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Table of Contents

Editor's Note	3
Theory and Practice	
<i>Community Drama and Eighth Grade Social Studies</i> Ronald V. Morris and Denise Shockley	5
Media Review	
<i>George Takei: They Called us enemy.</i> Brandon Beck	29
Call for Articles Summer 2024	43

Editor's Notes

We are pleased to introduce the Iowa Social Studies Journal's Winter 2024 issue. This issue explores a couple of important considerations facing social studies teachers and learners. Social studies teachers make important decisions about the types of learning and information they use to engage their students. These pieces highlight important considerations and approaches.

Ronald Morris shares the impact of introducing eighth grade students to both historical narratives about Tecumseh and live theater performance. Morris discusses what students learned about Tecumseh from the performances and suggests how this learning can raise curiosity and further inquiry on the part of students.

In his review of George Takei's graphic novel *They Called Us Enemy*, Brandon Beck describes not only how Takei's work pairs with the C3 framework but also how Takei's retelling of a dark chapter of Asian American history responds to curricular challenges and restrictions happening across the country. Beck juxtaposes Takei's work with the lack of coverage of Asian American histories in classrooms.

We hope you enjoy our Winter 2024 issue of the journal.

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Community Drama and Eighth Grade Social Studies

Ronald V. Morris

Ball State University

Denise Shockley

Gallia-Vinton Educational Service Center

This fall as students returned to school, 340 middle school students from three counties, representing rural poverty in Appalachia, attended an outdoor drama about Native American life that complimented their social studies curriculum. They came from seven middle schools and joined over 2.5 million visitors who since 1973 have witnessed the dramatic event. The two-hour-and-forty-minute experience included audience engagement in the story with amphitheater seating set in a natural environment, including music, cannon, 52 actors on horseback, canoes, and a 100-person cast.

Due to COVID-19, 2020 was the only year that the outdoor drama was not presented. Both the school administrators and teachers wanted the students to have the opportunity to witness the play and felt that it was very important for the students to experience it again. The eighth-grade students learned about state and national history through events depicted in the play. The research question for this study is: To what extent does seeing live reenactments of a historical event improve student content knowledge retention? Teachers answered open-ended questions about how they prepared students for and debriefed students from the experience. Students answered multiple-choice questions about the content they observed. Students saw the play on Thursday night during the first week of school; teachers provided QR codes for the students to complete their report via their phone from the completion of the play until the end of school on Monday.

Literature Review

In the literature teachers and students used drama to learn about history. Students participated in historical events and found meaning in them that they applied to contemporary events. Students used unscripted role-play to create a meaningful and relevant curriculum (Bas & Durmus, 2019; Pañares, 2016; Schroeter & Wager, 2017). Students who used drama had higher

achievement than those who did not have access to drama in social studies. The direct participation and structured reflection made this experience significant for students. Drama develops creative and strong citizens in social studies instruction.

However, watching video contributed to students learning social studies content found in short and computer delivered documentary or dramatization, television, or movies (Akham & Cicek, 2021; Groce et al., 2005; Lin et al., 2011). Screening studio films in two dimensions and viewing plays and live dramatization in three dimensions are different experiences—but the vicarious nature of the learning has some similarities. Vicarious participation takes the form of allowing students to encounter new ideas without having the actual experience themselves. In this study, students viewed economic processes, encountered new landforms and people, and learned about groups and individuals from the past. Students watched video to gain methodological clues about gathering information before reflection and decision making. Students watched video to determine how the government worked, about problems in democracy, and in what manner people endeavored to reform society. All of these were problematic for the social studies teacher and students to encounter in the typical class period.

How people make meaning from movies, video, and drama has been debated. Humans break down films into discernable bits such as music, scenery, action, and lighting that helped them find meaning in the greater story. Cutting, Brunick, and Candan (2012) observed that viewers separated films into segments without considering the intentions of the actor, even though that was important to make sense of the film. Analysis of film required a method of identifying and distinguishing discernable parts. Scenes of violence were frequently found in films, and they were easily categorized together. Dalton (2015) identified redemptive violence in films and how a film script depended on it as a structural element. The redemption at the

conclusion of a film justified the prior violence or the violence at the end redeemed the suffering prior to that point. Similar analysis was applied to portrayal of people of color. Dowie-Chin and Worlds (2020) suggested that critical race media theory should be used to analyze racism and white supremacy. People and situations depicted in movies may make more sense within this context of race and power.

When the depiction represented Native Americans, stereotypes of plains Indians (Indigenous peoples who lived on the Great Plains) were hard to work past. Nes (2012) explored the depictions of Native Americans in outdoor dramas. A sense of tragic fatalism often accompanied the story—as if the events had to come out this way. The Native American characters many times are reduced to “all good” or “all bad” cartoon figures in a morality play. Cordes and Sabzalian (2020) challenged dehumanizing colonial representations of Indigenous peoples. To combat misrepresentation, anticolonial education helps students to detect and interrupt inappropriate Native studies. Cordes and Sabzalian (2020) provide respectful alternatives through critical race media literacy. Stoddard and Chen (2018) reported that political ideology shapes student perceptions of expertise and evidence in political documentaries. When students viewed film, their beliefs about issues at a time of political polarization colored their thoughts during peer discussion. Student perceptions of source as viewed through a social context impacts learning about democratic education. Using a variety of techniques, the audience analyzed film and live theater to create deeper meanings about what they saw. The act of watching two-dimensional presentations on a screen and three-dimensional events live and in person are not the same thing. There should be a difference in how students respond to being part of an audience rather than the typical experience of watching another video on a screen as they use drama to learn about history.

Methods

Standards

The play was content rich showing the conflict of cultures between western settler (individuals from the United States searching for land to occupy) expansion and Native Americans contesting the use of the land. The play was appropriate for the students to see because of its alignment to state history standards for United States History. Teachers used eighth grade United States social studies standards (Ohio Department of Education, 2018) including:

- North America, originally inhabited by American Indians, was explored and colonized by Europeans for economic and religious reasons. (History Strand Content Statement 2)
- The United States added to its territory through treaties and purchases. (History Strand Content Statement 10)
- The movement of people, products and ideas resulted in new patterns of settlement and land use that influenced the political and economic development of the United States. (Geography Strand Content Statement 17)
- Cultural biases, stereotypes and prejudices had social, political and economic consequences for minority groups and the population as a whole. (Geography Strand Content Statement 18)
- Choices made by individuals, businesses and governments have both present and future consequences. (Economics Strand Content Statement 24)

The play explained the original inhabitants' location on the land and the treaty process where they lost their land. It showed how the Native Americans and settlers continued to migrate. The

play also demonstrated the choices made by individuals, businesses, and governments. The researchers used an interpretivist/constructivist theoretical framework.

Population

White Appalachian students are represented in this qualitative case study. All schools reflect generational systems of poverty and qualified for free breakfast and lunch programs. Students are in heterogeneous classrooms. According to the Ohio Report Card, 100% are Economically Disadvantaged (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.).

Gallia County

The Appalachian Regional Commission (2021) ranked Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, and Vinton counties as “At-Risk,” meaning the county is in the bottom 10–25% of counties in the nation in terms of economic well-being. The Department of Development (2021) declared Gallia County a Priority Investment Area and “Distressed,” which places it in the bottom 10% of counties in the nation.

With Gallia County's poverty rate being 21% for adults and 29% for children, it ranks as the third highest in Ohio. When figures include the “near poor” the population percentage nearly doubles. Ohio's poverty rate is 14.9%; the figure is 14.6% nationally. The per capita income is only \$24,130. About 1,058 Gallia County households (9.1%) subsist on less than \$10,000 a year. At best, those households have \$27 per day for housing, food, transportation, clothing, schooling, and other necessities. Another 1,367 households live on less than \$20,000. About 1,091 families with children are impoverished; nearly 500 of those families include single-parent families (Welfare Information, n.d.).

According to the Children's Defense Fund Action Council (2022), when considered as a group 24.9% of children are living in poverty. The United States Census Bureau (2021) also

reported 23.3% of children as being “Food Insecure” meaning they live without adequate access to substantial meals; access to nutritious food on a consistent basis plays a large role in students' learning (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.).

Many children's families live in subsidized and/or substandard housing. Educational attainment levels in the county are aligned with the severe statistics—16% of adults 25-years and older do not have a high school diploma, with the Ohio average being 9.6%. Only 15.9% of Gallia County residents have a bachelor's degree or higher; this rate is more than 27% in Ohio at large (Department of Job & Family Services, n.d.). The academic information found in the *Needs Assessments for Reading and Math* indicates local students need additional support to increase the local educational attainment statistics as time passes (Ohio Department of Education, n.d.).

Teachers

A majority of the White teachers were born in the area; attended college in the area at Appalachian institutions, located close to both where they were born and where they entered employment; and took jobs in the area. The teachers represented a range in experience from beginning teachers to teachers near retirement age (varying from building to building), but averaging 11 years of experience and nine years on their current campus. Teachers primarily lecture as their primary method of instruction. While most of the teachers majored in social studies, they had limited experiences with the arts themselves and their conversations tended to revolve around their secondary sports contracts. All staff are media literate to the extent that they have access to video. Their primary form of entertainment consisted of content provided through streaming services. In the paper teachers have been given a random number to obscure their identity and their comments are sited as T and the number.

Pre-activities

Teachers answered two questions about how they taught Tecumseh. The first question asked how they prepared their students for the play and the second question asked how they debriefed the students following the play. Teacher comments have been sampled here to illustrate what they said happened in their classrooms. Fifteen of the 18 teachers responded, resulting in a response rate of 83%. All of the teachers had the same number of days and amount of time to prepare or not prepare their students. How they prepared or did not prepare their students was a function of teacher choice.

Teachers prepared their students prior to the outdoor drama in a variety of ways to provide context for the content. Six of the 15 teachers sent their students to see the play with no historical preparation. They talked about procedures and expectations of behavior instead, “[I] Read them the riot act of how to behave in public” (T3). While this emphasis on behaviorism was important to the teacher, it did not do anything to teach social studies content or skills. Three teachers used lecture to orient the students to the play, “I did a general background informational lecture on Tecumseh” (T14). The method selected conveyed context quickly and expediently. Two teachers said they used discussion, “Also discuss[ed] how he tried to create a confederation to organize the tribes” (T4). The definition of discussion is questionable here as it could mean teacher talk, it could be controversial issues with students taking opposing sides, or it could be question and answer. One teacher had students read about Tecumseh. By using secondary sources teachers connected students to extended information or biographical narratives about the topic. Four teachers showed a video on Tecumseh, “I showed them the movie, *Tecumseh, The Last Warrior*” (T9). This method showed how another story teller approached the subject and allowed all abilities of students to access the topic through film. A thoughtful teacher (T13) reflected:

I introduced the topic of the drama by asking questions to determine first, what they knew about settler/Native American relations, and second, what they knew about Tecumseh specifically. Then we discussed those topics to give them enough background to follow the plot of the play (no spoilers given), and to spark interest in attending the drama.

This teacher was integrating inquiry strategies into student preparation to see the play by asking their students to identify questions they generated. How much time was allotted to question the investigation was not reported. The teacher tried to generate student interest by exploring the subjects that sparked the curiosity of the students. Teachers built contextual knowledge and provided experiences to help students access information from the play prior to seeing the outdoor drama.

Post activities

Teachers seemed to do more after the play with their students to debrief from the events of the experience. However, two teachers did not do any debriefing after the play, “I did not do this with my students” (T15). These teachers seemed pressed for time, did not see the potential for social studies instruction in the event, or did not know how to debrief after the play.

Alternatively, three teachers answered student questions, “Most questions after Tecumseh are about his brother, his death and Simon Kenton” (T4). Students had questions about human characters that were caught in the middle of historical events. Four teachers discussed the play with their students as, “classroom discussions” (T11). Again, this word discussion was not clarified so it is hard to determine what the teacher means when the teacher uses it.

One teacher had the students write a reflection. The teacher connected students through literacy to create new knowledge about what they learned, thought, or questioned from the experience. One teacher had the students conduct a simulation about Tecumseh. Simulations

have been used for many years to engage students through role-playing with big ideas that shaped the time and to think of connections with the present. Two teachers had the students evaluate the play orally, “The next day we did a compare and contrast between the play and what was taught in the lecture” (T14). Students engaged in the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy where they practiced evaluation and analysis to examine elements of the play.

Two teachers engaged in research or read additional sources about the topic, “Later, as we study the European colonization of North America, the students will have an opportunity to research more about the Native American/settler relationships” (T13). Opportunities for research were surprisingly rarely mentioned by the teachers when every student had access to phones or laptops at school. Classroom activities seemed to be primarily oral and did not seem to result in the students becoming producers of knowledge. While students did more post play as opposed to prior to the drama, teachers did not seem to require students to bring back information from the play that could be used in research activities or to complete assessments of knowledge gathered from the play. This directly contradicted the inquiry arc laid out by the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (NCSS, 2013) that calls for students to raise questions, work with in a discipline, examine sources, and take action.

Findings

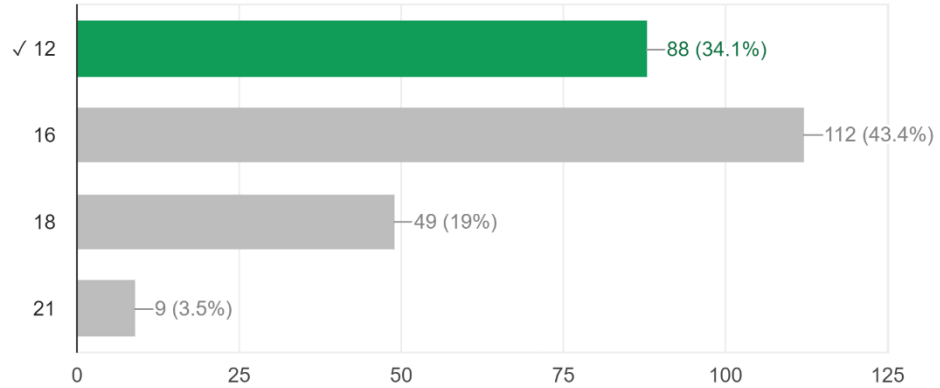
Students answered ten multiple-choice questions constructed by the researchers online within 72 hours (over the weekend) after the outdoor drama. Questions reflected the content of the play to determine what content students remembered from the drama. Of the 318 students who attended, 256 students responded with an 81% response rate, and questions number two and three were removed because the play did not cover that content.

Figure 1

Question Number One

1. How old was Tecumseh when he became a warrior?

88 / 258 correct responses



The lack of student understanding on the first question showed that the students did not comprehend some events they observed in the play (see Figure 1). This was surprising, since the age of the students was so close to both 12 and 16 it should have been of interest to the students.

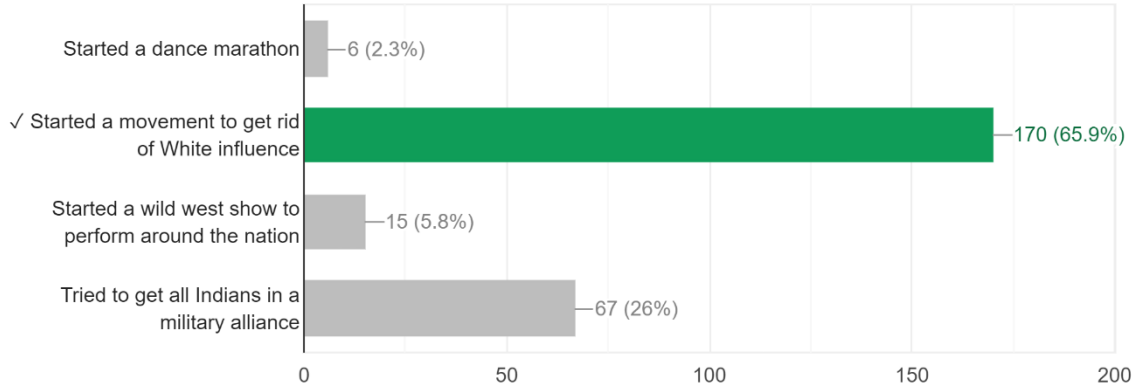
Even though age was not emphasized by the play's actors, it was thought there would be a higher level of interest by the students in the audience based on the fact that some characters were the same age as those in attendance. The actors clearly articulated the age, but it was neither repeated in the play nor emphasized.

Figure 2

Question Number Four

4. What did Tecumseh's half-brother do?

170 / 258 correct responses



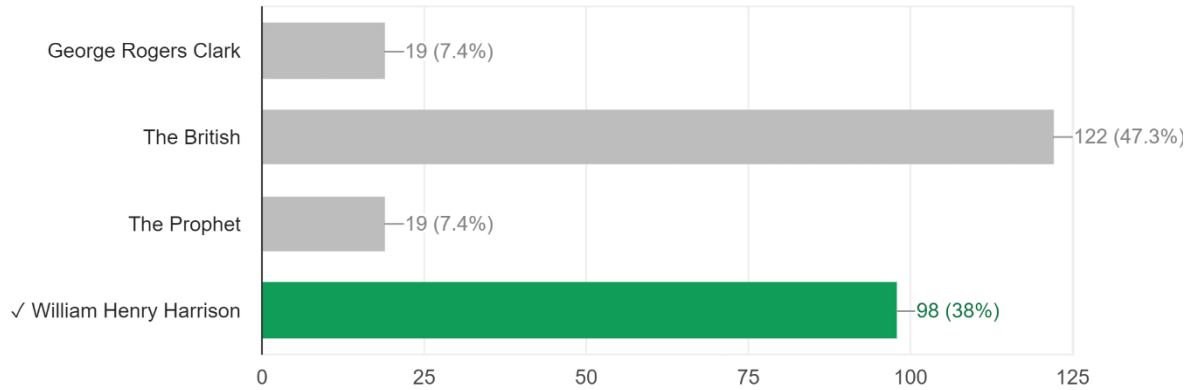
Question number four really showed that the play successfully communicated the role of Tecumseh's half-brother (see Figure 2). Students recalled this part of the play and the leadership of Tecumseh's half-brother in the Native American renewal movement. Getting Native Americans to give up the convenience of European trade goods to become self sufficient again was a difficult request, but it shows how committed people were to reclaiming their traditions.

Figure 3

Question Number Five

5. Who was Tecumseh's enemy?

98 / 258 correct responses



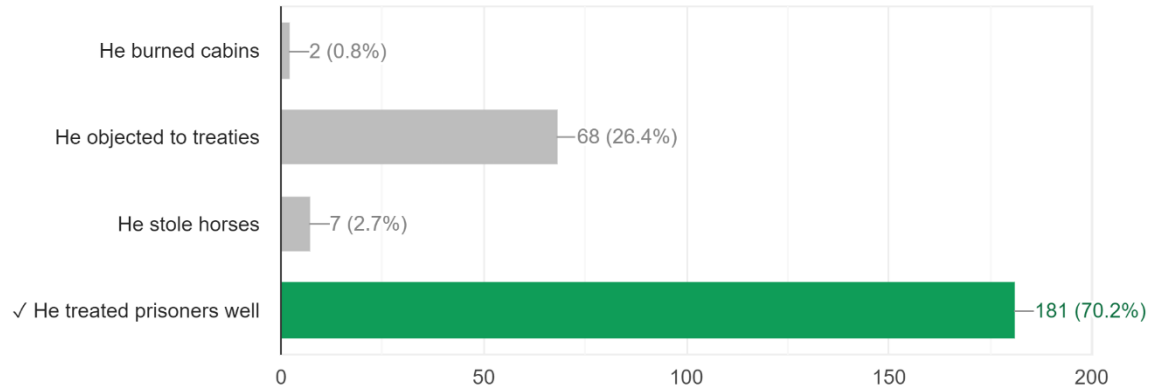
Tecumseh consistently allied with the British in fighting against William Henry Harrison and the United States (see Figure 3). Both the British and the Native Americans had their own political agendas, but they held a common cause for most of Tecumseh's life. The Americans consistently pushed Indians off their land, but the British were less of a threat than the land-hungry Americans.

Figure 4

Question Number Six

6. Why did settlers like Tecumseh?

181 / 258 correct responses



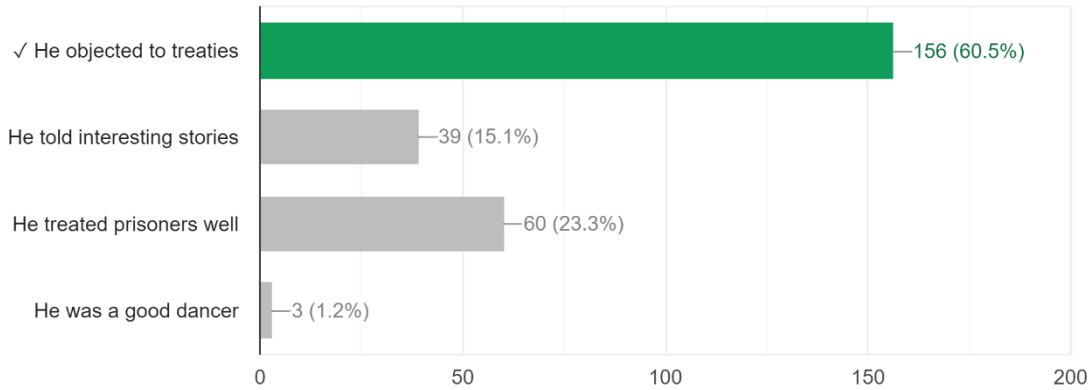
In question six, the students successfully identified Tecumseh’s good qualities as acknowledged by the settler population (see Figure 4). The settlers saw Tecumseh as noble and complying to the rules of war as Europeans understood military decorum. Moreover, the settlers viewed Tecumseh as a noble Indian as portrayed in the legend of his dating a white woman as opposed to the typical savage stereotype.

Figure 5

Question Number Seven

7. Why did Indians like Tecumseh?

156 / 258 correct responses



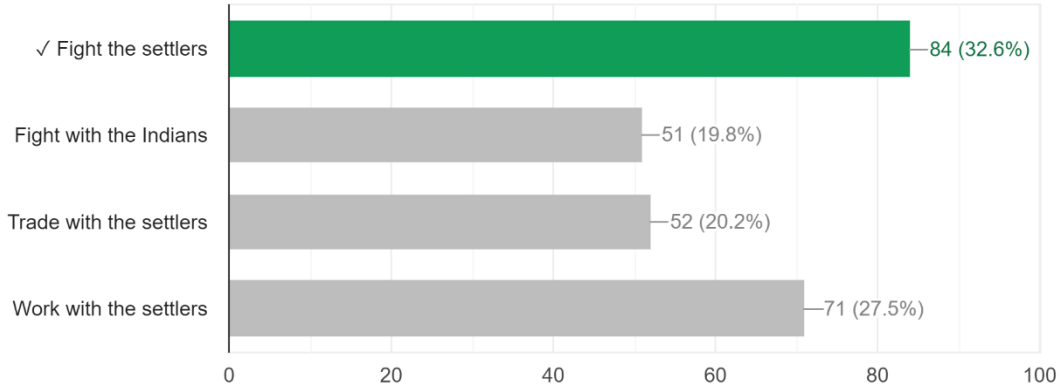
In question number seven the students identified Tecumseh’s position on major Native American land issues (see Figure 5). He led opposition to settler invasion and rallied various tribes to support his position to defy further expulsion. As a skilled diplomat, Tecumseh built a multinational Native coalition to exercise coordinated action to repel Anglo incursions.

Figure 6

Question Number Eight

8. What did the British want Tecumseh to do?

84 / 258 correct responses



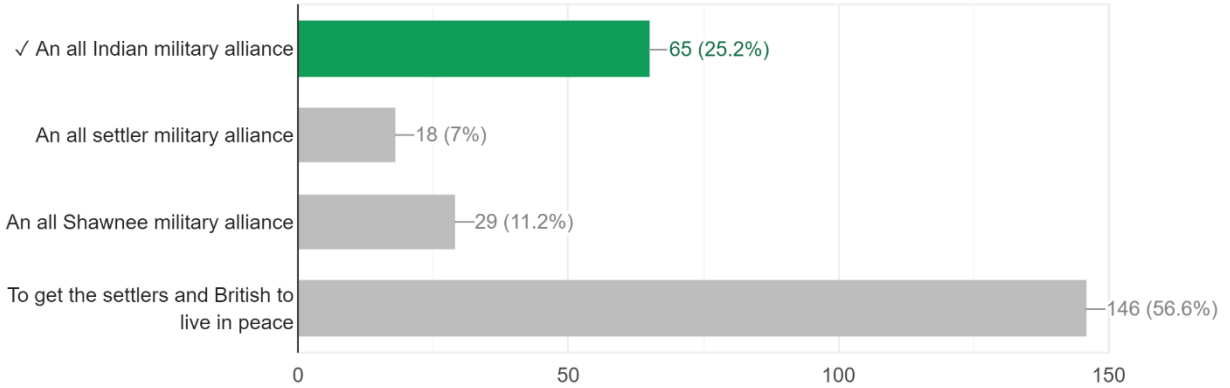
Students could just barely identify the political perspective of the British, even though arguments about the different viewpoints showed clear winners and losers (see Figure 6). By supplying ammunition to the Native Americans, the British could disrupt the western trade and migration of the young, rival United States. While there were arguments in the play, there were not clear winners and the political perspective of the British was not clearly and loudly announced in the play.

Figure 7

Question Number Nine

9. What was Tecumseh's dream?

65 / 258 correct responses



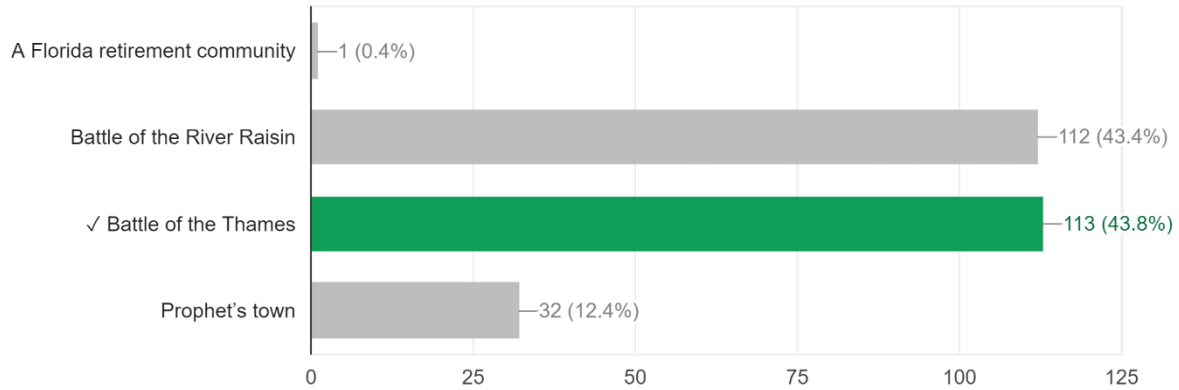
Students failed to identify Tecumseh's ambition (see Figure 7). Tecumseh traveled widely across the Eastern United States speaking with Indigenous people in an attempt to create an inclusive Native American confederation to oppose further territorial ambitions of the United States. As a fragmented force, the settlers never had to fight all of the Native Americans at the same time and they could play them off one another or fight them one nation at a time.

Figure 8

Question Number Ten

10. Where did Tecumseh die?

113 / 258 correct responses



Disappointingly students did not seem to know where Tecumseh died (see Figure 8). The outdoor drama should not be considered a one-and-done event, but instructional practices needed to align with inquiry to help students engage in meaningful research opportunities. Tecumseh was in Florida when there was a battle at Prophetstown, and there was a Battle of the River Raisin during the War of 1812. The significance of the death of Tecumseh during a Canadian War of 1812 battle, where he dueled with his nemesis William Henry Harrison’s forces, did not make a big impression on the students.

Limitations

This was a difficult experience to orchestrate; it required commitments of time and treasure to make it available. One of the pitfalls of the play was that it required a one-and-a-half-hour drive each way to get to and from the theater. Another pitfall was the cost—the ticket, teacher pay, dinner, and transportation fees resulted in an expensive event for the school district.

A third problem was that the last week of the theater season was the first week of the school year, leaving little time for student preparation. On the first day of school permission slips went home with the students for the play.

Some teachers who seemed to have other priorities did not see the potential for social studies instruction in the event and may have recognized it as an opportunity for cultural exposure. They may have considered the timeframe prior to the event too brief to do the necessary schema development and inquiry. Simultaneously, the novelty of a field trip, the epic scope of the live performance, and the 72-hour window over a weekend for collecting students' answers may have further affected accuracy of questionnaire answers.

Students did not have previous experience with live theater. They do not live in an area where live theater is available, and to get to live theater requires significant expenditure of resources in both time and finances. Students were not distracted during the show. The weather was good, the evening became darker as the play progressed leaving the action hyper lit and the rest of the area in darkness. The students were able to concentrate on the action occurring on stage of the two-hour play (minus the intermission). Eighth-grade students can normally watch two-and-a-half-hour movies without becoming distracted. Most of the students had never seen a live action play before and this was a good first experience with lots of action to hold their attention. The novelty of a field trip and the epic scope of the live performance may have impacted the responses to the survey.

Conclusion

Families from this region had never been able to afford a theater visit prior to this experience, and it was the first time many of the students had ever encountered professional actors. As the only outdoor theater in the state, with the next closest outdoor theater at a greater

distance out of state, teachers were prudent in creating opportunities for students to encounter live theater about curriculum-related content to help students raise questions for further research. Students raising questions is the first part of the inquiry arc reflected in the C3 framework (NCSS, 2013).

Teachers who used outdoor drama as a part of instructional practices had the potential to create meaning from the excitement of live theater. Students learned history and social studies from dramatic experiences whether direct participation in plays, role-play, or watching live theater. Teachers assessed student learning from drama experiences using authentic assessments. The implementation of strong debriefing experiences using a variety of methods extended understanding after viewing the outdoor drama. Teachers had the opportunity to introduce primary sources, evaluate the play, and engage students in research. Eighth-grade students assessed using authentic assessment practices at the conclusion of the debriefing measured understanding of the dramatic and historic content. When they did this, students demonstrated sharing information as part of the C3 framework (NCSS, 2013).

Moreover, watching historical and social studies movies, videos, reenactments, or live theater contributed vicariously to the creation of meaning. When teachers incorporated content learned from history and social studies, students absorbed content from the experience. As part of an instructional plan, content information was learned by the students. Teachers created strong preparatory experiences using a variety of methods to develop context prior to seeing the outdoor drama. Teachers introduced students to characters and events that they connected to social studies standards as part of the instructional program. Eighth-grade students raised questions they explored in inquiry situations to capture their interests in research. As students explored sources they continued to build knowledge through the inquiry arc (NCSS, 2013).

Teachers needed to help students understand that the possible stereotypes of characters similar to a morality play were not all there was to the story. Each character had complex motivations beyond “good settler” or “bad settler,” and did more in their lives than what could be depicted on stage. Moreover, teachers needed to help students question the violence portrayed—students needed to examine if the play justified violence. Was it justified? Did the violence make for a strong play? Were there other possible solutions people could take that rejected violence? What groups existed at that time that could have acted as mediators? Violence did happen, but it was not required. Furthermore, to avoid fatalism, students needed to evaluate how events could have come out differently. How might people have compromised? Could students imagine a different ending for the play? What would life be like now if an alternative ending occurred? Students have agency today like people had power to shape events in their time. Within the study of history, students used questions and concepts to learn with in a discipline (NCSS, 2013).

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Media review: *They Called us enemy*

Takei, G., Eisinger, J., & Scott, S. (2019). *They called us enemy*. Top Shelf Productions.

Brandon Beck

Clemson University

Issues concerning race, racism, and injustice are as American as apple pie. From the victimization and extermination of indigenous people to the present-day discrimination marginalized groups face in our country, racism and issues of race are a cemented part of American history (An, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The field of social studies allows students to develop the skill of racial literacy. This skill allows students to develop the tools needed to discuss the social construction of race, analyze the existence and impact of racism, and explore how racial stereotyping has affected the history of American society (An, 2016; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Critical race scholars have argued that the field of social studies is the ideal subject for students to explore the past and present, while also becoming agents of change (Ladson-Billings, 2003).

The educational landscape and field of social studies have yet to promote these ideals (An, 2016; Bronstein et al., 2023 Chandler & King, 2016). The consistent attack on how and what issues of race, racism, and equity are taught in the social studies classroom is a hot-button issue facing many in the educational community. Over 30 states—including Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Iowa, Tennessee, Texas, and Oklahoma—have passed, attempted, or considered laws banning the teaching of critical race theory (CRT) as academic framework from PK–12 classrooms (Bronstein et al., 2023). CRT is a theoretical framework used in higher education (often law), and it is used as an academic framework to promote anti-racist ideologies. This academic discipline is rooted in identifying systemic inequities and the role race plays in our society.

Current social studies legislation has begun to limit social studies educators' access to diverse text and content as, “Legislators have brought as many as sixty-one legislative efforts to ban divisive teaching in public schools” (Krebs, 2022, p. 194). Policymakers in as many as 28

states have begun to examine their state's social studies curricula to determine if divisive topics are included in their state's social studies curricular materials and standards (Krebs, 2022). It is no secret that to many social studies educators the presidential memo issued in 2021 halting and prohibiting divisive and anti-American propaganda in trainings does not reflect the learning that is taking place in social studies classrooms across the country (Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies on Training in the Federal Government, 2020). This memo suggested that the curriculum of many social studies educators is focused on “training on ‘critical race theory,’ ‘white privilege’ or any other...propaganda...that suggests that either (1) the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race...is inherently racist or evil” (Ledesma et al., 2023). Social studies educators nationwide are fighting for the ability to teach history as it should be taught, using primary sources and engaging activities to create historical narratives that reflect the diversity of their classrooms and the nation.

At the heart of the attack on historical education is the censorship and subsequent banning of any literature discussing race in the classroom (Koyama, 2023). In response to the political shift to censor the diverse histories of People of Color¹, curricular review groups are being created in school districts across the country. These groups review curricular materials to determine if they violate any pending legislation focused on the indoctrination of our country's youth (Gómez et al., 2023). Much of the texts that are reviewed by these panels is deemed inappropriate for use in the classroom due to their portrayals of race, gender, and sexuality (Krebs, 2022; Ledesma et al., 2023). Many of these now-banned books establish counternarratives that push against the traditional historical narratives supported by Western

¹ In keeping with Duncan et al. (2023) and other scholars, I have opted to use uppercase letters for the words People of Color to emphasize the diverse histories of marginalized people.

society. Historically, conflicts over curriculum have always occurred (Evans & Rugg, 2007). From the angry oppositions by parents and legislators to the popular series of elementary and junior high social studies textbooks written by conservative Harold Ruggs in the 1930s to the national controversy that erupted over the Man: A Course of Study humanities program used in elementary schools in the 1970s, there will always be conflict over curriculum (Evans & Rugg, 2007; Teitelbaum, 2022).

It is the general assumption that many parents and educators have no issue accepting that education will always be a contentious political and societal issue. Many social studies educators hold issue with the exclusion of the perspectives and opinions of marginalized community members (An, 2016; Evans & Rugg, 2007). The current political movement to ban the teachings of critical race theory principles as they apply to history as well as literature and curricular materials deemed difficult or divisive has led to the lived experiences of historically marginalized groups being excluded from the classroom (Scussel & Norris, 2023). To combat this censorship of diverse text in the social studies classroom, I reviewed the text *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, and Steven Scott (2019), and advocate for its place in the social studies classroom. This text promotes the skill development of racial literacy by allowing students to explore the autobiography of George Takei and analyze how racism and stereotyping affected his life during his time in Japanese internment camps. This text also highlights the Asian American community in place of its absence in the U.S. History curriculum standards (Suh et al., 2015).

As marginalized groups are discussed in social studies classrooms across the United States, Asian Americans are often excluded from the mainstream thought of discrimination and racism (An, 2016). Black representation is evident in social studies state standards, namely

during discussion of slavery and civil rights legislation (Anderson, 2013). Asian American history is often only briefly mentioned in many states' social studies standards or ignored altogether (An, 2016). Takei looked to dispel the notion of Asian American historical exclusion in his autobiographical graphic novel detailing his family's experiences in Japanese American internment camps. The story begins with the Takei family being awoken by U.S. soldiers in the middle of the night. They are told that under Executive Order 9066, they have no choice but to leave their family home and begin their transition to a Japanese internment camp. As the story unfolds, Takei discussed his family's history and nontraditional route to becoming American citizens. In his eyes, although his parents were nontraditional American citizens, they embodied every value and tradition associated with being American. Although his family diligently adopted all the customs, traditions, and cultural values associated with being American, they were still viewed as outsiders and un-American after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The author used the rest of the text to explain the perilous journey of his Japanese American family as they navigated systemic racism, assimilation, and cultural genocide.

In his own evaluation of the text, Takei asserted that he chose to write such a powerful graphic memoir to reach a younger audience who may not be aware that Japanese Americans were forced to live in camps during World War II. In his interview at California State University, Fullerton, Takei stated that:

Even with all that has been written about the internment camps, I still find people who are unaware of them; I had written about my family's experience in my autobiography, but I decided to use this format to reach younger people. As a teen, I loved comics books and noticed that many of the messages from these comics stayed with me as I grew older. (Orleans, 2022, para 4–5)

To many, Takei is best known for being helmsman Hikaru Sulu of the fictional starship USS Enterprise in the television series *Star Trek*. However, to those that read his text, Takei can be viewed as forward thinker who uses the medium of graphic novels to dispel traditional narratives of Asian American history. Many of the themes presented in *They Called Us Enemy* invoke the anti-racist ideologies of many Asian American critical scholars. These Asian American critical scholars argue that Asian Americans have been historically marginalized and discriminated against throughout American history (An, 2016). Their stories are often forgotten or go untold due to the westernization of the U.S. social studies curriculum (An, 2016). Stories of the oppressed are often excluded from the narrative of American history due to their portrayal of America as anything less than ideal (An, 2022). However, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) argued that “engaging stories can help us understand what life is like for others and invite the reader into the new and unfamiliar world” (p.11). The stories of the marginalized like *They Called Us Enemy* by Takei are often known as counterstories. Critical writers use counterstories to challenge, displace, or deconstruct established narratives and beliefs (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

They Called Us Enemy deconstructs the established narrative of America as a country that has always fought on the side of justice. Instead, the text explores the untold narratives of Japanese Americans and their experiences living in Japanese internment camps during World War II. At a time where the counterstories of the marginalized are being excluded and labeled divisive, social studies teachers must find creative ways to implement text that feature the historical experiences of the oppressed. Legislators are acting to reform education (particularly social studies) by aligning curricular content to values of liberty and the Western tradition (Koyama, 2023). This traditional view of education has historically excluded the stories of those who live outside of Western tradition (An, 2016, 2022; Koyama, 2023). Texts like *They Called*

Us Enemy allow Students of Color² and members of other oppressed groups to feel seen and know that their histories also matter.

They Called Us Enemy is a great resource for social studies classrooms due to its focus on historical content, promoting civic activism and including historical stories of members of historically marginalized communities. Considering the aforementioned political legislation targeting curricular materials regarding issues discussing systemic racism, this text presents a viable option for social studies educators to teach the histories of the oppressed. This is also an interdisciplinary text that can be used to build and construct cross-curricular lessons or activities. For example, social studies educators and English language arts educators can create cross curricular units centered around this text that promote literary and historical understanding. In light of the move to inquiry-based social studies standards, the goal for many social studies districts across the country has been to teach students to develop the tools needed to think like a historian. In contrast, English language educators also advocate for students to embody the characteristics of authors, poets, and writers in the classroom. Utilizing texts like *They Called Us Enemy* will allow for educators from a variety of disciplines to promote literacy and help students develop critical thinking skills. As the education community moves to project-based learning formats and STEM-based education, resources with the variability and adaptability of *They Called Us Enemy* are needed.

They Called Us Enemy is a graphic novel that immediately grabs readers' attention due to its nontraditional writing style. Many social studies educators advocate for using traditional text and do not see graphic novels' value in reaching young learners (Matthews, 2011). Studies show

² In keeping with Duncan et al. (2023) and other scholars, I have opted to use uppercase letters for the words Students of Color to emphasize the diverse histories of marginalized students.

that students are more likely to engage in social studies content when presented with text and a curriculum appealing to them (Matthews, 2011). Texts like *They Called Us Enemy* allow for the inclusion of issues often deemed divisive. Social Studies educators often feel uncomfortable having the agency to choose the curricular materials for their classroom, especially if the materials that they choose may upset parents (Matthews, 2011).

Figure 1

Panels Depicting American Soldiers Ordering Evacuation



Note. Takei, G., Eisinger, J., & Scott, S. (2019). *They called us enemy*. Top Shelf Productions. p. 6.

George Takei attempts to humanize a brutal, often forgotten chapter of U.S. history. Takei wants the reader to understand and feel the horrible treatment many families experienced during their internment camps. He recalled his family of five being herded like livestock to different camps across the country. The reader can almost smell the horse manure as he described how his family was loaded on a livestock train where they were tagged for eventual relocation. The text also builds more empathy and emotions to the lived experiences of these Japanese Americans. Takei does not simply tell a story in this text; he makes his readers develop deep and enduring understandings of this untold story. The guiding principles of the College, Career, and Civic Life

(C3) framework for social studies are included in this text. Social studies educators will love the inquiry that this text promotes. The C3 framework is an academic framework created to transform social studies instruction using inquiry to support critical thinking and problem solving. Inquiry is at the core of the C3 framework. Using four distinct dimensions, this framework uses questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, deepen investigations, acquire rigorous content, and apply knowledge and ideas in real-world settings to become active and engaged citizens in the 21st century.

Figure 2

Panels Depicting the Takeis Preparing the House for Christmas



Note. Takei, G., Eisinger, J., & Scott, S. (2019). *They called us enemy*. Top Shelf Productions. p. 14.

As readers read this text, they are immediately hit with heart-rendering pictures about the pleasant life of a Japanese American family living in California. In a sense, they are living the American dream by owning and operating a cleaning business and owning their own home. We see the story shift with the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the implementation of the infamous

Executive Order 9066. Here, we see authentic inquiry take place. Readers are immediately drawn to do outside research on Japanese Americans' lives before World War II, the rights of Japanese Americans during this period, and Executive Order 9066. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's infamous Executive order sent more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent to relocation centers across the country. According to Takei, these first-, second-, and third-generation Japanese immigrants were labeled as traitors to the country despite their long residency in the United States. Many were born as American citizens. However, due to their racial and cultural heritage, they were immediately ostracized and labeled enemy aliens. Takei invokes readers to gain a deep understanding of the role racism has played through the course of U.S. history. Despite the consistent degradation and disrespect his family and many other Japanese Americans faced at the hands of their fellow Americans, Takei, his father, and other Japanese Americans promoted democracy.

Figure 3

Panel Depicting Takekuma Norman Takei, George Takei's Father.



Note. Takei, G., Eisinger, J., & Scott, S. (2019). *They called us enemy*. Top Shelf Productions. p. 45.

In closing, educators can use *They Called Us Enemy* to combat the current politicization of the social studies subject. Books bans and calls for restricting curriculum to rewrite historical narratives to fit the perspective of one political party engulf the current educational landscape. Multidisciplinary texts like *They Called Us Enemy* allow the reader to investigate and determine the role racism has played in the founding and creation of the United States. Readers are presented with a compelling narrative and pushed to investigate the notions of American democracy.

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Iowa Journal for the Social Studies
Special Call for Papers, Summer 2024

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About the Journal

The Iowa Journal for the Social Studies is a peer-reviewed, electronic journal that provides an outlet for research, best practices, curriculum work, and media reviews in social studies education. Each issue of [*The Iowa Journal for the Social Studies*](#) will include work relevant to social studies researchers and educators in K-12 and higher education.

**Volume 32, Issue 2 Special Call for Manuscripts:
Divisive Legislation and Anti-Oppressive Elementary Social Studies**

The editors of the *Iowa Journal for the Social Studies*, a peer-reviewed electronic journal, issue a call to submit manuscripts for a special issue on Divisive Legislation and Anti-Oppressive Elementary Social Studies.

In this issue, we consider how teachers and teacher educators are responding to legislation about divisive concepts that impact elementary social studies from a theoretical, curricular, or experiential perspective, as well as the impact of the legislation in concert with teacher responses on the state of elementary social studies. In line with these goals, we invite manuscripts that engage with the following ideas: 1) Emotional responses to national movements driven by fear, 2) Maintaining space for social studies in spite of ongoing and renewed marginalization, and 3) How anti-oppressive social studies can continue to exist in this climate (more guidance offered on these topics on page 2).

Particularly, we seek empirical research along with works that push the conceptual frameworks as well as lesson plans and activities in the elementary classroom that respond to these legislations. We are interested in manuscripts that feature research, conceptual and theoretical work, curriculum and lesson plans that have been implemented in the K-16 classroom, and media reviews. In all submissions, we ask authors to frame their research through a critical lens and to think deeply about theory in relation to the call.

CFP posted: February 1, 2024

Submissions due by: March 15, 2024

Submissions sent out for review: Upon receipt

Reviews returned: By April 15, 2024

Author revisions submitted: May 15, 2024

Publication: June 15, 2024

Please send submissions to: Amy Allen, allenamy@vt.edu

1. Emotional responses to national movements driven by fear

In-service and pre-service teachers, parents, administrators, and university instructors are currently challenged to grapple with the affective impact of the divisive legislation aimed at public education and elementary social studies. We refer to affect as “the forces (intensities, energies, flows, etc.) that register on/with-in/across bodies to produce and shape personal/emotional experiences. In other words, affect is not what you feel, as much as it is an event that forces you *to be(come) affected, to feel some-thing*” (Shaviro, 2010, p. 5). This definition allows for the possibility that impact is made not only to someone but provides a space for agency in response and addresses “the ways that affective encounters have the potential to, at any given moment, move us forward ↔ keep us stuck, mark our belonging ↔ non-belonging to social worlds, and attune us to the promise ↔ threat of each relational encounter: the “‘more-than,’ the ‘other-than,’ the different-than” (Seigworth, 2017, p. ii; see also Dernikos, 2018; Niccolini, 2016; Stewart, 2007). In this call, we want to explore affective encounters with this legislation across the US, in and out of the classroom, in settings that impact elementary social studies.

2. Maintaining space for social studies in spite of ongoing and renewed marginalization

Barriers such as real or imagined time pressure, often due to teacher perception of overloaded curricula or the pressures of high-stakes testing, have led to the continued marginalization of social studies for decades (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Gibbs, 2019; Houser, 1995; Lintner, 2006). However, in more recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of teachers who avoid teaching social studies due to fear of retribution from parents, the school district, or even federal stakeholders (Dunn et al., 2019; Ravitch, 2016) or potential threats to their social, professional, or personal security (Dunn et al., 2019; Engebretson, 2018; Gibbs, 2019). These perceived threats have begun to be realized in and following the Trump era. In 2016, two teachers were put on leave after speaking out against then-President-Elect Trump (Branson-Potts, 2016). Two years ago, the Washington Post reported 160+ teachers lost their positions due to political debates (Nanaston & Balingit, 2022), and last year, a professor at Palm Beach Atlantic University was fired for teaching a racial justice unit after two decades on staff (Sachs, 2023). These are just a few of many examples across the nation. Because there is a real possibility of job loss as an increased number of teachers’ curricular and pedagogic decisions are monitored and policed (Dunn et al., 2019), teacher agency and autonomy, as well as teacher capacity and desire to teach social studies, are limited by fear. Ultimately, we posit, this fear leads to the further marginalization of elementary social studies. In this issue, we are interested in hearing about observed negative impacts on the space allotted for elementary social studies in the classroom in response to divisive concept bills as well as ways teachers and teacher educators are pushing back against this fear to protect the field and move forward with an anti-oppressive approach to teaching social studies.

3. How anti-oppressive social studies can continue to exist in this climate

Anti-oppressive social studies is a learning framework that addresses social studies content using a counter-narrative and non-indoctrination instructional approach. With that in mind, anti-oppressive social studies “draws our attention to long-standing structures and systems within which people learn and enact prejudices that reproduce unjust power relations” (Rodriguez & Swalwell, 2022, p. 26). Because oppression still exists in many forms around the globe and extends beyond human life, we are interested in ways social studies IS being taught in today’s classrooms that address various types of oppression and the struggles against it. All of the social studies disciplines - history, geography, civics, economics - can be taught in an anti-oppressive manner that allows children to critique systems of power, think critically, and engage in their own learning. Research and practitioner

manuscripts focused on classroom practices, curriculum, children’s literature, referencing primary and secondary sources, and the like are welcome.

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