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This descriptive case study describes the use of documentary film to teach historical thinking in one undergraduate elementary social studies methods course. The study was situated within a teacher education program at a mid-sized public university in the Southeastern United States. Eighteen students were enrolled in the course. Of the eighteen students, one student self-identified as biracial and seventeen students self-identified as White. I was the instructor for the course meetings. Over a period of four weeks, students viewed four different documentary films using anticipation guides, corroborated a variety of historical sources, and engaged in whole group Socratic dialogues in class. Following each of the four classes, students completed written reflections related to the process. Each week, students explored a new theme in the social studies curriculum and a different historical thinking skill. Case study method was used and data collection methods included pre and post questionnaires with Likert-style and open ended response items, students' viewing anticipation guides, transcribed Socratic dialogues, and students' written reflections. Data was coded and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Study findings revealed that students understood the documentary films to be realistic and informative historical sources, and frequently had emotional reactions to the four films. Students most often cited the film sources in their responses, and used the films to identify popular narratives and counter-narratives and engage historical empathy; however, they did not interrogate the film sources in the same way that they did the other

historical sources. Additionally, the films seemed to promote students' engagement with multiple controversial issues. Instructional implications for social studies education as well as implications for student learning are discussed.

USING FILM TO THINK HISTORICALLY ABOUT THE CIVIL RIGHTS
MOVEMENT WITH ELEMENTARY PRESERVICE TEACHERS

by

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To the loving memory of my mother and father, who were my earliest and most influential teachers, advisors, and mentors. Thank you for believing in me.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historical Thinking

Historical thinking is the process of investigating and interpreting the past through multiple, differing perspectives and historical accounts while considering one's own unique location in time, perspectives, and lived experiences influence how they understand history (Foster & Yeager, 1998; VanSledright, 2002; Wineburg, 2001). It is the process of uncovering, deliberating, and making sense of what is known and not known, even if it is fragmented. As a classroom practice, it can encourage learners to explore their positionality and experiences as well as the perspectives and lived experiences of others, while troubling how their ideas influence the ways in which they understand history, their lives, and others (James, 2008, 2009; VanSledright, 2002, 2004). It is inquiry based and experiential (VanSledright, 2002, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). As an instructional approach, historical thinking can situate contemporary learners within investigations of the past while bridging their lives with the lives of historical people, demonstrating some of the core principles of social justice pedagogy and critical pedagogy.

Classroom opportunities like historical thinking that involve learners in locating and studying marginalized and conflicting perspectives of social norms has been widely celebrated as social justice pedagogy (Bickmore, 2008; Giroux, 2006; Wade, 2007;

Zeichner, 2009). Social justice pedagogy encourages active participation in deconstructing the dominant narratives of history and society as well as the power structures that strengthen them. This is demonstrated as students become actively involved in challenging the dominant narratives of history (which often lead to challenging historical and contemporary narratives of society) often enacted as students locate and corroborate a variety of conflicting historical accounts. Social justice pedagogy also involves students in thinking about how historical and social norms and dominance are created, used, and sustained, and how their own ideas are impacted by these narratives and their own multiple identities.

Historical thinking also demonstrates aspects of critical pedagogy, which seeks to expose learners to issues of education, equity, and power (while also acknowledging their own position and power), and help them to develop the cognitive tools necessary for approaching problems. In the classroom, critical pedagogy attempts to trouble traditional schooling methods, and it celebrates teaching that amplifies marginalized perspectives and critiques the dominant ideology. As critical pedagogy is “a pedagogy that must be forged with, not for, the oppressed (Freire, 2009, p. 48),” then the historical counter-narratives of oppressed persons can provide a text for contributing to such learning experiences.

One tenet of historical thinking that embodies social justice pedagogy and critical pedagogy is locating and analyzing dominant historical narratives and historical counter-narratives. I define dominant narratives as widely published and accepted representations or perspectives of a historical event, group, or individuals. I define counter-narratives as

recorded representations of contemporary or historical events, groups, or individuals that present a perspective or account that contradicts the dominant, traditional narrative of the event, group, or individual. Counter-narratives can be primary or secondary sources such as written accounts, material artifacts, and audio-visual recordings. As a social justice and critical pedagogy method in the teacher education classroom, counter-narratives present a dynamic text, providing pre-service teachers the opportunity to better understand their own lives as they grapple with deliberating multiple perspectives (Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009) and the reality that many historical and contemporary perspectives or narratives are marginalized and even silenced. Because of this reality, counter-narratives are especially valuable for helping pre-service teachers understand the power constraint between dominant historical narratives and historical counter-narratives. Although literature about historical thinking is primarily situated in K-12 classrooms, historical thinking can be an optimal strategy for developing social justice pedagogy with elementary pre-service teachers. To understand the utility of historical thinking in elementary social studies teacher education, one must first consider the current state of elementary education and elementary social studies.

Contemporary Elementary Social Studies Teacher Education

Recently, elementary social studies has experienced a radical revolution with the onset of standardized testing. The impact of standardized testing is a national dilemma, with students in some states taking accountability tests as early as third grade. Furthermore, scholarship confirms that in the face of increased standardized testing, elementary social studies instruction has rapidly declined (Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield,

2006; Brown, 2010; Heafner et al., 2007; Knighton, 2003; Rock et al., 2006). Although elementary social studies is not entirely absent in elementary classrooms, when it is taught, it portrays Eurocentric, traditional narratives of historical events and people or facts and details transmitted to students rather than working towards a more comprehensive understanding of big ideas. This is unsettling as educational research demonstrates that young children can understand and negotiate abstract concepts and critical processes in the social studies through strategies like historical thinking, making elementary social studies an ideal location for teachers to enact social justice pedagogy through opportunities like historical thinking (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Perhaps related to the devaluation of social studies in elementary education is research that shows elementary pre-service teachers to be disinterested in teaching social studies and lacking knowledge of how to create quality social studies instruction.

Moreover, contemporary teacher education students are much different from pre-service teachers in the past. Today's pre-service teachers are millennial learners, equipped with technology tools and skills and drawn to interactive and technology centered teaching and learning opportunities. This is particularly critical for planning and implementing courses in teacher education, where pre-service teachers expect to experience non-traditional opportunities to learn about how to engage their own, future millennial learners. Therefore, the teacher education classroom should provide a variety of teaching and learning opportunities to engage students who are both millennial learners and future teachers (McGlynn, 2005). I posit that teaching with documentary film is one instructional method that engages millennial learners. As the availability and

use of technology is rampant among millennial pre-service teachers, teaching with film provides students with an alternative to traditional classroom instruction that is interactive and technology based. In summary, teaching with film in the social studies methods course embraces the cognitive interests of millennial learners while providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore their own thinking through counter-narratives of history. Here, they are engaging in a process unlike traditional social studies education as they take part in historical thinking with filmic counter-narratives of the past, interacting with the film text and creating their own account of what really happened.

Statement of the Problem

Contemporary elementary teacher education and social studies teacher education demonstrate the need for pre-service teachers to engage teacher educators who model critical pedagogy like historical thinking within their teacher education courses (Loughran, 2006; Zeichner, 2009). This implies that elementary teacher educators should intentionally and explicitly teach for and with historical thinking in the elementary social studies methods course. The elementary social studies methods course is an optimal location for developing historical thinking as it allows pre-service teachers to both learn to think historically and learn how to teach with historical thinking. Current scholarship surrounding teaching counter-narratives in social studies suggests that film is an ideal text to use for developing students' historical thinking skills and promoting a social justice perspective towards teaching and learning (Marcus, Metzger, Paxton, & Stoddard, 2010; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Stoddard, 2007). Moreover, teaching pre-service teachers how

to think about their own thought processes is central to their identity as millennial learners (McGlynn, 2005), and exploring counter-narratives through film is one instructional method that engages the millennial learner who is preparing to teach.

Using films that portray a counter-narrative creates a unique and engaging shared text for developing pre-service teachers' historical thinking skills while demonstrating a social justice foundation in the teacher education course. I posit that teaching historical thinking through film in the elementary social studies methods course provides a model for exemplary social studies instruction while troubling pre-service teachers' ideologies and expanding their understanding of counter-narratives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this interpretive, qualitative study was to examine how one bounded system of elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives in elementary social studies through the use of documentary film. The filmic counter-narratives that I presented in this study are progressive counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement. Each selected film or film clip encourages social justice thinking through the narrative that is presented in film. For example, *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks* reveals that Rosa was part of a larger, well-planned initiative, which goes against the dominant narrative that she was a tired seamstress who acted alone. Therefore, students saw and heard an account that contradicted the dominant narrative of Parks.

The purpose of using counter-narratives in my course was to expose students to historical perspectives or accounts that are counter to the traditional stories about the

Civil Rights Movement with which most people are not familiar. Although at times, some students learned about the event, group, or individual for the first time in my course, most of the films that I used provide an account of history that conflicts with what students were previously taught. Throughout the study of the movement, the films and related sources were corroborated together, which provided pre-service teachers multiple opportunities to develop their own historical account of what happened during the Civil Rights Movement.

I used the films and film clips as primary and secondary sources to generate student interest and ideas, and then corroborated the clips with other primary and secondary sources that presented the dominant narratives related to the Civil Rights Movement. Corroborating the multiple different sources is central to historical thinking, which brings together varying sources in an attempt to create students' own accounts of what took place. Throughout the process, students were confronted with the power of the dominant narrative. During the weekly exercises with historical thinking, I presented students with textbook passages and children's books about the Civil Rights Movement. Here, students determined which narrative—the dominant narrative or the counter-narrative—triumphed.

Through the descriptive case study design, I worked as a participant researcher to facilitate the course and collect data through multiple qualitative data collection methods including student's anticipation guides, pre and post questionnaires, recorded classroom discussions, and students' written reflections. The study took place during the fall 2011 semester. Following the closing of the data collection, I analyzed the multiple forms of

study data using constant comparative analysis to identify the themes and categories within the bounded system. The interpretive nature of case study design provided a unique perspective for understanding how pre-service teachers engage the process of teaching with historical thinking in the teacher education methods course. Numerous precautions were implemented to address the threats to credibility, dependability, and transferability of the case study design.

Research Questions

Grounded in a comprehensive review of the literature surrounding historical thinking, teaching with film, and elementary social studies education, the following research questions guided the descriptive case study investigation:

1. How do elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?
2. How does film facilitate elementary pre-service teachers' understanding of counter-narratives about the Civil Rights Movement?

Through implementing this study, I hoped to understand how one cohort of elementary pre-service teachers experienced historical thinking through filmic counter-narratives. This study provides instructional implications and implications for student learning in elementary social studies education. In the next chapter, I explore the current literature surrounding the conceptual framework for this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Thinking

Historical thinking is the critical cognitive process of investigating and interpreting the past through multiple, differing perspectives and historical accounts, while recognizing the influence of one's historicity and ideology on the process (Foster & Yeager, 1998; VanSledright, 2002; Wineburg, 2001). Historical thinking also forces learners to acknowledge and trouble their own positionality and historicity—a tenet of social justice teaching and critical race theory—and recognize that their epistemology and ontology directly impact the ways in which they understand their own lives and history (VanSledright, 2002, 2004). VanSledright (2001) asserts that students' multiple identities—race, class, ethnicity, and gender—all impact how they know and understand the world, including the past. When historical thinking is used to illuminate students' positionality, it invites and interrogation of the dominant historical narrative, which, like any curriculum, is shaped by the ideologies of those in positions of power (Apple, 1979). Students who engage historical thinking seek to understand the past through posing questions, identifying the context and the motivation for historical actions, and then weaving together a historical narrative spun across various, contradictory sources (Foster & Yeager, 1998; VanSledright, 2002; Wineburg, 2001), looking for the credibility across the sources (Tally & Goldenberg, 2005; Wineburg, 2001). Furthermore, historical

thinking promotes multiple strategies and skills that help students to critically and successfully engage the past, investigate historical sources, and identify what is known (or thought to be known), and what is not (Foster & Yeager, 1998).

This process is difficult. Wineburg (2001) asserts that historical thinking is an “unnatural act” because it conflicts with the natural thinking process and the strongly held beliefs and popular narratives about history. It requires students to actively consume historical content through a quest for locating evidence and generating a sound argument; this process confronts students with their own historical assumptions and how these assumptions and biases originated, and troubles their ideas about what makes a source credible, forcing students to dig deeper than their initial reactions and feelings about history (Wineburg, 2001), and developing a true understanding of the utility of history in their lives (Lee & Ashby, 2001; Levstik, 1997; VanSledright, 2002).

Through engaging historical thinking, learners are afforded experiences to develop the tools necessary to make sense of the past, understand historical significance, practice critical questioning, develop historical empathy, and explore counter-narratives (Lee & Ashby, 2001; VanSledright, 2002; Wineburg, 2001). Historical thinking requires teachers and students to understand historical significance as historical thinking develops (Levstik, 2000). Students who explore historical thinking are confronted with the development and function of historical significance in engaging the past. Analyzing historical significance involves students who are actively engaged in identifying what is significant in the past as they determine what historical events, people, and themes should be explored more than others (Levstik, 2000).

This is particularly true for elements of the past that are contentious or negative. Teachers often omit or gloss over the more controversial elements of the past; this may be related to their own uncomfortable feelings towards difficult topics or their lack of efficacy in teaching and discussing historical controversy. While teachers might avoid such classroom experiences, students may be interested in fleshing out contentious topics of the past. Interestingly, the process of dismantling historical assumptions and notions as well as popular historical knowledge seems to be more engaging to students than traditional content instruction alone (Levstik, 2000; Levstik & Barton, 2000; VanSledright, 2002). This suggests that students as young as elementary grades are naturally interested in historical significance and historical thinking, providing support for the utility of historical thinking as part of elementary students' social studies education experiences.

Historical thinking cultivates students' abilities to develop and pose questions, and recognize the multiple perspectives relative to historical events and themes. Students engaged in the processes of historical thinking pose deliberate questions about the documents that they investigate. Questions generally address the document's credibility, the source, how multiple sources merge, what is consistent, and how a collective narrative can be drawn (Wineburg, 2001). Question posing should lead students to historical perspective taking which is an analytic strategy that involves deconstructing the popular perspective, identifying marginalized perspectives, amplifying the voice of marginalized groups or persons, and then thoughtfully considering the positions and consequences of the conflicting and even omitted perspectives (VanSledright, 2004). This

process develops gradually over time and with ongoing engagement in historical thinking. Interestingly, students as young as elementary grades can successfully engage in historical question posing and historical perspective recognition (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Levstik, 1997). This provides implications for the utility of historical thinking in elementary grades and in elementary social studies teacher education.

Historical thinking illuminates the presence, utility, and importance of historical counter-narratives, a tenet of critical race theory (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and social justice pedagogy (Kumashiro, 2004). Traditional social studies texts across the grades illustrate history through retelling the popular or traditional narratives of the past, often minimizing or ignoring counter-narratives of historical events and themes. This is evident in historical accounts like the traditional narrative of Christopher Columbus, who has widely been hailed as a hero of American history throughout history textbooks and even across other, popular historical sources. However, there are alternative narratives, or counter-narratives, that provide a different, contradicting account of Columbus' role in American history. The process of historical thinking requires students to locate, interrogate, and interpret multiple, conflicting accounts of past events, experiences, or people. Therefore, historical thinking is difficult, especially if students do not have access to the historical resources that present multiple perspectives (Yeager & Foster, 2001). However, this engagement with counter-narratives is critical for honing students' historical thinking and students' understanding of self and others. Teaching with counter-stories or counter-narratives, one instructional practice related to both social justice pedagogy (Kumashiro,

2004) and critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1995), pushes students to move past the conventional accounts of history to explore the complexity of interpreting history and developing a coherent narrative, even when the past is not fully archived and marginalized narratives are not widely available (Levstik, 1997; Yeager & Foster, 2001). In addition to developing students' understanding of historical significance, perspective recognition, and counter-narratives, historical thinking seems to encourage historical empathy.

Contemporary research surrounding historical thinking reveals that teaching for historical thinking can promote students' historical empathy. Like historical thinking, historical empathy is a skill that develops over time and through persistent experience (Foster & Yeager, 1998; Yeager & Foster, 2001). Historical empathy is not sympathy nor is it identifying the similarities between the past and the present (Lee & Ashby, 2001; Yeager & Foster, 2001). Historical empathy entails drawing close to the past world while thinking about the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others in the past (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Gelbach, 2004; VanSledright, 2002, 2004). It is the effort to understand the past through careful consideration of how and why historical people did the things that they did, what their goals might have been, the context of historical events/people, and how their experiences and historical context are different from students' lives today (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Historical thinking is difficult because the past is not archived fully; moreover, students may not realize the impact of their own identities on how they investigate and understand the past. Therefore, historical thinking should include an investigation of who students are. Through historical thinking, students can critically

examine their own historical knowledge and contemporary context, their lived experiences, and their assumptions (VanSledright, 2002). The process of historical empathy requires that students recognize that there are multiple perspectives present in any part of history, perspectives different from their own, and that this reality impacts how students see and understand others and how others see and understand them (Barton, 1996; Barton & Levstik, 2004; VanSledright, 2002).

As historical thinking invites students to examine historical knowledge and evidence, historical empathy engages students in using this historical evidence to develop a reasonable and thoughtful explanation of the actions of people in history (Lee & Ashby, 2001). Historical empathy bridges the historical evidence available about the past with the inferences students are able to draw from practicing historical thinking (Yeager & Doppen, 2001). Current research suggests that historical empathy can ultimately lead students into the act of caring about the events and people in the past, including their perspectives (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Lee & Ashby, 2001). Historical empathy has the capacity to bring history to life for students, and some social studies educators believe that developing historical empathy among students is the most important part of teaching history (Yeager & Foster, 2001). Historical thinking and historical empathy compel students to acknowledge and own their historical positionality, which is vital to social justice teaching and critical race theory, and to recognize the context, perspectives, and reasoning of others. These experiences promote a social justice foundation, where learners wrestle with the impact of their own life experiences and historical context on how they understand their lives, others, and the world. Additionally, some researchers

contend that historical empathy promotes other, related historical thinking skills like perspective-taking and deliberation (Yeager & Doppen, 2001; Yeager & Foster, 2001).

Historical Thinking in Elementary Social Studies

Historical thinking in the elementary classroom involves students learning about change over time, the diversity of historical and contemporary perspectives, and students actively experiencing the big ideas of history rather than isolated and disconnected facts (Alleman & Brophy, 2003; Barton, 1996; Barton & Levstik, 2004; VanSledright, 2002).

Recent work situated in the elementary grades demonstrates that young children can actively investigate history as historians, assigning significance to historical events or people, assessing the credibility of opposing historical sources, interpreting the past, recognizing the presence of multiple perspectives, and applying historical empathy (Barton, 1996; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Brophy & Alleman, 2007; Field, 2001; James, 2009; James & McVay, 2009; Levstik, 1997, 2000; Levstik & Barton, 2000; Levstik & Pappas, 1992; Ohn, 2009; Slekar, 2009; VanSledright, 2002).

Most educational research related to teaching with historical thinking in the elementary classroom is dedicated to the use of historical narratives (Barton, 1996; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Levstik, 1995; Levstik & Pappas, 1992). In elementary social studies, the use of both traditional and under-celebrated historical narratives is important because students often adjust or change their narratives of the past if they do not fit the storyline that they like or if they demonstrate an alternative progression of events that is unfamiliar to students (Barton, 1996; Levstik & Pappas, 1992). Historical narratives seem to be more interesting to elementary students than textbooks, and elementary social

studies educators suggest that students display more active responses and increased motivation with historical narratives than with social studies textbooks (Barton, 1996; Levstik & Pappas, 1987). Therefore, the use of historical narratives seems to provide a natural segue into teaching historical thinking in the elementary grades. In summary, research related to historical thinking in the elementary grades illuminates the benefits of teaching children to think historically, while pointing to the role of the teacher in facilitating historical thinking.

Historical Thinking in Elementary Social Studies Teacher Education

Elementary social studies education provides the unique opportunity for pre-service teachers to learn how to engage historical thinking and use it in elementary social studies in powerful ways. The process of learning to teach for historical thinking begins with elementary pre-service teachers grappling with the knowledge of their own values and the impact of their positionality and beliefs on what and how they teach (Barton & Levstik, 2004; James, 2008; Ohn, 2009; Slekar, 2009), which is an active demonstration of equity pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 1995) critical pedagogy (Freire, 2009; Shor, 1992) and critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Elementary teachers who employ historical thinking in their classrooms must first experience the progression of thinking historically (Ohn, 2009; Yeager & Wilson, 1997). This process should begin in their teacher education program in the elementary social studies methods course.

As elementary educators are typically content generalists rather than content experts like their secondary peers, few elementary educators are social studies experts.

The larger body of literature related to teaching pre-service teachers how to think historically and to teach for historical thinking in their own classrooms is written about middle school and high school educators who are working in social studies education rather than in multiple content areas like their elementary peers. Therefore, if elementary students are capable of historical thinking, their teachers must understand historical thinking and how to promote it in the elementary classroom (Barton, 1996; Levstik & Pappas, 1987, 1992; Ohn, 2009). Therefore, developing pre-service teachers who understand and value historical thinking is even more vital in elementary teacher education, where pre-service teachers are not social studies content experts like their secondary peers, yet elementary students are capable of successfully engaging in historical thinking practices. I posit that the most beneficial and realistic location for elementary pre-service teachers to engage in historical thinking and to learn how to use historical thinking in the elementary classroom is the elementary social studies methods course.

Although current research demonstrates that historical thinking is a realistic and powerful teaching and learning strategy in the elementary grades, less is known about using historical thinking with pre-service elementary teachers. In an action research study of elementary social studies methods students, James (2008) examined the pre-service teachers' resistance to implementing the inquiry and interpretive skills of historical thinking with young learners. James studied 70 teacher candidates (both graduate and undergraduate students) across three semesters to understand their beliefs about teaching students to think historically in the elementary grades. James found that the pre-service

teachers overwhelmingly believed that young children cannot and should not engage in classroom practices that disrupt traditional teaching and narratives about the past. In fact, teacher candidates in this study believed that it was their job as elementary teachers to protect students from disruptive thinking and alternative perspectives, which they viewed as highly inappropriate for young learners. James' students collectively demonstrated strong beliefs in a linear account of the past and were adamant about preserving or privileging the popular, traditional narratives of history.

James's (2008) work provides stark implications for teaching historical thinking in elementary social studies methods, where pre-service teachers can and should wrestle with the reality of multiple, conflicting narratives of the past and begin creating their own framework for teaching students to think historically (or resist the experience and the use of historical thinking in their own, future classrooms). Additionally, James's work demands that elementary social studies educators consider the significance and difficulties of challenging pre-service teachers to dismantle traditional narratives of history, an active demonstration of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2009; Shor, 1992) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and to think critically about how they will engage their own, future students in the social studies. This work provides elementary social studies educators with the groundwork for future scholarship examining how elementary pre-service teachers engage the process of historical thinking and how they understand the utility of historical thinking with young learners.

A review of contemporary scholarship demonstrates that social studies educators have addressed the meaning of historical thinking, and developed a foundation for

teaching for historical thinking in elementary and secondary education. Additionally, research indicates that elementary teachers use narratives to develop students' historical thinking, yet, the use of counter-narratives to develop historical thinking has not been explored. Similarly, research about teaching elementary pre-service teachers how to think historically and how to teach for historical thinking in elementary social studies methods has only recently been reported, and research that examines the use of historical counter-narratives in elementary social studies methods to develop elementary pre-service teachers' historical thinking is scarce. The lack of research related to teaching with counter-narratives to develop historical thinking skills with elementary pre-service teachers paired with the literature surrounding historical thinking creates a unique and promising opportunity for developing further research related to teaching for historical thinking in elementary social studies teacher education.

Crafting learning opportunities in pre-service teacher education that join historical thinking, teaching with counter-narratives, and elementary social studies education demonstrates pedagogical and research potential. The use of film texts to present counter-narratives and promote historical thinking creates a new and exciting possibility for classroom practice and educational research. Interestingly, educational research about using film with pre-service teachers to develop their historical thinking is quickly expanding.

Teaching with Film to Facilitate Historical Thinking

Historical feature films and documentaries have been used for more than two decades as a teaching and learning strategy in social studies education. Feature films are

popular, typically Hollywood movie productions that depict real or fictional people and/or events situated within the past (Marcus & Levine, 2007). The rise in the use of films in the classroom was originally attributed to the popularity of the VHS tape and the broad circulation of feature films (Considine, 1989). More recently, the rampant use of films in social studies classrooms is credited to the continued and growing availability of feature films and documentaries as well as the development of DVDs (Stoddard & Marcus, 2005). As nine out of ten secondary social studies teachers report using feature films or film segments on a weekly basis and eight out of ten report using documentaries weekly (Stoddard & Marcus, 2005), film is clearly an important part of secondary social studies education. Early research regarding teaching with film in social studies provided implications for using film to identify bias and stereotypes, and to position films within the complex social and cultural frameworks of both the past and the present (Cates, 1990; Considine, 1989; O'Connor, 1988; Rosenstone, 1988). Even the earliest educational research about teaching with film in social studies examined how teachers and students engaged and deconstructed film (O'Connor, 1988; Seixas, 1993), sometimes focusing on how students and teachers understood the film's narratives (Cates, 1990). Teaching with film in secondary social studies has recently sparked a large amount of educational research, particularly the study of using film to teach perspective recognition and to explore alternative perspectives or counter-narratives (D'Sa, 2005; Hess, 2007; Marcus, 2005; Metzger, 2010; Stoddard, 2009, 2010; Stoddard & Marcus, 2005, 2010). Yet, less is known about the frequency of or motivation for teaching with films in the elementary grades.

Hollywood Feature Film as a Tool for Historical Thinking

Contemporary research about Hollywood feature films illustrates that teachers and teacher educators often use feature films as part of a larger framework for developing historical thinking (Briley, 2007; Marcus, 2007; Marcus et al., 2010; Stoddard & Marcus, 2005, 2006). Some researchers suggest that teachers who teach for historical thinking, and especially those who employ a social justice foundation as demonstrated through a critical pedagogy approach (Freire, 2009), may use selected Hollywood feature film to critique and analyze the norms, assumptions, and values of society by selecting films that demonstrate alternative perspectives or counter-narratives, and offering alternative narratives to the popular perspective depicted in a film (Marcus, 2007; Stoddard & Marcus, 2006, 2010).

Research about teaching with Hollywood film suggests that teachers must engage students in examining films as historical sources, which includes analyzing the producer or director's intent and the social context in which the film was made (Marcus, et al., 2010). In social studies education, films offer a unique opportunity as non-traditional classroom texts for students to explore popular narratives and counter-narratives of the past. Popular narratives are often recorded in students' social studies textbooks, but films can present a different perspective(s) of the past. Feature films can provide teachers and students the opportunity to locate counter-stories, which are the alternative perspectives that are too often absent from the more popular primary sources and textbooks (Briley, 2007; Marcus & Monaghan, 2009; Marcus et al., 2010).

Deconstructing popular feature films as historical sources involves several components of historical thinking, including looking closely at what is not being said or shown, identifying the era in which the film was produced, recognizing what social norms and historical knowledge are being presented and how marginalized groups are represented (Briley, 2007; Metzger, 2007; Stoddard & Marcus, 2005, 2006). This includes discerning why some depictions seem or feel realistic while similar accounts do not (Seixas, 1993). Generally, marginalized groups are not the main characters or central narratives in dominant historical texts like popular feature film (Stoddard & Marcus, 2006). Even when teachers attempt to highlight under-celebrated perspectives, social studies materials that do so are often unavailable or minimal. This problem demonstrates the importance of social studies teachers using film to explicitly deconstruct the dominant narratives that are portrayed, and looking for examples of counter-narratives in film to use in the social studies classroom (Stoddard & Marcus, 2006). While some popular feature film researchers posit that viewing films often constructs a sense of relatedness for students who can feel like they see the problems and events being portrayed through the eyes of those who lived the experiences (Metzger, 2007; O'Connor, 2007), this process is complicated by presentism, as students often see the past through their own, contemporary knowledge and lens (Cates, 1990; Seixas, 1993; Stoddard & Marcus, 2005).

Marcus (2007) and Metzger (2007) caution that using Hollywood feature films in the social studies classroom can be problematic if students do not exercise historical thinking skills by challenging the historical accuracy and narrative representations of

films and comparing films to other historical accounts and sources. For example, if students do not engage historical thinking as they view film media, they are likely to passively consume the film texts as accurate representations of the past. However, if students are engaged in joining feature film with historical thinking, they may approach and process the films as historical sources. Furthermore, utilizing feature film as a historical source and classroom teaching tool affords students the experiences of deconstructing traditional historical accounts, exploring counter-narratives, and even engaging in perspective recognition and historical empathy (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Stoddard & Marcus, 2010). Clearly, teaching with film using the process of historical thinking can provide opportunities for teachers to advance students' understanding of the past and even promote the development of critical pedagogy principles.

Documentary Film as a Tool for Historical Thinking

Documentary films are created within a certain social context and with a specific intent, and like popular feature films, documentaries are influenced by the ideas of the producer and director. Most documentary films contain primary source evidence (e.g., interviews, video footage, and photographs) that could be used to further the process of historical thinking. Currently, the body of literature related to teaching with documentary film is small but growing. Although there exists less research on the pedagogical uses of documentary film than feature film, the scholarship that has been circulated related to teaching with documentary film provides practical implications for teachers who use documentary film to teach historical thinking. Similar to Hollywood films, documentary films can be used to think historically. Researchers recognize that teachers who embrace

the principles of critical pedagogy and critical race theory can utilize films that represent marginalized groups to show under-celebrated perspectives, to trouble popular historical narratives, and to teach students to recognize whose stories are being celebrated and whose stories are not (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Stoddard, 2007). Furthermore, teachers who use documentary film to advance critical pedagogy may create and implement relevant activities that complement the films and pose thoughtful, critical questions (Stoddard, 2007).

Research focused on teaching with documentaries that present marginalized groups, individuals, or perspectives as counter-narratives is small but growing (Hess, 2007; Stoddard, 2007; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). For example, Hess (2007) examined three documentaries that portray marginalized groups or individuals as central narratives. This work demonstrates the possibilities of using documentaries in the classroom to expand students' understanding of popular narratives, counter-narratives, and the location (or absence) of alternative perspectives within popular film media. However, the small amount of literature available that examines teaching with films with counter-narratives points to the opportunity to further research teaching with filmic counter-narratives.

In addition to presenting alternative perspectives, documentary film can be used in the social studies classroom to develop historical empathy. Historical empathy involves identifying the perspectives that are upheld by the film, and comparing the film's perspectives to other narratives to create a personal response to the multiple stories being told (Marcus et al., 2010). The cinematic elements of a documentary film, including primary and secondary source accounts, may affect how students as viewers

develop historical empathy (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Stoddard, 2007). Using film to develop historical empathy can help students consider whose perspective they most relate to and why (Stoddard, 2007; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). Furthermore, Stoddard (2007) suggests that historical empathy can be influenced and even hindered by students' ideologies and what they want to believe about history and historical people. To promote students' historical empathy, teachers should join films with strategic readings, intentional and difficult questions, extension activities, and well planned classroom discussion (Marcus et al., 2010). Whether the films in use are Hollywood feature films or documentary films, teachers can situate both forms of film in the classroom in deliberate and meaningful ways that facilitate students' use of historical thinking skills while investigating the past.

Film as a Tool in Pre-service Teacher Education

If teachers are to use film in the social studies classroom both deliberately and effectively, they must first experience film as a student in the social studies methods course, then learn how to use film to teach social studies in their own, future classrooms. In the past decade, educational researchers began to study the use of film as an instructional tool in teacher education. Similar to the current literature about teaching with historical thinking in teacher education, only a small amount is known about teaching with film in teacher education. Although the body of scholarship is small, it is steadily increasing, creating a foundation for future research about using film teacher education.

In an action research case study of secondary pre-service teachers, Bullock and Freedman (2005) studied one course of pre-service teachers to understand whether the use of film as an integral component of the course promoted students' critical thinking and initiate their framework for social justice. Bullock and Freedman found that students engaged in discussions about the films (although apprehensively), and that the films challenged students' strongly held beliefs while promoting a social justice trajectory for the course. Bullock and Freedman point to the use of discussion to complement course films, and the use of films to disrupt students' thinking.

Across his work as a participant researcher, Trier (2003, 2005, 2007, 2010) has widely researched the use of film in preparing graduate pre-service teachers in English Education. His work demonstrates the use of film as a classroom text, often positioning the film as a shared text for students to analyze and dismantle during whole group and online discussions or personal essays/reactions, while providing pre-service teachers with experiences as students that they, too, can implement in their classrooms (Trier, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010). Trier (2007) suggests that pre-service teachers can recognize film as a literary narrative in English education and as a potentially critical teaching tool in their own, future classrooms. More importantly, he uses popular films and television series paired with important but often difficult texts to critically engage pre-service teachers in deconstructing social problems and educational issues that will impact their classroom teaching, moving students toward becoming critical, reflective educators (Trier, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010).

Furthermore, Trier has also used film in his secondary English teacher education course to confront pre-service teachers' notions about schools and students, particularly their beliefs about inner city students as "the other." His work with film was aimed at illuminating the systemic influences on their beliefs, and helping students interpret how their own schooling experiences influence how they "see" schools and students. Trier (2005) asserts that challenging pre-service teachers in these experiences with film helps them to recognize how their ideas and experiences directly influence their beliefs about teaching, schools, and students. Trier's recent research provides an interesting contribution to the larger body of scholarship about teaching with film in teacher education, expands the smaller body of literature related to preparing pre-service teachers to use film as narrative texts in their classrooms, and extends the scholarship related to using film to elicit discussions of controversial issues.

Through case study research, Stoddard (2009, 2010) studied the use of film as an integral part of one teacher education course. During course meetings, Stoddard used advanced organizers to help students record their thoughts, questions, and reactions to the historical feature films during the student facilitated Socratic seminars, Stoddard asserts that beginning the process with clear goals, carefully selecting films, and engaging in shared discussion and inquiry promoted pre-service teachers' understanding of film as a historical narrative and as a shared classroom text and their capacity for thinking critically about the historical accounts that they see and hear. Stoddard recognizes that the use of film as a Socratic seminar text is a challenging but powerful teaching method for facilitating secondary pre-service teachers' utility and understanding of films in the

classroom as texts and as shared tools for historical thinking and analysis. Stoddard's work (2009, 2010) illuminates the need for further research positioned in teacher education courses that use film to promote pre-service teachers' understanding and utility of historical thinking. Undoubtedly, documentary film provides a dynamic and often critical approach to teaching, and preparing future teachers to use film deliberately and critically is imperative in teacher education.

Despite this growing literature on the use of film in pre-service teacher education, few studies have chronicled the use of documentary film as a pedagogical tool to engage students in the process of historical thinking. I posit that using film in the teacher education methods classroom cultivates the opportunity to move elementary pre-service teachers past understanding the academic content of the methods course to developing historical thinking skills and even future teaching practices that promote critical pedagogy in the elementary school. This process can and should take place across teacher education courses, and I believe that it should be central to teaching and learning in the elementary social studies education course.

Summary of the Literature Review

Historical thinking is the critical cognitive process of investigating and interpreting the past through multiple, differing perspectives and historical accounts, while recognizing the influence of one's historicity and ideology on the process. When enacted in the classroom, historical thinking celebrates the principles of social justice teaching and critical race theory, and provides students with meaningful opportunities to understand their own lives and the lives of others. Although historical thinking is now

widely examined with secondary students, less is known about the utility of historical thinking with elementary students or elementary pre-service teachers. However, the small body of literature related to historical thinking in elementary grades and elementary pre-service teacher education suggests that the process of historical thinking should be further examined in elementary social studies education.

The use of popular feature film to teach historical thinking has been widely explored with secondary social studies students, and recently, the use of documentary film as an instructional tool in the secondary social studies classroom and teacher education has gained interest. However, less is known about the utility of popular feature film and documentary film with elementary students or pre-service teachers to teach historical thinking. Additionally, recent literature about using popular feature film and documentary film to teach historical thinking suggests that film is a historical source to present counter-narratives. This provides important implications for further research to understand how elementary pre-service teachers engage historical thinking in the social studies methods course.

Together, the current scholarship related to teaching historical thinking in secondary and elementary social studies as well as teacher education, teaching with film, and teaching historical thinking using popular feature film and documentary film demonstrates the unique opportunity for developing research to understand how elementary pre-service teachers understand historical thinking, specifically counter-narratives, as they encounter the process through documentary films in the elementary social studies education course. There, pre-service teachers can encounter an inquiry

approach to social studies where they are invited to analyze, critique, and deliberate conflicting historical accounts of the past, identify the counter-narratives of historical events and people, pose questions about historical sources and dominant narratives, and begin to understand the process of historical thinking.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Case Study Research

Case study research is a comprehensive description that is developed through multiple data sources and extensive inquiry within a case. Exemplary case study considers alternative perspectives, addresses important problems, collects and analyzes a wealth of data, and engages the reader in the interpretation of the study (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003). Case study research in education allows the researcher to view the common (teaching and learning) as problematic, emphasizing that teaching is a continual and difficult process, while studying educational problems to develop better practice (Loughran, 2006). It originates in the work of anthropology, sociology and ethnographic research and is primarily focused on describing and interpreting a unit of study or case (Merriam, 1998).

My understanding of case studies is an amalgamation of scholarship by Yin (2003), Stake (1995), and Merriam (2009). There are multiple, shared concepts within the case study framework of these three scholars that I employed in developing my own working knowledge of case study research and in developing this case study design. Case study research represents interpretivist principles as it seeks to explain, describe, explore, illustrate, and evaluate the multiple realities of a phenomenon inside of the boundaries of the phenomenon and in its context (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Labaree, 2003;

Merriam, 2009; Noor, 2008; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). For example, interpretivist researchers who conduct case study research are primarily concerned with understanding a specific case or collection of cases, rather than generalizing a study to other contexts or cases (Patton, 2002).

The case in case study research is sometimes referred to as the bounded system because the case is a unit or entity with real boundaries that determine what is included and what is not included (Merriam, 2009; Schram, 2006). A bounded system or case in case study research is similar to a photograph. There are rich and extensive opportunities to explore the story within the picture's edges; however, what is beyond the edges of the photo (boundaries) is not examined. Identifying the case in case study involves defining the boundaries of what will be studied, what will not be studied, who is or isn't studied, and why or why not (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). Interestingly, defining a case requires understanding what the case is not as well as what the researcher wants to know or learn by exploring the case (Merriam, 1998).

Case study research exhibits multiple strengths. Case studies are particularly suited for a comprehensive and focused study of a real life event, process, or relationships bound in time (Noor, 2008; Schram, 2006). Exemplary case study research should also demonstrate the triangulation of data collection methods and potential transferability to similar cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, case study research seeks to reveal what is not demonstrated/what is missing, and strives to interpret the relationships and interconnectedness of the case's composition (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

In addition to the strengths of case study research, case study research presents several limitations that must be understood and addressed by case study researchers. Case study research is significantly influenced by threats to credibility and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). This reality cannot be eliminated, but like subjectivity, careful study design and implementation can address and minimize the threats to case study credibility and trustworthiness. The comprehensive nature of case study research requires that the researcher is heavily immersed in significant data collection within the case over a long period of time. Both scheduling and financial restrictions limit the extent that most case study researchers can be involved in collecting data. However, case study researchers can address the lack of extended involvement by employing triangulation through using several different forms of data collection to address each of the research questions.

In case study research, the subjectivity of the researcher is central to understanding the limitations of case study research. Researcher subjectivity informs the study design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Although researcher subjectivity can be problematic, careful study design and implementation can address the function of subjectivity in case study research (Maxwell, 2005; Schram, 2006). Yin (2003) asserts that the case study researcher should have a strong grasp of the issues being studied, and be able to develop and pose questions while being adaptable and flexible. How I understand and interpret what I see, hear, and read is central to the research questions I pose, the methods I use, and the analysis that follows (Spradley, 1980). When the lack of balance between the case study researcher's role as both a

participant and as an observer occurs, it creates a challenge for study implementation and data collection (Yin, 2009).

Even though case study is a desirable qualitative research method for studying a specific case, it cannot be used to examine all types of research questions in qualitative research. For example, case study research cannot be used to provide a longitudinal, comprehensive account of a culture group. This form of research provides a more extended and embedded role for the researcher than case study research. Additionally, case study research is not ideal for a study of the past; it seeks to explore and understand a contemporary case or system in detail rather than research past experiences. As case study research seeks to explore or explain a specific unit(s), it cannot be generalized to the larger populace of which the case is a part, but instead some case study findings may be transferred to similar cases, or used to develop future research endeavors.

My purpose in conducting this research was to describe, explain, interpret, and analyze the complexities and multiple realities within one case of 18 elementary pre-service teachers engaged in the process of historical thinking using documentary film in one section of my social studies methods course in the fall of 2011. My interest in the case being investigated contributed to the credibility of the case study design being implemented (Yin, 2009). The development of this case study design began with a review of literature. Through reviewing the related literature and thinking about my personal interests and classroom experiences with teaching historical thinking and teaching with film, I developed assumptions about a possible case study of pre-service teachers that would help to generate the initial research questions and initiate a very structured

research process (Yin, 2003). Stake (1995) emphasizes the evolving nature of questions and data sources within case study. I embrace this unique characteristic of case study research. I believe that as the case study develops, the research questions and data collection methods should evolve as the study design changes. This idea is central to case study being defined by the case being studied rather than by the potential methods of data collection being used (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005).

Descriptive Case Study Research

This qualitative case study was a descriptive case study (Merriam, 2009). Descriptive case study is primarily focused on the end product which should be a thick description of the unit of study including the implicit interactions and influences and the entire process encountered in examining a case(s) (Merriam, 1998). Descriptive case study involves an explicit, careful description and interpretation of the case that is aligned with the overall study design, specifically the data collection and implementation procedures being utilized (Merriam, 2009).

This descriptive case study design demonstrated three research goals: 1. to describe the teaching and learning process of one section of Elementary Social Studies Methods throughout the semester by developing a comprehensive description of the context of the case and the relationships that occur, 2. to understand and explain the process that pre-service teachers experience when they engage historical counter-narratives in film, and 3. to use the outcomes to develop a more meaningful teacher education experience within the elementary social studies methods course. This descriptive case study explored two research questions:

1. How do elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?
2. How does film facilitate elementary pre-service teachers' understanding of counter-narratives about the Civil Rights Movement?

Researcher Reflexivity in Case Study

Reflexivity, also described as authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), is my awareness as the researcher of my location throughout the entire research process (Creswell, 2007; Richards, 2005). Reflexivity demonstrates how rigorous, transparent, organized, and exhaustive I am in examining myself as the researcher as well as the case of pre-service teachers in my course. It is central to how I understood the study and myself in relation to the study and participants as I assessed and re-assessed my role in the study's design, implementation, and interpretations (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Richards, 2005). It is my self-awareness, the interrogation of my preconceptions and interpretations, and a continual consciousness of my role as a participant researcher in relation to the study being conducted (Patton, 2002). The case study researcher should develop a thorough understanding of the value and facility of reflexivity in case study methodology. In the upcoming section, The Context of the Study, I describe my role as the researcher, including my own positionality and lived experiences as a student and as a teacher.

I identify most directly with the interpretivist/post-modern paradigm (Creswell, 2007). Interpretivist inquiry posits that human action and interaction is meaningful, that revealing and understanding the location and positionality of the researcher is critical,

and interpretation should seek to truthfully present participants' meanings (Schwandt, 2003). Interpretivism seeks to make sense of a phenomenon through deconstructing what participants experience and what they understand as reality (Schram, 2006). As an interpretivist/post-modernist, my beliefs about knowledge and knowledge formation are embedded in the reality that knowledge is context and time specific and co-constructed with others (Patton, 2002; Schram, 2006). I believe that knowledge includes what many believe, is not based on a single, dominant truth, and that there are multiple realities or truths (Creswell, 2007; Schram, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

As a qualitative case study researcher, I understand that my beliefs about truth and knowledge construction profoundly impacted the ways in which I developed this research study. Like Denzin and Lincoln (2003), I believe that the interpretivist researcher resembles a quilter, who quilts the qualitative study by nesting together multiple realities woven with the thread of her own beliefs and assumptions, and hemmed with the context and time of the study. Through my interpretivist/post-modern worldview, I recognize that acquiring shared knowledge with the participants is indivisible from the study context and our relationship within the teacher education classroom.

Yin (2003), Stake (1995), and Merriam (2009) allege that case study research begins with and is continually influenced by the researcher's perspective and location within the study. I fully embrace this reality and make no claims of researcher objectivity or neutrality in this case study research; in fact, I understand the role of my ongoing and embedded location and subjectivity as part of this study (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002; Peshkin, 1988). To address the influence of researcher subjectivity, Yin (2003) and Stake

(1995) promote developing a comprehensive description through extensive engagement in the study setting, purposeful sampling, utilizing multiple data sources and triangulating the data sources (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Each of these research components is part of the study design and implementation of researcher reflexivity in this study.

I understand that my ideas and beliefs about teaching and learning and my lived experiences influence my actions as a teacher and researcher. The ways in which I interacted with students and taught this course are directly related to my beliefs and experiences, and they cannot be separated. This study design originated from my previous experiences in teaching elementary pre-service teachers in elementary social studies methods. Specifically, past unsettling experiences in this course with challenging pre-service teachers to think historically and investigate/interpret historical counter-narratives incited my interest in critically exploring the deliberate use of films to promote pre-service teachers' understanding of historical thinking and counter-narratives. My beliefs about teaching elementary social studies, historical thinking, and teaching with film influence the ways in which I understand and teach elementary social studies methods to pre-service teachers, developed this study design, and the ways that I analyzed and interpreted the study data.

Undoubtedly, my positionality impacts my ideas and beliefs as a teacher educator, my deep passion for teaching historical thinking as part of elementary social studies, and my beliefs about film as a narrative text are woven throughout every aspect of my teaching and research. Reflexivity includes my attention to voice, perspective, audience, description, interpretation, and purpose (Patton, 2002). For example, the ways in which I

listened to and heard the participants, including hearing what is not spoken, are examples of my ongoing attempts at establishing researcher reflexivity (Yin, 2009). My reactivity (how I effect the study) heavily influenced the credibility of this study, and the attempts to address reactivity were demonstrated in the reflexive measures I implemented throughout the study (Glesne, 2006; Maxwell, 2005; Patton, 2002; Schram, 2006). Furthermore, reflexivity was demonstrated in my attempts to be adaptive and flexible as a case study researcher (Yin, 2009).

Throughout the research process, I was not trying to remove my subjectivity; this is unrealistic and not the goal of qualitative work (Glesne, 2006; Noor, 2008). My subjectivity is a part of how I research, what I acknowledged as data (or do not acknowledge), and how I analyzed and interpreted the data (Merriam, 2009; Schram, 2006). Researcher subjectivity reveals what I understand and what I am missing, and what I think is important and what is not (Schram, 2006). I believe that my subjectivity provided an opportunity to explore my location within the human relationships and interactions inherent in this study (Patton, 2002; Peshkin, 1988). Throughout the development and implementation of this study, I intended to recognize and own my subjectivity, continually trouble my reactivity as the course instructor, and I used multiple, reflexive measures to understand my location and function in this study (Glesne, 2006; Schram, 2006).

Researcher reflexivity is both a strength and limitation of qualitative research. As a participant researcher, I played an integral part in the study implementation, particularly the process of data collection and analysis. Yin (2003) emphasizes that the case study

researcher should be adaptive and flexible, looking for opportunities in everything and responsive to what is contradictory as well as what is not being said (Stake, 2006). However, my role as the participants' instructor required that I was both thoughtful and intentional in the way that I designed the study, taught the course, implemented data collection methods, and represented the students and cohorts of students. If I failed to be alert and responsive to contradictions, I risked influencing the credibility of the overall study design. Researcher reflexivity impacted my continual involvement and influence in the total study design. The reflexivity that I worked to establish throughout this research process demonstrates my understanding of qualitative case study research and my continual influence as a participant researcher and the course instructor. Acknowledging and managing the threats to authenticity through reflexive measures seemed to impact the credibility and transferability of this study.

The Context of the Study

Setting

This descriptive case study took place within the weekly course meetings for one section of the Elementary Social Studies Methods course in the undergraduate elementary education program at a medium sized public university in the southeastern United States. The university is located nearby renowned museums and landmarks of the Civil Rights Movement. This provided an incredible context for the students to understand more about the contributions of their local community to the movement, as well as the larger context and implications of the Civil Rights Movement. This is vital to understanding the context

of the course and participants within a study that involved exploring the Civil Rights Movement.

This course is designed to prepare undergraduate pre-service teachers to teach social studies to elementary students. It is one of five methods courses that students must take to complete their K-6 licensure, and it is taken in tandem with one other methods course, a weekly cohort seminar, and an internship in an elementary classroom. The course content regularly included inquiry based teaching methods, small and whole group discussions, project based learning, and techniques for teaching social studies with a variety of historical media. Over the span of fifteen weeks, students encountered ways to teach the social studies curriculum as well as methods for integrating elementary social studies content into other content.

Beginning with the first course meeting, I worked to create and sustain a safe and structured classroom that supported the conceptual framework that was the foundation for this course. Focused and strategic planning was central to the implementation of the course. This means that everything that I did as the instructor or that students did together or individually was deliberate and well thought out, demonstrating a clear progression of the course components and how intimately they were connected to one another.

Appendix A provides a comprehensive description of the unified design of all four of the course meetings during the study. Table 1 illustrates the social studies themes, historical thinking skills, and documentary films that were chosen to use film to think historically about specific components of the civil rights movement and the larger social studies themes located in the elementary social studies curriculum.

*Table 1**Weekly Course Meeting Components*

Week	Social Studies Theme	Historical Thinking Skill	Documentary Film
Week 1	Time, Continuity, and Change	Analyzing and corroborating historical sources	<i>Four Little Girls</i>
Week 2	Individuals, Groups, and Institutions	Identifying the Dominant and Counter-Narrative	<i>Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks</i>
Week 3	Individual Identity and Development	Historical Perspective Taking	<i>The Freedom Riders</i>
Week 4	Civic Ideals and Practices	Historical Empathy	<i>Mighty Times: The Children's March</i>

These components were organized chronologically, and the required course readings and other historical sources (including elementary social studies textbooks, children's picture books, historical books, and historical artifacts like photographs and newspaper articles) were aligned with the specific social studies themes and historical thinking skills throughout the study.

One of my greatest goals in teaching elementary social studies methods is to teach my students how to think historically, promote the development of specific historical thinking skills during my course, and help students understand how to use historical thinking in their own elementary classrooms. Therefore, historical thinking is a topic that was introduced at the onset of the course and woven throughout the four weeks of the

study. At the beginning of each of the four course meetings during the study, students were given direct instruction in the specific historical thinking skill in focus that week. For example, in Week 1, students were given direct instruction in analyzing historical sources using historical photographs and artifacts, and then worked in small groups to practice the skill. Because I believe that documentary film provides an appealing hook to engage pre-service teachers in thinking about historical events and people, I decided to use the films at the onset of the source examination during each week of the study.

In addition to my instructional decisions to teach historical thinking and structure the course in a specific way, I also made decisions about what sources I would present to students, which in return, determined the dominant narratives and counter-narratives that would be presented in the study. I define the dominant narrative as widely published and accepted representations or perspectives of a historical event, group, or individuals. For example, the dominant narrative of integration in the Southern United States presents the event as occurring with minimal resistance or violent resistance. I define counter-narratives as recorded representations of contemporary or historical events, groups, or individuals that present a perspective or account that contradicts the dominant, traditional narrative of the event, group, or individual. Presenting students with explicit historical counter-narratives was my primary objective in determining the historical narratives that I would use. Therefore, I began planning for instructional materials by choosing the four documentary films that best presented the four events and themes that I wanted to teach, and each of the documentary films presented multiple counter-narratives (e.g. the

Freedom Rides demonstrated the violent resistance to integrated riders on regularly scheduled buses) of the chosen event or theme.

Following the film choices, I searched for historical artifacts that were related to each of the events and themes. I chose a variety of digital artifacts that presented students with both dominant narratives and counter-narratives through images and historical documents. For example, in Week One, students viewed historical photographs of the dominant narrative (e.g. Ruby Bridges without clues of violent resistance) as well as Norman Rockwell's *The Problem We All Live With*, which depicted violent resistance to school integration. Then, to introduce additional sources, I located a variety of popular and lesser known children's books and historical texts for each week (e.g. *Speaking Out: The Civil Rights Movement 1950-1964* and *Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines*) that presented both dominant and counter-narratives of the Civil Rights events and themes that we would be studying. Finally, I wanted students to identify the historical narratives presented in elementary social studies textbooks. Therefore, I asked students to each bring in at least one and if possible two textbooks to use as sources each week of the study. I speculated that most of the textbooks would provide (if anything) a narrative that conflicted with the narratives presented in the films, and if the textbooks did not explore the events and themes we investigated, the resulting dilemma would provide an excellent opportunity to exercise historical thinking.

All four of the documentary films presented a progressive counter-narrative of the Civil Rights Movement, and were used to generate participants' thinking about the movement as well as their understanding of historical counter-narratives. Each week

following the film or film clips, students were introduced to newspaper articles, photographs, and other historical documents surrounding the Civil Rights Movement that showed both dominant narratives and counter-narratives, and they were given the opportunity to explore the sources in small groups. For example, in Week Three, students were given photographs of the Freedom Rides, excerpts from historical books written about the Freedom Rides. Then, students analyzed various children's literature and elementary social studies textbooks to identify which narrative—the dominant, traditional narrative or the counter-narrative—was printed. As a culminating response, students developed their own historical account of the event or person that was drawn from their engagement with the collective sources. Following the series of work with the different historical sources, participants engaged in shared dialogue about the experiences and completed written reflections related to the experiences.

Because of the historical thinking focus that framed the course, each course component was closely related to another. This resulted in a unified curriculum that students experienced through interconnected instructional practices like historical thinking and structured dialogue which became more meaningful and purposeful over time. Moreover, difficult questions and multiple perspectives were woven throughout these experiences. Together, these components provided a cohesive network of experiences that seemed to advance students' understanding of thinking historically.

Researcher Role

I am a middle class, White female. I was born into a working class family in a North Carolina town in the 1970s. My own K-12 schooling experiences were void of the

voices and stories of historical people and events that were not included in our school adopted textbooks. Therefore, I was not exposed to the concept of historical thinking during my formal K-12 education, and my first experiences with history were mostly written from the dominant point of view and celebrated the experiences and history of Whites in the past. Once I began at the university, my first history course presented the history of the United States through the Civil War. This was my first experience with primary source documents as well as narratives of historical groups like American Indians and historical events like the Civil War that were different than my own, prior knowledge of history. Soon, as I entered my teacher education program, my undergraduate social studies methods course was my first engagement with teaching social studies in the elementary grades outside of the social studies textbook.

After I began teaching, I purposefully veered from using the adopted textbook, but often struggled to locate other, meaningful resources to teach social studies. As I began my graduate program, some courses invited me to think about how history is taught, whose perspectives are illuminated, and whose perspectives are omitted. Additionally, some professors pushed me to challenge my own ideas and beliefs as well as my positionality as a White, middle class female, all prompting me to think about the connections between the ways in which I perceive history, my life experiences, and my interactions with others as well as my own teaching at the university. It was here that I began to understand that my history is not another person's history, and there are many, often conflicting accounts of history that are not included in the dominant narrative. This

series of experiences provided a foundation for my position as a critical social justice educator.

Soon after, I began teaching the social studies methods course and my ideas continued to develop and grow. I began to use one of the four documentary films featured in this study—*Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks*—each semester as I taught the concepts of Time, Continuity, and Change or Individual Development and Identity. However, I did not explicitly teach the concept of the dominant narrative and the counter-narrative together with the film, and I believe this contributed to some students not recognizing the presence and utility of conflicting historical narratives in history. This instructional experience paired with my own life experiences positioned me to consider how I could improve my own teaching in the methods course by providing students with a more structured and deliberate approach to thinking about the past by using documentary film to engage in historical thinking. I have now taught elementary social studies methods with five different sections of undergraduate students, and I now have a greater focus on teaching historical thinking in my methods course.

In addition to my educational experiences in my K-16 schooling and graduate school, my experiences in the classroom prior to graduate school were significant in understanding the context of the study. My educational background and teaching career is in elementary education. I taught elementary school for seven years, and each year, I was responsible for planning and implementing the social studies curriculum for that grade. I have several assumptions about elementary social studies education that entered the development and implementation of this study. I believe that all elementary teachers are

responsible for preparing their students for historical thinking through social studies education. I believe that documentary film is one meaningful tool for thinking about the past. I posit that traditional, White, middle class pre-service teachers should be introduced to dominant and counter-narratives of history as well as controversial issues that impact their own teaching and students, and I believe that film is an excellent vehicle for that. These experiences in elementary social studies education together with my positionality and lived experiences in K-16 education illustrate my role in this study as the researcher.

Participants

The eighteen participants in this case study were elementary pre-service teachers enrolled in one undergraduate social studies education course in which I was the instructor. All eighteen students were female; one student self-identified as biracial and seventeen out of eighteen students self-identified as White. Seventeen students were between 18 and 25, and for these students, the presence of state and national standardized testing permeated their K-12 schooling experiences, making it likely that their own elementary education did not include and all 18 students were residents of the Southern United States. The students were in their first semester of their senior year, and following the end of the semester, they began their final semester of the program and completed their student teaching practicum. The use of my own students as participants represents a convenient sample, but one that was also purposeful. Purposeful sampling involves locating and examining a group that overall most closely represents the problem being studied (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling is especially meaningful for this case

because it allowed a focused, in-depth study of a specific phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The phenomenon studied in this design was how pre-service teachers understand and engage historical thinking, specifically counter-narratives, in the teacher education classroom using documentary film.

Although a large sampling size is often desired in quantitative inquiry, developing vivid depictions is more meaningful than sampling size in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling was most appropriate for the study design and research questions in this case study, therefore I engaged purposeful sampling as I studied the pre-service teachers enrolled in my course. Through implementing purposeful sampling with one specific case, I was able to develop a more thorough description of the case in relation to the research questions I asked (Patton, 2002).

Data Collection Methods

No particular data collection method is specific to case study (Merriam, 1998), but rather sound research questions provide a foundation for developing exemplary case study research (Yin, 2009). In case study research, initial research questions provide the impetus for selecting specific data collection methods to be used (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Yin, 2003). Each of the data collection methods utilized in this study was chosen to approach both research questions in different ways (Creswell, 2007). Six data collection methods were employed in this case study. Each method provided a different form of data and together, the six methods developed a comprehensive collection of data over an entire semester. Table 2 demonstrates the relationship between the research questions and the data collection methods.

Table 2

A Crosswalk of Research Questions and Data Collection Methods

Research Question	Data Collection Method					
	Questionnaire	Audio-recorded Discussions	Participant Observation	Researcher Memos	Written Reflections	Anticipation Guides
How do elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?	X	X	X	X	X	X
How does film facilitate elementary pre-service teachers' understanding of counter-narratives about the Civil Rights Movement?	X	X	X		X	X

Participant observation is at the core of all qualitative work, and perhaps, the most frequently implemented qualitative data collection method (Wolcott, 2009; Yin, 2009). As a participant observer, I was both an insider and an outsider, attempting to fulfill several roles during the span of the study, including the data collection opportunities that occurred during the course meetings (Yin, 2009). There were simply too many things taking place during observations to record all that was occurring, particularly as a participant in the classroom during the data collection. During the films and during students' Socratic dialogues, I developed parallel field notes and researcher bracketing. The purpose of developing field notes and researcher bracketing was not to analyze or explain what was taking place in the context, but instead, to describe what I did see or did not see and what I did hear or did not hear (Glesne, 2006).

Because of the complexity of classrooms, I used an observation protocol to concentrate on the classroom features that were related to the research questions. However, important research data may have been overlooked if I narrowed my observations too much. I think that this process can be compared to using multiple lenses on a telescope. One lens, the observation protocol, facilitated magnifying conversations and interactions during observations. Here, I was able to develop a rich description of what I did see and what I did not see (Merriam, 2009). A second lens, unstructured observation, allowed me to fade back out to the larger picture of the whole class during the films and Socratic seminars. Each lens was vital in recording a concrete description of the case (Spradley, 1980). Paired with both lenses was researcher bracketing. Researcher bracketing was vital to creating a written account of my own thoughts, reactions, and

questions during the observations (Glesne, 2006). My observation notebook was organized in a parallel format with observation notes recorded on the left page and researcher bracketing recorded on the right page, and all observations were dated. I applied both the observation protocol and the parallel observation format during my participant observations. The observations provided a broad picture of the semester and the study from beginning to end.

Throughout the semester, students viewed carefully selected films and film segments together and then engaged in structured classroom discussions based on the Socratic seminar method. To help guide the film viewing, students used anticipation guides, a type of advanced organizer that allowed students to record their ideas, reactions, questions, and even film quotations. Students then used the anticipation guides during their student facilitated discussions to complement and expand the discussions. The discussions were audio-recorded using two voice recorders placed throughout the classroom. The voice recordings helped me to transcribe a verbatim record of the discussions that emerged between the participants. Participant observations were also completed during the shared discussions to provide an additional source of information about students and their engagement in the process.

It is important to understand why the voice recorders were used instead of written field notes of the discussions. Using written field notes rather than audio-recordings of the seminars would not have provided the wealth and accuracy of the discussions needed to develop a comprehensive description of the discussions that is characteristic of case study research. However, some students may have had apprehensions about participating

in the classroom conversations that were recorded. Therefore, in order to make the use of voice recorders more familiar and comfortable to students, the voice recorders were used beginning with the first seminars. Additionally, students began the process of Socratic seminars during the first week of the semester, and then continued to engage in them frequently throughout the semester. Additionally, students' participation in Socratic dialogues was included in their comprehensive course participation grade.

Although discussion provides an outlet for students to share in learning together, discussions alone do not allow all students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are thinking. Students' written reflections are an additional opportunity for students to reveal their thinking and learning throughout the study (Dinkelman, 1999; Hoover, 1994; Lee, 2008). Reflections are a unique feature of this study because they are participant generated documents (Glesne, 2006), and a collection of physical artifacts created over time (Yin, 2009), and they are formatted much like written interviews (Patton, 2002). In this study, there was a structured procedure for students' weekly written reflections. I posed an open ended question or questions that were related to the film or film clips screened in class each week. Pre-service teachers were given until the following class to develop a written response and post it on the course Blackboard site. The reflections were counted as part of students' comprehensive course participation grade and scored based on length and punctuality. Students were not graded based on the content or position of their weekly response. Utilizing the written reflections also promoted corroborating data collection sources (Yin, 2009).

Researcher memos are the informal, first person accounts of ideas, reactions, and speculations of the researcher throughout the study development and execution (Merriam, 2009; Richards, 2005; Schram, 2006). They were used to document my apprehensions and assumptions about the entire process of this case study from beginning to end. In fact, the process of researcher memos began during the development of this research proposal. I developed a memo protocol/checklist to use as I wrote memos during the study onset. During the data collection period, researcher memos were used to construct an ongoing narrative of my ideas, reactions, and speculations about the data collection process and the course overall.

A questionnaire was developed to allow students the opportunity to offer anonymous responses to the course experiences with historical thinking and film while also gaining a clearer picture of their initial and resulting understanding of using film to teach historical thinking in elementary social studies. To view the complete questionnaire instrument, see Appendix B. The questionnaire contained fifteen Likert-style items and four short answer questions, and the collective items were designed to address both research questions. The questionnaire contained nine items regarding pre-service teachers' perceptions of historical thinking. For example, one item in this category was: people should see and understand different perspectives in history. In addition, there are also six items focusing on pre-service teachers' perceptions of themselves as historical thinkers. An example of an item in this category is: when I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about why people made the decisions they made. One of the Likert scale items is reverse coded (e.g. I struggle to consider a historical account that is

different than what I believe.) The four open-ended items were: what does it mean to think historically, when I read or see a historical account that is different than what I have read or seen before, I (fill in the blank), how did film facilitate your understanding of the counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement, and what do you know about the Civil Rights Movement. In this study, the reliability of the instrument was calculated using Chronbach's alpha. The reliability is .824. The instrument was administered at the onset of the study and at the close of the study. The questionnaire provided valuable data about the change and development of students' historical thinking over the semester, their perceptions of themselves as historical thinkers, their developing knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, and their ideas about how to use documentary film to think historically.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis, or data reduction, is the system of procedures a researcher selects to reduce a large quantity of study data into themes (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Richards, 2005). Data analysis and interpretation is a critical process in case study research (Stake, 2006). This is the impetus for developing a clear vision for a study's data analysis procedures. The research questions should guide the researcher in locating patterns and relationships during the analysis, while constantly trying to understand what is ordinary in the case, what is unusual, and what emerges as the case study continues to unfold (Stake, 2006). Throughout this study, continual analysis occurred. The ongoing, systematic process for storing and organizing study data that began during the data collection contributed to a more sound and deliberate study design

(Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009). From the development and revision of research questions to what is reported in this manuscript, this descriptive case study was saturated with high quality analysis (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Joining the data analysis and interpretation can be a threat to credibility in qualitative research, specifically case study research, where the researcher is often intimately involved in the case and then analyzes the data. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation in this study demonstrated a rigorous and highly structured process (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

Triangulation is one aspect of the process data analysis and interpretation that contributed to the credibility of this descriptive case study. Triangulation is locating multiple, different ways of looking at the case being examined (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006; Maxwell, 2005; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2000). Triangulation between different forms of data collection is particularly meaningful in case study research as a strategy for minimizing credibility threats (Yin, 2009). As illustrated in Table 2, a crosswalk of research questions and data collection methods, this study design utilized six different data collection methods. Within those six methods, a beneficial overlap occurred as each research question was addressed by more than one form of data collection (Richards, 2005). As the process of analysis and interpretation began, I was able to develop a more credible system of codes and themes because of the overlap between data collection methods and research questions.

The process of case study data analysis and interpretation began with coding. Coding is the gradual practice of sorting, resorting, classifying, and reclassifying study data in order to organize everything connected to a topic or context in one, central

location in order to make meaning of it (Glesne, 2006; Richards, 2005). A structured and comprehensive process of coding was used to analyze the multiple forms of data collected in this study.

Constant Comparative Analysis

The coding and analysis process that was implemented in this case study is constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Constant comparative analysis or constant comparative method is part of Glaser and Strauss' method of grounded theory. Constant comparative analysis is the process of combining coding and theory development in analyzing study data (Glaser, 1965). Constant comparative analysis was used to develop the initial assertions or codes and themes in the data set (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Stake, 2006). Constant comparative analysis can be used for a variety of data collection sources, making it well suited for this particular case study that utilized six forms of study data. Figure 1 illustrates the systematic approach used to analyze the study data using constant comparative method.

The data analysis began with data reduction. My initial reading of the data revealed content related to students' future teaching. Because this information was not relevant to the research questions that guided the overall study and the data analysis, data related to students' future teaching was removed. This led to the next step in my data analysis, data segmentation. The data collected in this study was sorted into three different types of data: student data, researcher data, and instrument data. Student data included the recorded and transcribed classroom dialogues, students' written reflections, and students' anticipation guides.

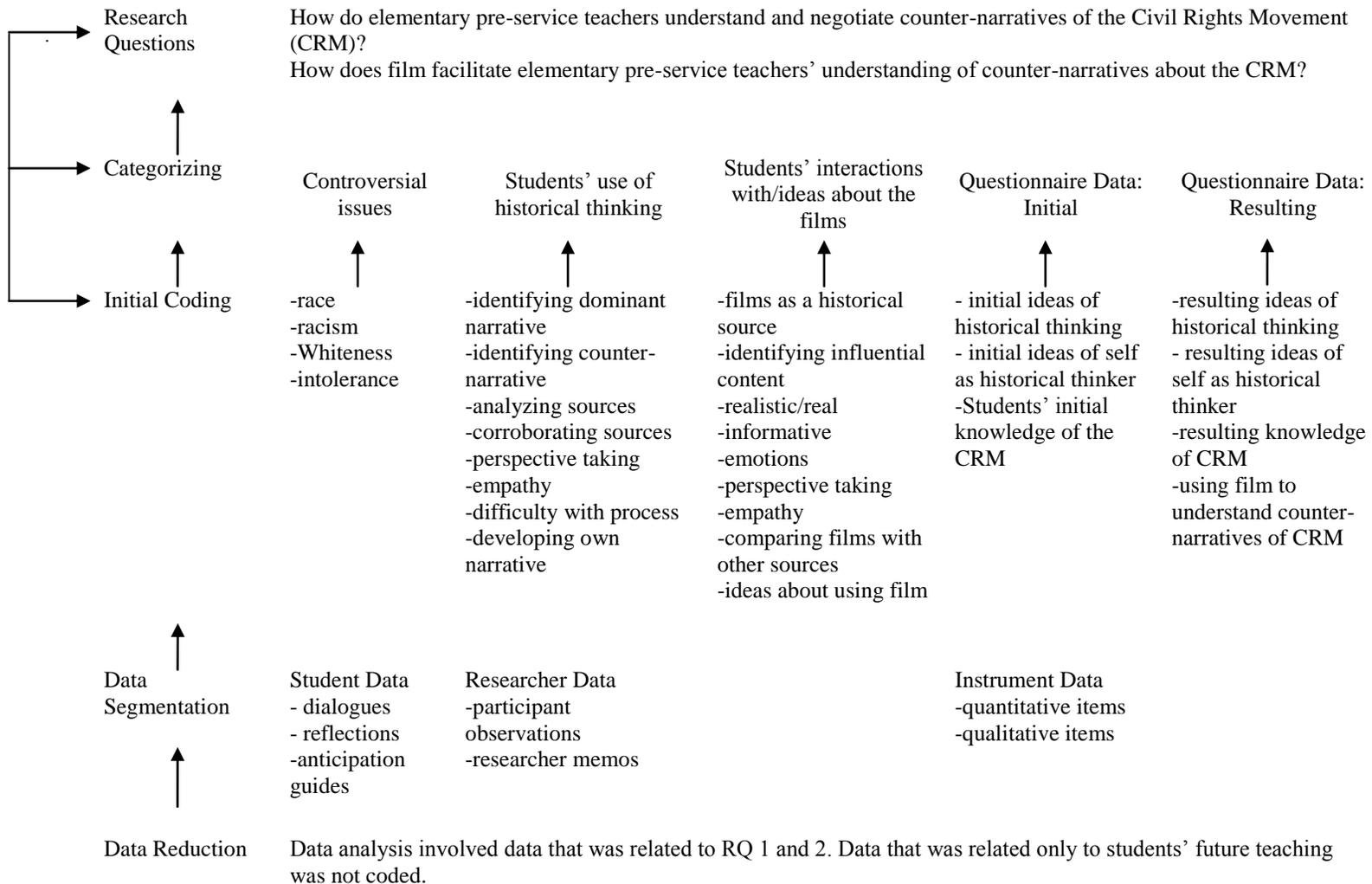


Figure 1. Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher data included participant observations and researcher memos. Finally, the instrument data included the initial and resulting questionnaire responses, which provided both quantitative items and qualitative items. Following the data segmentation, I completed my initial coding, which involved developing multiple, narrow categories or codes across the data sources. Examples of initial codes included analyzing sources and empathy, films as historical sources, and students' initial ideas of historical thinking. These themes were located as some students explicitly described their ideas about the process, provided examples of exercising historical thinking, and responded to the films as historical sources. For example, when a student wrote "Rosa was neither the first person nor woman to be arrested for not moving on the bus," the text was coded as identifying counter-narrative. I then repeated this process, looking for codes that I did not see initially. Because qualitative research explores unique problems, repeated readings of each piece of data became an important aspect of the data analysis because some codes in the data did not emerge in my initial readings, but instead became evident when the data sets were read numerous times (Stake, 1995, 2006). For example, some items that were originally coded as empathy were also coded as emotions during the repeated readings for initial codes. Following the initial codes, I compared the initial codes to the research questions to verify a relationship between the study's research questions and the initial codes that were derived from the data.

Next, I proceeded to categorizing, where I collapsed the collective categories into fewer, broader categories, and then wrote researcher memos about the themes that appeared to emerge as the process continued. These broader, more general categories

were developed based on both the themes that emerged during initial coding as well as the research questions that guided the study. For example, the initial codes of dominant narrative, counter-narrative, analyzing sources, corroborating sources, perspective taking, empathy, difficulty, and developing one's own narrative were collapsed into the larger, broader category of students' use of historical thinking (and in some cases, those same initial codes were collapsed into the broader category of students' interactions with/ideas about the films when the initial code was derived from the context of a film). Then, as I returned to the research questions, I found that the categories aligned with the two research questions that framed the study design and implementation. This allowed me to weave the pieces of data together through the broader themes (Glaser, 1965; Stake, 2006). Then, I used these categories/themes as I returned to my initial propositions and similar to the initial coding, I returned again to the research questions to confirm the relationship between the research questions and the categorizing (broader codes). This process of returning to the research questions during the data analysis influenced the credibility of the study.

After completing constant comparative analysis, I used the initial and categories to develop a manuscript of the findings and implications about this specific case that may help teacher educators and researchers examining other, very similar cases (Glaser, 1965; Merriam, 2009). This ongoing and deliberate method of data analysis demonstrates what Yin (2003) describes as high quality data analysis as it demonstrates how all of the study data related to teaching historical thinking with documentary film has been used, categorized, and interpreted as I looked back to the research questions to understand what

assertions could be made about the case. Throughout the process, I attempted to analyze the qualitative data with careful vigilance to avoid simplifying truly complex data to an unsophisticated or diluted state (Stake, 2006).

In addition to the constant comparative method used to analyze the qualitative data, I also calculated the mean scores for students' pre and post Likert-style questionnaire items. The Likert-style items from the pre and post questionnaire were compared by finding the mean scores for each item in both pre and post responses and then comparing the two sets of responses for change. The short answer items in the pre and post questionnaire were analyzed using the constant comparative method, and like the Likert items, students' initial and resulting responses were compared.

Credibility, Transferability, and Ethical Concerns in Case Study Research

Understanding credibility, transferability, and dependability is central to developing and implementing sound case study research. It helps the researcher to recognize and address the threats to credibility, transferability, and dependability. Potential credibility threats were thoughtfully considered in the initial development of this study and remained at the heart of the study's implementation (Yin, 2003). For example, as a participant observer, I had the opportunity to manipulate what occurred and what was recorded within the study setting. Because of this threat to the credibility of the study, I continually attempted to develop my reflexivity as one way to address and minimize the threats to the credibility of the study; however, as the participant observer, I was not able to fully remove the threat of this role throughout the investigation.

Therefore, I used several different data collection methods to answer the research questions that participant observations address (Yin, 2009).

I utilized four different practices to minimize the threats to the credibility and transferability of this case study. The first measure that I implemented was designing and carrying out a nested structure for this study. The nested structure of this study helped to develop clear procedures and a comprehensive database of study data, which contributed to the credibility and trustworthiness of the entire project (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003, 2009). The nested structure began with the study design process and initial researcher memos, followed by regular course discussions and written reflections across the semester, and closing the data collection with individual participant interviews. These elements developed a comprehensive sequence of interconnected elements and opportunities to revisit the research questions, study design, and data collection procedures (Yin, 2003, 2009). Specifically, the chain of evidence that was created through the interconnected study elements increased the reliability of the overall study design (Yin, 2009). The nested structure of this case study promoted the credibility, dependability, and transferability of this study.

Researcher memos, or researcher narratives, were written and analyzed throughout the study process to increase the credibility and dependability of the study (Yin, 2009). Developing researcher memos also contributed to the credibility of this study. Researcher memos can point out my subjectivity, unspoken and unrecognized feelings, and other threats to the credibility of the study. Researcher memos were used to push my own thinking and develop a written record of my feelings, assumptions, and

speculations about the whole process. Researcher memos had the potential to reveal how reactivity (my influence on the setting or participants) and my theoretical perspective affect the entire study (Maxwell, 2005). Researcher memos provided a location for me to record my own thoughts over time and revise the study design (Schram, 2006). Finally, triangulation of the data collection methods was implemented during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation to minimize the threats to the credibility of this research study.

Across qualitative research, the role of ethical behavior and developing and maintaining the credibility of the study saturates the research process. Ethical concerns can threaten the credibility, dependability, transferability, and trustworthiness of any qualitative research study, and are particularly important in case study research where the researcher is most often a participant in the context of the study (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). I thoughtfully considered the ethical concerns relevant to this study, and I carefully addressed the threat of coercion to the participants and the impact of demonstrating ethical behaviors on the overall study design. As the participants were students in my course, there was a risk of researcher coercion. Researcher coercion was addressed in the study design in two ways. First, I developed a lengthy lay summary form that explained the study design and addressed potential apprehensions that participants may have in participating. In an effort to reduce coercion, the lay summary form and Institutional Review Board consent forms were administered by one of my committee chairs, and students were able to ask questions about the study with someone other than me as the participant researcher. Second, in an effort to reduce coercion and teacher

friendly responses, I purposefully implemented data collection methods that were natural course components. This meant that students were able to exit the study at any time, yet they were able to remain in the course and complete all course activities and requirements regardless of their participation in the study. Furthermore, participant confidentiality was an ethical concern in this study. In considering how I would work to maintain participant confidentiality throughout the process, all students were given the opportunity to use their initials on their responses during the data collection, and then they were assigned pseudonyms in my presentations and dissertation manuscript. The risk of coercion and the precautions to maintain participant confidentiality were also explained in the lay summary form. As a reflexive researcher, I was aware of the impact of ethical concerns, and I intended to honor the participants by addressing and limiting ethical apprehensions within the study.

Finally, member checking was used to minimize threats to credibility, dependability, and transferability (Creswell, 2007). Member checking, or participant review (Patton, 2002) and respondent validation (Maxwell, 2005), involves allowing a participant (or participants) to look at a part of the data analysis and interpretation and then give feedback to the researcher about the way that the data was analyzed and the assertions that were drawn (Yin, 2003). I used member checking with participants to gain feedback about how I analyzed and interpreted their interviews. Participants who took part in member checking were selected from students who volunteer to help with the process after the semester has ended. Member checking allowed me to assess whether my

interpretation of the study data is accurate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and decreased the threats to the credibility, dependability, and transferability of this study.

Summary of the Methodology

The case study design explained in this chapter is a descriptive case study. Case study methodology is particularly suited for the research questions used in this study, which addressed the use of film in the elementary social studies methods course to develop pre-service teachers' historical thinking. The case study design was comprised of one bounded system of elementary pre-service teachers enrolled in an undergraduate elementary teacher education course at a mid-sized public university in the southeast United States. Six data collection methods were used: questionnaires, recorded class discussions, participant observations, researcher memos, written reflections, and anticipation guides.

Single case analysis was conducted using the constant comparative method. The data analysis began with data reduction, which involved removing data that was not relevant to the research questions (e.g. students' future teaching). Data segmentation preceded the initial coding, which resulted in specific, narrow themes such as examples of historical thinking skills like perspective taking and identifying the dominant narrative and counter-narrative. After repeating the process of initial coding twice to locate codes overlooked in the first reading, I moved to categorizing, where I collapsed the initial codes into broader, more general themes (sometimes placing an initial code into more than one category if applicable) like students' use of historical thinking. Careful attention was given to recognizing whether a piece of data could be given more than one code. For

example, some examples of Whiteness could collapse into student's interactions with the films and controversial issues (two examples of categorizing). By returning to the research questions throughout the process, I endeavored to develop a sound case study design that would increase the transferability and dependability of the study, acknowledge the role and facility of researcher reflexivity, and minimize the potential threats to the study's credibility.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter explores in depth the recurrent themes that were found in the data. First, I present the findings in terms of the broad categories of findings: students' initial understandings, students' interpretations of documentary film as a historical source, dominant and counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement, changes in students' perspectives related to the documentary films, and the impact of the documentary films on students' historical thinking. Then, I deconstruct and discuss each broad category through the narrower and more specific codes that were identified during initial coding. Direct quotations and phrases that were both spoken and written by students have been included to illustrate the findings.

Students' Initial Understandings

Students' Prior Knowledge of Historical Thinking

The initial questionnaire provided a baseline for understanding students' prior knowledge of historical thinking and the Civil Rights Movement before the study began. The results reveal students' initial beliefs about various aspects of historical thinking. Students' initial responses ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree." Table 3 illustrates the mean scores of students' responses.

Though students had not yet explored historical thinking within the course, the mean scores calculated from the initial questionnaire can be used to understand how

students as a group responded to the idea of historical thinking as they entered the study. When considering the initial mean scores, it appeared likely that students had positive beliefs about the different historical thinking skills and entered the study with a basic understanding of historical thinking.

Table 3

Students' Initial Questionnaire Responses about Historical Thinking

Questionnaire Item	Mean
I believe that there are multiple interpretations of history.	4.6
People should see and understand different perspectives in history.	4.4
Teaching more than one perspective about a historical event is central to learning social studies.	4.5
History can be interpreted in many ways.	4.4
Studying more than one perspective of a historical event is difficult.	3.4
Considering the perspectives of historical people is important for understanding history.	4.4
People's experiences influence how they understand history.	4.7
When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about people's location in history.	3.4
When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about why people made decisions.	4.2
Historical artifacts can be used to think like a historian.	4.3
I struggle to consider a historical account that is different than what I believe.	2.4
It is important to interpret history through different accounts.	4.1

Additionally, students' combined Likert scale responses about historical thinking skills represented a mean score of 4.1. However, their open ended responses about historical thinking suggested that students did not have a deep, working knowledge of historical thinking. When asked "what does it mean to think historically?" Two students did not provide a response. The remaining sixteen students' collective responses demonstrated that 16 out of 18 students could not clearly articulate in writing what it meant to think historically. Students' answers ranged from "to think and act in light of the past" and "to understand the events that have happened and compare those events to the present," to "to reference the past and past events."

Students' Prior Knowledge of Documentary Film

Students' initial beliefs about teaching history with film are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Students' Initial Questionnaire Responses about Teaching with Film

Questionnaire Item	Mean Score
I can locate the dominant narrative in a film.	3.0
I learn a lot about history through films.	4.4
Film can be used to think like a historian.	4.1

Similar to students' mean scores for historical thinking, students' Likert scale responses for teaching with documentary film were also generally high. The mean score for locating the dominant narrative in a film was 3.0, suggesting that students were

unsure of whether they could successfully identify dominant narratives in film sources. However, students' initial beliefs about using film to teach history were high, indicating that they were likely to approach the documentary films from an optimistic stance.

Students' Prior Knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the initial questionnaire was found in students' responses to their prior knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement. Fourteen students (14 out of 18) statements of prior content knowledge about the movement were general statements like "People were fighting for their rights to do as others do" and "It was a struggle that final brought about major reform in America." The four remaining responses were more detailed, such as "Not a lot, but I know that it was a turning point for people to start integrating equality in the United States" and "this was when the black race stood up for themselves to obtain equal rights between races." Six open ended responses (of the total 18) revealed that one-third of the students recognized their lack of much prior knowledge about the movement. These students answered, "We learned about it some in school" and "Not a whole lot, but I do know a few events and I have been to the museum."

In the initial questionnaire, 15 out of 18 students indicated that they had some prior knowledge of the movement in general; 7 included equal rights in their definition, and 5 indicated that it was a major event in United States history. Students' collective questionnaire responses did not name civil rights leaders, but these names surfaced as prior knowledge once the study commenced. Although the majority of students indicated later in their anticipation guides, class discussions, and written reflections that they did

have some prior knowledge of the iconic figures like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., not every student entered the class with knowledge of Parks and King. For example, one student wrote, “I didn’t learn anything about Rosa Parks in school at all and to be honest, I really didn’t know anything about the boycott.” This initial data suggested that the amount of historical content information about the movement that students would encounter in the next four weeks would be substantially more historical knowledge than students had been taught previously. In the following section, students’ use of documentary film as a historical source to develop historical thinking is discussed.

Students’ Interpretations of Documentary Film as a Historical Source

Four documentary films that clearly presented counter-narratives in contrast to the dominant narrative were strategically located within the study as central historical sources. At the onset of the course, a teacher directed lesson about using historical thinking as a means for studying the past was taught, and during each of the four weeks of the study, students were given direct instruction and guided practice with the specific historical thinking skill being examined that week (e.g. during Week 1 students practiced analyzing historical photographs together as a whole group and then again in small groups before viewing the first film, *Four Little Girls*). Although analyzing and interpreting documentary films as a separate or unique entity was not explicitly taught, students regularly engaged in whole group instruction and shared discussions focused on analyzing and corroborating primary source documents, including historical narratives, for accuracy during each week of the study. Through viewing each documentary film, students encountered many different primary and secondary sources including interviews,

action photographs, photographs of still objects (for example, Jim Crow signs in restaurants and bus stations), video footage, and audio footage. According to the design of the course and the case study, each of the four weeks I placed the films at the beginning of the historical source analysis, which meant that students saw and heard counter-narratives of the events and people through the films before they engaged the historical artifacts, textbooks, and other books. Across the weeks, students interacted with and then responded to the film sources. Also, students corroborated the documentary films with other historical accounts and artifacts, and compared the accuracy of the sources to each other. In this section, students' beliefs about documentary films as historical sources are explored.

Documentary Films are Informative and Realistic

Across the four weeks, students discussed the influence of films on understanding history, especially historical events and people. Even though we did not analyze the documentary films in separation from the other sources, I did teach students how to analyze visual documents (including photographs) as well as historical narratives like interviews which were key elements in all four of the documentary films used. Specifically, students pointed to their experiences with visualizing or seeing the Civil Rights Movement through filmic representations. For example, in Week One a student wrote that her “eyes were really opened” through the film, and a second student said, “The videos that showed real pictures and videos documenting were especially impactful because it made it true to me.” One student shared in the third Socratic dialogue, “I can read all day and not truly understand it but when I actually see it, I have a better feel for

it,” and in the same dialogue, a second student concurred “When I see it, it is much more realistic.” Throughout the four weeks, students also recognized the documents as realistic historical sources in their written reflections. In her written reflection, one student noted that “actually seeing the film clips makes it seem even more realistic and understandable.” Following the third week, another student logged,

The movie really impacted me because it gave the perspective of people who actually lived through the freedom rides and freedom summer. It made me realize how real the horrors of the civil rights movement were. The film brought out great emotions in me while I watched what African Americans had to go through to gain their rights. I was sickened by the images I saw.

Students repeatedly stated that films influenced their content knowledge understanding because they were realistic or real, even suggesting that the “realness” of the films contributed to their comprehensive understanding of historical thinking. The realness of the documentary films was compared to the realness of feature films in Week Three.

Here, a student stated,

I thought it was more important to use like actual like news clips and like actual documentation than to show like a movie with actors and stuff like that, because like you know you were talking about that movie “Mississippi Burning?” Like I’ve seen that movie and still watch it, and like that (the documentary) made it more real, because that was actual people that was actually happening, than watching a movie where people are acting and you know it’s just a movie. A lot of people don’t take that seriously, because like I feel like I was raised that like those are movies, and movies are fake, and sometimes you have to tell yourself that in certain movies like this isn’t really happening, it’s just a story.

The visual content in each film seemed to contribute to students’ ideas of the films as real and informative. Students consistently stated that the photographs, original

footage, interviews, and reenactments contributed to their engagement with historical thinking, knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, and ability to identify the dominant narratives and counter-narratives of the movement. For example, in Week One, a student recorded in her anticipation guide that the film “really changed the way that I see and think about it (the Civil Rights Movement) now.” As the weeks progressed, students continued to respond to the films as historical sources. In reflecting about the films’ collective content, students shared that “seeing the footage” and “listening to firsthand accounts” and “real pictures and videos made it true.” One student insisted, “There were real people in the interviews which informed what I believe happened.” In Week One, two students pointed to the utility of film to show “more than written texts” and contending that the films “impacted me more than just reading the facts.” Another student advised, “When things are brought to life, they are much more vivid than the lines of a textbook.” Across their written reflections, students repeatedly esteem film as informative and realistic historical sources. In a final reflection, one student shared,

The films influenced my understanding of the Civil Rights Movement because actually seeing what really happened affected the way I learned the information. I can sit and read a textbook all day and never learn as much as I learned through the films we watched. I felt as if I were in the time period seeing what happened and it was as if I was really exposed to the truth of the Civil Rights Movement.

Another student stressed, “It’s easy to read about something and not get a true sense of what actually happened, but when you see what occurred, it really makes it real.” A third student agreed,

I can read all day and not truly understand it, but when I actually see it, I have a better feel for it. And when you watch films, you can actually see the people talking who lived it and their emotions, and see it.

In the final written reflections, 14 out of 18 students reported that the films' visual content aided their understanding of the Civil Rights Movement, which seemed to make the films exceedingly more engaging than other historical sources.

Documentary Films Compared to Other Historical Sources

In addition to the documentary films, each week students explored a variety of historical sources including historical artifacts like photographs and documents, children's trade books, elementary social studies textbooks, and excerpts from non-fiction texts about the movement (for a detailed description of the historical sources used, refer to Appendix A). These sources were included as a way to juxtapose the dominant narrative with the counter-narrative the students were seeing in the four documentary films. Students were given the opportunity during each class to corroborate all of the related sources, including the film, and engage in a discussion about the sources and historical narratives in class and in their written reflections. Most often, students talked or wrote about the film sources instead of the elementary textbooks, children's books, and artifacts. When comparing the films to the other historical sources in class, students recognized characteristics of the films that seemed to influence their understanding of the films as superior historical sources. It is important to emphasize that by viewing the films before analyzing the other, different sources, students' ideas of the films as superior or more accurate and reliable sources may have been impacted.

Across the four weeks, students compared the documentary films to the other historical sources (elementary textbooks, children's books, historical texts, and historical artifacts like photographs and newspaper articles), and even corroborated the narratives that were presented across the sources to develop their own narratives of what they believed took place and the realness of the different sources. Most often, the documentary films were regarded as more accurate and more influential than the other sources used. Moreover, students seemed to use this information to corroborate the multiple sources and make decisions about which of the sources were most influential in developing their own ideas about the events and themes they examined surrounding the Civil Rights Movement.

Students' comparison of the accuracy of the collective sources. Although there was no indication that students viewed other historical sources as particularly unrealistic, students' reactions to the documentaries frequently included narratives of the films as "real evidence" or providing the "real" history through the perspectives of people who experienced the events that came to be known as the Civil Rights Movement. This may be related to my decision as the teacher to show the films first each week before introducing the other historical sources related to the event or theme being studied. A student simply, yet clearly explained how documentary film facilitated her understanding of the movement. She said, "It gave images to Black and White words." In the Socratic dialogue in Week Three, one student shared, "If you see it, it's so much more realistic." Similar written reflections or comments in class were not shared about the other, related sources. Again, this may have been related to the positioning of the films during the

course delivery; it is not clear whether the order in which the historical sources, including the documentary films, were introduced impacted students' ideas about the realness of varying sources.

As the study progressed, students continued to remark on the realness of films. One student wrote, "The films and clips greatly added to the understanding I have of the movement for the simple reason that when things are brought to life they are much more vivid than in the lines of a textbook." Another insisted that "films have a greater impact than reading a textbook about it." In her final reflection, a third student explained, "One cannot deny what he sees with his own eyes, which is why documentaries that capture history through an eyewitness point of view or even through capturing actual events on film are so vital in educating appropriately."

In comparison to the other historical sources that students worked with in each class meeting, the films were cited in students' anticipation guides, during the class discussions, and in written reflections significantly more than the textbooks, children's books, and historical photographs, even after exposure to both the dominant and counter-narrative. In fact, when asked to record which sources were the most influential on Week Three's anticipation guide, students overwhelmingly cited the video footage and interview quotations from the film *The Freedom Riders*, not the content that was illustrated or described in the other historical sources. This is echoed in one student's narrative about the influence of the films in her final written reflection:

I think the films and film clips have been the most influential to me because it made the stories so much more real to see them played out in actuality. Seeing the brutality played out is much more shocking than just hearing about it. If we hadn't

watched the films I don't think I would have gotten the same feelings and understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. Watching the films made me realize just how violent and dangerous the civil rights movement actually was. Hearing the actual victims who lived through the movement tell their stories was very moving.

Students frequently reported that the films were central to developing their understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, one student said, "Through these film clips I have got to see many different things that happened during the CRM other than that of the dominant narrative which was really interesting." Across the four weeks, most students demonstrated an understanding of documentary film as informative and realistic historical sources.

Students' corroboration of the collective sources. In Weeks One, Three, and Four, students encountered concepts, historical events, and historical people that of which they had minimal or no prior knowledge. Each class, before the film viewing and source analysis, students were asked to record what they knew about the week's topics in a section of their anticipation guide. In Weeks One, Three, and Four, students' anticipation guides revealed that they did not have prior knowledge of the concepts of Jim Crow segregation practices, the Freedom Rides, and civil rights marches, including the Birmingham Children's March. In fact, a total of 14 students across these three different weeks left the section entirely blank or entered "I don't know." During each course meeting, students corroborated the featured film with other historical sources. At this time each week, students were also able to draw from their own prior knowledge (if they had any) of the concepts, events, and people being examined. Students' prior knowledge seemed to impact their corroboration of sources. It is important to recognize that in

Weeks One, Three, and Four, students also did not locate information about these three concepts in the elementary textbooks that they analyzed. Therefore, when students were asked to develop and articulate the dominant narrative and counter-narrative in these three weeks, they were not able to draw from their prior knowledge or from the elementary textbooks to understand the dominant narrative and counter-narrative. Instead, they corroborated the documentary films with the historical artifacts and trade books provided in class.

Furthermore, as students compared the historical sources to the films, their own personal narratives of what occurred were largely drawn from the documentary films. This student's narrative about the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Rosa Parks demonstrates how some students' own narratives contain historical information derived from the documentary film viewed in class:

Rosa was neither the first person nor woman to be arrested for not moving on the bus. However she was the first woman whose case was made public. Rosa was not just a tired seamstress; she was a NAACP advocate that worked with the youth, a good citizen, and a role model, which combined, made her the perfect public figure to use in order to ignite the fight for civil rights. E.D. Nixon thought so as well and rushed to Rosa to start making preparations to defend her. This is also the point Martin Luther King Jr. entered the scene with his peaceful protests; such as the bus boycott that remarkably lasted more than a year.

Students also recorded on their anticipation guides the sources that were the most influential they encountered each week. Their anticipation guides showed that students frequently cited interviewee quotations, sound bytes from original footage, and images shown in the films as the most influential sources. For example, in Week One, students named the graphic photos of the four children murdered in the Sixteenth Street Baptist

Church bombing (including the image of the bodies in the morgue) as well as interviewee quotations by Denise McNair's father and Bill Cosby. Later in Week Three, the students recorded a total of 122 quotations or photographs and footage from the film *The Freedom Riders* in their anticipation guides. For example, students cited the pictures of the beatings, news conference footage with Governor George Wallace, excerpts from survivors' commentaries, and the speech by Bull Connor as powerful sources. Again, each of these examples is from the documentary films rather than the other historical sources used in class.

Similarly, Week Four anticipation guides (used during as students corroborated sources about the Birmingham Children's March) covered in notes about the use of violence with dogs and fire hoses, Bull Connor's speech, as well as excerpts from participant interviews. For example, three students recorded this quotation by a Birmingham resident who was interviewed about participating in the children's march as a child: "The reality of it was we were born black in Alabama. Because no matter if we didn't do anything, we were still going to get hurt." However, students did not frequently suggest that the historical artifacts or trade books were influential sources or used either as examples in their Socratic dialogues. For example, in Week One's dialogue, there were only 5 references to historical sources other the film *Four Little Girls*. Most importantly, students cited information from the documentary films much more than other sources when they wrote or spoke their own historical narratives. This is demonstrated in Week Two, during the study of Rosa Parks and the bus boycott, as the collective written reflections that week only revealed 8 connections to sources other than the film *Mighty*

Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks, and 6 of the 8 references were related to the biography of Claudette Colvin, which was used during the source analysis.

Students often credited the films and film clips with providing historical information that was absent in other sources, and with presenting a more accurate account of history than the other historical sources. One student contended, “Through these film clips I was able to see many different things that happened during the Civil Rights Movement other than that of the dominant narrative.” In her final written reflection, another student described how the films functioned as historical sources to expand her thinking beyond other sources: “The videos we have watched have definitely helped me become more of a historical thinker because I was able to see and hear many primary sources. I feel like most of my life I have only had access to the dominant narrative. Through these videos I was able to challenge that.” A third student explained how the films—as historical sources—contributed to her developing knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement and her understanding of films as historical sources:

Going into this unit, I did not have a great deal of prior knowledge in relation to the Civil Rights Movement. I knew that Rosa Parks would not give up her seat and what the KKK was. However, by watching these films and film clips in class, my knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement has greatly expanded. I have learned that the Civil Rights Movement was not just certain individuals who did great things, but was rather a movement inspired by groups. I also learned about all the events that made up the Civil Rights Movement. For instance, the Freedom Rides and Freedom Summer were completely new concepts to me; however, by viewing the films, I not only learned what these events were but how they impacted the rest of the Civil Rights Movement. The films influenced my understanding by showing me the big ideas that made up the events that made up the Civil Rights Movement. The films had a combination of facts and primary sources that made these events real and will allow me to remember the important factors of the Civil Rights Movement from now on.

One characteristic of the featured films was the explicit portrayal of counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, one student said that through the films, “I was able to see the counter narrative to many events that I did read about in a textbook. This helped to fill in gaps where I may have had questions I didn’t even know I had.” In Week Three, one student wrote about this aspect of the films: “Even history books, textbooks, or children’s books do not emphasize the counter-narrative and the real things that were occurring.” A second student challenged the elementary social studies textbooks, saying “things are left out and others are embellished, and the dominant narrative is the result.”

Throughout the study, students pointed to the films as the historical sources that influenced their developing knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement and their engagement with historical thinking. Frequently, students compared the films and film content to the elementary textbooks that they studied as historical sources. As early as Week One, students discussed the films’ influence on their understanding and compared the film content to the elementary textbooks. Some students claimed that the “textbook is not the whole story,” even suggesting that “textbooks leave out important, challenging sources and evidence.” One student recorded in her anticipation guide, “Why do textbooks keep things so simple?” In the class discussion in Week One, a student (referring to the content of the film *4 Little Girls*) compared the film to dominant textbook, claiming “it’s not in the textbook—there’s one perspective, but not all sides!” Another student added, “You never see that in textbooks.” In Week Three, following the study of the Freedom Rides, one student wrote that the textbooks only provided “a little

information, but if children researched the Civil Rights Movement, they would be shocked.” These statements about the films in comparison with the other historical sources (elementary social studies textbooks, children’s books, other historical texts, and historical photographs and documents) suggest that students perceived the films as more meaningful than the other historical sources used in class.

In Week Two, students corroborated several textbook excerpts and the content of one trade book with the film *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks*, and developed a conversation comparing the three:

Buchanan: A segue into that—what did you find in your textbooks? Anybody want to share? What did you find in your textbooks? Did (emphasis) you find things in your textbooks? Let’s talk about that for just a minute.

Anna: In the second grade one there was like a little three sentence part.

Buchanan: Read it for us please.

Anna: “There are laws against not respecting the rights and freedoms of others. A Right is the kind of freedoms people have. Having freedom means being about to make your own choices. When people respect one another’s rights, everyone’s rights are protected.” The only person it talks about it is Ella Baker and I am thinking that’s because yeah I guess they just put it in here because she was from North Carolina. It says “she grew up in Lillington, NC. And she was concerned about fairness. In 1952 she became the leader of the NAACP which works for equal rights of African Americans.” And that was like all in the whole thing that it said about civil rights.

Buchanan: So, if you look at the index, and you look under Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Civil Rights Movement are not there?

Caroline: But that is like second grade and maybe, like I know in fourth grade they just talk about NC so maybe

Dahlia: Well we have some upper grades books here so let’s look at those.

Elisabeth: Dec 1, 1955 an African American woman named Rosa Parks got on a bus in Montgomery, AL. she sat in the middle of the bus. Under Alabama law, African Americans could sit in the middle only if no Whites wanted that seat. As the bus filled up, the driver told Parks to go back to the back of the bus. She refused to move and was arrested. African Americans in Montgomery decide to act. They began a boycott of the city's buses that lasted more than a year. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation. And then it just talked about how they were met with violence but they elected to be non-violent.

Buchanan: What grade?

Elisabeth: First.

Dahlia: Well it says she refused to give up her seat but in the videos she refused to give up an empty seat no one wanted. Like the man gave up his seat but she had to move just so she could be behind him.

Elisabeth: Actually wasn't it the whole row?

Buchanan: Student 5, are you insinuating that the textbook is incorrect?
(Everyone laughs)

Dahlia: And it says she sat in the middle of the bus. Yeah, they are trying to be vague so you don't question it. Like this is the size of the textbook three like no names like

Elisabeth: This is the size of the textbook. Like I was looking over it and there were no names.

Dahlia: Did you ever notice that it says in our readings that it never says that three people were arrested prior to Rosa for the same thing?

Felice: Well like in the Claudette book, and one of the chapter's titles—and I love Claudette—one of the titles said, "Another negro woman arrested."

Dahlia: It doesn't say that in the textbook though.

Caroline: It doesn't talk about anybody being arrested before her.

Buchanan: So is there one more example from the textbook?

Garrett: Um, it says Rosa Parks was the local leader. Rosa Parks wanted to change the laws that were unfair to African Americans. It says they could sit in the middle if the White people did not need the seats. In 1955 Mrs. Parks was sitting

in the middle of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama and when she refused to give up her seat she was arrested.

Buchanan: ok, Harlow?

Harlow: well I just found this interesting. I think it's a little it's a lot different. All it says is like it's the definition of civil rights and it talks about Martin Luther King, Jr. and the day that honors Dr. King and his peaceful actions for civil rights. And that's like basically all it says. They didn't put her with civil rights. They put her with local leaders.

Garrett: and I thought it was interesting here in this children's book, it says "Rosa Parks has been called the mother of the civil rights movement."

Buchanan: And that's connected to our theme of individuals, groups and institutions, right?

Harlow: But you didn't hear any of that in the movie.

Students' (Un)critical Interpretation of Documentary Films as Historical Sources

When students were asked to think about their prior learning experiences with history and historical sources, some students admitted that they previously engaged history either passively or completely without challenging the accuracy of the sources. One student divulged, "I was never taught to question textbooks or other historical sources, and I always took what I read to be the truth." A second student confessed, "I always thought that what you read in textbooks was all truth, and there was nothing left out. Leaving important ideas and information out of a historical document actually never crossed my mind." In her third reflection, another student wrote about having similar experiences:

The films we have viewed throughout the course of this semester have opened my eyes to the idea that there is more than just one story. For example, as a child I read what was in the textbook and I was never prompted to consider that the

information I was reading could either be false or might have left out some very important events or ideas.

Although some students shared that they didn't approach history from a critical standpoint before, they believed that as their engagement with film as a historical source progressed, they understood how to study history and historical sources from a critical standpoint. For example, students believed that now, they were "not accepting all historical accounts as fact," and "there is so much more to the story." Some students even questioned their own thinking over time, acknowledging, "I don't know why it's just now occurring to me to question what I see, read, and hear for historical proof." Some students even alleged that it was the films that facilitated their recent more critical position towards historical sources. One student insisted,

The films have influenced my historical thinking and have allowed me to question, critique, and analyze what was really happening during the CRM time period. I have always heard dominant narratives about the CRM, but was never exposed to counter narratives. After being exposed to the films, I now have a better understanding of what really happened because I was able to analyze the films, hear real-life primary perspectives, and critique what really happened during the Civil Rights Movement. The films have been very beneficial and have really made me analyze and question this time period. Unlike memorizing facts or information and then forgetting about it one week later, these films will forever be a part of memory.

Although students claimed to have developed a more critical interpretation of history and historical sources, their collective approach to the documentary films did not demonstrate cautious consideration. Throughout the four weeks of the study, students repeatedly did not approach the films from a critical stance. Although students were regularly engaged in various forms of historical thinking, when they viewed,

corroborated, discussed, and wrote about the films, they did so from a less critical standpoint than they approached the other historical sources used in class. In fact, students seemed to most often receive the films as accurate and valuable sources. For example, students commented that the documentary films “gave lots of perspectives,” revealed “there is so much more to the story than we teach students,” and “greatly influenced my understanding by showing you have to dig deeper to get all the facts.” Yet, the anticipation guides, written reflections, and Socratic dialogues did not demonstrate students approaching or interpreting the films from a critical position.

In this study, students were taught how to analyze historical sources, specifically primary and secondary sources, using historical thinking skills. Across the four chosen documentary films, students frequently viewed and heard both primary and secondary source accounts and representations. Although students were taught a strategic method for analyzing historical sources, they were not taught an approach to analyzing the documentary films that was different from the other historical sources. Therefore, students’ lack of critical analysis of the documentary films may be related to the order in which the films were introduced. Consequently, I cannot draw definitive conclusions about students’ lack of critical interpretation of the four films, but only speculate as to why the students as a whole did not interrogate the documentary films in the same way that they did the elementary textbooks, children’s books, and historical artifacts.

Uncovering Dominant Narratives and Counter-narratives

Students were required to identify the dominant narratives and counter-narratives of the historical events related to the Civil Rights Movement each week. Their reflections

indicated that the films facilitated students' new understanding of dominant narratives and counter-narratives. For example, one student wrote in her last post, "By viewing these films, I see that there is a counter-narrative to every dominant narrative." A peer said that the films illustrated "information that is commonly left out of the traditional narrative." This section examines how students negotiated the narratives presented across the sources and students' collective narratives of three events and the movement at large is illustrated.

Identifying the Dominant Narrative

Every week, students examined a documentary film, elementary textbooks, children's trade books, historical artifacts, and excerpts from non-fiction texts about the movement with the goal of identifying the dominant narrative and counter-narrative of the events or people being examined (for a detailed record of the films, historical artifacts, and books used each week, refer to Appendix A). The films were positioned before the historical artifacts, the textbooks and children's books, and an anticipation guide was used to analyze and respond to each of the four films. During Week Two and Week Three, students were asked to record the dominant narrative of the events in their anticipation guides. The collective data sources demonstrate that students' articulation of the dominant narrative was quite different for each event. Students provided in-depth descriptions of the dominant narrative of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and of Rosa Parks' involvement in the boycott and larger Civil Rights Movement. Students' accounts of the dominant narrative were recorded in anticipation guides and written reflections. These included "there were just a few individuals;" "Rosa Parks was the first person to

refuse to give up her seat to a White person and it led to the start of the Civil Rights Movement” and “she was a tired seamstress who had had enough of unequal treatment.” In Week Three, where students examined the Freedom Rides, students provided less detailed accounts of the dominant narrative than in Week Two. For example, students described the dominant narrative as “Northern college students traveled south to integrate” and “it was White against blacks.”

One section of the anticipation guide for Week Four, where students learned about the role of young people in the Civil Rights Movement, asked students to describe the dominant narrative of the Birmingham Children’s March. Four students (out of the total 18) admitted that identifying the dominant narrative of an event that students didn’t have prior knowledge of or a textbook narrative of was difficult. Student responses included, “I’ve never heard much about the children; I’ve watched Selma, Lord Selma—it’s about the more well-known marches—but I didn’t know about the children’s march,” and “I had never heard of the children’s march and I just thought children peaceably marched through with no violence.” A third student wrote, “What dominant narrative? I’ve never heard anything about the kids!” These responses suggest that locating the dominant narrative was more difficult when they were examining a historical event or person that they did not have prior knowledge of before class. When students’ encountered a historical event that they did not have prior knowledge of and did not find a textbook narrative for, they relied on the provided trade books, related historical artifacts, and excerpts from historical books to identify the dominant narrative.

Identifying the Counter-narrative

Throughout the four weeks, students not only defined counter-narratives of individual events or people, but also defined what they believe a counter-narrative is. For example, one student defined counter-narratives as “The reality of what actually happened, not just what makes the story sound the best.” Their collective understanding of counter-narratives was focused on two main types of counter-narratives: historical information that is consistently absent in dominant accounts and the perspectives of participants that are not included in the dominant narrative. This indicates that students were thinking about the role of multiple perspectives as well as what information is needed yet missing to develop an accurate account of historical events. These two types of counter-narratives suggest that students recognized what historical information or perspectives are absent in dominant historical sources, and consider these perspectives as central to understanding history.

Throughout the four weeks, students demonstrated success in the anticipation guides, Socratic dialogues, and written reflections in using the four documentary films to understand dominant narratives and counter-narratives in history. For example, one student discussed the impact of *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks* in her written reflection in Week Two:

It is easiest to choose one idea of how an event occurred and keep telling that same story over and over again. This is evident in the majority of children’s books and textbook excerpts we looked at in class. For instance, the books say that she was a seamstress who had just had enough of unfair treatment that day she refused to give her seat up on the bus. However, other sources, including the videos we viewed in class, show that she was chosen to make that statement to push for equal rights. She worked with others who wanted to gain equal rights for African

Americans and the whole situation was planned, unlike the story that is told in most literature. This shows that her story, just like so many others, is told only one way, and that way is not always the way things actually happened.

Another student shared that the film helped her to understand that the bus boycott and the larger movement was led by “not two or three, but instead, thousands.”

During weeks that students examined civil rights events or themes that they did not have prior knowledge of (for example, Freedom Rides), only some students successfully identified the dominant narrative and counter-narratives. Students’ written reflections and the classroom discussions revealed that students were more involved in identifying the narratives—both dominant and counter-narratives—when they had some prior knowledge of the event or people. Again, they might have struggled with defining and embracing the dominant narrative because the documentary films were shown first before students looked at the textbooks, children’s books, and historical artifacts. This was evident in Week Two when students examined Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Fourteen students demonstrated prior knowledge about Rosa Parks and the bus boycott, and it seemed to influence their understanding of the dominant narrative and counter-narrative. For example, in the class Socratic discussion, one student divulged, “I always thought it was Rosa Parks that did all this. I guess because that’s all I learned in school but now it’s like, wow, there’s so many more factors that happened.”

During Week Two, students cited the documentary film as they identified the various counter-narratives of the bus boycott and Rosa Parks, both discussing and writing about the counter-narratives using the film *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks*. For example, one student addressed this in the whole group Socratic dialogue; she said, “I

like how it showed like how the preacher said so many of the employers and wives would like try to help black people and stuff like that.” In the same week, students engaged a whole group conversation where they compared the narratives of the documentary film to the related historical sources about the boycott and Rosa Parks. They readily recognized that the textbooks claimed that “Rosa Parks sat in the middle of the bus” and disputed the glorification of individuals involved in the Civil Rights Movement, challenging, “It was a group effort and not just a few individuals who made the movement possible.”

In one student’s weekly reflection following Week Two, she wrote, “I’m beginning to understand that there is not one person or event that brought about the Civil Rights Movement, rather many people and events pieced together and intertwined.” In the same week, another student reflected, “No one person or event began the movement; it was all the little people and small events, intertwined with everything else going on within society that set up the road for the Civil Rights Movement.” These assertions in Week Two demonstrated that students were able to recognize and understand the counter-narratives portrayed in the films and the dominant narratives drawn from other, dominant historical sources.

In Week Three, the class dialogue broached the difficulty of conflicting historical narratives and the presence of counter-narratives. One student offered, “What I think is hard about it is you know, you want facts; and thinking historically, you can’t look at everything you read as facts because there are so many counter-narratives.” A classmate concurred, noting, “It’s hard for me to believe a lot of history because there are so many different accounts.” The documentary films also seemed to help students identify the

counter-narratives that were absent in the dominant narrative of civil rights events. For example, in Week Two, following the study of the bus boycott, one student recognized that violent hate crimes against the civil rights activist and citizens were often omitted from dominant narratives about the Civil Rights Movement. She believed that this historical truth was a counter-narrative of the larger Civil Rights Movement, and alleged, “Leaving it (violent hate crimes) out completely hides the severity of what went on during this period.” In the following segment from the Socratic dialogue in Week Three, students explained their thinking about important perspectives that would provide the counter-narratives of the first Freedom Rides.

Buchanan: So given the sources you’ve looked at, what do you think the counter-narratives would be for the Freedom Rides?

Jenn: like the bus drivers?

Buchanan: be specific. What do you mean the bus drivers?

Jenn: Like the bus drivers that had to drive the people. Like I was thinking about that in the video, like it didn’t really go into like a lot of what they were thinking because they were just kind of like stuck in that situation. Like the random passengers, too.

Katy: And like the one bus driver that just abandoned the bus. I wondered how he felt when like he pretty much just left those people to die!

Lauren: Well I don’t know if I am piggy-backing on this but it’s like another counter-narrative is that the Kennedy’s weren’t really supportive of the civil rights movement like we were grown up to think. I thought he was a big activist for civil rights but it wasn’t until apparently people made him say hey you really need to take care of this. And it was other people in other nations who were saying “why are you talking about us when you have your own problems? How could you call us out on what we are doing with our own citizens when you have your own problems in your nation? You need to take care of that before you start even trying to tell us how we should run our country.”

Katy: Another counter-narrative is that they boarded regularly scheduled buses which I don't remember ever hearing that before. I thought that they were just on a bus like a band would get together and ride a bus around the nation.

This excerpt from the Socratic dialogue illustrates how students were able to understand counter-narratives of the Freedom Rides while also using the film to locate counter-narratives that they believed should be explored further and highlighted in dominant historical sources. This excerpt also suggests that students without much prior knowledge can successfully use documentary film to further develop their knowledge of history.

Students' Constructions of Dominant and Counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement

Throughout the study of the Civil Rights Movement, students encountered multiple opportunities to analyze and corroborate various historical sources, and then use those in sources to identify the dominant narratives and counter-narratives associated with the different historical events. Among the different events students analyzed, three particular events elicited the most attempts at identifying the dominant narratives and counter-narratives: Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the first Freedom Rides, and the Birmingham Children's March. Identifying the counter-narrative in each of these three events required students to locate the dominant narrative, understand what a counter-narrative is, how to analyze and corroborate contradictory historical sources, and then return to the historical sources to locate the presence or absence of the counter-narrative(s). Table 5 illustrates the dominant and counter-narratives examined during this study.

Table 5

Dominant and Counter-narratives

Week	Event	Dominant Narrative	Representative Quotations	Counter-Narrative	Representative Quotations
1	School and public Integration in the Southern states	School and public Integration in the United States took place with minimal resistance	Whites didn't see the problem.	Integrationists were met with violent resistance	Four innocent children were killed because of black hatred, really for no reason.
2	Montgomery Bus Boycott	The boycott began when Rosa Parks was arrested for sitting in the White section of a city bus.	The dominant narrative is there are main figures and leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.	The boycott was an organized and collective group effort	That the whole movement was only successful because of everyone in the community that made it possible, not just a few main people.
3	The Freedom Rides	After the bus boycott in Montgomery (1955-1956) integrated bus travel ensued	College students traveled for equal rights—non-violent protests against segregation.	Integrated riders on regularly scheduled intrastate buses were met with violent resistance in Southern states	It was a non-violent protest by both Blacks and Whites that created violent reactions. There were other non-Freedom Riders on the buses.
4	The Birmingham Children's March	Civil rights marches were led by adult activists	Children did not participate unless it was with their parents nor make a real impact.	Children led the march in Birmingham	Kids played an important role. The children organized the march. The children were beaten, hosed down, attacked by dogs.

Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Students used historical artifacts and photographs, trade books, current elementary social studies textbooks, and the documentary film *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks* to develop the dominant narrative and counter-narrative of the event. Students discovered that the history of Rosa Parks and her involvement in the Montgomery Bus Boycott is one of the most widely documented events of the movement in elementary social studies textbooks and children's literature.

The dominant narrative. As one student remarked, "Rosa was the dominant figure, made out to be the catalyst to the great movement that would change our nation forever." When asked about their prior knowledge of the movement in the initial questionnaire, some students recalled Parks as "a leader in the Civil Rights Movement," and wrote of her refusal to give up her bus seat. Students' prior knowledge of Parks may have contributed to their comprehensive documentation of the dominant narratives and counter-narratives of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Drawing from their prior knowledge, students shared that "Most of us thought that Rosa sat in the White section because there was no room left in the black section," and "In elementary school, most people learn Rosa Parks was the first African American to sit in the 'White' section of the bus and refuse to move after a long hard day of working as a seamstress."

Students' collective dominant narrative of the boycott described the events that unfolded that day as the result of an individual, a "tired seamstress" who was seated in the wrong section of the bus and "refused to give up her seat to a White man." This assertion is found in the Socratic dialogue for Week Two and also in students' written

reflections; this excerpt illustrates one student's knowledge of the dominant narrative of Rosa Parks and the boycott: "The dominant narrative tells us that she was seated in the White section and that is why she was told to give up her seat, when in fact the counter-narrative teaches something completely different." Students seemed to agree that most often, "Rosa's story is told through the eyes of leaders, admirers, and textbook authors."

The counter-narrative. Students seemed to navigate locating the counter-narrative of Parks and the bus boycott with little trouble, and their collective counter-narrative portrays a much different account of the event than the dominant narrative. One student explained:

The counter-narrative of Rosa Parks is that she was an activist. She knew that blacks were treated unfairly and she worked to change that. She knew going onto that bus that day that she would refuse to give up her seat. Another part of the counter-narrative is that she was sitting in the front row of the colored section and they moved the sign back when they told her to get up (which is something that the bus driver, unfortunately, could do). So according to this counter-narrative, she was doing exactly what the law told her she could do.

Another student elaborated:

The counter-narrative explains Mrs. Parks was actually sitting in the 'colored' section of the bus. It also goes on to tell us she was not even in the seat the White man wanted, she was merely sitting across the aisle. The man believed he could not sit across the aisle from a 'colored' woman because she would then be equal to him. Rosa was neither the first person nor woman to be arrested for not moving on the bus.

A third student posited:

Rosa Parks' story tells us that the stories of history are often changed as they are repeated. People generally like stories of heroes and people who defy the odds.

An organized bus boycott and the planned arrest of Rosa Parks is not as glamorous as the David and Goliath story that we have been told as children.

Students believed that the group effort encompassed cooks, church congregations, “children who attended fundraisers” and “passed out flyers,” the “drivers in the carpools,” and church leadership, including “even the White preacher of the black church where the meetings took place.” One student alleged that “Once Rosa Parks stood up against the White officer, a collective group joined together to rebel against all of the segregation laws and the problems that were going on throughout the community.” Another maintained that “Children spread the news with flyers all over town. Individuals, both Black and White, drove carpools to aid people on their way to work” and “one of the church ladies would cook the meals for the meetings every week. She helped support the cause in that she gave the money she made from the meals to the cause.”

These selections reveal that students understood that while Parks was instrumental to the boycott and larger movement, she did not act alone. The students’ counter-narrative of the boycott and Parks overwhelmingly recognizes the presence and function of a “collective, integrated, and organized group effort” by citizens who planned and implemented the boycott that “lasted for more than a year.” The “organized, group effort” proved that “joining together, working as a group can really make a difference.” Students’ narratives also noted that “other people did the same thing she did, and have gone unnoticed.” As one student explained, “To most students, Rosa was the first and the bravest. But the girl that came before her was a child at the time and showed true courage for her young age.”

The First Freedom Rides. Perhaps the most shocking event that the students explored during the study of the Civil Rights Movement was the first Freedom Rides. Before studying the rides, only two students had prior knowledge associated with the rides. Both students stated they knew that the rides “had something to do with buses.” Although students’ initial responses indicated that they were generally unaware of the Freedom Rides as part of the Civil Rights Movement, they were successful with locating the dominant narrative and counter-narrative of the Freedom Rides. They used the documentary *The Freedom Riders*, excerpts from biographies and autobiographies, artifacts, and trade books to identify the dominant narrative and counter-narrative. Students did not locate information about the Freedom Rides in the elementary textbooks they examined.

The dominant narrative. Students’ collective dominant narrative of the Freedom Rides stated that “the Freedom Rides were led by a group of college students who traveled south on buses to promote integration.” Specifically, students said the dominant narrative suggests that “only black people were involved.” Students also stated that the dominant narrative illustrates that in the south, riders encountered resistance to the rides.

The counter-narrative. Students’ collective counter-narrative provided a detailed picture of the first Freedom Rides. Their narratives demonstrated that the Freedom Rides “were not just by African Americans—Whites rode and took abuse in the endeavor,” and the Freedom Riders were “trained to deal with conflict.” The overarching violence of the movement was also present in many students’ counter-narratives of the Freedom Rides. Students understood that as the rides ensued, “White people helping in the Freedom

Riders were accused of being ‘n----- lovers’ and were beaten as bad as the blacks, if not worse.” One student said the counter-narrative included “the fact that police gave them fifteen minutes to beat the passengers before they could interject and take control.”

Students recognized that the passengers who “boarded regularly scheduled buses” and were not Freedom Riders provided another aspect of the counter-narrative of the rides. One student wrote,

They got on the bus thinking that it was just a normal day and that they were going to be safe on the ride...little did they know that they were going to be beat alongside the rest of the Freedom Riders. They were brought into the Freedom Rides by chance that day that they got on that bus and not another. I think it would be so interesting to hear what was crossing their minds when it all happened.

Some students reported that “the bus drivers’ accounts” and “the reporter who was beaten,” as well as the bystanders’ stories are part of the counter-narrative of the rides. A few students stressed the response (or lack of) by President Kennedy as part of the counter-narrative of the Freedom Rides, proclaiming, “JFK was spreading freedom everywhere except the Deep South.” Students believed that the Freedom Riders “commitment to finishing their rides” and their “non-violent response” contributed to the counter-narrative. Students’ ability to identify the role of individuals who were not Freedom Riders suggests that by the third class, students were beginning to recognize the presence and function of counter-narratives in understanding history.

Birmingham Children’s March. A third event that students identified the dominant narrative and counter-narrative of was the Birmingham Children’s March. Similar to the Freedom Rides, students did not have background knowledge of the

Birmingham Children's March before learning about the event in class, and their anticipation guides in the final week illustrated that. However, students did possess a general understanding that citizens marched in non-violent protest during the movement. Students used the documentary film *The Children's March*, trade books, excerpts from historical books about civil rights marches, and historical photographs to identify the dominant narrative and counter-narrative of the Birmingham Children's March.

The dominant narrative. Overall, students' collective dominant narrative of the march was less detailed than the other events. Most described the dominant narrative of the Birmingham Children's March as "children did what they were told;" they "didn't have a say or play a role," and "did not participate unless with their parents and did not make a real impact." Dominant accounts indicate that "marches were led by Martin Luther King, Jr." not by children. Students also recognized that marches were portrayed in the dominant narrative of the larger movement as "non-violent protests." However, when asked to identify the dominant narrative of the Birmingham Children's march, one student challenged, "What dominant narrative? I've never heard anything about the kids!"

The counter-narrative. Students' collective counter-narrative stated that the Birmingham Children's March was an "organized, multiple day march" that provided the "children's chance to participate in marches." Children and youth occupied the streets of Birmingham and Kelly Ingram Park for days, where they were "arrested and jailed by the thousands." As organized protestors, the youth were met with both law enforcement and citizen resistance, including "police brutality against the children" with dogs and fire

hoses used to deter their presence. “The KKK retaliation (for the march) was the Sixteenth Street bombing,” and “Birmingham was a landmark event that changed everything.” At the time, “the children’s march broke the back of Birmingham” as it garnered national attention and resulted in a televised address by President Kennedy, calling for an end to segregation.

The Collective Movement. Students were able to not only identify and articulate the dominant and counter-narratives of these three major events of the Civil Rights Movement, they were able to articulate a dominant narrative and a counter-narrative of the collective Civil Rights Movement.

The dominant narrative. Students’ dominant narrative of the Civil Rights Movement included statements like “all these events were well organized and executed by adult African Americans,” and “The dominant narrative of the entire Civil Rights Movement is that there was no brutal violence, that it was a peaceable movement.” Students also recognized that the dominant narrative portrays the Civil Rights Movement in a “simplistic way.” For example, students wrote, “In most stories of the Civil Rights Movement, we hear that it was basically black people versus White people,” and “In school, we usually only hear about Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and a few others.” One student emphasized the problematic nature of presenting the movement through only the dominant narrative. She challenged,

People try to make it more as if a couple people made the Civil Rights Movement happen. It’s like they are looking for the Superman or Batman in the bunch. Another reason is they have their own view of what’s important for people to know and remember, even if it’s not the whole truth.

The counter-narrative. Although the dominant narrative that students' discovered in textbooks and trade books celebrated individual leaders and events in exclusion, students overwhelmingly identified the counter-narrative of the movement as the presence and function of "planned and organized group efforts," children, youth, and college students as activists, and the interwoven principle of "non-violence." In her anticipation guide, one student wrote, "It is so amazing to hear about all different types of groups and people that took action during this time." Four students even recorded that "the children were the unsung heroes of the Civil Rights Movement." These excerpts from students' final written reflections demonstrate three students' understanding of the counter-narrative of the movement. One student wrote,

A counter-narrative would be the Freedom Riders. They are a group I never had the opportunity to learn about in school. Although iconic people such as Martin Luther King Jr. were extremely important and influential during the Civil Rights Movement, many of the changes made were due to groups like the Freedom Riders who are not given as much publicity as other aspects of the Civil Rights Movement.

Another student reflected, "History seems to dull down the fact that many White people also helped and stood at the front lines along with African Americans. Most of the movements involved young college students." A third student underscored the organized group effort exhibited across the collective movement:

The Civil Rights Movement cannot be solely attributed to Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, or any individual(s). Every man, woman and child (of all races) that boycotted the buses, helped in boycotting of buses, participated in other peaceful protests, and worked to make segregation a thing of the past should be acknowledged. Each and every individual made a difference, not just the common names we now hear.

Students' successful efforts in identifying the dominant narratives and counter-narratives of historical civil rights events and the larger movement provides a foundation for understanding their capacity for using documentary films as historical sources for engaging historical thinking and studying history.

Changes in Students' Perspectives Related to the Documentary Films

In addition to understanding the presence and utility of conflicting accounts of the past, historical thinking involves thinking about the perspectives of historical individuals and groups. In this study, students were introduced to a variety of perspectives across the historical sources, particularly the four documentary films. In each film, the students heard from survivors and participants who took part in the movement or were impacted by the historical events in some way. Additionally, students were positioned to empathize with historical individuals and groups that they were introduced to in the films. This section examines students' engagement with historical perspectives and empathy. First, considering students' initial and resulting ideas about historical thinking can help illustrate how their understanding of historical perspectives and empathy developed throughout the study.

Using Documentary Film to Develop Historical Perspectives and Empathy

Students' initial responses in defining historical thinking indicate that students did not enter the study with an understanding of the role of multiple perspectives in historical thinking. Responses about historical thinking included only some remarks related to understanding multiple perspectives of the past. For example, 6 out of 18 questionnaire responses included perspective taking, and of the six, only two noted that historical

thinking involves multiple, different perspectives. However, students' final questionnaire responses showed that more students recognized the role of different perspectives of historical people in understanding historical events and people than in the initial questions. In their final responses, 10 out of 18 definitions of historical thinking included acknowledging or studying different perspectives about the past. Additionally, findings revealed that each of the four weeks provided opportunities for students to attempt historical perspective taking.

As early as the first class, it was evident that students were both capable of perspective taking and willing to acknowledge and consider the perspectives of others. In her anticipation guide for Week One, where we examined segregation practices, a student wrote, "I have never looked at this from the perspective of a child who had to be told that certain things weren't allowed because of her skin color." During the following whole group Socratic dialogue, one student attempted historical perspective taking with the narrative given by the father of one child killed in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing. She shared,

I wrote down a quote from the gentleman it's about the bombing. "It was no easier to see the rock in her head than to tell her you can't have it because she was black." So I thought it was interesting that her father said that, not that it wasn't any more serious, but that he put them on the same level. You tell her she can't drink out of that fountain or you kill her, you're still discriminating. That was his perspective. Because obviously we think, "oh the bombing oh that's a bigger deal" but to him it was all the same. They were the same thing.

This initial exposure to a new perspective was not only articulated here in the dialogue, but it influenced her own developing knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, and

increased her awareness of the perspectives of others that are very different from her own. Then, in the same shared discussion, another student attempted historical perspective taking as she tried to understand the ideas and behaviors of those responsible for the church bombing in Birmingham. She posited,

You know, it's like can you really be mad at them for this idea? Or can you—should you—just like pity them that they are just like oblivious, that they were taught or brought up that way? I am not saying it's not their fault because everybody has a mind and can think and can notice that these things are bad, but it's just interesting to think about it that way.

Later in the Week One dialogue, a third student exchange between four students demonstrated their emerging use of historical perspective taking:

Micah: I have a quote that I thought was really interesting. There was like a White guy on there who worked for the city or state or something and he was talking about how Birmingham was a wonderful place to live in the 50s and 60s and then it showed pictures of black people hanging and then it showed the uh parents of these people the black people how lived there talking about like it was the most awful time to ever live in Birmingham and I just thought that was really interesting, how different they actually really did see it.

Buchanan: what do you make of that?

Micah: I think that the White people were like tried to make their selves oblivious to what was happening. Like if they weren't physically a part of it they just didn't want to really see it.

Natalie: Maybe they thought it was ok

Micah: Or they knew it was wrong and didn't want to . . . you know Convince yourself it was going to be ok?

Susanne: If you remember also though, like Denise's dad said like I wrote down: "The 50s were a time of quietness." That was Denise's dad that said that.

Therese: And to them it was like it was completely comfortable and fine.

Natalie: Nobody was there to help them. There was a lot of the

Therese: That's like why Rockwell named his painting that because it's something like everybody knew but no one wanted to talk about it. Nobody addressed it. Everybody knew it was there.

Susanne: Because if they had addressed it they had to do something about it. It's better to just not acknowledge it or do something about it because it meant taking a risk or you might be bombed or that you might be bombed or killed or whatever else done to you.

Natalie: Or that you just have to change your lifestyle or you're comfortable or happy or just didn't want to so why upset it?

Buchanan: Is it possible that the man that you're saying made the initial comment that Birmingham was a great place to live, is it possible that that was his life experience?

Micah: Yes, because most people didn't think it was wrong because they were born into that and that's how they were raised so they really didn't think about it, that's how life was.

In the next three weeks, students continued to attempt historical perspective taking, responding most often to the narratives they heard and events they saw unfold in the documentary films. For example, during the screening of *Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks*, three students recognized that the often omitted perspectives of the bus driver and arresting officer are part of the history of Parks' arrest and the subsequent bus boycott, even suggesting that understanding the perspectives of the bus driver and arresting officer at the events would help to develop their own narratives of what took place. In their written reflections, some students indicated that their experience with the documentary film and historical sources in about the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Rosa Parks in Week Two influenced their understanding of historical perspective taking. One

student reflected, “History is told through multiple accounts and through many different perspectives, which was clear while studying Rosa’s story.” A second student explained,

Rosa Park’s story tells us a great deal about how history is told. History is normally told from one perspective. It is easiest to choose one idea of how an event occurred and keep telling that same story over and over again. This is evident in the majority of children’s books and textbook excerpts we looked at in class. For instance, the books say that she was a seamstress who had just had enough of unfair treatment that day she refused to give her seat up on the bus. However, other sources, including the videos we viewed in class, show that she was chosen to make that statement to push for equal rights. She worked with others who wanted to gain equal rights for African Americans and the whole situation was planned, unlike the story that is told in most literature. This shows that her story, just like so many others, is told only one way, and that way is not always the way things actually happened.

Students’ attempts to acknowledge and consider the different perspectives that were part of the Civil Rights Movement continued in Weeks Three and Four. As students engaged a Socratic dialogue about the Freedom Rides in Week Three, one student attempted to understand the perspective of the riders as they entered the bus station in a new city. Comparing the riders to comrades in active combat, she shared,

I just have to say something that was really striking to me, two freedom riders standing together and it’s like I know they went down there together but it’s like a White man and a black man and it’s like this attitude of camaraderie that they and it’s almost like they went into battle together. Because on this film this guy said we looked at each other and then we went into the terminal. And I imagine if you are in battle and you have a fellow soldier beside you, you are just like okay let’s do this!

This example demonstrates that attempting historical perspective taking may also lead to students making connections to other, similar situations or experiences. A second student posed a very different question related to historical perspective taking as she tried

to understand the actions of the bus driver who left the burning bus outside of Anniston.

She asked, "I wonder how he felt when like he pretty much just left those people to die!"

In the final class, the discussion returned to the idea of using documentary film to teach historical thinking, specifically perspective taking:

Buchanan: A lot of what you guys are talking about has to do with the film versus the printed sources you have in front of you. So, what do you think about teaching historical thinking with films and film clips?

Student: I think that it's important because most of the video gives you more of a better perspective of seeing other people's perspectives; like one of the quotes that I had was like "Human dignity is the most important thing in my life, not my freedom or education" which is sad because you can't like change your way of life overnight, and just like seeing everybody's perspective.

The final week revealed continued efforts towards historical perspective taking, illuminating the role and success of organized efforts of children and young adults in the Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, students encountered various narratives of the ideas, actions, and perspectives of interviewees who were children or young adults when the historic Birmingham Children's March occurred. After hearing these primary source accounts and viewing original footage and reenactments of the children's march, the students responded to the film and related sources in a Socratic dialogue and in individual written reflections. One student tried to understand the perspective shared by a resident who was a child during the march. She said,

The movie made me think about the quote about one of the guys saying that they thought they could shame the White people or the police and the government into like feeling sorry for them when he was like, "look at what you're doing to us, look at how evil you're being." He thought they could shame them into getting rights and getting desegregation and he was like and that didn't happen. And I

don't know like that hit me because I always thought like if you show somebody how bad they are treating you of course they are going to stop. Like they are human, they can't possibly do that, but then you see this, and . . . they still did . . .

Her attempt at historical perspective taking here demonstrates that documentary film can be used to exercise perspective taking and respond to historical content. This coincided with a similar remark by a student in her written reflection, as she described her ideas about whether the films helped her to understand different perspectives. She stated, "I am able to see things from more than one point of view through all the different films and resources we have used." A third student revealed that "the narratives from others were interesting to me, but also changed my perspective."

Unlike Weeks One through Three, Week Four (the study of the Birmingham Children's March) illuminated the collective action of children and young adults, which prompted some students to thoughtfully consider the perspectives of the children and youth as well as their parents. The following excerpt from the final written reflections demonstrates how one student attempted historical perspective taking in the study of the Birmingham Children's March and the larger Civil Rights Movement:

Before watching the films, I honestly was unaware of more than one perspective when it comes to history. I knew the facts that I had been taught and did not dare question them because I thought "history can't be changed and my teachers would not have lied to me". However, by viewing these films, I see that there is a counter narrative to every dominant narrative. What I have read in a social studies textbook is not always what happened, according to the real people who were interviewed in the films. For instance, when we talked about Rosa Parks, it was interesting to hear what her family, friends, and those involved with the Civil Rights Movement along with her had to say. These firsthand comments completely changed my perspective and helped me to realize that you have to dig deeper, even when you think you are being presented with the correct facts.

This excerpt also reveals that the films helped the student to understand her own beliefs through presenting multiple, different perspectives across the film. These different illustrations indicate that students' exposure to multiple perspectives and their experiences with perspective taking contributed to their understanding of dominant narratives and counter-narratives, and may have also expanded their capacity to engage in aspects of historical empathy.

Only two students described historical empathy as part of historical thinking in their initial questionnaire responses, and when given the statement "When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about why people made the decisions they made," 13 out of 18 students responded that they "strongly agree." As early as Week One, when we examined segregation practices and violent resistance to integration, students engaged historical empathy in the whole group Socratic dialogues and written reflections. Their encounters with the violence and segregation practices of the Civil Rights Movement seemed to incite emotions in the students, and impelled them to contemplate the emotions that others felt as they lived daily under Jim Crow Laws like bus segregation, practiced non-violence at a freedom ride station, or mourned the loss of a child in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing. Because historical empathy requires the student to move past source analysis and corroboration to acknowledging and trying to understand the thoughts and actions of historical people, students' use of historical empathy in Week One and again in Week Two indicates that they were willing to explore historical thinking early on and even most past the basic historical analysis to historical empathy.

Students' empathy occurred most often during the last two weeks, but the first two weeks demonstrated the group's initial attempts at the skill. As students tried to analyze and interpret their first filmic encounter with the Civil Rights Movement, they experienced a wide range of reactions, including intense emotions. Initially, students tried to understand the experiences of the survivors of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing and the family members of the four children who were murdered; one student explained, "I thought about how I would feel and what I'd do if I was in that situation." Yet within the same dialogue, students pushed further, struggling to engage empathy towards "Dynamite" Bob Chambliss, the notorious Birmingham bomber, and other Whites who supported segregation:

Buchanan: Is it possible that the man who made the comment that Birmingham was a great place to live—is it possible that that was his life experience?

Micah: Yeah.

Caroline: Yes, because most people didn't think it was wrong, because they were born into that, and that's how they were raised, so they really didn't think about it. That's how life was.

Dahlia: They said that the city really came about in the early 1900s, so for someone growing up during that time, I mean, hey, this is a great place apparently.

Reagan: I don't think they are really different than we are now. Like there are terrible things that go on in the world now. Like for the majority of us, but I can't speak for everybody, but you don't really have like growing up in America and in a place where we're like most of us are like middle class White people. We don't really have like these terrible life experiences that like, and then you hear about something that happened terrible to somebody else and you had no idea that that was going on. I don't really think it was that they just didn't care.

Dahlia: They were just indifferent to the behavior.

As the conversation continued, students tried to understand what influenced the ideas and actions of Chambliss and other segregationist Whites at this place in history:

Student 5: Or like we were talking about in our group that like it's just really strange when you think about it. These um White children that were raised in this situation, that are taught that black people are completely different; you know, they are not the same, they are the other.

Student 4: It's like a cycle, that's sad especially like Chambliss he was laughing and you know all smiles and stuff and it's like to me there's something wrong like you know?

Student 5: He thought it was ok

Student 4: Well that's what the KKK was.

Student 6: That's all they did. Well we don't know what his past was either but he joined the KKK for a reason. And all of them have the same mindset and you know whatever could be going on, brainwashing or whatever, they all have the same mindset.

Amazingly, within the first week of the study, students attempted to identify and understand the ideas, lived experiences, and actions of the persons responsible for the violence and aftermath that students witnessed in the film. One student said, "I do feel sensitive to what these people believe happened and their perspective of the accounts that they lived through."

In a difficult exchange about the church bombing and the prevalence of segregationist ideas, one student questioned, "Can you really be mad at them for this idea, or can you, should you just like pity them, that they are just like oblivious, like that they were taught or brought up that way?" As the discussion moved forward, another student challenged, "We still need to show grace. Maybe they are not exposed."

It is critical to recognize that in this unpacking of the historical events and people affected by the violence, students were not excusing the attitudes, beliefs, or actions of the bomber, or dismissing the crime. In fact, students were overwhelmingly shocked and angered, even sickened, by the accounts and artifacts they studied. Instead, they were attempting to understand why someone—here, “Dynamite” Bob Chambliss—the bomber—acted in a certain way within a specific historical context. Because of the escalating violence and segregation practices that continued for the duration of the Civil Rights Movement, students continued to encounter this same issue of struggling to understand historical people within very different life experiences and historical contexts than their own.

Students continued to show progress with historical empathy in the last two weeks of the study, where it was a focus skill and central to the discussion questions and reflection questions. One anticipation guide question in Week Three prompted students to consider whether they would ride in the Freedom Rides. Ten out of eighteen students responded with either “no” or “I don’t know,” and one student brought the question into her written reflection that week. She answered the question while also attempting to relate to the Freedom Riders and their motivation for organizing the movement and boarding the buses:

I’d like to think I have the guts to stand up for what was right. I believe I could and would have joined a sit-in, but I don’t think I would have the courage to participate in the Freedom Rides movement or even Freedom Summer for that matter.

In their final written reflection, students were asked if they engaged historical empathy during the unit. Sixteen out of eighteen students responded that they did and cited the films' content as the springboard for their empathy. For example, one student wrote, "I engaged in historical empathy through the videos and the personal interviews, and by viewing pictures of the terrible events that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement."

Another student explained,

I empathized with the people in the videos as children/young adults and the historical accounts they gave as much older adults. In my opinion it was impossible to NOT engage in historical empathy in this unit. The video we watched last week, I empathized with a lot. They were just children but even at a young age knew they were in trouble even if they didn't do something, "because they were black kids growing up in Alabama." It was not long ago I was the same age as the children in that video and to put myself in their shoes and attempt to feel what they felt, gave me goose bumps to say the least.

Other students found that the process of empathy encouraged them to look for ways that they were similar to the historical people that they were studying. One student referenced this in her final reflection, as she describes how she engaged historical empathy in the study:

I tried to relate the events that happened during the Civil Rights Movement with the hard events I have had to face or see in my lifetime and could understand the pain that they went through. One of the biggest examples of historical empathy I felt was for all African Americans. I have been discriminated against throughout my life in different ways and relate to African Americans being discriminated against because of the color of their skin. While I have never been beaten or abused, I can still on a small level understand how they felt. Historical empathy is an important issue to me because I feel like it is real life. Empathy is something we face every day with those around us and practicing historical empathy will enhance our relationships with those we know personally.

Similar to other historical thinking skills, students' use of historical empathy was most often related to a historical event, group of people, or individual encountered in one of the documentary films in class. For example, students sometimes described in the Socratic dialogues how they empathized with historical people from the documentary films. In Week Two, during the study of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Rosa Parks, one student explained her empathy towards Martin Luther King, Jr. and the crowd gathered around his bombed home:

When Martin Luther got up there and was there and was like, "We are not going to fight," I was like, "Yeah!" and like I felt like I was on his team; I was like, "Yeah!" like because we are kindred spirits and they are singing *Amazing Grace* and I felt like I was there! And so I didn't identify at all with those [White] people. There are crazy people of all races so I don't feel like there is an "us" and "them."

Her written reflection during the same week probes deeper into her engagement with historical empathy towards the crowd:

A very key experience of mine in this study for historical empathy was when MLK's home was bombed. Everyone gathered outside of his house and they were ready to rumble with the White violators, but MLK used his gift of leadership to express forgiveness and grace to the guilty. He challenged them to remain peaceful and in doing so, put even more fight in their hearts. The community gathered at his home began to sing "Amazing Grace." In this moment, I was lost in the song and felt as if I was one in the community; I could feel their anger turn to passion and their pain turn to peace.

Her response of empathy was reiterated in another student's written reflection, who shared similar feelings towards the college students who chose to take part in the

Freedom Rides. She stated, “I was proud to identify with the college group of students who were willing to risk their lives for the betterment of a people group.”

Later, in Week Four, after studying the Birmingham Children’s March, two students shared how the films encouraged their engagement with historical empathy:

Dahlia: I never knew that it was as violent as it was. I never knew it had so many like consequences and I didn’t know that people were literally going out there knowing that they probably would die.

Susanne: I want to tag on that. Like I didn’t realize that like I saw pictures of it in high school and things but I guess it didn’t really like click until this class. That that’s . . . I mean like I saw pictures and I saw things like that throughout my years being here but it never dawned on me. Like I never had historical empathy for it. I mean, I thought it was wrong but I didn’t I guess personally relate to it or try to connect to the people, the blacks who went through that.

Buchanan: was there anything specific about this process that pushed you to that?

Susanne: I guess the videos; just from hearing what the dominant narrative was, figuring out what I was taught, and then watching videos and looking at documents that were different than what I grew up on and then just actually hearing from other people and what they had to say.

In the same discussion, these students returned back to the skill of historical empathy as they tried to understand why the children and even the Freedom Riders chose to participate in the Civil Rights Movement:

Caroline: They were going to jail for what they believed in.

Harlow: Right and I can’t say. I can’t say . . . Back to last week, about the bus question; would I be willing to get on that bus? I couldn’t say that I would be willing to get on the bus.

Reagan: The thing about it is they were under 18 so that’s swiped off their record,

Harlow: But no, not their teachers.

Reagan: Well no.

Buchanan: You're saying from an adult perspective, why wouldn't an adult?

Harlow: Well for the bus boycott, I don't know if I could actually get on the bus and ride in the freedom rides. I don't know. I don't know if I could do that. I would want to, and I would do everything I could to support it but I don't know if I would be able to . . .

Buchanan: It's hard to say. That's historical empathy.

The structured anticipation guides complemented the documentary films to provide opportunities for students to exercise historical empathy. For example, one anticipation guide question in Week Three prompted students to consider whether they would ride in the Freedom Rides. Ten students responded with either “no” or “I don't know.” As the above excerpt demonstrates, Harlow brought the anticipation guide question into the whole group discussion that same day. While thinking aloud, she answered the question and also attempted to relate to the Freedom Riders and identify their motivation for organizing the movement and boarding the buses. In a similar attempt, one student's written reflection illustrated her difficulty with empathy towards participating in the Freedom Rides. She wrote, “I want to say yes, I would, but I can't possibly know what I would have actually done.” This struggle with engaging historical empathy to understand the Freedom Rides was observed again in students' anticipation guides and written reflections, where they recorded statements like “Today, I couldn't see myself doing it because of the way the world is now, but perhaps in that time my thoughts would be more powerful, especially if I lived with the loss of dignity,” and “I knew I could never understand how the people felt; even imagining it is terrifying.”

Although students seemed to demonstrate the capacity to engage historical thinking in their anticipation guides, Socratic dialogues, and written reflections, they did not consistently use the skill each week or recognize it as a historical thinking skill when defining historical thinking. In the second questionnaire, only 4 out of 18 students included characteristics of historical empathy in their definition of historical thinking, and the most frequent interactions that students had with historical empathy were in response to direct questions about historical empathy in Weeks Three and Four. Additionally, when students talked about their attempts at historical empathy, they described the process as difficult and emotional, and openly struggled with trying to understand a historical person whose values and beliefs or life experiences were very different from their own. For example, one student admitted, “I also tried to put myself in the shoes of the violent Whites who beat and tortured African Americans, it was hard to imagine how someone could ever harm another individual the way they did.”

In the final whole group Socratic dialogue, a student explained how she tried to engage historical empathy with a four year old boy who was arrested during the Birmingham Children’s March and Bull Connor who was at the center of Jim Crow segregation in Birmingham. She said,

I have something about historical empathy. So, two things. Well first, when Bull Connor was like the police officers did a great job of keeping the peace I was like really? Peace? That was not peace. And then contrasting that with the four year old who was in prison. You know that four year old really did not understand the depth of what was going on. But that’s what he was being told. I feel like Bull Connor was the same way. He cannot possibly think that that was peace, unless he was kind of raised with that mindset. So I think I got empathy on both parts because like yesterday you were saying like you’re not born with prejudice. I think that’s something you are taught. And that was so natural for them.

Other students' written reflections provide an explanation of how they attempted historical empathy over the four weeks. One student shared,

I have definitely engaged in historical empathy in this unit because seeing all of the horrid things that were happening to the African Americans made me step back and think about how they felt and all of the pain that they had to endure during the CRM. Also, I put my biases aside and really tried to put myself in their shoes and imagine what was going on from their point of view.

In addition to students' engagement with historical perspectives during the study, their frequent attempts at perspective taking and historical empathy with the individuals or groups presented in the films often coincided with statements of emotional reactions to the documentary films. For example, when one student said, "Anger arose inside of me towards certain groups of people when I was able to visually and audibly experience the violence that they poured out onto innocent citizens," she demonstrated an emotional reaction to the documentary *The Freedom Riders* as well as perspective taking towards citizens during the Freedom Rides. At other times, students' claims of emotional involvement and reactions to the documentary films were not associated with the perspectives of specific historical people but instead related to the content portrayed in the documentaries.

Documentary Films Elicit Emotions

It is critical to understand that all four documentary films featured in this study repeatedly presented interviews with activists and survivors from the Civil Rights Movement, original media including film footage and photographs, and reenactments of historical events and people related to the Civil Rights Movement. During the study of

historical thinking and the Civil Rights Movement, students frequently recorded in their anticipation guides and written reflections or shared that they felt emotional or experienced emotions (the general term) as they viewed the films. The encounters with real survivors and activists in the films seemed to be the aspect that elicited the most emotional involvement with the films.

When I returned to these assertions in context, I found that students most often used these terms—emotional and emotions—to describe their reaction to a film, their ideas about how the films contributed to their understanding of the Civil Rights Movement, or how the films facilitated their historical thinking. In Week Three, one student explained her ideas about why the films were an emotional experience. She said, “Yeah—it’s more emotional. You read it, and you had to play it in your head, but then you see it and you’re like, wow—it’s totally different than what I thought it to be.” Two classmates continued the thought, adding,

Katy: I think it’s really important to teach this because it gives them a chance to see both sides of it and kind of form their own thoughts and opinions about it because the way about they’re brought up is one certain way and its really good for kids to see that there’s other perspectives, there’s other sides...

Lauren: Like that’s there narrative and what they’ve learned is the counter-narrative. It’s what they’ve known all their lives.

Each week, most students reported in class or in writing that they became emotionally involved in the documentary films, experiencing a “roller coaster of emotions.” Other students said, “The videos were intense; they hit home for me,” and “Any good history lesson, or any real historical account, should absolutely bring about some kind of

emotional response.” Students expressed or named three different categories of emotional reactions or involvement with the four documentary films during this study: shock and horror, disgust, anger, and outrage, and guilt, shame and embarrassment.

Shock and horror. Across the four classes, students communicated an array of emotional reactions to the films. The most frequently occurring category of emotional responses was shock and horror. Students’ reactions of shock and horror were most often directed towards the acts of violence or personal narratives about the violence portrayed in the films.

As early as Week One, when we examined segregation practices and examples of violent resistance, students’ emotional reactions included shock; this is evident when one student explained how the films impacted her understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. She wrote, “It brought the brutality to the forefront of my understanding.” After the first class, similar reactions continued, as students summarized how their knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement has been impacted through the films. One student wrote, “It still blows my mind the amount of hate and ignorance from the White race,” and a second student admitted, “It was shocking to see all hell break loose.” Others were shocked at the non-violent response of activists. A student said, “I was shocked at how the people involved with the Freedom Rides were completely non-violent and remained non-violent even while they were being beaten!”

Students also shared that historical information that was different from their prior knowledge—such as the work of the Blacks and Whites in the Freedom Rides or the extent of violence towards activists—was shocking to see. Other elements of violence

that students reported they did not have prior knowledge of included police brutality and the extent of the violent crimes committed during that time. For example, one student confessed, “I am blown away that the police officers at this time not only knew what was going on without stopping it, but encouraged it by identifying it as “fun” for those abusive participants.” In total, nine students returned to the issue of violence in their final written reflection, where they explained their thoughts and feelings about the violence that took place. One student shared, “Before this class, I had a very little knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement and I was not expecting the depth of violence and pain that was associated with the movement.” Another student wrote, “I reacted with deep pain, horror, and shock at the way these people were treated.” In her third written reflection, another student tried to explain her reaction of shock and horror towards the violent events encountered in the first three films:

Seeing people have an expression of pride or joy on their face while looking at a person hanging from a noose or seeing a body ripped apart makes me wonder at the sickness that is in our world. My mind can't really process the fact that in those days, it was normal to see such violence and disgusting realities.

Disgust, anger, and outrage. In addition to shock and horror, students frequently responded to the films with disgust, anger, and outrage. Students' responses in this category were most often reactions to the violence of the Civil Rights Movement. In Week One, students began a discussion of the outright violence reported in the film, with some students commenting “Nothing burns me up more than things like this” and “I do not, nor will I ever understand, how anyone could look at the pain on that woman's face and be proud that they had caused that.” The following week, one student confessed,

I'm guilty of having prejudiced thoughts from time to time, but when it comes down to it, I know that those people are flesh and blood, just like me, created in God's image. To see them treated like I wouldn't even treat a dog is hard to watch.

Disgust, anger, and outrage were especially evident in Week Three as we studied the Freedom Rides. This class included particularly violent, original footage and images as well as detailed accounts from surviving Freedom Riders. When asked in the anticipation guide what her reaction to the film was, one student responded that she felt, "absolute disgust and awe, and outrage for the sheer hate and idiocy of Whites." In the same week, students reacted to the violence by asking, "Are these people crazy?" and admitting, "I can't imagine treating anyone the way that many African Americans and their friends were treated." Another student wrote that the films' depictions of the violence of the Civil Rights Movement confirmed "how serious the abuse and hate was." In her written reflection following the third week, one student wrote, "Anger arose inside of me towards certain groups of people when I was able to visually and audibly experience the violence that they poured out onto innocent citizens." One student returned to the segregation practices and violent resistance examined in Week One, and tried to explain her reaction of anger towards the violent acts that killed several children during the Civil Rights Movement. She vowed, "I do not, nor will I ever understand, how anyone could look at the pain on that woman's face and be proud that they had caused that."

In addition to their anger towards the violence, students often reacted in anger at their own lack of knowledge or lack of schooling experiences related to the Civil Rights

Movement. In the first Socratic dialogue, the conversation turned to students' reactions to the films, and a student responded, "It makes me mad like my teachers didn't teach me these things, and even if they did, they just glossed over it in a way that didn't make it stick." Another student confessed, "I always thought it was Rosa Parks that did all this—I guess because that's all I learned in school, but now, it's like wow, there's so many factors that happened like over the years and there's not just one month or whatever that all this happens." Students' written reflections confirmed this same trend of anger at their own lack of knowledge. One student admitted, "I didn't learn anything about Rosa Parks in school, and to be honest, I really didn't know anything about the boycott." In Week Three, student reflections provided vivid descriptions of students' anger towards their own lack of prior knowledge and the narratives that they once believed to be true about the Civil Rights Movement. One student vented,

I hate that the stories that we all thought of as historical facts are turning into nothing other than the politically correct version of what really happened. These perverse, twisted half-truths skew the understanding of students and take away the honor and dignity of those human beings that actually lived through what we are being taught.

Additionally, students reacted to their own, new knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement. The inconsistency between what the students were exposed to in this class and what they learned or didn't learn in their K-12 education surfaced each class during Socratic dialogues or written reflections. Throughout the four weeks, students attempted to understand why they did not learn this content in their K-12 education, and discussed that engaging this content now is more difficult because it is different from what they

learned previously. One student admitted, “I’ve never heard of this whole movement. Ever.” A second student asserted, “There is so much that is left out in history that I am learning now, and my ideas are changing because the stereotypical thoughts in my mind have now vanished after seeing the real live video footage in class.”

Despite students’ generally deficient prior knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, they were still able to work with a variety of historical sources, recognize historical content and narratives they had not been exposed to before, and then use the collective content to think historically and develop their own narratives of the Civil Rights Movement. This conflict between students’ prior knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement and their developing historical thinking and use of counter-narratives will be discussed at length in a different portion of this chapter.

Guilt, shame, and embarrassment. At times, students responded to the film content with guilt, shame and embarrassment. These reactions were most often in response to violence and segregation practices executed by Southern Whites. After viewing the film *The Freedom Riders*, one student recorded in her anticipation guide, “I feel ashamed to associate with some of the White people in the South.” Her peer shared in the Socratic dialogue, “It blows my mind that people actually felt like that, and I’m embarrassed.” As 17 out of 18 students self-identify as White and live in the South, it is likely that students viewed the actions of Whites in the films as somehow representative of their own lives as Southern Whites. Therefore, reports of shame and embarrassment suggest that those students did not share the same beliefs as the segregationists and violent Whites they saw. For example, one student professed, “I know that I have little

cause to identify with the Whites who persecuted the college students, but I still felt some shame.”

Students who stated that they felt guilt seemed to feel some form of responsibility for the violence and segregation practices depicted in the films. The following excerpt from a whole group dialogue in Week Two, where we studied the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Rosa Parks, illustrates the reaction of guilt and shame that one student felt after viewing the film:

I think like but after watching this today I always had in my mind the traditional narrative of the CRM that like black people were causing all this chaos and like White people were but after watching this today I feel really bad about being part of the White population because they beat them and black people had like no violence for the most part and had like peace about it. and after watching it today my narrative really changed about the whole situation because we were horrible and had all this hatred towards them and they were trying to just be equal with us and I really feel bad about it and my mind has really changed about the thoughts of it because it was horrible what we did instead of thinking, oh, black people did all of this and that and we have that stereotype in our minds that we've always heard that they did this and this and this when black people I thought were the ones and I think that caused a lot of controversy when they were really more for non-violence with Martin Luther King, Jr. and stuff.

At other times, students felt ashamed that they had not learned the counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement before. For example, one student wrote, “I felt kind of ashamed that my teachers I had growing up did not teach us this and it was probably because this is such sensitive topic.” Another student reflected in the final week,

After many years of being told the story line is basically the same but many details are left out, altered, or added, I personally could not help but to compare history and the way was taught (to me) to a game of telephone. Where one person makes a statement whispers it to the next and the game continues around a group

of people. It rarely works out that the last person is told the initial message, much like history, or the Rosa Parks story anyway.

Students' frequent and detailed emotional responses to the documentary films suggest that films as historical sources are likely to elicit emotional reactions, and in this study, students' emotional reactions were recurrently related to their discussions of historical and contemporary issues of Whiteness and racism.

Documentary Film's Ability to Broach Racism and Whiteness in the Classroom

As I analyzed the data, certain categories that emerged during the initial coding seemed to be connected to the students' varying emotional reactions. For example, students' reactions of guilt, shame, and embarrassment seemed to be related to their discussions about Whiteness and racism. Across the data sources, students demonstrated a struggle with issues of Whiteness, race, and racism. Because of the overt nature of their design, the films directly addressed and even illuminated these controversial issues. Through the study design, students were intentionally positioned to respond to these issues in the class discussions and in their writing. These topics were situated within a historical context that students had minimal or no personal experiences with, which made the issues difficult to analyze, deliberate, and understand. Furthermore, students' ideas of the documentary films as "real" made it difficult to ignore the controversial issues presented. The following section considers how the four films used in this study provided students' encounters with Whiteness, race, and racism.

I cannot effectively discuss the findings related to Whiteness without acknowledging the presence and function of Whiteness in my own life. My own

positionality as a White woman entered the course before the study even began, and it remained as students discussed the issues of Whiteness, race, and racism that were positioned in the classroom through the four different documentary films. Their discussions related to racism and Whiteness may have been impacted by my own reality as being a White teacher in a classroom of mostly White students. As with any learning opportunity, students' prior knowledge, lived experiences, and positionalities became part of the four week process. This meant that students' prior life experiences with these same controversial issues impacted how they analyzed and understood the historical content, including the film. These same life experiences were often brought into class discussions as students periodically thought out loud while they worked through the new knowledge and their prior experiences, while examining how their own lived experiences influenced the ways in which they understood the entire process. Students' life experiences include their positionality, and it is critical to reiterate that 17 out of 18 students self-identified as White. Whiteness was central to most students' positionalities, and it heavily influenced their responses to the content. It was also central to many of the illustrations of racism depicted in the study. Furthermore, the positionality or identity of most of the students as White was further emphasized by the position and utility of Whiteness and racism in the documentary films.

This ongoing struggle with Whiteness began in Week One, where students deliberated racial segregation and attempted to understand the lived experiences of African Americans living in the Jim Crow South. In their anticipation guides, they recorded influential artifacts that they viewed, which include images of racism like

“Whites only” signs and the aftermath photographed in church bombings. One student asserted that “Whites didn’t see the problem,” and others made connections to Whiteness and racism. Here, one student acknowledged the privilege of her own Whiteness and the presence of racism, explaining, “For me, like to go to a fountain I like, just common knowledge, but for her (Denise McNair)—and her mom trying to explain to her, like her mom had to explain to her it was only for Whites.” Her classmate wrote, “I’ve never looked at this from the perspective of a child who had to be told that certain things weren’t allowed because of skin color.” A classmate offered, “It surprised me that people had such hatred for people they don’t even know based on their color.” Another student reflected, “At first, I wondered why it was such a big deal with the water fountains, but now, I know it’s not about the water at all.” In a similar response in her anticipation guide, one student recorded her struggle with the following quote: “It was so painful to tell her she couldn’t have a sandwich because she was black.” Following these exchanges and reflections during Week One, the struggle with Whiteness and racism continued in Week Three as students discussed the difficulties of using historical thinking with the Civil Rights Movement:

Buchanan: So I want to answer #5 okay. We like to dance around things, right?

Harlow: Of course.

Buchanan: So let’s not dance around this question about why this is difficult. What is difficult about this process?

Anna: I was just going to say that there’s a lot of differences and difference in opinions.

Harlow: That we’re White. I’m just. We’re White. The whole thing.

Buchanan: Ok so let's break it down into two things. What's difficult about the content that we are looking at and what's difficult about the process of historical thinking. Ok, Susanne?

Susanne: The content is difficult for me because I'm White and like it's hard to accept. (pause) And like my ancestors may have participated in this and like they may have participated in this and I'm sitting here thinking oh my God you sound like an idiot. Like it blows my mind that people actually felt like that and I'm embarrassed.

Elisabeth: I think it's hard to accept because I like to live in this little bubble where like everything is ok and it's hard to accept that it was that bad and that people were doing terrible, terrible things.

Garrett: And it's hard to watch from their perspective too because I guess we've always seen it from my perspective and like their accounts of how it was is like, I don't know it's like a whole different thing you gotta take in.

Harlow: It's like finding out the truth.

In the whole group film analysis, students demonstrated that discussing the role of Whiteness during the Civil Rights Movement was a difficult task, even among White students. Two students attempted to understand the response of Whites to the violence of the Civil Rights Movement:

Reagan: White people tried to make themselves oblivious to what was happening. If they weren't physically a part of it, they just didn't want to really see it.

Elisabeth: Because if they had addressed it, they had to do something about it.

These exchanges illustrates how some students, within the larger group discussion, attempted historical analysis with a controversial topic that could potentially be uncomfortable given students' own Whiteness. For example, in her anticipation guide in Week One, a student imagined the position Black parents were in during Jim Crow as she

recorded, “How do you tell your child they’re not good enough to use the ‘White’ water fountain?” In her response to the horrible effects racist resistance, another student admitted, “I felt sadness for the families and shame for the actions of my race.” Here, she is acknowledging the presence of her own Whiteness as well as the function of racism during the Civil Rights Movement. One student pushed the issue of Whiteness even farther, introducing the function of power in Whiteness. She challenged,

They got what they wanted and like, they didn’t have to share (the power). I mean it’s easy. Like if you can get anything you want, like I guess that’s why the White people back then, they were doing it, because they got everything they wanted—because they like that power. They were on top.

Because the film content showed racial segregation, hate crimes, and non-violent resistance, the persistent issue of racism was present alongside most illustrations of Whiteness in each week of the study. For example, in Week One, students were discussing the rash of burnings at Black churches that occurred several years after the Sixteenth Street bombing. The conversation focused specifically on a White news reporter featured in the documentary who asked if the burnings were racially motivated. As the conversation fell silent, one student interjected, “Was it racially motivated? That was totally racially motivated.”

Students’ discussion of Whiteness and racism extended past the documentaries and other historical sources to their own ideas, beliefs, and experiences related to racism. As one student explained, “It’s difficult because you don’t know your biases.” Another student boldly admitted:

I'm guilty of having prejudiced thoughts from time to time, but when it comes down to it, I know that those people are flesh and blood just like me, created in God's image. To see them treated like I wouldn't even treat a dog is hard to watch.

At times, students openly talked about the contemporary presence of both Whiteness and racism, even disclosing personal connections to the issue. This excerpt from the first Socratic dialogue demonstrates some students' personal connections:

Anna: Like my grandpa, ok, he's racist. He is still to this day. He hates blacks and Jews!

Caroline: It's just like somebody say it's ingrained in them. Like my great grandma she will call a black person the N word in a heartbeat. She thinks its ok. She will just throw that word out like its nothing.

Katy: I was gonna say like not too far away in the south where we live they still have like 40 minutes away they still have KKK meetings like they are like born into it its ingrained in them, and they keep going and they could eventually change and its passed down through generations. That's all they're exposed to like there's no black people out there whatsoever. Like they're crazy like it's still like that today! People don't know it because they are not exposed to it. And that's just what they're born into and they don't see any better or see any other like brighter side to it.

Lauren: Where Micah and I are from about 2 months ago they had a KKK march.

Micah: I didn't know that?

Reagan: That happens here.

Elisabeth: Like our reaction to this was like, "Oh my word! This is horrible!" But like back then like my high school was one of the first KKK hangings. And it's really prevalent and bad. Like my great grandpa was in the KKK, but now some of my best friends are black. And like it nothing burns me up more than things like this and you just see the generations! Like what is going into that to make us react this way? And like back then it was totally fine and the police knew about it you know?

Reagan: I think a big thing that's changed is like we've always had like everybody together, whereas, like our grandparents they never did; I think it's more like what you're exposed to and what you're used to. It kind of keeps changing?

Buchanan: Have we all always been exposed?

Lauren: Not all of us.

Reagan: No, but I know people who aren't exposed as much and they still have those some of those mindsets. And so like the more you're exposed the more those go away.

One student even attempted to discuss with the whole group the enduring problems of racism. She offered, "Something that I keep thinking about is the people that grow up with these, this hate ingrained in their minds. What makes them change if they do? They have these ideas, or hate people, because they are different."

While most students who talked about or wrote about racism suggested that "people are still not treated as equally as they should be still," and "we need to remember there is still a lot of prejudice today," not all students believed that racism is a contemporary issue. This may be related to the prevalence of Whiteness within the collective group of students. For example, in the second Socratic dialogue, one student stated, "I don't feel like we have that anymore, or at least like most of us I would say, like the White people, don't have that hatred anymore." However, as she continued, it was clear that she had controversial ideas about race and hatred. She added, "But the black people, if they still see it as like, 'they did that to us, like us personally,' I think it would just bring back that hatred and it would be back." Sadly, after this statement, the dialogue dropped, and the direction changed to students' ideas about empathy towards the boycott

activists. No one challenged her statement or continued the contentious discourse that surfaced.

Impact of Documentary Film on Students' Historical Thinking

In this section, findings related to students' feelings about teaching with documentary film and students' improved historical thinking are discussed. Students' post-questionnaire responses and final written reflections revealed findings about the impact of the documentary films on students' historical thinking, and students' patterns of skill use both weekly and across the four weeks provide insight into teaching historical thinking.

Students' Resulting Understanding of Historical Thinking

Following the close of the study, students completed the questionnaire a second time. Students' post-questionnaire responses are illustrated below in Table 6. As illustrated, the mean Likert scores for items related to students' beliefs about historical thinking remained high, with a cumulative mean score of 4.5 for the combined responses. The mean scores for three items were substantially higher for the post-questionnaire than the initial questionnaire.

Table 6

Students' Post-Questionnaire Responses about Historical Thinking

Questionnaire Item	Mean
I believe that there are multiple interpretations of history.	4.8
People should see and understand different perspectives in history.	4.8

Table 6 (cont.)

Questionnaire Item	Mean
Teaching more than one perspective about a historical event is central to learning social studies.	4.8
History can be interpreted in many ways.	4.4
Studying more than one perspective of a historical event is difficult.	3.7
Considering the perspectives of historical people is important for understanding history.	4.5
People's experiences influence how they understand history.	4.4
When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about people's location in history.	4.3
When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about why people made decisions.	4.4
Historical artifacts can be used to think like a historian.	4.4
I struggle to consider a historical account that is different than what I believe.	4.7
It is important to interpret history through different accounts.	4.7

These three pairs of pre and post-questionnaire scores illustrate that students seemed to develop a more positive belief about multiple perspectives in history, even acknowledging the importance of interpreting history using different historical accounts. Additionally, when responding to “I struggle to consider a historical account that is different than what I believe,” showed a large mean score difference. This suggests that at the close of the study, most students recognized that considering contradictory historical accounts is more difficult than they believed at the onset of the study. Table 7 illustrates the mean differences of students' initial and resulting responses.

*Table 7**Comparison of Selected Initial and Post Questionnaire Response Mean Scores*

Item	Pre	Post
People should see and understand different perspectives in history.	4.4	4.8
I struggle to consider a historical account that is different than what I believe.	2.4	4.7
It is important to interpret history through different accounts.	4.1	4.7

In addition to students' consistently high initial and post-questionnaire responses, their final explanations of historical thinking demonstrate that most students developed a working definition of historical thinking. At the close of the study, 16 out of 18 students provided an accurate written definition of historical thinking on the post-questionnaire. Students' responses included, "It means that you can analyze an event or type of situation through critiquing narratives and peoples' decisions," and "To take all accounts—dominant and counter-narrative accounts—and analyze, critique, and think about the events that happened and question the artifacts, too." A third student responded, "To think historically is to take into account the contexts of the events you are studying and try to empathize with people in history by considering their perspectives." Most students' post-questionnaire definitions were detailed, clear, and accurate, suggesting that they completed the study with a better understanding of what it means to think historically.

Students' Understanding of Using Documentary Film to Teach Historical Thinking

As the study progressed, students frequently spoke or wrote about the films in ways that indicated that they believe film can be used to teach history and historical thinking. For example, some wrote in their anticipation guides that historical thinking encourages students “to think for themselves and draw their own conclusions,” and that the films “have influenced my historical thinking and have allowed me to question, critique, and analyze what was really happening during the Civil Rights Movement time period.” One student revealed, “Before this class, I did not know of the term “counter-narrative,” however now I am understanding more and more that every story that is told always has two sides: a dominant narrative and a counter-narrative.”

Other students wrote about the films' influence on their historical thinking in their final reflections. One student wrote, “My ideas and beliefs about historical sources, even classroom textbooks, have been turned upside down.” Another student explained,

Using the films and clips throughout our unit on the Civil Rights Movement has influenced a change in my idea of historical thinking. I now feel that I can view these sources and critique, question, see multiple view points on the information given. Instead of memorizing factual information, I now can analyze the idea of history and develop my idea thinking and interpretations.

When asked how the films have influenced their historical thinking, one student responded,

Through analyzing different sources, I found that the dominant narrative isn't actually the reality of what happened during these events. The counter-narrative of these events helped make sense of each event and revealed “pieces of the story” that are usually not explained. Most of the films we watched revealed the

counter-narratives and usually didn't add up to what most of us had heard about growing up.

A second student discussed the utility of the films to facilitate historical thinking, pointing to the importance of critical interpretation when examining history and historical sources:

This unit on the Civil Rights Movement has greatly influenced my understanding of historical thinking. Watching the films really showed me that there are multiple stories circulating about historical events and that each narrative will be slightly different than the next. It is important to look at these sources with a critical eye, not accepting everything you see or hear as fact, but to deeply research the event and find out what information matches up and what does not.

When asked if the process influenced her understanding of historical thinking, another student said,

When I was in grade school I was never taught to question text books or other historical sources, and always took what I read to be the truth and only truth. I don't know why it is just occurring to me to question what I read, see, and hear for historical proof. It has been so interesting to me to discover how much of what I was taught in school is incorrect. I am learning to question everything I read, see, and hear because there is never just one answer to a historical question.

Across their final reflections, students indicated that they were beginning to understand the utility of film as a historical source and to promote historical thinking. The following excerpt from one student's entry summarizes her ideas about the utility of documentary film in comparison to other historical sources:

After viewing the films on the Civil Rights Movement I have actually learned much more than I ever did during my school age years. Seeing the importance of different views, learning about the counter-narratives and unsung heroes you start

to question your understanding. It has given me a different understanding as far as the dominant-narratives goes. I now believe that the influences of the people were much more powerful than that of their leaders. The communication of this time was incredibly valuable. African American unity was the basis of the Civil Rights Movement, not just the leaders such as MLK or Rosa Parks.

The following excerpt demonstrates that some students even recognized that their ideas about using film in the classroom were changing:

I feel like I have gained a new understanding for how to use films and film clips in the classroom to teach historical thinking. Before seeing how they were used in this class, I always believed movies to be a time-filler when teachers didn't really know how to explain something or there was a substitute in the class that day. The films that we viewed in the methods class were much more engaging and educational than movies I have viewed in my own classes.

In their final written reflections, two other students explained how their ideas about history were changing. One student wrote, "History is told through someone's view of what's important for people to know and remember, even if it's not the whole truth." Her classmate asserted, "History is normally told from one perspective in stories that develop a hero. Some things are left out, others are embellished, and the dominant narrative is the result." Students also recognized that "History is interpreted by many people," and "History is told through someone's view of what's important for people to know and remember, even if it's not the whole truth." Other students pushed even further, saying, "People like stories of heroes," and "It's easier to teach one perspective over and over." One student even challenged, "The point of view often told is what people want to be told and passed down."

At the close of the study, most students seemed to have a better understanding of how film can be used to facilitate historical thinking, and some students also shared that their thinking about studying history changed through this experience. One student described this change in her final written reflection:

My historical thinking as changed more and more with every clip we have been able to watch. I always thought of “history” and historical thinking as artifacts such as dinosaur bones; but this is very shallow minded. Historical thinking can expand from bones to first hand experiences, quotes, songs and to the interviews. There are more counter-narratives than anyone in school can imagine because these perspectives are looked over. Now that I see all of these differences and changes from the clips, I realize that dominant narratives are important but should never over-shadow the counter-narratives.

Summary of Findings

Five broad categories of findings were located across the study data: students’ initial understandings, students’ interpretations of documentary film as a historical source, dominant and counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement, changes in students’ perspectives related to the documentary films, and the impact of the documentary films on students’ historical thinking. Students’ initial understandings are measured using the mean scores and open responses from students’ first questionnaire responses, with scores and responses suggesting that students entered the study with positive beliefs about historical thinking skills (perhaps even suggesting an inflated view of their own historical thinking skills), yet as a whole, students’ open ended responses revealed that students’ were not able to articulate the meaning of historical thinking or describe the Civil Rights Movement.

Students provided rich descriptions and interpretations of the films as informative and realistic historical sources, and were involved in corroborating the collective historical sources and continually developing their own ideas about the films as historical sources. Across the study, they critically analyzed the textbooks, children's books, and historical artifacts in their small groups, yet students did not demonstrate a critical interpretation of the documentary films, which they seemed to passively consume each class. This may be related to the films being positioned at the beginning of the source analysis each week, but it may also be related to the method of source analysis that was used for each of the different types of historical sources.

Students were also involved in identifying the dominant narratives and the counter-narratives of different Civil Rights Movement events and themes. The findings revealed that students continually used the documentary films to articulate counter-narratives and the textbooks and trade books to communicate the dominant narratives.

In addition to identifying and negotiating narratives, students demonstrated that they considered multiple historical perspectives, and at times, engaged historical empathy. Their engagement with conflicting perspectives seemed to be linked to students' various emotional reactions to the documentary films, and across the four weeks, students demonstrated an ongoing struggle with controversial issues of racism and Whiteness. The documentary films seemed to provide a launching point for students to examine these topics in class and even return to them in their written reflections. Finally, students' final questionnaire responses and written reflections indicate that students developed a working knowledge of historical thinking, began to engage a variety of

historical thinking skills, and recognized documentary films as historical sources that can be used to study history.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Historical thinking, as an approach to studying history that seeks out multiple, often silenced perspectives, is an ideal classroom teaching method and cognitive process for exploring the complex concept of perspectives, including positionality. As it troubles one's own understanding of self-positionality and the perspectives and identities of others, it invites students to think about history as it relates to their lives and the lives of others. Although historical thinking is an "unnatural act" of cognition (Wineburg, 2001), prior research by social studies educators suggests teaching that promotes historical thinking skills like corroborating sources, considering multiple perspectives, and attempting empathy can be a significant and challenging classroom experience when the process is implemented in a meaningful way (Marcus et al., 2010; VanSledright, 2001, 2002; Wineburg, 2001). Documentary film provides an appealing format for exercising historical thinking skills. Because of the elements of historiography traditionally included in documentaries (interviews, primary source documents), the films can present historical content while also engaging students in various historical artifacts and narratives—and as a result—further students' thinking about the past.

While other scholars have examined the use of historical thinking and film in secondary social studies methods or the use of historical thinking in elementary social studies methods, this study is the first to teach historical thinking with documentary film

in the elementary social studies classroom. The study findings provide four categories of implications for this research: documentary film as an instructional tool for historical thinking, implications for exploring multiple perspectives and counter-narratives, implications for elementary social studies teacher education, and implications for future research. In this chapter, I discuss the implications identified in this study, recognize the limitations of the study, and conclude with suggestions for future research. The findings from this study offer implications for exploring multiple perspectives and counter-narratives, and implications for elementary social studies teacher education.

Documentary Film as an Instructional Tool for Historical Thinking

Planning for Historical Thinking Instruction that Incorporates Documentary Film

In this study, students' collective experiences with historical thinking were situated within the historical context of the Civil Rights Movement, and the design of the study allowed students to also study the chronological progression of the events of the Civil Rights Movement. This feature concurs with research findings by Marcus et al. (2010) and VanSledright (2002) that films that are shown to teach historical thinking should be couched within the study of historical events or historical people. Students' weekly experiences were not only related to the movement, but they were also ordered in a way that illustrated the development of the movement over time, and students seemed to benefit from exploring historical thinking within a specific historical context and then studying that context in depth. The outcome of such engagement suggests that when students are given a structured historical context through the documentary films for exercising historical thinking skills, they can be strategically engaged in a series of

unified classroom interactions rather than sporadic and detached encounters with historical content and skills.

In addition to couching the study in a structured historical context, the design of the four class meetings seemed to also contribute to students' use of the documentary films as a tool for historical thinking. Through using this structured design, students were able to build their skill set for historical thinking in a logical way, beginning with analyzing and corroborating various contradictory sources, and in the last weeks, moving past corroborating sources to acknowledging and engaging the perspectives of historical people. These experiences were interwoven, and the findings provide implications for using this approach in teacher education to support students' historical knowledge as well as their ability to think historically. Two important components of the structured design used in this study were utilizing multiple and contradicting historical narratives and deliberate question posing. Prior research by VanSledright (2002) and Levstik and Barton (Levstik, 2000; Levstik & Barton, 2004) suggest that students' involvement in historical thinking can be enhanced when different and even contradicting historical sources are examined as students study the past. Using an array of sources including documentary film, children's trade books, elementary textbooks, historical photographs, and digitized artifacts required extensive prior planning. The range of historical sources seemed to provide students with a better understanding of the Civil Rights Movement, but more importantly, the collective texts and artifacts supported source corroboration and prompted their attempts at identifying the dominant narratives and counter-narratives.

Social studies educators who have studied using film to teach historical thinking emphasize the role of thoughtful and deliberate questions in teaching historical thinking (Marcus et al., 2010; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). Across the four weeks, a variety of deliberate questions were asked in the anticipation guides, Socratic dialogues, and written reflections, and the questions were strategically planned out before the study began. These thoughtful and deliberate questions seemed to facilitate students' engagement with the films during the viewing and afterwards, as well as in their attempts at historical thinking skills. This suggests that developing and implementing sound questions should be central to planning for instruction that uses film to encourage historical thinking.

Instructional Strategies that Facilitate the Use of Documentaries

One aspect of the study that seemed to facilitate students' historical thinking was using purposeful teaching methods that facilitated students' experiences with the films and with historical thinking. As previous work by Stoddard (2007, 2010) and Marcus et al. (2010) demonstrate, using anticipation guides and structured discussions may promote students' engagement with the films, which can impact their use of historical thinking. The study findings reveal implications for using three different instructional methods to advance students' involvement with the documentary films: anticipation guides, Socratic dialogues, and written reflections. Because of the theme-specific design of each guide, students interacted with the films through the guides in different ways each week. This seemed to not only promote student interest, but it also provided students with a reference for their subsequent Socratic dialogues. Similar to work by Stoddard (2010) using popular feature films, this suggests that thoughtful and clearly aligned anticipation guides

can promote historical thinking with documentary films. Additionally, the findings add to existing research about teaching with film by demonstrating that anticipation guides can facilitate the use of documentary films to think historically (Marcus et al., 2010; Metzger, 2010; Stoddard, 2010). Therefore, teacher educators are likely to find success with using anticipation guides to view documentary films.

This study also suggests that Socratic dialogues can be a useful instructional method for historical thinking using documentary films. In this study, some students took part regularly in the discussions, while other students seemed to actively listen to their peers, but did not contribute to the dialogue verbally. At other times, students were challenged by their peers as they shared. Students also used the Socratic dialogues to pose questions—often times, difficult questions—about the films as well as the process of historical thinking. I, too, was able to pose contentious questions related to the films' collective content during Socratic dialogues. Moreover, the dialogues allowed students to move within and between the thinking skills and historical content of the four films during the four weeks, a practice that could not have been accomplished as a group in the other two instructional methods. This use of Socratic dialogues to facilitate students' thinking about the content concurs with research findings by Hess (2009) and Journell (2011b), who have explored the comprehensive process of navigating contentious issues, posing questions, and eliciting student discussion about difficult content in teacher education. Although the dialogues provided frequent opportunities for students to develop their thinking, it is important to recognize that some students do not take part in whole group discussions. The Socratic dialogues alone did not provide enough

information for understanding students' developing historical thinking or their knowledge of teaching historical thinking with film. As a result, other forms of response were critical.

Overall, students' reflection responses provided a wealth of data for understanding individual students' ideas about the documentary films each week and whether they were influential in developing their capacity for historical thinking. The written reflections provided students with opportunities to respond to the films, describe their engagement with thinking historically, and explain their ideas about teaching historical thinking with film outside of the face to face class meetings, which in return, yield more detailed and often more personal than their anticipation guides or discussions. This indicates that written reflections may be important for examining students' ideas about teaching with film to elicit historical thinking. As each of these instructional strategies revealed advantages and challenges, teacher educators should consider how their instruction offers a variety of ways to respond to documentary films as they attempt historical thinking.

Considering the Advantages of Documentary Films as Historical Sources

Documentary film is an appealing instructional tool for historical thinking because it includes primary source material and can be used as a historical source historical source (Hess, 2007; Marcus, 2007; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). Prior research by Metzger (2010) and Stoddard and Marcus (Stoddard, 2007, 2010; Stoddard & Marcus, 2010) reveals that teachers should make deliberate choices about which films are most appropriate for teaching the historical content and exercising historical thinking. Whether

feature films or documentary films are used, choosing films that encourage students to think historically and present historical content is essential to using film to teach the process. This is a significant component of planning for instruction as evidenced in this study. As the instructor, I was selective and purposeful in choosing which documentaries to showcase in class. While I wanted to make the best use of course meeting time, I also intended to choose the films that best embodied the Civil Rights Movement and provided a dynamic classroom context for students to engage specific historical thinking skills. Once the documentaries were chosen and viewed, the students then used the films as historical sources extensively in this study. This indicates that film choice may have greatly impacted impact students' use of film to think historically, and teacher educators should be deliberate about choosing documentary films that best represent the historical content and the historical thinking skills that they want to convey to students.

In addition to considering which documentaries to use, I also made decisions about whether to use complete films or segments of films (Marcus, 2007; Stoddard, 2007, 2010). Students' success with the four documentaries suggests that it is important to consider whether segments are sometimes a better use of instructional time and a more deliberate use of films to teach historical thinking than viewing entire films (Stoddard & Marcus, 2010). However, deciding whether a film segment should be used or an entire film should be influenced by the social studies content and historical thinking goals that are guiding the overall instructional planning. Across the planning and implementation of the study, I made purposeful instructional decisions about how to use the documentary films as instructional tools, and the resulting findings provide insight for teacher

educators who may consider positioning documentary film to teach historical thinking. As students viewed the films and responded to the films using their anticipation guides, it was necessary to stop the films and segments frequently. In fact, students often asked to stop or replay the films in the study. Similarly, Stoddard (2007, 2010) suggests pausing films during viewing to allow students to pose questions, record lengthy responses, and even react to the films. The findings in this study suggest that such deliberate viewing experiences can contribute to more meaningful encounters with documentary films and historical thinking.

The Impact and Implications of Documentary Films as Primary Source Materials

In this study, students frequently reported that the documentaries were realistic and yielded emotional reactions or connections during class. Additionally, students asserted that the films were influential in expanding their historical knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement and their historical thinking skills. This is likely the outcome of the elements of historiography (interviews, primary and secondary source artifacts) in each of the films joined with students' frequent emotional reactions (Marcus et al., 2010; Metzger, 2007; O'Connor, 2007; VanSledright, 2001) It may also be related to most students' positionality as millennial learners, and their frequent life experiences with consuming visual media (Holliday & Li, 2004; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Moss, 2008). In fact, their identities as millennial learners may have actually encouraged their frequent and extensive interactions with the primary source elements of the documentaries, helping explain why most students referenced the films in their responses much more often than the other printed primary and secondary sources. Even though students were

presented with textbooks, trade books, and historical artifacts each week that were directly related to the civil rights event and social studies theme being studied, students overwhelmingly cited the content in the four films as they talked about and wrote about their weekly attempts at thinking historically.

Likewise, the documentaries seemed to also be essential to students' resulting content knowledge of the Civil Rights movement as a whole as well as their attempts to disrupt the dominant narratives and consider the multiple perspectives that contribute to the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Because of students' identities as millennial learners, it is likely that the films, as a compilation of visual and auditory sources with moving images, spoke to the students in a way that the traditional historical sources did not speak to them (Holliday & Li, 2004; Howe & Strauss, 2007). This widespread use of the documentary films as primary source materials in this study also corresponds with prior social studies research by Marcus and Stoddard (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Stoddard, 2007) that suggests documentary films are highly engaging historical sources that can extend and even challenge students' ideas about history. However, prior research does not address students' extensive use of historical sources as compared to the other historical sources, which demonstrates a potential contribution from this study to the literature related to teaching with documentaries.

Other Possible Explanations for Students' Reliance on the Documentary Films

Marcus et al. (2010) propose that a primary goal of using film in the social studies classroom is to develop students as active consumers of film, and other teacher educators recognize the function of critical interpretation in deconstructing film (Bullock &

Freedman, 2005; Trier, 2003, 2005). Overall, students were very critical of the historical narratives they located in the elementary textbooks and trade books, sometimes even identifying the counter-narratives of historical events and people that were absent from these popular sources. Although students considered most of these sources from a critical standpoint, they did not approach the documentary films from the same position. While students in this study were encouraged to use historical thinking to analyze and corroborate all of the historical sources (including the documentaries) through a critical lens, I did not involve students in analyzing the films through a different approach specific to film media or in analyzing the films separately from the other historical sources.

Toplin (1996) and Rosenstone (1995) recommend approaching the analysis of films, including documentaries, differently than other historical sources; their work as well as others (Marcus et al., 2010; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009) emphasizes the ideological perspectives of filmmakers in analyzing film media. In all likelihood, this method of source analysis was a factor that contributed to students' passive consumption of the films. In hindsight, I probably should have demonstrated to the class how to critically analyze a documentary film as a source unto itself rather than just the primary source material that was contained in the film. Documentary filmmakers make deliberate choices on which sources to include and which sources to exclude, and those decisions should be scrutinize. This is a limitation of the study that I will discuss in greater detail later in the chapter.

Additionally, my role as teacher and researcher may have influenced students' uncritical interpretations of the films in class and in writing. My developing identity as a critical, social justice educator and my quest to uncover counter-narratives of history within the methods course was very clear in our class meetings, and this may have contributed to students' passive interpretations of the four films. Also, their identity as millennial learners may have factored into their uncritical stance towards the documentaries. Their passive approach to the films may have also been the result of the order in which the collective historical sources were presented to students. Each of the four weeks, students were introduced to and shown the documentary before they were introduced to or analyzed any of the other sources; therefore, the first narratives that they heard or saw related to the events or themes were from the documentaries and not from the other sources. It is likely that this contributed to students' uncritical interpretations of all four documentaries. In summary, students' frequently occurring uncritical interpretations may be the result of several instructional flaws, yet this issue suggests that learners must be exposed to the documentaries in deliberate ways and explicitly challenged to critically analyze documentary film, which may require a different analysis and framework than other historical sources (Toplin, 1996, Rosenstone, 1995).

Implications for Teaching Historical Perspectives and Counter-narratives

All teachers, including teacher educators, make choices about what to teach and how to teach it. As a teacher educator, I strive to model critical pedagogy practices (Freire, 2009; Shor, 1992) in my teacher education classroom that problematize the dominant stories in social studies education while expanding students' ideas about

powerful teaching and learning. Therefore, it was important to me to create experiences for students with historical narratives within my social studies methods course that troubled their own ideas about history's stories while creating opportunities for them to understand the lives of historical and contemporary people, and recognize the function of their own positionality (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Freire, 2009; Levstik, 1995, 1997; Wineburg, 2001). Recent scholarship by Marcus and Stoddard (Marcus, 2007; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Stoddard & Marcus, 2006) focuses on troubling dominant historical narratives, looking for counter-narratives by locating and studying historical counter-narratives and expanding classroom experiences with multiple perspectives including historical empathy. This study demonstrates how pre-service teachers were able to engage multiple historical perspectives through documentary films about the Civil Rights Movement. Although it was not the original purpose of using the documentaries, it is important to recognize and think about how films may also implicitly teach the dominant narratives of history as well. Because of the opportunities for developing specific skills that are possible when teaching historical thinking with film, this comprehensive strategy should be carefully considered when planning for instruction in the elementary social studies methods course. As a teacher educator, I understand that teaching historical thinking in the elementary social studies methods course should be a fundamental element of pre-service teachers' experiences, therefore, locating and using deliberate strategies like documentaries that can facilitate students' experiences with thinking historically is central to my role as an elementary social studies methods instructor.

Across the four weeks, students' work revealed that although they engaged historical perspectives and attempted empathy towards historical people, they understood that considering the perspectives of others, especially perspectives that are different from their own, is more difficult than they realized. This issue of difficulty with multiple historical perspectives concurs with prior findings in teacher education by James (2008) and Marcus and Stoddard (2009), who also attempted to expose pre-service teachers to conflicting historical perspectives. The four documentary films created opportunities to explore the presence and function of racism and Whiteness in the past and present. In fact, the documentary films positioned these issues within the weekly meetings, providing a medium for students to then negotiate the different issues that are often taboo topics within the classroom—even in the social studies classroom (Hess, 2007; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; VanSledright, 2004). Within the context of historical thinking and film, students had a structured and meaningful location to consider and respond to these issues; yet the study revealed that some students did not take part in a verbal or a written response to the issues.

Through this process the pre-service teachers seemed to develop a deeper understanding of the reality and function of their own identities. Racism and Whiteness were particularly important in teaching this group of students, as 17 out of 18 students were White and I am White. Additionally, both the students and I are currently geographically located (and are residents of) the Southeast United States. Therefore, we do not embody geographic diversity. It is not clear how students would have reacted to the issues if the class had minority representation, if I had a different ethnic identity, or if

our collective geographic history was more diverse. As the presence of Whiteness (both historically and today) entered the study through our shared positionalities and again within the documentaries, some students may have reconsidered their own Whiteness, and the privilege that it carries both in the past and the present. As counter-narratives reveal and intentionally invite the disruption of and even dismantle power structures that are present in historical narratives, students were provided with opportunities to interrogate the power structures surrounding history and identify who is telling the narrative and how that author intends for the account to be read and retold. Students also troubled power structures as they examined how history is told today, and considered how their own use and interpretations of history (particularly their use of dominant and counter-narratives) can either interrupt the dominant narrative or advance it. This engagement with positionality and power structures through the documentaries demonstrates classroom encounters with social justice pedagogy and critical pedagogy, and examines the function of race, a central element of critical race theory. By thoughtfully and deliberately locating films in their teaching that encourage students to think about issues of racism and Whiteness using historical thinking, teacher educators can more effectively broach these issues in the elementary social studies methods course.

It is possible that a more diverse cohort of students would have enriched the discussions and provided additional, different perspectives towards racism and Whiteness, and it is also possible that students who did participate in examining the issues would not have discussed with the whole class to the extent that they did. I believe that examining these issues with peers who have different lived experiences and

backgrounds would have deepened and even extended the discussions, and the perspectives of a teacher educator whose ethnic identity was different than most of the students would have also challenged their ideas and enriched and students' experiences with racism and Whiteness. While I believe that some students were able to discuss these issues because they felt my classroom was a safe place, it is not clear whether some students did not feel safe and therefore did not participate, or if some students would have engaged Whiteness and racism to the extent that they did if I presented a different ethnic identity. Furthermore, some students' lack of participation may be due to their program's cohort design. As students take all of their teacher education courses with the same peers, they may be cautious of discussing controversial topics with their peers and impacting their ongoing relationships with one another. Due to the intimate cohort design, some students may not feel safe and comfortable in sharing their ideas about these topics with their cohort peers. These factors must be acknowledged and considered when planning for instruction that broaches controversial issues through film and historical thinking.

While further research is needed to understand why some students did not examine these issues, this study does reveal that even with a medium for introducing Whiteness and racism, some students did not demonstrate engagement with the issues with peers or in their own individual response. There are many possible factors that could contribute to students' lack of engagement with controversial issues in the teacher education classroom. Therefore, teacher educators should consider how their teaching methods encourage these conversations and how to adapt their own teaching to more

frequently and deliberately introduce issues like Whiteness and intolerance with pre-service teachers.

Implications for Elementary Social Studies Teacher Education

The four week experience that students had with historical narratives through historical thinking and the documentaries offers several implications for elementary social studies teacher educators to consider as they craft and teach their methods courses. First, the role of historical thinking in the K-5 classroom should be considered.

Looking at the Bigger Picture: The Social Studies Curriculum and the White Teacher

National social studies standards indicate that young learners should be able to use critical thinking to approach and understand the past and historical people, and apply this knowledge to their own lives (National Council for the Social Studies, 2012). Historical thinking is one critical context for approaching and understanding the past in the elementary curriculum, yet, it is also part of the elementary content curriculum to think historically (National Council for the Social Studies, 2012). If elementary students are to begin to understand the past and apply it to their own lives, their elementary classroom experiences should include frequent opportunities to engage in such experiences (James, 2008; Ohn, 2009; Yeager & Wilson, 1997). These experiences may originate with classroom teachers who had similar learning opportunities in their social studies methods course. Again, this highlights the importance of creating elementary social studies methods courses that provide frequent opportunities for pre-service

teachers to engage in deliberate classroom practices like documentary films to challenge the domination of the formal social studies curriculum through historical thinking.

Central to improving elementary social studies teacher education is the awareness of how elementary teachers as individuals impact the teaching and learning that occurs in classrooms, and how their understanding of themselves can be improved through the goals and design of the elementary social studies methods course. Because the elementary teaching force is primarily White, these students' struggles with understanding their own Whiteness and the function of Whiteness in history should help us as teacher educators understand how to position and deconstruct positionality—specifically issues related to Whiteness—in our courses in ways that help students begin to think about their identities as each relates to their lived experiences, beliefs, and their future classroom practice. The pre-service teachers in this study were nearly all White. Through the process of historical thinking using documentaries, they struggled with multiple perspectives that were different than their own lived experiences, and they were exposed to issues of race including Whiteness. It is possible that because the issue was raised several times, some students began to trouble their own ideas and beliefs about race, others, and their own racial identity as White. This is promising for elementary social studies teacher education, and challenges other teacher educators to be more deliberate about including these issues (which are already present) in the ongoing conversations across their courses.

Considering the Implications of Pre-service Teachers' Social Studies Content

Knowledge

As historical thinking is an “unnatural act” (Wineburg, 2001), students should encounter the process in their social studies education courses and expand their thinking through the experiences. Elementary pre-service teachers should be able to think historically and be prepared to teach their own elementary students how to think historically, yet, as the findings in this study demonstrate, elementary pre-service teachers may not enter their teacher education program with much historical content knowledge or well developed historical thinking skills. Recently, some social studies researchers have examined the seemingly shallow and even inaccurate historical content knowledge of elementary pre-service teachers (Doppen et al., 2011; Sanchez, 2010), drawing implications for acknowledging and combating this deficit in teacher education. Doppen et al. and Sanchez posit that elementary pre-service teachers may not have the comprehensive social studies content knowledge necessary to articulate the dominant narratives of historical events and people that are part of the elementary social studies curriculum. Based on the research on elementary pre-service teachers' lack of social studies content knowledge, one could argue that elementary pre-service teachers may not enter their social studies methods courses with the comprehensive content knowledge necessary to articulate the dominant narratives of many historical events that are part of the elementary social studies curriculum.

In this study, most students did not enter the study with a working knowledge of historical thinking or the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, students' lack of content

knowledge and understanding of historical thinking was also problematic because the pre-service teachers' initial questionnaire responses indicated that they thought that they understood historical thinking at the onset of the study, yet their responses indicated otherwise. This pedagogical mismatch corresponds with the implications by Doppen et al (2011) and Sanchez (2010) for providing such experiences in the elementary social studies course with historical content that counters the popular conceptions of history. Because students did not have a working knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement or of three of the four events we examined, some weeks the study of historical counter-narratives was merged with their first encounters with the dominant narratives of the events. For example, in the second week we investigated Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. That week, most students (14 out of 18) did have some or a great deal of prior knowledge about Parks and or the bus boycott. However, during the other three weeks, most students did not have any knowledge of the events and themes being examined. During those weeks, students' lack of content knowledge forced me to merge instruction in the dominant narratives with the counter-narratives. This provides insight for teacher educators who are considering using historical counter-narratives as a vital part of their historical content knowledge instruction.

If elementary pre-service teachers are to be advocates for the social studies curriculum, they must first know the content and then be able to explain why the social studies are central to students' development in the elementary years. In addition to shallow or inaccurate content knowledge, pre-service teachers may enter teacher education with apprehensions about the use of teaching methods that promote multiple

historical perspectives (James, 2008). Each of these factors impact how the students approach the teacher education course components, therefore, students' social studies methods course should include frequent opportunities to learn about and practice historical thinking through methods like documentaries. As a result, the findings in this study provide insight for effective instruction in historical thinking, even when students lack prior understanding of the history being examined in the methods class. These implications for elementary social studies teacher education can help elementary social studies teacher educators expand their own teaching with documentary film, and conduct future research in elementary social studies methods that uses documentary film to think historically. Indeed, as social studies instruction is changing in contemporary elementary classrooms (Heafner et al., 2007) pre-service teachers need to understand how to advocate for elementary social studies through effective instructional methods like documentary film and historical thinking.

Limitations of the Study

There is a growing body of scholarship that celebrates teachers as researchers in the teacher education classroom (Bullock & Freedman, 2005; Dinkelman, 1999; Hess, 2010; James, 2008; Sevier, 2005). As the teacher and researcher, I was deeply embedded designing and implementing the research study, delivering the classroom instruction, and collecting the study data. Together with the enmeshed qualitative design, I was inseparable from the research study. Although my presence as a teacher researcher provided opportunities for participant observation, questioning, and an in depth knowledge of participants, it also created limitations for the study. As teacher and

researcher, students understood that I was first their course instructor and then a researcher attempting to answer questions about historical thinking and film. Students understood that I was collecting data during the semester, and that ultimately, their responses in class were going to be a part of my work. They also understood that taking part in Socratic dialogues contributed to their course participation grade. These insights about their contributions to class may have encouraged teacher-friendly answers and obliged participation across the duration of the study. Although this is a common limitation of teacher research, it is important to recognize the possibility that my role as teacher and researcher created limitations within the study. Moreover, elements of my positionality, specifically my Whiteness, may have created a limitation for expanding students' thinking related to issues of racism and Whiteness. Because the majority of the students were White, I did not present a different racial or ethnic identity than the students had already experienced, which somewhat "normalized" the issue of Whiteness rather than critically interrogating it.

In addition to the implications for teaching historical thinking, ample instructional time is necessary for teaching multiple historical thinking skills and then applying these skills within the classroom repeatedly. Indeed, to demonstrate great gains in thinking historically, students need ongoing interactions with historical thinking embedded across the semester or school year rather than a more restricted timeframe of four exclusive weeks. Moreover the challenge of obtaining sufficient classroom time for teaching historical thinking was complicated by the curriculum requirements for the methods course. Because of the limitations of the study timeline and the course's considerable

content demands, it was not possible to extend this study past four consecutive weeks. However, in the regular classroom and outside of the data collection context, teachers could continue to develop the different historical thinking skills in subsequent studies of past events and people. Doing so would only strengthen and support students' developing abilities, particularly the more difficult skills of perspective taking, empathy, and developing one's own narrative of history.

This study reveals that historical thinking is not a skill or series of skills that can be taught, explored, and mastered in four weeks. In contrast, within such time restraints, these skills can only be introduced and students engage the skills minimally. To develop these skills fully requires repeated engagement with each skill within multiple settings over time with historical sources. If this study were replicated, conducting the study over a longer period of time would provide a more in depth look at students' responses to historical thinking and their ideas about using film to teach historical thinking.

Students' collective uncritical interpretations of the documentaries prompted me to consider why they may have approached the films in such a way. Each week of the study, the documentary films were introduced and viewed before the other historical sources (elementary textbooks, children's books, other historical books and artifacts) were introduced or analyzed. Because students always view the films before being introduced to the other, different sources, this may have created a limitation for the study design, and it likely contributed to students' lack of a critical lens towards the films. Although this design flaw creates a limitation for the study, it encourages me as an educational researcher to think about how I can reorganize the historical sources to

improve my classroom instruction and the study design in future research using documentary films to think historically.

In addition to my decision to show the documentaries at the beginning of each class, my choice to have students analyze the films in the same way as the other historical sources also created a limitation in the study. I did not explicitly ask the students to analyze or challenge the films any differently than the other different sources, yet Toplin (1996) and Rosenstone (1995) assert that historical films should be analyzed or approached in a different way than written texts and other historical artifacts. This limitation also offers insight for future research involving teaching with documentary films. As documentary films are an excellent instructional tool for dissemination historical knowledge and thinking about multiple perspectives towards past, they should also be approached as unique historical sources that may be flawed. Consequently, the films should also be challenged for historical accuracy beginning with locating the producer/director's ideological perspectives and evaluating the historical narratives being presented.

The final data collection method to be used in this study was student interviews. Students were given the opportunity to meet on campus for a 15-20 minute interview in the week following the study of historical thinking. This week also followed the university's fall break and midterms. Student participation was solicited through email and in the fourth week, I reminded students in class about the opportunity to do an interview about the study. Unfortunately, no students volunteered to complete an interview, which reduced the data collection methods from six to five. Although students'

responses in the other data sources provided important and comprehensive insight to understand their ideas and beliefs about using film to think historically, individual interviews may have given students the opportunity to share information that they were not comfortable sharing in the public dialogues or in writing. Moreover, interviews may have also revealed more about students who did not contribute often during Socratic dialogues, thus providing a more thorough illustration of students' understandings about the process.

Although four thoughtful approaches were used to decrease threats to the credibility, dependability, and transferability of the study, there was one method that I planned to use that I was unable to implement. I was not able to use peer debriefing during the data analysis and interpretation. If I were to replicate all or part of this same study, I would ask several different methods instructors to review the findings; I initially only approached one instructor, who unfortunately was unable to review the findings. The absence of peer debriefing does impact the credibility of the study, and as a new researcher, it will continue to be important to consider how to decrease the threats to the credibility, dependability, and transferability of future research.

Additionally, in the initial study design, I intended to examine individual teacher education students in greater detail within the case being explored. I expected to look more closely at the written reflections and researcher observations of students who were not active during the discussions, or seemed to lack developing historical thinking skills in their written reflections. I considered looking at students who seemed to be highly engaged in the process of historical thinking, attempting to understand what factors are

most important in promoting their engagement and the ideas/process that they engage as they work to develop these skills. I also intended to examine students who seemed to be resistant to the course films, shared discussions, or the process of historical thinking to better understand their behaviors, the inside and outside factors that influenced their behaviors, and their individual experiences in the course. Because of the time restraints and lack of individual interviews, I was unable to examine individual students through case within case analysis. If I am able to replicate this study in whole or in part in the future, I intend to include more individual opportunities for response, which may help to gain a better picture of how individual students navigated the process.

Implications for Future Research

The findings in this study have provided implications for future research examining the use of documentary film to explore historical thinking. Historical thinking is not a skill or series of skills that can be taught and mastered in four weeks. Instead, these skills can only be introduced and attempted in such a short period, and developing these skills fully would require repeated engagement with each skill in multiple settings with historical sources. This study indicates that to demonstrate great gains, future research using documentary film should provide students with frequent opportunities for historical thinking across a longer span of time to begin to understand the process and then exercise historical thinking skills. Although important findings were identified in the intensive four week period used in this study, an extended instructional and research timeline would likely provide a more comprehensive knowledge of how students engage and understand the process and understand the functions of film. Additionally, the

instructional methods used in this study provide implications for future research surrounding historical thinking and film, and the study limitations can be used to develop future research concerned with using documentary film to think historically. For example, the order in which the collective historical sources are introduced should be varied from week to week. It is evident that students' written reflections and anticipation guides were critical to understanding students' ideas and beliefs during the study. Although some shared freely during Socratic dialogues, many did not, and assessing their developing historical thinking would have been difficult with only data from Socratic dialogues. Each of these aspects should be thoughtfully considered when planning for similar research endeavors involving historical thinking in elementary teacher education using documentaries. Future research in teacher education that seeks to explore racism and Whiteness should also glean direction from this study, as students were introduced to and considered these issues using the four films, suggesting that documentary films and historical thinking may provide a unique place for students to engage such issues in elementary teacher education. Therefore, teacher educators who position and explore these issues in their courses should consider using documentary film and historical thinking to broach the issues in their classrooms and in their research.

Although my positionality as the teacher and the researcher posed some limitations in this study, it has also encouraged my ideas for future research. As a teacher educator, I have developed in my understanding of teaching historical thinking, specifically the role of difficult historical topics like Whiteness. Also, my knowledge of generating and implementing educational research—specifically research in one's own

classroom—has expanded through designing and conducting this study and then analyzing the data and crafting the manuscript.

Additionally, as a teacher researcher, my understanding of data collection methods has progressed significantly. During the research proposal stage, I developed and implemented a data collection instrument to use in this study. Through engaging in this process, I have gained a deeper understanding of instruments for data collection and analysis as well as the comprehensive steps a researcher follows to create and improve a data collection instrument. I have developed a stronger interest in creating instruments that are specifically designed to answer the research questions that I pose, and my efficacy for aligning instrument items with specific research questions has increased. I have also gained a better understanding of how, when an instrument using both qualitative and quantitative items is well planned out, the qualitative data can help the researcher better understand the quantitative data. On the initial instrument responses, students' overwhelmingly high ratings on their own historical thinking skills (quantitative items) with high ratings, yet their open responses (qualitative items) revealed that they didn't have a thorough understanding of historical thinking. I found this to be a benefit of utilizing related qualitative and quantitative data together in an instrument.

Implications for future research include my own thoughts and ideas about replicating this study in the future. If I were given the opportunity to expand or alter this study, I would like to increase the number and duration of students' experiences with historical empathy. I would plan for students to continue their work with historical empathy using films as they explore other elements of the elementary social studies

curriculum. I believe that students' continued engagement with historical thinking may increase their understanding of others, encouraging them to attempt empathy and understanding towards their own, future elementary students and their families. Additionally, I would ask students to locate and bring in their own historical sources related to the content we are examining. I believe that this may increase students' interest in the other historical sources.

Summary of Implications of the Study

This study illuminates four categories of implications for using documentary film to think historically: implications for positioning documentary film as an instructional tool for historical thinking, implications for identifying multiple perspectives and counter-narratives, implications for the field of elementary social studies teacher education, and implications for future research. Study limitations including limitations of the study design, researcher limitations, and data collection and analysis limitations. Study implications suggest that when teaching historical thinking in pre-service teacher education, documentary film can be a beneficial and highly engaging tool, particularly for millennial learners when used in thoughtful and deliberate ways. However, the findings suggest that documentary film should be analyzed differently than other historical sources.

Through their engagement with the documentaries, students were exposed to multiple historical perspectives and counter-narratives as well as issues of racism and Whiteness, and encouraged to use historical thinking to explore each idea. Such classroom experiences exemplify some of the core principles of critical pedagogy, critical

race theory, and social justice pedagogy. Furthermore, students were encouraged to explore their own positionality, and attempt to understand how their identities and lived experiences influence the ways in which they understand the past.

The implications for elementary social studies teacher education demonstrate the importance of such experiences within the methods course setting, and contend that as most elementary pre-service teachers do not enter their programs with a comprehensive knowledge of history. As elementary social studies instruction is quickly declining, experiences like these should be considered and used in the methods class to expand students' historical content knowledge and promote their own historical thinking skills. Although the limitations have likely inhibited the study in some way(s), as an educational researcher, I am able to glean from the limitations and the larger study implications for understanding myself as a research and opportunities for future research.

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APPENDIX A

CHART OF COURSE COMPONENTS RELATED TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Required Readings	Film	Related Historical Sources	Guiding Discussion Question	Written Reflection Question
<i>SSYL: Analyzing Historical Photographs</i> <i>SSYL: Brown vs BOE</i> <i>SSYL: ABCs of Brown v BOE</i>	<i>4 Little Girls</i>	Library of Congress photographs Elementary Social Studies Textbooks Norman Rockwell's <i>The Problem We All Live With</i> <i>The Other Side</i> <i>White Socks Only</i> <i>Through My Eyes</i> <i>The Story of Ruby Bridges</i> <i>Ruby Bridges Goes to School</i>	What do we know about the larger context of what was taking place? Why do you think Rockwell chose that title for his work? What are your reactions to the 16 th Street bombing?	What historical account can you give of the onset of the Civil Rights Movement?
<i>Rethinking Schools: What's Wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth</i> <i>SSYL: Rosa Parks Myth</i>	<i>Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks</i>	Library of Congress photographs Elementary Social Studies Textbooks <i>Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott</i> <i>Rosa Parks: My Story</i> <i>Rosa</i> <i>Boycott Blues: How Rosa Parks Inspired a Nation</i> <i>I am Rosa Parks</i> <i>The Story of Rosa Parks</i> <i>Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice</i>	What does Rosa's story tell us about how history is told? What examples of organized, collective actions do we see? Why are they important in understanding the Civil Rights Movement? How is Parks portrayed in popular media and children's literature? What is the counter-	What do you think about films that present counter-narratives?

			narrative of Rosa Parks?	
<i>The Story of Ourselves</i> <i>Letters from Mississippi: Reports from Civil Rights Volunteers and Freedom School Poetry of the 1964 Freedom Summer</i>	<i>Freedom Riders</i>	Elementary Social Studies Textbooks Library of Congress photographs <i>Speaking Out: The Civil Rights Movement 1950-1964</i> <i>Freedom Summer</i> <i>Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice</i> <i>Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines</i> <i>Faces of Freedom Summer</i> <i>Freedom Train</i>	Why don't most Americans know these stories? What is the counter-narrative of the Freedom Riders? How do the Freedom Riders events build on prior Civil Rights events?	How are your ideas and beliefs about historical sources changing?
<i>SSYL: Children and Social Change in Alabama: 1965 and 2005</i>	<i>The Children's March Selma, Lord Selma</i>	International Civil Rights Museum, Greensboro, NC Elementary Social Studies Textbooks <i>Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit Ins</i> <i>Sit In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down</i> <i>Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Brown, and Me</i> 1968	What have you learned about the Civil Rights Movement? How is life different and similar today? What is your historical account of the Civil Rights Movement?	How have the films and film clips influenced your understanding of the Civil Rights Movement?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

Part A: Rank your Answer (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree/Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

SA	A	Neither A/D	D	SD	
1	2	3	4	5	I believe that there are multiple interpretations of history.
1	2	3	4	5	I can locate the popular narrative in a film.
1	2	3	4	5	People should see and understand different perspectives in history.
1	2	3	4	5	I learn a lot about history through films.
1	2	3	4	5	Teaching more than one perspective about a historical event is central to learning about social studies.
1	2	3	4	5	History can be interpreted in many ways.
1	2	3	4	5	Studying more than one perspective of a historical event is difficult.
1	2	3	4	5	Considering the perspectives of historical people is important for understanding history.
1	2	3	4	5	People's experiences influence how they understand history.
1	2	3	4	5	When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about people's location in history.
1	2	3	4	5	When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about why people made the decisions they made.
1	2	3	4	5	Film can be used to think like a historian.
1	2	3	4	5	Historical artifacts can be used to think like a historian.
1	2	3	4	5	I struggle to consider a historical account that is different than what I believe.
1	2	3	4	5	It is important to interpret history through different accounts.

Part B: Short Answer

What does it mean to think historically? _____

When I read or see a historical account that is different than what I have read or seen before,

What do you know about the Civil Rights Movement? _____

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH QUESTION AND QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM CORRELATION CHART

Research Question 1: How do elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?

Research Question 2: How does film facilitate elementary pre-service teachers' understanding of counter-narratives about the Civil Rights Movement?

Research Question	Questionnaire Item
1	I believe that there are multiple interpretations of history.
2	I can locate the popular narrative in a film.
1, 2	People should see and understand different perspectives in history.
2	I learn a lot about history through films.
1	Teaching more than one perspective about a historical event is central to learning about social studies.
1	History can be interpreted in many ways.
1	Studying more than one perspective of a historical event is difficult.
1	Considering the perspectives of historical people is important for understanding history.
1	People's experiences influence how they understand history.
1	When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about people's location in history.
1	When I am learning about a historical event, I try to think about why people made the decisions they made.
2	Film can be used to think like a historian.
1	Historical artifacts can be used to think like a historian.
1	I struggle to consider a historical account that is different than what I believe.
1	It is important to interpret history through different accounts.

(RQ 1) What does it mean to think historically?

(RQ 2) When I read or see a historical account that is different than what I have read or seen before, I

(RQ 1, 2) What do you know about the Civil Rights Movement?

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH QUESTION AND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL CORRELATION CHART

Research Question 1: How do elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?

Research Question 2: How does film facilitate elementary pre-service teachers' understanding of counter-narratives about the Civil Rights Movement?

Interview Questions:

1. What are your thoughts about studying counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?
2. In thinking about this semester, what activities were the most beneficial to you in learning how to engage historical thinking?
3. How have your ideas and beliefs about the Civil Rights Movement changed since the beginning of the semester?
4. How have your ideas and beliefs about elementary social studies changed this semester? Why?
5. Tell me your beliefs about using films that present counter-narratives.
6. Given that we are interested in learning more about how to prepare future teachers to think historically, is there anything else that you want to share?

Research Question	Interview Question
1	What are your thoughts about studying counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?
1, 2	In thinking about this semester, what activities were the most beneficial to you in learning how to engage historical thinking?
1, 2	How have your ideas and beliefs about the Civil Rights Movement changed since the beginning of the semester?
1, 2	How have your ideas and beliefs about elementary social studies changed this semester? Why?
2	Tell me your beliefs about using films that present counter-narratives.
	Given that we are interested in learning more about how to prepare future teachers to think historically, is there anything else that you want to share?

APPENDIX E

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND GUIDING DISCUSSION QUESTION CORRELATION CHART

Research Question 1: How do elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?

Research Question 2: How does film facilitate elementary pre-service teachers' understanding of counter-narratives about the Civil Rights Movement?

Research Question	Guiding Discussion Question
1, 2	What do we know about the larger context of what was taking place? Why do you think Rockwell chose that title for his work? What are your reactions to the 16 th Street bombing?
1, 2	What does Rosa's story tell us about how history is told? What examples of organized, collective actions do we see? Why are they important in understanding the Civil Rights Movement? How is Parks portrayed in popular media and children's literature? What is the counter-narrative of Rosa Parks? What do you think about films that present counter-narratives?
1, 2	Why don't most Americans know these stories? What is the counter-narrative of the Freedom Riders? How do the Freedom Riders events build on prior Civil Rights events?
1, 2	What have you learned about the Civil Rights Movement? How is life different and similar today? What is your historical account of the Civil Rights Movement?

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH QUESTION AND WRITTEN REFLECTION QUESTION CORRELATION CHART

Research Question 1: How do elementary pre-service teachers understand and negotiate counter-narratives of the Civil Rights Movement?

Research Question 2: How does film facilitate elementary pre-service teachers' understanding of counter-narratives about the Civil Rights Movement?

Written Reflection Questions:

1. What historical account can you give of the onset of the Civil Rights Movement?
2. What are your thoughts and reactions to class today?
3. How are your ideas and beliefs about historical sources changing?
4. How have the films and film clips influenced your understanding of the Civil Rights Movement?

Research Question	Written Reflection Question
1, 2	What historical account can you give of the onset of the Civil Rights Movement?
1, 2	What are your thoughts and reactions to class today?
1, 2	How are your ideas and beliefs about historical sources changing?
1, 2	How have the films and film clips influenced your understanding of the Civil Rights Movement?

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Freedom Riders Anticipation and Viewing Guide

What do you know about the Freedom Rides?

Main Ideas:

What quotes, photographs, or video footage were the most powerful?

Reactions:

Could you get on the bus?
