ teaching methods designed to draw on students' prior knowledge and allow for more student involvement, teachers were likely to ignore the appeals because they believed these techniques required more instructional time and hindered their efforts to keep their lessons aligned with that suggested in the pacing guide. However, when Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury were ahead

in terms of the content prescribed by the pacing guide, they both taught in ways that allowed for or were supportive of greater student participation. Similarly, when Mr. Gaines believed he had ample time for an instructional unit, he encouraged students to actively participate in the lessons; however, as he approached the pacing guide's prescribed end date for a unit, Mr. Gaines turned to direct instruction, which limited students' opportunities to participate, in order to teach the required content at a faster rate so that he could complete the unit as near to the approved end date as possible.

Had I observed only one of the three instructional units that made up the teachers' instruction on the Civil War era, I would have left unaware of this slight, but significant, change in the teacher's instructional methods. Reflective of their beliefs regarding teacher-centered instruction, I never saw Mr. Hobart or Ms. Newbury teach a lesson in which they were not the central figure; however, when these two teachers were ahead of the pacing guide's prescribed point in the content, they would encourage student participation by providing time within the lesson for the students to share in a manner that went beyond recitation (Dillon, 1988; Larson, 1997). Related to this, Mr. Gaines's lessons at the beginning of units usually allowed more time for student participation than those lessons at the end of units when he was racing to finish instruction within the pacing guide's prescribed time. This was most evident during his Civil War and Reconstruction units. These changes in the teachers' instructional methods demonstrated the impact the pacing guide had on the teachers' planning to the extent that they would try to teach at the rate suggested by the pacing guide rather than follow the suggestions of the district officials and school administrators who encouraged the teachers to teach

lessons designed to develop students' critical thinking skills. In addition, seeing Mr. Gaines adjust his practice from unit to unit demonstrated how the teachers had to balance these three factors. Having examined the relevant literature and described the school context as well as provided background on the teachers and their perspective on history and instruction, I briefly describe the design of my study before going forward with the data chapters. Over the next three chapters, I examine those choices in detail vis-à-vis to teaching about the Civil War era.

Chapter 3: What the Teachers Taught about the Antebellum Period

Introduction

Having examined the historiography of the Civil War era in the previous chapter as well as suggested topics and instructional approaches for teaching about this time, in this chapter I describe the content Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught about the antebellum period of the Civil War era. I discuss the teaching methods they employed as well as the rationales behind their curricular and instructional decisions.

In a portion of the last chapter, I briefly examined three common factors that influenced the teachers' practice. These features consisted of the teacher's historical perspective, the teacher's beliefs about how best to meet their students' needs, and the district pacing guide. In recounting the teachers' lessons on the antebellum period, I provide more detail as to how these issues impacted each teacher's practice. As Grant (1996) has shown personal, structural and organizational factors influence teachers' classroom practice, and these areas can sometimes work at cross-currents with one another. That is, teachers often weigh a myriad of considerations—some of which may seem contradictory—before determining the historical content and instructional methods to be used in a given lesson. For instance, a teacher, reflecting on his own experience as a student whose history teacher often lectured, may choose to give a lecture on the Civil War containing quotations from soldiers' diaries because he believes that it will allow him to provide students some understanding of the experience of battle while best managing student behavior. Another teacher might develop a lesson on Civil War military strategy with a component for group work as a means to channel his students'

desire for social interaction toward meeting the lesson's curricular and instructional objectives because he recalls how bored he was as a student during lectures. While these are simple examples, they illustrate how various factors may influence teacher decision making regarding the historical content teachers seek to impart and the instructional methods they employ.

Although Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines were using the same content standards and had to negotiate the same strictures in the pacing guide, the historical content they chose to teach along with their contextualizing of the material and the instructional methods they used were reflective of their different historical perspectives and their diverse beliefs about how to best address the needs of their students, respectively. Just as these teachers had different historical perspectives, they also viewed the pacing guide differently. Both Mr. Hobart and Mr. Gaines saw it as a tool that could assist them in determining how to teach historical content as efficiently as possible. For Mr. Hobart, this meant he “put the pedal to the metal” and moved from topic to topic “not as fast as you can but quicker than before,” before he had to contend with the pacing guide. For Mr. Gaines, he believed that he could catch up to the pacing guide when he saw that he was running short on time (according to the pacing guide's dictates), explaining “I look to see how much time I have left.” While Ms. Newbury disagreed with the pacing guide's emphasis on certain historical topics reflected in the amount of teaching time designated for those topics, she nevertheless came to conform to the pacing guide stating, “Maybe three or four years ago when I first started teaching five years ago, I didn't really have the pacing down, so I would, for the last couple of years it's been

pretty much the same, the same time.” Over the last two years, she developed enough mastery of the pacing guide that she did not have to deviate from her planned teaching time.

Similarly, the teachers interpreted the content standards differently based on their historical perspectives. For example, on the first day that I arrived to formally observe Mr. Hobart’s teaching he told me that states’ rights was the cause of the Civil War and added that, “Students will say slavery right away, but states’ rights was the real cause of the Civil War.” His historical perspective with its focus on the disagreements between the federal and state governments was reflected in his emphasis on political history. On occasion, Mr. Hobart pointed out or briefly spoke on an aspect of social history such as the activities of women in the North and South during the war, but most of the historical content in his lessons focused on the activities of the federal government and the various state governments. Ms. Newbury’s historical perspective led her to highlight the many cases of discrimination in American history and how that discrimination was eventually overcome. In addition, she pointed out that her students, many of whom were immigrants or the children of immigrants, were being discriminated against but less so than their parents. Reflective of this historical point of view, she emphasized slavery as “the real cause of the Civil War,” a phrase she used during her lesson on John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry. Mr. Gaines’s historical perspective was one that focused on how he believed history should be taught, specifically history that highlighted the multiple perspectives of various historical actors. In his Civil War instruction, he sought to stress the multiple causes of the war that resulted in people becoming “so enamored about their

politics, about their feelings about their region” that they would kill one another. This approach was sensible to him because, as he explained, “The whole politics behind, the true politics behind the Civil War wasn’t so much about slavery, but it was more about secession and things like that, and mind you that everybody has their own interpretation of why things happened, and so, it’s, it’s a fascinating, fascinating time.” Mr. Gaines’s enthusiasm for the Civil War as a historical topic of great depth and richness was countered by his sense that “the way we teach history is more like you get the pebble and you just skip it along the water, and that’s the unfortunate thing about it.” He felt that he no longer had the time to explore historical topics surrounding the war in depth the way he did before the pacing guide, saying, “You really can’t, so you just kind of pick and choose of what you think is important.” As curricular and instructional gatekeepers (Thornton, 1991), teachers have always chosen the historical content and instructional approaches contained in their lessons; however, Mr. Gaines felt that the pacing guide reduced his level of autonomy.

The differences in the three teachers’ historical perspectives were evident in the historical material they taught to their students, though there were also similarities in the historical content they taught, which I argue was due to the state content standards and the pacing guide. In the next three sections, I examine these teachers’ practice, focusing on the historical material they taught and the instructional methods they employed during their units on the antebellum period. I begin with Mr. Hobart because he was the most traditional of the teachers in terms of how he framed the historical information he taught and the instructional techniques he used. He was traditional in that he had students’

desks arranged in straight rows facing the blackboard, where he spent much of each lesson, and the content of his lessons could best be described as political history, in that they tended to focus on the activities of the federal government and various state governments. And Mr. Hobart predominantly taught teacher-centered lessons in which the textbook was the primary instructional resource (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Loewen, 1995, VanSledright, 2002).

Mr. Hobart: States' Rights to Control Slavery as the Cause of the Civil War

In my first formal interview, Mr. Hobart reiterated that the principle of states' rights was the war's "number one cause." He added that there continued to be disagreements between the states that showed states' rights was an issue in the present day. Having heard Mr. Hobart explain the primary cause of the Civil War twice, I was uncertain as to exactly what he meant by the term "states' rights." In his lessons, Mr. Hobart showed that he did not mean states' rights for the sake of states' rights (McPherson, 2007), but states' rights regarding the control of slavery as the most important cause of the Civil War (Fehrenbacher, 1990). Mr. Hobart's connection of states' rights from the Civil War era to present day disputes between the states reflected his historical perspective, in which he sought to show his students how the past influenced the present, although more often than not he drew on examples from the present in an effort to help his students better understand the past.

Whenever he did discuss or have students read about the issue of states' rights, it was also linked to the subject of slavery—not as a moral issue—but rather as a policy matter,

even when addressing such topics as Bleeding Kansas in which both slavery's supporters and opponents lost their lives. In his recounting of the pre-war years, Mr. Hobart relied on the textbook, *Creating America: A History of the United States: Beginnings through World War I* (2006) from which he often had students read aloud. The chapters in the textbook emphasized the political events of America's past while occasionally making reference to social history, mentioning the activities of White women, Native Americans, or free African Americans. While the inclusion of women in the textbook was an effort to present a more complete history of the period (Gitlin, 1995) Mr. Hobart referred to these only when he believed they were relevant to the topic at hand, as the social history paragraphs often appeared as boxes to the side of the main text. Mr. Hobart's belief in the value of direct instruction was evident in having students read aloud from the textbook, because he said that the book "did a good job of covering the material," although he did skip paragraphs or sections that he did not view as relevant to the content standards or could be interpreted as contrasting with his own historical views (Wills, 1994).

His use of the textbook distinguished Mr. Hobart from Ms. Newbury and Mr. Gaines who used the text as little as possible in their instruction. Ms. Newbury said that the book contained more information than the students needed to know, and Mr. Gaines spoke disparagingly of teachers "who are just straight from the book," adding that he wanted his students to "see the different perspectives of different eyes." In lieu of the text, Ms. Newbury used a combination of handouts from educational workbooks along

with her self-prepared notes, and Mr. Gaines drew from his outlines which were based on the content standards along with internet-based sources.

The pacing guide was a structural factor that Mr. Hobart had to consider as he planned his instruction. Several times both formally and informally, he explained how he had to “put the pedal to the metal” and continue moving through the content standards. His sense that he had to keep pushing forward came from his experience during the prior year in which he spent too much time teaching his Civil War unit in part because he had created learning stations. Mr. Hobart gave details on how the development of the stations was labor intensive and that the students had difficulty completing each station’s tasks. As a result of this, he ended up having less than a week to teach Reconstruction because he needed to review for the state content standards examination. His experience with the learning stations may also have influenced his belief that project-based learning was not as effective as direct instruction for preparing the students for the state test. In order to teach to the standards more succinctly, Mr. Hobart described how he would go through the textbook with the content standards to determine what needed to be emphasized within a given section and what could be ignored altogether or given less attention. These four features—Mr. Hobart’s historical perspective, his view that direct instruction was the best way to meet his students’ needs, and the pacing guide as well as his prior experience with the learning stations—were the primary factors that influenced Mr. Hobart’s teaching of the antebellum period.

Mr. Hobart’s most direct statement of how states’ rights caused the war occurred when he taught about the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Before discussing the debates and

the major events that preceded them, Mr. Hobart asked if any students remembered the debates between Barack Obama and John McCain, which had taken place about four months earlier. A student explained how McCain and Obama had addressed different issues facing America, and Mr. Hobart added that McCain and Obama were allowed to speak directly to one another and question one another. Mr. Hobart's connecting of the present and the past demonstrated how his goal of linking the past and present actually played out as a reversal of his intended goal. In reviewing the events leading to the debates such as Preston Brooks' beating of Senator Charles Sumner, Mr. Hobart said, "Suddenly in politics, slavery is going to be the main issue." Through students reading aloud from the textbook, Mr. Hobart showed how Republicans charged Democrats with wanting to extend slavery to all of the states. In addition, he highlighted how Republicans attacked Senator Stephen Douglas for sponsoring the Kansas-Nebraska Act which allowed the citizens of those two territories to determine whether to have slavery. A student read how Lincoln feared that Southerners wanted slavery to exist throughout the nation. Mr. Hobart had a student read from Lincoln's "House Divided" speech to show that Lincoln believed the nation would become all slave states or all free. Mr. Hobart followed this up by saying, "...Like I told you before, states' rights is the number one cause. Douglass says let the states decide on the issue of slavery...." In a later lesson when discussing the debates, Mr. Hobart highlighted that Lincoln was opposed to slavery's expansion but was not against slavery's existence. However, this was the crux of the matter from Mr. Hobart's perspective: would Lincoln's opposition to slavery's expansion win out over the idea that states had the right to decide on slavery's fate within

their boundaries, or would states maintain the right to decide for themselves whether to have slavery? Mr. Hobart made the point that Douglas won the senate election; therefore, his position on the states and slavery would remain ascendant for a few more years.

Similarly, Mr. Hobart taught that the Missouri Compromise was a matter of states' rights.¹⁰ He told me that he explained that the Missouri territory petitioned to join the Union as a slave state since slaveholders had been bringing their slaves to the area since Missouri's earliest territorial days, but that the Senate had held up the petition because the balance between slave and free states would no longer exist. Mr. Hobart asked the students whether or not a state should have the right to decide on slavery. He did not share student responses with me, though he did tell me that he explained the role of Henry Clay in brokering the agreement that allowed the balance to be maintained. As he narrated the lesson, he pointed to the board and said, "See, states' rights." That is, Maine opted to join the Union as a free state, and Missouri chose to enter as a slave state. This was certainly the case at the state level, but from Henry Clay's perspective, the important issue was to preserve the equilibrium amongst free and slave states (Peterson, 1987). Mr. Hobart did not emphasize this point because it ran counter to his interpretation. Similar to Wills's (1994) finding that teachers skipped sections of their textbooks which ran counter to their interpretation of Native American history, Mr. Hobart did not acknowledge that the Missouri Compromise was an instance of the federal government's involvement with the slavery issue.

¹⁰ I spoke with Mr. Hobart immediately after this lesson but was not present when he taught it due to a scheduling conflict; however, I did see the notes that he had on his board which he referenced as he recounted the class period.

Mr. Hobart continued to stress the right of the states to determine their status as free or slave states in teaching about the Wilmot Proviso (1846). Although this proposal did not become law, Mr. Hobart, through the students' reading of the textbook and his elaboration, underlined the South's belief that the proviso was unconstitutional because it would have prevented slaveholders from bringing their slaves into any territory gained from the war with Mexico. Slaveholders, who viewed slaves as property, saw Wilmot's plan as a violation of their Fifth Amendment property rights because they would be unable to bring their slaves into the new lands. With a combination of recitation and his explanatory comments, Mr. Hobart drew attention to the fact that the North was supportive of Wilmot's proposition while Southerners were opposed. This made the proviso an example of sectionalism. Rather than lecture like the master storyteller in Grant's (2003) study, Mr. Hobart used the textbook to anchor his historical narrative. Having his students read aloud, he said, served as a means to involve the pupils in the lesson, and he added that he did not have his students read every page of the book because not all of its sections covered the historical content equally well. And again, in those instances when the textbook's interpretation ran counter to Mr. Hobart's view, he simply skipped those sections of the text.

In addition, Mr. Hobart called attention to the states' rights perspective through his teaching about the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In following up students' reading of the textbook, he focused on the key provision in the law, that being popular sovereignty, which allowed the citizens of the two territories to decide whether to enter the Union as slave or free states. Using recitation, Mr. Hobart had students recount how Missourians

came to Kansas to vote for it to become a slave state. Mr. Hobart told the class that instead of having a smooth election as Stephen Douglas, the law's chief sponsor, had wanted, the balloting ended with a disputed result that led to fighting, known as "Bleeding Kansas," between pro- and anti-slavery forces.

In teaching about the Dred Scott case, Mr. Hobart continued to highlight how the dispute of states' rights to control slavery caused the Civil War. Through the use of a handout, in place of the textbook, he emphasized how the case raised the "question of slavery expansion" (worksheet used on 02.26.09). Mr. Hobart reviewed the various courts' decisions as Scott's case made its way to the United States Supreme Court, and through recitation, students explained the Supreme Court's decision. He highlighted that the Court, under Chief Justice Roger Taney, ruled that Congress could not declare slavery illegal in any U. S. territory because it violated slaveholders' rights to property. "So," Mr. Hobart exclaimed, "the Missouri Compromise goes bye-bye." This ruling left it to newly formed states to decide the slavery issue. Additionally, this ruling fit neatly into an interpretation that states' rights was the main cause of the Civil War. Using the handout made sense to Mr. Hobart because it provided more detail on the case than the textbook. A further benefit was that Mr. Hobart could review how the federal court system functions. This, in turn, could be linked to the Constitution, which Mr. Hobart stated, was the most important topic to teach because it is so fundamental to understanding the events of America's past. It was also the most tested topic on the content standards test.

Mr. Hobart emphasized how Southerners' concerns about slavery affected the outcome of the election of 1860. He introduced the topic with the example of the 1992 election between George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Ross Perot to show how Clinton, with a plurality of the popular vote, won a majority of the electoral votes, adding that Perot drew more votes away from Bush than from Clinton and this bolstered Clinton's chances. Mr. Hobart said, "Something like this in the 1860 election." Having students read aloud from the textbook, he paid special attention to the splitting of the Democratic Party at their nominating convention in April 1860. After a student read about fifty delegates leaving the convention because the platform endorsed popular sovereignty and did not support slavery outright, Mr. Hobart commented, "Popular sovereignty should appeal to the South because it lets the states decide whether to have slaves, but the South didn't like it because the platform didn't take a strong enough stand in support of slavery, so some of the delegates left the convention like Cartman on *South Park*, 'Screw you guys, I'm going home.'" However, Mr. Hobart's words demonstrated how the South's position evolved from one endorsing popular sovereignty to one that only sanctioned slavery. In fact, if he had had the students read the next two paragraphs in the textbook, they would have learned that the rift between Northern Democrats and the remaining Southerners proved so great that they could not reach a consensus as to a presidential candidate and that when the Democrats met again in June "almost all Southerners left the meeting" (*Creating America*, 2006, p. 472) which gave Northern Democrats the opportunity to nominate Stephen Douglas, a supporter of popular sovereignty. By doing

this, Mr. Hobart found additional evidence for a states' rights interpretation as the war's main cause.

Moreover, Mr. Hobart pointed to more evidence for a states' rights interpretation in his lesson focusing on secession. Having students read in the textbook that "[s]upporters of secession based their arguments on the idea of states' rights. They argued that states had voluntarily joined the Union. Consequently, they claimed states also had the right to leave the Union" (*Creating America*, 2006, p. 473). He stressed this point about the right Southern states asserted to join or leave the Union. In addition, Mr. Hobart had students read the paragraph preceding this one, which stated that the South believed Lincoln would eventually move to end slavery in spite of his statements proclaiming he had no quarrel where slavery already existed. He reiterated the view that Lincoln would not have ended slavery. Mr. Hobart read aloud from Lincoln's First Inaugural Address in the textbook to advance his position. Mr. Hobart asked a student, "What does he mean when he says, 'We are not enemies, but friends'" (*Creating America*, 2006, p. 475)? The student answered, "How we're friends. How we're all Americans." Mr. Hobart affirmed that this was correct and restated that Lincoln said he would not end slavery. Here, Mr. Hobart downplayed slavery as a political issue and cause of the war to promote the South's states' rights argument, which he too viewed as the war's primary cause.

As he brought his pre-war unit to a close, Mr. Hobart developed a metaphor to connect what he had taught by asking his students, "Now, if I was looking for ingredients for my recipe for civil war that will move the nation from sectionalism to secession, what ingredients would I need?" Students volunteered numerous events and issues of the era

such as the Dred Scott case, popular sovereignty, the Missouri Compromise, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The pupils also mentioned the tariff issue and states' rights. Reflective of Mr. Hobart's view of history and what was most important in causing the Civil War, the students tended to name events and issues rather than the people behind them as though the events and issues were not the result of people's actions (Loewen, 1995). Although he taught about the key political leaders of the time, there were instances when he focused more attention on the outcomes of a particular piece of legislation than the politicians involved in the lawmaking process. This may have been because of the pressure to move on to the next content standard or because he believed that he had spent sufficient time on elected leaders, but the effect of this was to deny agency to historical figures (Loewen, 1995). In concluding this lesson, Mr. Hobart pointed out that students should see that the issues of slavery and states' rights which would result in secession and Civil War were coming to a head.

In addition, Mr. Hobart highlighted California's admission to the Union as a free state. Here, again, a state chose whether to enter the Union as slave or free. Related to this, he pointed out how people opposed to popular sovereignty as well as abolitionists joined together to form the Republican Party. In his lessons on the election of 1856, while mentioning that both James Buchanan, the Democratic candidate, and John C. Fremont, the Republican candidate, tried to say as little as possible on the slavery issue, Mr. Hobart emphasized Buchanan's support of popular sovereignty, the states' rights position. Additionally, he linked this election to the then recently concluded 2008 election by pointing out how the Republican's choice of Fremont was like the Democrat's choice of

Obama because both candidates did not have too much political experience “so there were not many things to attack him on, kind of like President Obama.” On the contrary, Mr. Hobart explained, John McCain had been a senator for much longer and “[w]hen you’re in politics for a long time, your opponents can bring up dirt about you.” He then told his students “when you’re a politician... you almost never make all of the people happy.” This was often how Mr. Hobart connected the past and the present to illustrate a point about the past. While he believed he was showing how the past influenced the present, in fact in his practice he seemed to be bringing the concerns of the present to bear on his students’ understanding of the past as Carr (1961) had written. The references to Obama and McCain, Mr. Hobart believed, would assist his pupils in better understanding the 1856 election. Although his connections of the past and present were intended as a point of clarification, it was just as likely that students might have mixed the details of the two events that Mr. Hobart was relating, especially with his 1992 election example. Students might have taken the linkage as an example of the misguided notion that history repeats itself, although the historical contexts surrounding the events were different (Sandage, 1993).

Mr. Hobart reinforced his lessons on states’ rights to control slavery through the use of a DVD titled *The Causes of the Civil War*. He also created a PowerPoint presentation to review the causes and events that led up to the war. Mr. Hobart followed this up by having students create their own test questions to review with one another before their test. Further support for these concepts was provided through the handouts he had students complete such as the one in which students had to show how the Wilmot

Proviso, the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the election of 1860 exacerbated the tensions between the North and South resulting in civil war. As Mr. Hobart highlighted multiple times, the events of the antebellum period, viewed through a states' rights interpretation, brought about the Civil War.

Furthermore, reflective of his interpretation of Civil War causation, Mr. Hobart's historical content consisted largely of recounting the actions of politicians such as Stephen Douglas, Henry Clay, and Abraham Lincoln, because they, in his view, played the most significant role in the antebellum period. This is the type of history called for by Schlesinger (1991/1998) focusing on the great men, in this case, politicians, who negotiated the compromises of the era. In addition, Schlesinger advocated including the key contributions of Blacks, women, and other minorities. In this regard, Mr. Hobart taught about Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman and their work in the abolitionist movement, but their activities were not given the same attention as the politicians who Mr. Hobart viewed as being at the center of the antebellum period. Because of the pressure he felt from the pacing guide Mr. Hobart chose to emphasize political history, because it was most consistent with his historical perspective and he could not highlight all aspects of the historical content equally. Additionally, from his previous experience and the California Testing Blueprint, Mr. Hobart knew that political historical content was more heavily tested than social history.¹¹ Although even in this regard he tended to downplay the politicians' behavior and concentrate on the outcomes of legislation,

¹¹ The testing Blueprint showed teachers which content standards were considered most important as well as showing the percentage of the test that addressed each curricular unit.

something that likely made it difficult for his students to understand how politicians were motivated to act (Loewen, 1995).

Mr. Hobart's view of history, his beliefs in regard to meeting his students' needs, and the district pacing guide influenced his choices regarding historical content and instructional methods. Mr. Hobart consistently used teacher-centered lessons because, as he told me, direct instruction was the best way to convey the content to his students. The pacing guide made it all the more likely that Mr. Hobart would employ direct instruction since he believed it allowed him to teach the material at a faster rate than student-centered lessons as he explained, "I got to speed through it, you know, where before you could really, really spend time on it." Finally, Mr. Hobart's goal of showing how "the past touches the present" frequently was expressed in the opposite way, for example when he alluded to recent events such as elections to shed light on incidents of the antebellum period.

Like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury believed that using teacher-centered lessons was the best way to meet their students' needs. However, she differed from Mr. Hobart in her historical perspective. As mentioned earlier, Ms. Newbury viewed America's history as one in which discrimination and the fight against it was central. Emanating from this viewpoint, slavery, the most extreme form of bigotry, was the primary cause of the Civil War. Because Ms. Newbury had become fairly adept at following the pacing guide, she did not seem to feel the same pressure that Mr. Hobart and Mr. Gaines did; however, in occasional asides like "I only teach them what they need to know" she let me know that

the guide was still a consideration in her curricular and instructional decisions as she had to keep going forward through the content standards.

Ms. Newbury: Inhumane and Immoral Slavery Caused the Civil War

On more than one occasion, Ms. Newbury said, “I feel very passionate about my teaching.” Her enthusiasm connected to her view of history: “the idea about justice in this country.... I’m just trying to give two sides to a story, but I think it’s important for them [her students] to see how far we’ve come, and I always try to push that. But we don’t have this today, but we don’t have that today.” Ms. Newbury meant that the nation had prevailed over past ills through such actions as the abolition of slavery, and through these examples, she wanted her predominantly Latino students to realize that present day discrimination could also be overcome.

During my second formal interview in March, I asked Ms. Newbury about her meticulous recitation on the antebellum period in which she asked every student at least one question and her objectives for the activity. She explained, “To remind them what led up to this [the Civil War]. They need to remember that it didn’t just happen overnight. This was something that had been building since the Constitution.... I just want them to remember that because I think the causes of it [the war] are just so important.” This illustrated her view of slavery’s importance as the central cause of the Civil War, specifically, and as an example of discrimination overcome. Additionally, this recitation was evidence of the significance Ms. Newbury gave to slavery as part of the curriculum. As mentioned previously, she believed that direct instruction was the best

way to convey content because “I noticed group work with eighth graders if it’s not really watched, they fall, you know, they’re not doing what they need to be doing anyway, so, so... I don’t use a lot of [group work], we talk about it [the content] more.” This talk consisted of recitation. While all three teachers used this technique, Ms. Newbury included more recitation in her lessons than Mr. Hobart or Mr. Gaines.

Unlike Mr. Hobart and Mr. Gaines who viewed the pacing guide as being of some benefit in that it aided them in keeping on track as they made their way through the content standards, Ms. Newbury admitted, “I hate the pacing guide.... I don’t have a problem with the standards from the state. I do have a problem with the pacing guide because they give us very little time on the Constitution.” She explained that the pacing guide placed nearly equal emphasis on all topics based on the amount of time devoted to them, but some topics, for instance, the Constitution and the Civil War, deserved more time befitting their importance. Related to the pacing guide, Ms. Newbury explained that she rarely used the textbook because “the book gives them [her students] more than they need [to know].” She solved this matter by developing reading packets that “just gives them what they need to know.” California’s restructuring of the U. S. history curriculum which divided the historical content into three parts over grades 5, 8, and 11 was done to enable teachers to explore historical content in greater depth (California Department of Education, 2005); however, the pacing guide seemed to have the unintended consequence of directing teachers to teach historical topics at a surface level (Sandholtz, Ogawa, & Scribner, 2004). Mr. Gaines asserted this as well.

However in the case of Ms. Newbury, as I discovered, this surface level coverage of historical content—teaching them only what they needed to know—applied to political history but not social history. That is, Ms. Newbury spent what she felt was sufficient time teaching about the legislation of the antebellum period so that she could have more time for teaching about the broader antebellum society which she viewed as being of greater importance.¹² As she explained in our last formal interview, her state test results continued to improve from one year to the next, so Ms. Newbury believed she was teaching enough political history. At the same time, she thought that the social history she taught may have enabled her students' test results to show sustained growth as her students had a better chance of doing well on these less tested areas because of her instruction on social historical content. More importantly, Ms. Newbury believed that teaching social historical content enabled her to demonstrate how discrimination, which had been overcome in the past, could eventually be overcome by her students' generation. As with Mr. Hobart, this demonstrated how the issues of the present—concerns about her students facing discrimination—influenced how Ms. Newbury viewed the past and the content she chose to emphasize.

Reflective of her historical perspective, Ms. Newbury explained that in her teaching about the Civil War era, she addressed issues of justice and discrimination. This was evident in her teaching about slavery in which she focused on showing how slavery was inhumane and, therefore, immoral. She stated that, unlike some teachers, she started her

¹² Many of her homework assignments from the *California Standards Enrichment Workbook* were centered in political historical content. Additionally, several of these assignments reviewed sixth and seventh grade historical material that was also tested on the eighth grade California history content standards examination.

lessons on slavery teaching about the middle passage, the horrific transatlantic voyage that captured Africans endured. This was significant because this showed that slavery's immorality began before Africans ever set foot in North America.

Ms. Newbury taught her students about the middle passage by having them read from the unit packet she had assembled.¹³ The handout emphasized the harsh conditions Africans faced from the moment of capture until their arrival in the Western Hemisphere. Through recitation, she stress that Africans were kept shackled to prevent escape. Ms. Newbury highlighted the filthy conditions on slave ships which resulted in captives' deaths, and she told of the sharks that "followed the slave ships because they would throw bodies of dead Africans into the water." In addition, she showed a brief documentary on the middle passage to bring further attention to the inhumane conditions Africans suffered.¹⁴

Building on these lessons, Ms. Newbury described slavery's conditions in the United States. She stated that slavery was matrilineal, going so far as to remind students of a scene she had shown from *Gone with the Wind* that depicted a White slave overseer who fathered a child with a female slave.¹⁵ Ms. Newbury added, "You even had masters who had children with one of their slaves. The mother could be raped. Any baby that comes from a slave mother belongs to the master. Masters would never acknowledge the baby

¹³ Ms. Newbury had told me in the first formal interview that while she assigned homework from the *California Standards Enrichment Workbook*, published by McDougal Little, the publisher of the eighth grade history textbook, and she occasionally used the text for vocabulary assignments, she rarely used the text in class. Instead, she prepared unit notes or a reading packet of handouts from various workbooks she had on hand.

¹⁴ I was not present for the showing of the documentary, but Ms. Newbury referenced the film several times during the unit.

¹⁵ I was not present for the screening of the scenes described in this paragraph; however, I was present when Ms. Newbury showed the hospital scene after the fall of Atlanta.

was theirs.” Furthermore, she used the example of William and Ellen Craft to point out slaves’ greatest fear was that their own children could be sold, thus, breaking up their family. As Ms. Newbury displayed a small poster of a boy enslaved and dressed in rags, she said, “See the slaves were not well dressed, not like in *Gone with the Wind*.”

Consistent with Loewen’s (1995, 2010) recommendation for teachers, she contradicted this touchstone of popular culture, although she did not have her students carry out the rest of Loewen’s suggestion which was to have students examine the historiography behind the movie in terms of analyzing how the film is representative of the Lost Cause mythology because she needed to keep up with the pacing guide. In addition, Ms. Newbury explained that slaves were treated as property, adding, “They could be beaten or killed.” As she made these points, Ms. Newbury demonstrated that slavery was a cruel and wicked system designed to keep African Americans in a condition of dispirited subsistence (Douglass, 1845/1994). By illustrating slavery’s harsh conditions, she could demonstrate why slavery became such a contentious issue between the North and South.

To further develop the notion of slavery’s inhumanity, Ms. Newbury stressed the importance of the Underground Railroad. She reinforced the notion that slavery was so degrading that African Americans undertook extreme measures to escape from slavery. Ms. Newbury’s focus on the Underground Railroad allowed her to highlight how slaves resisted the institution and explain that slaves’ resistance was one way to fight the discrimination that was inherent in slavery. She had her students read about the

Underground Railroad.¹⁶ Through recitation, she elicited that the Underground Railroad consisted of a network of routes slaves could use to escape to the North. Ms. Newbury had students explain the work of conductors and, emphasizing Harriet Tubman's efforts, she described the nineteen trips below the Mason-Dixon Line made by "the Moses of her people."¹⁷ In addition to recitation, she had her students respond to a series of written questions about the Underground Railroad, some of which focused on basic facts and others which sought to put students in a scenario similar to those faced by abolitionists. In response to a question asking if it was right or wrong to break the law to help runaway slaves, one student explained, "I don't think it was wrong to help the slaves escape because they were human beings, so they shouldn't be slaves." Answers like this helped to illustrate Ms. Newbury's central focus on the inhumane conditions slaves faced. Ms. Newbury reinforced her instruction by showing a film called *The Underground Railroad: Escape from Slavery*. She also personalized her lessons by screening a film about William and Ellen Craft who escaped from Macon, Georgia by having the fair-skinned Ellen disguised as a White slave master and William posing as "his" servant. When I asked her if the Crafts might be on the California Standards Test, Ms. Newbury

¹⁶ Unlike her ELL classes in which students would read aloud, Ms. Newbury had her Law Enforcement Academic Program (LEAP) students, who were in the second highest track, read handouts silently and then she would conduct a recitation about the reading. While Ms. Newbury referred to this as "discussion," I describe it as recitation since it followed the pattern of teacher question, student answer, teacher evaluation of student answer, and a new question (Dillon, 1988).

¹⁷ McPherson (2007) explains that the most recent scholarship puts the number of times Tubman returned to the South at ten or thirteen.

answered, “No, it’s not on the test, but I want them to know that there were other ways to get away from slavery than the Underground Railroad.”¹⁸

The moral issue of assisting slaves in their escape led Ms. Newbury to teach about the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. She pointed out that the act made it illegal to help slaves escape and that any runaway slave found in the North had to be returned to their master. Furthermore, she told her students that the fact that the South wanted this law showed that they knew chattel slavery was not a condition anyone would willingly choose, even though Southerners defended the institution as being beneficial for African Americans. Ms. Newbury illustrated how escaped slaves feared the new law with the story of Frederick Douglass, explaining that he fled to England because he worried about being re-enslaved. She added that he wrote a book while in England and sold it to buy his freedom. While this was a slightly inaccurate recounting of Douglass’s first trip to England, it did convey escaped slaves’ anxiety regarding their possible forced return to the South. In addition, Ms. Newbury taught about the slave catchers who were paid for capturing and returning runaway slaves, and she explained that free Blacks had to show their free papers, or they would be forced back into slavery.

Adding to her lesson on Frederick Douglass, Ms. Newbury taught about William Lloyd Garrison and his radical abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*. She asked why Garrison’s newspaper was considered radical and a student responded that Garrison wanted slaveholders put in jail and that Garrison believed unjust laws should be broken.

¹⁸ Rather than travel at night as portrayed in *The Underground Railroad: Escape from Slavery*, the Crafts were able to move northward during the day since they were disguised as master and slave, although this was not without great risk.

She used this as a jumping off point for a discussion of the local curfew law. Asking her students whether it was fair to require those less than 18 years old and not with a parent or guardian to be inside by 10:00 p.m., Ms. Newbury heard from most of her students that they had broken the law because they did not know about it and that they were not afraid of being punished. She said, "If you don't like a law, you should find out about the law. Raise your hand if you've been outside after 10:00 p.m. (each student raised a hand)." After hearing several students explain that they broke the curfew law because they were unaware of it, Ms. Newbury said, "You guys are breaking the law," in a tone that implied the students' law breaking out of ignorance was not the same as the civil disobedience Garrison advocated. Ms. Newbury shifted the discussion, asking, "Who thinks the law that says it is illegal to download music without paying for it is unjust? Raise your hand." Everyone raised his or her hand. This led to a lengthy discussion about how musicians make money and the difference between a website like iTunes where people pay to download music and one like the original version of Napster where people did not pay for the service. By the end of the discussion, most of the students saw illegal downloading as "ripping them [musicians] off," and the majority of the students said that laws against illegal downloading were justified. This was the only instance I observed in which students had a chance to respond either to each other's comments or those of Ms. Newbury in which their reply was not evaluated as far as its correctness, and this was the only time during my observation when Ms. Newbury was slightly ahead of the pacing guide.

Following this part of the lesson, Ms. Newbury, referring back to the Garrison handout, talked about how some abolitionists did not believe in equality for slaves and wanted Blacks sent back to Africa after they were freed. A student suggested that maybe the abolitionists favoring this idea believed the former slaves would be treated better in Africa. Other students suggested that abolitionists advocating returning Blacks to Africa were racists and should be sent there themselves. Ms. Newbury explained that most Whites were racists at this time, so you wouldn't be able to find enough non-racist Whites to round up racist Whites and ship them out of the United States. Ms. Newbury then stated that the Whites were stereotyping Blacks by thinking they knew about any African cultures or languages just because they were of African ancestry. She used her own experience as an immigrant from England to support her point, explaining to the class how she knew more about English culture than her two daughters who were born in the United States. She added that as each new generation of an immigrant group becomes acculturated, they know less and less of their ancestors' culture. Finally, she asked rhetorically, "How African were the slaves in the 1850s and 1860s?"

After the lesson, Ms. Newbury seemed almost apologetic, saying, "We only got one page done today, but it was interesting, the whole idea about just and unjust laws. I wanted them to think about it, and I'm a little bit ahead." Because Ms. Newbury was slightly ahead of the pacing guide, she gave her students the opportunity to think about just and unjust laws as well as the issue of African American stereotypes, an issue to which she would return. However, when she taught about stereotypes of the North and South, she used recitation during the lesson because, by that point in the unit, she was no

longer “a little bit ahead,” and she was pressured to finish the unit as directed by the pacing guide (Wills, 2007; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009).

Another way Ms. Newbury demonstrated the inhumanity of slavery was by teaching how Southerners defended the institution. She explained, “Southerners used to say that there was slavery in the North because of the way workers in factories were treated, but no matter how much discrimination there was in the North people were not being bought and sold.” Ms. Newbury mentioned an example from the William and Ellen Craft film to show how the Bible was used to defend slavery; however, she also reminded the students of a character who used the Bible to advocate for the abolition of slavery. In making this point, Ms. Newbury explained that slaveholders did not want slaves to learn to read and write because these skills could be used to forge travel passes that might aid a slave trying to escape. Through recitation and the reading of an excerpt of a Frederick Douglass speech, Ms. Newbury reiterated how the Bible was used to both defend and question slavery’s existence.

Before the Civil War, potential slave rebellions were the greatest threat to the peculiar institution. Ms. Newbury, through her teaching of Nat Turner’s Rebellion, demonstrated slavery’s inhumanity again. After reading about the rebellion, Ms. Newbury told her students to think of one reason why Turner’s activity was justified and a reason why it was not. Every student who responded cited slavery’s immorality as justification for the killing of Turner’s White victims. In addition, she had students read about the rebellion’s long term effects such as the new stringent laws against slaves learning to read and write. Ms. Newbury reinforced these concepts through a homework assignment that focused on

Turner's Rebellion as well as that of Denmark Vesey. Although Ms. Newbury was not an advocate of violence, her lesson on Turner demonstrated that in addition to breaking tools or escaping, slaves could attack their masters. The harshness of slavery could drive slaves to rebellion as in the case of Turner or dispirited existence as reported by Douglass (1855/1994).

Although she spent most of her instructional time on the social history of the antebellum period, Ms. Newbury did teach political historical content as well; however, she did this in a manner reflective of her historical perspective. For example, when she taught about the Dred Scott case, Ms. Newbury explained how Chief Justice Taney based his opinion on a constitutional interpretation that the property rights contained in the Fifth Amendment supported slavery, and that this decision greatly upset the North where more Whites were coming to believe that African Americans, although not Whites' equals, deserved the opportunity to earn a living. Pushing her explanation further, she told her students, "The South is happy. They say, 'At last, slavery is in the Constitution.'" In teaching about the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Ms. Newbury highlighted the resulting Bleeding Kansas to demonstrate that Northerners viewed slavery as inhumane while Southerners saw the ownership of slaves as being a fundamental right because slaves were property. Ms. Newbury used her lessons on Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Brown to show how Northerners and Southerners projected stereotypes on one another. She used the example of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to demonstrate how Northerners viewed Southerners as Simon Legree, the harsh master of the novel, while the vast majority of Southern Whites did not own any slaves. Ms. Newbury added that the novel "helped

readers see slaves as real people in an unjust and cruel situation” (handout used 03.10.09). Conversely, she pointed out that Brown’s actions at Harpers Ferry and Northern abolitionists’ reactions to Brown’s deeds led Southerners to stereotype Northerners as radical abolitionists. Throughout her teaching on the antebellum period, Ms. Newbury focused extensively on showing how slavery as an inhumane condition caused the Civil War. This was consistent with her historical view in which the American experience consisted of ethnic and racial minorities facing discrimination; however, eventually, through legal means or war, as in the case of ending slavery, that prejudice was overcome.

Like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury’s teaching followed Schlesinger’s (1991/1998) guidelines as it focused on the most important history makers. However, because Ms. Newbury viewed slavery as being the central issue of the antebellum period, her lessons tended to focus on major figures of the abolitionist movement such as Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Harriet Tubman whom she viewed as the notables of the antebellum period. Ms. Newbury’s history lessons were, in practice, a reversal of Schlesinger’s ideas because, from her perspective, the antislavery leaders were the key leaders of the time and the politicians were secondary figures, responding to the growing discord between slavery supporters and opponents. In this way Ms. Newbury’s historical view was more akin to Loewen’s (1995, 2009) or Levine’s (1996) who both advocated a bottom up approach to history. In her units on the war and Reconstruction, Ms. Newbury’s teaching continued to focus on those at the bottom of society, the common soldiers, women, and African Americans, although she usually

spoke of these groups in general terms, almost never explaining the motives for their actions. Women and African Americans tended to be depicted as victims of those in power and their acts of opposition were frequently overlooked. For example, Ms. Newbury highlighted that slaves could be whipped; however, aside from discussing escape, she briefly mentioned other methods of resistance such as misusing tools or working slowly.

On occasion, because of her perspective on history, Ms. Newbury presented examples of slave resistance through rebellion, like that led by Nat Turner, through writing and speaking, like Frederick Douglass, and through escape, like Harriet Tubman and the lesser known but equally courageous William and Ellen Craft. In these portrayals of struggle, she demonstrated her belief that her choice of historical content could teach her students how various ethnic and racial groups have met discrimination and fought to overcome it.

Ms. Newbury's belief about how best to meet her students' needs and the pacing guide combined to influence her instructional choices. Because of her view that eighth graders tend to be off-task when they work in small groups, Ms. Newbury always taught teacher-centered lessons. Even when she was slightly ahead of the pacing guide during her lesson on William Lloyd Garrison and the concept of just and unjust laws, she never gave her students the opportunity to discuss the issues free of her guidance. Perhaps she thought that her students could not interact with one another for any length of time because they had not practiced these skills; however, it seemed more likely that her decision to lead this discussion reflected her view that students performed best and

learned more when the teacher guided them. Furthermore, this lesson demonstrated the influence of the pacing guide in that this was the one lesson where Ms. Newbury did not conduct a recitation because she was “slightly ahead” of the guide. In addition, she knew that she could not allow this discussion-based lesson to become too free flowing, or it would take up more than a class period and Ms. Newbury, who had become an adept manager of the pacing guide, would likely fall behind schedule.

Although Mr. Gaines followed the same content standards as Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury and had to manage the pacing guide just as they did, he had broader goals for his students beyond those based in the curriculum. Both Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury had fairly straightforward goals in terms of their historical content; however, Mr. Gaines wanted his students to understand how the complexity of the antebellum period and rising sectional tensions resulted in war, but this was not his only goal. He wanted his students to learn to be self-determined. To meet this goal, Mr. Gaines structured his lessons so that the students had to take the initiative to complete the activities. At the same time, he wanted his students to experience success in his classroom.¹⁹ These three goals tended to complicate his teaching both in terms of historical content and instructional approaches adopted. When Mr. Gaines’s view changed as to how he could increase students’ likelihood of experiencing success, it made it more difficult for students to reach his goal

¹⁹ I am not implying that Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury did not want their students to be successful, but Mr. Gaines shared information about his students’ grades and failure rates that indicated he was often frustrated by the number of students who did not complete homework assignments. Furthermore, Mr. Gaines’ students were not in the same track as Mr. Hobart’s and Ms. Newbury’s, and his students did not generally complete homework assignments at the same rate as those of the other two teachers. Mr. Hobart generally had no more than two students not complete an assignment and on most occasions all of his students turned in their homework. Ms. Newbury usually had between two and five students not complete an assignment. Mr. Gaines often had seven or more students not turn in homework assignments with the high being 12 students who did not turn in the cumulative essay on time (half of these did turn it in a day late).

of self-determination. Factoring in his struggle maintaining the pacing guide's schedule on top of his student goals, and Mr. Gaines's irritation, displayed privately on occasion, was understandable. Unlike Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury who seemed to have settled on a method for balancing curricular and instructional goals with the pressure of the pacing guide, Mr. Gaines was still in the process of devising the best approach.

Mr. Gaines: The Injustice of Slavery as a "Key Factor" in Causing the Civil War

In our first formal interview, Mr. Gaines said that teaching history gave him the opportunity to aid his students in "kind of see[ing] the different perspectives of different eyes." In other words, he viewed history as a tool for teaching that events can be seen from more than one point of view. This idea came up in a lesson when Mr. Gaines discussed the "wall of history." He explained how there were two sides to all historical events: that of the victors' and that of the vanquished, and generally his efforts at teaching multiple perspectives were reduced to presenting two opposing sides as though that covered the entire range of views on a topic. Mr. Gaines wanted his students to realize "that people felt so enamored about their politics, about their feelings, about their region" that they would make war on one another. He conveyed how the political differences between the North and South along with slavery combined with an ever-hardening inflexibility in both sections resulted in civil war. Although political means were initially successful in reducing tensions between the two regions, in time, the strain became greater. The North and South were no longer willing to reduce their demands in order to reach a political solution—compromise—that would maintain the Union. This

intransigence resulted in the South's decision for secession; in the words of Lincoln, "And the war came" (Gienapp, 2002, p. 220).

Mr. Gaines's instructional approach evolved from one of his goals for his students: "You have to be self-determined. I'm trying to have them understand there's something, there's something bigger out there. They just need to have that because they don't have an appreciation." He added that he had grown up in poverty and no one had given him anything; he had to work for everything he had. In his lessons, Mr. Gaines provided the necessary resources, but it was up to the students to complete the assignments. He did not go out of his way to motivate them, other than to tell them he knew they were capable of completing his assignments. The students had to take the initiative. Typically, his lessons began with a warm up activity (anticipatory set) followed by correcting the previous lesson's homework. Then, Mr. Gaines explained what the students were to do for the main activity. This might include a brief lecture on the relevant historical content. The students had time to complete the exercise, using textbooks, the internet, and Mr. Gaines's outline that was posted on his class website, and then Mr. Gaines led them in correcting it and reminded the students of the next homework assignment. He explained that this lesson model was designed to teach the students to be more independent. However, after Mr. Gaines returned from a weekend teaching conference, he became more involved in monitoring the students' progress during the work period.²⁰ This

²⁰ This took place after I was observing his class for three weeks. The change in his teaching was noticeable the Monday after the conference. I asked him about it after observing two lessons during which he supervised the students more dynamically by checking their progress as they worked, reminding them of how much time they had to complete the task, and encouraging them to use all of the available resources. Two weeks prior to this Mr. Gaines also instituted a new grading scale which he said was to more accurately reflect the degree to which the students mastered the content standards.

resulted from discussions he had at the conference. In reevaluating his teaching, Mr. Gaines concluded that his students were not ready for the degree of autonomy he allowed during the work period. Throughout the remainder of the time I was present, Mr. Gaines supervised the student work period more closely.

To a greater extent than was evident with Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines continued to adjust to the strictures of the pacing guide. Like Mr. Hobart he saw the guide's benefit in that it aided teachers to stay on track as they taught the standards, but Mr. Gaines also pointed out that the pacing guide made him more aware of the time allotted for teaching certain topics, saying that time was a greater consideration than it had been prior to the pacing guide's adoption. In comparing teaching before the pacing guide with teaching under its direction, Mr. Gaines said, "Whereas before they would allow us to really sink into it, and, so you go into each battle. You go into, maybe, the technology, the whole, everything that's embedded within the Civil War, but you can't anymore." He stated that before the pacing guide there was more flexibility to explore some historical topics in depth, but now, "the way that we teach history is more like you get the pebble and you just skip it along the water." Mr. Gaines felt that he could only skim the surface of historical topics.

When a student said that the Civil War "was caused by slavery," Mr. Gaines replied, "It was a key factor." Although he wanted his students to recognize that other issues such as states' rights and economic differences were important in the antebellum period leading to the Civil War, and he spent some instructional time in his Civil War unit on these causes, in his teaching during his antebellum unit Mr. Gaines spent most of his time

showing how slavery's injustice made it the underlying cause of the war. He did not give many details as to how African Americans were abused under slavery. Mr. Gaines did not provide in-depth descriptions of instances of whippings or other acts of degradation in the way Ms. Newbury did; rather, he taught that slavery was an unjust system because African Americans did not control their lives.

In order to show that slavery was an unfair institution and a "key factor" in causing the Civil War, Mr. Gaines described the history of slavery in America. He posted a brief outline on the class website which he expanded upon in his lessons. For instance, Mr. Gaines gave details on when African Americans were first brought to the Americas, and he added that the first Blacks were transported to the United States at about the same time the Pilgrims arrived. He described how African American families could be broken up because the slaves' children belonged to the master who could do with them as he wished, deciding whether the offspring lived with their parents or were sold off. He also pointed out that slave marriages could be dissolved at the master's discretion by selling off either member of a couple because such marriages were not legally recognized since slaves were considered property. Mr. Gaines connected this to the slaves' fear of being sold to the Deep South since conditions there were often worse and escape to the North was all the more difficult.

Associated with the economics of slavery, Mr. Gaines described how the cotton gin led to the expansion of slavery into the—then—southwestern states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama and increased the demand for slaves. More so than Mr. Hobart or Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines made plain the difference between house slaves, field

slaves, and the small number of skilled slaves who might be rented out to earn more money for their master. He encouraged the students to use his outline because the students could always access its information through the class website. As an added benefit, the outline provided a quick overview of the content standards and their meaning in language that the students could more easily understand. As a means of tying all these points together, Mr. Gaines summarized by telling his students that slaves had no say in deciding where they worked, when they worked, or for whom they worked. Mr. Gaines reinforced these concepts through review worksheets, activities in the *District Assessment Workbook* and his warm up exercises.²¹

In addition, Mr. Gaines communicated slavery's injustice through his teaching on the abolition movement. He drew heavily from activities in the *District Assessment Workbook*, moving from lessons on the nineteenth century women's rights movement to abolition as an outgrowth of it. The *District Assessment Workbook* provided several activities that were the centerpiece of Mr. Gaines's lessons during his antebellum unit and where he, initially, allowed the students a great deal of latitude as they completed the exercises. He highlighted how women attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840 but were not allowed to participate. Another event that he touched on was the creation of the Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1837. Mr. Gaines emphasized how the organization's members were criticized because of their opposition to slavery and the belief that women should not be involved in political issues. He spent time detailing the

²¹ While Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury used the *District Assessment Workbook* largely as a resource for quick review before the March periodic assessment, Mr. Gaines pulled activities from the workbook throughout his antebellum unit. However, when Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury made greater use of the workbook during their units on Reconstruction, Mr. Gaines was unable to because he was trying to shorten his Reconstruction unit so that he could finish his instruction within the time allotted by the pacing guide.

work of the Grimke sisters as women's rights advocates and early supporters of abolition. Furthermore, he referenced Sojourner Truth as a touchstone figure because she was a former slave who, like the Grimkes, was active in both of these causes. He followed up on one of the assessment workbook's activities, asking the students why women participated in the abolition movement. Several students explained that women probably felt like slaves because of their own limited freedom at the time. Moreover, he had students develop arguments, based on earlier lessons, supporting and opposing abolition so that they could better understand both sides of the issue from a nineteenth century perspective. This activity connected to his view of history as a useful tool for students to understand events from multiple perspectives. For another project, students created fliers supporting abolition. Through his lessons on major figures in the movement, Mr. Gaines led his students' breakdown of abolitionists' proposals to end slavery and the likelihood of each proposal's success. This session demonstrated how he valued teaching history from multiple perspectives; however, although he envisioned teaching historical content from multiple perspectives, this was often reduced to opposing points of view. Mr. Gaines highlighted how the abolition movement eventually resulted in more Northerners questioning slavery's existence.

Amongst the abolitionists, Mr. Gaines paid special attention to Frederick Douglass. He had his students read a brief biography contained in the *District Assessment Workbook* and analyze how events in Douglass's life influenced his participation in the abolitionist movement. Through recitation, Mr. Gaines stressed that Douglass was a former slave who spoke publicly for slavery's end, wrote his autobiography, and

published *The North Star*, an abolitionist newspaper. In addition, he highlighted how Douglass toured the country to spread the abolitionist message and sometimes was physically attacked by slavery supporters. Mr. Gaines called attention to Douglass's work with the Underground Railroad and his resistance to Northern segregation. Here, Mr. Gaines was able to teach about the racism African Americans faced in the North and the efforts of Black activists in the abolition movement as suggested by historians and history educators (Blight, 2002; Loewen, 1995; Rael, 2006). However, he did not have time to analyze Black activists' speeches or articles as called for by Rael, other than reading a few quotations from Douglass, because he had to move on to the next content standard as he was already falling behind the pacing guide's schedule. Although he generally did not emphasize the abuses of slavery, Mr. Gaines drew out from the students how Douglass had been beaten numerous times and suffered additional grief watching his aunt being whipped when he was a young boy. Mr. Gaines used excerpts from Douglass's speeches to demonstrate how Douglass drew from the Declaration of Independence in his support for abolition. Here, Mr. Gaines highlighted Douglass's proclamation that African Americans deserved rights because they were human beings. As Wills (1996) suggested, Mr. Gaines showed Douglass's fundamental argument for human rights that moved beyond one of moral suasion against slavery to a basic recognition of Blacks' humanity and their entitlement to inalienable rights.

Paired with Douglass in the *District Assessment Workbook*, Mr. Gaines gave particular consideration to John Brown. As with Douglass, students read a one page biography as well as a series of Brown's quotations. Mr. Gaines elicited from his

students that Brown “came from a religious family that was against slavery.” Similarly, Mr. Gaines drew out from the students how the twelve year old Brown’s witnessing a slave beating influenced his abolitionist views. Mr. Gaines expanded on this incident, explaining, “When slaves were beaten, slaveholders would make sure that all the rest of their slaves were watching so that they would be too scared to run away.” Through recitation, students explained how Brown, believing that slavery would only end with bloodshed, led the attack at Harpers Ferry. Mr. Gaines emphasized how Brown, unlike Douglass who was sympathetic to Brown’s cause but thought the attack foolhardy, used violence to try to end slavery.²² In addition, Mr. Gaines made the point that Brown’s attacks in Kansas and Harpers Ferry increased the tension between the North and South. Mr. Gaines reinforced his teaching on Douglass and Brown by having his students write a comparative essay on the two abolitionists. This was another instance in which Mr. Gaines’s efforts to teach history from multiple perspectives was reduced to that of two viewpoints.

Related to his Douglass and Brown lessons, Mr. Gaines taught about the Underground Railroad, highlighting how this was a more involved form of participation than speaking or writing but not as extreme as Brown’s attacks. He emphasized the fact that the Underground Railroad was not literally subterranean, and in a moment of self-deprecation, spoke of how, as a child, he thought it really was underground like a subway.²³ In doing this, he demonstrated how he cared for his students by lightening a

²² Although Douglass advocated slaves’ use of violence to escape, he did not believe Brown’s attack had much chance for success.

²³ This was one of many instances I observed of Mr. Gaines putting his students at ease. Many of his students nodded their heads in agreement as Mr. Gaines recounted his initial beliefs about the Underground

moment that could have resulted in the teasing of a student if they had admitted once holding that belief (Valenzuela, 1999). In order to help his students understand just what the Underground Railroad entailed, Mr. Gaines gave a detailed example in which he had two students move about the room from table group to table group, simulating runaway slaves moving from one location to the next as they made their way to freedom. While many of his students were familiar with Harriet Tubman, Mr. Gaines emphasized the danger she faced risking her life to help the enslaved.

To further demonstrate slavery's injustice, Mr. Gaines compared the economic development of the North and South. Through another self-made outline and recitation, he highlighted the North's superior transportation system. Moreover, Mr. Gaines emphasized that European immigrants came to the North where workers were needed more than in the South because of industrialization. He contrasted this with the Southern economy and its agrarian basis. Specifically, Mr. Gaines pointed to the increase in cotton exports and the corresponding rise in the demand for slaves. He concluded by saying that although the Southern economy was growing the North's was growing even faster. While he never stated it directly, Mr. Gaines implied that slavery restrained Southern economic development.

This was the third lesson after Mr. Gaines became more active in his monitoring of the students' activity during the student work period built into each class. While his students still had more autonomy than those in Mr. Hobart's or Ms. Newbury's classrooms, Mr.

Railroad. Mr. Hobart, who taught students in the second highest track, was also aware of this as he shared his admiration for the rapport Mr. Gaines's had with his students who were in the third track of the school's five.

Gaines's students were able to complete their work more quickly and Mr. Gaines started the recitation portion of the lesson earlier in the period than he had when he was not supervising his students as closely. He made this decision because, as he put it, "they still need some nurturing," although it held out the potential benefit of helping him draw nearer to the pacing guide. Additionally, he estimated that the rate of students on task increased from 66% to 85%, and Mr. Gaines said, "I notice that more students are participating and engaged." Along with the increase in student engagement, however, Mr. Gaines sacrificed some student autonomy. The same autonomy he had contended was necessary for students to learn self-determination. With his greater number of student goals, Mr. Gaines had more difficulty keeping these balanced.

Mr. Gaines also taught about Benjamin Franklin as an early opponent of slavery, and he explained how John Quincy Adams, as a member of Congress, attempted to enact laws to abolish slavery. He also described how William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Weld worked as speakers, writers, and editors in support of abolition. Through his lessons, Mr. Gaines emphasized the unjust nature of slavery and how the growing tension between supporters and opponents was a cause of the Civil War.

Mr. Gaines' history lessons, like Ms. Newbury's, were centered on the abolitionists. Like Ms. Newbury, he reversed Schlesinger's (1991/1998) notions about history instruction by focusing his lessons on those on the periphery of society. By focusing on the opponents of slavery, Mr. Gaines emphasized the abolitionists' efforts which led to increased tension between the North and the South. This connected with his Civil War unit in which he focused more on the government officials who tried to address the

sectional tension before the war than the fighting itself. Here, Mr. Gaines differed from Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury in that Mr. Hobart continued to place the political and, in addition, the military leaders at the center of historical events and Ms. Newbury maintained her focus on the common people and how they were affected by the war. In his brief final unit on Reconstruction, Mr. Gaines emphasized the impact of the period on African Americans who were most effected, spending little time on the new amendments.

Like Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines's teaching of the antebellum period was influenced by three key factors: his perspective on history, his beliefs regarding instruction that would best meet his students' needs, and the pacing guide. Mr. Gaines believed that history should be taught using the multiple perspectives of the participants. In the lesson where students examined abolitionists' proposals for ending slavery, Mr. Gaines had students consider the ideas of Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Tubman, John Brown, John Quincy Adams, and Theodore Weld. These lessons enabled Mr. Gaines to demonstrate that even amongst abolitionists, ideas for abolishing slavery ranged across a spectrum. Regarding his beliefs about instruction, as Mr. Gaines's views changed, so did his instructional approach. He moved from a loose instructional model in which students had a large section of the period to work independently to one in which he monitored students' activity more closely because he came to believe his students were not as developmentally capable. This represented a significant change in Mr. Gaines's instructional views in that he had to first admit that another approach might be more effective, and, as Cohen (1990) demonstrated, teachers may have difficulty realizing this. Even though Mr. Gaines was able to teach lessons in

which students looked at the activities of multiple participants, he was unable to do this at the depth called for by Loewen (1995, 2009) and Rael (2006) because of the pacing guide which spurred him to “move, move, move” onto the next standard. When Mr. Gaines taught from a multiple perspectives approach, students were interpreting single paragraph summaries for each abolitionist, a list of 3-5 bullet points for each historical figure, or, as in the cases of Douglass and Brown, a full page summary. In fact, at this point in his Civil War era instruction Mr. Gaines was falling behind the pacing guide, but he believed he could catch up during his units on the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Discussion

The differences in the historical content taught by Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines were most reflective of their different historical perspectives. On the other hand, the similarities were most likely the result of having to follow the same content standards. At the same time, however, the three teachers were considering how best to meet their students’ needs in terms of instructional methods and navigate their way through the pacing guide. This forced the teachers to juggle competing concerns (Grant, 1996). For instance, assessing their actual place in the curriculum relative to the prescribed point in the pacing guide might lead them to prioritize moving through the curriculum at a faster rate while sacrificing teaching from multiple perspectives.

The content standards: blending old and new

When teachers implement curricular reforms, they may do so in a way that their new teaching practice emerges as an amalgam of both the old and the new (Cohen, 1990).

Although the content standards were created to ensure that all students were taught the same curriculum so that they would all have a fair chance to perform well on the California Standards Test (Wills & Sandholtz, 2009), the three teachers' historical content demonstrated how each teacher's historical perspective impacted their interpretation of the content standards. Additionally, these differences in historical viewpoint were reflected in the organizational differences in the way each teacher structured their antebellum units.

If the teachers strictly followed the content standards, they would have taught an antebellum unit that focused on the abolitionist movement and legislation relevant to slavery from 1820 through the late 1850s as well as including the Lincoln-Douglas debates, the Dred Scott decision and "the significance of the States' Rights Doctrine" (California Department of Education, 2005, p. 112). As far as teaching a Civil War unit, the standards called for teachers to "compare the conflicting interpretations of state and federal authority as emphasized in the speeches and writings of statesmen such as Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun" (California Department of Education, 2005, p. 112). Seemingly, the differences between Webster and Calhoun would have been taught in the antebellum unit when teachers taught about the legislation in which the two men, along with Henry Clay, were involved.²⁴ I point this out not to criticize the standards' authors but to make the point that even at the state level historical content is complicated and messy. The structuring of units may impose an order that results in the oversimplification of the historical context. Reading the content standards shows how

²⁴ Clay is mentioned in the content standards' antebellum unit but not in the Civil War unit where Webster and Calhoun appear.

historical topics tend to overlap from one unit to the next, just as the issues of the time continued to impact historical actors' lives from one year to the next. For instance, Webster and Calhoun had to consider the issue of slavery several times throughout their careers. There was never a point where the issue was permanently settled. Similarly, as Mr. Hobart pointed out, states are still fighting with the federal government over issues; therefore, states' rights is not a settled matter as a review of the U. S. Supreme Court's recent cases would demonstrate. Although, he might have added, the historical context is always different. History does not repeat itself.

In the case of Mr. Hobart, he taught a brief unit on the nineteenth century reform movements including abolition and women's rights before his unit on the antebellum period. By ordering his units in this way he could focus his antebellum unit on the political issues of the times, which more closely aligned with his historical view that states' rights was the primary cause of the Civil War. Furthermore, with this arrangement, Mr. Hobart could include a discussion of Webster, Calhoun, and Clay, the great triumvirate (Peterson, 1987), within his unit, allowing his students to learn about these three statesmen in their historical context rather than splitting them up along the lines called for in the content standards. However, at the same time Mr. Hobart's unit structuring largely removed the abolition movement from the historical stage when he taught about much of the legislation where slavery was at issue. Perhaps most interesting, considering his historical perspective and emphasis on political history, by teaching the abolition movement before his unit on the pre-war period and its legislation Mr. Hobart might have inadvertently suggested to his students that legislation related to

slavery (political history) was a reaction to the abolition movement (social history). Arranging his units topically might have benefited his students by providing them a deeper historical context in that they could have seen how the abolition movement impacted the politics of slavery and vice versa. His unit organization provided another advantage in that it enabled him to continue moving forward as to the pacing guide's strictures because he had reduced the content overlap contained in the standards.

Similarly, Ms. Newbury's unit structure and organization reflected her historical perspective. With her belief that slavery was the main cause of the Civil War, it made sense for Ms. Newbury to structure her antebellum unit so that both the abolition movement and the legislation from the Missouri Compromise through the proposed Crittenden Compromise was included as well as the Dred Scott decision and the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Mr. Newbury taught a short unit on nineteenth century reform movements including women's rights and the effort to broaden public education prior to her antebellum unit. Although this organizational approach fit with her historical perspective, it likely made it difficult for her students to see how some reformers, like Frederick Douglass, were involved in both the women's rights and abolition causes as well as how movement participants adapted strategies and tactics from one another. Again, like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury's unit arrangement made it easier for her to advance through the content standards and maintain the prescribed pace because she had reduced the content repetition built in the standards.

While Mr. Gaines taught in a manner different from that of Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, he aligned his units more closely with the way the content standards were

organized by the Department of Education. Additionally, he drew on the *District Assessment Workbook* to structure his units. Like Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, this approach was also reflective of his historical perspective. Looking at the unit outlines Mr. Gaines posted on his course website and comparing them to the content standards, there were many similarities as to phrases employed and terminology. The influence of the *District Assessment Workbook* was evident as well in the structure of his antebellum unit. Like the workbook, Mr. Gaines's unit focused on the abolition and women's rights movements. Arranging his unit in this way, he could demonstrate how these reform movements grew out of an effort to move the nation to extend the rights of the Declaration of Independence to a greater portion of the citizenry. And he showed how the movements influenced one another and this was evident in his lessons on Frederick Douglass. However, Mr. Gaines's antebellum unit differed from the content standards in that he shifted the political historical content of the antebellum period to his Civil War unit. This move had two potential benefits. First, it could assist him in catching up to the pacing guide and, second, it might allow his students to more closely link the political issues that helped lead to war with the Civil War itself. Gaining ground on the pacing guide was likely uppermost in Mr. Gaines's mind; although he continued to believe he could pull even with the guide, when teachers shared the historical content they were teaching at each department meeting it became clear that he was falling behind. On the other hand, Mr. Gaines would likely have to review some aspects of the abolitionist movement as he taught the antebellum political historical content because some of his

students might have forgotten the content and going over the information would provide a richer historical context in which to study pre-war politics.

In reviewing these teachers' decisions regarding unit structure as well as organization within curricular units, I am not arguing that there was one best way to teach the required historical content. Instead, I am trying to show that the teachers faced numerous choices and had to weigh the costs and benefits of each choice they made. Their historical perspectives seemed to play a large part in these decisions; however, it would be wrong to discount the pacing guide and other considerations they were constantly weighing in making curricular and instructional decisions. For instance, Ms. Martin, the assistant principal who oversaw social studies, pushed the teachers in department meetings to include critical thinking in their lessons. In regard to this, I saw Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines make room for what they viewed as critical thinking exercises in their lessons when they believed they had time to teach the intended content and keep up with the pacing guide, or in the case of Mr. Gaines when he felt he had enough time that he could still catch up to the pacing guide by the end of an instructional unit.

The notion that teachers can "just follow the standards," so that every student has a fair chance on the California Standards Test, seemed to disregard the complexity inherent in their choices of historical content and the decisions related to it. Each of the teachers explained that he or she followed the standards; however, the historical content taught was often different. Future research examining how teachers interpret the content standards and what factors influence their interpretations might result in a better understanding of the resulting differences in the historical content taught. Much as the

teachers interpreted the content standards before they taught their students, the students interpreted the historical content that they were taught. While this was not a focus of this study, there is value in its consideration as far as revealing the complexity of the historical content Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught.

Students' interpretation of the antebellum period

In order to develop a fuller portrait of student historical understanding, Barton and Levstik (1998) and Epstein (1998, 2000) examined how middle and high school students determined historical significance. In their work, they found that students drew not only from their historical understanding resulting from the historical content presented in school (official history), but that students also brought historical content from their personal lives (vernacular history) to determine an historical event's importance. Official history frames events in such a way as to promote unity (Bodnar, 1994). That is, events are depicted in the ideal and ambiguity is downplayed. In contrast, vernacular history is based on individuals' lived experience, including family members' stories of the past (Epstein, 1998, 2000). Vernacular history originates in the complexity of day-to-day living.

Although Mr. Hobart stated that the principle of states' rights was the primary cause of the Civil War, the historical content he taught featured a more complicated interpretation of the Civil War. For instance, when he taught about the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Mr. Hobart discussed the importance of states' rights in commenting on Douglas and his advocacy of this concept; however, earlier in the same lesson, he said, "Suddenly in politics, slavery is going to be the main issue." Similarly, in teaching about the Dred

Scott case, Mr. Hobart pointed out that the case was connected to the issue of slavery expansion; however, in reviewing the Supreme Court's decision, he explained that Congress could not stop states from allowing slavery. Although he did not acknowledge this, Mr. Hobart's lessons pointed to both of these issues as being key factors in Civil War causation. In addition, the historical content he taught emphasized a fact-based understanding of history as almost every question posed to students required a factual response. As in Grant's (2003) work, the students likely saw history as consisting only of facts. This was reinforced when Mr. Hobart, going over a homework assignment, said, "These questions are your opinion. Make sure they have something [written down]." That is, as long as students provided a response, it would be accepted as correct. The idea that opinions needed to be supported with evidence did not receive much attention.

However, this did not mean that the students did not interpret the historical content differently from Mr. Hobart. During his antebellum unit, I never heard a student use the term "states' rights" during a lesson. The students spoke of slave states and free states, and people who supported slavery in the South and abolitionists who resided in the North. Although Mr. Hobart spent some time discussing Northern racism, this idea did not remain in the forefront throughout the unit, so students slipped into a conception of the North being opposed to slavery while the South favored it. In his antebellum unit's concluding activity in which he asked the students "ingredients for my recipe for civil war," the students mentioned a number of events that would fit into both a principle of states' rights or slavery as the primary cause of the war interpretation such as the Kansas-Nebraska Act, popular sovereignty, the Dred Scott case, and the Wilmot Proviso. In

addition, they listed three items that were more closely associated with states' rights: the tariff issue, sectional economic differences, and "Southern states' rights." However, the students also brought up more items that were more aligned with slavery including slavery violence (meaning slave rebellions), the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman, John Brown, Frederick Douglass, *The North Star*, William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*, Harpers Ferry, abolition, and the Fugitive Slave Law. Of course, I am not arguing that the students definitively believed that slavery was the central cause of the war because I did not have the opportunity to ask them. However, I do think it is fair to acknowledge that the students likely viewed slavery, particularly as an immoral institution, as being of greater significance than Mr. Hobart viewed it himself.

Similarly, although Mr. Gaines taught that there were four main causes of the Civil War during his Civil War unit (this unit will be discussed in the next chapter), his students tended to focus on the importance of slavery as a cause of the war. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, and on more than one occasion, pupils stated that slavery was the cause of the Civil War. Related to this, during the Civil War unit, they asked if Abraham Lincoln was an abolitionist, and Mr. Gaines said that Lincoln did not want slavery to expand but that he was not opposed to slavery. On the other hand, during Ms. Newbury's antebellum unit the issue of slavery's significance in causing the Civil War was not brought up by students because this was Ms. Newbury's historical perspective. Because her students seemed to be in agreement with this view they did not

suggest another perspective different from their teacher as seemed to happen in Mr. Hobart's and Mr. Gaines's classes.²⁵

The significance of this finding was not that the students seemed to believe that slavery was the central cause of the war, but rather it revealed that students interpreted the historical content being taught and did not accept it uncritically. This was significant for the issues that it raised. Epstein's (1998, 2000) research not only revealed that students might interpret historical content differently from the teacher's emphasis, but she showed that African American and White students in the same classroom interpret historical content and attribute historical significance differently. One foundation for this difference was the vernacular history students brought to their interpretation. Epstein (1998) found that White students tended to construe historical content in a manner similar to the teacher's perspective. African American students interpreted the content differently, along the lines of the historical content they had learned from friends and family (vernacular history). Similarly Barton (1999) found differences in the historical interpretations of Catholic and Protestant students in Northern Ireland. Given that more than 80% of Sunny Lake students are Latino, these findings beg the question: how might Latino students' vernacular histories influence their historical interpretations, and how are their interpretations similar or different from students of different racial and/or ethnic backgrounds? The students' efforts at historical

²⁵ I am not suggesting this was the only reason Ms. Newbury's students did not raise other interpretations as to the primary cause of the Civil War. It is entirely possible that they did not bring up other causes because they believed doing so would result in an argument with Ms. Newbury and they knew she believed that the immorality of slavery was the primary cause of the war.

interpretation were also important for what they revealed about the complicated nature of the historical content in the three classrooms.

Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught that Northern and Southern Whites viewed African Americans as inferior. For instance, Ms. Newbury and Mr. Gaines recounted Frederick Douglass's experiences with Northern racism, and Mr. Hobart explained how Irish immigrants feared escaped slaves coming to the North because wages could be reduced. In addition, all three teachers stated that the Republican Party's platform did not support abolition, although there were abolitionists within their ranks, but against the expansion of slavery.²⁶ Yet, in the students' interpretation, the Northerners were against slavery, and Southerners were for it. This view of the antebellum period was akin to academic historians' perspectives in the 1960s (Blight, 2001; Kolchin, 1998) and a step away from the Myth of the Lost Cause (Blight, 2002; Nolan, 2000), which ignored slavery's import in Civil War causation and, in its own way, downplayed the complexity of antebellum politics. The work of Lee and Ashby (2000) along with that of VanSledright (2002) demonstrated students' abilities to work with primary source materials; however, VanSledright also found that fifth graders had difficulty assessing the credibility of sources. VanSledright viewed this as significant, for it illustrated that students could learn to investigate sources carefully and move away from implicit acceptance of their textbook's veracity but raised issues as to students' ability to formulate nuanced interpretations. Here, while the students made more inclusive interpretations of antebellum historical content as far as including African

²⁶ Mr. Gaines did not discuss the Republican Party until his Civil War unit.

Americans and slavery in their understanding of Civil War causation, at the same time, paradoxically, their view of North-South sectionalism became more simplified. That is, by viewing Northerners as opposed to slavery and Southerners as supportive of it, the students held a less complicated view of the two sections while adding depth to their interpretation of the period as a whole through their recognition of slavery's importance. Further investigation into the subtlety of students' historical understanding could help us comprehend students' interpretive abilities.

In this chapter, I have shown how Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury and Mr. Gaines contemplated numerous concerns in making choices regarding historical content, instructional methods, and the rate of content delivery. In addition, I have suggested areas for further study in light of my findings regarding the teaching of the antebellum period. In the following chapter, I examine the content taught and the instructional approaches employed by the three teachers as well as demonstrating the factors that influenced their decision making during their teaching of the Civil War. Drawing from this, I examine how the teachers' historical perspectives, their beliefs concerning instruction, and the district's pacing guide worked in combination to influence their curricular and instructional decision making.

Chapter 4: What the Teachers Taught about the Civil War

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the content Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught about the Civil War itself, the centerpiece of the time commonly referred to as the Civil War era (Burton, 2008; McPherson, 1982). In addition, I consider the instructional methods the teachers adopted as well as the rationales behind their curricular and instructional decisions.

As in their teaching on the antebellum period, the teachers' historical perspectives, their beliefs regarding the instructional approaches that would best meet their students' needs and the district pacing guide were the three major factors that influenced the teachers' lessons on the Civil War. For the three teachers, these features interacted with one another, at times seemingly in contradiction. In their consideration of these aspects, the teachers at times had to prioritize (Grant, 1996). For example, although Mr. Gaines wanted to teach his students through a multiple perspective approach, he abandoned this as he fell further behind the schedule set out in the pacing guide. By this point in his Civil War unit teaching all of the content standards became his most important objective. Teaching the historical content quickly would allow him to meet this goal. If he continued to teach from multiple perspectives which required more instructional time, he would have fallen still further behind, explaining that he deviated from his unit plan, "when I see that I'm running out of time." Following his move to actively monitoring his students' work period during his antebellum unit, the change to direct instruction in his Civil War teaching represented a second shift in Mr. Gaines's instruction and curriculum.

For Mr. Hobart, his experience using learning stations the previous year acted as an additional influence on the planning of his lessons and exacerbated his concerns about keeping up with the pacing guide. As discussed in the previous chapter, Mr. Hobart viewed the stations as overly consuming instructional time. On top of that, Mr. Hobart had put in extra hours preparing the stations, and in the end, his students were confused by the activities and he fell behind the pacing guide's schedule. This experience from the previous year acted to reinforce his determination to "keep the pedal to the metal" and continue using direct instruction as he taught the content standards. On the other hand, Ms. Newbury had, over the previous two years, developed enough awareness of the pacing guide that she appeared to move from one standard to the next while not worrying about time; however, in reality, she considered the pacing guide in making her unit plan and designing her lessons, knowing from past experience the importance of keeping up with the schedule.

In addition, the teachers' historical perspectives shaped the historical content they taught. Mr. Hobart's view of the Civil War focused on the immense loss of life. He explained, "The Civil War has such an impact on how we are today. The amount of casualties, too; that's one thing I tell the kids is you add up all the casualties, and it's more than almost all the other wars combined cause it was Americans versus Americans." This view led Mr. Hobart to concentrate on showing the brutality of the Civil War through his attention to key battles and Civil War leaders. Similarly, Ms. Newbury sought to show the harsh reality of war in her unit; however, she focused more on the soldiers and their experiences rather than spending much time on the leaders or

key battles, telling me, ‘I hear the kids say this all the time, ‘Oh, if I was in Iraq, I’d shoot them.’ They got to understand it’s not a picnic, it isn’t, you know. There’s no fun in being a soldier, and I think that’s what I want to get over to them....’” Taking a different approach from Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines’s Civil War teaching reflected his view that “slavery was one reason for the Civil War, but there were other reasons as well.” In support of this idea, Mr. Gaines spent class time examining how the views of John Calhoun and Daniel Webster, for instance, concerning states’ rights and the preservation of the Union were reflected in the compromises preceding the war. Much of his Civil War instruction focused on the issues and events that caused the war as Mr. Gaines spent the least time teaching about the war itself in part because he fell so far behind the pacing guide’s schedule.

The teachers’ historical viewpoints, their instructional principles, and the district pacing guide were the most significant factors that influenced their Civil War curriculum and instruction. In order to show how these aspects played out in their teaching, I examine Mr. Hobart’s Civil War lessons first, followed by Ms. Newbury and, finally, Mr. Gaines.

Mr. Hobart: Key Battles of the Civil War Reveal the Brutal Nature of War

Mr. Hobart’s most heartfelt response to his students’ reactions to his Civil War lessons came after showing a segment of the film, *Gettysburg*, as he overheard pupils discussing how they would have acted if they had been in that battle, Mr. Hobart said, “Anything I can do to get students thinking is a good thing.” However, he did not want them merely

to be thinking about any aspect of the Civil War rather, he sought to convey the horrors of warfare. By focusing on key battles, military conditions, and leaders' responses to warfare, Mr. Hobart was able to evoke the brutality of war.

Mr. Hobart demonstrated the cruelty of battle through his lessons on the Battle of Gettysburg. He had students look at a map of the battlefield to provide an overview of the three days' skirmish. Additionally, he had students read about the battle in the textbook, turning back to the map from time to time. In this way, he told them, they could envision where the fighting took place as they read about the battlefield events. Mr. Hobart's communicated the war's brutality as students realized that fighting took place at more than one location at the same time and that there were few, if any, positions where a soldier did not have to worry about being shot.

Mr. Hobart laid the groundwork for the brutality theme by having his students read about the battles that transpired before Gettysburg. After a student read about the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, Mr. Hobart tried to put the loss of life into terms the students could grasp, saying, "Imagine 12,600 killed on the Union side at Fredericksburg. Here at school, we have about 2,000 students and staff combined, so you'd have to kill everyone in the school times six, and you still wouldn't equal the number of soldiers the Union lost at Fredericksburg." As in his lessons on the antebellum period, Mr. Hobart used examples from the present or contemporary history to clarify the concepts that he viewed as important for his students. Although he had expressed a desire to use the past to inform his students' understanding of the present, more often he drew on the present to link his students to the past. Furthermore, the comparison of battle

deaths to the school's population represented an effort to bridge the gap between the past and present and create an affective connection for the pupils and was reflective of his goal to make history come alive for his students. Mr. Hobart shared this goal with Ms. Newbury.

As students read about Gettysburg, Mr. Hobart reminded them that initially the Confederacy fought a defensive war that, more often than not, resulted in fewer casualties, but now they were invading the North and the Union held the high ground, implying that the fighting in Pennsylvania would prove more costly for the Confederacy. The students read how "the air seemed full of bullets" which resulted in "ghastly heaps of dead men" (*Creating America*, 2006, p. 513). Following a student's reading aloud about Pickett's Charge, Mr. Hobart, attempting to convey the fear Pickett's men must have felt, said, "How many of you saw the first *South Park* movie? Remember the part when they attack Canada, and they want the African Americans to be in the front, and the African Americans say they don't want to be first? The men in Pickett's Charge must have felt like that." As discussed in the previous chapter, here, again, Mr. Hobart was drawing from a contemporary example, one from popular culture, to make the point that soldiers must have been apprehensive as they set out toward the Union lines. His use of contemporary popular culture was an effort to reach his students on their level and, potentially, to deepen his students' understanding of Civil War soldiers' experiences (Wineburg, Mosborg, Porat, Duncan, 2007). Although it seemed as if Mr. Hobart was making a point about the fear soldiers felt in battle, linking this to *South Park* may have

had the opposite effect. That is, his comment could be interpreted as making light of soldiers' experience through his reference to a satirical movie.

To give students a stronger sense of the battlefield, Mr. Hobart showed two segments from *Gettysburg*, based on Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize winning novel. The first portion focused on Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and the 20th Maine. Mr. Hobart screened scenes depicting the fighting in the Devil's Den and the Peach Orchard. His students saw men shot, wounded and bleeding to death. In addition, Mr. Hobart showed scenes of hand-to-hand combat that illustrated the intimate nature of some Civil War fighting which added to its horror. Moreover, he made the point that many soldiers knew that they would not survive the battle. For example, when Chamberlain appealed to a group of arrested Union deserters to join in the fighting rather than face court-martials and the men agreed to serve in battle, Chamberlain was told that there were no rifles for these men, and he told them, "You just wait here for a bit. There'll be guns available in a little while." Mr. Hobart explained that Chamberlain knew some of his men would be killed or so severely wounded that they would no longer need their rifles. He emphasized how difficult it must have been to go into battle, knowing you would likely die. At the end of the piece, Mr. Hobart pointed out that many soldiers and officers wanted to shake Chamberlain's hand because they knew how fortunate he and his soldiers were to emerge victorious from the fighting on Little Round Top.

Through his screening of *Gettysburg* segments, Mr. Hobart taught about the war in a manner related to that suggested by Bilof (1996). Bilof recommended that teachers assign Shaara's novel, *The Killer Angels*, because it would humanize the historical

figures. In addition, he suggested that students read articles about Chamberlain, Robert E. Lee, and James Longstreet. In Bilof's classroom, these activities were supported with class discussion, analysis of battlefield photographs, and the study of Civil War documents and culminated with his students writing an essay in which they compared the novel and the historical evidence to analyze the battle. In the words of one of his students, the assignment "made the war real, tangible, brought ... [it] to life" (p. 22). However, due to the strictures of the pacing guide, Mr. Hobart was unable to emulate these ideas. Bilof's Civil War unit took seven weeks, and Mr. Hobart did not have that much time. Mr. Hobart's decision to call off his planned teaching of Irene Hunt's *Across Five Aprils* further illustrated the pressure of the pacing guide.²⁷ Initially he believed that he was far enough ahead in the pacing guide that he could make the novel part of his Civil War unit; however, as it got closer to the point at which he planned to teach the novel, Mr. Hobart realized that he did not have sufficient time unless Ms. Caulfield, his students' English teacher, also taught lessons on the novel. As it turned out, she was having difficulty keeping up with the English pacing guide. Although he was ahead of the pacing guide, Mr. Hobart was not far enough ahead to where he could teach the novel. Furthermore, his experience the prior year with learning stations made him hesitant to undertake any large scale project.

Mr. Hobart showed another part of *Gettysburg*. Having commented on Pickett's Charge as his students read about it, Mr. Hobart screened the portion of the film depicting

²⁷ It should be noted that Bilof taught *The Killer Angels* to a class of high school students, so it was likely too advanced for Mr. Hobart's eighth graders; however *Across Five Aprils* had previously been taught at Sunny Lake as the school textbook room had ample copies of the novel.

that attack. As Mr. Hobart set up the DVD player, he said, “We’re going to watch another part of the movie. You’ll see why so many soldiers died.” Through questioning when he stopped the film, Mr. Hobart elicited that the Confederate bombardment of the Union lines was designed to weaken their forces, increasing the likelihood of Pickett’s success. As in the earlier section of the film, the students saw the intensity and brutality of battle as Pickett’s division was largely wiped out. Because the class ended just as the scene following Confederate general Lewis Armistead’s capture concluded, Mr. Hobart simply commented, “Watching this, you can see why there were so many deaths in battle.” However, he continued to reference the two *Gettysburg* segments to reinforce his students’ reading about other battles throughout the remainder of the unit. Moreover, in a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Hobart displayed a variety of slides from the Civil War including two from Gettysburg, one showing a dead soldier in the Devil’s Den and the other showing dead soldiers on the battlefield after Pickett’s Charge. After each slide, Mr. Hobart stated that the pictures showed “the reality of war.” In an understated way, he illustrated for his students that the war was, indeed, brutal.

In addition, Mr. Hobart showed the students how the soldiers’ living conditions added to their misery. He had students read about military training. Students found it especially “nasty,” as one of them put it, that soldiers had to dig their own latrines. In commenting on the reading, Mr. Hobart emphasized that any problem in camp was even worse on the battlefield. For instance, while students read that food quality declined as the war dragged on, it was even worse in battle where soldiers might be unable to get supplied because wagons could not reach them. Connecting the reading to the Black

Death which the students had studied in seventh grade, Mr. Hobart pointed out that unsanitary conditions often led to disease and death for soldiers. He highlighted the fact that the soldiers themselves were rarely able to bathe so that they were often infested with lice or fleas and suffered from diarrhea or other intestinal disorders. Through reading the textbook as well as handouts, Mr. Hobart emphasized the fact that twice as many men died of disease as died of battlefield wounds. Moreover, he focused on the conditions faced by soldiers in Civil War prison camps. Mr. Hobart paid special attention to Andersonville in Georgia and the Union prison in Elmira, New York as both were featured in a textbook portion that he assigned. After students read about the excessive loss of life in Andersonville, he commented:

Andersonville was horrible. It was built to hold a lot fewer soldiers than ended up there. There was another prison camp near Chicago [Camp Douglas] that historians think was awful. They're doing research there now. What do you think is a bad day? You fail a test? Your girlfriend dumps you? But imagine this, 100 people a day dying. It would be like if I put 100 people in this classroom, shut off the air conditioning, and gave you four bottles of water.

This was another example of Mr. Hobart using the students' knowledge of the present in an attempt to develop their historical empathy. That is, he wanted the students to understand what the soldiers went through during the fighting of the Civil War. To further build his students' historical understanding, Mr. Hobart had his students look at a picture in the textbook showing a survivor of Andersonville, and he included two slides of Andersonville in his PowerPoint lecture to demonstrate the harsh conditions captured soldiers faced.

Contributing to the great loss of life were improvements in weaponry and the lack of medical knowledge and technology. Mr. Hobart stressed these topics in his Civil War lessons. He had his students closely examine a diagram of the Monitor, the Union ironclad, describing the new ship's potential to inflict damage on the Confederates. In addition, Mr. Hobart had his students read about improvements in arms, such as the development of the minié ball and the increased use of rifles which enabled soldiers to shoot farther with greater accuracy. As his students explained in response to his questions, the improved weapons resulted in greater casualties. Related to this, Mr. Hobart emphasized the poor medical knowledge and technology as an additional cause of soldier deaths. In readings during lessons, he gave great attention to the fact that doctors were not aware of germs and how they could spread disease. His students read how doctors did not wash their hands between patients, nor did surgeons wash their instruments; therefore, wounds could become infected more easily, and, often, wounds to limbs resulted in amputation to halt the spread of infection. To conclude his teaching on this topic, Mr. Hobart showed the opening segment from *Dances with Wolves* in which Lieutenant John Dunbar forced a boot back onto his badly wounded foot, mounted his horse, and rode towards the Confederate lines. In his remarks about the scene, Mr. Hobart highlighted the pile of amputated limbs outside the surgical tent, and he added that all soldiers feared the loss of an arm or a leg since most of them had been farmers before the war and farm life would be all the more difficult with the loss of a limb. Moreover in his PowerPoint presentation, he displayed two slides related to the medical equipment of the war. The first showed an ambulance wagon, and Mr. Hobart said, "You

can see the kind of technology they had to move wounded soldiers from the field. Pictures show the reality of the war. You can see why so many soldiers who were wounded would die.” The next slide showed an operating area with a canopy to provide shade; Mr. Hobart commented, “This picture shows how soldiers were operated on. You can see the poor conditions.” Through his focus on new weapons and the lack of medical knowledge and technology, Mr. Hobart was able to further convey the brutal nature of war.

While Mr. Hobart spent a good part of his Civil War lessons discussing battles and the conditions faced by soldiers to get across the horrific character of war, his references to military leaders furthered his theme of the war’s brutality. Most of his discussion of military leaders, Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Lee, and George McClellan, was to remind students on which side these soldiers fought; however, Mr. Hobart also used quotations from Sherman and Grant to highlight the horrors of warfare. As students read about the immense loss of life at the Battle of Shiloh and the mangled bodies left on the battlefield after the fighting ended, Mr. Hobart said, “In Iraq and Afghanistan, if there’s ten deaths in a month, people get upset about it. Here, there were bodies all over the battlefield.” Yet again, he drew on current events to demonstrate the horrific results of battle during the Civil War. He continued this theme, asking his students, “What did General Sherman mean when he said, ‘The scenes on this field would have cured anybody of war’” (*Creating America*, 2006, p. 495)? A student responded, “When you see what happens in a battle, it will change your mind about war.” In other words, the army’s leaders, too, understood that war was so destructive that once seen, a person

would never want to fight again. Similarly, Mr. Hobart had students read how Grant felt at the time of Lee's surrender, in which the Union general "later wrote that his joy at that moment was mixed with sadness" (*Creating America*, 2006, p. 519). Mr. Hobart asked what Grant meant by the comment, and a student explained, "He's sad because even though the war is over, a lot of men died," and Mr. Hobart added, "Yes, thousands lost their lives." However reflective of his perspective on Civil War causation, Mr. Hobart did not ask about another part of Grant's extended quotation in which he wrote of the Confederates' fighting for a "cause [that] was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought" (p. 519) which would have raised the issue of slavery as the war's cause. In drawing from a portion of the quotation and not its entirety, Mr. Hobart illustrated, again, that teachers may ignore sections of the textbook which run counter to their own historical views (Wills, 1994). Yet, by incorporating Grant's words in his lesson, Mr. Hobart emphasized the brutal nature of war.

Finally, throughout the unit, Mr. Hobart mentioned the immense loss of life as well as the number of soldiers who suffered permanent disfigurement or loss of limb and how these losses would leave the pre-war tensions between the two sections largely unresolved. On the first day of the unit he said in passing, "More soldiers will die in this [war] than any other that the United States fights—about 500,000." Similarly, as he brought the unit to a conclusion, Mr. Hobart had the students read about the numbers of dead and wounded for the two sides. His students added up the figures and he summed up, saying, "So, if you add it all up, over a million men were killed or wounded out of three million who served, so that means one out of every three was killed or wounded."

Mr. Hobart made two points with this information: first, that the loss of life demonstrated the brutality of war, and, second, that these losses would result in continued tension between the North and South as the nation sought to rebuild itself and come to terms with what occurred between 1861 and 1865.

Mr. Hobart reinforced the concept of war's brutal nature through the use of handouts that recounted the role of women as nurses, the casualties in battles not discussed here, and the presentation of DVDs such as *Civil War: Why, Who, What, Where & When?* In teaching about Reconstruction, he would refer back to the Civil War and the loss of life as a means of framing his teaching to raise questions about Reconstruction's purpose and goals.

With his historical perspective of the Civil War, Mr. Hobart reiterated throughout the unit the high cost of the war for both sides. He repeatedly pointed out that the war resulted in hundreds of thousands of lives lost. This detail was an insight into his historical point of view. That is, the tremendous loss of life was testament to the brutality and horror of the war.

As in his unit on the antebellum era, Mr. Hobart continued to use direct instruction. In fact, his direct instruction was strengthened through the use of a unit outline. Unlike the teacher (Wills, 2006; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009) who used methodical outlining in which the students and teacher participated in the development of the outline and the historical knowledge it represented, Mr. Hobart's outline was prepared in advance of the unit, printed on transparencies, and then projected on the screen in the front of the class. After a group of students read a section of the text, Mr. Hobart often asked a recitation question

or two and then revealed the relevant portion of his outline.²⁸ The students then copied down the newly displayed section. With this method, Mr. Hobart's instruction was akin to the storyteller (Grant, 2003) who only stopped his lecturing to switch from one transparency to the next. However, Mr. Hobart's use of the textbook, recitation, and the occasional student questions demonstrated that his instruction was somewhat more engaging for students than the storyteller's lecturing but not as involving as methodical outlining. Furthermore because Mr. Hobart taught two eighth grade classes, he likely viewed the preparation of an outline in advance as a means to ensure that both classes were taught the same historical content. In other words, the outline benefited both him and the students in that it kept his instruction focused on the points he needed to cover as far as the content standards, and it directed his students to the key points in each lesson. This demonstrated the influence of the content standards and the district pacing guide. By using the same outline with his two classes, he made sure that he taught all of the content standards and that he did so in an efficient matter that enabled him to meet or exceed the dictates of the pacing guide. In this way, he did not have to worry whether he might have neglected to teach a key standard and use class time going back to a previous content standard. As long as all of the required standards were included in his unit outline, Mr. Hobart could be assured that he taught both of his classes the state content standards. In this way his outline served as a tool of efficiency as it enabled Mr. Hobart to meet the goals of the content standards and the pacing guide. Because of his experience the prior year with the learning stations when Mr. Hobart viewed his students

²⁸ Mr. Hobart kept the outline covered so that his students could not copy the next part of it while another student was reading or answering a question.

struggling with the content, the outline served as a safety net to guarantee that his students were, at minimum, exposed to the content standards.

In addition to its impact discussed in the previous paragraph, the district pacing guide and his learning station experience weighed heavily on Mr. Hobart as he decided to not teach *Across Five Aprils*. Although he was further ahead in the pacing guide than he had been in the previous year, when it came time to choose whether he could teach the book and keep up with the pacing guide's prescription, he opted not to teach the novel. As he explained in a formal interview conducted four days before his decision, He said, “[B]ut then it’s different than I did last year. I mean, just, and like last year I think I was, I wasn’t as far as I was now, so I really had to, when it came time, close to the CST testing, I had to really, like, get that in there, you know, between that [the Civil War] and Reconstruction, where this year I’m going to have, I got more time.” Further, his previous year’s experience in which he had also been ahead of the pacing guide, but not as far ahead as during the year of my study, and had to rush to finish his instruction before reviewing for the California Standards Test, made him hesitant to undertake the teaching of a book, something he had not done before. The prior year’s Civil War learning stations which Mr. Hobart viewed as a failure increased his doubts about undertaking new instruction or content, besides *Across Five Aprils* was not part of the content standards.²⁹ More than once, Mr. Hobart, in conversation with me, referred to historical content not included in the content standards as “trivial.”

²⁹ I saw Mr. Hobart in a class where I did not formally observe respond to a student’s question about the Ostend Manifesto by telling him that it was not important. The manifesto, while mentioned in the state history framework, is not mentioned in the state content standards.

Like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury's Civil War unit was centered on the concept of war's brutality, although she did not use the same content to convey this idea. Ms. Newbury did not teach specific battles in depth as Mr. Hobart did with Gettysburg and Shiloh; instead she concentrated on how the Civil War impacted soldiers, both Black and White, and civilians to illustrate the horrors of warfare. Her historical perspective that war was brutal, she believed, carried the additional message that the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are horrific as well. Likewise her instructional methods and the district's pacing guide influenced her teaching of the Civil War. Although she showed more films in this unit than she had in her antebellum unit, Ms. Newbury continued to use direct instruction. As she screened DVDs about the Civil War, she stopped them from time to time to ask her students about what was taking place or what motivated a character to act as he or she did. In addition, she created worksheets to accompany the lengthiest of the movies, *The Blue and the Gray*. These were assigned as homework so that she could show more of the movie during each class period. Ms. Newbury's approach to showing *The Blue and the Gray* demonstrated the impact of the pacing guide on her instruction in that she was able to show this lengthy film while still keeping up with the schedule. The examination of her Civil War unit shows how her historical perspective, instructional methods, and the district pacing guide influenced Ms. Newbury's teaching.

Ms. Newbury: Civil War Soldiers and the Horrific and Inglorious Nature of Warfare

In my last interview with Ms. Newbury, she explained that films enabled her students to have an emotional connection to the history she taught. Ms. Newbury added that

through movies and photographs, “It gets their [the students’] interest. They remember the Civil War.” However, she wanted more than for her students to merely remember the war, she said, “I don’t think the kids understand how violent and messy and nasty it was. I just don’t think they can even begin to understand [without seeing pictures and films].” Ms. Newbury wanted her students to develop an appreciation of the chaos of war so that they would recognize war’s brutal and inglorious nature.

To achieve her goal, Ms. Newbury focused on the hardships of war. On the first day of her Civil War unit, she discussed the total number of casualties suffered by Union and Confederate soldiers in detail, pointing out that more than a million soldiers were killed or wounded. She mentioned the great loss of life many times throughout the unit to remind her students of the war’s horror. The war’s other great tragedy, Ms. Newbury highlighted, was the fact that there were numerous cases of family members fighting on opposite sides. She told her students they would see this in the film, *The Blue and the Gray*, based on a story by the Pulitzer Prize winning historian Bruce Catton. Moreover, Ms. Newbury emphasized the wounds soldiers suffered. She spoke of the amputated limbs and the mental trauma a soldier might experience watching a friend die or even after killing an enemy soldier. During the screening of *The Blue and the Gray*, Ms. Newbury further stressed this idea by drawing the students’ attention to John Geysler’s, a character based on an actual Union soldier, recurrent nightmares resulting from the bloodshed he witnessed.

Ms. Newbury emphasized the unsanitary conditions soldiers faced. Her students read about camp conditions, and through recitation, she brought attention to the fact that the

soldiers' food was often moldy or contaminated by insects, how soldiers were regularly scared, and how the climate—cold winters and humid summers—took an additional toll on the men. Through a scene in *The Blue and the Gray* in which a soldier urinated on himself during battle, Ms. Newbury made the point that this reflected the soldier's intense fear. The cause of this fear, she explained, was that soldiers realized the likelihood of their dying in battle. Related to soldiers' fear of battle, Ms. Newbury, drawing from scenes in both *The Blue and the Gray* and *Glory*, another film she showed, highlighted the punishments meted out for cowardice or desertion. She explained that desertion was a problem for both sides, but that it became more of an issue for the Confederacy as soldiers recognized they were losing the war.

Sharing Ms. Newbury's goal, scholars have widely suggested the importance of students learning about the Civil War's hardships (Bilof, 1996; P. Horton, 2000; Hutchinson, 2005; Waller & Edgington, 2001). In addition to highlighting the topic's significance, researchers have recommended that students use primary source materials, such as Civil War songs, soldiers' letters, and battlefield reports. However, none of the scholars cited advocated the use of any film in lieu of primary sources, advising, instead, that a film might be shown in conjunction with primary sources (Bilof, 1996). Yet, Ms. Newbury explained that in addition to film enabling her students to connect emotionally with the history she wanted to impart, the movies she showed, especially *The Blue and the Gray*, had the added benefit of allowing her to teach more material than if she had used the textbook because this film covered the entirety of the war from John Brown's trial in 1859 through Appomattox. In fact, she even told her students to "think of it [*The*

Blue and the Gray] as your textbook.” That is, using the film made it possible for her to keep up with the pacing guide.

One should not lose sight of the fact that it took Ms. Newbury several years to become adept at incorporating *The Blue and the Gray* into her unit. Her initial attempts at including the film in her unit took too much time, and she fell behind the pacing guide. She then tried showing selected sections of the movie, but the students had difficulty following the plot because her descriptions of the segments she skipped were not detailed enough, and the pupils did not seem to make the emotional connection to the war that she sought. Eventually, she created homework assignments for the film that let her show the entire film in class in less time than in earlier screenings when she stopped the movie more frequently to highlight a significant scene. In this way, Ms. Newbury could meet her curricular goal and maintain the proper pace.

In addition, Ms. Newbury highlighted the unsanitary conditions in military hospitals. Through the use of a scene in *The Blue and the Gray*, Ms. Newbury drew students’ attention to the way in which soldiers could end up hospitalized because of contaminated food or water, and she added that more than 60,000 soldiers, like one of the characters in the film, died of dysentery. Through recitation, she stressed the lack of anesthetics and antibiotics, and Ms. Newbury pointed out scenes from *Gone with the Wind* and *Glory* which depicted poor conditions in military hospitals, not just in terms of cleanliness, but also as to the overworked doctors and the nurses who, more often in the South, lacked full training. Moreover, she used the hospital scenes to demonstrate how doctors moved from one patient to another, spreading germs, of which they had no knowledge.

Reflective of her interest in teaching her students about discrimination, Ms. Newbury, in addition to illustrating the brutal nature of war for White soldiers, through readings and handouts, showed *Glory* to illustrate the war's often greater hardships for African American soldiers. First, she pointed out that African American soldiers were volunteers, yet rather than being welcomed into the Union forces they were often greeted by White soldiers' skepticism. White soldiers and civilians were doubtful of African Americans' willingness to fight; many believed Blacks would retreat in the face of rifle fire (McPherson, 1997). Ms. Newbury stated that African American soldiers were initially paid less than their White counterparts. As students watched *Glory*, she emphasized the Massachusetts 54th's boycott against unequal pay, explaining to her students that accepting less pay than White soldiers would mean the acceptance of inferior status.³⁰ Ms. Newbury demonstrated the added difficulties faced by African American soldiers, underlining the Confederate proclamation which stated that captured Black soldiers in federal uniforms would be killed and those caught with weapons but not in uniform (e.g. contraband) would be forced into slavery. On top of this, she pointed out that White officers, such as Colonel Shaw, leading Black soldiers would also be killed if captured. Ms. Newbury told her students to notice the difficulties Black soldiers faced in training. Here, however, she added that this was not on account of discrimination, but rather, because White officers wanted to ensure that Black soldiers under their command were ready for battle. While White officers were getting Black soldiers battle ready, getting

³⁰ For the sake of historical accuracy, McPherson (1997) made the point that it was actually Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, the regiment's commanding officer, who led the boycott, not the soldiers themselves as it is portrayed in the movie. McPherson wrote of the film and the use of some fictitious scenes, "It is a story of their transformation from an oppressed to a proud people. It is a story told skillfully through several fictional events in the film..." (p. 109).

the opportunity to fight was often difficult because of the uncertainty even White supporters of Black enlistment felt about African Americans' coming under fire. For this reason when students watched the scene showing the unsuccessful attack on Fort Wagner, Ms. Newbury highlighted the fact that the Massachusetts 54th gained the respect of many White soldiers at the cost of a nearly 50% casualty rate. Through these examples, Ms. Newbury stressed the added hardships African American soldiers faced.

Ms. Newbury's lessons on African American soldiers were especially important to history educators because she demonstrated how Blacks took an active part in the struggle to end slavery (P. Horton, 2000; Loewen, 1995). Loewen strongly advocated that students learn how African Americans were fully engaged in the fight for abolition and, he made the point that students should learn what resulted from African American involvement in the Union war effort, namely, that many White soldiers had greater respect for their Black comrades, although they often continued to view Blacks as inferior. In order to teach these ideas, history educators suggested students analyze soldiers' letters and battlefield reports (P. Horton, 2000; Hutchinson, 2005). Related to this, Loewen (2009) proposed that students use primary sources on the topic to evaluate their textbook's coverage of African American soldiers. However, because of the pacing guide's time constraints, Ms. Newbury was unable to devote the time needed for these kinds of lessons. Noted Civil War scholar James M. McPherson (1997) stated that *Glory* is "the most powerful Civil War movie ever made" (p. 99); the film had the additional benefit of allowing Ms. Newbury to teach about African American soldiers and their role in the Civil War at a faster rate than if she had followed the history educators'

suggestions; therefore, maintaining an instructional rate that allowed her to keep even with the pacing guide's schedule.

Through the use of the films mentioned, Ms. Newbury demonstrated war's brutal and inglorious nature by stressing the battle scenes as well as through the use of handouts and a reading from *History Alive* (Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2002). Segments depicting the Battle of Bull Run, Antietam, and Gettysburg showed students the war's devastation. At the end of a scene in *Glory* showing the Battle of Antietam, the single bloodiest day in American history, Ms. Newbury commented simply, "See, war's not so glorious." Moreover, this comment reinforced a handout the students had read called "The Glories of War," the theme of which was the opposite of its title. Another scene from *Glory* depicting the harsh hand-to-hand combat on James Island in South Carolina illustrated the brutality men experienced when fighting in close quarters as Ms. Newbury made the point that the difference between surviving in battle and being killed was often a matter of luck and inches. A scene from *The Blue and the Gray* portraying the Battle of Bull Run in which citizens were trampled, wounded, and even killed during the Union's disorderly retreat back to Washington illustrated the hazards not only soldiers faced but civilians as well. This scene served to reiterate the point made in another handout that the Civil War would require more suffering than some civilians predicted prior to this first major battle.

Pointing out how civilians coped with danger during the Civil War, Ms. Newbury drew the students' attention to the concept of total war. Although she did not concentrate on teaching about Civil War generals, she did explain through a reading from *History*

Alive (Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2002) and recitation the meaning of total war and how it was employed by Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman. As she put it, total war meant that the war's destruction was brought to bear on civilians. Ms. Newbury highlighted the impact of total war through a scene in *The Blue and the Gray* which showed Mississippians hiding in caves, surviving on scraps of food, and even resorting to eating rats during Grant's siege of Vicksburg. Additionally, she showed a scene from *Gone with the Wind* depicting Sherman's attack on Atlanta, Ms. Newbury elicited Union leaders' thinking that taking the war to civilians would make them pressure the Confederate government to surrender because citizens would believe that their military could no longer protect them. Highlighting the costs of the war for civilians, which students may overlook when they envision warfare, was still another way that Ms. Newbury developed her theme of war's brutal and inglorious character.

Ms. Newbury further demonstrated war's horrific quality by bringing attention to new military technology. Ms. Newbury highlighted the use of ironclads, not only the Monitor and the Merrimac, and how these new ships with their better defensive capability aided Grant during his Mississippi River campaign. Moreover, she described the development of new rifles that could shoot minié balls which were more accurate and resulted in more casualties. With scenes from *The Blue and the Gray*, Ms. Newbury stressed the effect of the rifle's accuracy. The first showed Abraham Lincoln testing a new rifle that held six rounds of ammunition. Later in the film as students watched soldiers use the new arms in battle, Ms. Newbury drew out from the students that soldiers were able to fire more quickly and likely kill more of the enemy because they would not have to reload as often.

She also discussed the use of observational balloons as depicted in *The Blue and the Gray* and used for a short time during the war, which allowed soldiers to better understand a battlefield's topography with the goal of directing more lethal attacks on the enemy. Through her lessons on new weapons, Ms. Newbury demonstrated how new weapons made death a greater possibility.

To conclude her teaching on the war's inglorious and horrific nature, Ms. Newbury focused on issues the country would face as the fighting came to an end. She pointed out that the North and South's ill feelings towards one another intensified on account of the great loss of life, adding that the brutal nature of war would make it difficult for the two sides to set aside what had happened during the war's four years so that the country could rebuild. Further, Ms. Newbury referred to Lincoln's assassination as the war's final horrible act. She explained to her students that the president's murder contributed to the friction between the North and South. In closing, Ms. Newbury explained that Lincoln's absence would be felt as the country sought to answer the questions of what should happen to the newly freed slaves and how the country should reunite. She tied this all together by pointing out that Lincoln's killing by a Southern sympathizer who thought he was aiding his cause, in the end, made Reconstruction more difficult.

Ms. Newbury bolstered her conception of the war's brutality through the use of additional handouts, assignments in the *California Standards Enrichment Workbook*, readings, and discussions of battles, such as the Battles of the Wilderness. Besides the scenes from films cited previously, Ms. Newbury referenced many other sections to convey the inglorious nature of the Civil War. As she brought the unit to a conclusion,

Ms. Newbury told her students to think about the ex-slaves and the devastated South; she continued, “Half of the country was torn apart at the end of the war. So, they’re going to have to figure out how to put it back together.” While this comment was meant in part to set up her Reconstruction unit, it also reflected the central theme of her Civil War unit: the great devastation inflicted during the war was evidence of the war’s brutality.

Throughout her instruction, Ms. Newbury’s teaching echoed her historical perspective that the Civil War was characterized by brutality. Her emphasis on the loss of life was one way she highlighted her main concept. Furthermore in teaching about women’s active participation in the war effort through their service as nurses or with the U. S. Sanitary Commission, Ms. Newbury made the point that women had to become involved in the struggle because so many men were off fighting in the horrific conflict that there was no one else to undertake these roles. The scale of the war and its destruction meant that women had to serve. Similarly, as Ms. Newbury taught, African Americans’ service in the military was an additional indicator of the war’s devastating nature (McPherson, 1997). As Ms. Newbury explained, the Emancipation Proclamation not only made the war a struggle for African American freedom, but it made it the official policy of the Union to recruit Blacks to serve in the war (Loewen, 1995; McPherson, 1997).

In addition, Ms. Newbury’s lessons continued in the vein of direct instruction reflective of her storyteller approach (Grant, 2003). Throughout her Civil War unit, her lessons were teacher-centered. When she showed the movies *The Blue and the Gray* and *Glory* along with scenes from *Gone with the Wind*, Ms. Newbury stopped the films to emphasize the brutality of war through a recitation question or a series of such questions.

She monitored her students' attention to the details of the movie. This resulted in lessons centered in historical fact. Although Ms. Newbury viewed her lessons as being far different from Mr. Hobart's because much of his instruction centered on the textbook, her teaching was not as distinct as it might seem because, as she told the students, they "should think of it [the film] as your textbook." While this comment was said specifically in reference to *The Blue and the Gray*, it applied to *Glory* as well because, it was the anchor of her lessons in the same way *The Blue and the Gray* was during that portion of the unit. Similarly, both films were docudramas which emphasized the narrative; therefore, Ms. Newbury's breaks for recitation provided the opportunity for her to highlight the historical content within each movie. Similarly to Evans's (1990) exemplar of the storyteller conception, Ms. Newbury saw the use of films as a means of making "something come alive for them [her students]" and turning history "from black and white into technicolor" (p. 106); however, rather than lecture in the way a storyteller would, Ms. Newbury used the movies to connect her students to the past.

The films served as the platform for her to emphasize Civil War historical content. She stated, "I think you can talk till you're blue in the face about 600,000 men dying, and it means nothing to them. It's a number, but it's, it's, it means nothing;" however, *The Blue and the Gray* and *Glory* offered a means for connecting her students with the Civil War era. From Ms. Newbury's perspective, this was the most important reason for using the films: the movies made her instruction livelier and she highlighted the war's toll on soldiers, with particular attention to African American soldiers, and civilians. Ms. Newbury added, "I've never had students that did not love *Glory*, never had that. *The*

Blue and the Gray sometimes it can be long...but I would say the last two years that they've loved it, they loved it."³¹

On top of this, the films enabled Ms. Newbury to maintain a teaching speed aligned with the pacing guide. Ms. Newbury explained that *The Blue and the Gray* covered the period from John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859 through Lincoln's funeral and the marriage of John Geysler, an actual soldier in the Civil War, in June 1865, "and so it's a week [to show the film], but I go, 'Well, you know, how would I have covered that in a week in a classroom?'" Through her use of the film, Ms. Newbury taught more of the content standards than she could have with another instructional method. Similarly, she described how *Glory* enabled her to cover more of the content standards than only the one which addressed the role of African Americans soldiers in the war. While Ms. Newbury believed the films were a way to connect her students emotionally to the historical information she taught, the movies were additionally beneficial in that through their use, Ms. Newbury taught historical content within the pacing guide's time strictures.

Similarly, concerns over the pacing guide impacted Mr. Gaines's teaching during his Civil War unit. Mr. Gaines's practice changed during his instruction on the antebellum period following his participation in a conference for middle school teachers and administrators. As discussed in the last chapter, he more energetically monitored his students' activities during the work period that he built into each of his lessons. Mr.

³¹ It was during the last two years that Ms. Newbury went back to showing the film in its entirety and used homework assignments to address some of the film's topics so that she would spend less class time on these issues. Three years ago, she screened selected clips and explained what occurred between the scenes shown; however, Ms. Newbury said students then had difficulty following the narrative and that trouble interfered with their understanding the historical information in the film. During her first two years, she showed the entire film but did not have homework assignments to correspond with it.

Gaines explained that this change came about when he was convinced that eighth grade students were not capable of working as independently as he had previously thought. Through his increased supervision, the students seemed to work through assignments more efficiently which resulted in the additional benefit of Mr. Gaines having more instructional time which was often used to emphasize points made during that particular lesson. In his Civil War unit, Mr. Gaines's teaching changed again as his instruction became more aligned with that of Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury in that he adopted a direct instruction approach as his students worked on the culminating activity of the unit. Mr. Gaines's modification to his instruction was the result of several factors I describe in the section that follows.

Mr. Gaines: Political Differences Led to Secession and the Civil War

Mr. Gaines, during a lesson, said that slavery was a key factor in bringing about the Civil War, but not the only cause. In fact in his first interview, he explained that he wanted his students to understand “the whole politics behind, the true politics behind the Civil War wasn't so much about slavery, but it was more about secession and things like that,” and he added that he wanted his students to realize “that people felt so enamored about their politics, about their feelings about their region” that they would make war on one another. Mr. Gaines's lessons conveyed the message that the war evolved out of the political differences between the North and South and that slavery was the underlying issue behind this. While political means were initially successful in reducing tension between the two regions, in time the strain became so great that the North and South were

no longer willing to reduce their sectional demands in order to reach a political solution—compromise—that would maintain the Union. This intransigence resulted in the South’s decision to secede; in the words of Lincoln, “And the war came” (Gienapp, 2002, p. 220).

On more than one occasion, Mr. Gaines had told his students that “slavery was one reason for the Civil War, but there were other reasons as well.” In fact, he had his students analyze how four aspects—slavery, states’ rights, economic issues, and political factors—caused the Civil War; however, as this lesson demonstrated, the injustice of slavery and the limits of compromise lay at the root of all these features of Civil War causation. In his Civil War lessons, analyzing the battles did not prove to be as important as understanding the war’s causes since the war left many of these same issues unresolved, to play out during the years of Reconstruction and beyond. While this was partly a result of his historical viewpoint, the pressure to teach the historical content more quickly so he could catch up to the pacing guide weighed on Mr. Gaines as he taught both his Civil War and Reconstruction units.

In order to convey how sectional tensions intensified, Mr. Gaines first taught how these disagreements had been resolved initially. He instructed his students as to how the Missouri Compromise was reached in order to settle a potential imbalance between slave and free state representation in the Senate. As Mr. Gaines explained it, up until 1820—the time of the compromise—the number of slave and free states had remained balanced; however, when the Missouri territory sought to join the Union as a slave state without a

free state partner, that balance would have been disrupted.³² Eventually, as students read on websites or in their textbook, Henry Clay, who would be known as “The Great Compromiser,” helped reach an agreement between the two regions whereby Maine, which had been part of Massachusetts, joined the Union as a free state, Missouri as a slave state, and slavery was prohibited above 36° 30’ latitude with the exception of Missouri. In reviewing this agreement, Mr. Gaines highlighted how the North and South worked out their differences in order to keep the country united. He further emphasized this by stating that this was an instance when Congress put national interests ahead of sectional or state ones.

In teaching about the Fugitive Slave Act, Mr. Gaines showed how the tension between the North and South grew. Although this law was part of the Compromise of 1850, he did not emphasize that connection because, as he saw it, California statehood (as a free state), which was also part of the agreement, was a political matter; whereas, the Fugitive Slave Act was, at one level, a personal matter in that it prohibited citizens from aiding escaping slaves. Furthermore, Mr. Gaines connected this provision to his antebellum unit lessons which highlighted slavery as an unjust system because it denied freedom for African Americans. Under the Fugitive Slave Act, White citizens and free Blacks were coerced by the law into assisting slave catchers in recapturing runaway slaves. Although Mr. Gaines demonstrated how slavery opponents viewed this law as unfair, he admitted to his students that if he had been alive at the time, he would have followed the law because slaves were viewed as property, and he did not want to suffer the consequences,

³² The dispute that was settled by the Missouri Compromise actually began in December 1819 and was put to an end in March 1820.

which included imprisonment, if caught helping an escaped slave. Interestingly, several students said they would have assisted any runaway slaves because it was the right thing to do. This was symbolic of Mr. Gaines's rapport with his students in that they felt free to disagree with him.

Following this, Mr. Gaines taught about the Kansas-Nebraska Act and how it ratcheted up the tension between the North and South a bit higher. He explained, and his students read on-line, how this act opened up the Kansas and Nebraska territories to popular sovereignty, the right to choose to allow slavery or not. Mr. Gaines emphasized that popular sovereignty was the law's central concept. Here, he referred to the students' earlier reading about John Brown in the District Assessment Workbook and drew out how Brown and his collaborators killed five pro-slavery men with broadswords at Pottawottamie Creek in response to the killing of anti-slavery men in Lawrence. Concluding his lesson, Mr. Gaines emphasized the Kansas-Nebraska Act's significance in causing the Civil War because the law demonstrated the difficulty slavery supporters and opponents faced in trying to hold a fair election regarding such a volatile issue.

Mr. Gaines highlighted the ever increasing friction between the North and South in discussing the Dred Scott case. Through student reading of his unit outline, Mr. Gaines drew attention to the Supreme Court's ruling which stated that African Americans were not citizens and had no right to sue in court. Furthermore, he explained how another section of the decision overturned the Missouri Compromise. Mr. Gaines elicited through recitation that slavery was allowed anywhere in the United States causing rejoicing in the South. Northerners found the ruling particularly disturbing because they

viewed the 37 year old Missouri agreement as a settled matter. Along with the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Mr. Gaines stressed that this event was one of the most significant in bringing about the war.

Building on the Dred Scott case, Mr. Gaines focused intently on the presidential election of 1860 and Abraham Lincoln's victory as a cause of the Civil War. Highlighting Lincoln's belief that while he opposed the expansion of slavery, he had no power under the Constitution to abolish slavery in the states in which it existed, Mr. Gaines pointed to a passage from Lincoln's First Inaugural Address that expressed this idea. However, he explained, Southern states viewed Lincoln as a threat to slavery because they did not believe his statements. With this lack of trust, there was no way a compromise to maintain the Union could be reached. In addition to explaining the start of open hostilities, Mr. Gaines emphasized another point in Lincoln's First Inaugural, his intention to defend federal property. Therefore, when the Confederacy fired on Fort Sumter, Mr. Gaines explained, the war began. If Lincoln did not follow through on this point, it would have been construed as an admission that the Confederacy had the right to secede, something Lincoln very much opposed.

The lessons on Lincoln's election took place within the context of Mr. Gaines guiding his students through the writing of a culminating essay on the Civil War. Additionally, it was during this point when Mr. Gaines's teaching shifted to direct instruction.

Several factors led Mr. Gaines to change his instructional approach: first, the dictates of the pacing guide. He was teaching historical information which, according to the pacing guide, he should have taught earlier. He explained that when he looked at the

calendar, the pacing guide, and the date of the Content Standards Test, he realized how limited his remaining instructional time was, saying to himself, “Oh, my goodness, I’m far behind.” A second factor that contributed to his being behind schedule was the severe cold he suffered immediately after spring break which caused him to miss three days of school. Although Mr. Gaines would have been overdue as far as moving onto his Reconstruction unit, his absence put him even further in arrears. Mr. Gaines’s illness demonstrated how seemingly minor events can impact classroom instruction (Wills, 2005).³³ The third cause of Mr. Gaines’s transition to full time direct instruction was that his students wanted continued assistance with the essay. By the middle of the second culminating essay lesson, Mr. Gaines had guided his students through the construction of their introductory paragraphs and the topic and second sentences of the first body paragraph. When he told his students, “I am going to leave you on your own because I think you know what to do.” In response, the pupils yelled, “NO! NO!” Mr. Gaines responded, “Okay, I won’t leave you on your own, but you will need to provide the details,” the historical evidence that would support the arguments within their essays. His decision was consistent with his reputation for being exceptionally helpful to students. Students were always in his room during lunch and the nutrition break seeking assistance with homework (for history and other subjects), his advice on social issues, or just to hang out.³⁴ The historical content in the essay was a mixture of old information that had previously been taught and new that Mr. Gaines taught as he guided his students

³³ In Wills’s (2005) study, he demonstrated how mundane factors of school, late busses in his study, were a contributing factor in shaping the historical understanding constructed by the students and teacher.

³⁴ Although Mr. Gaines sought to foster independence in his students by having them work on their own during lessons, he would assist students if they asked.

through the writing of the essay; however, he demonstrated privately that the “new” material was actually available to his students through his unit outlines posted on the class website; however, in the end, it was faster for him to teach it directly than to have them sort through this on their own as they constructed their essays.

Following his instruction on the election of 1860, Mr. Gaines taught about the Southern states’ decision to secede. He explained that under the doctrine of nullification, which John Calhoun strongly endorsed, states, acting on behalf of their citizens, had the right to declare a law void through the powers granted to the people and the states under the Tenth Amendment. Furthermore, Mr. Gaines taught that Southern states were no longer interested in simply maintaining slavery where it existed; rather, they sought to gain additional slave states, for Southerners had come to believe that if slavery did not continue to expand, it would, like a plant which stops growing, wither and die. Mr. Gaines reiterated that these two events, Lincoln’s election and the Southern states’ choice to secede, motivated by concerns regarding slavery, were the two most important events that caused the Civil War.

As far as teaching about the actual Civil War, aside from recounting whether the Union or Confederacy won the few battles he mentioned, Mr. Gaines emphasized three points. First, the Battle of Antietam was a key victory for the Union because it enabled Lincoln to announce the Emancipation Proclamation and added a second purpose to the war, that of freeing the slaves. Second, the Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point of the war because from that point on the Confederacy would never again invade the North. In addition, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, Mr. Gaines pointed out, served as a

restatement of the war's new purpose, freedom for the slaves, along with the war's initial goal of restoring the Union. Third, and finally, using the example of the civil war in El Salvador, which about a third of his students were familiar with, having heard stories about it from their parents, Mr. Gaines emphasized that the hostility between the Union and Confederacy would continue in the years after the fighting ended and that additional violence occurred during Reconstruction.

Mr. Gaines strengthened his conception of the Civil War as resulting from the inability to bridge the growing differences over the issue of slavery through the use of additional handouts, the creation of comic strips, readings, and discussions of antebellum events, such as the Wilmot Proviso, not mentioned here. Furthermore, Mr. Gaines reinforced his teaching through his students' preparation of news reports on key battles, personalities, and events of the war including, for example, Bull Run, Robert E. Lee, the surrender at Appomattox, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. Although the students did not present the reports to the class as originally intended, Mr. Gaines was able to draw from the students' historical understanding, gathered during the reports' preparation, as he guided them through the writing of the culminating essay.³⁵

Mr. Gaines's teaching about the Civil War was most reflective of his historical perspective. Like the historian Shelby Foote, Mr. Gaines viewed the war as resulting from a failure to compromise, explaining that the people of the Civil War era became so caught up in politics that they were willing to make war on one another. This was the

³⁵ Mr. Gaines intended to put together a "news broadcast" on the Civil War; however, his previously discussed absence as well as the unavailability of the video equipment on the days set aside for filming resulted in the project not being completed.

tragedy of the Civil War. Similarly, in *The Civil War*, the Ken Burns film, answering the question, what caused the Civil War, Foote answered, “It was because we failed to do a thing we really have a genius for which is compromise.... Our true genius is for compromise. Our whole government’s founded on it, and it failed” (episode one, 1990). By emphasizing the compromises that preceded the war, Mr. Gaines taught an important lesson about how government functions: often, disagreements end in a settlement in which neither side gets everything that they wanted.

Although his Civil War unit lessons did not address the horrors of the war, a topic suggested by scholars (Bilof, 1996; Hutchinson, 2005; Manning, 2007; Waller & Edgington, 2001), his decision to focus his unit on the causes of the war, rather than the battles, was one Frederick Douglass advocated following the war’s end (Blight, 2002). Douglass stressed remembering the causes of the war because he worried that slavery’s role in causing the war was in danger of being forgotten amidst the Union-Confederate veterans’ reunion activities that began in the 1870s. Mr. Gaines’s focus on the compromises grew out of his previous unit highlighting slavery’s injustice. Taken together his antebellum and Civil War units made the argument that as the North and South’s views on slavery became more entrenched, political compromise became more difficult. Mr. Gaines’s struggle to catch up to the pacing guide and the corresponding depletion of instructional time hampered his ability to teach with a multiple perspectives approach. For example, after a lesson in which he reviewed John Brown’s attack on Harpers Ferry as a reason Northerners fought in the war within his culminating essay instruction, I asked Mr. Gaines, “Couldn’t you say that John Brown was more of a

Southern cause of the war since he attacked Harpers Ferry? I remember when you talked about the ‘wall of history,’ and how events could be seen from both sides, so what about the other side?” He answered, “Yeah, I know, I’ve been thinking about that, too, but I don’t have the time to show both sides. I’m already up against it [in terms of finishing the curriculum to review for the Content Standards Test]. I’m too short on time.”

Similar to Wills’s (2007; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009) research, Mr. Gaines’s experience demonstrated how time management can result in teachers deciding to modify instructional methods in order to cover historical content at a faster pace. In turn, however, the change in instructional approach led to alterations in the historical content taught as in this case where Mr. Gaines felt he did not have time to show how John Brown’s raid impacted the North and South.

The burden of meeting the district pacing guide’s strictures influenced Mr. Gaines’s modification to his instruction. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Mr. Gaines’s absence due to illness and his students’ desire for his guidance as they wrote their culminating essays were additional factors that led to his adoption of direct instruction. While time management is always an issue for teachers (Cuban, 1992; Jackson, 1986; Wills, 2007; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009), the pacing guide exacerbated the pressure Mr. Gaines felt to teach all of the content standards. In addition, although his absence and his students’ request for his assistance with the essay influenced his decision to switch to direct instruction, according to the pacing guide, he was already behind schedule. In other words, he likely would have decided to switch to an instructional method that he believed would enable him to teach the content more quickly since he was already overdue to

begin his unit on Reconstruction at the time of his absence. In the end, Mr. Gaines modified the culminating essay, which initially focused on the antebellum period and the Civil War, to include the Reconstruction era; doing so enabled him to catch up with the pacing guide and left him with two weeks to review for the Content Standards Test.³⁶

To this point, I described Mr. Hobart's, Ms. Newbury's, and Mr. Gaines's teaching about the Civil War and provided limited analysis of the historical content and the methods used to impart this. In the section which follows, I more thoroughly examine the rationales behind the teachers' decisions regarding historical content and instructional approaches.

Discussion

The differences in the historical content taught by Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines were most reflective of their different historical perspectives; however, in Mr. Gaines's case, the struggle to catch up with the pacing guide became an increasingly significant influence which resulted in his instructional approach becoming more similar to that of Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury. The three teachers' experiences teaching the Civil War demonstrated how the teachers had to balance competing concerns (Grant, 1996). Although it appeared that Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury were able to follow the pacing guide without much difficulty, these manifestations resulted from their

³⁶ After class, Mr. Gaines explained his thinking on modifying the essay to include the Reconstruction era, saying, "Since it is a cumulative activity, it made more sense to me for it to cover the whole unit [meaning the entire Civil War era consisting of the antebellum period, the war itself, and Reconstruction]." Mr. Gaines may have misspoken, but by saying that the essay was a *cumulative* activity instead of a *culminating* one, as he had called it throughout his lessons, meant that he was adding to the essay instead of the essay serving as the concluding part of his Civil War unit. In line with this change in terminology, Mr. Gaines taught lessons on Reconstruction as he guided his students through their essay writing.

consideration of how to most effectively use the allotted time to meet their students' instructional needs when they planned their units. For example, Ms. Newbury's use of films in the unit was done because she believed it enabled her students to connect affectively with the Civil War, and the movies allowed her to teach a large body of content in a limited amount of time. This was not the only factor that impacted Ms. Newbury's curricular and instructional decisions, specifically, nor those of Mr. Hobart and Mr. Gaines. To consider those choices in more depth, I explore the content of Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury.

Using the past to question the present

As E. H. Carr (1961) wrote, "History consists essentially in seeing the past through the eyes of the present and in light of its problems" (p. 22). The present, at some level, influences historians as they investigate the past. For instance, David Goldfield (2011) recently wrote a history of the Civil War that is centered on how religious differences between Northerners and Southerners led to war. Several critics (Delbanco, 2011; Kelley, 2011) noted that current differences between Republicans and Democrats in religiosity and the intense partisanship featured in today's politics seem to have influenced Goldfield's perspective in the book. When asked about this, Goldfield answered, "I had no personal contemporary ax to grind, [b]ut it turns out this book I wrote definitely speaks to what we're going through today in terms of the difficulty of finding a center" (Kelley, 2011, p. L4). Like the proverbial fish who is the last one to be aware of the water in which he is swimming, history teachers may not be fully aware of how contemporary events impact their framing of historical content within their lessons.

Given the fact that the United States was, and still is, fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, both Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, at some level, were influenced by those current conflicts in preparing their Civil War units. As discussed in the previous chapter, Mr. Hobart at times used recent events such as the 1992 and 2008 elections to illuminate antebellum events. In the same way, while teaching about the Battle of Shiloh, Mr. Hobart said, “In Iraq and Afghanistan, if there’s ten deaths in a month, people get upset about it. Here, there were bodies all over the battlefield.” These immediate examples seemed to contradict his course objective of using the study of past events to understand the present. However, taken as a whole, Mr. Hobart’s Civil War instruction conveyed a message that said “although our popular culture glorifies combat and we should not denigrate our combat troops, the reality is that all war is horrific.”

Similarly, Ms. Newbury’s Civil War lessons taught that war is one of the most traumatic experiences human beings can face, and that students should think carefully before joining the military even in peacetime because war is always possible. Related to this, Ms. Newbury explained:

I want to talk to them about the glories of war because that’s the other thing I hear, “Oh, Miss, I want to go to Iraq, and I want to shoot everybody down....” They got to understand it’s not a picnic. It isn’t, you know. There’s no fun in being a soldier, and I think that’s what I want to get over to them.

Her references to the glories of war and war as a picnic alluded to two handouts her students read. The first titled “The Glories of War” described the hardships soldiers faced, and the second called “War is not a Picnic” told how picnickers who came to the Bull Run battlefield had to retreat ahead of the Union soldiers and were fear stricken as

the Confederates won the first major fight of the war. On more than one occasion, Ms. Newbury said she wanted “to bring home” to her students the suffering soldiers endured.

While the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had some bearing on Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury’s Civil War lessons, the Vietnam War also shaped their instruction (Collins, 2011; Cullen, 1995; Toplin, 1996). The historian David Blight, discussing changes in Civil War historiography, said, “When the Vietnam generation began to study the Civil War we got a darker story—we got to the prisons, the question of death, the common soldiers’ brutal experience” (Collins, 2011, p. D6). Some of this scholarship filtered down to the middle school level. Mr. Hobart had his students read about Andersonville, the Georgia prisoner of war camp, in their textbook. Additionally, he included photographs of the camp and the Union survivors in his PowerPoint presentation. To provide balance, his students’ reading also described conditions faced by Confederate prisoners in Elmira, New York, and he mentioned recent excavations underway at Camp Douglas in Illinois, another prisoner of war camp. The influence of Vietnam was evident in Ms. Newbury’s comments regarding posttraumatic stress disorder. While she explained that this term was not used during the Civil War, she made the point that soldiers suffered psychologically from their experiences, mentioning the scene in *The Blue and the Gray* in which a journalist experiences nightmares based on what he had seen while reporting from the battlefield.

The most direct example of the Vietnam War’s impact on instruction came during the following exchange in which Ms. Newbury asked about the issue of survivor’s guilt.

Ms. Newbury: Imagine seeing your friend dead, or you've killed someone for the first time. It's not something that happens regularly. How easy is it to get back into your regular life?

Student: Soldiers might feel disgraced.

Ms. Newbury: I think you're thinking more about the Vietnam War. Vietnam was different, but no matter what war there's nothing glorious about war.

Ms. Newbury reiterated this point repeatedly: there is no glory in war. Similarly, Mr. Hobart, during his PowerPoint presentation as he displayed pictures of dead soldiers, continually said, "This is the reality of war." He did not say, "This was the reality of the Civil War" because death is the reality in any war. Knowing that unlike the Vietnam War in which his father served where pictures of that war were in newspapers and magazines regularly, his students were less likely to have seen pictures of dying Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq, Mr. Hobart was able to convey some of the misery of war through the work of noted Civil War photographers Matthew Brady and Alexander Gardner.

Reflective of their differing historical perspectives, Mr. Hobart spent more time focusing on the military and political leaders as well as Union and Confederate strategy and Ms. Newbury concentrated on the experiences of soldiers and civilians, but there were additional areas where their Civil War instruction overlapped and demonstrated the horror of war. Both teachers discussed the issue of desertion and the fears soldiers had both of dying and performing poorly on the battlefield (McPherson, 1997). During his screening of *The Red Badge of Courage*, Mr. Hobart discussed Henry Fleming's fright of battle, explaining that Henry was afraid of dying. Similarly, Ms. Newbury discussed

soldiers being punished for cowardice or running away as this was featured in both *The Blue and the Gray* and *Glory*. Both teachers also taught about the draft. Mr. Hobart explained how Northern men could hire substitutes and Southerners who owned at least twenty slaves did not have to serve in the army. This led him to point out how the war was viewed by soldiers as “a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.” Ms. Newbury touched on the same ideas but connected this directly to current military recruiting. Arguing that armed services recruiters target students at less affluent high schools, she rhetorically asked her students if they thought service recruiters spent as much time at high schools in wealthier communities, adding, “You know you don’t need to join the army to get an education.”

Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, through the historical content they taught, communicated the message that all war is horrific. Furthermore, although they were influenced by the Vietnam War and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, they did not blame the soldiers for war’s awfulness, but rather they sought to develop their students’ empathy, a goal history educators (Barton & Levstik, 2004) advocate, for the soldiers of the Civil War and, by extension, the current wars through their demonstration of “the reality of war.” Examined more deliberately, Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury’s Civil War teaching raises questions about teachers’ historical perspectives as far as how teachers’ viewpoints are formed, the likelihood their perceptions change or remain fixed, and what current events or other factors in the teacher’s experience might bring about such alterations. Additional research may shed light on these areas as well as other aspects of the evolution of teachers’ historical perspectives.

Mr. Gaines came closest to expressing the point of view that war is brutal when he explained that the tragedy of the Civil War was that people in the North and South became so incensed that they fought each other; however, because of the pressure he felt to catch up with the pacing guide's strictures, he so rushed through his teaching of the Civil War that he spent roughly half of a class period teaching about actual combat. His hurried teaching of the Civil War was one consequence of the pacing guide, but at the same time, he did not abandon his view that it was important for his students to write an essay on the Civil War era. As he taught about the Civil War, Mr. Gaines realized that he could not meet all of his personal curricular objectives, such as teaching from multiple perspectives, while trying to catch up to the pacing guide's parameters. Teachers must constantly balance competing demands within the limits of instructional time (Grant, 1996). Because Mr. Gaines was bound by the pacing guide, the pressure to continue moving forward through the standards while juggling various needs was exacerbated.

The pacing guide and prioritization

Mr. Gaines constantly struggled to stay within the limits of the pacing guide. Although I did not realize this when I conducted preliminary observations of the teachers in January 2009, I started to become aware of it when I returned in February to begin observing the teachers' lessons on the Civil War era.³⁷ While I started observing Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury's antebellum units on Thursday, February 19th, I did not begin observing Mr. Gaines until Tuesday, February 24th, and he actually gave a test that day to

³⁷ I conducted preliminary observations and interviews to gather background data on such issues as the teachers' perspective on the importance of history, their viewpoints as to the value of teaching about the Civil War. Additionally, I wanted to observe their teaching as a baseline to see how their instruction in this earlier unit (on the American West) compared with their instruction during their units on the Civil War era.

conclude his previous unit, so he did not begin instruction on the antebellum period until the following day nearly a week behind Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury.

Mr. Gaines's difficulty keeping up with the pacing guide stemmed from his open instructional goals. For example, Mr. Hobart had five specific curricular goals for teaching about the Civil War. He wanted his students to understand the causes of the war, leaders, the key battles, how the war ended, and people's reaction to the end of the war. In general, he said, "I want them to know the basics." While broader than Mr. Hobart's objectives, Ms. Newbury had only two aims. First, she wanted her students to understand how the war "changed the country in more ways than just ending slavery," and how the war was "a terrible time... in America, what America had to go through." Like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury explained that I "just give them what they need to know," although in her practice, she seemed to go beyond this. Conversely, Mr. Gaines's Civil War curricular aims were more expansive, stating, "I'm hoping they will understand why it happened and be able to understand the difficulties that the time presented for, especially, Abraham Lincoln, and kind of, like, get a real understanding of what his true intent [was]. I want them to understand why it happened, but to also be aware that it's not, it's not what it appears." He added that Lincoln's goal initially was not to end slavery, and that "sometimes they [students] have a hard time conceptualizing the real reasons [for the war]." He went on, saying, "I'm hoping...they'll [his students] gain that at the end, that they can understand why it happened and how it happened and go from there." Mr. Gaines shared his view that ending slavery made things worse for African Americans and that his students "should look back and think of the struggles these people

[former slaves] have had to endure once the war was over.” Moreover, he described how he wanted his students to “get a full understanding of the symbolism about the Civil War, being that it was kind of like the start of the new modern warfare.” While Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury talked about teaching “the basics,” Mr. Gaines lamented what had become of history instruction:

It’s hard, though, it’s really hard because the way that we teach history is more like you get the pebble and you just skip it along the water, and that’s the unfortunate thing about it. Whereas before they would allow us to really sink into it, and so you go into each battle. You go into, maybe, the technology, the whole, you know, everything that’s embedded within the Civil War, but you can’t anymore. You really can’t, so you just kind of pick and choose of what you think is important.

Mr. Gaines argued that he did not have the same level of autonomy to decide what topics to teach and the depth of study as he did prior to the adoption of the pacing guide. In his research, Wills (2007) made the point that teachers have always had difficulty managing instructional time and that state testing made time management a greater struggle.

Related to this notion, Thornton (1991) argued that the teacher is the curricular and instructional gatekeeper, meaning he or she determines what historical content is taught in class as well as how it is presented. Mr. Gaines addressed this in commenting on how he could teach more detailed historical content before the pacing guide. Although Mr. Gaines did not acknowledge that he was picking and choosing historical content and instructional methods prior to the pacing guide’s implementation, he was certainly aware of making these choices afterwards. This speaks to another of Thornton’s points that contextual factors may impinge on the teacher’s ability as the gatekeeper. Mr. Gaines experienced this with the pacing guide to such a degree that he expressed it to me while

Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury who had largely adjusted to the guide's schedule did not articulate the same level of frustration.³⁸ In fact, Mr. Gaines would explain that he had become better at following the pacing guide during this year, even though he would spend less time teaching about Reconstruction than in the previous year, adding "I think by next year I think I'll have it well-oiled, but I'm still trying to break the kinks and ... make things flow with the instructional (pacing) guide."

Mr. Gaines's adjustments during his Civil War unit demonstrated that in order to balance the competing demands of teaching the content standards through his historical perspective, meeting his students' needs as to instruction, and getting closer to the pacing guide's schedule, he had to alter his priorities. In an effort to resolve these difficulties, Mr. Gaines shifted to direct instruction. This was the second time he had changed his approach. During his antebellum unit, he more vigorously monitored his students during the activity period he built into each of his lessons. In addition, he abandoned the Civil War newscast project, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, because of the time crunch and the unavailability of the video equipment.

However, rather than shift to fill-in-the-blank handouts or multiple choice worksheets which might have made it easier to make up ground in regard to the pacing guide, Mr. Gaines had his students write a culminating essay. Neither Mr. Hobart nor Ms. Newbury gave their students any assignment that required anything longer than a two or three

³⁸ I am not implying that Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury had no difficulties with the pacing guide but only that they did not have the same degree of aggravation maintaining its schedule. This was largely because the two teachers had made concerted efforts to eliminate topics that were "trivial," as Mr. Hobart put it, such as the Ostend Manifesto, which is not included in the content standards, although it is addressed in the social studies framework which provides an overview of the content as well as suggested instructional techniques (California Department of Education, 2005).

sentence response, so Mr. Gaines's instructional choice was an interesting one. Although he had mentioned the Civil War newscast when I spoke with him before he started his Civil War unit, he did not discuss writing the essay. Investigating how the writing of the essay evolved from Mr. Gaines initial announcement of the assignment through its completion provides insight into Mr. Gaines's curricular and instructional decision making and reveals how he balanced competing demands (Grant, 1996).

Although the essay was listed in the lesson's agenda on Mr. Gaines's class website, after students completed the warm up activity and corrected the previous day's assignment, Mr. Gaines announced, "We can't use the laptops today because Mr. Gregorio needs them. So, we're going to work on the culminating activity for this unit: essay writing."³⁹ On the board Mr. Gaines had pre-written an outline of the causes of the Civil War, and he explained, "On your paper with 'The Civil War' as the title, you're going to recap why the Civil War happened." Initially, he intended to have his students write an essay that concentrated solely on Civil War causation; however, near the end of the period as a student was reviewing the substance of the introductory paragraph and giving a brief overview of the remaining paragraphs, Mr. Gaines responded, "Actually, this is the beginning of your essay, and in the beginning the Civil War was tearing up the country like in El Salvador when there was a civil war and many people fled the country to get away from the killing." The significance of this statement was manifold. First, it indicated that Mr. Gaines had decided to expand the essay as he explained after class, "Since it is a cumulative activity, it made more sense to me for it to cover the whole unit

³⁹ Mr. Gaines explained that the students were going to use the school laptops' built in cameras as they had during rehearsals to film the final version of their newscasts.

(meaning the entire Civil War era).” Second, his linkage to the Salvadoran civil war, a connection he made multiple times, represented an effort to relate the familiar, the Salvadoran war, to something, the Civil War, where his students had even less prior knowledge. Making associations like this had been the subject of a department meeting discussing the use of SDAIE strategies.⁴⁰ Third, Mr. Gaines believed that expanding the essay in this manner would enable him to move through the remainder of the content standards so that he would have sufficient time to review for the California Standards Test.

Still, his change to the essay assignment demonstrated how Mr. Gaines tried to meet competing curricular and instructional needs (Grant, 1996). By making the essay inclusive of all the historical content he had taught and still planned to teach on the Civil War era, Mr. Gaines hoped to show his students the complexity of this deeply conflicted period. As explained earlier, he believed the Civil War era was a complicated time that impacted Americans so deeply that they would attack one another. Reworking the essay in this way allowed Mr. Gaines to remain true to his historical perspective. Related to this, Mr. Gaines felt that by expanding the assignment he could bridge a divide of sorts in that he could teach a more complicated version of the period than if he assigned worksheets while also making up time vis-à-vis the pacing guide. An additional benefit of the enlarged essay was that Mr. Gaines would not be dependent on the availability of

⁴⁰ SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) techniques are intended to overcome students’ negative emotional responses which may include anxiety, self-doubt, or even boredom in regard to learning English. The department meeting focused on methods for generating student interest by drawing on students’ prior knowledge and creating more opportunities for students to participate directly in lessons. Ms. Martin, the assistant principal in charge of social studies, emphasized that these approaches could be useful for working with all students at Sunny Lake and could help students to become more engaged in social studies lessons.

equipment not in his classroom. This move gave him more autonomy over curriculum and instruction, although at the same time, the students lost much of the independence they had while working on the newscast. As the essay assignment progressed, Mr. Gaines drew from the students' newscast research to flesh out historical content. By doing this, Mr. Gaines restored some of the students' sense that their work for the broadcast served a purpose.

On top of this, Mr. Gaines's Civil War essay assignment addressed additional concerns. Ideally, the essay offered an opportunity for students to think critically about the time period. Developing lessons that required students to think analytically had been a repeated topic of discussion at department meetings. Ms. Martin, the assistant principal in charge of social studies, had shared strategies including the use of writing assignments designed to support students interacting with historical content at a deeper level than factual recall. Once Mr. Gaines decided to expand the essay, he created an essay outline structured to aid the students in completing the assignment; however, the level of detail in the outline created a paradox in that while the outline increased the likelihood that students could complete the assignment, at the same time, it limited students' opportunity for critical thinking because of the outline's specificity. For instance, students had to follow Mr. Gaines's essay outline organization even if they had in mind a different construction that they thought would make a stronger argument. It is difficult to say whether any students would have diverted from Mr. Gaines's outline if it was less thorough when, in fact, the vast majority of them practically begged him to continue his

guidance following his announcement that he was going to have them write the remainder of the essay independently midway through his third (essay) lesson.

Like teachers who modified their instructional approach to ensure that they taught all of the historical content required by state standards (Wills, 2007; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009), Mr. Gaines's decision to continue his instruction showed that his primary concern was with students completing the essay. After his third lesson, he realized that the scale of the essay might work against the possibility that students would complete the assignment, saying to me after class, "If I can get them to understand this, it will be a miracle." However, by this point, Mr. Gaines had insufficient time remaining to devise another activity that would enable him to teach the required content standards as he would soon need to begin reviewing for the state test. Furthermore, I am doubtful that he would have eliminated the essay assignment even if time was not an issue. During a previous short essay assignment when Mr. Gaines realized that his students found it difficult, rather than chide the students for laziness, or abandon the assignment, he modified the essay by changing the structure to increase the likelihood that they could complete it, explaining in an interview, "I will put the blame on me" when students do not understand an assignment.

Exploring Mr. Gaines's experience with essay writing reveals both the challenges he had to contend with as well as the conflicting demands he had to negotiate as he sought to teach the content standards within the remaining time frame while remaining faithful to part of his historical perspective. As described earlier, although Mr. Gaines did not believe he had enough time to explain how John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry impacted

both the North and South, he still sought to impart some of the Civil War era's complexity through his teaching within the time constraints he faced.

Barton and Levstik (2003) once asked in a short piece, "Why don't more history teachers engage students in interpretation" (p. 358)? Similarly, after exploring Mr. Gaines's Civil War instruction, one might ask, "Why don't more history teachers engage students in essay writing?" While I believe that Mr. Gaines's historical perspective was an important factor in his creation of the essay assignment as was Ms. Martin's call for critical thinking in social studies, further research may shed light on the additional issues that impact history teachers' decision making about writing assignments. On the other side of the coin, additional research is needed to investigate why history teachers might be hesitant to employ writing assignments. In the case of Mr. Hobart, he was possibly reluctant to assign an essay because of his experience with the previous year's learning stations which featured open-ended writing prompts. As for Ms. Newbury, while a student essay offered the opportunity for critical thinking, she probably did not view such an assignment as a means of reaching students affectively although an essay following *Glory* or *The Blue and the Gray* may have offered students the chance to reflect more deliberately on the films' meaning. Furthermore, the fact that the content standards test consisted of only multiple choice questions may have played a part in both teachers' decisions in regard to writing assignments. Although Grant (2001) argued that testing is an uncertain lever as to how it impacts history instruction, the inclusion of a writing assessment on the history content standards test would likely lead more history teachers to give their students more writing assignments. However, most states have viewed the

cost of an examination including a writing component as prohibitive (Wineburg, 2004). Although it seems Grant is correct in arguing that there is not a correlation between the inclusion of a topic for testing and the kind of instruction regarding that topic, including a new subject on a test should result in the addition of some instruction on that topic.

In this chapter, I have shown how contemporary events influenced Mr. Hobart's and Ms. Newbury's depiction of the Civil War. In examining Mr. Gaines's decision to assign an essay, I sought to demonstrate the complex thinking that underlay this choice (Grant, 1996). Related to these subjects, I have suggested areas for further study in light of my findings reported here. In the next chapter, I investigate the content taught and the instructional approaches the three teachers used in their Reconstruction units in addition to showing the issues that influenced their teaching of this time period. In doing this, I focus on how the teachers' historical perspectives, their beliefs concerning instruction, and the district's pacing guide worked in combination to influence their curricular and instructional decision making.

Chapter 5: What the Teachers Taught about Reconstruction

Introduction

This chapter describes the content Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught about the period following the Civil War known as Reconstruction which is viewed by historians as the concluding part of the Civil War era (Burton, 2008; McPherson, 1982). Briley (2008) has stated that Reconstruction “remains an era shrouded in myth and misconception” (p. 453). One of the reasons for this may be that while the research of Wills (1996) and Lipscomb (2002) examined teaching about the Civil War, there have been no studies on the teaching of Reconstruction. Although Green (1991) implied that teaching about the post-Civil War period consists solely of imparting historical facts, his work focused primarily on suggestions for how to teach about the era and did not investigate any actual cases of teachers’ lessons on Reconstruction.

As in their teaching about the antebellum era and the Civil War, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines’s teaching was influenced by their historical perspectives, their convictions regarding instructional methods that would most benefit their students, and the district’s pacing guide. While all three teachers instructed their students on Reconstruction’s mixed results, they framed their lessons on the era differently, reflective of their historical perspectives. Mr. Hobart viewed Reconstruction as another step towards African Americans gaining political rights. He expressed this understanding most directly to his students when he said, “Like I’ve said before, getting rights comes in baby steps. One hundred years later, the Civil Rights Movement with Martin Luther King would help African Americans get the rights they had and then lost during

Reconstruction.” Although he acknowledged Blacks’ newly won rights were virtually nonexistent by the end of Reconstruction, he still saw the period as positive because, for the first time in American history, African Americans had the right to vote and were recognized as citizens, if only for a short time. Similarly, Ms. Newbury recognized that African Americans gained constitutional rights during Reconstruction; however, the fact that these rights were denied so quickly, most notably through the use of severe violence, shaped her conception, which she shared with her students, of Reconstruction as a tragic period. Like Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines viewed Reconstruction more negatively than Mr. Hobart. In more than one instance, he told his students that “Reconstruction was worse than slavery,” adding that at least under slavery, African Americans had some protection because of their value to slaveholders, whereas during Reconstruction, “you have sharecropping which is very similar to slavery,” but “the main focal point [was] you have the black codes and Jim Crow laws and segregation. That segregation lasts throughout another, what, you know, 80 years or so, so that’s like the main focal point of it.” Segregation was especially problematic because African Americans had fought to overcome slavery, yet they were still second class citizens. Although the teachers’ Reconstruction content was more similar than in their previous units on the antebellum era and the Civil War, their different historical perspectives of the post-Civil War era shaped their teaching of Reconstruction material and the frame they provided their students to build their own historical understanding of the period (Grant, 2003).

By the same token, the teachers’ beliefs regarding instructional methods and the district’s pacing guide influenced their teaching about Reconstruction. Ms. Newbury

continued to view direct instruction as the most effective means for conveying information to her students. Additionally, her teacher-centered lessons allowed her to maintain the pacing guide's prescribed rate of instruction. Similarly, Mr. Hobart continued to employ direct instruction as his primary approach to teaching; however he provided greater opportunities for student participation in this unit than in either of his two previous units. In contrast to Mr. Hobart, Mr. Gaines had the least flexibility in terms of making room for student input during his brief Reconstruction unit.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, because Mr. Gaines had fallen so far behind the pacing guide's parameters and because his students wanted his guidance during the writing of their culminating essays, he had turned to using direct instruction exclusively in his teaching. Furthermore, in an effort to get closer to the pacing guide's schedule and have time to review for the California Standards Test, Mr. Gaines taught his Reconstruction unit as part of his instruction for the culminating essay assignment in his Civil War unit. Mr. Hobart, on the other hand, had the luxury of allowing greater student involvement in his Reconstruction unit than either Ms. Newbury or Mr. Gaines did at any point in their three units on the Civil War era. This resulted, in part, from Mr. Hobart's continuing to be at least a week ahead of the pacing guide's schedule, so he had more time available for the unit before reviewing for the California Standards Test. Additional considerations, he explained, were:

I wanted to change things up a little bit, and also, you know, our [social studies department] meeting we're talking about these SDAIE techniques, and, you know, so I came up with that idea of taking notes, but put it in a certain fashion that the kids don't realize they're taking notes and they're going to give it their own creativity to it, and then also they, you know,

make a really good booklet and then they can use it on their notes, I mean, on, on their test, too.⁴¹

Mr. Hobart decided to teach a bit differently so as to give the students more ownership of their learning. He had his pupils create a “foldable,” a three dimensional graphic organizer, in which they wrote information about various aspects of Reconstruction (Zike, 2000). In addition, he had the students talk to a partner about what to write before they actually wrote their notes, so that they could decide what was most important about the unit’s topics. By allowing the students to write their own notes for the unit, rather than copy his notes as in his Civil War unit, the pupils might be more likely to internalize the historical content.

The teachers’ historical viewpoints, their instructional principles, and the district pacing guide were the most significant factors that influenced their teaching about Reconstruction. In order to demonstrate how these features played out in their teaching, I examine Mr. Hobart’s Reconstruction lessons in the section which follows. After this, I investigate the teaching of Ms. Newbury and, finally, Mr. Gaines.

Mr. Hobart: Reconstruction as the Creation of African American Rights

In Mr. Hobart’s teaching, the main question facing the country after the Civil War was “what should happen to the former slaves?” He explained to his students that African

⁴¹ SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) techniques are intended to overcome students’ negative emotional responses which may include anxiety, self-doubt, or even boredom in regard to learning English. The department meeting focused on methods for generating student interest by drawing on students’ prior knowledge and creating more opportunities for students to participate directly in lessons. Ms. Martin, the assistant principal in charge of social studies, emphasized that these approaches could be useful for working with all students at Sunny Lake and could help students to become more engaged in social studies lessons.

Americans had gained their freedom after the war but had little in the way of resources. To demonstrate the significance of the situation facing the nation after the war's end, Mr. Hobart began his Reconstruction unit by asking his students to devise proposals for aiding former slaves in their transition to freedom and rebuilding the South. After the students shared their ideas, which Mr. Hobart wrote on the board, he told the students that in this unit they would learn about how America actually addressed these matters, and the students would be able to compare their solutions with those that were actually enacted.

In his instruction on the post-Civil War period, Mr. Hobart conveyed how Reconstruction led to the establishment of African American rights by concentrating on three areas: first, he taught about the new rights Blacks gained during the period, second, he used lessons to show how the federal government protected these new rights, and, third, he demonstrated how White Southerners sought to restrain, to the point of near elimination, African American rights. In general, the students proposed providing more assistance for African Americans than was actually enacted. As far as White Southerners, the students were split—some favoring punishment and others suggesting aid—as to how to win back Whites' loyalty to the Union. The smallest group of students recommended punishing the Confederate leaders and helping all Southern non-combatants. Based on his comments, Mr. Hobart endorsed the ideas of punishing Southern Whites or, at the least, penalizing Confederate leaders.

In teaching about African Americans' newly won rights, Mr. Hobart concentrated on four main items: the Freedmen's Bureau and the three amendments—Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth—added to the Constitution during the Reconstruction period.

In his lessons on the Thirteenth Amendment, Mr. Hobart emphasized how it was a stepping stone towards more equal rights that followed. He highlighted the importance of the amendment by having his students analyze a Thomas Nast lithograph titled “Emancipation” that was in the *District Assessment Workbook*. The lithograph consisted of a series of illustrations on the left side showing conditions under slavery—African Americans being whipped, a slave auction—and the right side displayed a life of freedom—Blacks being paid for their work, African American children attending school—and in the center was a picture of a middle class African American family sitting near their stove with a smaller illustration of Abraham Lincoln below that. Through his recitation, Mr. Hobart drew his students’ attention to the transition in African American life that was depicted in the lithograph. In addition, he made a point of having students identify where the lithograph was printed. When they realized that it was printed in Philadelphia, Mr. Hobart said, “Yeah, it’s not published in Richmond because people there wouldn’t want African Americans to have rights.” The notion that Southern Whites opposed Black rights would be one that Mr. Hobart returned to throughout the unit. Furthermore, he reinforced his teaching on the Thirteenth Amendment by having students analyze additional lithographs from the *District Assessment Workbook* as well as examining an excerpt from the actual amendment.

Hand-in-hand with the Thirteenth Amendment, Mr. Hobart taught his students about the Freedmen’s Bureau. He underscored the agency’s work, particularly in the arena of education. Mr. Hobart explained the importance of schools through readings he assigned that described the increase in African American attendance and the rising literacy rate

amongst former slaves. He put further emphasis on the role of education in aiding African American improvement as he reminded the pupils numerous times to “remember that the African Americans are stuck with nothing” at the end of the war. Mr. Hobart explained that Black gains in schooling enabled them to get better jobs as shown in the Nast lithograph. Education, additionally, aided African Americans in exercising their newly won rights.

Those new rights were most emphatically stated in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Mr. Hobart had students read how the Fourteenth Amendment provided greater protection to African American citizenship than the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and ensured “equal protection of the laws.” Mr. Hobart told his class that he thought the amendment was a positive outcome for African Americans because “all citizens would have their rights, and states have to give African American men the right to vote or the states lose power.” He strengthened these points through the analysis of additional lithographs from the *District Assessment Workbook*. Moreover, he had students examine an excerpt from the Fourteenth Amendment. To teach about the Fifteenth Amendment, Mr. Hobart had students read about the election of 1868 in which Grant won a narrow popular vote majority in large part because of African Americans who braved Ku Klux Klan attacks and went to the polls. On top of this, he had students read how the Radical Republicans passed the Fifteenth Amendment to ensure African American suffrage in future elections as well. What’s more, Mr. Hobart pointed out that Blacks could now be elected to public office. Similarly to his teaching about the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, Mr. Hobart provided added emphasis by having his students analyze

lithographs and an excerpt from the Fifteenth Amendment. Expanding his instruction on new African American rights, Mr. Hobart taught his students how new legislation granted enforcement power to government agencies so that Blacks could actually exercise their new rights.

To a much greater degree than Ms. Newbury or Mr. Gaines and in line with his historical perspective on Reconstruction, Mr. Hobart expressed how the federal government sought to protect African American rights. For instance, his teaching about the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 and the Anti-Klan Bill of 1871 highlighted the enforcement powers contained in these two laws. He had students read aloud about the Reconstruction Acts of 1867. After a student read about the law's provisions—dividing the South into five military districts, disenfranchising the South's ruling class, and mandating that African American males be given the right to vote, and that Southern states ratify the Fourteenth Amendment—Mr. Hobart commented, “This law did a lot.” Using recitation, he reiterated multiple times what he called “the key part of the law,” the division of the South into five military districts. He told his students, “Now, Northern military leaders will come to the South.” Additionally, he highlighted the denial of suffrage to the ruling class as a means of punishing the South. Similarly, in teaching about the Anti-Klan Bill of 1871, Mr. Hobart focused on the enforcement section of the law. He had students read aloud about how the law empowered federal marshals to arrest thousands of Klansmen, lessening the use of violence to intimidate Black voters. Furthermore, Mr. Hobart pointed out that this law created more tension between Klan members and their supporters and the Grant administration. At least twice prior to the

end of the unit, Mr. Hobart reviewed this law, highlighting that the enforcement powers contained in the two laws enabled African Americans to exercise their newly gained rights.

Given his teaching about new African American rights and how the federal government set out to enforce those rights, Mr. Hobart taught about the Ku Klux Klan and the ruling class's resistance to the changes brought forth during Reconstruction. First, he did this by having students read about the black codes. Following up this reading, Mr. Hobart emphasized how the codes were nearly a reinstatement of slavery. He highlighted a phrase in the reading, the "old South," and elicited from students that this term meant a return to the antebellum ways in which the ruling class was in charge and African Americans were relegated to the bottom rungs of the social ladder (Perman, 1991). Second, he drew students' attention to the Ku Klux Klan. While many of his students had some knowledge of the Klan, they did not realize just how fear-inducing Klansmen were. Through reading about this group and analyzing lithographs and political cartoons of the period, Mr. Hobart demonstrated that Klan members were, in his words, "domestic terrorists."⁴² Third, he taught how Southern Whites used laws to restrict Black male suffrage along with Jim Crow statutes following the *Plessy* decision to reinstitute segregation and Black second class citizenship. By having his students read an excerpt from *History Alive* (Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2002) and following it with recitation, Mr. Hobart taught his students about literacy tests, poll taxes, and the grandfather clause and how these rules were used to limit African American voting.

⁴² The students read the phrase, "the Klan's terrorism" (*Creating America*, 2006, p.544) in their textbook, and in discussing the KKK further, Mr. Hobart used the term "domestic terrorists."

Using the same reading, he instructed pupils how Southern states established segregated communities. Through recitation, handouts, and dispatches (each lesson's opening activity), he reviewed these points multiple times. Additionally, Mr. Hobart had students read how Northerners eventually grew tired of Reconstruction because of the economic difficulties of the 1870s and the scandals of the Grant administration. In teaching how Southern Whites used political and extralegal methods to limit Black rights, Mr. Hobart highlighted how this represented an attempt to return to the antebellum era of African American enslavement.

By focusing on the amendments which resulted in African Americans gaining new rights, the laws which enabled the federal government to protect those rights for a time, and the resistance of Southern Whites to these changes, Mr. Hobart expressed his notion that the establishment of Black rights was central to understanding Reconstruction. As a means of concluding the unit, Mr. Hobart stated that Reconstruction symbolized baby steps towards the African American rights that were eventually won in the Civil Rights Movement through the efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr. This point provided additional evidence for Mr. Hobart's conception of Reconstruction as a time in which African American rights were instituted. He reinforced these teachings through the use of worksheets, analysis of written and illustrated Reconstruction era documents, and readings from the textbook and additional sources.

Mr. Hobart did not share any formal goals for his Reconstruction unit perhaps because, as he said, one week into his post-Civil War instruction, "Reconstruction is like a new topic for me. I've only done it for a couple of years. I would barely get to it in the

past.” Mr. Hobart spent two weeks teaching this unit, the same amount called for in the district pacing guide, but, as he explained, significantly more instructional time than he had previously. In addition, Reconstruction was a new unit for a second reason: the fact that Mr. Hobart provided more opportunities for student participation than in his earlier units. The most obvious example of this difference occurred the first time he told his students to talk with their partners before writing a definition of Reconstruction in their own words. The students sat in silence. Mr. Hobart, somewhat perplexed by their response, said, “I want you to talk. I know usually you’re supposed to be quiet in class, but I want you to talk with each other so you can come up with a definition.” Finally, Mr. Hobart’s Reconstruction unit was different from earlier instruction in the way in which he used the *District Assessment Workbook*.⁴³ In his unit on the antebellum period, he used the workbook once to review for the district’s periodic assessment; however, in the Reconstruction unit, Mr. Hobart incorporated the workbook into four of his lessons. Although his instruction continued to emphasize factual historical content, the workbook’s activities provided his students the opportunity to analyze primary source documents of the era. While his instruction remained teacher-centered, Mr. Hobart made room for more student participation in part because he had the time available.

Like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury spent more time teaching Reconstruction than she had previously because she had come closer to meeting the pacing guide’s schedule.

Although it was less than the two weeks called for in the guide, it was nearly double her

⁴³ The *District Assessment Workbook* was designed to help prepare students for the district’s periodic assessments which occurred in December, March, and June and were practice tests for the California Standards Test. The activities in the workbook tied in with the units on the Constitution and Federalist period, the antebellum era, and Reconstruction.

prior year's four periods of instruction. However, Ms. Newbury's conception of Reconstruction, although drawing largely from the same historical content as Mr. Hobart, was much different. Despite the fact that his historical perspective was one in which Reconstruction was a more positive than negative experience for African Americans, Ms. Newbury, whose teaching I examine in the following section, framed Reconstruction as a terrible time for Blacks.

Ms. Newbury: Reconstruction as a Tragic Time for African Americans

Even when she discussed African Americans' recently acquired rights, Ms. Newbury highlighted the fact that most Blacks would lose these liberties through Southern states' legal maneuvering and the terror tactics of the Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacist organizations. Contrary to Claude Bowers (1929) who argued in his book, *The Tragic Era*, that Reconstruction was unfortunate because of the burdens imposed on Southern Whites, what made Reconstruction tragic, in Ms. Newbury's view, was that African Americans could only exercise their newly won rights for a short time before those rights were denied them. Ms. Newbury conveyed her conception of Reconstruction in three ways. First, she taught about African Americans' recently obtained rights. Second, she communicated how these rights were blocked through extralegal means. Third, she conveyed how White Southerners used legislation to restrict African Americans' use of their rights.

Like Mr. Hobart in teaching about African Americans' new rights, Ms. Newbury focused on four items: the Freedmen's Bureau and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and

Fifteenth Amendments. Although the Freedmen's Bureau did more than build schools, Ms. Newbury focused on that aspect of its work in her lessons on the organization. She emphasized the importance of education for recently freed African Americans, telling her students that education could help Blacks since many of them had no money, no jobs, and few skills because most had worked as field hands during slavery. In addition, Ms. Newbury brought attention to the Freedmen's Bureau when she had her students analyze a Thomas Nast lithograph titled "Emancipation," part of which showed African American children going to school. Furthermore, Ms. Newbury taught that the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery; however, she added a constitutionally-based rationale for this amendment's necessity as she emphasized the fact that this change was needed because the Emancipation Proclamation had only freed African Americans in the Confederate states on account of Lincoln's belief that he did not have the constitutional authority to free the slaves in the border states. Moreover, Ms. Newbury pointed out that the amendment was required to overturn the Dred Scott decision which had established the notion that the Constitution supported the slaveholders' right to own slaves. In other words, the Constitution had to be changed because it was a pro-slavery document following the Supreme Court's ruling in the Dred Scott case as Ms. Newbury said many times in her unit on the antebellum era (see Chapter 3, page 87 for the first instance where she said this).⁴⁴

Along these lines, Ms. Newbury connected the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Dred Scott decision as well. In teaching about the Fourteenth Amendment, Ms.

⁴⁴ Over the course of her three Civil War era units, Ms. Newbury or her students referenced the Constitution as a document supporting slavery more than a dozen times.

Newbury asked her students about the Supreme Court case. Her students explained how the court's decision stated that slaves were not citizens and did not have any rights. Therefore, Ms. Newbury explained, the Fourteenth Amendment ensured that the Constitution no longer supported Chief Justice Taney's interpretation. Ms. Newbury pointed out that this amendment made African Americans citizens and entitled them to equal protection under the law, meaning that, for instance, they could now bring lawsuits or get married—both rights which had previously been denied. Theoretically, Ms. Newbury stated, Black males should have been allowed to vote since they were now citizens; however, in order to ensure that suffrage rights were clearly stated and not only implied as in the Fourteenth Amendment, the Fifteenth Amendment containing the franchise was added to the Constitution. She reinforced the importance of the Fifteenth Amendment by having her students analyze a lithograph titled “The Fifteenth Amendment” in the *District Assessment Workbook* which depicted the rights to an education, to get married, to freely practice one's religion, and, of course, to vote.

Often when she was teaching about African Americans' new rights, Ms. Newbury underlined extralegal methods White Southerners used to eliminate those rights, emphasizing the Ku Klux Klan's use of violence and intimidation. For instance, when she first asked about the Klan and their activities, one of her students said the Klan's goal was “to kill Blacks.” Ms. Newbury responded by saying, “But they didn't always kill people. They want to keep Blacks at the bottom [of society]. We'll talk about the other amendments like the right to vote, but if you were Black and you tried to vote, you may be killed.” Later in her instruction, she would explain how the threat of violence was

often enough to intimidate African Americans (Perman, 1991). Moreover, Ms. Newbury described how seeing someone who had recently voted “swinging from a tree” could frighten others sufficiently to give up their suffrage rights. She followed this comment by elucidating what “lynching” was, adding that often members of local law enforcement agencies were also members of the KKK. Ms. Newbury buttressed these explanations through the use of a cartoon titled “Worse than Slavery” which featured a drawing of a cowering Black couple surrounded by a Klansman and a member of the White League as well as, in the background, an African American man hanging from a tree and a burned out schoolhouse. Scenes shown from *Aftershock: beyond the Civil War*, a History Channel documentary, bolstered her descriptions as it depicted KKK members burning schools and churches, breaking up African Americans’ meetings, and beating and lynching Blacks in order to reinstate the antebellum power structure.

Through her use of *Aftershock*, Ms. Newbury was also able to introduce the legal means used to deny African Americans their new freedoms. First, she taught how the black codes were created to keep African Americans at the very bottom of the social order. In addition, the film described the codes as “de facto slavery.” Ms. Newbury strengthened this impression by recounting specific ways in which the black codes restricted African Americans. Furthermore, she linked the black codes to sharecropping, giving a detailed explanation of how it worked in which she used two students to assist her class in envisioning the details of this pernicious institution. As Ms. Newbury concluded her sharecropping example, she asked, “What’s the problem?” A student replied, “You have nothing,” and Ms. Newbury confirmed that this was precisely African

Americans' difficulty under sharecropping. Moreover, she described how Southern states passed laws to limit African Americans' voting rights. Here, she detailed how the literacy test, poll tax, and grandfather clause were employed to curtail the Black franchise while safeguarding poor Whites' ability to cast their ballots. To bring the point home, Ms. Newbury explained how the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling enabled Southern states to institute Jim Crow laws. She set out the states' rights argument, describing how the doctrine of "separate but equal" permitted states to establish legal segregation, then added that the separate facilities were never equivalent.

In the course of her teaching on African Americans' new rights, the illicit methods used to restrict those rights as well as the legal means employed to limit those freedoms, Ms. Newbury communicated the idea that Reconstruction was a tragic time for African Americans. Furthermore, in concluding her unit, Ms. Newbury referenced the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s to make the case that Reconstruction was a terrible time for Blacks, saying that while he did make use of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the fact that Martin Luther King, Jr. had to march for rights indicated that Reconstruction had largely failed. Contrary to Mr. Hobart's view that Reconstruction signified the first steps towards African American rights, which came to fruition under the guidance of Martin Luther King, Jr., Ms. Newbury believed that if the rights granted to African Americans in the years after the Civil War had been fully enforced, there would not have been a need for the Civil Rights Movement.⁴⁵ This was

⁴⁵ I am not implying that Ms. Newbury did not have a positive view of the Civil Rights Movement and its achievements, but rather that the reason the movement was necessary was because the laws of the Jim Crow era circumscribed the gains made by African Americans during Reconstruction. Both Ms. Newbury

also why Reconstruction was a tragic period for Blacks as they were soon without the rights they had exercised for only a short time. Ms. Newbury added force to her teaching on Reconstruction through homework assignments from the *California Standards Enrichment Workbook*, lecture notes, and handouts used in and outside of class as well as teaching about Andrew Johnson's role in Reconstruction, the White League, and the contract system.

Although Ms. Newbury spent more time teaching Reconstruction than she had in previous years, it was still less time than called for in the district pacing guide. However, like Mr. Hobart, she incorporated exercises from the *District Assessment Workbook* in her unit instruction, although she did not use the activities to the same degree he did. Her inclusion of them allowed her students to analyze lithographs and political cartoons. These opportunities were inline with the type of instruction encourage by Ms. Martin, the assistant principal, in social studies department meetings because they gave students the opportunity to think critically about the historical content they were studying. Furthermore, this was the first time that she was able to include these exercises in her Reconstruction lessons. This represented a break from her predominant instruction focusing on factual historical content. As in Mr. Hobart's case, her use of the *District Assessment Workbook* was different from when she used it during her antebellum unit in that the activities were integrated into her lessons and not only used to prepare for the district periodic assessment.

and Mr. Gaines used part of their lessons on the Friday before the Martin Luther King, Birthday holiday to teach about King and his work on behalf of human rights.

In the vein of Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines viewed Reconstruction as being worse than slavery for African Americans because Blacks were less safe against potential White violence than they were under slavery where it was in slaveholders' best interest to protect them. However unlike Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, he spent less time on Reconstruction than he had in previous years as he spent a total of three class periods on the topic. In years past, he had spent approximately double that time. As described in chapter four, Mr. Gaines realized that he needed to make a concerted effort to catch up to the pacing guide's schedule so that he would have sufficient time to review for the California Standards Test. Furthermore, he decided as he was using direct instruction to guide his students through the writing of their culminating essays on the Civil War to include his Reconstruction lessons so that the essay was expanded to include historical content on the antebellum period, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. In the end, this enabled him to make up time. Furthermore, his students wanted his guidance throughout the essay assignment as they did not believe they could complete the assignment without Mr. Gaines's support.⁴⁶

Mr. Gaines: Reconstruction was worse than Slavery

Twice in formal interviews, Mr. Gaines stated that Reconstruction was worse than slavery because African Americans had few means to protect themselves from the Ku Klux Klan. During his Civil War unit, a student asked him, "What happened to the

⁴⁶ As described in the previous chapter, when Mr. Gaines told his pupils that he was going to have them work independently on the remainder of the essay, they collectively screamed, "No!" He responded, telling them that he would continue to assist them.

slaves after the war was over?" Mr. Gaines answered, "After the Civil War, what protected the slaves? The Freedmen's Bureau was able to protect the former slaves a little, but they had to worry about attacks from the Ku Klux Klan. Slaves had been protected before because they were considered property." He then told his pupils that they needed to learn about the Civil War before learning about what happened after the war; however, his view of Reconstruction was clear: under slavery, African Americans were looked after, not as an act of kindness, but, because it was in the best interest of the slaveholders; however, during Reconstruction, Blacks' daily existence was more difficult because of threats from the KKK and African Americans had few ways to defend themselves.

In order to demonstrate how life during Reconstruction was worse than slavery, Mr. Gaines focused on three topics of the period like those Ms. Newbury emphasized, although he taught the historical content somewhat differently. First he explained what the Ku Klux Klan was. Second, he demonstrated how White Southerners used legal means to limit African Americans' freedom, and, third, Mr. Gaines briefly taught about the rights gained in the postwar era; however, he stressed that African Americans could only use these rights, as he put it, "in theory." That is, he implied Blacks never really had these liberties.

First, Mr. Gaines taught about the Ku Klux Klan, its goals and methods for achieving those ends. He elicited from his students that the Klan was a group of White supremacists. Mr. Gaines made the point that the KKK was created as a result of changes, notably that African Americans were now part of society, which came about in

the aftermath of the Civil War. According to Mr. Gaines, the Klan was “a loose form of terrorists,” whose purpose was to keep African Americans at the bottom of society. This definition combined those of Mr. Hobart who referred to the KKK as “domestic terrorists,” and Ms. Newbury who discussed the Klan’s goal suppressing African American’s efforts to move up the social ladder. Later, he drew out from his students that “the KKK terrorized African Americans,” and “they scared the African Americans.” The Klan did this through the use of lynching which Mr. Gaines explained was “a special word; it’s when someone is killed without a trial.” He would explain that lynching was used “to show them their place. Africans Americans in the South weren’t supposed to look Whites in the eye. They had to say, ‘Yes, ma’am’ and ‘Yes, sir’.... It’s the Deep South culture. Blacks could get in trouble if they didn’t follow the rules of the South.” In other words, if African Americans acted as though they were no longer at the bottom of the social ladder, the KKK would remind them otherwise. This was what made Reconstruction so horrific for African Americans, according to Mr. Gaines. Under slavery, lower class Whites could not attack most African Americans without recourse because they would have to answer to the slaveholders; however, now that slavery was over, that protection was gone, and, there were instances where Southern elites encouraged lower class Whites to attack or threaten Blacks as a means of keeping African Americans at the bottom of the society (Perman, 1991).

On top of the unlawful means used to restrict African Americans, Mr. Gaines taught about the new laws designed to hold Blacks in the lowest social position. First and foremost among these were Jim Crow laws. He reminded his students of the lessons

from January at the time of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, when he said, “Remember we talked about Rosa Parks and how she wouldn’t move to the back of the bus? Those are Jim Crow laws. They were used to segregate people.” Mr. Gaines drew out from his pupils that these laws were created “after the Civil War.” He added that segregation laws also affected schools, recounting the case of Linda Brown which overturned segregation in schools. Moreover, he told his students that Mexican Americans in Southern California “actually went to court before the *Brown* case to get segregation laws overturned.” Mr. Gaines also explained the “separate but equal” rationale behind segregation as he told his students, “The Supreme Court said that the students could go to separate schools as long as they were the same quality, but really the quality of the school and the equipment in the African American schools were poorer.” By forcing Blacks to use facilities of lesser quality, Whites could maintain their position above African Americans in the social order.

Adding to the legal difficulties African Americans faced, Mr. Gaines explained how sharecropping and the black codes impeded Blacks’ social and economic progress. To give students an overview of sharecropping, Mr. Gaines made an analogy to the coyote, a smuggler of illegal immigrants into the United States, and how the people he brings to America often have to pay him after they cross the border. Furthermore, he explained how the difficulties of this arrangement often leave those new immigrants with nothing. Here, Mr. Gaines’s instruction was similar to Mr. Hobart’s use of SDAIE strategies in that he was drawing on his students’ prior knowledge. Like Ms. Newbury, he brought out from his students how this was akin to slavery as he said, “See, so sharecropping and

slavery is the same thing.” To clarify this concept further, Mr. Gaines told his students that under sharecropping African Americans “always ended up owing money to the plantation owner,” and that was the reason it was like slavery. Moreover, after eliciting from his students that the black codes were an effect of the Civil War that limited the Freedmen’s rights, Mr. Gaines explained that the codes were a form of oppression.

Through the use of legal and illegal measures, Whites subjugated African Americans. Reflective of his view that African Americans only had new rights “in theory,” Mr. Gaines did not teach much about these, other than to recount the purpose of each new amendment. He drew out from his students that the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. Through the use of hints, Mr. Gaines elicited that the Fourteenth Amendment granted African Americans citizenship and with this came the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In addition, Mr. Gaines brought out that the Fifteenth Amendment gave African Americans the right to vote. Finally, he mentioned how the poll tax, literacy test, and grandfather clause were used to stop Black male suffrage. He reviewed the three amendments twice before concluding the unit.

With his lessons focused on the illegal and legal methods used to restrict African Americans’ rights, and his brief instruction on Blacks’ new rights, Mr. Gaines communicated that, for African Americans, Reconstruction was worse than slavery. Although not done in as direct a manner as Ms. Newbury, through his twice reminding students of his lessons about the Civil Rights Movement in January, Mr. Gaines conveyed the irony that Reconstruction was more difficult for African Americans than

slavery, in part, because the rights gained during the era could not be fully exercised until the gains of the 1950s and '60s.

Given the limited time available, Mr. Gaines was still able to teach much of the same historical content as Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury; however, he was not able to review the information in the same way as the other two teachers. In addition, he was not able to provide the opportunities he had in previous units for student input. For instance, during the antebellum era and Civil War units, Mr. Gaines gave students the chance to work in groups reviewing the historical content as they completed the comprehensive questions assignments for each unit, but during the Reconstruction unit, Mr. Gaines completed the same activity through direct instruction because, as he explained, "I wanted to make sure we went over all of the questions. If we had done it the other way [with students working independently], it would take longer to explain it and then have them [his pupils] do it." Mr. Gaines did as much as he could to teach the historical content as quickly as possible. Unlike Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines did not integrate activities from the *District Assessment Workbook*. In his unit on the antebellum era, Mr. Gaines had added the workbook to his lessons to a greater degree and more seamlessly than either Mr. Hobart or Ms. Newbury; however, during this unit, he was so harried to move through the historical content that he could not incorporate the exercises into his lessons. In teaching about Reconstruction, Mr. Gaines had to balance two goals: first, imparting the historical content, and, second, catching up to the district pacing guide so that he would have ample time to review for the content standards test (Grant, 1996).

To this point, I described Mr. Hobart's, Ms. Newbury's, and Mr. Gaines's teaching about the Reconstruction and provided limited analysis of the historical content and the instructional methods used. In the section which follows, I extend my exploration to reflect on the significance and meaning of the historical content taught by the three teachers. Furthermore, I contemplate how the content they taught and instructional approaches they employed may have impacted their students.

Discussion

In the chapter, thus far, I described the Reconstruction historical content taught by Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines. Additionally, I explained how their historical perspectives, their beliefs about instruction, and the district's pacing guide shaped the historical information they taught. On occasion, I commented on aspects of the historical knowledge taught in the three classrooms. In this section, I discuss further the importance of the Reconstruction content of the three teachers. In order to examine the meaning of the post-Civil War subject matter taught, two aspects of that historical information must be considered. First, what was the implication of the historical content that was taught? In other words, what messages did Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines imbue through the historical material they chose to teach? Second, what notions of history were shared with the students through the historical content that was taught?

Historical content taught and its meaning

Historians and history educators suggested five major understandings students should come away with after studying the Civil War era. One of these pertains to

Reconstruction. In order to avoid students thinking that the abolition of slavery meant the end of oppression for African Americans (Wills, 1996), Green (1991) recommended that students analyze the historiography of Reconstruction. By investigating the historiography of Reconstruction as well as the primary sources on which historical interpretations were based, students could learn that the legal end of slavery did not eliminate racism in the United States (Foner, 1989, 2003, 2005). Additionally, students could see how historians' partiality influenced their interpretation of the post-Civil War era (Blight, 2001, 2002). This type of examination potentially could enable students to reflect on how their own biases shape their interpretation of modern society.

Related to this, Briley (2008) made the point that while the Civil Rights Movement "forced a reconsideration of slavery's influence upon the United States," the revisionist interpretation of Reconstruction in which a biracial alliance of politicians and activists sought to bring about progressive social change in the South, "while opposed by terrorist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, has not resonated as well in the popular mind" (p. 453). Along the lines of Green's recommendations, Briley suggested that teachers have students examine how Reconstruction is portrayed in the film, *Gone with the Wind*. Similarly, Loewen (2010), in his latest work, advocated that students use multiple textbooks along with segments of the movie to consider how historical interpretations of Reconstruction have changed over time.

Although Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, nor Mr. Gaines followed these suggestions as far as investigating the historiography of Reconstruction, both Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury spent more time examining primary sources in the form of lithographs and political

cartoons than they had in either of their previous units. Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury's incorporation of these materials was not in the vein that Green (1991) advocated in that the two teachers focused strictly on the meaning of the documents and did not consider them within their broader historical context. Furthermore, all three teachers, within the scope of their teaching, demonstrated that Reconstruction was a complex era in which there were both positive and negative outcomes for historical actors. Perhaps because of the fact that Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury were able to spend more time on this unit than they had in the past, they were able to show that Reconstruction, in the words of Ms. Newbury, featured both "good and bad history," while still teaching the unit within the scope of their own historical perspectives. Although Mr. Gaines used less instructional time to teach Reconstruction, he, too, was able to demonstrate how Reconstruction was a complicated period.

Mr. Hobart showed Reconstruction's complexity through his decisions regarding content and instructional methods. First, he had his students consider the issues that the country faced after Appomattox when he had his students draw up proposals for addressing those concerns such as "should the government help former slaves, and if so, how?" By having his pupils design and report their solutions, he enabled them to develop historical empathy as they came to understand some sense of the difficulties government leaders faced in responding to these issues (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Second, he told his students as they examined lithographs in the *District Assessment Workbook* to look for the positive and negative aspects of the post-Civil War period depicted within the illustrations. Through the use of these primary source documents, Mr. Hobart

demonstrated that Reconstruction was viewed as a difficult time for people of the period. Although K-12 history books often simplify the past (Loewen, 1995), Mr. Hobart addressed this problem by revealing what some historical participants, namely, political cartoonists, thought about Reconstruction events. Third, Mr. Hobart had his students read about the new laws and amendments which established rights for African Americans as well as reading about the federal government's efforts to protect those rights. Fourth, he showed the downside of Reconstruction by teaching how the Ku Klux Klan and Southern state laws were used to undermine these new federal laws. Through his historical perspective, Mr. Hobart viewed African Americans' new rights won during Reconstruction as being a steppingstone towards the gains in human rights that came during the Civil Rights Movement. Interestingly, his students echoed this sentiment by a slight majority when he asked them if they viewed Reconstruction as a more beneficial or harmful period in American history. Like the students in Grant's (2003) research, Mr. Hobart's pupils expressed historical views similar to his.

Similarly to Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury demonstrated Reconstruction's many difficulties. She did this, first, by eliciting from her students how the nation had to rebuild and decide how to assist the former slaves. Building on her students' comments, she added that the federal government needed to decide whether Reconstruction would be used to punish the South or reunification should be less painful. The question of the motives underlying Reconstruction policy enabled Ms. Newbury to show that the period was more complicated than often portrayed in textbooks (Loewen, 1995). Second, again, like Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury used the Reconstruction era political cartoons and

lithographs in the *District Assessment Workbook* to show Reconstruction's benefits and costs for African Americans. Her students examined the illustrations to analyze the positive and negative features of the post-Civil War era. Finally, Ms. Newbury's screening of segments from *Aftershock: beyond the Civil War* made evident that while the majority of Whites opposed African American efforts in the areas of education, economic prosperity, and politics, there was a minority that supported the Blacks' cause (Loewen, 1995). Furthermore, the film excerpts demonstrated the brutality directed at African Americans throughout much of the period. Although Ms. Newbury explained the new rights African Americans gained and reinforced this through her homework assignments, reflective of her historical view that Reconstruction was a tragic period for African Americans, the majority of her instruction concentrated on its violent aspects. Echoing this and, again, like Grant's (2003) findings, her students listed more of Reconstruction's negative characteristics than positive ones when she reviewed with her class before their unit test.

Similar to Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines's teaching on Reconstruction revealed some of the complexity of the era. Given the limited time he had available for instruction, one might expect his lessons to be simplified, and, while his instruction provided less depth than that of the other two teachers, he explained how Reconstruction contained much suffering for African Americans. In perhaps his most important lesson, Mr. Gaines demonstrated how White elites used their resources to subjugate African Americans as he went through a lengthy example to illustrate the workings of sharecropping. In this instance, he showed that violence was not the only means used to

keep Blacks near the bottom of society. As Mr. Gaines revealed, upper class Whites used economic means to keep Blacks in a position akin to slavery. If he had had more time, he might have raised the issue of land redistribution that was stirred up with Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15 (Foner, 1989) under which African Americans were to be given land, and asked his students, like Mr. Hobart did, how the government should help the ex-slaves. Additionally, doing this would have allowed Mr. Gaines the opportunity to ask about the quality of African American freedom. That is, now that they were no longer enslaved but had limited resources, how were Blacks still constrained? Similarly to Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury whose viewpoint shaped their instruction, Mr. Gaines, with his historical perspective that Reconstruction was worse than slavery, spent the majority of his instructional time highlighting the difficulties African Americans dealt with during the post-Civil War era.

However, Mr. Gaines differed from the other two teachers in his depiction of the impact of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments in that he viewed these as totally ineffective as far as granting new freedoms to African Americans. In his downplaying of these changes to the Constitution, Mr. Gaines differed with historians such as Richard Nelson Current (1987) who believed that two factors, White supremacy and granting Blacks suffrage rights, resulted in violence against African Americans. Mr. Gaines saw White dominance as the sole driving force behind Reconstruction bloodshed; therefore, the attempt to extend suffrage to Blacks was foolhardy since legislation alone could not change the hearts of Southern Whites. Mr. Gaines's claim regarding Black voting was akin to Goldfield's (2011) argument that "there may have been other means to achieve

[abolition]” (Kelley, 2011, p. L4) without the Civil War’s death and destruction as well as Reconstruction’s continued animosity.⁴⁷ In both of these instances, the levels of violence led both historian and teacher to consider gradual implementations of change as a means of avoiding violence. As in the case of Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury’s pupils and given the emphasis of his instruction, Mr. Gaines’s students were more pessimistic than optimistic in recalling Reconstruction’s characteristics during his closing activity (Grant, 2003).

To a greater degree than in any of their earlier instructional units, the three teachers presented a more complicated historical account of Reconstruction than the narrative taught in their two previous units. With the nation coming out of the greatest crisis it had known (McPherson, 1989) one would expect the period which followed to be difficult. Related to this, in his research on U. S. history textbooks, Loewen (1995) found that the Reconstruction historical content in the books he examined reflected the revisionist historians who rose to prominence beginning in the 1960s. Drawing on African American historical sources as well as those of so-called carpetbaggers and scalawags, revisionist historians such as Kenneth M. Stampp (1965) demonstrated that Reconstruction was not the great tragedy for Whites as depicted by historians of the Dunning school, but, rather, a tragic era for most Blacks who lost the political, educational, and, even, economic gains they made at the height of the period (Foner, 1989; Novick, 1988). Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines’s lessons reflected this

⁴⁷ Goldfield suggested that a form of compensated emancipation offered a means to avoid the war’s immense loss of life; however, as Delbanco (2011) pointed out, any compensated emancipation program required slaveholders willing to sell. Goldfield admitted that all efforts at compensated emancipation failed even in Delaware where slavery was a small part of the economy because slaveholders had no interest in ending slavery.

interpretation of the period, although Mr. Hobart's perspective fit within a American history narrative of progress in which each historical era represented a step forward towards greater freedom for all (Barton & Levstik, 1998, 2004). He still demonstrated the hardships African Americans had to negotiate during this period and into the era of Jim Crow.

However, as with the three teachers in my study, Loewen (1995) found that while the history textbooks he examined were reflective of more recent scholarship, the books tended to focus on the actions of political figures, leaving African Americans, Native Americans, women, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and working class European Americans with limited roles in the narrative, often in the position of reacting to the actions of government officials. By and large, this is how Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines framed their Reconstruction lessons. African Americans were granted new rights under the amendments passed following the Civil War, and they were able to use these rights for a limited time. Although in Mr. Gaines's view, Blacks never really had the chance to exercise their newly won liberties. However, in the way the three teachers taught, students had little or no exposure to historical content that showed how African Americans advocated for the right to vote, how they called on the government to protect them from the Ku Klux Klan, and how they persevered in learning how to read and write (Foner, 1989). This sort of instruction denied African American historical figures agency as participants on the same stage as political leaders. Furthermore, I do not think it is farfetched to argue that teaching in this manner, although not intentionally racist or disparaging of African Americans, could lead students to conclude that Blacks were

incapable of acting on their own behalf and could only improve their social position when White leaders believed it was best to do so.

Similarly, as Loewen's (1995) investigation of textbooks showed, within the three teachers' Reconstruction lessons, the government, not the people elected to positions of power, was depicted as the only body that could act to improve post-Civil War conditions, primarily through the passage of new laws. However, in Mr. Gaines's unit, the government could only act "in theory." Historical figures reacting on their own accord were missing from the historical content taught. Instead, the government decided to pass new laws and new amendments because it sensed there was a need. However, the notion that people, albeit politicians or citizen-advocates, actually came up with the ideas which were the roots of this new legislation was largely absent in the three teachers' lessons. For example, while Mr. Hobart had his students read excerpts from the three Civil War amendments, he had students interpret the meaning of the words within them, but he did not have his students consider why elected officials decided there was a need for the amendments or laws, nor did he have his students reflect on why citizens pressured the government for this legislation (Foner, 1989). Therefore, even the elected officials who created new legislation to address the issues of Reconstruction were often absent from the historical content taught in these instructional units.

Related to this, throughout Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines's teaching during their respective Reconstruction units, African Americans were nearly always depicted as victims of KKK-led violence or suffering due to Jim Crow laws. I am not trying to downplay the dangers of the Klan nor the wounds of segregation; however,

given the complexity of Reconstruction, as portrayed by the teachers, they could have added to this by discussing how Blacks continued to struggle against the oppression they still faced after slavery was abolished. Doing so would have given the students a more complicated picture of the difficulties African Americans endured as well as a richer understanding of Black achievement. For instance, very briefly in one of his last lessons on Reconstruction, Mr. Hobart elicited from a student the increase in the number of Black owned businesses from 1865 through the early 1900s, and in the same lesson, a student mentioned gains in African American literacy during the same period (Teacher Curriculum Institute, 2002). In this example students could see that African Americans did not accept their condition but made strides to improve their situations whenever possible (Foner, 1989). Ms. Newbury could have made this point as well because she also had access to these materials. This would have made her interpretation of Reconstruction more complex and heightened the sense of Reconstruction as a tragic period for African Americans. By showing that Blacks had made gains educationally and economically but that those improvements were not as great as they could have been, Ms. Newbury would have demonstrated all the more thoroughly the impact of Jim Crow laws and KKK violence in limiting African American progress.

Teaching history absent of historical actors

Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines were elaborators, which was closely related to Grant (2003) and Evans's (1988, 1989, 1990, 1994) conception of the history teacher as storyteller. While the storyteller lectured on the historical content of a lesson, the three teachers explained in greater detail and added to the information contained in

the textbook, a handout, or other source throughout their Reconstruction units.

Therefore, there was a little more student involvement in an elaborator's lesson in comparison to a storyteller's because the students usually had to read some material before the teacher would expand on it or ask recitation questions. Although the pressure to keep up with the district's pacing guide did not limit the teachers in terms of the historical content they taught, it continued to constrain their instructional practices.

While Mr. Hobart opened up his instruction to a degree by providing students the opportunity to decide how to explain the significance in their "foldables" of the various historical events and laws they studied, his teaching remained focused on factual historical content. Similarly, although she spent almost twice as much instructional time on Reconstruction as in previous years, Ms. Newbury continued to teach with the same approach as she had in both her antebellum and Civil War units. As discussed in the previous chapter, Mr. Gaines employed an instructional approach like those of Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury in an effort to catch up with the pacing guide. While this had the benefit of allowing him to meet this goal, Mr. Gaines so thoroughly controlled the instructional process that even during his comprehensive questions activity that he used to review historical content at the end of every unit, he guided his students through this exercise in order to save time. Furthermore, although Ms. Newbury employed *Aftershock: beyond the Civil War*, a film that featured scenes showing how African Americans in the South and their White allies organized campaigns to secure new rights, she did not highlight these segments, but, instead, chose to emphasize Klan violence and African American victimization. In the same way, although Mr. Hobart had his students

reflect on how they would address the issues of Reconstruction in his unit's opening activity, once this part of the unit was completed, he continued to emphasize factual historical content such as when he emphasized all of the provisions contained in the Reconstruction Acts of 1867.

However, as in their Civil War units, while the three teachers taught similarly as far as the instructional styles they used, the historical content they called attention to in their lessons was different. Mr. Hobart, given his historical perspective, emphasized the federal government's attempts to protect African American rights. With her historical viewpoint of the era, Ms. Newbury's lessons stressed state and local laws used to restrict Black rights. Mr. Gaines, taking a different approach, spent the least time teaching about new African American rights, choosing, instead, to emphasize the oppression of Reconstruction and Jim Crow. This finding is consistent with Grant's (2001) research on teaching where he concluded that testing was "an uncertain lever" as far as influencing the historical content taught and the instructional methods used by teachers (p. 398). However, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines differed from the teachers in Grant's research in the similarity of their instructional methods. As in their Civil War units, this speaks to the influence of the pacing guide. While the teachers in Grant's study were under the constraints of state content standards and state testing, yet, taught lessons that emphasized different historical content and employed different instructional methods, the three teachers at Sunny Lake Middle School had to consider state content standards, state testing, and the district pacing guide as they made decisions regarding the historical content taught and the instructional approaches employed. The influence of the

pacing guide, with its dictates to cover material at a rate deemed sufficient to allow the teacher to teach all of the content standards that might be tested by the state, reinforced Ms. Newbury's choice to use direct instruction, and even in Mr. Hobart's case in which he spent the called for two weeks on Reconstruction, the pacing guide seemed to limit his willingness to open up his instruction to allow for greater student participation. Although students had more opportunity to participate and engage the historical content to a greater extent than in either of his prior units, Mr. Hobart continued to use teacher-centered instruction anchored by the textbook's historical content. In the case of Mr. Gaines, his transition to teacher centered instruction, which took place as he was teaching his Civil War unit, was in response to his sense that he was running out of time to teach the Civil War and Reconstruction standards as deemed by the time limits set forth in the pacing guide before reviewing for the content standards test. His decision to guide his students through the completion of his unit closing comprehensive questions exercise, an activity they had always carried out independently in the past, was further evidence of the pressure he felt to finish his Reconstruction unit as quickly as possible.

Additionally, given that the historical content taught in their Reconstruction units depicted historical actors largely absent of agency, the teachers' emphasis on factual historical content fit within this frame. In other words, as Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines continued to stress historical facts it made sense to the three teachers not to teach in a manner that would allow their students a means to reflect on the choices facing the historical actors of the Reconstruction era. Furthermore, as in their antebellum period and Civil War units, the concentration on factual historical content often through

recitation continued to send a message to students that the study of history consisted predominantly of the memorization of facts (Grant, 2003). As in Grant's work, it was likely that the students of Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines saw history as a passive subject in which there is nothing to think about because everything you learn already happened. Similarly to their antebellum period and Civil War units, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines's curricular and instructional decisions were influenced by their historical perspectives, their beliefs about instruction, and the district pacing guide and the need to balance the competing demands of these features (Grant, 1996).

In the concluding chapter of my study, I consider the significance of my findings as to curriculum and instruction. Additionally, I discuss the messages conveyed through the teaching of Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines. Finally, I suggest areas for future research on the teaching of the Civil War era.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

Over the course of the previous three chapters, I have described the histories of the Civil War era taught by Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines, showing how their historical perspectives, their beliefs about instruction, and the pacing guide influenced their teaching. In addition, I examined points in their teaching where their practice differed because of changes in context. For instance, I investigated how Mr. Gaines adopted a more teacher-centered approach to lessons, determining that his need to catch up to the pacing guide led him to teach in a manner that, he believed, would allow him to move through the content standards at a faster rate. Seemingly in contrast, he had his students write a culminating essay although it required more instructional time; however, the task enabled him to illustrate, to an extent, the complexity of the Civil War period, a concept important to his historical perspective. Furthermore, this examination demonstrated how Mr. Gaines had to balance competing demands as he taught about the Civil War (Grant, 1996). In addition, I explored lessons in Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury's practice in which they allowed for student participation that went beyond recitation such as during Mr. Hobart's Reconstruction unit and in Ms. Newbury's class on William Lloyd Garrison and civil disobedience.

In this chapter, I situate the histories taught by Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury and Mr. Gaines within the historiography of the Civil War era as well as examine how their historical content and instruction compares with the recommendations of history educators. However, before exploring their Civil War histories as to the meaning of the

information taught, I consider similarities in the character of the historical content and instructional approaches these teachers employed. I examine these teachers' use of direct instruction. Related to this, I explore the teachers' emphasis on factual history and the corresponding limited agency of historical actors within the historical content they taught. This resulted in a narrative history in which events portrayed seemed to follow inevitably one after the other.

What Counts as History?

As described in the previous three chapters, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught about a variety of events, people, and legislation of the Civil War era. In response to a question about instructional goals, Mr. Hobart stated, "I like to show how the past touches the present. Like, why do we have the things we have today?" However, as I demonstrated in examining the historical content he taught, Mr. Hobart tended to draw on examples from the present to enlighten his students' conception of the past such as when he discussed the election of 1992 to elucidate the election of 1860. Answering the same question, Ms. Newbury said, "Race, I think talking about race is important, talking about discrimination." She continued, "I talk about bad history. Every country has its bad history and its good history, and that's what makes you a country, and, you know, what you get from this is to learn from the bad things and not repeat them." Ms. Newbury's words echoed George Santayana's "famous rationale for history—that those who fail to learn the lessons of the past are condemned to repeat them" (VanSledright, 1997, p. 530). When I asked Mr. Gaines about goals for his

students, he responded, “You have to be self determined, and so trying to give that message to them, and maybe, hopefully, they would understand that there’s something much more out there for them if they just apply themselves to it.” He added that by teaching students about “the fight, the struggle” of earlier generations, his students might develop an appreciation for what they have and for the efforts of the people who came before them. These teachers had very different goals as to what they wanted their students to take away from their study of American history.

Given these differences between Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines, it would seem reasonable to expect to find differences in the historical content taught. This was the case, but it might also be reasonable to expect to find differences in the history instruction across these three teachers’ practices. That is, with their differences in student goals would it be sensible to find differences in the three teachers’ instructional practice?

With few exceptions, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught in the same manner—direct instruction—during the bulk of the lessons I observed. By direct instruction, I mean that the teachers led lessons in which they sought to communicate historical content to their students while speaking to their students or through recitation. The students’ role was to absorb this information and, on occasion, to respond with the correct factual information to answer the teacher’s question. There were instances when the teachers asked their students opinion questions such as what they thought of the *Dred Scott* decision (Mr. Hobart), or what they would have done if they were Prudence Crandall and they were trying to run an integrated school in antebellum Massachusetts (Ms. Newbury), or how they would have responded to the fugitive slave act (Mr. Gaines).

But these were few and far between. Although the teachers drew their content from different resources—the textbook (Mr. Hobart), packets of handouts and films (Ms. Newbury), and the internet, unit outlines, and handouts (Mr. Gaines)—their approach to teaching was more alike than different. Similarly, they viewed the same kind of historical content—factual information—as the most important feature in learning history. Learning history was not to be confused with “doing history” (Levstik & Barton, 2005; VanSledright, 2002). Doing history refers to the practices historians use when they are examining evidence to develop an interpretation of a past event. For instance, analyzing a speech of Frederick Douglass advocating for Black soldiers to serve in the Union cause and comparing it with other documents of the time such as Lincoln’s final version of the Emancipation Proclamation would be useful in assessing Douglass’s influence on the President’s thinking.⁴⁸ Additionally, such an exercise might enable students to consider, as Lincoln did, the issue of African American rights following the war’s conclusion

Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines rarely had their students undertake this kind of activity, and if they did, it was only for brief periods within a lesson. In Mr. Gaines’s class, he instructed students to incorporate Frederick Douglass and John Brown quotations found in the *District Assessment Workbook* in a comparative essay on the two abolitionist figures. Similarly, Mr. Hobart’s students read brief excerpts from the three Civil War amendments and interpreted them. Rather than examine these instances, I focus on the one case where the three teachers used the same document excerpt.

⁴⁸ Although not included in the preliminary draft, the final version of the proclamation stated that African Americans could serve in the Union forces.

In order to prepare their students for a section in one of the district's periodic assessments, the three teachers had students read quotations from Frederick Douglass, one of which was from his speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" The excerpt allowed students to "hear" a politicized African American voice which Wills (1996) argued could be a valuable addition to the curriculum of the Civil War era because it "has the potential to broaden the focus of the history students learn and provide themes, concepts, and issues that provide more easily realized connections between the past and the present" (p. 381). In analyzing the speech students could move beyond an understanding of slavery's immorality to one where they investigate how slavery's existence called into question the United States' commitment to liberty for all and, furthermore, Douglass's words could be useful in exploring issues of freedom in the present.

Before examining how the excerpt was used by the three teachers, let me present it as printed in the *District Assessment Workbook*:

...Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? ...The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice are not enjoyed in common. This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. ...the Constitution and the Bible which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery—the great sin and shame of America (*District Assessment Workbook*, 2008, p. 58).

Here, Douglass makes the point that the rights enjoyed by Whites are not extended to African Americans. Additionally, he points out that the Constitution, which he viewed as an anti-slavery document, contrary to the ruling in the *Dred Scott* case, and the Bible are

ignored so that slavery can exist. Finally, he pledges to question slavery's existence as forcefully as he can. How was the excerpt incorporated into each teacher's lesson?

After reviewing the women's rights movement and Douglass's background, Mr. Hobart told his students to read the excerpt above, and he asked "What do you think it means?" A student replied, "Freedom should belong to everyone." Mr. Hobart said, "Yes and," as he said and wrote on the overhead transparency, "African Americans do not enjoy the rights found in the Declaration of Independence," which students wrote in their *District Assessment Workbooks* and then he asked, "Which two groups were fighting for rights at this time?" A student answered, "Women and slaves." Mr. Hobart acknowledged this response and then asked how the women's rights and abolition movements were similar. Thus, the excerpt from Douglass's speech was taken up for about two minutes. The fact that this quotation was part of the review for the periodic assessment, and that Mr. Hobart knew that there was a short constructed response question on the test about this quote or a John Brown quote may have influenced how he included the passage in his lesson, but Douglass's ideas, expressed in the selection, were never heard again, and this was not an anomaly.

In Ms. Newbury's lesson, the talk surrounding the Douglass excerpt was much the same. After students read the quotation, Ms. Newbury asked, "What happened on the Fourth of July?" A student replied, "Freedom." Acknowledging the response, Ms. Newbury said, "Freedom from the British, independence for the colonies. Who is Douglass talking to?" Jorge, another student, answered, "Whites." Ms. Newbury followed up, asking, "What's he saying?" Jorge, again, responded, "Blacks don't

celebrate on the Fourth of July.” Acknowledging this, Ms. Newbury said, “Yes because they have nothing to celebrate,” then she directed her students to a John Brown passage. As in Mr. Hobart’s lesson, the discussion surrounding the Douglass extract was completed in two minutes or so. Similarly, I do not want to discount the fact that Ms. Newbury was part of a review lesson, and she had additional historical content she needed to go over before the end of the class period. However, this passage could have been incorporated into other lessons to raise important issues. For example, when Ms. Newbury showed *Glory* with its scene featuring Frederick Douglass, she could have asked her students how the recruitment of African Americans might influence Blacks gaining new rights.

Mr. Gaines’s use of the Douglass piece was somewhat different from the other two teachers in that he began his lesson by asking his students to respond to the question in the title, “What to the slave is the Fourth of July?”⁴⁹ In their initial responses the students ignored the word “slave,” and spoke of hot dogs and fireworks. Then Mr. Gaines wrote the word “slave” on the board and asked, “In the 1800s what could a slave do?” Richard, a student, answered, “Nothing.” Another said, “Work all day.” Mr. Gaines followed this up, asking, “So, what would the Fourth of July be like for slaves?” Roxanna replied, “It would be a regular day.” Mr. Gaines asked “Why would it be a regular day?” Guillermo stated, “Because slaves have no rights,” and another student added, “They have to work.” Summing up, Raffa explained, “He [Douglass] used the Declaration of Independence to support his actions [opposing slavery].” This was the extent of the dialogue before Mr.

⁴⁹ When Mr. Gaines suggested the students incorporate the Douglass and Brown quotations into their essays he did not use instructional time to discuss the meanings of any of the passages.

Gaines, like Ms. Newbury, went on to a John Brown quote. As with Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury, Mr. Gaines's use of the passage was likely influenced by the fact that he had to review additional material in order to prepare the students for the assessment; however, the Douglass excerpt was never spoken of again, except very briefly after the District Periodic Assessment when Mr. Gaines reminded his students how they should have answered the short constructed response question that featured the Douglass quote. While it is possible that Mr. Gaines drew on the Douglass passage when he showed *Glory* after the state content standards examination, I do not think it likely because I had not observed him do anything like that during the time I was present.⁵⁰

Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines may have used the excerpt from Douglass's speech in the way they did because of the possibility that it would appear on the District Periodic Assessment. In other words, knowing that it might be referenced as part of a test item, the teachers thought that they only needed to talk about the meaning of the quotation briefly and that would be sufficient to prepare their students for the assessment. On the other hand, because the teachers knew that the Douglass selection could be on the district test, they felt obligated to spend some time on it. Grant (2001) has argued that testing is an uncertain lever. That is, the inclusion of a testing topic does not ensure that it will be taught in a manner that engages students. It only ensures that the matter will be taught in some fashion. Perhaps if the three teachers had more training in how to incorporate primary source materials into their lessons, they might employ

⁵⁰ Mr. Gaines returned to the topic of the Civil War after the history-social studies state examination. During this time, his class watched *Glory*, and he told me he discussed the Civil War soldiers' experience. I was not present for this but learned of it from his course website and from talking with him after state testing.

them in ways that would challenge their students to think more deeply about the documents and their meaning. An additional factor that may have influenced how the teachers utilized the documents might have been that they knew that the test did not count in terms of being a measurement of their abilities as teachers or their students' performance. The three teachers taught about the Douglass passage in the same manner they taught about most topics—a quick explanation or summation of the matter, perhaps a recitation question or two—then they moved on to the next part of the lesson.

What I typically observed was an emphasis on historical facts. While this was not always apparent in the initial presentation of historical content embedded in each lesson's narrative—whether through the textbook, handout, outline, or teacher lecture—the subject under discussion ended up being reduced to a few bits of information in further iterations. Again, Frederick Douglass serves as a case in point. Although Ms. Newbury had her class read a summary of Douglass's pre-war activities, including his travels to England, and Mr. Gaines's students read a one page biography of Douglass that spoke of his advocating women's rights, in their teaching as well as in Mr. Hobart's lessons, Douglass's life was reduced to a few facts. He had been a slave. He escaped from slavery. He was an abolitionist speaker. He published *The North Star*, an abolitionist newspaper. To this list, Ms. Newbury, during her screening of *Glory*, added that Douglass recruited African Americans to serve in the Union Army.

There were also cases in which the initial teaching of historical content was strictly factual. For example, in teaching about the Compromise of 1850, the three teachers reduced the agreement to two items. California was admitted to the Union as a free state,

giving the North something it wanted, and a stricter fugitive slave law was written which Southerners supported. What arguments were made favoring the adoption of this compromise? What were the arguments against it? Students were told that California wanted to join the Union as a free state, and Southern senators and representatives had to get some concessions in the legislation to win their support. Loewen (1995) made the case that textbooks consist of historical content largely devoid of ideas. Much of the instruction I observed substantiated his claim as in this case where the three teachers and their students spent little time discussing the rationale for the compromise. Occasionally I saw historical errors on the part of the teachers such as the mispronunciation of a name or the misidentification of a landmark in reference to a battle. This was understandable since the teachers may not have been as familiar with aspects of the Civil War era as professional historians. However, the teaching about the Compromise of 1850 was most surprising because in all three teachers' lessons three components of the agreement were completely absent from their instruction.⁵¹ In this case not only was the content condensed to historical facts, but the facts were condensed still further. The Compromise of 1850 which featured five elements was reduced to two.

Similarly, Mr. Gaines's efforts at teaching historical content through multiple perspectives became bogged down in facts. He wanted his students to learn about historical events from more than one point of view, so that he could show the period in all its complexity. In this way, "[t]he Civil War becomes the story of black Americans, of

⁵¹ *Creating America*, the textbook, discussed four parts of the compromise skipping the plank which involved payment to Texas for giving up its claim to land that eventually became part of New Mexico and Colorado; however, Mr. Hobart did not have his students read this section.

white Americans, of Southern and Union supporters, of foot soldiers and officers, of women on the home front and the battle front” (Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 1997/2000, p. 195-196). Levstik and Barton (2005) suggest the use of different primary sources or even historical fiction to assist students in understanding historical events from multiple points of view. Along with recognizing the complexity of the past, the use of a multiple perspective approach can foster the development of historical empathy. Historical empathy “involves imagining the thoughts and feelings of other people from their own perspectives” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 206). It is based on the understanding that historical actors during the Civil War era did not share the same point of view but, rather, had different beliefs and understandings of the events of the period as they unfolded. Although this may seem like common sense, students often have difficulty grasping this concept (Lipscomb, 2002), and scholars have “concluded that historical empathy is a mysterious achievement” (Ashby & Lee, 1987, as cited in VanSledright, 2002, p. 147).

Mr. Gaines’s attempts at teaching history through multiple perspectives centered on factual content about various historical figures as this was the format of most of the lessons I observed. When he taught about different abolitionists and their views on how to end slavery, he gave each student two handouts. The first featured biographies of six abolitionists, each a paragraph in length. The second consisted of three or four bullet points, consisting of a fact, for each of the six abolitionists.⁵² Using these materials the students, working in groups, were each assigned one of the abolitionists. Each student

⁵² Information on Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Weld, John Quincy Adams, and Harriet Tubman appeared on both handouts. In addition to these five, the first handout included a paragraph about John Brown. The second handout featured bullet points on Benjamin Franklin along with the five abolitionists common to both.

then summarized their abolitionists' main ideas for ending slavery and how they spread their message. For example, William Lloyd Garrison "started the abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*." He "spoke forcefully for the immediate release of slaves," and he "wanted immediate abolition of slaves with no payment for slave owners." All three student answers were direct quotes from one of the handouts. Similarly, Theodore Weld "wrote abolition pamphlets." He "was a member of the Anti-Slavery Society, and he "viewed slavery as a sin." In the succeeding lesson, Mr. Gaines instructed the students to continue with their abolitionist summaries and answer two questions regarding their subject: "How do you think they tried to abolish slavery?" and "What evidence do you see that supports your thinking?" Answers to the first question were the same as in the previous lesson, and in responses to the second question, students read information verbatim from either of the handouts. Therefore, the evidence cited in replying to the second question repeated the responses to the first question. For example, a student said that he knew Garrison wanted the immediate abolition of slavery because "he called for the immediate freeing of all slaves" (handout, 03/03/09). In explaining such student responses, VanSledright (2002) states, "School is no doubt an influential factor. The importance placed on literal comprehension of text during emergent reading activities cultivates a belief that the meaning is in the text, that the text contains what really is" (p. 145). He also cites the use of tests that emphasize factual recall as contributing to this phenomenon. In the case of Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines, their reliance on recall questions during recitation placed added weight on students' ability to recognize and remember historical facts and impacted their pupils' conception of history as a fact-

based narrative. Although Mr. Gaines's students recognized that John Brown advocated the use of violence to end slavery and John Quincy Adams introduced an amendment in Congress to abolish slavery, that is, different abolitionists tried different approaches to end slavery, students did not understand why Brown and Adams supported different methods for eliminating slavery. Additionally, students could not grasp how these competing ideas for ending slavery were deliberated upon by the people of the time; therefore, given the handouts used to generate student historical understanding, the likelihood of students developing historical empathy was slim.

Fact-centric teaching made sense to the teachers because they felt there was so much content to cover in order to meet the content standards that they could not teach any topic in depth. Ms. Newbury explained that she only taught her students "what they need to know." For instance with the Compromise of 1850, her students did not need to know all five planks of the agreement, so why take up time teaching that when there was other historical content her students *did* need to know? Similarly, Mr. Hobart in describing how he determined which textbook sections to read said:

Basically just the, you know, the night before I'll skim through it [the textbook], and then I'll see what parts are not that great, you know, as far as information. Sometimes they throw extra stuff in there just to throw it in there (laughs), but it's not so important, you know. I want them to know the basics. You know, like, I don't have time. I keep saying there isn't time to go into every single detail. Plus too much reading, you know, it'll bore the kids.

Mr. Hobart wanted his students "to know the basics," the facts, but not "every single detail." He sought to come up with just the right mix of historical content without going into too much depth because he did not have "time to go into every single detail." His

use of the textbook reflects this balancing act as well. Although he had said that “they [the authors] do a pretty good job in the book as far as delivering their, you know, content compared to other units,” he did not want his students to read the entire Civil War chapter because “it’ll bore the kids.” Mr. Gaines expressed similar concerns in trying to determine what historical content was to meet each of the content standards as he explained:

That’s what I mentioned to my buddy cause my buddy, he’s the math coach, and he’s telling me, “You have to do this.” I’m like, “Dude, but you don’t understand.” There’s just so much embedded in just one in the, there’s so much embedded even in the sub-standard that you have to do. The prerequisite of it is just, and us as historians, we go off. I mean, we can’t go that deep or else we’d be here forever.

Here, Mr. Gaines explained, was one of the differences between the math standards and the history-social studies content standards. The math standards focused on skills, but the history standards consisted of actual content. Like Ms. Newbury and Mr. Hobart, Mr. Gaines was constantly trying to determine precisely the right amount of historical content to include for each standard.

The three teachers’ experience speaks to “the futility of teaching history as a grocery list” (VanSledright, 2002, p. 19). Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines’s encounters with the content standards suggest that this conception of history as a list of topics which teachers check off as they teach them has limited effectiveness as far as helping students understand the past (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Students have often performed poorly on standardized history assessments (Paxton, 2003). However now that student performance on these tests was considered an indication of teacher effectiveness, the three teachers felt pressure to move through the content standards

quickly so that they could teach everything their students might need to know for the content standards test. In order to go forward through the content standards, the historical narrative Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines presented was reduced to the facts and events of the period. That is, the three teachers eliminated any inkling of the concept of contingency (Loewen, 1995; McPherson, 2002), the consideration of other possible outcomes in their retelling of the past, from their lessons so that their historical narrative became the recounting of one event or fact after another.

The notion of contingency is an important historical tool. Through its use, historians can develop a deeper understanding of the past through their consideration of how a historical incident played out as it did and how what followed would have been changed if the event had had a different result. For instance, if Pickett's Charge had succeeded in driving the Union forces off Cemetery Ridge, could the Confederacy have won recognition for their country? Would a victory on Northern soil have resulted in the acknowledgement of Southern independence? This theory can aid historians in understanding the significance of individual events and break the sense that historical events had to occur in the order and manner in which they did (McPherson, 2002). In order to counter the sense of inevitability that can creep into narratives of the past where hindsight is 20/20, the notion of contingency can serve in the development of a more complex picture of the past (Potter, 1976).

However, the fact that Sunny Lake's test scores had improved incrementally over each of the last five years served as evidence that the teachers were effective instructors and made it unlikely that teachers would embrace a program in which they taught students

how to do history, a shift that would make history instruction more akin to mathematics (Barton & Levstik, 2003). The long tradition of history instruction laden with factual content made it understandable that the struggle needed to implement instructional reform aimed at teaching students to do history would be a lengthy one (Cuban, 1991; Goodlad, 1984/2004). Related to this was the teachers' own "apprenticeship of observation," that is, their own experiences as students in which history instruction was likely anchored in historical facts, conveying a sense that this was the proper way to teach history because it was always taught this way (Lortie, 1975/2002, p. 61). If Mr. Gaines's efforts at teaching from multiple perspectives are any indication, the teachers might have believed they were successfully incorporating new instructional approaches when, in reality, they were creating their own hybrid, blending old and new methods (Cohen, 1990). For example, in a department meeting that featured a discussion on the subject of rigor in the curriculum, the teachers never came to a consensus as to the meaning of the term, so every teacher explained how their curriculum met the criterion based on their own individualized definition. Raising the subject of rigor was an important first step in examining their teaching practice; however, no follow up occurred during the time I was present.

Based on the lessons I observed, it was reasonable to believe that the students viewed history as a subject in which memorization was one of, if not, the most important skills (Grant, 2003). While social studies in general, and history in particular, might seem conducive to developing students' ability to reason, secondary students view social studies as one of the least useful subjects (Goodlad, 1984/2004). Students may view

social studies in this light on account of their passive role in the classroom. From the students' perspective, history was a settled topic absent of controversy in which learning about the past might serve as a warning to avoid the same mistakes in the future (VanSledright, 1997). Contained within this conception of history is a belief that the past repeats itself. The sense of history's repetition relates to the sense that history is inevitable.

The three teachers' instructional approaches turned out to be more similar than they initially appeared to be and the nature of the historical content was also similar. However, the actual historical content Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught reflected their differing historical perspectives. The greatest distinctions between the three teachers occurred in their antebellum units. While there were still content differences amongst the three teachers in their Civil War and Reconstruction units, these distinctions were smaller than in their pre-Civil War units. In any case, the variety in historical content amongst the three teachers stemmed from their different historical viewpoints.

Different Historical Perspectives Result in Different Historical Content

In teaching about the Civil War era, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines added their contribution to the on-going dialogue amongst historians and history educators as to what historical content about the period should be taught and how that material should be taught. In the first portion of this chapter, I demonstrated how the three teachers' instructional methods were more alike than they initially appeared. Furthermore, I

showed that their instructional approaches resulted in historical content that could best be characterized as weighed down by facts. By framing their narratives in this manner and neglecting to account for potential alternative outcomes to the historical events they recounted, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught historical content in which there was a sense of inevitability. The impression of expectedness that accompanied the three teachers' historical narratives resulted from their teaching one historical fact after another. Their choice to leave out the concept of contingency which would have led the teachers to examine with their students the possible alternative effects from historical events added to the sense of inevitability.

However, focusing only on the nature of the historical content and the instruction in that content one would ignore the significant differences within the actual historical narratives that Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines sought to impart to their students. For instance, on the surface, the three teachers all taught about slavery in the antebellum period, but this characterization ignores the significant differences in the actual content contained in the three teachers' lessons. These disparities can be traced to the three teachers' different historical perspectives.

Mr. Hobart: From states' rights to African American rights

Mr. Hobart's lessons on the antebellum period emphasized states' rights as the central cause of the war. This was to be expected since he told me the first time I met him in person that states' rights was the main cause of the Civil War. In explaining the significance of states' rights, Mr. Hobart declared, "I kind of use it [the Civil War] the first time I teach it to the kids that slavery wasn't the number one cause of the war. It

was states' rights. They don't often know that yet. This is why we have issues today between the states because the states want to have their own rights, like compared to, like, whole countries." Mr. Hobart expressed many times that history could help his students understand the present, but, as I pointed out in chapter three, this often played out the opposite way within his lessons. That is, Mr. Hobart drew from recent historical examples to clarify a point about the past such as when he cited the 1992 election in his lesson on the election of 1860. Similarly in his comment on states' rights and the Civil War, Mr. Hobart argued that because states continue to advocate for their rights in relation to the federal government and one another, this is proof that states' rights was the most important cause of the war.

Although the reasoning in his argument seemed convoluted, Mr. Hobart would point out how states' rights served as the primary catalyst for the war throughout his antebellum unit. Furthermore, his teaching had a root in historiography in that it reflected the myth of the Lost Cause which Southerners conceived in the years immediately following the Civil War (Gallagher, 2000, 2004; Nolan, 2000). The Lost Cause myth highlighted the efforts of Southern soldiers, emphasized states' rights as the main cause of the war, and sought to erase African American participation in the war. Related to this, Lost Cause supporters downplayed or ignored slavery's role in bringing about the war. And while much of his teaching about slavery was incidental, within his lesson on the election of 1856 Mr. Hobart explained, "Suddenly in politics, slavery is going to be the main issue." This comment did not fit within the framework of the Lost Cause; however, at the same time, it was not an endorsement of the position espoused by

historians such as James M. McPherson (1989) and David Blight (2002) that slavery was the central cause of the Civil War, meaning that slavery was the origin for the issues which led to the war. In fact, whenever Mr. Hobart referred to slavery, he spoke of it as a policy issue akin to, let's say, the tariff. In a sense, he took the historian Don Fehrenbacher's (1990) argument that the discussion of states' rights was a means for Southerners to camouflage slavery's central role in bringing about the war and flipped it on its head. In Mr. Hobart's view, the principle of states' rights was the predominant issue that led to war, and the right to own slaves just happened to be the subject in which the theory of states' rights was tested.

Although Mr. Hobart downplayed slavery's role in causing the war, he did not fully endorse the Lost Cause myth because he did not view the Confederate Army as being the equal of the Union forces. In fact, as he told his students, his favorite Civil War general was William Sherman because Sherman "didn't back down. He did what he said he would do." Mr. Hobart recounted how Sherman's destruction of South Carolina was even greater than in Georgia because, as one of his students explained, "South Carolina was the first state to secede." No one who sympathized with the myth of the Lost Cause would choose Sherman as their favorite general because of the immense damage his army inflicted on the South. I would contend that Sherman's exploits demonstrated that the Confederate forces were not the equal of the Union as the war progressed.

On the other hand and aligned with the Lost Cause myth, Mr. Hobart spent little time teaching about African American soldiers' contribution to the Union cause which is an additional concept history educator and historians suggest is important for students to

learn (Cimprich, 2005; P. Horton, 2000; Manning, 2007). Aside from having his students read a brief section in the textbook, a few paragraphs in various handouts, and the inclusion of two slides in his PowerPoint lecture, Mr. Hobart did not draw attention to African American soldiers' participation in the war.⁵³ Given his states' rights perspective, it seemed unlikely that he would emphasize Black participation in the Union war effort. Furthermore, when asked about the Civil War's usefulness for teaching about racial issues, Mr. Hobart seemed reticent to teach about race as he said, "Racial issues was, it was, obviously, a little bit into it, but because of, you know, you had, you know, White-Black and you had Irish coming in. That's a big involvement. But like I said before, states' rights was the number one thing." He went on, saying, "I hate to play the race card on it [the Civil War]." He mentioned that he would teach about Massachusetts 54th and "that it wasn't all Northerners who were against slavery;" he concluded, "But I also, I guess, I do play the race card a little bit" because he taught about these two topics. Mr. Hobart seemed to think that spending what he viewed as too much time on African Americans' involvement in the war would bias his historical narrative by overemphasizing Black participation disproportionately in regard to the historical record; however, by devoting as little time as he did to African American efforts in the war, he perpetuated a portion of the Lost Cause myth. Furthermore, he overlooked a point made by historians and Abraham Lincoln that Blacks' actions turned the war in the Union's

⁵³ Mr. Hobart was the only teacher not to include *Glory* in his Civil War instruction (although Mr. Gaines did not show the film until after state testing). In fact, he stated that students found the film boring because it did not include enough battle scenes. I'm not sure how he came to this conclusion. While he may have been hesitant to show it because it necessitated securing parent permission due to its R rating, Ms. Newbury explained that students always returned the signed permission slips, adding it was the one homework assignment every student completed.

favor (Blight, 2002; Fehrenbacher, 1989; McPherson, 1989, 1997). In addition, Mr. Hobart neglected to mention that African Americans' battlefield exploits won the begrudging respect of their White comrades, although most White soldiers still did not view Blacks as their equals (Loewen, 1995; McPherson, 1965/1990, 1989). While he did not pay much attention to African Americans' service to the Union cause, Mr. Hobart did not sentimentalize the battlefield's horrors for his students (Bilof, 1996).

In the greatest departure from his antebellum instruction, Mr. Hobart's Reconstruction unit was the opposite of the myth of the Lost Cause. Here, Mr. Hobart did not follow the states' rights theme and make the argument, as Claude Bowers did in *The Tragic Era*, that the Federal government treated the South unfairly, violating their states' rights. Instead Mr. Hobart, in a nod toward his focus on political history, emphasized how the federal government acted to protect African Americans' newly gained rights (Foner, 1989, 1997). While all three teachers portrayed Blacks as victims of violence, discriminatory legislation, and unscrupulous landowners in regard to sharecropping and tenancy, Mr. Hobart briefly showed how African Americans made gains in the areas of education and business ownership in the years after the Civil War.⁵⁴ Thinking about his historical content from the antebellum unit through Reconstruction raises the question "What brought about the change in his historical content?"

Mr. Hobart provided the answer after one of his lessons when he stated, "Reconstruction is like a new topic for me. I've only done it for a couple of years. I

⁵⁴ Mr. Hobart's inclusion of the reading on Blacks' advancement during Reconstruction and Jim Crow was serendipitous. He came across the reading in *History Alive* (2002) while covering Ms. Newbury's homeroom class on a morning when she was late to school. After reading the excerpt, he decided to use it as one of his concluding Reconstruction lessons.

would barely get to it in the past. I wanted to try something new. You know all this talk in the [department] meetings. I wanted to do some critical thinking.” Because Mr. Hobart had not formulated a definitive historical perspective on Reconstruction, he followed the textbook closely and since the textbook did not present a states’ rights perspective, neither did Mr. Hobart. Such a point of view likely would have been viewed unfavorably by the students as it would have blamed formerly enslaved African Americans for Reconstruction’s failure. In addition, he was willing to try new instructional methods such as the “foldable” in which students created their notes rather than copying his because of the discussions in department meetings as well as the fact that he had more instructional time for Reconstruction. At the conclusion of the unit, Mr. Hobart explained, “I think I was two weeks ahead of myself this year compared to last year, so therefore, I was able to add extra meat to Reconstruction. The “extra meat” came in the form of lithographs and political cartoons from the *District Assessment Workbook*. Mr. Hobart’s students practiced interpreting these illustrations of the Reconstruction era. Although Briley (2008) and Green (1991) suggested using excerpts from works on Reconstruction history to show how interpretation of the period has changed, Mr. Hobart’s lessons provided students an opportunity to see how contemporary cartoonists and artists viewed Reconstruction. While Mr. Hobart made room for these activities in his unit, he placed political historical content at the center of his Reconstruction curriculum through the focus on the federal government, legislation, and political leaders.

With his use of the *District Assessment Workbook* materials, Mr. Hobart came closest to teaching historical content aligned with social historians who seek “to uncover the lives of ordinary people in all their richness” (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1995, p. 84). Similarly, Ms. Newbury concentrated on the history of African Americans, the farmers who served as soldiers in the Civil War, and White women. More so than Mr. Hobart and Mr. Gaines, Ms. Newbury attempted to show her students African American life under slavery, Black and White soldiers’ experience of the Civil War, and White women’s lives during the war years. In doing this, she sought to demonstrate how ordinary people struggled to overcome the hardships of the Civil War era.

Ms. Newbury: Social history demonstrates overcoming discrimination

Throughout her instruction on the Civil War era, Ms. Newbury emphasized social history (Loewen, 1995). Although she taught about legislation of the antebellum period, Ms. Newbury concentrated on African American slavery, seeking to illustrate slavery’s impact on African Americans and how they resisted this institution. Similarly, in her unit on the Civil War, she showed how the war affected the common soldier, paying particular attention to African American soldiers to demonstrate the additional burdens they faced as well as how they struggled to overcome them. While she spent the most instructional time highlighting African Americans’ actions during Reconstruction, unlike her first two units, Ms. Newbury did not present examples of African American resistance to the hardships of the time.

In her antebellum instruction, Ms. Newbury put slavery at the center of her unit. This reflected her view that the Civil War is a useful topic for teaching about racial issues

(Loewen, 1995), adding, “yes, for me, the Civil War moves into this idea of land, identity, and what you don’t know about each other.” Echoing the views of historians, Ms. Newbury explained to her students that slavery was the main cause of the war because the sectional conflict of the time could be traced back to the issue of enslavement (Blight, 2001, 2002; Davis, 2005; McPherson, 1989, 2007). Although she did not use primary source materials as history educators and historians suggest in her antebellum unit (Blight, 2002; Chesebrough & McBride, 1990; Waller & Edgington, 2001), Ms. Newbury demonstrated slavery’s many hardships, but she also showed how African Americans resisted the peculiar institution. She shared how slaves could be punished by being whipped or sold so that they would never see their families again (Stampf, 1956). Ms. Newbury did not spare her students the details of the slave experience, discussing openly how slave masters and overseers raped female slaves and that any resulting offspring were considered slaves.

However Ms. Newbury did not only teach her students about the difficulties of being enslaved, but she described how slaves challenged the institution. She had her students read about the Underground Railroad as well as screening a film on the topic. Ms. Newbury discussed Nat Turner’s rebellion and how it resulted in harsher laws which further restricted African Americans in the South. In addition, she mentioned less dramatic forms of resistance such as sabotaging tools, working slowly, or pretending not to know how to do something. Most interestingly, Ms. Newbury showed her students a film on William and Ellen Craft, an enslaved married couple, who escaped from Georgia by posing as slave mistress and slave. The film explained that the Crafts’ primary

motivation was the fear that any children they might have would be sold. Here, she showed how one of the difficulties of slavery became a driving force in spurring two people to refuse to accept their situation. Although Ms. Newbury spent more instructional time demonstrating how slaves were victims of the institution, she did not ignore teaching about slave resistance.

Ms. Newbury continued to frame her historical narrative in this way throughout her Civil War unit, spending much of her time highlighting the hardships Black and White soldiers faced as well as showing how African American soldiers fought against White soldiers' discrimination. For instance, she emphasized the unsanitary conditions soldiers experienced and how these frequently resulted in disease and death (Bilof, 1996; Waller & Edgington, 2001). Ms. Newbury also described how soldiers struggled to overcome their fear as they went into battle. She used readings to convey this in addition to pointing out scenes in both *The Blue and the Gray* and *Glory* in which characters were crying or expressed hesitancy to march into battle. Segments from *Glory* served another purpose in that they gave Ms. Newbury an opportunity to show the racism Black soldiers experienced while encamped. She countered this by highlighting cheers White soldiers directed at the Massachusetts 54th Regiment as it prepared to attack Fort Wagner. Ms. Newbury emphasized the difficulties soldiers encountered in the Civil War, but she also pointed to some positive outcomes such as African Americans proving themselves on the field of battle and the impact this had on their White comrades' thinking (Loewen, 1995).

This pattern of teaching primarily about historical actors' difficulties and briefly focusing on their efforts to overcome them held true through her antebellum and Civil

War units; however, Ms. Newbury broke from this in her Reconstruction unit. Even though she spent time on the amendments that extended new rights to African Americans, Ms. Newbury devoted the bulk of her lessons to demonstrating the horrors Blacks faced during Reconstruction. She emphasized the impact of lynching, not only on the victim, but how it intimidated African American community members. Connected with this, Ms. Newbury showed how Jim Crow laws made it nearly impossible for Blacks to vote. Combined with segregation laws, African Americans were forced into second class citizenship. The problems associated with sharecropping added an economic aspect to the growing list of hardships faced by Southern Blacks. However, Ms. Newbury did not show how African Americans countered these efforts, nor explain how Southern Whites viewed Blacks' initial use of their new rights as a threat to Whites' social standing (Current, 1987).

In her Reconstruction unit to a greater degree than in her previous two units, Ms. Newbury portrayed African Americans as victims of Whites' actions. She did not show how Blacks continued to do what they could to resist White subjugation following the establishment of Jim Crow laws. In addition, when she used contemporary lithographs and political cartoons, she spent more time on the negative parts of the images and only briefly mentioned the positive aspects such as Black children going to school. Why did Ms. Newbury teach Reconstruction in this way? First, although she had more time for her Reconstruction unit than she had in previous years, Ms. Newbury still had less time than called for by the pacing guide. She may not have felt she had sufficient time to explain Blacks' opposition. Second, as Briley (2008) argued, Americans' understanding

of Reconstruction is not as ingrained as our understanding of slavery, therefore, Ms. Newbury may not have been aware of how African Americans continued to fight against the White power structure through education, creating artistic and literary works, opening small businesses where possible as well as migrating to somewhat less threatening environs in the North and West (Litwack, 1999; Teachers Curriculum Institute, 2002). While this may have partially explained her Reconstruction teaching, Ms. Newbury's belief that Reconstruction was a failure and that Martin Luther King's work in the 1950s and 1960s proved Reconstruction's shortcomings was the greatest influence on her content decisions. Teaching about Black resistance during the post-Civil War period, she seemed to believe, would have called her interpretation into question. Furthermore, by connecting Reconstruction's failure with King's triumph, Ms. Newbury could show that through a lengthy struggle discrimination could be overcome yet again. She did not view African American resistance during Reconstruction as resulting in as clean cut an outcome as the abolition of slavery and African American soldiers gaining respect during the war. However, as in her antebellum unit where she taught about African American resistance to slavery, teaching how Blacks struggled against Jim Crow laws and KKK-led violence and intimidation would have demonstrated the immense courage exhibited by Southern Blacks.

Ms. Newbury's attention to social history and discrimination within her historical content came closer to the kind of history called for by Loewen (1995) as well as Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn (1997/2000) than Mr. Hobart or Mr. Gaines. Although Ms. Newbury mentioned racism, the belief in one race's superiority, on occasion within her instruction,

the historical content she taught actually focused on discrimination, the act of treating a group differently on the basis of race. By framing her instruction in this manner, she acknowledged her students' experience as immigrants or the children of immigrants who had shared tales of discrimination, and at the same time she demonstrated how previous discrimination had been eradicated. This way she conveyed the message that the discrimination her students or their parents faced would eventually be eliminated. If Ms. Newbury had focused on racism, her lessons might have demonstrated the difficulty of changing people's beliefs and portrayed America more ambiguously. Additionally although she seemed to conflate racism and discrimination, Ms. Newbury chose not to emphasize racism because she did not believe it to be developmentally appropriate for her eighth graders (Schlesinger, 1991/1998; Wills, 2005). Ms. Newbury's historical content with her concentration on social history and discrimination represented a variation on the narrative of progress. However, rather than focus on the nation becoming freer and solving its problems over time, Ms. Newbury emphasized how ethnic or racial groups faced discrimination but eventually overcame it (Barton & Levstik, 1998).

Mr. Gaines's Reconstruction unit was similar to Ms. Newbury's in that he saw the period as being one of great suffering for African Americans. However, while Ms. Newbury viewed the era as one in which African Americans could initially exercise new rights, Mr. Gaines saw it as a time worse than slavery. Mr. Gaines's perspective on the antebellum period was also related to Ms. Newbury's, but whereas she viewed slavery as immoral and inhumane, Mr. Gaines viewed slavery as unjust and unfair. In addition,

while Mr. Gaines viewed slavery as being a “key factor” in causing the Civil War, he did not see it as the sole cause. This was a subtle but nonetheless significant difference.

Mr. Gaines: From multiple causes to one view

Throughout his antebellum unit, Mr. Gaines seemed reluctant to directly address slavery’s role in bringing about the Civil War. This reflected his own view of the Civil War causation as he explained, “The whole politics behind, the true politics behind the Civil War wasn’t so much about slavery, but it was more about secession and things like that, and mind you that everybody has their own interpretation of why things happen, and so it’s, it’s a fascinating, fascinating time.” Mr. Gaines believed that because the abolition of slavery was not initially one of Lincoln’s stated goals; slavery was not the primary cause of the Civil War.

However, this was not the only force that shaped Mr. Gaines’s perspective on the Civil War. As discussed earlier, Mr. Gaines believed that historical events could be seen from more than one point of view. In class, he shared his concept of the “wall of history” in which events could be examined from the winner’s point of view and the loser’s. With this outlook, it would have been a stretch for Mr. Gaines to point to one issue—slavery—as being the determining factor leading to the Civil War. Linked to this was his goal of teaching self-determination, but determination did not only refer to teaching his students to set goals and strive to reach those goals. Determination was also useful in figuring out how things worked. By framing the Civil War as having multiple causes, Mr. Gaines was leaving it up to his students to determine the main cause. Furthermore, given the cataclysmic nature of the war (Bilof, 1996; Cimprich, 2005; P. Horton, 2000;

Hutchinson, 2005; Waller & Edgington, 2001) and “that people felt so enamored about their politics, about their feelings about their region” that they would make war on one another, Mr. Gaines did not believe the war could not be reduced to one cause. As with Shelby Foote, the nation’s failure to compromise on a number of issues in the period leading up to the Civil War made the war, in Mr. Gaines’s eyes, tragic.

Mr. Gaines taught that there were four causes—slavery, states’ rights, economics, and politics—that resulted in the Civil War, but slavery emerged as the “key factor” in that he spent most of his instructional time teaching about it. However, he did not teach about slavery in the same manner as Ms. Newbury. Ms. Newbury sought to make her students understand what slaves felt living this horrific experience. Ms. Newbury strived to connect her students affectively to her historical content, building historical empathy (Levstik & Barton, 2005; VanSledright, 2002). Mr. Gaines, on the other hand, framed slavery as a great injustice—not because of how enslaved African Americans were treated—but because of their lack of freedom.

In nineteenth century America, as Mr. Gaines taught through his linking of the women’s rights and abolition movements, people had varying degrees of freedom, depending on one’s position in society. Native born White men were the freest. European immigrants were next on the scale, hoping to move closer to the White men’s level of freedom. Mr. Gaines demonstrated this with his inclusion of a few scenes from *Gangs of New York* which depicted the mistreatment of recent Irish immigrants. Additionally, the film showed how those immigrants who lived in America longer had better jobs and a more stable existence. White women followed immigrants, and African

Americans were at the bottom of society.⁵⁵ Reflective of how he viewed slavery within society as a whole, Mr. Gaines focused his lessons more on efforts to abolish slavery and the impact of the Underground Railroad rather than on the horrors slaves endured. In this way, his antebellum historical content fit between that of Mr. Hobart which portrayed slavery as a political issue, largely ignoring African Americans' perspective, and Ms. Newbury who tried to teach her unit from a Black point of view.

Unlike his antebellum unit, Mr. Gaines used more direct instruction in his Civil War unit. He did this, as discussed earlier, when he realized that he was falling further behind the pacing guide. This change also impacted the way he structured the unit's historical content in that he moved away from allowing the students to come to an understanding about the topic under consideration. That is, rather than let his students to examine different abolitionists' ideas for ending slavery; Mr. Gaines explained what the North and South thought about an issue such as the Wilmot Proviso. He followed this up by explaining the outcome of the dispute. In this way, his content and instructional technique echoed that of Mr. Hobart.⁵⁶

During his Reconstruction unit, Mr. Gaines continued in the same vein he had transitioned to in his previous unit. He maintained his use of direct instruction. And as in his Civil War unit, he described what he viewed as the most significant aspects of the topic being taught; however, this was not what it appeared to be. Mr. Gaines was not explaining the content merely as part of his effort to catch up with the pacing guide, but

⁵⁵ Immigrant women would have fit between White women and African Americans, but Mr. Gaines did not delineate to that degree.

⁵⁶ As discussed in Chapter 4, Mr. Gaines included little historical content on the war itself, although he would return to the topic following state testing I was not present for these lessons.

with Reconstruction Mr. Gaines had a clearly stated position about the period. When asked about the Civil War as a tool for teaching about racial issues at the beginning of my observation, Mr. Gaines stated:

I think it's a great introduction to racial issues cause nothing was really solved, if not, it made things worse, you know, for African Americans. So, I can see them, it's, like, okay, you know what, the Civil War was eventually geared towards slavery and people in bondage, but what was the, what was the ultimate result of after the Civil War and the whole time of Reconstruction, you know? The African American cause, or their fight, became worse from the black codes to Jim Crow laws and all that. Yes, they were no longer free, but they were free on paper, but they still had to do sharecropping or like certain things. So, I think it's a great introduction, but eventually once you head down to the whole Civil Rights Movement and then you can see that's where it started as far as their fight.

He viewed Reconstruction as resulting in worse treatment for African Americans than they experienced during slavery. The black codes, Jim Crow laws, and sharecropping made life for Blacks even more difficult than during their enslavement. Mr. Gaines added in a later discussion that during slavery African Americans received some protection against violence from slaveholders, but once Blacks were free, it was no longer in any White man's interest to safeguard African Americans. In addition, Mr. Gaines's clearly stated position reflected his belief that Reconstruction was the most awful period Blacks experienced. The threat of violence was so great, the economic exploitation was so severe that African Americans suffered more during this period than during slavery. Given the horrific nature of Reconstruction, Mr. Gaines felt, like the historian Thomas Sobottke (2010), that this was the one time where there was no wall of history. History scholars and teachers needed to take a morally principled stand. There was no need to consider the position of Southern Whites.

Throughout their teaching, Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught about topics directly or tangentially related to race, depending on their historical perspective. Wills (1996) wrote that African American historical actors often only appear in American history courses when students learn about the Civil War era and the Civil Rights Movement, and one could argue that by linking Reconstruction with the push for equality in the mid-twentieth century, the three teachers were doing this again. However, there are two differences. First, the Civil Rights Movement, as was the period after Reconstruction, was beyond the scope of the eighth grade content standards. Therefore, one cannot say with certainty how Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines would, or would not, teach about African Americans in the period between 1877 and the 1950s. Second, because I was not present for most of their teaching prior to the Civil War era it would be difficult to determine how, when, and if, the teachers included African Americans in their historical content prior to their Civil War era instruction.⁵⁷ Finally, although teaching beyond Reconstruction was beyond the scope of their curriculum, the fact that Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines did teach about African Americans' involvement in this period sets up the possibility that they could teach about African American historical figures after Reconstruction. That is, at least, there is little likelihood that their students will believe that Blacks faced few difficulties after slavery's abolition (Loewen, 2010; Wills, 1996).

⁵⁷ I conducted preliminary observations for one week in January 2009 about three and a half weeks before Mr. Hobart and Ms. Newbury began their antebellum units.

Suggestions for Further Research

Within each of the three previous chapters, I have recommended topics for future research. In chapter three, I suggested conducting research on how teachers interpret the content standards and what factors influence their interpretations. Given the different antebellum narratives Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines taught, examining how the teachers determine the meaning of the content standards and the issues which impact their making sense of said standards would be a worthy addition to understanding teachers' thinking. Additionally, I proposed exploring how Latino students' vernacular histories influence their interpretation of American history. This would build on the work of Epstein (1998, 2000) and Barton and Levstik (1998).

Given the significance I place on the teachers' historical perspectives, in chapter four, I urged that more research be conducted in regarding the formation of teachers' historical perspectives. How are historical points of view developed? Do viewpoints change over time or remain fixed? What current events or other factors lead to changes in teachers' historical perceptions? All of these questions would benefit from further study. Similarly related to the call for developing students' critical thinking skills (Barton & Levstik, 2003; Grant, 2003; VanSledright, 2002) is the suggestion that students complete more writing activities which could enable them to move beyond fact-based recall to an analytic stance (Barton & Levstik, 2004). For this reason, I recommended investigating what factors lead history-social studies teachers to incorporate writing assignments as well as the reverse. Are there factors which dissuade the use of writing exercises in history classes?

As far as studying a specific aspect of the historical content I observed, I put forward the idea that future investigation of teachers' Reconstruction historical content would be worthwhile. Considering Briley's (2008) contention that the history of Reconstruction is still full of misconceptions, why did Mr. Hobart, Ms. Newbury, and Mr. Gaines teach their most complex historical content about this period? Do other teachers frame the Reconstruction period in this way? In addition, given the three teachers' different historical perspectives, why were their historical narratives more similar than for the previous units, and do these same patterns exist amongst other teachers? Is there something about how Reconstruction is viewed that lead to this outcome? After all, Briley claims that the revisionist Foner interpretation, which argues that Reconstruction's failure, was in not maintaining African Americans' newly won rights, is now standard in history textbooks. If this is the case, do teachers follow their textbooks more closely for this unit or was the three teachers' case an anomaly?

Whether any of these proposals is undertaken, studying what, how, and why teachers teach about the Civil War era can further our understanding of history education. Moreover, with the Civil War sesquicentennial upon us, it should be an especially fruitful time for such research.

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