ABSTRACT

HOLMES, CASEY ELIZABETH. "Your Generation is Going to Do This Right": A Qualitative Case Study of Critical Citizenship Education in an Eighth Grade Social Studies Classroom. (Under the direction of Dr. Meghan Manfra and Dr. Paula McAvoy).

This qualitative case study explored the implementation of critical citizenship education in an eighth grade social studies classroom. This research was guided by Johnson and Morris' (2010) framework for studying critical citizenship education and took place in a public charter school located in a capital city in the southeastern United States. The main teacher participant was a Black female social studies teacher with twenty years of teaching experience. Data collection occurred over a period of approximately seven weeks and took place in an entirely virtual environment due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Data sources consisted of over thirty days of classroom observations, class instructional materials, a daily teacher's journal, two semi-structured teacher interviews, eight informal teacher interviews, and two semi-structured interviews each with four student volunteers. Constant comparative data analysis included multiple cycles of coding. Findings from this study highlight the teacher's own critical orientation towards citizenship and the salience of modeling her sense of identity for her students. The teacher adopted a humanistic approach to history education, through which she hoped to expand her students' understanding of history while also engaging them in inquiry into human values and culture. The tensions between the teacher's professional goals and her personal identity influenced her decisions about disclosure and controversy in the classroom, and she maintained students' optimism by infusing a critical curriculum with messages of hope. These findings reveal opportunities for future research and offer important implications for students, teachers, teacher educators, and the field of social studies.

"Your Generation is Going to Do This Right": A Qualitative Case Study of Critical Citizenship Education in an Eighth Grade Social Studies Classroom

by
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DEDICATION

This one’s for me.

BIOGRAPHY

Casey Elizabeth Holmes grew up in Darnestown, Maryland, a small town about an hour northwest of Washington, D.C. The proud product of 21 years of public schooling, she attended a series of magnet schools and International Baccalaureate programs from fourth grade through high school graduation. In these privileged school environments she learned from excellent teachers and developed a lifelong interest in history and social studies. She spent much of her childhood in the car as her infinitely patient parents drove her cross-county to school and soccer games, and she used these many car-bound hours to nurture her insatiable love of reading.

Her first college tour took her south after a soccer tournament in Greensboro, and on this visit she fell in love with her adopted home of North Carolina. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and Master of Arts in Teaching Secondary Social Studies both from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. A student teaching experience in a Civics and Economics class catalyzed her passion for politics, government, and civics education. After graduating with her MAT, she taught high school social studies for three years in Raleigh, NC before returning to North Carolina State University to pursue her PhD in Teacher Education and Learning Sciences with a focus in Social Studies Education.

Her time in the doctoral program at NCSU solidified her interest in civic and citizenship education and made her a better teacher. She continues to believe in the power of education and delights in knowing that her students teach her a lot more than she has ever taught them. After her graduation from NCSU, she is looking forward to continuing her work with undergraduate pre-service teachers and advocating for the field of social studies. She is also looking forward to reading more books for fun. She will gladly root against Duke basketball for the rest of her life.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The events of 2020 offered a unique glimpse into the dilemmas and questions of citizenship in the United States as communities responded to problems of political polarization, racial injustice, and the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. While many of the underlying issues have existed for centuries, these events have brought renewed attention to the interconnectedness of people and systems around the world (Tufekci, 2020). The complexity and urgency of recognizing and addressing these issues forces people to consider what they owe to one another as citizens in a community.

In the United States, data have revealed declining public confidence in previously trusted authorities such as governmental institutions, academia, traditional media outlets, and scientific expertise (Damico et al., 2018). Public mistrust of scientific institutions was brought to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to over 2.6 million worldwide deaths and over 530,000 American deaths[1] (Our World in Data, n.d.), crippled the American economy, and decimated the labor force. At the time of this writing in spring 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic was still ongoing and had led to over a year of quarantine and social distancing mandates. Yet, the virus was still proffered by many to be a hoax, conspiracy, or communist plot (Rott, 2020).

Adding to this tumultuous context was a renewed conversation about the history of racial inequality and systemic injustice in the United States, due in part to the racial disparities in COVID-19 deaths and vaccinations (CDC, 2020; Shapiro, 2021) and propelled by a wider movement for racial justice following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. White

[1] These statistics were accurate at the time of this writing in March 2021.

Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin killed Floyd, an unarmed 46-year-old Black man, by kneeling on his neck for approximately nine minutes after detaining him for allegedly using a counterfeit bill (Haworth et al., 2020). George Floyd's murder, one of many examples of police brutality and killings of Black people by police officers, prompted a series of peaceful protests for racial justice throughout the summer and fall, widely led by Black Lives Matter movement organizers.

The national conversation around the history of racial injustice extended into educational discourse in the fall of 2020 when then-President Trump gave a speech in which he announced he would create a commission to promote "patriotic education" and described the teaching of systemic racism in schools as "a form of child abuse" (Wise, 2020, n.p.). He specifically named the 1619 Project, an initiative from *The New York Times* to reframe history through the lens of the legacy of slavery and contributions of Black Americans (Silverstein, 2019), as a key example of the "web of lies" spun by radical teachers in U.S. schools (Wise, 2020, n.p.). President Trump initiated the promised "1776 Commission" by executive order in a statement that declared that "the United States of America is the most just and exceptional Nation ever to exist on Earth" (The White House, 2020, n.p.). The commission's report was released on January 18, 2021, two days prior to the end of Trump's term (The White House, 2021). The report was widely regarded as a partisan propaganda tool intended to deny the legacy of slavery today, and to promote patriotic education that emphasized American exceptionalism (Binkley, 2021).

This complex web of interrelated contemporary problems of politics, government, misinformation and disinformation, economic inequality, social injustice, public health, and educational curricula compels citizens to grapple with difficult questions around what kind of society we wish to have now and in the future. In other words, these are all issues that center the

question of what people owe to one another as citizens in a local, national, or global community. Yet, as the controversies over the 1619 Project and 1776 Commission reveal, the ways in which schools prepare future citizens, including what version of the nation's history is taught and the inculcation of public values, has always been contested. While education for democratic life can be included across the curriculum, Parker (1990) has argued that "social studies is the only place … where focused inquiry on [citizenship] might be located" (p. 17). It is imperative that the social studies instruction enacted in schools is reflective of the vision of citizenship that will best serve our needs as a democratic nation.

The academic and practitioner communities have reached a general consensus that the fundamental purpose of social studies in schools is citizenship education and the preparation of young people to be good citizens (e.g., Barr et al., 1978; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; NCSS, 2008, 2016; Niemi & Junn, 1988; Parker, 1996; Ross, 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Yet, this question of what it means to be a "good citizen" has no objective answer (Ross & Vinson, 2014) and has divided the social studies community and broader society since the advent of the discipline itself. The issue of good citizenship is a crucial consideration for social studies education: if K-12 social studies classes teach young people how to be citizens, then the knowledge, skills, abilities, and values that are taught, transmitted, or explored in those classes represent the priorities of American citizenship.

In the teacher's role as curriculum gatekeeper (Thornton, 1991), teachers' beliefs about citizenship, the purposes of social studies, and students' abilities affect what happens in their classrooms. The teacher as curricular-instructional gatekeeper links the curriculum, the teacher's enactment of the curriculum, and opportunities for student learning as teachers make pedagogical and content-related decisions (Thornton, 1991). Therefore, teachers' own understanding of what

citizenship education looks like or *should* look like are vital contributions to their students' engagement with issues of what it means to be a good citizen. The contemporary problems of our modern world now require teachers who believe it necessary for their students to truly grapple with these difficult questions of inequality, justice, and power.

Statement of the Problem

Traditional social studies instruction is not conducive to the development of the type of critical, reflective, and actively engaged citizenry that today's complex, politically polarized, media-saturated society requires. For a representative democracy to be successful, citizens must be knowledgeable and empowered to engage in self-government. Citizens have a responsibility to think and reflect critically and must be engaged, active, and critical of the status quo (Dantley, 2017). Passive or disengaged citizens are more likely to be vulnerable to tyrants and exploitation and are less likely to hold their elected officials accountable for their decisions and actions (Deardorff & Kupenda, 2011), which seems increasingly dangerous in the aftermath of the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Democratic citizenship education in today's environment of misinformation, polarization, racial injustice and increasing income and social inequality must include opportunities for students to critically investigate the historical roots of our contemporary problems and to then take reasoned and rational action in pursuit of a more equitable future.

Narrow Conceptions of Citizenship as Whiteness

Narrow conceptions of citizenship are widespread in social studies classrooms (e.g., Banks, 2008; Grelle & Metzger, 1996; Miller-Lane et al., 2007). The predominant approach to content and instruction in social studies education is an "archaic" process through which students learn a variety of facts about the United States government and come to internalize the "same

patriotic, Eurocentric narrative that has been taught since the nation's founding" (Journell, 2011a, p. 11). This "official heritage metanarrative" (Salinas, 2006, p. 21) of citizenship and American history emphasizes American exceptionalism and discounts the actions and influences of most non-Europeans. The uncritical narrative that the story of America is one of constant progress and freedom has become part of the nation's collective memory, passed down through passive and similarly uncritical instructional approaches to history and citizenship education and serving to continually reinforce the status quo (Castro & Knowles, 2017; Reay, 2008; VanSledright, 2010).

The status quo is linked with a White, middle class interpretation of citizenship (Reay, 2008) that has excluded women, individuals of different abilities or religions, and most communities of color throughout history (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 2004; Delgado, 1999). When social studies instruction reinforces these narrowly-defined visions of citizenship, it negates the validity of the real experiences of many immigrant youths, youth of color, girls, non-binary students, and differently abled students, who see their own identities and cultures vilified, misrepresented, or ignored (Choi, 2013). For these students and others who do not like social studies, the subject is made to feel irrelevant and meaningless as they struggle to find any coherence with their own lives, interests, and realities (Heafner, 2004; Schug et al., 1984). These restrictive and exclusionary narratives are even more problematic when considering that a majority of the nation's student population is made up of students who do not identify as White, with projections of increasing community diversity and a majority-minority U.S. population by 2044 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; United States Census Bureau, 2015). Broader, more critical conceptions of citizenship are necessary to help students recognize and

work to address the systemic injustices that so many individuals and communities have faced throughout history.

Traditional Social Studies Instruction

Despite an ever-growing body of research that maintains that deeper learning is achieved more often by doing, rather than by simply reading, watching, or listening (Levinson & Levine, 2013), traditional teacher-centered and transmission-based pedagogical practices persist in the social studies classroom (Bain, 2005; Grant et al., 2017). Textbooks still predominate and the "typical" teacher is one who primarily lectures and distributes worksheets (Levstik, 2008; Saye & SSIRC, 2013; VanSledright, 2010).

Research consistently demonstrates that disciplined, systematic, and rigorous inquiry-based processes engage students in deeper exploration of content material, lead to more substantive and sustained learning, and appear to increase the likelihood of successfully transferring learned knowledge and skills into new contexts (Parker et al., 2013; Saye, 2017). Yet, teachers often cite time, high-stakes standardized testing, and perceptions of student ability as barriers to more student-centered or innovative approaches to teaching (Grant et al., 2017; Thacker et al., 2017). Teachers' own educational experiences also often predispose them toward conventional pedagogical approaches, having not had much, if any, exposure to inquiry or other student-driven processes as students or pre-service teachers (Saye & Brush, 2006).

Students learn about citizenship in implicit and explicit ways in school, and the uncritical transmission of knowledge in concert with uncritical deposits of facts and information to be memorized causes students to experience social studies as a passive, inactive, and unquestioning endeavor. If students understand citizenship in a democracy to be centered solely upon facts and dates that a higher authority deems to be important, students will learn that citizenship is about

obeying and observing, rather than questioning or challenging the status quo in pursuit of a more democratic and just society.

Alternative Narratives of Citizenship

The social studies classroom is the primary space in which students are asked to grapple with matters of citizenship. Adherence to traditional visions of what it means to be a good citizen and live together results in the reinforcement of the status quo, maintenance of existing forms of power, and potential alienation of wide swaths of the student population. Without helping students learn to question and interrogate their assumptions about political, social, and civic institutions, they are committed to passive understandings of citizenship and habits of unquestioning obedience (Castro, 2013). Teachers and other stakeholders must therefore consider alternative methods of social studies instruction and support students' development of a critical orientation towards citizenship.

The prevalence of traditional instructional methods and narrow visions of citizenship does not mean that there are no teachers engaged in critical work; to date, there have been several studies that have highlighted teachers and their students doing this important work in their classrooms. For example, Parkhouse (2018) explored the critical pedagogies employed by teachers in eleventh grade U.S. history classrooms, and Kelly (2014) and Martell (2013) conducted self-studies examining their own work as critical teachers in high school classrooms. More recently, Magill and Salinas (2019) focused on the critical pedagogical practices of social studies teachers primarily at the high school level. More empirical work continues to be needed in this area in order to understand what critical citizenship education might look like at various grade levels and in various types of classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of a teacher-created, critical citizenship education curriculum in an eighth-grade US history classroom. I sought to understand the ways in which the teacher's beliefs about citizenship, history, and the purposes of social studies education impacted her pedagogical and content-based decisions and instructional practices. In recognition of the connection between teaching and learning, I endeavored to understand the varied ways in which the eighth-grade students reacted to and interpreted this type of critical citizenship curriculum. I explored students' engagement with the curriculum and various instructional strategies and materials in an effort to understand students' conceptions of the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions indicative of critical citizenship.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

1. How does a self-identified critical social studies teacher enact critical citizenship education in an eighth grade United States history classroom?
    a. How do this teacher's beliefs about citizenship education influence her instructional decision-making?
    b. How do students respond to critical citizenship education in this teacher's eighth grade United States history classroom?

Theoretical Framework: Critical Citizenship Education

This work is rooted in critical pedagogy and guided by a framework for critical citizenship education. Critical citizenship is used generally as an umbrella term to include forms of citizenship education that strive toward social justice by exploring the promises and realities of democratic society and interrogating the underlying assumptions of its associated systems,

structures, and institutions (Johnson & Morris, 2010). It includes conceptions of citizenship found in the research literature that include transformative citizenship (Banks, 2008), justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), anti-racist citizenship (e.g., Husband, 2012; Kalin, 2002; King & Chandler, 2016), critical global citizenship (e.g., Andreotti, 2006; Torres, 2017), critical multicultural citizenship (Castro, 2010, 2013, 2014), civic multicultural competence (Miller-Lane et al., 2007), and critical discourses of citizenship (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

The conceptualization of critical citizenship utilized in this study was developed by Johnson and Morris (2010) in an attempt to crystallize and synthesize the key elements of the separate literatures surrounding critical pedagogy, critical thinking, and citizenship education. By mapping their framework onto what they discerned to be the foundational elements of critical pedagogy, Johnson and Morris (2010) explicitly tied their conception of critical citizenship to students' understanding of issues related to power, oppression, and systemic injustice, their skills in investigating, critiquing, and reflecting upon the interaction of these systems, and their concern for and commitments to questioning and addressing these injustices. Paralleling's Freire's (1970/2018) idea of praxis, which follows a cycle of reflexive inquiry followed by action, a critical conception of citizenship is one in which individuals identify, critically question, interrogate, and reflect upon the historical roots of social and political injustices, then engage in action to work towards creating a more just and equitable society.

Through their analysis, Johnson and Morris (2010) have offered a framework for critical citizenship education that can be used to analyze and compare curricula to promote forms of critical citizenship. This framework presents the interaction of what Johnson and Morris (2010) have identified to be the four distinctive elements of critical pedagogy – politics/ideology,

social/collective, self/subjectivity, and praxis/engagement – with the four elements of citizenship education as defined by Cogan et al. (2002) – knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions. Through their literature analysis, the authors identified ten elements associated with critical thinking and critical pedagogy. They then classified each of these elements as either a distinguishing characteristic of either critical thinking or critical pedagogy or as common to both. The authors included in the framework only the elements that uniquely described critical pedagogy. I used this framework as described by Johnson and Morris (2010) to guide my study design, data collection, and analysis.

The framework was ideal for this study because I sought to understand how a teacher enacted critical citizenship education in a history-focused social studies setting with the intention of fostering critical habits and dispositions in her students. Within her eighth-grade classroom, the teacher emphasized the relevance of social studies and offered a myriad of opportunities for students to consider their own agency and their own roles in history, which are crucial components of a broader education for critical citizenship. I also used critical citizenship education as a guide for understanding my emerging findings as I analyzed the data I collected through classroom observations, classroom artifacts, and teacher and student interviews. The framework for critical citizenship education is explained in detail in the next chapter.

Scope of the Study

I conducted a qualitative instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) beginning in August 2020 on the first day of the school year. Using purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) to identify a teacher participant, I conducted research in one eighth grade classroom where the teacher intentionally employed a lens of critical citizenship to teach United States history. The case included a Black female teacher, her White female co-teacher, and her two sections of eighth grade social studies,

for a course they called *Humanities*. The student body at the school is predominantly White and this was reflected in both sections. Four students, all White girls, each participated in two in-depth individual interviews during the second half of the observation period. The school context was a public charter school serving approximately 450 students in grades K through eight, located in a large southeastern capital city. Data sources included classroom observations, teacher interviews, a daily teacher's journal, student interviews, and classroom instructional materials.

I conducted classroom observations for four days per week for a period of six and a half consecutive weeks. I began classroom observations at the very beginning of the school year in an attempt to understand the habits and tone established within the classroom during the first days and weeks of the year. I conducted two in-depth semi-structured interviews with the teacher, one each at the beginning and the end of the observation period. I also conducted a weekly informal, unstructured interview with the teacher each Friday to discuss decision-making processes during that week, in addition to a follow-up interview in December 2020 to review her approach to teaching the 2020 presidential election. The teacher was compensated $300 for her full participation in the study. Finally, I conducted two in-depth semi-structured interviews each with four student volunteers from the teacher's classes. The goal of the instructor interviews was to understand the teacher's pedagogical beliefs and the way her beliefs manifested in her instructional decisions, while the student interviews provided an opportunity to understand how students with different levels of knowledge, interest, and awareness of social studies responded to and interpreted the teacher's intentionally critical pedagogy.

The theoretical framework of critical citizenship education informed my data collection by affecting the focus of my classroom observations as well as the questions that I asked in

teacher and student interviews. I focused particularly on definitions of what it means to be a "good citizen," conversations about democracy or American government, and reflections upon identity, membership, and agency for social change. In interviews, I also asked questions related to power and politics in an attempt to understand the teacher's and students' knowledge, values, skills, and dispositions as related to citizenship. When analyzing data, I attempted to parse out and reveal the way(s) in which critical knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions were evident as related to curricular elements of critical pedagogy: politics, the social/collective, self/subjectivity, and praxis.

Significance of the Study

Through this research I sought to address a gap in the research literature as it relates to citizenship education. Perhaps due to the various conceptions of citizenship that come under the "critical citizenship" umbrella, there have not been many comprehensive studies that utilize this particular framework offered by Johnson and Morris (2010) as a tool for analyzing the criticality of citizenship curricula, and few if any at all that do so outside of the United Kingdom. There appear to be no prior studies utilizing this framework to analyze critical citizenship education at the middle school level. In the present study, I explored questions of citizenship in a middle school classroom in an effort to understand the ways in which elements of critical citizenship education were implemented and visible (or not) amongst a group of younger students. Social studies is often considered a preparation for *future* citizenship, but students are citizens *now*, regardless of their age. The results of the study offer insight into how students conceptualize civic behaviors in their current lives.

In addition, studies of citizenship education at the high school level frequently focus on civics or government classes, since these are spaces where direct conversations about citizenship

occur. Yet, students learn about what it means to be a citizen even when not specifically discussing citizenship (Chiodo & Martin, 2005). The way students view and interpret history may also help shape their understanding of citizen habits and behavior. Exploring these issues at the middle school level in a history classroom offered a unique perspective into the interpretation of citizenship curriculum. The results of this study present a starting point for continued exploration of what critical citizenship education can look like in middle school history-based settings.

Summary of Chapter

Today's political, social, and economic realities require reconsideration of the traditional methods of teaching and the historically narrow conception of the American narrative portrayed in the social studies. Teachers and students must renegotiate what it means to be a good citizen in light of today's polarized and radicalized context. In this study I explored the enactment of critical citizenship education in an eighth grade social studies classroom for the purpose of understanding the nuances of teacher beliefs about citizenship, the observed instructional practices, and student responses to this type of teaching and learning. In the next chapter, I review the relevant research literature around citizenship education and teacher beliefs. I also outline the theoretical framework guiding this study, critical citizenship education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Citizenship education in schools has traditionally presented a narrow, unity-driven and identity-building conception of what it means to be a citizen, but this narrative is complicated by the historical links between citizenship and Whiteness. The dominant approach to history and citizenship education has been one of an America-is-best narrative of progress and patriotism, delivered through transmission-based and teacher-centered instructional practices. Students' internalization of these narratives and learning experiences results in an uncritical and passive understanding of citizenship. By contrast, critical citizenship education diverges from these traditional conceptions of citizenship as proponents seek to interrogate the promises and realities of democratic society and act upon social injustices. Teachers that take up the mantle of critical citizenship education seem to be guided by their own beliefs about what it means to be a citizen, which are informed by their own lived realities within their family lives and K-12 and teacher preparation experiences. Teachers' beliefs about citizenship education inform their instructional practices, which in turn affect the ways students experience citizenship in their classrooms. A means of conceptualizing critical citizenship education is captured by the framework put forth by Johnson and Morris (2010), which has roots in critical pedagogy and served as the theoretical framework for this study.

Citizenship Education in Schools

Theorists of critical citizenship education diverge from the traditional or typical conceptions of citizenship that are most frequently conveyed in social studies classrooms in the

United States. In order to more fully understand critical citizenship, it is necessary to contrast it with the more traditional views of citizenship that predominate in K-12 public schools.

Citizenship may mean "many different things to different people" (Vinson, 2001, p. 66), but uses of the word "citizenship" can be broadly categorized in two ways: either as a reference to a specific legal status or to a more open definition that includes the rights, identities, responsibilities, and obligations of the residents of a community in general, not dependent upon an individual's legal status (Levinson, 2014). School curricula generally encapsulate this more open definition of citizenship. Most states have social studies curriculum standards that require teachers to teach about American democratic institutions and processes in addition to the rights, responsibilities, and duties of citizens (Shapiro & Brown, 2018). While these standards include activities restricted to legal citizens, such as voting, the standards mention other actions such as obeying the law, volunteering in the community, and helping others as expectations for both legal citizens and noncitizens. In this paper I likewise utilize a multidimensional conception of "citizenship" that describes membership in and identity with a community regardless of legal status (Levinson, 2014).

Historical Uses of Citizenship Education for Building Common National Identity

Historically, political leaders have leveraged citizenship education to provide the foundation for a common national identity and develop patriotism (Johnson & Morris, 2010). One of the early purposes of schooling in the United States was to develop a "collective social identity and citizenship" that included ideas about the "Americanization" and assimilation of immigrants (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 19). Even some of the earliest school reformers agreed that schools should give "all children of whatever origin a basic education to form them into good

Americans, which meant civically moral, patriotic, English-speaking Protestants" (Heater, 2003, p. 102).

Since at least the late 18th century the social studies curriculum in the United States has included content designed to strengthen nationalist and patriotic sentiment. Stanley and Nelson (1994) noted the persistence of this "nationalistic education" (p. 269), which involves the study of the nation's history and institutions through a focus on patriotism and acceptance of society's core values and structures. Today, the social studies curriculum throughout K-12 schooling continues to include examples of this nationalistic material.

In elementary grades, students consistently learn about famous individuals like Christopher Columbus, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks, engaging in dress-up or reenactment scenarios that help students identify with the stories about the founding and development of the nation (Barton & Levstik, 2004). While learning about individual people's stories can be motivational for young students who may emotionally identify with the characters in these individual narratives, interpreting history largely on the basis of individual achievements can cripple students' understanding of the larger context of historical and contemporary events. Students may grow to believe that social problems are caused "solely by deficiencies in [individual] attitudes, rather than by inequitable or unproductive societal arrangements" (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 162) and that these types of problems can be solved simply through the efforts of individual heroes rather than requiring any kind of collective effort.

Wills' (1996) case study of middle school history classrooms highlighted the potential pitfalls of this approach. Students had difficulty seeing any connection between slavery and the reaction in Los Angeles following the 1992 police beating of Rodney King, a current event at the

time of the study. Students in the class suggested that the contemporary plight of African Americans in the United States was not due to slavery, because "there are no slaves anymore" (p. 372), but instead that African Americans "believe everyone is against them" (p. 372) or even that they "bring it upon themselves" (p. 371). While the mostly White students in the class did appear sensitive to and outraged by the experience of slavery, the focus on the individual narratives of enslaved persons perhaps masked the wider consequences of institutional racism in economic systems and social norms (Barton & Levstik, 2004). A narrative of American history told through the eyes of individual, heroic figures for the purpose of fostering a national identity skews students' understanding of agency and fosters misunderstanding or ignorance of the significant role of social, political, and economic institutions.

The emphasis on the unifying origin and development story of the United States remains consistent through the history and civic textbooks of the middle and upper grades, which emphasize the founding fathers, events, and documents (Avery & Simmons, 2001). National identification is further promoted in the upper grades by teachers' and students' use of first-person pronouns like *our*, *we*, and *us* as they discuss the origin of *our* country, even when students' own ancestors were not members of the dominant group (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Hahn, 2008). According to VanSledright (1997) and Barton and Levstik (2004), students in elementary, middle, and high school grades frequently described the need to understand national origins as the purpose for studying U.S. history in school. Given the historical emphasis on national identity within citizenship education, the complex web between citizenship, national identity, and Whiteness in the United States must be explored.

Citizenship, National Identity, and Whiteness. In the United States, eligibility for full membership as a citizen has historically been linked with Whiteness (Banks & Nguyen, 2008;

Ladson-Billings, 2004; Urrieta, 2004). Citizenship – both legal status and identity – has been frequently and systematically denied to historically colonized groups in efforts to maintain a narrow definition of who could fully participate in American society (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Delgado (1999) highlighted the public face of this exclusion, noting the nation's history of exclusionary and racist immigration policies, including "anti-Asian and anti-Mexican laws" and a quota system based on national origin (p. 250).

Barton and Levstik (2004) have echoed the prevalence of the theme of legal and social exclusion, noting the long list of groups of peoples, among them African Americans, Chinese and Japanese immigrants, who have "failed to conform to the prevailing norms" for national identity during a particular period of American history (p. 61). Indeed, assimilationist processes and policies have required minority groups to conform to the dominant culture and prevailing norms, both in society and in schools (Banks & Nguyen, 2008). American schools, in particular, assumed that national belonging and citizenship could only be achieved through assimilation into the mainstream culture (Banks, 2008).

At the same time, "White" has grown to frequently be viewed as synonymous with "American" (Banks & Nguyen, 2008). Ladson-Billings (2004) highlighted research that suggests this perspective is pervasive; in the United States, White people are viewed as "more loyal, more patriotic, and more committed to the public good" while citizens of color are frequently accused of "being ethnocentric and less patriotic" (p. 113).

Further complicating the relationship among citizenship, national identity, and Whiteness is the misalignment between the idealized version of citizenship conveyed in schools and the reality of the society in which many teachers and students may live. Citizenship education is often taught under the twin assumptions of equal agency and political efficacy; in other words,

that all students can act towards their own interest in the political realm and that these participatory actions have the power to make real change (Junn, 2004). Yet real democratic life looks quite different from an idealized democracy, and the "American democratic creed … does not apply equally, but instead depends on where one is situated in relation to others" (Junn, 2004, p. 254).

A powerful example of the discrepancy between real and idealized democratic life comes from Epstein's (2000) study of five African American and five Euro-American students in an 11th grade history class. The students' racial identities and personal experiences significantly influenced their conceptualization of the historical experiences of different racial groups and the existence (or lack) of a common national history or identity. When asked to select the twenty most significant actors and events in U.S. history, the White students constructed a national story in which European-American figures were the major historical subjects while the African American students described a nation whose history and development were significantly impacted by racism and unequal racial relations (Epstein, 2000). Even events and figures that were shared on both lists were explained by the students in a way that reflected their own lived experiences; the Euro-American students viewed history from a European/colonizer perspective, while the Afrocentric narrative presented figures like the Founding Fathers, Abraham Lincoln, and the Emancipation Proclamation from the perspective of the African and African American communities.

The links between citizenship and national identity in the United States must be examined when considering the way that citizenship curricula are envisioned and enacted by teachers in schools. Teachers' understandings of citizenship and the way that constructions of citizenship have been used to exclude or include, vilify or exalt, influence how these concepts

are discussed in social studies classrooms. When traditionally narrow conceptions of citizenship are presented, they negate the experiences of large swaths of the student population and paint a narrow portrait of what it means to be a good or even patriotic citizen. It is compelling to consider what this worldview means for other teachers who teach social studies and issues of citizenship.

History and Citizenship Education. The complex links between national identity, citizenship education, and history education inform the present study because it is imperative to recognize that "every class teaches citizenship in some way, if only by example" (Chiodo & Martin, 2005, p. 24). While there is not yet an extensive research base that specifically links particular perspectives on the learning of history with specific civic skills, values, or dispositions (Barton & Levstik, 2008), the vision of the country's history that is taught in social studies classrooms still offers an indication as to what types of narratives may be considered valid.

Questions about whose history should be taught from what perspective and connections between historical phenomena and contemporary problems all suggest means by which history education includes implicit citizenship education (Miller-Lane et al., 2007). If the focus of U.S. history classes is an emphasis on the nation's founders and individual heroes, do students have opportunities to develop awareness of the complicated and contradictory legacy of much of American history? If history is presented as something that happened in the past with no relation to current issues, are students prepared to develop the capacity to investigate deeper causes of oppression and injustice as is necessary for critical citizenship education (Johnson & Morris, 2010)? Sheehan (2013) has contended that the ability to think critically about history is a "key feature" of critical citizenship (p. 79). Even if civic behaviors or ideals do not develop directly as a result of simply hearing stories about American heroes, it seems clear that narrow, unified

visions of U.S. history that offer no room for alternative narratives or student questioning are less compatible with the tenets of critical citizenship education.

Non-Critical Approaches to American History and Citizenship Education

The early emphasis on cultivating national identity through a common origin story, along with the persistent vision of narrowly defined citizenship described above, gave rise to a non-critical approach to American history and citizenship more generally in American schools (Banks, 2008). This approach, which has become the most pervasive approach to social studies education, means that students are taught a unifying national narrative of American history (Journell, 2011a; Miller-Lane et al., 2007). This "official heritage metanarrative" of citizenship and American history emphasizes American exceptionalism and discounts the actions and influences of most non-Europeans (Salinas, 2006, p. 21). It has become part of the nation's collective memory, passed down through passive and uncritical approaches to history and citizenship education (Castro & Knowles, 2017; Reay, 2008; VanSledright, 2010).

The dominant narrative of U.S. history that students receive is the story of freedom and progress; they often believe in the moral superiority of the U.S. because of the country's unique achievement of freedom and perceived continually expanding body of opportunities and rights (Barton & Levstik, 2004). The belief in America's inherent goodness, morality, and strength has been considered as justification for foreign policy decisions but also for the teaching of the subject itself. Lynne Cheney (2001) noted that a renewed focus on teaching U.S. history after the events of 9/11 was necessary so that students would know about American history "as we set out to defend America, 'assured of the rightness of our cause,' in our President's words" (n.p.). Cornbleth's (1998) study of elementary, middle, and high school history classes prior to the events of September 11, 2001 revealed a similar type of conviction: despite the presence of some

alternative narratives, teachers often portrayed the country as "imperfect but best" (p. 628) after having righted past wrongs. Barton and Levstik (2004) similarly found that middle school students largely considered the founding documents and events of the nation to be evidence for the nation's inherent moral superiority. This problematic and oversimplified story of America conflicts with reality and contributes to the transmission of an

> Overly narrow, uncritical, and chauvinistic conception of citizenship that tends to equate being a good citizen with the acceptance and defense of the status quo – a conception of what it means to be a good citizen that amounts to 'my country right or wrong, love it or leave it.' (Grelle & Metzger, 1996, p. 150)

While this lesson may not be the conscious intention of all social studies teachers, the narrative persists, due in part to the claim that national identity and unity should be the goal and a frequent contention that the nation's origin story is a crucial component of American civic knowledge (e.g., Hirsch, Jr., 1988).

Many people would argue that the nation can only be united and maintained if all citizens share a singular vision of what it means to be an American and that embracing varied or multiple identities weakens the nation and sows disunity (Barton & Levstik, 2004). When this national identity is anchored in the unique history of the nation itself, it offers a lens through which to view contemporary issues as well as a more durable vision of what it means to be an "American" (Barton & Levstik, 2004). At the same time, however, promoting a single national identity that is rooted in a narrow vision of belonging serves to maintain the status quo. While maintaining the status quo is laudable to some, it was built upon injustice and discrimination, therefore serving to sustain the authority of those who created the institutions and structures in the first place and harming non-dominant groups (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Parker (2014) has described the "core tension" of citizenship education in today's modern, increasingly diverse, and increasingly global United States as a balancing act between "personal freedom" and individual differences with a desire for unification and a "common political culture" (p. 349). This tension frequently results in the subsuming of all differences into a unifying narrative of universal citizenship and an uncritical view of citizenship and membership in the American democracy.

Patriotism

The push for a national vision of unity is galvanized by frequently monolithic ideals of patriotism (Westheimer, 2011). While patriotism can bolster the strength of a democratic society, the nature of this commitment is important, and the type of patriotism pursued in schools, governments, and boards of education is often one of "America-right-or-wrong" (Westheimer, 2011, p. 82). Lawmakers and educational decision-makers posit that patriotism should remain "above" partisan politics (Westheimer, 2011, p. 87), and dissent is therefore considered threatening to a presumably neutral and nonpartisan education (Cooper, 2015).

Students seem to be internalizing this narrative. Kahne and Middaugh's (2011) study of high school seniors revealed that fewer than half believed that loving one's country – patriotism – required a person to be politically or civically active and 43% agreed with or were neutral towards the statement that "it is un-American to criticize this country" (Westheimer, 2011, p. 91). The authors emphasized their concern that these sorts of passive patriotic commitments distract students from recognizing that a healthy, strong democracy requires critique and debate (Kahne & Middaugh, 2011). Apple (2009) has gone so far as to maintain that social criticism is actually the ultimate act of patriotism, since interrogation of a nation's policies represents a true commitment to the foundational values of the nation itself.

Teacher-Centered Social Studies Instruction

Emphasis on a unified vision of shared national identity is bolstered by the prevalence of passive methods of teaching and learning in social studies. Traditional teacher-centered and transmission-based pedagogical practices persist in the social studies classroom (Grant et al., 2017). Textbooks still predominate and the typical social studies teacher is one who primarily lectures and distributes worksheets (Levstik, 2008; Saye & SSIRC, 2013). In practice, this approach means that students learn a variety of facts about foundational documents, branches of government, and other democratic processes (Banks, 2008; Journell, 2011a; Miller-Lane et al., 2007). The emphasis on traditional "established knowledge" (Banks, 2008, p. 135) that is practiced in most social studies classrooms in the United States (Parker, 2003) is problematic because it fails to disrupt class, racial, or gender discrimination and instead reinforces dominant power relationships and the status quo in schools and in society.

The pedagogical practices that students encounter in social studies classrooms also serve as implicit civic education; whether students are encouraged to express their own opinions, disagree with others, or offered opportunities for voice and leadership may influence their sense of civic membership and identity and their understanding of what it means to be a citizen (Levinson, 2014). Passive teaching and passive content result in students experiencing mostly a "curriculum of compliance" in which they are compelled to see and understand the world in a limited way that conceals alternative and potentially challenging narratives of history (Leahey, 2014, p. 46).

Transmission-based approaches to social studies education develop students' habits of obedience and a passive understanding of citizenship and how citizens behave in democracies (Castro, 2013). Ross (2000) described this as "spectator citizenship" (p. 55), which largely

separates student-citizens from the world and condemns them to be perpetual observers of, rather than participants in, the democratic process. In this context, students are citizens without agency, and may be understood as "objects" of the knowledge that is bestowed upon them by their teacher (Freire, 1970/2018; Magill & Salinas, 2019). This type of limited, compliance-based narrative is apparent in citizenship curricula and is internalized by the students who are engaged with these materials and teaching.

Non-Critical Conceptions of "Good Citizenship"

Transmission approaches to uncritical content in the social studies regularly contribute to a generally passive, uncritical, and "care-less" (Tupper, 2007, p. 259) conception of citizenship that reinforces existing privileges, perpetuates conditions of oppression, and ignores the existence of deep inequalities. These models of non-critical citizenship appear in both curricular materials and the understanding of the students who engage with such materials.

Non-Critical Models of Citizenship Curricula. In their textual analysis of citizenship curricula between 1990 and 2003, Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) found that the two most prominent ideological discourses in the texts were discourses of civic republican citizenship, characterized by service, cooperation, respect, and patriotism, and liberal citizenship, characterized by a shared national identity, ability to reason, and a focus on individual rights and autonomy. They identified a collection of five other discourses, which they termed using an umbrella of "critical discourses," that each presented a critical orientation to citizenship and raised issues of membership, engagement, and identity. The authors highlighted feminist discourses, cultural citizenship discourses, reconstructionist discourses, queer discourses, and transnationalism, noting that this type of critical orientation was far more prevalent in research

and scholarly texts than in practical curriculum materials. In applied texts for use in classrooms, they observed a "relative silence" (p. 666) of critical language and practices.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) used the results of their study of two civic education programs to delineate a framework of three different kinds of "good citizens" that each have different implications for democratic education. The personally responsible citizen follows the law, works, behaves responsibly in their community, volunteers, and maintains good moral character. A participatory citizen is actively engaged in the community and democratic processes, like voting, but does so within the confines of the existing hierarchies and structures. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have cited the inadequacy of personally responsible citizenship programs for educating democratic citizens, noting that more critical attention must be paid to the need for collective action to address root causes of social problems. They argue instead that democracy is best served by the cultivation of justice-oriented citizens who seek out and address areas of injustice, questioning and changing established systems in order to solve problems and improve society. However, the authors found that the personally responsible view of citizenship received the most attention by the students and in schools.

Passive Student Conceptions of Citizenship. The research literature surrounding students' understanding of civic behaviors and actions overwhelmingly suggests that students hold thin conceptions of democracy and citizenship (Castro & Knowles, 2017). Thin conceptions are rights-based, with citizenship manifesting in rather passive roles for citizens, such as obeying laws and periodically voting. Thin conceptions of citizenship contrast with "thick" conceptions of citizenship, which imply much higher expectations for citizens' virtues, participation, and performance in the community (Barber, 1984; Kennedy et al., 2008; Walzer, 1994).

Examples abound of student conceptions of citizenship that revolve mostly around personal responsibility, following the law, and being a good neighbor. Results of Kennedy et al.'s (2008) quantitative analysis suggest that American high school students who took the 1994 IEA International Civic Education Study exam generally associated "good citizenship" with voting and other behaviors that suggest personally-responsible citizenship, like knowing the nation's history and respecting political and civic leaders. Conover and Searing (2000) explored perceptions of citizenship with high school students using a card sorting technique, and the findings revealed students largely associated passive actions and attitudes with being a good citizen. Almost all of the students noted the importance of following major laws and paying taxes, in addition to voting in elections, national loyalty, serving in the military, participating in jury duty, being a good neighbor, and donating to charity (Conover & Searing, 2000).

Other studies with middle school students suggest that thin conceptions of citizenship persist even in the middle school years when students are further removed from voter eligibility. Hickey's (2002) ethnographic study of middle school students revealed that students' emerging concepts of citizenship centered mostly around helping others and following laws. Chiodo and Martin's mixed methods study of eighth- and 11th-graders' views of citizenship likewise revealed that students primarily defined a "good citizen" as someone who helps others in their own community and obeys rules and laws (Chiodo & Martin, 2005; Martin & Chiodo, 2007). Other responses centered around the attributes of patriotism and respecting others. Notably, the student participants had difficulty engaging with the political side of citizenship and struggled to envision themselves behaving as good citizens ten years in the future (Chiodo & Martin, 2005; Martin & Chiodo, 2007).

Critical Conceptions of Citizenship

Despite the continued prevalence of traditional conceptions of citizenship and citizen behaviors in social studies classrooms, scholars have proposed several alternative frameworks for what citizenship education could or should look like. The critical citizenship discourses (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006) and justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) discussed above are two examples of the categories delineated by scholars in their empirical work. Scholars have developed a variety of other conceptual frameworks that advocate for a new, deeper, and more critical vision of citizenship to be taught in schools.

When used in the literature, the term "critical citizenship" is often not explicitly defined by the author. The term instead seems to be used in a way that designates critical citizenship as a general term for any approach to citizenship education that adopts a critical lens. As an umbrella term, critical citizenship goes beyond a basic knowledge of government processes or participating in local volunteer activities (Teitelbaum, 2011). Instead, to be a critical citizen is to hold an active rather than static conception of citizenship, interrogate the underlying assumptions of social and political structures and systems, and explore the promises and realities of democratic society through critical inquiry of differing accounts of both past and present events (Dudley et al., 1999; Teitelbaum, 2011). Critical citizenship education, then, goes beyond developing specific habits of thought or critical thinking skills to suggest that students must learn to identify, reflect, and act upon social and political injustices or inequalities that benefit one group(s) at the expense of another group(s) (Burbules & Berk, 1999).

Two relevant conceptual frameworks, transformative citizenship (Banks, 2008) and advanced citizen education (Parker, 1996) are briefly described below. The authors of both typologies advocate for the most critical version of citizenship as set forth in their frameworks,

and both could be considered, to some extent, a critical orientation towards citizenship. The authors envision that this is citizenship education as it could or even should be.

Transformative Citizenship

Banks (2008) proposed a four-level typology for conceptualizing citizenship, from the thinnest to thickest conceptions of what it means to be a citizen. The lowest manifestation of citizenship is legal citizenship, which is citizenship in status only. Middling levels include minimal citizenship, which describes habits of voting in national and local elections for mainstream candidates only, and active citizenship, in which individuals participate consistently and enthusiastically but only in ways that support and maintain the existing political and social structures. Banks (2008) advocated for education to teach towards transformative citizenship, the thickest level in which citizens take action to promote social justice even when doing so requires them to violate or challenge existing laws or structures.

Advanced Citizenship Education

Parker (1996) advocated for what he described as a "deepened and expanded meaning" for democratic citizenship education (p. 104). He outlined a two-winged historical approach to citizenship education and encouraged the adoption of a third, more "advanced" approach. The traditional wing of citizenship education is focused on the values, knowledge, and skills that citizens should have related to "mainstream civics" (p. 111), such as the workings of political institutions, the three branches of government, protection of individual rights, and voting. He visualized the opposite wing as the progressive wing, proponents of which still acknowledge the importance of a knowledge base but want more focus on action, agency, and participation in citizenship education. Parker (1996) described his conception of "advanced" citizenship education as a "more fully articulated conception of citizenship education" (p. 113) that

incorporates a vision of democracy as a journey in progress, citizens as direct and active agents in that process, and asserts that differences and diversity do not inherently have to lead to dissolution.

Critical citizenship education continues to be uncommon in schools despite the advocacy of these scholars and other educators. However, some teachers are already engaged in this type of work, and it is helpful to envision what deeper, more critical, and more engaged citizenship education could look like within the social studies classroom. Teachers' beliefs about teaching, social studies, and citizenship education play a role in whether and how critical citizenship education is enacted in the K-12 classroom.

Teacher Beliefs and Critical Citizenship Education

It has been well-established in the research literature that prior beliefs inform teachers' instructional goals and objectives and consequently their pedagogical vision (e.g., Calderhead, 1996; Chin & Barber, 2010; Patterson et al., 2012; Richardson, 1996; Villegas, 2007). Teachers serve as the curricular-instructional gatekeepers in their classrooms (Thornton, 2005), (dis)allowing students' access to particular content, materials, and instructional practices. The curriculum enacted in a classroom can therefore be considered the "compendium of teacher thinking and doing" (Fickel, 2000, p. 360).

Belief systems act as a filter through which individuals make sense of their world, influencing perception and behavior and filtering the interpretation of new experiences and phenomena (Pajares, 1992). Calderhead (1996) suggested that teachers in particular hold beliefs in four areas that are essential to their instruction: beliefs about the nature and purposes of teaching, the purposes and goals of teaching their particular subject, the process of learning to teach, and the role of one's own self in the act of teaching. These beliefs extend to and influence

teachers' perceptions and understandings of citizenship (Marri et al., 2014). Teachers' beliefs about citizenship thus play a critical role in shaping the pedagogical decisions, learning experiences, and relational interactions that take place within a social studies classroom, forming the context in which students learn to be citizens (Chin & Barber, 2010; Patterson et al., 2012). Teachers' beliefs can influence both the content and method of instruction in the classroom.

Influences on Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs are formed, broadly, by their previous personal and educational experiences (Villegas, 2007). Teachers are strongly influenced by their own cultural biographies, including their family origins and ethnicities, social class, experiences with gender and racial issues and inequalities, and other biographical characteristics (Castro, 2014; Fickel, 2000). The impact of teachers' own experiences as students also merits significant consideration. Lortie (1975) originally described the "apprenticeship-of-observation" (p. 65) that future teachers undergo in schools as they construct a set of beliefs about what constitutes teaching, learning, and knowledge. In the social studies, as explored above, knowledge has traditionally been classified as factual, memorized information, taught and learned through transmission-oriented lectures; this then often becomes pre-service teachers' tacit understanding of what it looks and feels like to teach social studies. Teachers teach the way they were taught (Lortie, 1975). Holt-Reynolds' (1992) study with pre-service teachers reflected this assertion. Her findings revealed that pre-service teachers who as students preferred more teacher-driven instructional strategies, like lecturing, were reluctant to implement more student-centered strategies in their own classrooms as teachers. Pre-service teacher field placements often reinforce prior experiences; even within teacher preparation programs that prioritize inquiry-based, student-centered learning, research suggests that the influence of a mentor teacher whose instructional practices are

incongruent with theory learned in coursework can "wash-out" the influence of the university preparation programs (Pryor, 2006, p. 101).

Teachers' personal and lived experiences are powerful influences on their beliefs about teaching, their students, and their subject matter. Pre-service teachers' teacher preparation programs, as well as in-service teachers' particular school and community contexts, can also to some extent influence teachers' beliefs. Yet, in each case, previous beliefs and schema filter the way that new information interacts and is integrated with existing knowledge (Fickel, 2000; Villegas, 2007). Fickel's (2000) case study of a high school social studies teacher offered a succinct example of the roots and impact of teacher beliefs on classroom practice. The teacher participant spoke of identifying with the problem-centered, inquiry-focused approach to teaching and learning philosophized by Dewey, stating his belief that the purpose of education was the development of "active, critically thoughtful citizens who are able to make informed choices" (p. 369-370). The teacher was explicitly aware of his own personal theories and indicated that these developed from a combination of his personal experiences as a Native American with Cherokee background as well as his own high school and later professional education experiences. These beliefs manifested directly in his classroom as he sought to establish relevance for his students and a classroom culture that supported multiple perspectives.

Teacher Beliefs about Citizenship

As curricular gatekeepers, teachers' own beliefs about citizenship influence the conceptions of citizenship that are conveyed in social studies classrooms. While research does highlight some teachers who hold more critical conceptions of citizenship, the prevailing trend continues to be a commitment to a personally responsible, passive orientation towards citizenship.

Passive Teacher Conceptions of Citizenship. As with the non-critical student conceptions of citizenship discussed above, research conducted with pre-service and in-service teachers suggests that many teachers hold similarly passive views of citizenship. The literature suggests that many teachers take a "depoliticized approach" to citizenship education, focusing on "creating harmony" and developing social skills (Sincer et al., 2019, p. 190).

For example, Martin's (2008, 2010) case study revealed that pre-service social studies teachers defined good citizenship as following laws and helping others. The pre-service teachers (PSTs) in the study favored personally responsible views of citizenship that centered around developing their future students' good moral character (Martin, 2008, 2010). Many of the pre-service teachers anticipated demonstrating "good citizenship" ten years in the future by helping others through their roles as teachers. Fry and O'Brien's (2015) and O'Brien and Smith's (2011) studies with pre-service elementary teachers suggested that the PSTs held simplistic perceptions of good citizenship, identifying with a personally responsible model of citizenship that primarily involved helping others and following laws. These PSTs cited concerns about classroom management and lack of content knowledge as reasons for subscribing to this vision of citizenship in their classrooms (Fry & O'Brien, 2015). Patterson et al.'s (2012) mixed methods study with practicing high school social studies teachers also revealed that the majority of the teachers described a personally-responsible orientation to citizenship. Very few of the teachers embraced a justice-oriented view of citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) that would have been more critical in nature.

There is some research that suggests that pre-service teachers may actively avoid teaching a justice-oriented conception of citizenship due to concerns about caregivers' feedback and even the teacher's job security (Marri et al., 2014). Teachers adopting more supposedly

"neutral" stances in their social studies classrooms due to concerns about negative feedback when teaching potentially controversial issues is a common theme in social studies research literature (e.g., Geller, 2020; Hess, 2005; Hess & McAvoy, 2009; Journell, 2016; Miller-Lane et al., 2006).

Scholars have also begun to explore the connections between teachers' beliefs about citizenship and their own political ideologies. For example, Castro's (2013) study with elementary and secondary pre-service social studies teachers suggested that the pre-service teachers' civic worldviews influenced their perceived importance of particular skills of citizenship. The participants in his study largely endorsed what Castro (2013) described as "conservative-values-based" (p. 228) definitions of citizenship, in which ideal citizens are individuals who contribute to the maintenance of their communities and exhibit character traits like pride, respect, morality, and honesty. The participants highlighted deliberation as the most important citizenship skill for its potential to promote unity and stronger community, shying away from other skills, like bargaining and activism, that were perceived to cause conflict. The pre-service teachers suggested that they would aim to foster values of cooperation and harmony in their classrooms, modeling values of cooperation and respect in the quest for unity.

Knowles and Castro (2019) built upon Castro's (2013) earlier work by exploring the implications of teachers' ideological beliefs on civic education. Whether explicit or implicit, all teachers hold ideological views related to citizenship. Knowles and Castro (2019) found that teachers who reported both stronger conservative and liberal civic education ideologies related to greater levels of system justification, or their personal support for the status quo. Both conservative civic education ideology, which promotes nationalism and patriotism, reproduces existing social patterns, and emphasizes customary knowledge, and liberal civic education

ideology, which highlights individualism, the importance of participation, critical thinking, and skills of cooperation and deliberation, were positively associated with teaching more passive forms of citizenship in schools.

Notably, only a critical civic education ideology was aligned with active forms of civic participation and negatively associated with system justification. A critical civic education ideology calls for structural change, social critique, and the challenging of social structures that limit the freedom of marginalized groups. While most of the teachers in the study identified with a liberal civic education ideology, the authors questioned whether liberal or conservative civic education ideologies are sufficient for social change (Knowles & Castro, 2019). Even teaching citizenship from a liberal ideological stance, which embraces multiculturalism and encourages tolerance, may serve only to maintain social structures and reproduce existing inequalities (Papastephanou, 2008). Considerations of a teacher's ideology were valuable for the current study when seeking to unpack a teacher's goals for critical citizenship education and the pedagogical and instructional choices she made in order to implement such a curriculum. The alignment between the teacher's beliefs about citizenship and her actual instruction in practice offered helpful insights into the pedagogy of critical citizenship education.

Critical Teacher Conceptions of Citizenship. While passive teacher conceptions of citizenship are predominant in schools, the extant literature does offer examples of teachers who hold and attempt to convey more critical conceptions of citizenship in their classrooms.

Black scholars in particular have done considerable conceptual work reframing American history through the lens of critical citizenship. These scholars and their allies have worked to highlight the ways that Black educators have sought to re-envision citizenship as responsive to the lived realities of marginalized communities of color, and to emphasize the active role that

Black educators have played in pursuing social change and a deeper vision of citizenship for Black Americans (Bair, 2008; King et al., 2010; Pinkney, 2016; Preston-Grimes, 2007; Tyson & Park, 2008).

Recent empirical work also highlights the critical orientations towards citizenship held in particular by many teachers of color. For example, in her recent work focused on African American social studies teachers Vickery (2017) highlighted her participants' perception that citizenship was "always meant to only mean White people" (p. 328). The teachers in this study reconceptualized citizenship to reflect their own experiences as African American women and to create "free spaces" in their own classrooms for their students who may otherwise be excluded from the traditional citizenship narrative (Vickery, 2017, p. 340). Rodríguez (2018) similarly explored how three Asian American elementary school teachers reconceptualized the meaning of citizenship in their classrooms using children's literature and counternarratives to disrupt traditional norms.

Other critical teacher beliefs about citizenship appear implicitly in the literature, indicated by teachers' broader commitment to critical pedagogy in their social studies classrooms. Magill and Salinas' (2019) work with three high school teachers with critical teaching dispositions revealed the teachers' commitment to social justice, willingness to disrupt normative narratives about communities of color and women, and attention to issues of power, particularly within the school context and between curriculum, teachers, students, and authentic social engagement. Kelly (2014) and Martell (2013) both conducted self-studies examining their own work as critical teachers in diverse high school classrooms, reflecting their beliefs about the need for a more culturally relevant social studies classroom and the marginalizing effects of historically narrow conceptions of citizenship. The two White eleventh grade United States history teachers

in Parkhouse's (2018) study of critical pedagogy both formed beliefs about citizenship that were rooted in their own personal lived experiences and involved naming and calling out race and racism. The teachers in this study provided a model for the tight connection between teacher beliefs about citizenship and instructional practices, as their beliefs about citizenship manifested by centering student experiences and current events, building a culture of communal trust, encouraging student questioning, and teaching specific lessons in critical media literacy.

Teacher Beliefs and Instructional Practices

Teacher beliefs influence both the content and pathways for learning within their classrooms. While citizenship education is an explicit purpose of social studies curriculum, educating citizens occurs across disciplines in formal and informal curricula. Within the classroom space, the teacher's role in making instructional decisions and establishing a classroom climate contributes to students' education about the nature and behaviors of citizenship (Obenchain et al., 2016).

M. Evans (2008) offered an overarching conceptual framework to illustrate the relationship between orientations towards citizenship education curricula and the types of learning experiences that are given priority in those classrooms. Transmission-oriented citizenship education is content-driven and reproduces existing societal problems through the top-down, teacher-centered instructional strategies such as mini-lectures, copying notes, and practice/drill skill activities. This type of orientation towards instruction as a simple conveyance of specific pieces of fact from teacher to student prohibits students' higher order thinking (Onosko, 1991). A transactional approach to citizenship education, in which knowledge is believed to be less fixed and more fluid, incorporates problem-solving skills, inquiry, essays and other performance assessments within a classroom that includes dialogue between and among

students and teachers. The transformative orientation towards citizenship education is associated with "reform" practices and whole-person learning. In a transformative citizenship education curriculum, teachers and students are actively involved in all phases of learning and the teacher acts more as facilitator than knowledge-giver. Student agency for social change within the political, historical, and social context are emphasized. Through his empirical studies, R. W. Evans (1990) delineated a similar link between a teacher's ideological orientation and what happens in their classrooms. He highlighted in particular the relationship between a teacher's conception of history and the purposes of history education with the teacher's ideology and pedagogical orientations.

Other more recent empirical work also affirms the impact of teacher beliefs on their instructional practices. Anderson et al.'s (1997) factor analysis of teachers' beliefs about citizenship education highlighted the relationship between teacher beliefs and decisions about content and instructional practices. Within the four citizenship perspectives revealed through data analysis, the critical thinkers emphasized the importance of questioning the status quo while the assimilationists encouraged patriotism and teaching traditional American values.

Instructional practice may also be linked with a teacher's political ideology by virtue of their beliefs about citizenship. The critical thinker teachers in Anderson et al.'s (1997) analysis were much more likely to self-identify as politically liberal, while the assimilationist teachers were much more likely to self-identify as politically conservative. Knowles (2018) pursued this ideological thread further to specifically link teachers' civic education ideology and their self-reported instructional practices. Results of the study revealed a positive association between conservative civic ideology and teacher-text instruction, while critical civic education ideology was positively correlated with collaborative and research-based instruction. Teachers who self-

identify as ideologically liberal may also be more likely than ideologically conservative teachers to cultivate an open classroom climate (Gainous & Martens, 2016). These classroom contexts again offer illuminating considerations about the potential relationships between teacher beliefs and instructional practices. It seems likely that an open classroom climate in which questions are encouraged and collaborative- and research-driven student engagement is expected may be more immediately conducive to the implementation of critical citizenship education than would teacher- and textbook-centered instruction and a more closed classroom climate.

Teachers' instructional practices in the social studies classroom affect how students learn about and experience citizenship. Teachers committed to more critical visions of social studies and citizenship education tend to teach skills necessary for social change, including utilizing multiple perspectives (e.g., Dilworth, 2004), student engagement in discussions (e.g., Marri, 2005), fostering a culture of questioning (e.g., Parkhouse, 2018; Salinas & Castro, 2010), and helping students realize their individual and collective agency related to political and social issues (e.g., Tyson, 2002). Gradwell's (2010) case study of a middle school teacher who regularly and ambitiously used primary sources in pursuit of preparing her students for active and informed participation revealed that the teacher's practices were a direct result of her belief that to function in a pluralistic society, students must be exposed to pluralistic history. Teachers have also leveraged the official school curriculum as a means of facilitating an investigation into what is considered "official" and who decides it to be so (e.g., Castro, 2014; Cho, 2018; Magill & Salinas, 2019; Salinas & Castro, 2010).

The means and depth by which teachers engage students in these learning experiences is also relevant. For example, Swalwell's (2013) exploration of social justice pedagogy with privileged students suggested that while the focus teachers were committed to exposing students

to multiple perspectives and providing opportunities for participation and community-based action, students reported various levels of understanding the systemic and contextual nature of oppression. The students who expressed orientations that Swalwell (2013) identified as "meritocrats" or "benevolent benefactors" seemed to hold individualized and idiosyncratic ideas about injustice, that injustice arises from a lack of personal responsibility or due to tragic misfortune. The teachers in these cases did not always teach about or emphasize the influence of deeper institutional structures or systems or one's own subjectivity.

These concerns about the nature of instruction are related to broader considerations about the frequent misalignment between teachers' stated beliefs or curricular goals and their enacted curriculum and instructional practices. Existing literature cautions that teachers' stated orientations towards citizenship may not always be reflected in their teaching practices (e.g., Blevins et al., 2020; R. W. Evans, 1990). While it is clear that teacher beliefs about citizenship are guided by their own political ideology and have a significant impact on their instructional practices, the strength and alignment of those beliefs and practices remain murky and not generalizable. Additional research studies that explore the interaction between teacher beliefs about citizenship and instructional practices are warranted.

Theoretical Framework

Critical orientations towards citizenship like those described by Parker (1996), Banks (2008), Westheimer and Kahne (2004), and Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) overlap with one another and feature some elements of critical pedagogy, but the framework offered by Johnson and Morris (2010) synthesizes this literature to align citizenship knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions specifically with the foundational elements of critical pedagogy. In this section, I provide a brief overview of critical pedagogy, describe its centrality to critical

citizenship education, and conclude with the framework for critical citizenship education as created by Johnson and Morris (2010).

Critical Pedagogy

With roots in the critical theories of the Frankfurt School scholars, critical pedagogy is the application of critical theory to schools and education (Freire, 1970/2018; Giroux, 1980; Kincheloe, 2008a; McLaren, 2016). Critical theorists raise questions about assumptions, implications, consequences, benefactors, and who benefits from particular systems, institutions, and situations (Cornbleth, 2017), recognizing that knowledge and social interaction are mediated by power relations in a vastly unequal society (Kincheloe et al., 2011). Schools are social institutions, designed for a public purpose, and are therefore "agencies of socialization" (Giroux, 1980, p. 333) that often echo the broader societal power structures by privileging certain ideas and values within the classroom (Apple, 2008). Thus, critical pedagogues are concerned with the central role of power and politics in how schools work both within schools' historical context and as part of the contemporary social and political fabric of society (McLaren, 2016). Schooling is a form of "cultural politics" that legitimates and prepares students for certain forms of social life – ones that reproduce social, political, and economic inequalities (McLaren, 2016, p. 123). Critical pedagogy, by contrast, is grounded in a vision of social and educational justice and its adherents are committed to resisting oppression and the harmful effects of dominant powers in education (Kincheloe, 2008b).

Proponents of critical pedagogy act upon the belief that education is inherently political (Kincheloe, 2008b). The supposed neutrality of traditional education is a widely held belief by many educators, politicians, and other educational stakeholders, contending that activities that "strengthen or maintain the status quo are neutral or at least nonpolitical, and activities that

critique or challenge the status quo are 'political' and many times inappropriate" (Ross, 2000, p. 43). This assumption is particularly salient in the social studies, where teachers are often encouraged to "stick to the facts" and stay neutral (Ross, 2000, p. 43) as if there is some unified notion of truth that should be held up and maintained through education (Westheimer, 2011). However, no educational curriculum is neutral (Shor, 1992). Education that tries to be neutral by adhering to traditionally taught values or facts simply serves to support society's dominant ideology (Freire, 1985).

Kincheloe (2008a) described this supposition of neutrality as the "Great Denial" (p. 10) of the political dimension of education. The curriculum and choice of subject matter "is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms … it is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some group's vision of legitimate knowledge" (Apple, 1993, p. 222). The implications for history and citizenship education here seem clear. Decisions about whose history or literature is taught, from whose perspective the past and present are examined, and which themes are emphasized in the process of teaching and learning are all political – not neutral – choices (Shor, 1992). A social studies curriculum that demands the transference of "a body of established facts about the great men and great events of American history" is teaching a political lesson and upholding the status quo (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 167). Critical pedagogy seems therefore inherently at odds with the traditional and passive conceptions of citizenship education discussed at the beginning of this chapter. A critical orientation towards citizenship is required instead.

Critical Pedagogy and Citizenship Education. In his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Brazilian critical theorist Freire (1970/2018) described the traditional conception of education as the "banking model" in which knowledge is a gift given to students by the teacher.

In this compliance-centric view of education, students are passive receptacles, "receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" of knowledge bestowed upon them by their teachers (Freire, 1970/2018, p. 72). This educational training ensures that students live passively, as objects rather than subjects in their own lives (Freire, 1970/2018), implicitly accepting the norms and expectations created from a standpoint of White supremacy (hooks, 1994). The official school curriculum has been designed to maintain a narrative of White supremacy (Ladson-Billings, 1998), and schools consistently affirm and reward students who exhibit White, middle-class speech and habits of citizenship (McLaren, 2016; Reay, 2008; Schutz, 2008; Urrieta, 2004). In social studies in particular there is a long history of rote, fact- and memorization-based pedagogy and a plethora of transmission-based approaches by which students come to understand citizenship as a set of passive and obedient behaviors (Castro, 2013; Leahey, 2014).

Critical pedagogy and critical citizenship education, by contrast, require the adoption of a problem-posing model for education, which involves the individual and collective striving for emergence of critical consciousness, or *conscientization* (Freire, 1970/2018). Rather than memorizing facts and values that are given to them by teachers, students who are engaged in a curriculum shaped by critical pedagogy are empowered to ask questions, make meaning, and act upon reflection, or *praxis* (Freire, 1970/2018; Shor, 1992). Adherents to a critical pedagogy would thus suggest that education should be used to enable students' habits of questioning, aiding the development of their critical knowledge about school and society (Shor, 1992). Ability to question and critical interrogation of societal structures and systems are crucial elements of critical citizenship education (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Rather than unreservedly accepting the narratives of exceptionalism (Salinas, 2006) or America as "imperfect but best" (Cornbleth,

1998, p. 628), critical citizenship education involves calling attention to the "deficiency, lack of, or even the existence of democracy" (Knowles, 2018, p. 78).

In this new problem-posing model for education, the relationship between teacher and student is no longer a one-way gifting of knowledge. Instead, students and teachers both take on the role of teacher and student, each capable of producing their own knowledge (Freire, 1970/2018). Teachers who engage in citizenship education through the lens of critical pedagogy construct with their students a vision of society and citizenship that is dynamic and fluid and believe that students themselves are capable of playing a role in the transformation of society (Moore et al., 2011). The hopeful perspective required here is crucial, as students may come to internalize feelings of cynicism or helplessness when beginning to recognize injustices and oppression present in the systems and institutions around them (Schmidt, 2008). Students must be empowered to believe that the way society has been constructed is contestable and can be reconstructed by human agency (Kincheloe, 2008a). From this perspective, both democracy and citizenship are processes, ongoing ways of living, rather than fixed outcomes or endpoints (Lister, 1997; Parker, 1996).

Giroux (2020) highlighted the close connections between critical pedagogy and critical citizenship education, going so far as to claim that at its most ambitious, the project of critical pedagogy requires, simultaneously, the cultivation of critical citizens. If the goal of critical pedagogy is to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and courage to challenge common assumptions and hold authority accountable while struggling for a more socially just world, then these efforts must be rooted in the cultivation of critical citizens who are prepared for and capable of participating and governing in a democracy. Therefore, this project must be tied to the

cultivation of critical citizens. Giroux (2020) succinctly tied together the projects of critical pedagogy and critical citizenship:

> Educating young people in the spirit of a critical democracy by providing them with the knowledge, passion, civic capacities, and social responsibility necessary to address the problems facing the nation and the globe means challenging those modes of schooling and pedagogy designed largely to promote economic gain, create consuming subjects, and substitute training for critical thinking and analysis. (p. 11)

Ross and Vinson (2014) underscored the difficulty of this project, describing this type of critical citizenship as "dangerous citizenship" because it requires that "people, as individuals and collectively, take on actions and behaviors that bring with them certain necessary dangers" and go beyond the traditional means of participation such as voting (p. 78). These actions are dangerous, the authors contended, because they are threatening to people and institutions who uphold the status quo, dominant discourses, and existing social and political hierarchies. Despite the difficulty, they posited that citizenship in today's world requires a "praxis-inspired" mindset of opposition and resistance, with the intention of making society more equitable and just through enlightened political participation (Ross & Vinson, 2014, p. 78).

The framework for critical citizenship education developed by Johnson and Morris (2010) and described in the next section was an effort to specifically link the primary elements of critical pedagogy with tangible descriptions and indicators of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that critical citizens might demonstrate.

Framework for Critical Citizenship Education

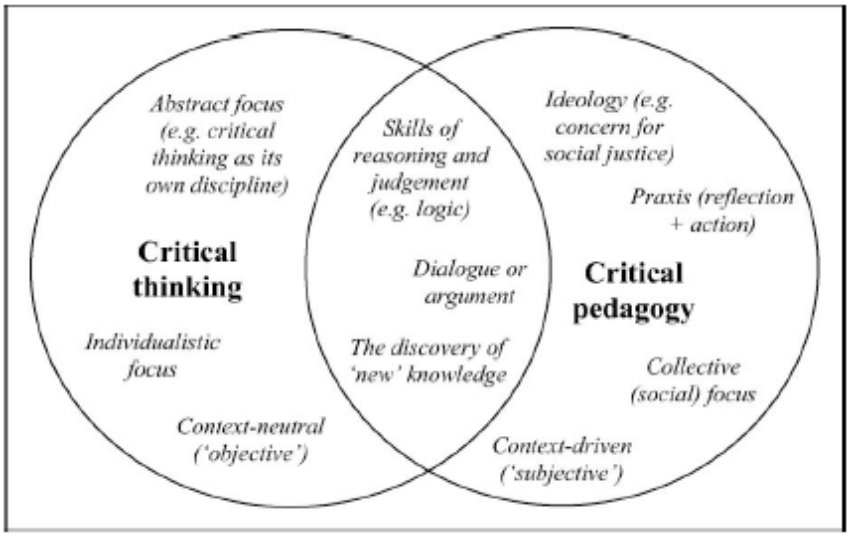
The framework for critical citizenship education described here differs from previous proposals and frameworks described elsewhere in this chapter because of the intentional

alignment of critical citizenship with critical pedagogy. Other models may include elements of critical pedagogy, but Johnson and Morris' (2010) framework represents a purposeful synthesis of critical thinking, critical pedagogy, and citizenship education to suggest the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions of a person who maintains a critical orientation towards citizenship.

Noting the ambiguity of the meaning of the word "critical" in educational contexts, Johnson and Morris (2010) first reviewed the use of the terms "critical thinking" and "critical pedagogy" within the literature, identifying the fundamental elements of each. While both fields require skills of reasoning, the use of dialogue or argument, and discovering "new" knowledge, the authors identified four elements that distinguish critical pedagogy from the more neutral or objective connotation of critical thinking (Burbules & Berk, 1999): ideological/political, collective/social focus, context-driven/subjective, and praxis (reflection plus action). See Figure 1 for a display of the intersections between critical thinking and critical pedagogy, as described by Johnson and Morris (2010).

Figure 1

Intersections Between Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy



Note. As described by Johnson & Morris (2010, p. 80).

The *ideological/political* element refers to the theories of power, oppression, and injustice that appear in critical pedagogy literature. This element significantly distinguishes critical pedagogy from critical thinking, which is purported by many to be free of politics and intended to replace false or unsystematic thinking with more structured and reliable procedures for inquiry (Burbules & Berk, 1999). This element also inherently refutes the myth of the "neutrality" of education.

Collective/social focus brings to mind Freire's (1970/2018) emphasis on dialogue and discourse, which he believed to be essential for developing mutual trust and partnership between teachers and students. Promoting a collective element to learning and democracy counteracts the common individualistic and competitive approach to learning, solidifying the importance of a community of inquiry and the need to consider concerns larger than just one individual.

Emphasis on *subjectivity and context* again refutes the supposed neutrality and context-free nature of critical thinking (Burbules & Berk, 1999), accepting instead the presence and importance of feelings, emotions, and morals within education. Knowledge and understanding of one's own space and identity within the existing systems of power, and student understanding of themselves and their positioning in society are included here (Papastephanou, 2008).

Finally, *praxis* is necessary for real change to occur. Reflection without action is simply words, and action without reflection works to maintain the status quo within an unjust system. Parker (2003) provided an example of action without reflection in the dangerous trajectory of the highly active Ku Klux Klan. This type of unenlightened action undermines democratic ideals; thus, both authentic reflection and meaningful action are necessary for true praxis. This cycle of action and reflection must also be accompanied by hope, linking critique and possibility to enable students to develop and realize any sense of agency (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986).

Johnson and Morris (2010) utilized Cogan et al.'s (2002) definition of citizenship education as the formation of "the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions of citizens" (p. 4) to layer the elements of critical pedagogy with curricular language from more critical orientations towards citizenship education, like the justice-oriented (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) and transformative (Banks, 2008) visions of citizenship outlined above. The terms can represent both individual attributes or skills as well as the culture of a particular educational context. The result of this process of analysis is outlined in Figure 2.

It may be significant that Johnson and Morris are faculty at an English university operating under an English understanding of citizenship. Certainly, the geographic and political history of England and its role within the European Union may offer an explanation for a more expansive exploration of diverse cultures and languages than has been the case in the United States. Citizenship education also became mandatory in all English secondary schools in 2002 in an attempt to increase civic engagement (Whiteley, 2014). Johnson and Morris (2010) also described a citizenship education that is often now "expected to achieve a far more complex set of purposes" (p. 77) than its previous focus on building common national identity and developing patriotism. They posited that citizenship education now often incorporates questions of multiculturalism, supranational and global citizenship, tolerance, and human rights. Based on literature reviewed above, the evolution of citizenship in this way does not yet seem to have taken root in the United States social studies curriculum.

Figure 2

Framework for Critical Citizenship Education

	POLITICS/ ideology	SOCIAL/ collective	SELF/subjectivity	PRAXIS/ engagement
Knowledge	Knowledge and understanding of histories, societies, systems, oppressions and injustices, power structures and macrostructural relationships	Knowledge of interconnections between culture, power and transformation; non-mainstream writings and ideas in addition to dominant discourses	Knowledge of own position, cultures and context; sense of identity	Knowledge of how collectively to effect systematic change; how knowledge itself is power; how behaviour influences society and injustice
Skills	Skills of critical and structural social analysis; capacity to politicise notions of culture, knowledge and power; capacity to investigate deeper causalities	Skills in dialogue, cooperation and interaction; skills in critical interpretation of others' viewpoints; capacity to think holistically	Capacity to reflect critically on one's 'status' within communities and society; independent critical thinking; speaking with one's own voice	Skills of critical thinking and active participation; skills in acting collectively to challenge the status quo; ability to imagine a better world
Values	Commitment to values against injustice and oppression	Inclusive dialogical relationship with others' identities and values	Concern for social justice and consideration of self-worth	Informed, responsible and ethical action and reflection
Dispositions	Actively questioning; critical interest in society and public affairs; seeks out and acts against injustice and oppression	Socially aware; cooperative; responsible towards self and others; willing to learn with others	Critical perspective; autonomous; responsible in thought, emotion and action; forward-thinking; in touch with reality	Commitment and motivation to change society; civic courage; responsibility for decisions and actions

Note. As described by Johnson & Morris (2010, p. 90).

Importantly, the authors concede that the language in their framework is "arguably conventional rather than radical" (Johnson & Morris, 2010, p. 87) and the domains of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions broadly reflect the categories reflected in England's National Curriculum documents. However, this may prove beneficial for the application of this

framework to American settings. Given social studies teachers' oft-noted concerns about remaining politically "neutral" in their classrooms (e.g., Geller, 2020; Hess, 2005; Hess & McAvoy, 2009; Journell, 2016; Miller-Lane et al., 2006) as well as the pressure of covering material in pursuit of success on standardized tests (e.g., Loewen, 2010; Parker, 2015), it may be that this more conventional language provides greater opportunity for revealing "spaces" (Johnson & Morris, 2010, p. 78) for critical pedagogy within existing programs and curricula.

In a later comparative analysis of English and French citizenship curricula, Johnson and Morris (2012) found that the official national curricula did offer such "spaces." Their analysis of curricular documents for students ages 11-14 in both countries revealed that elements of critical citizenship existed in each program and that opportunities for critical citizenship education existed even when not stated explicitly in the documents. The authors noted in particular that the connection between the stated curriculum and the actual in-person teacher implementation of this curriculum offered significant potential for teachers and students to work towards a more critical form of citizenship education. In their original article, Johnson and Morris (2010) highlighted the potential for future research to utilize the proposed framework to explore teachers' and students' experiences with critical citizenship education, as well as to represent the existence or absence of elements of critical citizenship within various levels of curriculum and associated materials. The present study offered this opportunity to explore the practical realities of a teacher's implementation of a critical citizenship education curriculum.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature related to citizenship education and teacher beliefs and outlined the theoretical framework guiding the present study. Teachers' beliefs and own orientations towards citizenship influence the conceptions of citizenship and

instructional practices that are emphasized in their classrooms. In contrast to the traditional and transmission-based approaches to citizenship education that predominate in social studies classrooms, the framework for critical citizenship education described here is rooted in critical pedagogy and concerned with student questioning, reflection, agency, and action. In the next chapter, I will outline my methodological approach to exploring critical citizenship education in a middle school social studies classroom setting.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

This qualitative case study explored teacher enactment of and student response to a critical citizenship curriculum in a middle school history classroom. Using data collected from classroom observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, and classroom artifacts, I sought to answer one primary research question and two sub-questions:

1. How does a self-identified critical social studies teacher enact critical citizenship education in an eighth grade United States history classroom?
    a. How do this teacher's beliefs about citizenship education influence her instructional decision-making?
    b. How do students respond to critical citizenship education in this teacher's eighth grade United States history classroom?

The results of this study offer new understandings about the interplay of teacher beliefs, teacher decision-making, and student responses in a middle school social studies class. With an aim toward improving social studies education, this study offers possibilities for critical citizenship education in middle school social studies.

Methodological Approach and Rationale

Qualitative Research

For this study I employed an instrumental case study approach to qualitative research (Stake, 1995). Qualitative research methodologies are rooted in a researcher's interest in understanding how people interpret their experiences within the context of the world around them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), thus making qualitative research both situated and naturalistic

(Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017). Human experiences do not happen in isolation; human behavior is affected by context. Qualitative researchers enter the field and conduct research in the settings in which events, phenomena, and processes are naturally happening, such as classrooms or community sites. Researchers do not manipulate or control variables in the field, but instead engage in more discovery-oriented research to observe the natural processes unfolding organically (Guba, 1978; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). With a focus on situated meaning-making and understanding how people make sense of their lives and the world around them, qualitative research asks "why" or "how" questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). These types of qualitative questions seek to uncover meaning about complex, situated social phenomena by exploring them relatively holistically and in context through mostly inductive methods of analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017).

A qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study because qualitative researchers, above all else, are interested in "understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). The focus of qualitative research is on process, meaning, and understanding, acknowledging the primacy of context (Merriam, 2009). Context was particularly salient in this case as the complex relationships among educational factors like teachers, students, curricula, and school settings (Preissle-Goetz & LeCompte, 1991) were essential to understanding critical citizenship education in practice. The way citizenship is conveyed in social studies classrooms is already a complicated issue and the very definition of good citizenship is contested (Lister, 1997). Qualitative inquiry was most appropriate for digging into these complex questions as qualitative perspectives challenge the existence of correct absolutes, acknowledging the relativity of

knowledge and that each individual may experience their reality and lived experiences slightly differently (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017; Preissle-Goetz & LeCompte, 1991).

Case Study Approach

The particular approach to qualitative research that I employed was an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), which is "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Case study research explores a "real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p . 96).

Case studies have several defining features. Case studies revolve around a specific case, described and analyzed in great detail that is bounded in space and time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Merriam (2009), case studies have three defining characteristics: they are "particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic" (p. 43). The case itself, in all of its specificity, is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon being studied and is often an appropriate design when considering practical problems due to the thick and highly descriptive detail that must be produced. Merriam (2009) has contended that case studies help extend the reader's own understanding of the studied phenomenon based on their own experiences and interpretation of meaning.

The real strength of case study research is the particularization (Stake, 1995), so a case study approach is appropriate when a researcher's questions seek to explore some process or phenomenon within the specific context in which it takes place (Merriam, 1998). The focus is on gaining an understanding of the situation and the ways in which the people involved make meaning of it. The purpose of a case study inquiry is understanding and the research emphasis is on interpretation, rather than intervention (Stake, 1995), so a case study requires holistic

description and explanation (Merriam, 1998). The research questions in this study therefore necessitated a case study methodological choice.

The case in this study was bounded by both time and space. It focused on the teacher participant's two classes of mostly White students in her eighth-grade U.S. history course, called *Humanities*. The teacher participant, Sally Bailey, a Black woman, co-taught the course with a White co-teacher, Anne Matthews. Sally purposefully employed a lens of critical citizenship education in her teaching. The content of the course curriculum lent itself to studying citizenship education due to the interconnected nature of history and citizenship education, explored at length in the previous chapter.

A case study design is particularly suited to situations in which the aim is to understand the interaction of significant factors that are characteristic of the phenomenon, as it was in this instance (Merriam, 1998). The factors influencing a teacher's decision to implement a critical citizenship education curriculum, and the ways in which this type of curriculum was enacted by a teacher and responded to by her students could not be detached from the classroom and school context within which this teaching and learning took place. The dearth of critical citizenship-specific literature at the middle school level and in the history class setting meant that a detailed, thorough, and thickly described exploration of this case was needed.

Stake (1995) has delineated three categories of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. While recognizing that there is some overlap between intrinsic and instrumental case studies and there may be difficulty in categorizing cases as one or the other (Grandy, 2010), I approached the current study with the perspective that this particular case was instrumental. In an instrumental case study, the particular case is used as a means of developing deeper insight into a broader issue or theory (Crowe et al., 2011). In this case, the eighth grade history classroom in

which I conducted the research served as a means of understanding more about the attributes of critical citizenship education, how a teacher arrives at the decision to engage in such pedagogy, and how critical citizenship education might look in practice in a middle school classroom. An exploration of this specific case still broadened our understanding of critical citizenship education through an understanding of this specific example of the case at hand (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011).

Epistemological Assumptions. One's particular approach to case study is influenced by the theoretical assumptions underlying a research agenda and worldview. My conception of the process and outcomes of case study research aligns most closely with the constructivist approach (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). This epistemological orientation informs my worldview and attitude towards qualitative research more generally. I believe that each individual experiences and understands the world in different ways and that knowledge is constructed by people's experiences by themselves and with others in the world. The goal of case study research, then, is to attempt to parse out participants' differing perspectives and rely on their voices to inform our understanding of the phenomenon – in this case, critical citizenship education.

Context and Participants

History teacher Sally Bailey was the primary participant in this study. The particular site was selected due to its perceived atmosphere of encouraging questioning and criticality while also experiencing a change in the demographics of the student population over the last few years.

Recruitment and Selection

Teacher Recruitment and Selection. I used purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) to identify and recruit one critical eighth-grade social studies teacher. I have previously taught and worked with social studies teachers as well as organizational directors and consultants in the area

who do work in the area of hard history, and through their networks they recommended eighth-grade teachers who engaged in this type of critical work. Once suggested, I emailed those recommended teachers to introduce myself and set up brief meetings with each teacher to learn more about their teaching philosophies and whether they qualified as critical citizenship educators.

To be eligible to participate in the study, the teacher participant had to meet the following selection criteria: be an eighth-grade social studies teacher in a public school, identify as a critical citizenship educator, and voluntarily consent to participate in the study. These selection criteria were included in the consent form and reviewed orally with potential participants. The description I included in the IRB materials and consent forms to define a critical citizenship educator was one who "views students as creators of knowledge, encourages students to question the status quo, recognizes injustice of society, and advocates for students to take individual and/or collective action towards a more just society." After one teacher demonstrated that she met the study requirements and was interested in participating in the study, I narrowed my focus to this one teacher and her school site. I emailed administrators at the potential research site (see Appendix D) using publicly-available email addresses to explain the study and ensure consent for access to the research site.

Only one teacher participant was selected for the study so as to create ample space for a deep, detailed, rich understanding of this particular case. Selected with purpose, the teacher participant and her classroom constitute an information-rich case (Patton, 2015) for learning about the teacher beliefs and decision-making processes involved in implementing a curriculum of critical citizenship education. Eisner (1998) noted the potential power of such a case when he commented that "a vivid portrait of excellent teaching … can become a prototype that can be

used in the education of teachers or for the appraisal of teaching" (p. 199). Single case studies with one focus participant have been previously conducted in the social studies for the purpose of examining both novice and experienced high school teachers' personal theories, beliefs, and worldviews and their impact on the teacher's instructional decision-making (e.g., Cornett, 1990; Fickel, 2000; Phillips, 2009; Van Hover & Yeager, 2007); demonstrating wise social studies practice in a middle school history classroom (Webeck et al., 2005); creating a "portrait of practice" of a social studies university methods professor (Slekar, 2006, p. 241); and understanding a single student's participation in a discussion of controversial issues in which he held an opposing position to every other student in his class (Beck, 2019). The researchers in each of these case studies engaged one focus participant and used a variety of data sources to deeply examine particular aspects of the teacher's or student's classroom, exploring factors that influenced teacher or student decision-making and digging deeply into the context in which these cases occurred. It is clear that we can gain a myriad of crucial insights from thoughtfully exploring and coming to understand the complexities of one teacher in one classroom, as was the case in this study. I sought to find an eighth-grade teacher participant in particular in hopes of focusing on a teaching context with younger students.

Sally Bailey (pseudonym) is a Black woman and veteran middle school teacher with twenty years of teaching experience. An undergraduate history major, she began her teaching career overseas in Germany as a high school language arts and history teacher. Once she returned to the United States, she spent time as a reading specialist and then as an eighth-grade teacher before pursuing a Master's degree in English. After graduation, she moved to the current state and taught middle school history and language arts courses at a private school in the capital city for eight years before coming to Community School. Currently in her fourth year at Community

School, Sally teaches eighth-grade humanities along with her co-teacher, Anne Matthews (pseudonym), who also has about twenty years of teaching experience. Sally and Anne have taught together as humanities co-teachers for all four years of Sally's tenure at Community School.

Student Recruitment and Selection. Once I had been granted access to Sally's classroom, I sought to recruit student participants to participate in this study as well. I recruited students through a verbal invitation before class began as well as a written recruitment script for parents that was sent home in the eighth grade's weekly blog (see Appendix E). All students enrolled in either section of eighth-grade humanities class were invited to participate in the study. While several more parents indicated interest in their child's participation, only five students assented to participate in the study. Of those five potential students, only four students agreed to participate in interviews and attended scheduled interview times. All four of these students were White girls. See Table 1 for a description of teacher and student study participants. Anne Matthews consented to participate in the study and is included in Table 1 for reference, although the focus of this study was on Sally Bailey and her role as the history teacher.

Table 1

Participant Descriptions

Name	Role	Gender	Race	Years at Community School
Sally Bailey	Humanities Teacher	Female	Black	Four
Anne Matthews	Humanities Teacher	Female	White	Five
Lacy	Student	Female	White	Three (6^{th} grade+)
Emilia	Student	Female	White	Seven (2^{nd} grade+)
Eliza	Student	Female	White	Seven (2^{nd} grade+)
Nate	Student	Female	White	Three (6^{th} grade+)

Note. All participants are identified using pseudonyms for confidentiality.

Site Selection

The study took place at Community School (pseudonym), a public charter school in a large southeastern capital city that serves approximately 450 students in grades K through eight. The elementary and middle grades are housed in separate campus locations around the downtown area and students are admitted to the school via a lottery system. The school has approximately 35 teachers, and each middle school cohort has between 70 and 80 students. There were 74 total students enrolled in the two eighth-grade humanities classes during the period in which this study took place.

Community School was founded in 1997 with a focus on experiential and project-based learning, both of which remain fundamental pillars of the school today. The school's educational approach is built around eight core values: innovation, social empowerment, craftsmanship, connections to nature, relationships, curiosity, responsibility, and reflection. The school's location in the heart of the city downtown supports the emphasis on experiential learning and community connection by making it easier for teachers to facilitate regular field experiences in the surrounding community. In support of Community School's attempts to foster an equitable and engaged learning environment in which students consider themselves to be equal partners in the learning process, teachers are addressed by their first names. Students call Sally by her first name, rather than "Ms. Bailey."

The eighth-grade team at Community School is composed of four primary content teachers – two math, two humanities – in addition to special education professionals and support staff. A core pillar of the school's educational program is co-teaching. Content teachers regularly co-teach as equal partners. The presence of two teachers per classroom means that class sizes are

larger; the 74 students in humanities were split between just two sections, both of which were co-taught by Sally and her co-teacher Anne.

All four teachers on the eighth-grade team are responsible for teaching science, as there is no specific science teacher. Science content is taught mostly during an interdisciplinary course called *Expedition*, which students attend daily and is taught by a combination of all four core content teachers. The school operates on a trimester schedule, and each trimester is centered on a particular theme that relates to the science standards. The first trimester, during which this study took place, was focused on water and related issues of human rights and access to clean water. Given the integrated nature of the grade level, the eighth-grade teachers attempt to integrate references to issues related to the trimester theme and science standard when applicable or appropriate in their other content classes.

The eighth grade humanities class, co-taught by Sally and Anne, is structured to serve as a combination of English language arts and United States history. Within the one-hour class periods, ELA and social studies time are generally taught separately. For example, the class might begin with a review of root words, but the rest of the lesson might be devoted to analyzing primary sources related to the early Jamestown settlement. Anne, a licensed ELA and English teacher, leads the ELA-dominant sections of the lesson, and Sally, a licensed social studies teacher, leads the history-dominant sections of the lesson. As equal teaching partners, both Sally and Anne contribute to discussions and to the lesson even when the other teacher is leading the lesson segment. This study focuses primarily on Sally's implementation of the history curriculum. Despite the grade level alignment to science standards, social studies instruction in humanities is based around the state's social studies standards. Students at Community School take end-of-grade standardized proficiency exams at a variety of grades. Exam scores are

reported and the school is included in the state school report card system, so even though the school is a charter school there are still accountability requirements.

Community School had a predominantly White and middle-class student body in the past, but in recent years has seen a slow increase in diversity of its school population. The school's student population had consistently hovered around 83% White but decreased to 75% White in the 2018-2019 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). Data for the current school year are not yet available. The school has specific and stated goals of increasing racial and economic diversity in the next several years to be more representative of the demographics of the county in which the school resides, which was approximately 60% White, 20% Black or African American, and 10% Hispanic or Latino as of 2018 (Data USA, n.d.). To address these goals, the school adopted a weighted lottery in which economically disadvantaged students receive priority for selection. In general, however, socioeconomic status of students and their families remains generally middle and upper-middle class. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), just 17 students in K-8 were eligible for free or reduced lunch in the 2018-2019 school year.

Data Collection

I collected four types of data at the research site: classroom observation field notes, teacher interviews, student interviews, and classroom artifacts including all instructional materials. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all Community School instruction was conducted virtually during the study period, so all classes and interviews took place using Zoom and all classroom artifacts and materials were shared digitally using Google platforms. I began data collection on the very first day of the school year and remained immersed in the research site for

almost seven weeks until the school's fall break. See Table 2 for an illustration of the data collection timeline.

Table 2

Data Collection Timeline

Data Source	Dates Collected	Relevant Protocols
Teacher Interviews		
Semi-Structured Interviews (60 mins)	9/2/20 & 10/21/20	See Appendix B
Weekly Informal Interviews (10-25 mins)	8/28/20 9/4/20 9/11/20 9/18/20 9/25/20 10/2/20 10/16/20	
Informal Follow-Up Interview (30 mins)	12/4/20	
Classroom Observations	Week 1: 8/19/20-8/21/20 Week 2: 8/24/20-8/28/20 Week 3: 8/31/20-9/4/20 Week 4: 9/8/20-9/11/20 Week 5: 9/14/20-9/18/20 Week 6: 9/21/20-9/25/20 Week 7: 9/29/20-10/2/20 Beyond: 10/12/20; 10/19/20-10/21/20	See Appendix A
Written Teacher Journals (daily)	Week 1: 8/31/20-9/4/20 Week 2: 9/8/20-9/11/20 Week 3: 9/14/20-9/18/20 Week 4: 9/21/20-9/25/20 Week 5: 9/29/20-10/2/20 Week 6: 10/12/20-10/16/20	
Semi-Structured Student Interviews (30-45 mins)		See Appendix C
Lacy	9/21/20 & 10/19/20	
Emilia	9/22/20 & 10/12/20	
Eliza	9/25/20 & 10/12/20	
Nate	10/15/20 & 10/21/20	

Sally and Anne used a chronological approach to teaching U.S. history. During the first week of observation, the teachers reviewed summer assignments related to the Sudanese Civil War. This topic was both a bridge from the seventh-grade curriculum, focused on world history, and an entry point for the eighth grade's initial focus on water as the science theme. Following

the summer assignment review, the observation period included the history of Native Americans prior to European contact and continued through the Declaration of Independence and Revolutionary War.

Observations

Sally and her co-teacher Anne taught two sections of the eighth-grade humanities course, which were scheduled back-to-back and lasted for one hour each. I observed both sections of the humanities class for four days per week to immerse myself in the research site. My own instructional duties one day per week prevented me from observing on Thursdays throughout the duration of the data collection period. I obtained all instructional materials for the days I was not present in class. On two of the Thursdays I missed, the teachers recorded the class lecture in both classes for their own students who missed class and included the video lecture in the day's instructional materials. I was able to watch a recorded video of both class sessions. Sally also kept a daily teacher journal throughout the study period in which she made note of her thoughts and reactions during the lesson, including the days I was not physically present in the virtual classroom.

Classroom observations lasted for six and a half consecutive weeks, from the first day of school in mid-August until the school's week-long fall break in early October. I observed the day immediately following fall break, October 12, to observe Sally's lesson about Columbus Day, in addition to three additional class days the following week during which students learned about the Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson.

Beginning the school year along with the teacher and students led to a more "quiet entry" into the field (Stake, 1995, p. 59) and also offered access to the habits, tone, and classroom norms established during the first days of the year. I made every effort to interact with the

teacher and her students in as natural, nonthreatening, and unobtrusive a manner as possible to not only build trust between myself and the participants but also to reduce as much as possible the effect of my own presence in the virtual classroom (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I kept my camera on during observations. I took field notes during each class period, focusing on student and teacher interactions, dialogue, and the presentation and discussion of course material. Using Johnson and Morris's (2010) framework for critical citizenship education as a guide for classroom observations, I focused on classroom interactions that reflect the major categories delineated in that framework: the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that are reflective of the main elements of critical pedagogy, a focus on the political/ideological, the need for collective efforts, understanding of the self, and the reflection and action cycle termed "praxis." See Appendix A for observation protocol.

In addition to field notes, I wrote daily memos after each class period summarizing my observations from the lesson and any initial wonderings or reflections. Each week, I wrote a longer, weekly analytic memo in which I documented my reflections, thought processes, and emerging synthesis of the data (Miles et al., 2020).

Teacher Interviews

I conducted two in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participating teacher, one at the start and one at the end of the observation period. These interviews were aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework. In addition, I conducted an informal, unstructured interview with the teacher at the end of each week to briefly discuss her pedagogical decisions and decision-making processes during that week. I also conducted one follow-up interview with the teacher participant in December to specifically address her mini lesson on White supremacy and racism and her approach to teaching on the day of the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Semi-Structured Interviews. The first semi-structured interview focused on Sally's personal and professional background and teaching philosophies. We discussed her understanding of citizenship, her perception of the purposes of social studies, and the intersection of these two concepts (i.e., the role of social studies in citizenship education and vice versa). The second semi-structured interview focused more on the Sally's perceptions of her students' understandings of citizenship over the observation period and the extent to which she felt she and her students had met her previously stated teaching and learning goals. See Appendix B for teacher interview protocols.

Each semi-structured interview lasted for approximately 60 minutes and took place virtually, using Zoom, during Sally's planning period. These responsive interviews were guided by the interview protocol but were intended to be more fluid and conversational rather than rigid (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). All interviews were audio recorded to the Zoom cloud and automatically transcribed by the Zoom software system. I then reviewed the auto-generated transcriptions for accuracy and re-transcribed the interviews by hand when necessary.

These interviews were valuable because they elicited Sally's thoughts, feelings, and intentions and suggested explanations for observed behaviors (Merriam, 1998). In this way, the interviews helped generate depth of understanding (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and were especially crucial for the present case study with only one participant (Merriam, 1998). Intentions, thoughts, and internal interpretations were not always visible when observing classroom behavior, and the ability to probe the teacher's underlying beliefs and decision-making processes through interview sessions was crucial for developing a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the critical citizenship education happening in her classroom.

Weekly Informal Interviews and Follow-Up Interview. I conducted an informal interview with Sally every Friday, for a total of seven weekly informal interviews. These interviews were largely unstructured and consisted of between three and five questions that I had developed as part of my field notes or daily memos. Informal interviews lasted between 10 and 25 minutes, and my questions focused on Sally's general perceptions and feelings about the week in addition to specific questions about instructional materials or lesson implementation. All interviews were audio recorded to the Zoom cloud and automatically transcribed by the Zoom software system. I then reviewed the auto-generated transcriptions for accuracy and re-transcribed the interviews by hand when necessary.

I conducted one follow-up informal interview with Sally in early December, approximately six weeks after the conclusion of the observation period and other study components. My two broad lines of inquiry centered around Sally's mini lesson on White supremacy and race, which she had taught after the end of the observation period, as well as her approach to teaching the day of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, which took place on November 3, 2020. This follow-up interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes. The interview was audio recorded to the Zoom cloud and automatically transcribed by the Zoom software system. I reviewed the auto-generated transcription for accuracy and re-transcribed as needed.

Student Interviews

I conducted two individual semi-structured interviews with four of Sally's students, one student from the first class block and three students from the second class block (see Appendix C for student interview protocol). The first interview for each student took place about halfway through the observation period, and the second interview took place near the end of the observation period. Each student interview lasted between 30-45 minutes. All interviews were

audio recorded to the Zoom cloud and automatically transcribed by the Zoom software system. I then reviewed the auto-generated transcriptions for accuracy and re-transcribed the interviews by hand when necessary. All humanities students were invited to participate in the study; four students agreed to participate and made themselves available for interviews.

The student interviews provided an opportunity to understand how individual students of varying backgrounds and experiences responded to and interpreted their teacher's intentionally critical pedagogy. Probing student thoughts and intentions, in tandem with classroom observations, offered insight into the relationship among teacher intentions, teacher pedagogy, and student learning. These interviews were an opportunity to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 3).

Classroom Artifacts

As part of the normal everyday classroom observation (Yin, 2018), I collected all classroom artifacts including instructional materials, assessments, and blank copies of all student assignments and handouts. Text documents including curricular materials are particularly useful when used alongside interview and observation data to contextualize and compare the biases of each data source (Hodder, 2000). In this case, these digital documents provided insight into the instructional decision-making of the teacher participant and provided a unique lens for triangulation in exploring critical citizenship education. Documents like student assignments and other instructional materials are stable, unobtrusive, repeatedly viewable, and specific in terms of the details they may provide (Yin, 2018).

Data Analysis

I employed an inductive, comparative, and ongoing process for data analysis (Merriam, 1998). Data analysis began early in the study and occurred simultaneously with data collection for the purpose of making comparisons among different data sets and data sources and using emerging themes and patterns to inform data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This constant-comparative method, originally associated specifically with grounded theory but since utilized throughout qualitative research more generally, involved drawing comparisons within and across sub-segments of data while data collection was still ongoing (Boeije, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This kind of integrated analysis not only created opportunities to follow up with participants and modify data collection based on what the data began to reveal, but also deepened understanding about the nuances and dimensions of the data (Castro, 2013). Simultaneous data collection and analysis continued until the point of "saturation," or when data collection produced no new insights into critical citizenship education in this particular context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 199). The process of data analysis was a process of "meaning making" through "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting" the data (Merriam, 1998, p. 178).

To begin data analysis, I first reviewed each automated interview transcription, comparing it with the recorded audio and in most cases re-transcribing by hand large portions of each interview. I reviewed and re-transcribed each transcription immediately following each interview. I then read and re-read the transcriptions, field notes, and classroom artifacts to immerse myself in the data and get a sense of the data as a whole before breaking it into parts (Agar, 1980).

Next, I began a process of coding the data by hand, engaging in multiple cycles of coding using a combination of open and *a priori* codes. Through first cycle open coding I identified any segment of data that might be useful (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), aiming to capture the smallest pieces of data possible. As much as possible when open coding I attempted to tie my analysis more closely to the voices of the participants by utilizing *in vivo* codes, which use the participants' direct language (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2016). Open codes ranged from single words to short phrases, such as "empower students'" or "students draw own conclusions."

In addition to inductive open coding, I also applied *a priori* codes (Miles et al., 2020) drawn from the framework for critical citizenship education (Johnson & Morris, 2010). The eight codes inherent in the framework include the elements of citizenship: knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions, and the elements of critical pedagogy: politics, social, self, and praxis. By applying these eight codes in tandem with the open codes, I was able to indicate the intersection of the citizenship and critical pedagogy elements (i.e., "politics-knowledge").

Second cycle coding involved comparing initial codes, identifying patterns, and grouping similar codes into a smaller number of categories or subthemes (Saldaña, 2016). Through this process of pattern coding, I classified many previously individual examples of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) into categories that consisted of "several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 194). Using these emerging categories, I continued to search for consistent patterns across the data and refined, collapsed, modified, and discarded categories until new codes did not produce any new insights (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). See Table 3 for an example of the coding process using a sample of codes and categories.

Table 3

Sample of Coding Process

Data Segment & Source	Open Codes	Emerging Theme
"that's why this slideshow is designed to hear all of your voices. So when your slide comes up, you're just going to hear me read the question, and then I'm going to go silent. If you're in charge of that slide, you're going to have to unmute yourself and read us your answer. (observation, 8/25/20)	student peer teaching	
"and so you're going to have to talk and you're going to have to present, because that's a cornerstone of what we do at Community School – is you finding your voice and using it" (observation, 8/31/20)	"empower students"	
"Now that you guys have kind of reflected on what you learned about Columbus as a child, looking at a more complex Columbus as an 8th grader, and looking at this controversy, how do you think we should celebrate this second Monday in October?" (observation, 10/12/20)	students draw own conclusions	student creation of knowledge
[about many perspectives] "In this county people do not think the same, right? Then, and now, and in the future, when they're adults and they're running things, it's important to realize that people do not think the same – they never will. And there's value in that – there is value in the diversity of thought" (teacher interview, 10/16/20)	students share multiple perspectives	
"I feel like we need to be able to share our opinions … Our classroom should be a safe space to listen to a variety of opinions" (observation, 9/11/20)	students share opinions	

Finally, I synthesized these subthemes into broader themes and developed these themes into assertions, or "declarative statement[s] of summative synthesis" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 93). All data analysis was completed by hand without the use of software.

Research Credibility

The highly situated and human-focused characteristics of qualitative designs require that researchers give attention to overcoming challenges and mitigating concerns related to subjectivity and credibility. To address concerns of rigor and trustworthiness, I made concerted

efforts to ensure the credibility, consistency, and transferability of my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To strengthen the credibility of my findings given the data presented, I employed methodological triangulation by utilizing data from observations, interviews, and classroom artifacts (Stake, 1995). To aid in triangulation efforts I also used multiple sources of data, such as interview data from different students, observations on different days over an extended period of time, and follow-up interviews with students and the teacher (Denzin, 1978). Analyzing data from multiple time points and sources allowed for corroboration and strengthening of patterns that emerged from one particular set of data. The process of triangulation helped clarify meanings in pursuit of interpretation and revealing key assertions (Stake, 1995).

In addition, I engaged in member checking throughout the analysis process, asking the participants to review in-process material for accuracy and soliciting feedback on initial interpretations and preliminary findings (Stake, 1995). These member checks provided participants with the opportunity to suggest some changes or modifications to help better capture their perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also engaged three peer colleagues, one within and two outside the field of social studies, in a peer review process during the analysis stage. I provided these three colleagues with a codebook and an excerpt from an interview transcript and asked each colleague to use the codebook to code a sample of data. Verification of similar coding outputs from other researchers helped support my emerging interpretations and analyses of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 1995).

Beyond and in concert with previously described strategies, I maintained a researcher's log to help secure the consistency and dependability of my study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Richards, 2015). Also called an "audit trail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 322) or the "chain of

evidence" (Yin, 2018, p. 136), this written record includes my process notes about data collection and the derivation of codes and categories, my reflections, questions, and decisions made throughout the inquiry, all memos written throughout the data collection and analysis periods, and a record of each time I interacted with the data during analysis and interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Systematic and intensive record-keeping provide a detailed picture of my data collection and analysis processes.

Finally, I engaged in consistent and thorough memoing throughout the data collection and analysis phases and reported my findings using "thick description." Thick description here includes both detailed accounts of the research setting, context, and participants in addition to highly detailed findings that utilize evidence that includes quotations from interviews, field notes, and classroom artifacts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All of these strategies were employed against a backdrop of reflexivity upon my own biases and positionalities, which is addressed in the following section.

Subjectivity Statement

Since a primary purpose of social studies education is to promote the development of good citizens who will participate actively in a democratic society, social studies research is inherently positioned in some way against the ethical and political commitments that teaching for "good citizenship" necessitates (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017). In other words, all social studies research is conducted through the lens of a particular perspective about the nature and appropriateness of social studies and citizenship education – thus "educational research is always advocacy research inasmuch as it unavoidably advances some moral-political perspective" (Howe & Moses, 1999, p. 38). It is therefore not possible to do research in a vacuum, without any attention to personal or political worldview, particularly when studying the issue of

citizenship (Becker, 1967). Research is always part of wider power structures, making research, in all circumstances, a political activity.

Like the vast majority of American public-school teachers (United States Department of Education, 2016), I am a White woman, and I recognize that my own upbringing in a middle-class family afforded me innumerable privileges in my personal, professional, and educational spheres. As a researcher, White womanhood often grants me the authority to enter a school space since I share these elements of identity with many faculty and staff. I have also spent time as a social studies teacher in a public high school, and this background provides me with the dialogical foundation to be considered an "insider." For example, I can comprehend and utilize educational abbreviations and jargon in conversation with other educators, and this familiarity and comfort with the language of education provides me opportunity to enter these educational spaces with a sense of belonging.

On the other hand, these same aspects of my positionality may cause me to be viewed as an "outsider" by students or faculty of color, who may be less willing to speak or engage with a young, White woman when so many of American society's systemic injustices, both in and outside of schooling, have been perpetuated and held up by White people generally and White women more specifically. As a White, female teacher, I understand that my presence, possible inaction, and potential lack of advocacy related to these issues may have contributed to the problem.

I have been particularly interested in exploring the theoretical framework of critical citizenship education because I believe that this is what it means to be a "good citizen" in American society today. Acknowledging that many of the systems and structures were designed to benefit White people like myself, I operate from the assumption that the United States is not

truly democratic and our so-called democratic society is rife with injustices, inequities, and systemic and institutional racism and discrimination. At the same time, I do not claim to have engaged in truly critical pedagogy when I was teaching civics and citizenship to high school students. While I did make a dedicated effort to highlight alternative narratives that are traditionally missing or ignored in civics classes, I would not have classified my teaching as critical more generally. I still operated within the boundaries of the existing systems and did not consistently encourage the need for collective action to make society more just. I found myself frequently frustrated by the pushback I received from students when I taught about societal realities, such as income inequality, and was considered to be advocating for a partisan agenda.

The assumptions and experiences I carry with me affect the lens through which I conduct citizenship-focused research. My purpose in articulating these values and beliefs is not to ignore or cast aside these influences or to attempt to operate from a falsely objective lens but is instead to improve the transparency of my research design. My background, experiences, skills, dispositions, and beliefs are all important to allowing others to understand the context and results of this study (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

To navigate some of these concerns, I have worked diligently to bolster the credibility of my work by memoing immediately after research experiences, conducting member checks with participants throughout the data analysis and writing phases, and establishing a peer review process with colleagues. These efforts and others have been previously discussed as means of ensuring the credibility, dependability, consistency, and transferability of the study. Other ethical considerations exist and are discussed below.

Ethical Considerations

Potential ethical issues are prevalent in qualitative research due to the open-ended, inquiry-driven, subjective, and personal nature of the work. Work with human subjects requires detailed attention to concerns of privacy and confidentiality so as to protect participants from harm by research. For those purposes, no participant names or identifying information, like phone numbers and email addresses, were recorded with the data, and all reported data during and after the study has been anonymized. All names referenced in this study have been protected with assigned or self-selected pseudonyms and the anonymization of all write-ups (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The teacher participant in this study voluntarily completed a consent form (see Appendix F) in order to participate. The inclusion of minors in this study necessitated consent from parents/guardians (see Appendix G) and assent from all students (see Appendix H) who wished to participate. In consenting to the study, Sally understood that the anticipated risk of her participation was minimal despite the reality, given the small school community, that real anonymity for her may not have been possible inside the research site, even with the use of pseudonyms (Miles, 1979). She also acknowledged that the risk outside of the site itself was perhaps somewhat greater due to the uncommon implementation of critical citizenship education within social studies and her identity as a Black woman. While these factors made it possible that Sally might face some potential employment risks or risks related to her reputation, anticipated benefits of the study outweighed potential risks. Risk to minor students was anticipated to be minimal.

Consent forms for all teacher and student participants required participants to acknowledge the details of the study and the voluntary nature of participation in the study. Any

participant could choose to withdraw from the study at any time without question or penalty. This study strictly adhered to all regulations for working with human subjects as required by the Institutional Review Board.

Limitations

This study focused on one teacher participant, which may limit the study's generalizability. In addition, the student participants were all White girls, so while each student offered a unique viewpoint based on their own experiences, there were other students whose perspectives were not as thoroughly represented in this study. Some classroom interactions were limited due to the constraints of a virtual-only environment in which health concerns prevented in-person meetings or interviews. The online environment had other limitations. Not all students consistently had their cameras turned on, and due to class sizes it was not possible to see all students' video boxes on the screen at one time. The teachers frequently employed breakout rooms for cooperative work in small groups, but these virtual groups were more cumbersome than they would have been in the physical classroom. In person, teachers would be able to circulate between groups and see and hear multiple groups and voices at once, while in the virtual setting they had to join individual breakout rooms one at a time and were then isolated from other students.

Despite a small sample size this study yielded many benefits. The focus on one teacher participant was intentional as a means to illustrate a rich case example of what critical citizenship education can look like in a middle school classroom. The depth of detail achieved from a prolonged and focused immersion in Sally's classroom may not have been possible with a wider focus. The intention of this study was in its specificity and the demonstrations of critical citizenship education in a particular context, rather than any mass generalizability. In addition,

the forced virtual environment and necessary integration of technology tools offered new possibilities for Sally to share student responses and facilitate some new place-based experiences for students. Online-only learning offered a unique context in which to consider the possibilities of critical citizenship education outside the traditional four walls of a physical classroom.

Summary of Chapter

The use of a qualitative, instrumental, case study methodology (Stake, 1995) was appropriate for this study as these complex issues of citizenship, teacher beliefs and decision-making, and the implementation of a critical citizenship education curriculum require a detailed, nuanced, holistic, and in-depth analysis. Data were collected from classroom observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, and classroom artifacts, and the variety of data sources contributed to stronger methodological triangulation. Member checking, peer review, articulation of my own positionality and subjectivity, and consistent memoing via an audit trail strengthened the credibility of my study. In the next section, I will review the study's findings.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction and Context

Findings from this qualitative research case study describe a teacher's enactment of critical citizenship education in her eighth grade United States history classroom. Themes that emerged from data analysis answer the following research question and sub-questions for this study:

1. How does a self-identified critical social studies teacher enact critical citizenship education in an eighth grade United States history classroom?
    a. How do this teacher's beliefs about citizenship education influence her instructional decision-making?
    b. How do students respond to critical citizenship education in this teacher's eighth grade United States history classroom?

This study took place at Community School, a public charter school in a large southeastern capital city. The capital city and its surrounding county are home to several research universities; the city and county consistently vote more liberal than many other parts of the state. Voter turnout data from the 2020 presidential election indicate that Democrat Joe Biden won approximately 62% of the vote and Republican Donald Trump won approximately 36% of the vote in this county (State Election Results, 2021). Community School itself has a progressive mission, committed to empowering students to foster a just and sustainable world. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, the school posted a statement to its website condemning the act and affirming that Black Lives Matter. The school commitment to social justice and progressive

education, in combination with the school's location in a large city, result in a generally politically left-leaning student and family population.

During the observation period, Sally and Anne taught two blocks of the humanities course, which were taught back-to-back after the homeroom period that began each day. Each humanities class was 55 minutes long. During the first trimester period of the study, there were a total of 74 students enrolled in humanities. These students were split between the two class blocks and assigned to humanities classes based on their math assignment. Students enrolled in *Math I* were assigned to the first humanities class, while students in either *Math 8* or *Math II* were assigned to the second humanities class. The humanities and math classes occurred simultaneously, so during the first class period half of the eighth grade was in humanities and the other half of the eighth grade was in their assigned math class. There were 31 students in the first humanities class block and 43 students in the second humanities class block. In both classes, the students were primarily female and White. Approximately 58% of the students were girls and approximately 76% of the students were White.

Sally and Anne worked as equal co-teachers during each humanities class. The ELA segment of class and the social studies segment of class were usually treated separately, with Anne leading the ELA-focused activities and Sally leading the history-focused activities. While one teacher was leading, the other teacher would contribute or add to the discussion when relevant and would often be in charge of monitoring the chat and answering students' questions. A special education teacher also attended the second humanities block. She participated in the small talk and chatter as students filtered into the Zoom room at the beginning of class, but once class began typically adopted more of an observer role. When students worked in small groups,

she joined the breakout rooms of two or three students who received special education services to provide support and guidance.

The seven-week observation period began with community-building activities and a review of the summer assignments on the Sudanese Civil War. Over the summer, students read *A Long Walk to Water* (Park, 2018), a young adult novel depicting the life of a Sudanese girl living in 2008 and a Sudanese boy living in 1985 who became one of the "Lost Boys" of Sudan. Sally linked the summer reading about Sudan with early American history by emphasizing themes such as conflict over resources and reasons why people might be motivated to leave their homelands. After the initial week focused on Sudan, subsequent historical topics during the study period began with Native American history prior to European contact and continued through the American Revolutionary War. See Table 4 for an illustration of a sample week of class content, assignments, and activities.

Table 4 details the activities of the second full week of school. As indicated in the table, most days had a combination of English language arts and history content, particularly early in the school year as students learned about recurring ELA assignments like root words and analogies. Current events were incorporated into the curriculum one day per week.

Table 4

Description of Sample Week of Class Activities

Date	Class Activities and Approximate Time Spent	Lead Teacher
Monday 8/31/20	• Welcome/ small talk (10 minutes) • Overview of homework – word root illustrations (3 minutes) • Breakout rooms – students share Google Tour projects about Sudan (35 minutes) • Whole class debrief (3 minutes)	• Both • Anne • Sally • Both
Tuesday 9/1/20	• Welcome/ small talk (5 minutes) • Overview of tonight's homework – mystery questions based on root words (8 minutes) • Introduction to Where I'm From poem: individual annotation of George Ella Lyon's original poem (20 minutes) • Whole class share outs of annotation/ discussion of poem (20 minutes)	• Both • Anne • Sally • Both
Wednesday 9/2/20	• Welcome/ small talk (3 minutes) • Go over answers to mystery questions homework (10 minutes) • Preview tonight's homework – analogies with root words & overview of analogies (10 minutes) • Demonstration of Where I'm From poem template & overview of project (20 minutes) • Independent student work time - poems (10 minutes)	• Both • Anne • Anne • Sally • Both
Thursday 9/3/20	• Welcome/ small talk (5 minutes) • Share out of analogies homework answers (15 minutes) • Share out/discussion of answers to *Upfront* article questions (students took quiz Friday 8/28/20) (30 minutes)	• Both • Anne • Sally
Friday 9/4/20	• Welcome/ small talk (5 minutes) • Root words quiz via Kahoot (10 minutes) • Independent work time for students to work on Where I'm From poems (35 minutes)	• Both • Anne • Both

Note. "Lead Teacher" indicates the primary facilitator of the activity/ segment of class. Teachers continued to contribute to class even when not leading the activity.

The eighth-grade policy during virtual learning was that students with camera-enabled computers had to turn their cameras on at least once during the class period. Most students tended to keep their cameras on as they entered the Zoom room at the beginning of class, but then turned their cameras off when class began. On a typical day, in each humanities class block, about one-third of the class had their cameras turned on for the majority of the class period; other

student videos either showed a black box or their profile image. A small handful of videos each day were pointed up at the ceiling or ceiling fan with only a student's forehead visible. Students frequently brought their pets into the video frames, and on occasion it was possible to see a student's parent in the background or at the computer helping them with a technical issue. Students mostly attended class from their bedrooms and were often seen with blankets in their laps.

Student engagement in class varied widely. A small group of students in each class participated regularly in answering questions and volunteering to share their answers to the homework. Students were generally more likely to participate in the written chat box than they were by unmuting and speaking out loud, which resulted in Sally and Anne frequently asking for students to respond specifically in the chat to encourage engagement. There seemed to be little connection between students' engagement and their choice to turn their camera on or off during the class period.

Sally enacted critical citizenship education within this community, school, and classroom context. In this chapter, I explore the major themes and sub-themes that emerged from my analysis of the influence of teacher beliefs on instructional decision-making, the enactment of critical citizenship education in Sally's classroom, and her students' response to critical citizenship education.

Influence of Teacher Beliefs about Citizenship Education on Instructional Decision-Making

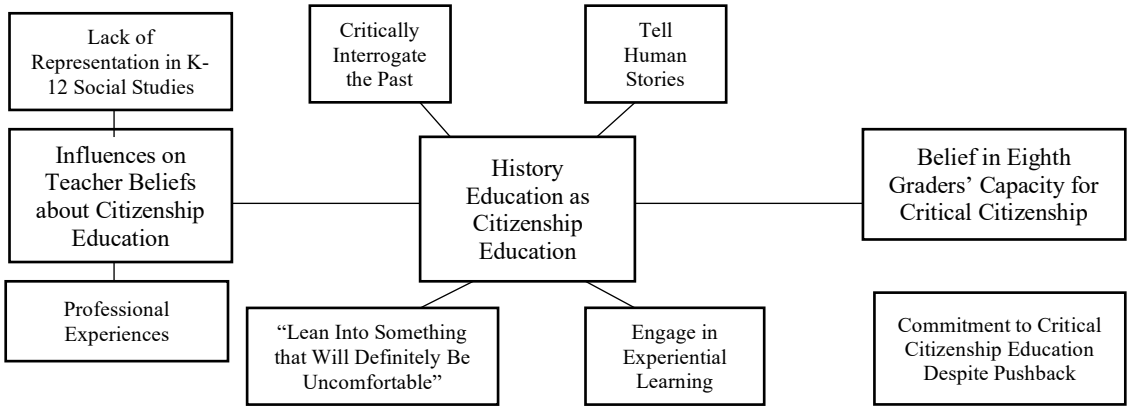
Prior research has established that a teacher's beliefs influence their educational philosophies and instructional practices (e.g., Calderhead, 1996; Chin & Barber, 2010; Patterson et al., 2012; Richardson, 1996; Villegas, 2007). Sally's beliefs about citizenship were formed by her own identities and experiences. Her critical knowledge of historical injustices, the legacy of

oppression, and her powerful sense of identity reflected her own critical orientation towards citizenship.

In her role as curriculum gatekeeper (Thornton, 1991), Sally's beliefs about citizenship education influenced her instructional practices and decision-making. She aimed for her instructional practices to help students understand systemic injustices, engage with potentially uncomfortable topics, think critically, ask questions, and develop their own identities, all of which are necessary for critical citizenship. To accomplish these goals, her instructional practices were broadly organized around critical interrogation of history, telling human stories, and engaging with potentially uncomfortable topics. Underlining these practices were Sally's consistent reminders to her students that their voices were valuable and they were capable of envisioning a better future and making change. While Sally has in the past and continues today to receive negative feedback and pushback from parents and other stakeholders, she feels compelled to continue teaching in this manner due to her belief that a critical orientation towards citizenship is the only way forward for her students (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Themes and Sub-Themes: Influence of Teacher Beliefs about Citizenship Education on Instructional Decision-Making



Influences on Teacher Beliefs about Citizenship and Social Studies

Sally's beliefs about citizenship education and the purposes of social studies more generally were innately shaped by a combination of her identities and personal and professional experiences. Sally's identities and experiences catalyzed her own development as a critical citizen as she reconciled her personal identity with traditional representations of Black Americans throughout history and the typical historical narratives more generally. Her experiences as a Black female social studies teacher solidified her belief in the necessity for critical citizenship education (see Table 5).

Table 5

Sub-Themes: Influences on Teacher Beliefs about Citizenship and Social Studies

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
Lack of representation in K-12 social studies	Teacher perceptions of the lack of portrayals of people with shared identities in her own K-12 schooling experiences	*From my books, from my textbooks, they've mostly been White men. And you will see a few – for lack of a better term – token people of color or women thrown in there, not delved deeply into.*
Professional experiences	Negative experiences as a teacher that Sally perceived to be related to her identity as a Black woman	*I've been silenced on certain things where I've had administration tell me because I am – because I cannot be objective, I cannot teach on Black things.*

Lack of Representation in K-12 Social Studies. As a Black woman, Sally was acutely aware of the lack of representation of Black folks and women in the histories she read during her K-12 social studies classes. Reflecting on her own childhood educational experiences, Sally noted that,

> U.S. [history] courses traditionally have kind of just looked at one group. When you look through history and you look at people who have been deemed heroes and leaders and changemakers, they've looked the same … they've mostly been White men. And you

> will see a few – for lack of a better term – token people of color or women thrown in there, [but] not delved deeply into. (Interview, September 2, 2020)

Like many youths today (Choi, 2013), Sally did not see herself reflected in the narrative she learned about the United States in school, and these interactions among her identity as a Black woman and her K-12 social studies experiences heavily influenced her approach to teaching social studies. As a teacher, her goal was to offer a vision of American history for her students that is not only more accurate but also provided opportunities for her students to "see themselves when we're talking about American history. We're talking about people who … helped shape this country, for better or for worse. I want [students] to see themselves in it and that they are part of it" (interview, September 2, 2020).

In the instances where people of color were portrayed in her K-12 education, their stories were frequently inaccurate or dehumanizing. For example, Sally had a distinct memory of a passage about slavery in her ninth grade American history textbook in which she recalls the text conveyed that "some slaves were happy with being slaves, and they were happy on their plantations and they had a great culture with their masters" (interview, September 2, 2020). It was not until college, majoring in history that she learned deeply about the consistent and persistent resistance by Africans and African Americans against their enslavers and the institution of slavery. Rather than a simple story of Abraham Lincoln freeing the slaves, as she learned in her own high school history courses, in her college courses she learned a more complex and nuanced narrative in which "Abraham Lincoln was really lukewarm about freeing slaves" and that Black people "won their own freedom" for themselves (interview, September 2, 2020).

As an adult, Sally wondered about the psychological effect of these types of learning

experiences and reflects upon how powerful it would have been for her as a child if she had known there were Black changemakers even within the system of slavery. She lamented that:

> When people study history and they want to see, well, who has shaped our country? Who has been instrumental in the hard work, the boots on the ground, and that idea of an American Dream? A lot of times, young kids, they see White men who are the ones doing these things. And then it makes you wonder, *man, do I fit into this story?* Do I fit into this idea of this American Dream? Did my ancestors work hard to build this country, too? Or were we just observers? Were we just onlookers? (Interview, September 2, 2020)

Sally believed that this type of one-dimensional narrative was harmful not just to students from traditionally marginalized communities, like Black and Hispanic students, but also to White students who may also grow up and live their lives with this one single understanding of history that ignores the deep complexity and nuance of historical figures, "heroes," and events. Failure to interrogate or confront the status quo reinforces existing systems and hierarchies of power, perpetuating the cycle of oppression and injustice. Her own experiences as a social studies student, in which her textbooks and teachers largely ignored, misrepresented, or flattened the contributions and complexities of her culture and history, helped foster Sally's critical orientation towards citizenship.

Professional Experiences. Early professional experiences continued to solidify Sally's own critical orientation towards citizenship and reinforced her perception that fostering such an orientation is necessary for her own students. At previous schools, Sally was always one of the few Black teachers, in line with the national statistic that 80% of teachers are White (Hussar et al., 2020). She was often the only Black social studies teacher. At her previous school, a private school in the same city as Community School, she faced a variety of instances of pushback and

feeling “silenced” (interview, September 2, 2020) due to her identity. She reported that parents took their children out of her class due to their discomfort with their children having a Black social studies teacher; in one case, she was reassigned from teaching American history to world history because of the administration’s perception that she “could not be objective” and therefore could not “teach on Black things” (interview, September 2, 2020).

Early on in her career, Sally was focused on “climbing a ladder … work[ing] really hard to establish my reputation and to gain the trust of people,” as is typical for beginning teachers (interview, December 4, 2020). As a consequence, she believes she was often “more eager to make sure people liked me,” in an effort at self-preservation, rather than “making sure [my students] thought and making sure my lessons were very critical” (interview, December 4, 2020). However, these experiences in which Sally received pushback from both parents and administrators at a previous private school made her realize that her skin color may be a factor in any situation, regardless of how she teaches, and thus the efforts to please others at the expense of her beliefs or her students’ critical thinking were futile.

These negative experiences propelled Sally’s evolution as a critical citizenship educator, which she now strives to embrace in her current role at Community School. Sally felt that Community School “embraces 200% - more than [she has] ever seen at any other school that [she has] been at” (interview, September 2, 2020) – her philosophy that students’ engagement with discomfort can be a space for deep learning. She felt that her own philosophies towards teaching aligned with Community School’s emphasis on experiential, student-centered learning, the school’s mission to empower students to foster a just and sustainable world, and the school’s core values including reflection, responsibility, and social empowerment. At Community School, the “response of the administration has been drastically different” than her experience at other

schools; for the first time, she felt that she had "100%" administrative support for her teaching (interview, September 2, 2020).

History Education as Citizenship Education

Sally's own schooling experiences and later professional experiences revealed to her the inadequacy of her own K-12 social studies education. This inconsistency helped her begin a more critical journey through American history, particularly around the role and contributions of Black people in American history. As a result, Sally believed that the primary focus of her history teaching was to plan instruction that encourages students' critical thinking and widens their historical narrative.

Sally's emphasis on developing students' capacities for critical thought stemmed from her vision of a future in which students and their generational peers are responsible for making important decisions about social and political issues. Comparing "grow[ing] humans" in some ways to "growing plants," Sally described her main goal of U.S. history education to be to prepare young people with the nutrients and care necessary for them to be able to "make decisions that will benefit their generation and future generations" (interview, September 2, 2020). To do so, the history teacher must equip students with the skills and tools necessary to be able to make rational and informed choices in the service of humanity. Sally believed that her responsibility in advancing this vision of citizenship within the history classroom was to create "very strong critical thinkers that will be able to make decisions that will benefit their generation and future generations" (interview, September 2, 2020). From her perspective, students "can only make those decisions if [they] have a strong understanding of things that have already happened and have a strong understanding of how [those things] have affected humanity" (interview, September 2, 2020). To achieve these goals, Sally focused her instructional decisions around

critical interrogation of the past, sharing human stories, leaning into uncomfortable topics, and as possible, engaging in experiential student-centered learning (see Table 6).

Table 6

Sub-Themes: History Education as Citizenship Education

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
Critically interrogate the past	Question traditional historical narratives & disrupt myths of individual heroes	*And so I feel like it's important for us to learn all of it. And so I feel like when we learn the heroic side, we're teaching our kids a revisionist history even then.*
Tell human stories	Emphasizing individual and group experiences, rather than dates and facts	*They need to connect with people. We cannot divorce the study of history from – this is social studies, right, the study of people! – we cannot divorce the study of history from people's stories and people's perspectives.*
"Lean into something that will definitely be uncomfortable"	Students engage with topics that might be difficult or potentially uncomfortable to talk about or discuss	*Some of that's going to be uncomfortable. We're going to have some really frank and real conversations about supremacy – White supremacy, segregation.*
Engage in experiential learning	Students learn by doing and exploring the history in their local community	*Our classroom doesn't just exist between walls. Our classroom exists all over the city. I love how I'm given permission to use all of downtown to teach my courses.*

Critically Interrogate the Past. Sally believed that a habit of "question[ing] everything" is central to critical citizenship, and therefore sought to implement instruction that compelled her students to ask questions of history rather than "tak[ing] things at face value" (interview, September 2, 2020). In practice, Sally sought to plant seeds of questioning by offering her students multiple perspectives about a topic or event, with particular attention to narratives or stories that may not be traditionally explored in social studies classrooms.

For example, Sally taught a lecture using Google Earth on the history of North and South American indigenous cultures and livelihoods prior to first contact with Europeans. For many students, this lecture offered a new perspective on the complexity and depth of Native American cultures and their millennia-long, flourishing history prior to European contact. To teach about

Christopher Columbus, Sally juxtaposed an animated video designed for children that highlighted his accomplishments with a more complex video from TEDx that described some of his atrocities, such as cutting off Native Americans' hands if they worked too slowly. She also included excerpts from Columbus' own journal entries about his perception of Native Americans, and contemporary video interviews with Native Americans and Italian Americans around the recognition of Columbus Day as a national holiday. Students were introduced to the cognitive habits of questioning and skepticism required for critical citizenship as they read texts and watched videos that presented multiple perspectives and subsequently formed their own opinions about the issues.

Sally believed a more accurate and holistic understanding of the lasting legacies of history would better prepare students when faced with significant social and political problems. For example, Sally described her intent to "teach about [the] 1898 [Wilmington Massacre] and historically the efforts that they went through to make sure Black people could not vote, with the Red Shirts and things of that nature – and then connect it to voter suppression today" (interview, September 2, 2020). Sally hoped that as critical citizens, students would ask questions and evaluate multiple perspectives in order to "arrive at the best solution that they think is going to benefit the most people" (interview, September 2, 2020). If students were to learn a singular and unexamined narrative of the past, then these decisions would likely not take into account the voices or perspectives of those historically marginalized people and groups who are so frequently ignored or misrepresented in history textbooks and narratives. Sally noted the danger in teaching and learning a single, narrow story:

> I mean, what are we going to learn if we only teach the heroic things and then we ignore all of the other things that we are unfortunately still doing, because it's seeped into our

> society subconscious? We're still doing elements, we're still looking at certain people in certain ways, because we're not putting it out there [that] this is another way that this "hero" treats people. (Interview, October 16, 2020)

For students to become critical citizens, committed to informed action and able to envision a better, more just world, then they must learn from past mistakes and engage with the flawed complexity of humanity. Rather than creating or perpetuating heroes, Sally believed that it is important to study whole people in all of their complexity. In response to President Trump's comments that teachers using materials from the 1619 Project or critical theorists like Howard Zinn were teaching revisionist history (Wise, 2020), Sally commented that *ignoring* these issues and teaching students only the "heroic" side was also a form of "teaching our kids a revisionist history" (interview, October 16, 2020). This commitment to contextualizing and demystifying supposed heroes was particularly evident when Sally taught about Christopher Columbus, described above, and when she assigned students to visit different rooms of a virtual Monticello exhibit to learn about Thomas Jefferson's life as an enslaver in Virginia.

Tell Human Stories. Since social studies is the study of people, and citizenship education focuses on citizens' responsibilities and obligations to one another and to the state, Sally believed it is essential to share a wide variety of human stories and perspectives. Furthermore, she maintained the impossibility of divorcing the study of history from people's stories and perspectives – that stories and perspectives are "tantamount" to understanding the past and the present alike (interview, September 2, 2020). Rather than emphasizing only dates and events as in traditional history courses, Sally took a more humanities-based approach in which her students were able to explore "the human stories behind the dates and the facts" (interview, September 2, 2020).

Sally's dedication to presenting varying perspectives, especially those that have not traditionally appeared in history books, was key to helping students make connections with other people. Drawing especially from her own experiences, she believed that it was important for students to know the stories and voices that have often been overlooked when discussing history. These stories and individuals that have contributed to the nation's history but might not be part of "standard curriculum" or "approved to be written in standard history books" (interview, September 2, 2020) form essential knowledge about the power structures that have been built and reinforced over time. Her beliefs about the importance of diverse stories for the purpose of fostering engaged and empathetic citizenship offer insight into her inclusion of Christopher Columbus' personal journal alongside contemporary interviews with Native Americans and Italian Americans in the larger exploration of Columbus Day. These beliefs were also evident in her decision to assign students to read and discuss one of four teenagers' reflections upon their own experiences with racism in the United States. As they read their assigned passages, students answered questions such as, "What is your personal reaction to this story?" (artifact, October 29, 2020) that required students to consider the human impacts of the legacy of White supremacy in the United States.

"Lean Into Something That Will Definitely be Uncomfortable." Critiquing traditionally heroic figures and learning about topics like racism and White supremacy may be uncomfortable for some students, but Sally viewed this discomfort as a learning opportunity and as preparation for the burden of forming opinions about policies and political candidates that may feel uncomfortable at times. For students to be able to help fix the pressing problems of the present, they must be able to identify the historical roots of current problems and discuss potentially hard or uncomfortable issues from a variety of perspectives. Sally recognized that

discussions about the highly contentious and tumultuous 2020 presidential election would likely cause discomfort yet was adamant that "this is an opportunity for the kids to really lean into something that will definitely be uncomfortable. And isn't that what we're trying to do?" (interview, October 2, 2020). Due to this conviction, Sally planned the lesson on the day after the first 2020 presidential debate around the debate itself, asking students to participate in anonymous polls in which they reflected on various aspects of the candidates' presentations, offered suggestions for each candidate to improve their performance in potential future debates, and rated their own abilities to put aside their biases and watch the debate objectively. Sally took the same approach to teaching students about White supremacy and racism, concepts that she told students they would be discussing from the very first day of school. Sally prepared an introductory lesson on the continued role of White supremacy and racism in the United States that included personal experiences from teenagers and a 2016 POV/*New York Times* video about the concept of implicit bias. To answer the accompanying questions, students were asked to reflect upon the ways in which these racial encounters may have impacted the teenage narrators.

Engage in Experiential Learning. Much of Sally's own formative years of education were taught from a framework of experiential learning. While completing her undergraduate degree in Germany, Sally experienced history in person, traveling to preserved French trenches to study the poetry and literature of World War I, learning about the Jazz Age in Paris, and experiencing the poetry of William Butler Yeats in his Irish homeland. These experiences impressed upon Sally the power of an immersive and experiential education, helping to shape her philosophy that education can and should occur anywhere and within the context of students' daily lives. As a teacher, Sally particularly valued Community School's location in the heart of the city's downtown, which makes it easy to organize local field experiences and emphasizes to

students that the “classroom doesn’t just exist between walls; our classroom exists all over the city” (interview, September 2, 2020).

Her own experiences and preference for learning history in an experiential manner, often outside of the traditional four-walled classroom, aligned with Sally’s current goals for fostering a critical orientation towards citizenship in her eighth-grade students. While the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic restricted teachers’ and students’ ability to learn outside the confines of their computers, Sally modified her instruction to include as many opportunities as possible for students to still virtually experience history. Sally conducted two lectures during the observation period, one focused on Native American history and the other on European exploration. For each of these lectures, Sally transformed her traditional slides presentation into a Google Earth tour so that students could experience a sense of time and space as they learned the history of these groups. Aligned with their first trimester study of early America, Sally offered students the option to virtually attend the American Indian Heritage Celebration at the state’s museum of history. When studying the Declaration of Independence, Sally saw an opportunity to turn Thomas Jefferson’s ancestral home of Monticello into a learning experience: small groups of students took tours of different “rooms” at Monticello, each of which addressed a different aspect of slavery at Jefferson’s plantation. In-person learning experiences were not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Sally attempted to still convey, as much as possible, the wide variety of spaces in which learning about history is possible. By adopting a more student-centered approach and experiential lens to teaching history, Sally hoped to expand students’ perception of what it means to be a citizen of their local, national, and global communities.

Belief in Eighth Graders' Capacity for Critical Citizenship

A defining feature of Sally's vision for citizenship education was her conviction that eighth-grade students are capable of engaging with uncomfortable and critical topics and many are already aware of these issues and want to talk about them. While teachers often cite students' age as a reason for avoiding discussion of controversial topics or political issues in middle school (Conklin, 2011), Sally recognized eighth graders' ability and developmental readiness to adopt a more critical orientation towards citizenship:

> I think we don't give eighth graders enough credit. This might be the last year for them to really uncover and uncrack and explore some topics within social studies before they get into high school and they start thinking about colleges and really start becoming hyper-focused on SAT and ACT scores, transcripts, and athletics. I feel eighth grade is that prime grade for social studies teachers to really dig deep into some content - into some uncomfortable content - and for eighth graders to feel like they can take that risk without a lot of consequences right now. (Interview, October 21, 2020)

Sally regularly expressed to her students her belief and hope in a brighter, more just, and more equitable future because of her students' voices and actions. She hoped to empower her students with the knowledge that they are the changemakers, and frequently made comments directly to her students in which she conveyed the pride or inspiration she gleaned from their ideas. Telling students that "you guys are going to be the people that shape our country" (observation, September 10, 2020), Sally emphasized her students' maturity and ability to "see this more complex, more nuanced vision" (observation, October 12, 2020) of historical figures like Thomas Jefferson and Christopher Columbus who are commonly portrayed as one-dimensional heroes.

She also intentionally pointed out areas in which she hoped the current eighth graders would grow to make improvements upon the actions of past leaders. Referencing the frequent lack of discussion of Native Americans prior to European contact that is typical of many American history textbooks, Sally told students that she was "confident that your generation is going to do this right, and you're going to end up giving a more comprehensive history" (observation, September 10, 2020). Similarly, after playing a video describing how people commonly treat politics and elections like a sport, Sally relayed her hope that "young people can do a much better job than we adults are doing right now, and that you guys will be able to get back to the issues and focus on that" (observation, September 29, 2020).

By consistently asking students to draw and share their own conclusions in large and small group settings, Sally reinforced her statements that students' voices and knowledge were valuable and worth being heard. Through her constant reminders of students' abilities and expressions of hope for the future, Sally not only demonstrated her own ability to imagine a better world but may have helped her students also envision what might be possible and spark or reinforce their motivations and commitments to change society. Despite constraints on possibilities for taking action due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these statements and affirmations were intended to prime students to recognize their potential for taking action and making change.

Commitment to Critical Citizenship Education Despite Pushback. Sally's conviction of the importance of critical citizenship education compelled her to continue teaching alternative narratives and hard histories even when she received negative pushback or pressure from parents or other external forces. During the research study period, two different fathers registered complaints about the content of Sally's instruction. Both of these parents expressed their concern that in discussing racism in class and assigning summer reading and homework that dealt with

police brutality, Sally was pushing an agenda in support of Black Lives Matter or "leftist ideas" (interview, September 4, 2020). While one incident was resolved quickly and appeared to stem largely from a student's misrepresentation of her assignment, the other parent continued to register complaints with the Community School administration about Sally's instructional materials. He found Sally's use of *Upfront* magazine to be problematic because the magazine was published by Scholastic in partnership with *The New York Times* and maintained that if Sally brought up Black Lives Matter it meant that she did not support Trump, and he did not want his daughter exposed to those ideas. Sally eventually removed herself from this interaction so that the father could communicate directly with Community School's director, as she felt that the constant attacks on her identity as a Black woman meant that "I'm actually arguing my humanity" (interview, September 4, 2020).

External factors leading up to the 2020 presidential election also heightened Sally's awareness of the potential for pushback and complaint. In September 2020, President Trump announced he would create a commission to promote "patriotic education" and described the teaching of systemic racism as "a form of child abuse" (Wise, 2020, n.p.). He specifically named the 1619 Project, an initiative from *The New York Times* to reframe history through the lens of the legacy of slavery and contributions of Black Americans (Silverstein, 2019), as a key example of the "web of lies" spun by radical teachers in U.S. schools (Wise, 2020, n.p.).

The pre-assessment questions that Sally used to gauge students' knowledge about slavery and contributions of Black Americans, as well as the *Upfront* article, "6 Myths About Slavery," were both adapted from 1619 Project curricular materials, and Sally felt, "with every word our President says, he's putting a larger target on my back and making it harder for me to do my job" (interview, September 18, 2020). She believed that with the escalating rhetoric and the

demonization of any historical narrative that did not celebrate America's exceptionalism that it would become a fight "just to try to encourage these kids that they too can help make their world better" (interview, September 18, 2020).

In the face of these challenges and potential professional pressures, and "feel[ing] like we have a fight on our hands" (interview, September 18, 2020), Sally remained committed to her vision of history education for critical citizenship. She said, "I want to do my job. This makes it harder for me, but it doesn't deter me, because I feel like I have a responsibility to these children that they feel empowered … to make our world better" (interview, September 18, 2020). Further, she felt that, "I'm doing a disservice to these kids if I don't. If I cave, I'm not doing what I set out to do" as a history teacher (interview, September 18, 2020).

Sally's commitment to valuing and empowering her students' voices, helping her students develop a critical perspective, and imagine and take action towards a better future aligned with her conception of citizenship education and motivated her to continue to teach in the face of potential obstacles and challenges. Yet, she speculated that this kind of pressure may prevent other social studies teachers from teaching in a similar manner. When asked in an interview to react to the framework for critical citizenship education (Johnson & Morris, 2010), Sally could imagine:

> Teachers [would] look at this and feel hesitant about how they might be viewed, about the pushback they would get. And yes, I read this [framework] and I think I would get pushback. But I *have* gotten pushback, and that hasn't stopped me. But I wonder if that would stop someone else. And I *know* it would. I know it would stop other teachers just because they feel like their profession or their jobs might be under fire, under question, and being more risk-averse. (Interview, October 21, 2020)

Sally's reflection revealed that it may require courage and true conviction for teachers to teach for critical citizenship in the face of external pressures. While her teaching environment at Community School assisted Sally in these moments, as she benefitted from school values aligned with social justice and a supportive administrative team, she had taught this way for many years without these supports. Her belief in the necessity of critical citizenship compelled her to continue teaching in spite of these challenges, but she worried about citizenship education in a chaotic and violent sociopolitical context in which the president of the United States portrayed critical educators and critical citizenship as the antithesis of American democracy.

Sally's beliefs about citizenship education were highly influenced by her own experiences with a lack of representation in K-12 social studies classes and previous professional settings. Due largely to these experiences in combination with her own identity as a Black woman, Sally conceived history education as a space for citizenship education and therefore approached her U.S. history course with an emphasis on fostering students' critical interrogation of the past, telling human stories, encouraging students to learn into uncomfortable topics and discussions, and experiential learning. She also adamantly believed in eighth graders' capacity for critical thought and deep investigation of important issues, and frequently reiterated directly to her students that she believed in their abilities to make a better world. Her belief in eighth graders' ability to engage with critical citizenship education and the necessity of doing so compelled her to continue teaching through this lens despite parental pushback and external pressures.

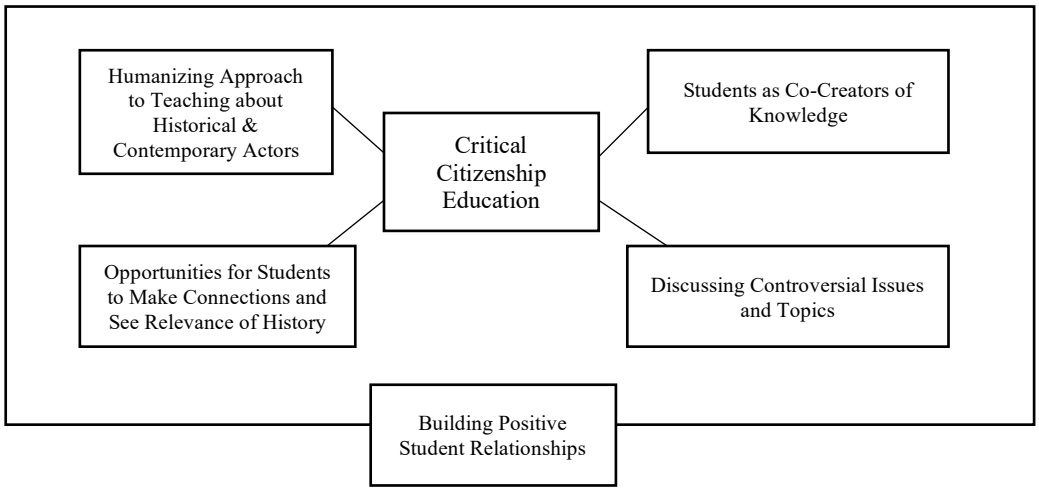
Critical Citizenship Education Enacted

Sally's enactment of critical citizenship education in her U.S. history-focused eighth-grade classroom clustered around five primary themes: taking a humanizing approach to teaching

about historical and contemporary actors, creating opportunities for students to make connections and see the relevance of history, affirming students as co-creators of knowledge, discussing controversial issue and topics, and building positive relationships with students (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Themes Utilized to Understand the Enactment of Critical Citizenship Education



The first four of these themes represent direct connections to Sally's approach to critical citizenship education, expressed through interviews and classroom observations. The fifth theme, building relationships and a positive classroom community, wraps around the other four themes as the context for critical citizenship education. I explore each of these sub-themes in depth in the following sections.

Humanizing Approach to Teaching about Historical and Contemporary Actors

Sally described her curriculum as an attempt to "humanize" people and groups within both historical and contemporary contexts (interview, September 18, 2020). Recalling student research about Native American tribes from previous years, she described students "completely focus[ing] on feathers and teepees and stereotypical things" (interview, September 18, 2020). Sally contrasted those experiences with those of her current students, with whom she spent more

time teaching the "history of Native Americans, where they've lived, how long they've lived here, and how expansive [their civilizations were]" (interview, September 18, 2020). She noted that she did not see that type of stereotypical representation of Native Americans in the work of her current students and concluded that it may have been partially due to "going in that direction – taking time to humanize these people and taking time to make sure that these kids know that these people are not extinct" (interview, September 18, 2020). Sally's desire to "humanize" people extended beyond this one example to her broader approach to teaching history as she intended to help students move beyond a stereotypical understanding of history and to engage in considerations of complicated human decision-making. Her three-pronged humanizing approach focused on asking students to "dig into the complexity" of people by investigating the nuances of famous historical figures, directly confronting existing stereotypes and misconceptions about people, groups, and events, and sharing her own sense of identity and self-worth (see Table 7).

Table 7

Sub-Themes: Humanizing Approach to Teaching about Historical and Contemporary Actors

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
"Digging into the complexity" of people	Students explore accomplishments and mistakes of historical figures	*Complexity rests at his core. We need to look at not only the wonderful things Thomas Jefferson has done for our country but also some of those things that may have contradicted some of those great things he did for this country.*
Directly addressing stereotypes & misconceptions	Teacher refutes common stereotypes or misunderstandings about people or groups, verbally or through instructional materials	*A lot of people assume that people brought over from Africa did not have education or did not know how to write, so this blows our assumptions.*
Sharing own sense of identity and self-worth	Teacher shares elements of her own identity as a Black woman in United States	*If 80% of their cargo – and I hate to say it like that, because some of these people are my relatives.*

"Digging Into the Complexity" of People. As an instructor of history, a discipline that centers on the interactions and lives of people, Sally aimed to help her students move beyond the traditional narratives of mythologizing heroes and individual actions that Barton and Levstik (2004) found to be common in contemporary social studies textbooks. Exploring both the accomplishments and mistakes of historical figures made history more accessible for students and complicated their understanding of previously one-dimensional heroes. Sally sought to highlight the complexities inherent in the lives and actions of famous historical figures such as Christopher Columbus and Thomas Jefferson.

For example, when introducing a lesson on Christopher Columbus, Sally asked students to share the information they had learned about Columbus as children, then had students compare the narrative of Columbus told by two different educational videos. One video, with animated characters and upbeat music, offered a heroic view of Columbus' accomplishments, while the second video provided a more nuanced and critical view of Columbus and detailed his role as an enslaver of Native Americans who would behead his slaves as punishment for slow or insufficient work. Students reflected upon what they had learned about Columbus as a child in comparison with what Sally told them was a "more complex, more nuanced vision of Columbus" portrayed by the second video (observation, October 12, 2020). Their learning was supplemented by reading excerpts from Columbus' personal journals and watching a short video that featured contemporary perspectives from Native Americans and Italian Americans, who each had a different perspective on the celebration of Columbus Day. Each of these perspectives and sources contributed to students' understanding of Columbus as a complex and flawed person, rather than simply a one-dimensional American hero who had discovered the New World. At the conclusion of the lesson students shared written opinions in the chat, based upon these sources,

about how the United States should celebrate Columbus Day. To share their view, students wrote a greeting card line, such as “Happy Columbus Day!” or “Happy Indigenous People's Day!” (observation, October 12, 2020).

Sally took a similar approach to introducing the other European explorers who helped conquer and colonize what would become early America. Stating that she wanted to “shift away from this idea of ‘they found the New World, and they’re exploring’” (interview, September 18, 2020), Sally sought to reframe students’ understanding of the Age of Exploration by highlighting the push factors that would cause explorers to leave their homelands, rather than focusing on the supposedly heroic deeds of individual men. Noting that traditional curricula and narratives have made them “larger than life … we don’t look at them as human” (interview, September 18, 2020), Sally’s two-lesson lecture series around European explorers focused on the problems facing Europeans at home. She highlighted obstacles like overpopulation, deforestation, constant war, and poverty in Europe, helping students understand the various motivations that might propel humans to leave their homeland for a place they have never been (artifact, September 16, 2020) – a theme that could be investigated at many points throughout history.

By reframing historical figures as whole people who made morally complex decisions and actions, Sally hoped for students to be able to identify connections to current times and to their own lives. She explained this purpose explicitly to her students in relation to Thomas Jefferson. In advance of the lesson in which students learned about Thomas Jefferson’s role as an enslaver, Sally told her students:

> At the heart of Thomas Jefferson which we cannot ignore, and as your history teacher I feel like I would be doing you a disservice … is the complexity of Thomas Jefferson … because I think this is reflective of the complexity that rests at America’s core. We often

> say things that [we] emulate or that we profess to do, but we actually do another. And Thomas Jefferson was like this. And I feel like it's a great reflection of how our country is. Complexity rests at his core. We need to look at not only the wonderful things Thomas Jefferson has done for our country but also some of those things that may have contradicted some of those great things he did for this country. So we're going to learn about this complexity, really, so we can better learn about ourselves … as citizens. (Observation, October 21, 2020)

Sally taught students that Thomas Jefferson was both the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, declaring equality for all men, and at the same time an enslaver who owned hundreds of human beings throughout his lifetime. Through her comments and the lesson that followed, Sally offered students an opportunity to engage with the multidimensional reality of humanity, that both egregious mistakes and historic achievements can exist side-by-side. This more nuanced understanding of Thomas Jefferson was intended to help build students' capacity for critical citizenship. It may be difficult for students to interrogate assumptions or understand systems of power if historical figures are held up as one-dimensional heroes without flaws. Opening up the actions or motivations of famous heroes to critique and questioning may help students think about history in a more nuanced and complicated way.

Directly Addressing Stereotypes and Misconceptions. To reinforce her efforts to move student understanding beyond stereotypes, Sally made verbal comments and structured assignments so that they refuted common assumptions or corrected misconceptions about people or events. For example, when sharing answers from a worksheet that students completed about a documentary on the Sudanese Civil War at the beginning of the year, Sally asked how many students knew that racism was such an issue on the continent of Africa. When most students

replied no, Sally continued that "yes, a lot of people think that people in Africa are kind of the same, but there are different religions [and] races" (observation, August 25, 2020). Here, she refuted a common misperception of African people and African culture as homogenous entities. Discussing the autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, a Senegalese man who was captured, enslaved, and transported to America, Sally reminded students that this kind of primary source, translated from the original Arabic, "is quite a big deal in the historical world because a lot of people assume that people brought over from Africa did not have education or did not know how to write, so this blows our assumptions" (observation, September 13, 2020). Sally made similar observations about the practice of slavery more generally, telling her students that "it's not often talked about … that slavery existed in all thirteen colonies, not just the South" (observation, September 13, 2020) and that:

> People like to say … back in the 1700s they didn't know slavery was wrong, that it was just something everybody did. No, no, no, that couldn't be further from the truth … There was this ongoing longstanding feud, long before the American Revolution or Civil War, that they were debating about slavery. (Observation, October 19, 2020)

Here again Sally acknowledged and then directly refuted misconceptions. Sally often framed her comments addressing misperceptions or incorrect assumptions as "a lot of people assume" or "we sometimes think," which served to acknowledge students' prior misconceptions but also, without evoking guilt or shame, encouraged them to consider other perspectives that may provide a more nuanced, accurate, and holistic view of the truth.

She took this direct approach to addressing misconceptions when teaching about Native Americans, noting that "there's a lot of people who didn't know unfortunately that Native Americans exist, and they do. They exist. They have traditions … they have their own identity"

(observation, September 10, 2020). Students conducted research on the state's eight recognized tribes, using the tribes' official websites as their source of information. By assigning students to research the Native American tribes using the tribes' own information, as well as requiring students to report on recent news, most of which focused on each tribe's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sally emphasized that Native Americans are people who still live and exist today, facing many of the same issues and challenges experienced by the students in her classroom.

When possible, Sally used instructional materials that explicitly stated and refuted common misconceptions. In the same lesson about Native Americans, Sally showed students a video from Teen Vogue, "6 Misconceptions about Native American People," in which four Native American teenagers responded to common stereotypes about Native Americans such as "Native Americans still live in teepees," and "Native Americans get rich off casinos" (observation, September 10, 2020). This video directly refuted inaccurate assumptions about Native Americans and reminded students that Native Americans still live today. In the next unit focusing on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, students read an article from *Upfront* magazine entitled, "6 Myths About Slavery," which refuted, using evidence, the myth that enslaved people rarely fought back (artifact, September 25, 2020). Framing enslaved people as advocates for their own liberation, the authors of the article refuted the misconception that enslaved people were helpless victims of slavery who lacked agency. Sally incorporated these materials into her instruction in an attempt to reframe the perceived main actors in the historical narrative, so that students could see a "variety of leaders" and change agents (interview, September 25, 2020). These contemporary pieces of journalism also reminded students that they were not studying past peoples, but instead learning the histories of people who exist and live today.

Sharing Her Own Sense of Identity and Self-Worth. Sally's sense of identity as a Black woman was a particularly salient component of her own critical orientation towards citizenship. She openly shared her identity with students in her classroom through her use of her bitmoji[2] and sharing of her own experiences as a participant in the summer protests for racial justice following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 (Haworth et al., 2020). The capital city in which Community School is located saw many weeks of protest and included nightly curfews and some instances of violence and looting in the downtown area. Upon returning to school in mid-August, Community School students and staff were acutely aware of the events of the summer and the events happening in their local community.

Within this context, Community School teachers included their bitmojis in the slideshow through which students accessed their daily class schedules as a way of personalizing an entirely online school environment. Sally dressed her bitmoji each day in a Black Lives Matter t-shirt. The real Sally also frequently herself dressed in expressive t-shirts that proclaimed elements of her identity, such as "Rosa Parks & Rec Department" (observation, August 31, 2020), "abolitionist" (observation, August 28, 2020), and "beautiful in every shade" (observation, September 1, 2020). On another occasion, Sally shared that her son and daughter had marched in the protests and that Sally had handed out Black Lives Matter flyers. These expressions revealed her own identity and activism and modeled for students that good citizens take action and work for change.

In addition to her self-expression, Sally also infused reflections upon her own identity into her presentation of curricular content. Early in the year, as both a relationship-building

[2] Bitmojis are personal avatars designed to look like cartoon versions of individuals. See bitmoji.com

activity and entry into a larger long-term conversation about identity, students wrote their own "Where I'm From" poems[3] to share some of their formative experiences and lasting family memories. Modeling the final product for her students in the form of an Adobe Spark video, Sally's own "Where I'm From" poem ended with these lines, which she narrated over a split-screen image containing a photograph from the 1963 March on Washington and a photograph from a 2020 Black Lives Matter protest:

> From the lynching Lizzie Shackleford escaped in Fort Worth, Texas
>
> To the haven created for the [family name] to flourish in Medina, Ohio.…
>
> I am from a fierceness, and a boldness, and a refusal to bend
>
> I am from the thrones of Africa, the cries of black lives, the rebirth in Ohio, and the promise of tomorrow. (Observation, September 2, 2020)

Through her poem, Sally demonstrated her understanding of the histories and traumas that shape the unique experience of being Black in America, which contributes to her knowledge of her own position, culture, and identity in addition to a deeper understanding of power structures in America. She continued to remind students of her lived realities during her lecture on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, noting that enslaved persons were considered cargo and that she "hate[d] to say it like that, because some of these people are my relatives" (observation, September 23, 2020). Acknowledging the continued legacy of slavery, Sally told students in this same lecture that African Americans have been in many cases unable to accurately trace their lineage "because their names were stripped from them and their cultures were stripped from them … I have been on several sites trying to reconcile my ancestry, my history, my relatives"

[3] Poem first developed and published by George Ella Lyon, popularized as a school writing prompt. See http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html

(observation, September 23, 2020). Sally's openness about her family's history and uncertain ancestry revealed her own humanity as a Black woman living in America today, and was another reminder to students that they were studying not just past peoples but also learning the history of people who live in the United States today.

Opportunities for Students to Make Connections and See Relevance of History

To foster students' critical citizenship, Sally recognized the need to help students relate to what they are learning in history class. Students traditionally do not like social studies, largely due to the perceived irrelevance of the subject matter and lack of clear importance or connection to current events, modern times, and students' everyday lives (Heafner, 2004; Schug et al., 1984). If history is presented as facts to be memorized, then there is no opportunity for deeper analysis or a critical orientation towards systems, structures, and power relationships. Sally sought to combat these common reactions to social studies by helping students identify historical patterns, normalizing critiques of traditional social studies curricula, and incorporating current events into the history curriculum (see Table 8).

Sally attempted to elicit students' recognition of the relevance of history by reframing history as open to interpretation, rather than as a static body of facts to be memorized. Students' perception of the relevance of history and its connection to the world beyond school are important for critical citizenship since understanding of systemic injustices and legacy of oppression are rooted in historical knowledge.

Table 8

Sub-Themes: Opportunities for Students to Make Connections and See Relevance of History

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
Identifying historical patterns	Highlighting themes throughout different eras or places in history, such as conflict over resources	*What similarities do you notice between Sudan's history and what you already know about American history?*
Normalizing critiques of traditional social studies curricula	Teacher models the questioning of textbooks and other sources of typical social studies narratives	*It's really important when we study American history that we begin with when the first people arrived on the land- the Native Americans. Sometimes this is overlooked, sometimes this is given a scant reference.*
Incorporating current events	Teacher includes current events (summer and fall 2020) in the curricula, such as the presidential election & COVID-19 pandemic	*Your standard this year is American history so we always take this opportunity to discuss the democracy within our country and to read about the current events in our country.*

Identifying Historical Patterns. Sally helped students identify historical patterns and themes that transcended geography and time, such as the potential for conflict over resources, the influence of issues of slavery and racism, differences in ethnicity and religion, and push and pull factors of migration. For example, early in the year, Sally established the expectation that students would regularly think critically to make connections between new and prior knowledge. She used the prior knowledge students brought from the seventh-grade world history curriculum as a bridge to eighth grade's focus on American history. Students watched a documentary on the Sudanese Civil War in the first week of class based on their *A Long Walk to Water* summer reading assignment. Two of the questions Sally included on the viewing guide were: "What similarities do you notice between Sudan's history and what you already know about American history?" and "How has slavery, race, and the British played a role in conflict in the Sudan?" (artifact, August 21, 2020). Here Sally asked students to draw comparisons between Sudan and their prior knowledge of American history on issues related to colonization, slavery, and race.

When students shared out the answers to their documentary viewing guide worksheet, Adam commented in the chat that "both sides were not budging so [they should] just split up" (observation, August 25, 2020). Sally's response was to encourage Adam to continue to reflect on his proposed solution to conflict, previewing their study of the American Civil War when "the Southern states decided to be their own country and became the Confederacy, but that turned out not to be too simple either" (observation, August 25, 2020). Sally again drew explicit connections to the American Civil War when discussing how the discovery of oil in southern Sudan complicated the relationship between the north and south by asking students to share in the chat what issues complicated the American Civil War. Students shared insights such as "tax," "not just slavery," "tea tax," "money," "laws," and "slavery" (observation, August 25, 2020), revealing many students' established understanding of the complex conflict between the northern and southern states. Activating students' prior knowledge was a way for Sally to assess students' existing knowledge and identify where it might be necessary to explicitly address misconceptions or incorrect assumptions.

Sally's emphasis on historical patterns and themes often aligned with her attempts to avoid creating one-dimensional heroes. For example, Sally sought to reframe students' perspective towards European explorers by emphasizing in her lecture the push factors causing them to leave their homelands, rather than highlighting only individual brave or heroic deeds. By doing so, Sally intended to return to these themes later in the year with different groups of people in different time periods. Sally planned to return to those push and pull factors when she taught about modern immigration issues and discussed immigration from Mexico and the U.S. southern border later in the year. Describing her intention, Sally envisioned explaining to students that:

> Some of these push and pull factors that you're going to study when we're talking about America and Mexico are the same push and pull factors that occurred when Europeans left in the 20th century, in the 19th century, from Europe, Eastern Russia - those are the same. (Interview, September 18, 2020)

Purposefully drawing connections between eras and groups in American history also served Sally's larger effort to work beyond common stereotypes of groups of people, particularly those with frequently negative public connotations, such as Mexican and Latin American immigrants. In contrast to viewing history as a series of disconnected events or the results of individual heroic acts, Sally hoped that her efforts to identify historical patterns would help students conceptualize history as a complex, interconnected web of events, concepts, and consequences and would facilitate their understanding of the potential long-term reverberations of decisions and actions.

Normalizing Critiques of Traditional Social Studies Curricula. As part of her effort to reframe history as being open to interpretation, Sally modeled critiquing and asking questions of the past so as to model these habits for students. Sally regularly critiqued traditional social studies textbooks and curricula, modeling her own critical perspective and habits of questioning. These practices suggested to students that there is more than one way to understand or study history, that history is open to interpretation, and that textbooks and other historical sources can be fallible. Sally directly addressed these habits, as well as the need for engaging in critique and questioning, when she told her students,

> All of these things that have happened in history, it's not to look down on someone. It's not to say, "Oh, humans are such awful, awful species" – which, and sometimes we can be! But my purpose in loving history and in teaching it is that I have the privilege of

> empowering you with this knowledge so that you guys can do things about it. We've done some great things, but we've also done some things that we need to solve. And I think you guys have the power to solve it. (Observation, September 23, 2020)

Sally explicitly tied her critiques of the past and of historical figures to her belief in students' ability to imagine and create a better world using the knowledge of past mistakes.

Sally directly identified areas in which traditional curricula and instructional materials are insufficient or incomplete. She began a lecture on indigenous groups in North America by emphasizing that they had lived for thousands of years prior to European contact. She used this as an opportunity to question how textbooks often ignore this reality:

> Some textbooks do a good job [of beginning with Native Americans], and some don't do such a good job. Some social studies lessons start with European contact … and we think here in *Humanities* that we should start with the first peoples that arrived here. (Observation, September 10, 2020)

Sally not only spent time teaching about early Native American life and the "quite powerful empires … [with] civilizations and languages" (observation, September 16, 2020) that existed prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus, but also used the typical treatment of these groups in textbooks to help students understand the interpretive nature of history. Her comments invited students to consider that standard materials can be flawed and should be evaluated through a critical lens.

Introducing a student project exploring the eight recognized tribes in the state, Sally again critiqued the typical teaching of history around Native Americans while highlighting the relevance of Native American history to the eighth-grade curriculum. She told her students, "the way we teach is that Native Americans are in the past. [But] there are five million Native

Americans living in the United States. [Learning about Native Americans is] current news, and it's geography" (observation, September 11, 2020). In the project that followed, students researched and presented on each tribe's current geographic location and paths of migration, as well as their current tribal news, cementing the reality of Sally's critique that Native Americans continue to actively live in the United States today. Her modeling of critique in this way also served to build a more three-dimensional vision of Native Americans as humans. She similarly exposed the veneration of historical figures, beginning as early as her lecture on European exploration when she told students that "not much is known about [Hernán Cortés'] personality because of history's tendency to heroize people during this period" (observation, September 16, 2020).

Sally's critiques and questions expanded to thoughtful consideration of language and terminology, even those widely used in traditional curricula or textbooks. She invited students to consider the description of the New World being "quote/unquote discovered by Christopher Columbus" (observation, September 16, 2020), emphasizing the vast Incan and Aztec empires and other Native American civilizations and languages already in the Americas before Columbus. She explained to students, "'discovered' is kind of a nebulous term. Discovered for the Europeans" (observation, September 16, 2020). In another instance, as students began their study of Native American tribes, Sally told students during her lecture that "the prominent Native American groups in the south were known as the five civilized tribes, and we'll have some talk about why they were called that. You know, that might be problematic" (observation, September 10, 2020). Through her focus on specific words, Sally problematized language and demonstrated her own understanding of the ways in which knowledge and language can be tied to power or injustice.

Sally connected this perspective on language back to her own model of critical citizenship. She displayed her own capacity for change when discussing the 1918 flu pandemic. Students read an *Upfront* article, "Pandemic!," in which the author explained that the 1918 pandemic became known as the "Spanish Flu" because Spain's lack of involvement in World War II meant that the Spanish media was the least censored and therefore reported on the pandemic most fully (artifact, September 8, 2020). Sally reflected upon the impact of the article on her own teaching practice and use of language. She told her students:

> I always knew it was called the "Spanish Flu" primarily because Spain was the first to report it, but in reading our article and reading it more deeply, I didn't know that Spain was one of the first ones to report on it consistently. So I'm going to make more of an effort to not call it the "Spanish Flu." Because that's how I would introduce it, not really realizing the connotations or the ideas we have about blaming it on Spain, and maybe I'm doing the wrong thing about spreading that wrong information to children. I'm going to change that. I didn't know I was helping to spread stuff like that, so I'm going to change it. (Observation, September 9, 2020)

Through her admission of her own past misunderstandings, Sally modeled for her students the need to be continually self-reflective and critical even of one's own knowledge, as well as the capacity to make a conscious choice to improve upon these missteps in the future. Sally's statement to her students reinforced her own humanity, since all people are capable of learning new information and making changes based on that new knowledge. She also modeled true praxis, even in this small way – an action and commitment to change based on informed and responsible reflection. Sally's own demonstration of praxis here reinforced her reminders to

students of their capacity to make change and "right the wrongs of past textbooks" (observation, September 10, 2020).

Incorporating Current Events. Sally regularly incorporated and addressed current events in her classroom as a way to both build students' background knowledge of government systems and founding documents and to connect students to their community, illustrating the relevance of history. In the first week of the school year, students read an article from *Upfront* magazine, a current events resource intended for high school students, that detailed the differences between presidential candidates Donald Trump and Joe Biden, their views on major issues, and general election-related statistics such as the electoral map and voter turnout calculations (artifact, August 28, 2020).

Two weeks later, students spent a class period learning about the presidential election process and the Electoral College. Using material created by iCivics, a popular organization promoting civic education and active citizenship, students read about the function and structure of the Electoral College and built their background knowledge about this uniquely American governmental system. During the lesson, students completed tasks such as comparing the election processes for a congressional versus presidential election and matching vocabulary words with their definitions (artifact, September 15, 2020). The instructional materials used in this lesson were surprisingly uncritical given the nature of the content, as students were not asked to grapple with the undemocratic nature of the Electoral College or consider whether it should be abolished, as many have called for, nor were they introduced to the outsized role of money and political action committees in the campaign process. However, Sally intended for this lesson to serve as an introduction to learning about government systems and the presidential election processes. The Electoral College is a complicated and uniquely American system, and the results

of a pre-assessment that Sally assigned indicated that few students had any prior knowledge about the institution (observation, September 15, 2020). In this case, the complexity and unfamiliarity of the content may have necessitated building students' background content knowledge prior to them being able to approach the concepts through a more critical lens.

In addition to the one day per week of class time that Sally explicitly dedicated to current events, she also made verbal connections to current events when they were relevant to that day's historical content. For example, when students shared out their modern-day translations of the text of the Declaration of Independence, Sally highlighted the current relevance of the Declaration's claim that people have the right to "alter or abolish" a government when it becomes destructive:

> That's why the Declaration is such an important document. This is a living document. This document is still in play. American people, they have the right, every four years, to reflect … as American people, we are also reflecting on our leader right now … We're undergoing a reflection process right now, where we're looking at our leader, and the American people are deciding, do we elect a new government, a new leader, or do we keep this government going for four more years? So this line here is still important … if the government becomes destructive, we have the right to abolish it and elect a new government … this makes us distinct. (Observation, October 20, 2020)

Through this statement, Sally highlighted the purpose of early American founding documents while also emphasizing their continued relevance in today's democratic processes and in people's everyday lives. She also modeled the identification of connections between current events and their historical roots that is a hallmark of a critical orientation towards citizenship.

Given the complex sociopolitical context of the summer and fall of 2020 in combination with Community School's central location downtown in a state capital, the inclusion of current events during social studies class was an accessible means of engaging students with their local community and promoting a deeper understanding of the relevance of social studies and history. While the school's emphasis on experiential learning was constrained by virtual-only learning and the COVID-19 pandemic, Sally continued to envision a social studies classroom that transcended the walls of the physical classroom or the computer screen. When one of the eighth-grade students was interviewed by the local news channel while cleaning up graffiti the morning after a protest turned violent, Sally lauded the active participation of this "upstanding citizen," describing how the student "talks about how downtown is our school, which it is – we don't learn in the classroom like other schools do – and [the student] and her dad talked about how they were cleaning up their school" (observation, August 31, 2020). Visualizing her ideal classroom, Sally saw "a diverse eighth-grade class analyzing statues [and] the remembrance culture of Confederate statues downtown … because that's just a Wednesday. That's just what they do" (interview, October 21, 2020).

Sally understood that students would be more likely to see the relevance of history when they were able to "experience [it] and how it affects them," rather than just reading about these events and issues (interview, October 21, 2020). She therefore attempted to tie together current events with local action, although this was difficult during the research period due to the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. In her teacher journal, Sally privately reflected that she would "like to figure out how to get students active about the election or census" but acknowledged that it would be "extra tough considering the pandemic" (September 18, 2020). Relating current events to the local community and highlighting citizen action, when possible,

were intended to underline the relevance of history and prime students' capabilities for reflection, action, and engagement, united together in "praxis."

In one notable example of connecting historical content and current events, on the second weekly current event day, students read an *Upfront* article, "Pandemic," that described the 1918 flu pandemic at the end of World War I. As they read, students completed a worksheet of guiding questions in which they considered the steps taken – and not – to stop the spread of the flu, as well as some positives that came out of the pandemic. Sally framed the reading and worksheet around the larger compelling question of "what ethical dilemmas might a pandemic give rise to?" (artifact, September 8, 2020), which allowed students to immediately relate this historical event to their own lives during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Here Sally was able to combine the identification of historical patterns, opportunity for critique, and incorporation of current events into one lesson. Student responses demonstrated their social awareness, sense of responsibility for their own actions, and commitments against injustice. For example, students noted that ethical dilemmas in a pandemic might include choosing between "protest[ing for] something very important, like racism, [versus] stay[ing] home to keep others safe;" giving up freedoms "for the good of the world;" deciding whether it is "worth risking infection for religious practices;" "prioritiz[ing] comfort over the health of people everywhere;" and "hatred towards others for little to no reason" – the last student citing the uptick in discrimination against Asians and Asian-Americans due to the novel coronavirus' origin in China (observation, September 11, 2020). Through these discussions, it was evident that students could connect the historical event they were reading about to the current issues affecting them today, demonstrating the relevance of history.

While incorporating readings and discussions about current events may have fostered a deeper sense of the relevance of social studies to students' lives, Sally recognized the need to further contextualize current events as part of the historical narrative. Discussing the relationship between the summer's protests for racial justice and the history of systemic racism and oppression in the United States, Sally commented that,

> A lot of [the students] were aware, of course, of the protests, and the rioting, and the acts of violence from this summer. They're aware of the recent acts of violence. It seems like very few are cognizant of how the structure has been put into place from the beginning, and how the foundation has been laid – how these things did not just happen, right then, this summer. (Interview, December 4, 2020)

To truly foster a critical orientation towards citizenship, students must engage directly with the historical roots of these current events and confront issues of White supremacy and racism. Student awareness of current events and present injustices is a crucial and productive foundation of knowledge, but students must also be supported in moving towards a more critical perspective of history, culture, and power.

Students as Co-Creators of Knowledge

Sally strongly believed that her students were capable of deep critical thinking, forming thoughtful opinions about current events and historical questions, and contributing to the creation of knowledge within the classroom. She frequently conveyed these beliefs directly to her students and emphasized the importance of students using their own voices and learning to speak up. Sally explicitly linked students' use of their voices in class to one of the core values of Community School, social empowerment, which she told her students "means getting up and speaking in front of others and finding your voice and using your voice" (observation, August

31, 2020). To reinforce her statements, Sally structured social studies instruction so that students had opportunities to engage with a variety of viewpoints and perspectives, draw their own conclusions, and take responsibility for their own learning through peer teaching (see Table 9).

Table 9

Sub-Themes: Students as Co-Creators of Knowledge

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
Students engaging with multiple perspectives and drawing conclusions	Students utilize multiple sources & perspectives to develop their own viewpoint or opinion about an issue or question	*How should we remember Thomas Jefferson? What is his legacy – his contribution to the United States?*
Peer teaching	Students verbally share the results of their research or text analyses with the class to instruct their classmates about a particular historical event or concept	*Presenting is going to be something we're going to do quite often in eighth grade.*

Students Engaging with Multiple Perspectives and Drawing Conclusions. One of Sally's main goals for her eighth-grade social studies class was to expose students to a variety of perspectives, particularly those that may be considered outside of the mainstream and that may not often be taught in schools. She believed, "young people get so much value when they're able to read direct sources from that time period, rather than my opinion, or rather than textbooks' opinions about the subject" (interview, October 16, 2020). Sally utilized primary sources as one of many perspectives whenever possible and asked students to make inferences and answer open-ended questions with their own opinion after reflecting upon the various perspectives with which they had engaged. Central to Sally's prioritization of student voices was providing opportunities for students to share their conclusions and opinions with their peers.

For example, when learning about the early English settlement at Jamestown, students read two different accounts, both written by John Smith, in which he detailed his capture and release by Chief Powhatan (Wahunsenacawh), ruler of the Powhatan people in the Chesapeake

Bay region around Jamestown (artifact, September 18, 2020). In the same lesson, students analyzed English maps of the land that would become Virginia, compared an illustration of John Smith with one of Pocahontas, and made inferences about Native American community life based on visual representations of different Native American settlements (artifact, September 18, 2020). Considering how and why accounts and reports might differ was an exercise in historical thinking that also prompted students to consider the importance of the source, author, context, and purpose of historical documents.

Sally aligned this analysis of primary and secondary sources representing multiple viewpoints and perspectives with broad open-ended questions that required students to make inferences and draw conclusions about the content. For example, Sally framed her class' exploration of Christopher Columbus with the question of "How should we celebrate Columbus Day?" (artifact, October 12, 2020) and highlighted the nuances and complexity of Thomas Jefferson by asking students to decide "How should we remember Thomas Jefferson? What is his legacy – his contribution to the United States?" (artifact, October 21, 2020). Sally was adamant that students come to these conclusions on their own, with the support of the readings but without any involvement from the teacher. Commenting that, "I don't want them to arrive to my conclusion. It's really important to me that they arrive to their own conclusion" (interview, September 2, 2020), Sally believed that this type of student autonomy was necessary for students to develop critical thinking skills and confidence in their own voices.

Sally attempted to underline the value of students' voices by highlighting the diversity of perspectives within the class and the importance of these varied voices for students' future efforts at change. She stated that making space for students to draw and publicly share their own conclusions was critical for students in an American society because in this country "people do

not think the same … when they're adults and they're running things, it's important to realize that people do not think the same. They never will. And there's value in that. There is value in the diversity of thought" (interview, October 16, 2020). On Columbus Day, students' evaluation of perspectives about Columbus himself and Columbus Day as an observed holiday concluded with a share-out of how they would name this day if they were writing greeting cards. Students shared their responses in the chat, which ranged from celebrating Columbus Day to celebrating Indigenous People's Day to removing the holiday altogether. Reading students' chat responses aloud, Sally concluded the class by stating that,

> You guys are all right. History is controversial. I think the value is in having this discussion - not necessarily one student being right over another. But I think the value is most of us agree that the discussion needs to be had. And that's the value I place in today, in Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day. And that we don't just need to learn about the "1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue," it takes away from the Taino and Native Americans. Happy history day! That's going to be my day - talking about it. (Observation, October 12, 2020)

Rather than prioritizing one view, Sally considered the primary value of this exchange to be the demonstration of a variety of viewpoints within one classroom. Regardless of students' conclusions, the discussion was valuable for the development of critical citizens who would participate in an American society that is also full of an increasingly diverse set of opinions and perspectives.

Sally leveraged technology tools, common in the virtual-only learning environment, to reveal the existence of multiple perspectives within the classroom. Students frequently completed assignments and knowledge pre-assessments using Google Forms and Google Docs

and the instructor was able to view all student responses at one time relatively easily. Sally compiled and shared students' anonymous responses to critical and thought-provoking questions as a means of demonstrating students' wide range of beliefs and experiences. These questions included students' experiences learning about slavery, their knowledge of Black Americans' contributions to American history, their perception of the legacy of slavery in the United States, and potential ethical dilemmas caused by a pandemic. Sally asked students to simply read their classmates' perspectives as she shared her screen and scrolled through responses, then asked students to record any themes that they identified from the responses. Students submitted a range of responses, most notably around their experiences learning about slavery and Black history. While most students remembered learning about slavery in elementary school, a few students offered that they learned about slavery as part of their family's history, like the student who commented, "My mom told me about slavery. I learned that we were from Africa, we got stolen and came to America. [When I learned about it] I was confused and scared" (observation, September 22, 2020). Very few students were able to identify contributions of Black Americans beyond slavery or individual people like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, or President Barack Obama; a common response was "don't know" or "idk" (observation, September 22, 2020).

Whenever possible, Sally included the perspectives of teenagers in her instructional materials, again demonstrating the importance of young people's voices. She shared this conviction with her students as well, telling them that "I want you guys to hear from teenagers, because you guys are going to be the people that shape our country. So it's important to know how all of you think" (observation, September 10, 2020). The teenage voices that Sally included were usually young people of color or from misrepresented or underrepresented groups, like Native Americans teenagers addressing stereotypes and misconceptions about Native Americans,

and Asian-Americans and Black Americans recounting their personal experiences with race and racism in the United States. These stories therefore were intended to serve multiple purposes, as they offered a valuable voice for young people and may have helped students move beyond common stereotypes associated with those groups.

Peer Teaching. Requiring students to teach their classmates helped students take responsibility for their own actions and learning. Sally intended for these instances of peer teaching to serve as opportunities for students to see their own agency and value in their classroom space. She hoped that asking students to share content information with their classmates would highlight students' roles as creators of and contributors to class knowledge.

For example, students frequently shared the final products of their major individual projects with their classmates. During the observation period, students shared a Google Tour they had created to highlight one element of Sudanese history related to the Sudanese Civil War (observation, August 31, 2020) as well as Twitter pages that they had made from the perspective of one historical figure involved in the convergence of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans on North American land (observation, September 30, 2020). At the beginning of the year, these project share-out breakout rooms had varied success. Students were not always finished with their projects, and many students were hesitant to speak in their small groups. These occurrences during the first attempted share-out session of the Google Tour project prompted Anne to remind students that "due dates are due dates … deadlines are deadlines, even in the virtual world" (observation, August 31, 2020). Sally reiterated that a virtual learning environment did not change her expectations for participation, that "even though we're over Zoom, that's not going to go away" (observation, August 31, 2020). Sally told her students that "presenting is going to be something we're going to do quite often in eighth grade. No, it's not

something you're going to be perfect at, but you'll get better over time" (observation, August 31, 2020).

Students consistently worked in cooperative small groups or as a whole class as a means of developing students' skills of working together. Sally frequently used a modified jigsaw technique[4] to facilitate student sharing of new knowledge with one another. Students worked in cooperative groups to prepare and share presentations on the eight state-recognized Native American tribes (observation, September 14, 2020), key moments of the American Revolutionary War (artifact, October 13-14, 2020), and elements of Thomas Jefferson's attitudes towards slavery based on different rooms at Monticello (observation, October 21, 2020).

Sally also employed the jigsaw technique to facilitate students' sharing of their own interpretations of text, rather than simply sharing the results of research or segments of teacher-assigned factual content. For example, students made inferences based on a series of primary sources related to the Jamestown colony, and small groups of students shared out their analysis of an individual source with the whole class (observation, September 21, 2020). Later in the year, students worked in small groups to translate excerpts from the Declaration of Independence into modern-day language, then shared those interpretations with the class (observation, October 19-20, 2020). In both cases, students recorded their classmates' interpretations to complete their notes worksheets.

While student verbal participation was not always equal due to some students' hesitancy to speak up in small groups or in the whole class setting, Sally's use of these instructional practices was intended to convey a clear message to students that their voices were valuable and

[4] The jigsaw technique is a cooperative learning strategy in which students become "experts" in a small portion of the content for the bigger lesson and then teach their segment of knowledge to the rest of the class. See https://www.jigsaw.org/

that their conclusions were important and worthwhile. Sally continued to remind students of the schoolwide mission of social empowerment as well as her own expectation that students would share their perspectives and present their work in her class. Implementing opportunities for peer teaching also signaled to students that Sally believed them to be capable of the deep critical thinking and analysis that were required by the assignments, particularly those necessitating interpretation. As Sally demonstrates, it is difficult to build habits of engagement and participation if students perceive their voices to be unimportant or not valued. By contrast, a habit of active participation within the classroom setting demonstrates to students that the expectation is to be involved and to speak up, even if they are not always right.

Discussing Controversial Issues and Topics

In alignment with Community School's commitment to a challenging, relevant education and learning environment in which teachers engage students in current, relevant issues, Sally believed that engaging students in controversial issues was an important part of her approach to critical citizenship education. There is an important distinction in how Sally treated controversy in her classroom and the extent to which she shared her opinions and perspectives about those issues that seems to align with Ho et al.'s (2017) characterization of controversial issues versus controversial topics. Ho et al. (2017) noted the difference between controversial issues, which are open to debate and require students to make some judgment or opinion, and controversial topics, which are subject matter that "some adults may find objectionable but that does not necessarily have more than one side" (p. 323). The different ways in which Sally approached teaching controversial issues and controversial topics in her classroom were exemplified through her treatment of the 2020 presidential election and of the role of White supremacy and racism in American history. She treated the presidential election as a controversial issue, open to debate,

and approached the realities of White supremacy and racism as controversial topics that would be covered in the curriculum despite potential pushback. Within this context, Sally made decisions about what opinions and experiences she shared with her students, choosing to withhold her own electoral preferences in discussions of the presidential election while being vocal about her support for the Black Lives Matter movement. She believed that the election was open for debate and therefore attempted to remain neutral but shared her support for BLM because she did not see equal recognition for Black lives as open for debate.

Controversial Issue: 2020 Presidential Election. The 2020 presidential election in the United States was a vitriolic and divisive contest between incumbent President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden. Sally believed that part of being an informed citizen in 2020 was learning about and engaging with the presidential election. During the study period, student assignments related to the presidential election included the following activities: reading and answering questions about an *Upfront* magazine article describing the differences between the candidates' policy positions, reading background information about the Electoral College, preparing for, watching, and reflecting upon the presidential debate, writing a letter to the incoming president outlining issues of interest; and reflecting upon the impact of the 2020 election season on students' personal relationships with family and friends.

Sally was careful to withhold her own opinions about the candidates while teaching this election-related material. She tried to ensure that students would not know her electoral preferences, who she planned to vote for, or her opinion on election-related issues. Sally was acutely aware of the influence of her own identity on students' and parents' opinions and assumptions about her and believed that she therefore could not be vocal about her own political

ideologies if she wanted to be able to engage students with election issues. She explained this perception:

> I feel like if I come in on the outset and they know my political ideology, they're going to come in - either if they feel the opposite, or their parents feel opposite, really, they're going to come in with this idea of, "Everything she says is going to be this left-wing ideology, or is going to be wrong" - or they're going to come in with this confirmation bias, "Oh yes she's going to teach everything I believe in." And then that's not going to really be a productive history course. I feel like they're more open if I'm not forthcoming with my political side. (Interview, September 2, 2020)

Sally's awareness of the potential impact of her identity as a Black woman resulted in her desire to preserve her privacy in other areas not so outwardly visible. She believed that "coming in as a Black woman social studies teacher, [students] probably already have cast me off in some way. And so I don't want to give them more" (interview, December 4, 2020). Recognizing the vulnerability of her identities, she perceived that she had to "work harder" to ensure that students would build critical thinking skills and draw their own conclusions without the influence of their assumptions based on her identity (interview, December 4, 2020).

As their first current event assignment of the year, students read an article from *Upfront* magazine entitled "What's At Stake," which outlined Biden's and Trump's policy stances and included quotations from individual citizens describing their perceived importance of the presidential election. The guiding questions for the article were focused largely on developing reading comprehension skills, and the few questions about the candidates' policies or positions were couched in statements like "according to the article" and "using evidence" (artifact, August 28, 2020). Sally did not offer any additional commentary on either of the candidates as the class

went over the answers. Reflecting on the assignment, Sally commented that the reading questions were intended to help facilitate discussion of "close reading strategies," including "looking for context clues - reading more than just that sentence to get a full understanding of the answer" (interview, September 4, 2020). Rather than just "giving me [their] opinion and running of with it" about the candidates, Sally intended for this first reading comprehension assignment to serve as a means of assessing students' "comprehension and understanding of that text" (interview, September 4, 2020).

Despite Sally's intention to provide a balanced view of the candidates, a parent complained about the use of the "What's At Stake" article because *Upfront* magazine, while published by Scholastic, is created in partnership with *The New York Times*. After the parent complained about Sally's use of materials from the liberal newspaper in her instruction, Sally recorded her concerns in her teacher's journal:

> Now I'm always worried that the mere mention of an election will be controversial. I'd like them to collect some data on how many family members have completed the census or registered to vote and compare it to the state data, but now I'm anxious. (September 18, 2020)

Sally ultimately chose not to assign students this assignment to collect data on the census or voter registration out of concern for potential pushback. Yet, she continued to view the election as a controversial current event that was relevant to her curriculum. She believed that informed citizenship required her students to engage with the presidential election and form opinions about the candidates, even if they were too young to vote in the election. For this purpose, Sally assigned students to watch 30 minutes of the first presidential debate on September 29, 2020. While watching, she asked students to "take notes on key moments of the debate and record any

information that might help you" answer the questions that students would respond to the following day (artifact, September 29, 2020), which included a reflection upon what they learned and how the debate challenged or complicated their previous opinions.

In a reflection upon the student debate assignment, Sally recalled her hesitancy to ask students to watch the debate after previous pushback she had received about the election:

> I briefly considered not assigning the debates, just because I've already had pushback about various things going on in the world from a couple of parents. And so I considered [that] it might be comfortable for me to not address the debates and skip over it. But then after I thought about it, I thought I might be cheating my kids out of learning about the candidates. They *are* going to be voting in the next election. So I kind of - it's almost like I checked myself. Was the reason I would not assign the debate to watch is because it would be comfortable for me? And I realized that was where that was coming from - I didn't want the tension. I felt like I was being selfish. So in the end, I'm like, this is an opportunity for the kids to really lean into something that will definitely be uncomfortable. And isn't that what we're trying to do? So in the end, I decided I gotta do it even if I don't want to do it. (Interview, October 2, 2020)

Sally's purpose in teaching the debate was to provide students with an opportunity to learn more about their elected officials, but the debate proved to be a chaotic and unruly event, characterized widely as "unseemly" (Schwartz, 2020, n.p.), "a national humiliation" (Smith, 2020, n.p.), and even "the worst debate of all time" (Stevens, 2020, n.p.). Sally revealed in an interview that she had a similar reaction as she was watching the debate: "my mouth was just open … and I just panicked! Oh, my goodness … I just had my eighth graders watch this mess!" (interview, October 2, 2020).

Recognizing that students may not have been able to meet this objective of learning about the candidates due to the lack of clear policy statements, Sally therefore sought to engage students in a reflection on the debate the next day without advocating for one candidate over another. Concerned with a balanced presentation of the candidates, Sally utilized the digital polling tool Poll Everywhere to ask students a series of questions rather than allowing them to simply unmute themselves or type in the chat to share their reactions. An approach she commonly uses, the use of polls was attractive to Sally for their collective anonymity. She commented,

> Any time where you know you're going to have a variety of opinions and you want to create an atmosphere of discussion and of dialogue that is productive and not hurtful, I like to start off with polls. That way for students who aren't as vocal, they still feel safe enough to give their perspective, but not bring a lot of attention on themselves. (Interview, October 2, 2020)

During the lesson, students used the polling tools to rate each candidate's presentation on a scale from "poor" to "excellent," referring to how each candidate conducted himself and presented himself on the stage. Students then offered suggestions as to how each candidate could have improved his performance in the second debate. This reflection on "presentation" was a callback to the previous day's study of how candidates' appearances were a factor in the 1960 presidential debate. Sally intentionally sought to link students' reflections upon the 2020 presidential debate with the historical moment of the first televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

As election day grew closer, Sally conducted a class poll to determine what issues were important to her students and using the results of that ballot assigned students to write a letter to

the incoming president. Students began their letters before the results of the election were known, and Sally described this as a very intentional decision:

> Just in case [the election] happened to go either way, I wanted to make sure that the kids did a similar assignment - not based on whether I was outraged over the election or not. So I made sure I was very intentional in pre-planning what the kids did. (Interview, December 4, 2020)

The timing of Sally's letter assignment was equally intentional, as she reasoned that the goals that the students "want a person in office to accomplish should be based on the issues, regardless of who wins" (interview, December 4, 2020), and asking students to write the letter after the declaration of a winner would influence what they chose to discuss in their letters. Framing the assignment in this way required students to continue to reflect on their own perspectives and elaborate upon issues important to them while also largely separating the purposes of the election from the students' personal feelings about a particular candidate. Sally believed that this approach to teaching about the election, assigning the letter in advance of a victor and regardless of the winner, would support her withholding of her own opinions about the candidates.

Sally's use of polls, targeted questioning, and general focus on issues of students' personal interest facilitated students' engagement with a potentially difficult and polarizing topic in an approachable way. Yet, since Trump's character itself was controversial and his remarks were frequently racist or derogatory, avoiding direct discussion or evaluation of his policies or statements also meant avoiding much of the controversy of the election. Sally's caution about disclosing her electoral preferences or political affiliations, in tandem with the emotionally charged and high-tension environment of the election campaign, seemed to prevent her from engaging students in a more critical analysis of election issues.

Controversial Topic: Racism and White Supremacy in U.S. History. In contrast with her approach to teaching about the 2020 presidential election, which she presented as an issue open to debate or judgment, Sally treated racism and White supremacy as a "settled empirical issue" (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 161). The existence and legacy of White supremacy and racism in the United was not open to debate or evaluation. She perceived the topic to be relevant and important to include in her history curriculum, even if it might potentially be perceived by administrators, students, or their families as uncomfortable or inappropriate for the classroom. Sally was vocal about her recognition of the legacy of systemic racism through her visible support of the Black Lives Matter movement. Her advocacy underlined her conception of racism and White supremacy as a controversial topic and she presented the topic to her students in that manner.

Sally introduced the year-long theme of racism and White supremacy on the very first day of school. While students did not immediately discuss the concepts or definitions of the terms, Sally told students when previewing the class that "we are really going to focus on the history of race in American society" (observation, August 19, 2020) as part of the social studies curriculum for the year. She acknowledged to students that:

> Some of that's going to be uncomfortable. We're going to have some really frank and real conversations about supremacy, White supremacy, segregation. There's going to be a lot of things that are jaw-dropping - very illuminating. One thing I like about history is why we are the way we are today. As you guys know, there have been a lot of things in the news about racial unrest in the United States, and historically speaking, what led up to all of those protests, and police brutality, and riots, and looting, and how we're all connected through that throughout history. (Observation, August 19, 2020)

In the first moments of class, Sally made clear to her students that White supremacy and systemic racism are real social forces that not only continue to exist today but are also central to the study of American history.

Sally focused students' early exposures to the topic of racism on their own self-reflections and connections with young adult texts. For example, during her instruction about the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Sally probed students' reflections upon their own experiences with learning about racism and the legacy of slavery through a series of three open-ended pre-assessment questions. These questions asked students how they first learned about the history of slavery in the U.S., and how that information was presented; the students' opinions of what they see as the lasting legacy of slavery in the U.S.; and what students knew about the contributions of Black Americans to U.S. society (artifact, September 22, 2020). Sally shared students' anonymous responses to these questions with the class to highlight the variety of learning experiences that students remembered and their reflections upon their prior knowledge.

To further engage with the modern-day legacy of racism and White supremacy, students read one of four passages from teenagers about their experiences with racism. The teenage perspectives included a 16-year-old undocumented boy from El Salvador living in California, a 16-year-old Black boy in Oakland, a 15-year-old Filipina girl from Washington, and a 19-year-old young biracial Michigan woman (artifact, October 29, 2020). The aim of reading these stories from the perspective of other young people in the United States was to personalize the harms of racial injustice. Through their reflections on the readings in small groups and as a whole class, Sally hoped for students to develop an initial understanding of the existence of others' identities and values. She envisioned that students could "read other young people's perspective toward their personal identity, and then use that to build upon them discussing and

writing and thinking about *their* identity surrounding race and how it connects to this larger American story" (interview, December 4, 2020).

Students were not asked to reflect upon their own identities and perspectives towards race during the research observation period. However, Sally indicated that this turn towards the self would happen later in the school year. She did "not want to start off by having them talk about their personal identity and feelings towards race in the beginning of the year when trust hasn't been established" (interview, December 4, 2020). She acutely felt the need to wait until later in the school year to ask students to reflect upon their own personal identities due to students' general reluctance to deeply engage on Zoom in the virtual environment.

Students began to more purposefully study White supremacy and racism several weeks into the school year, after they were introduced to the narratives of indigenous Native Americans, European colonizers, and enslaved Africans. Students then started to read *Fever 1793*, a novel set in 1793 Philadelphia as a yellow fever epidemic sweeps through the city (Anderson, 2011), as an accompaniment to the study of the American Revolutionary War and early America. Sally used the novel's plot as an introduction to a lesson about White supremacy and race, highlighting the ways in which the life of Eliza, a free Black woman and housekeeper, was different from the life of the main character's mother, Lucille, a White coffee shop owner. Sally asked her students to consider that:

> Even though they both live in Philadelphia and even though slavery is outlawed at that time - 1793 in Philadelphia - still, Eliza and Mattie's mom [Lucille], their lives are very different. And why is that? Why, even though slavery is outlawed and Eliza is free, they still move through life differently - why is that? (Interview, December 4, 2020)

Using Eliza's role in the novel as an entry into the larger lesson, Sally conducted a mini lecture about White supremacy and race, stating that "the history of race is also the history of White supremacy," which she defined as "the belief that White people are superior in many ways to people of other races and that therefore, White people should be dominant over other races" (artifact, October 29, 2020).

Sally's plans for students' future reflections upon their identities and perspectives towards race were also tied to young adult literature. She stated,

> We're very intentional in making sure that we start talking about this now, so we can continue this thread throughout the year and feel comfortable enough to build on it each time. By the time we get to *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we're able to really delve into the personal and kind of take a mirror and look at ourselves. (Interview, December 4, 2020)

Sally perceived *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a novel set in a fictional Alabama town during the early 1930s (Lee, 1960), as a catalyst for students to "talk about how they move through their lives differently based on different factors, such as race" and how their identities "connect to this larger American story" (interview, December 4, 2020). Through the early conversations around the existence of White supremacy and racism, Sally sought to help students build the foundation of knowledge that they would need for critical self-reflection in the future.

Sally's approach to teaching about the 2020 presidential election and the legacy of racism in the United States varied considerably between the two subjects and whether she considered them open for debate. She openly shared her own identity as a Black woman, expressed her support for the Black Lives Matter movement, and treated the legacy of systemic racism as an integral and necessary component of the eighth-grade U.S. history curriculum. As a controversial topic, it might elicit pushback from students, parents, or other stakeholders, but she utilized

young adult texts and other youth voices to link the topic to the history curriculum. At the same time, Sally considered the 2020 presidential election to be a highly controversial issue and was adamant about withholding her own preferences about the candidates and the issues they represented. The vulnerability she felt as a result of her identity as a Black woman and her desire for her students to develop their capacity for autonomous critical thought led her to present herself as politically neutral as possible. These considerations influenced the ways in which she engaged students with controversial issues and topics.

Building Positive Student Relationships

Sally's efforts at critical citizenship education in her eighth-grade social studies class were galvanized by the positive and caring relationships she shared with her students, yet the means of this relationship-building were not always overly clear during humanities class specifically. The approximately 80 eighth-grade students were divided into four homeroom groups, and the students began every school day with their homeroom class. The small size of the school and the close-knit nature of the school community meant that most of the most intentional trust-building activities occurred during the students' homeroom period. At the beginning of the 2020 school year, homeroom teachers conducted thirty-minute home visits, either in person or over Zoom, during which students introduced teachers to their adults, siblings, pets, neighborhood, and interests. Eighth-grade students were also able to participate in one to two optional in-person experiences with their homeroom teachers during each trimester, in accordance with all state-mandated COVID-related precautions.

During humanities class itself, Sally built relationships mostly through her dialogue and interactions with students during the class. Sally frequently engaged students in small talk or told personal stories about herself, her husband, or her children while students filtered into the Zoom

room at the beginning of each class. At the beginning of one class, for example, Sally told students a story about telling her own children that she wanted to play a role in naming her future grandchildren, prompting a short conversation in which students shared some of the unique names passed down through their own families over time (observation, August 21, 2020). Sally's sharing of some personal stories and experiences reminded students of her own humanity.

Sally also built relationships through her focus on empowering students, reminding them of the importance and power of their voices and opinions. Each time she expressed hope and confidence for a future in which the students were responsible for making policy decisions, Sally conveyed to students that their voices and presence in her class were valuable to her. Her emphasis on students' value and power carried over into her near-constant accessibility and availability to students as another means of building relationships in a completely virtual learning environment. Due to the blurring of boundaries between work, home, and school, and the myriad ways in which students could communicate with teachers, such as via Google Classroom, over email, private comment, private chat in Zoom, or Google Hangouts chat, Sally reflected that "kids have a way to get to us, but as a flip side kids have a way to get to us *all the time*" (interview, October 21, 2020). While she wanted to be available to her students and build relationships, Sally identified the near-constant communication as a challenge that would be unsustainable in the long-term:

> I feel like a rubber band this year, virtually. I'm just stretched in so many different directions so that I can be available to my students virtually … I feel like with this, in order to have some kind of relationship with our kids, the boundaries, as far as [the teacher's boundaries] are concerned, are suspended right now. (Interview, October 21, 2020)

Despite these challenges and Sally's uncertainty about the feasibility of maintaining this structure potentially through an entire school year, her efforts at building positive and caring relationships with her students were important to her larger goal of history education for critical citizenship. Building trust and respect and valuing students' voices were important for students to remain open to new knowledge and different ways of thinking and to eventually engage in self-reflection upon racial identities and positions.

The power of Sally's efforts at relationship-building were illustrated by her experiences with one particular student, Leeann. At the beginning of the school year, Leeann's father accused Sally of promoting Black Lives Matter and requiring his daughter to write a paper in support of the movement. Yet, despite Leeann's support of Trump and Sally's identity as a Black woman, vocal that Black lives matter, Leeann began to confide in Sally about the friends she had lost because of her political opinions. In an interview, Sally commented:

> It's like [Leeann] is cognizant enough where she won't say what the opinions are, but she wants advice on what should she do. She's asking me, how should I get my friends back? And I've just been having this dialogue with her, like, you know, the election is really ugly right now, and perhaps after the election is over, this might be an opportunity to reflect, and everybody kind of try to repair their relationships with their friends and their families. (Interview, October 2, 2020)

Recalling other private chats and emails from Leeann, Sally recounted Leeann telling her she was so happy she was her teacher, and that it seemed like Sally "care[d] about the kids a lot" (interview, October 2, 2020). While Leeann and her father were not interested in Leeann's participation in this study to be able to provide further reflection or explanation, Sally's

remembrances illustrate her deep caring and desire to empower her students even with different or unpopular opinions – even opinions that might directly refute Sally's own humanity.

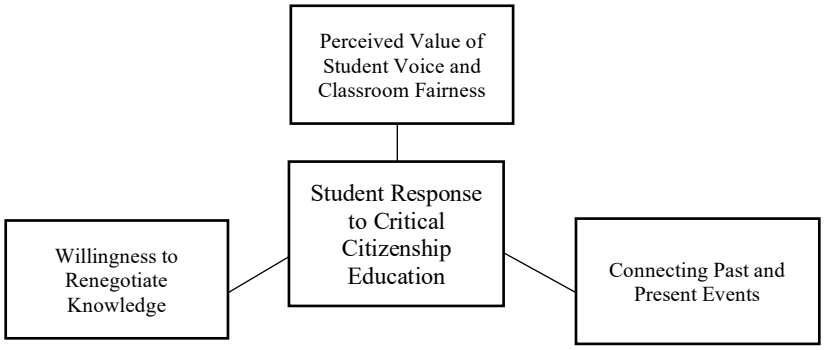
Sally enacted critical citizenship education in her eighth-grade humanities class through both the curricular content and instructional approaches used to address that content. Sally approached history from a humanizing lens, seeking to move students beyond a stereotypical understanding of historical and contemporary actors, and created opportunities for students to make connections and see the relevance of history. She affirmed students' power as co-creators of knowledge who were able to engage with multiple perspectives, teach one another, and draw their own conclusions. Controversial issues and topics were essential components of her history curriculum. Establishing and building positive relationships with students was the environmental context in which Sally was able to implement her vision of critical citizenship education.

Student Response to Critical Citizenship Education

Student responses to critical citizenship education were evident in classroom observations and in-depth follow-up interviews with a small number of students. Four students, Lacy, Eliza, Emilia, and Nate (self-selected pseudonym), all White girls, each participated in two follow-up interviews with the researcher about their experiences with history, social studies, and citizenship. Analysis of student reactions to Sally's enactment of critical citizenship education clustered around three primary sub-themes (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Themes Utilized to Understand Students' Response to Critical Citizenship Education



The eighth-grade students in this study perceived their humanities classroom to be a space in which their voices and opinions were valued, and they demonstrated a willingness to renegotiate their knowledge based on new information and experiences. Students were also able to make connections between past and present and consider the relevance of history.

Perceived Value of Student Voice and Classroom Fairness

Students perceived their humanities classroom to be a fair and equitable space in which their own voices and opinions were highly valued and sought after (see Table 10).

Table 10

Sub-Themes: Perceived Value of Student Voice and Classroom Fairness

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
Value of student voice	Students feel that their opinions and voices are welcomed and desired in their humanities class	*The teachers – whenever they say something, it's like, no matter what you think, or what you believe, it's relevant.*
Classroom fairness	Students feel that their humanities class is fair because they perceive the representation of history to be fair	*They show all sides of what happened. For example, they didn't just talk about Columbus coming to America and settling it and stuff. They talked about the English and the French and the Africans and the Native Americans.*

Students' beliefs that their opinions and perspectives were considered valuable and that their humanities classroom was fair aligned with Sally's own emphasis on student empowerment and view of students as co-constructors of knowledge in her classroom.

Value of Student Voice. When asked about student voice in follow-up interviews, students described the classroom environment as feeling "less judging" (interview, Lacy, September 21, 2020) and one in which students were encouraged to share their opinions and viewpoints. Nate specifically highlighted that students were able to include their opinions and biases in their assignments (interview, October 15, 2020). All four students who participated in interviews perceived the value of student voice in the easy access they had to asking and answering questions. The teachers' consistent questioning and attention to students' responses made students feel that the teachers "actually care what we have to say" (interview, Eliza, September 25, 2020), even when those opinions may have been contrary to their classmates' or teachers' beliefs. Emilia reflected:

> I have been able to voice my opinions when I wanted to. I also sometimes speak up when I either disagree or think that point needs to be exaggerated. I do say [it] when I need to. And [the teachers] don't cut me off and say, "Okay, moving on." When I had started talking, I was allowed to explain why I said something, or finish what I wanted to say. And they didn't just cut me off and be like, "Okay, next question." (Interview, September 22, 2020)

Lacy likewise perceived students' opinions to be relevant "no matter what you think or what you believe" (interview, September 21, 2020), evidenced by Sally and Anne's consistent encouragement for students to speak out "on Zoom, and unmute, and say stuff in the chat" (interview, Eliza, September 25, 2020).

Emphasizing student voice encouraged students to share their opinions around controversial or divisive questions, even when their viewpoints were potentially unpopular or different from those of their classmates. For example, when students discussed the presidential debate, 63% of students in the first class block rated Trump's presentation as "poor," while thirteen percent rated it as "average," six percent as "good," and ten percent as "excellent." Adam, a White male student, noted in the chat that Trump's "presentation of his ideas was rough but I can understand getting into Bidens *[sic]* head and taking jabs," later verbally commenting:

> So, you gotta go into these debates with an open mind. You can't – I guess you can – but I think the best way to go into debates is with no biases. And I think Trump could've really won over some of Biden's viewers and some people from the Democratic Party. But he kind of blew it because Biden went on the attack early, and then Trump took it too personally, and he got aggressive, and he kind of made himself look immature. (Observation, September 30, 2020)

Sally responded to Adam's comment by asking him to rate his own ability to put his biases aside and offer an example of what Trump could have done in the debate to pull in more people who did not agree with him. Adam's answer that "going after [Biden's] son [Hunter] was kind of a low blow" was supported by another student, Molly, who unmuted and shared out loud another example of when "Trump interrupted [Biden] and started talking about how Biden didn't know what school he went to, and that was a low unnecessary hit" (observation, September 30, 2020).

Adam's comments are representative of the students' willingness to engage with difficult issues such as the 2020 presidential election and the divisive character of Donald Trump more generally. In this example, Sally's use of anonymous polls allowed all students to engage without fear of particular consequences, while follow-up questions provided space for students to explain

or justify their opinions if they were willing and wanted to do so. Adam's reflection upon the role of biases also demonstrated some understanding of the importance of the lens of identity.

A similar variety of viewpoints was expressed on Columbus Day, when Sally asked students to share what they thought the second Monday in October should be called. In the second class block, students responded with the following exchange in the written chat:

From Adira: happy indigenous people day! :)

From [student]: happy indigenous day and education about them

From Emilia: Happy Indigenous Peoples Day

From [student]: Happy Indigenous

From [student]: Indigenous Peoples Day

From Emily: I think It should stay but have still the day to learn about the indigenous

From [student]: Happy Indigenous peoples day! we should learn about the genocide that Columbus caused

From [student]: I think its important to be educated on Americas founding, but it should be dedicated to indigenous people

From [student]: We should have different holidays that celebrate other cultures

From Sawyer: happy columbus day :)

From Nate: We should recognize Columbus but also the Native Americans

From [student]: celebrate both… because its apart of history

From [student]: I agree that we should just have two seperate holidays, instead of needing to replace one for the other

From [student]: I think we should celebrate both and have a holiday that doesn't celebrate a person but the cultures

> From Lacy: yeah I think his history should still be told not celebrated but in a more fair and inclusive way for the indigenous people. (Observation, October 12, 2020)

In this written exchange at the end of class, students expressed their own opinions about this issue after having spent the class period learning about various perspectives on celebrating Christopher Columbus. With Sally's encouragement and continued probing, students transitioned this written conversation into a verbal discussion. When Sally asked the student who posted "happy columbus day :)" in the chat if he would care to explain, Sawyer continued out loud:

> Well, I think they both *[Native Americans and Italian Americans]* went through discrimination and stuff. I mean at the same time like Columbus was the one who led the voyage to America, so I feel like he should still get some recognition or whatever for that, but I feel like maybe there could be a holiday for both of them. (Observation, October 12, 2020)

When a female student, Emily, agreed that we should "celebrate both… because it's apart *[sic]* of history," Sally asked her to elaborate. This verbal exchange followed:

> Emily: I mean, it's just that… it was a part of like, our past. And if we don't - I don't know, I mean I get you shouldn't celebrate something he did that was bad, but still, it kind of shaped us, and if we don't learn stuff from that we can't fix it for the future.
>
> Beckett: But we don't need to celebrate it, we could just learn it.
>
> Adira: My question is what would we be celebrating for Christopher Columbus? We're obviously not celebrating the horrible things he did, so what would we be celebrating?
>
> Sawyer: He was a pretty bad guy, or whatever, how he treated the natives and stuff, he could have been a lot nicer about that, but then at the same time we need a way to

> remember I guess. It would have been done with or without him eventually… he did spark slavery and stuff. (Observation, October 12, 2020)

Once again, students demonstrated their willingness to speak and use their voices in class, even when they disagreed with one another. These conversations were crucial for students' development of the social element of critical citizenship as they dialogued with others about their viewpoints and reasoning. Given the opportunity to share their perspectives, students responded by contributing widely varied opinions and viewpoints.

Classroom Fairness. In follow-up interviews, three of the four students suggested that they perceived the classroom to be fair because the representation of history itself seemed to them to be fair. These students highlighted the incorporation of multiple perspectives on historical events as an indication that Sally was offering them a thorough and comprehensive picture of history. While Eliza generally summarized the fair portrayal, saying that Sally "pretty much showed all sides of what happened" (interview, September 25, 2020), Nate and Emilia took slightly different approaches to their explanation of a similar sentiment. In contrast with Nate's perception that Sally was showing "everyone's side" rather than just showing "what all the White European dudes [were] doing" (interview, October 15, 2020), Emilia commented that "even though Sally is not White, she has not said, like, 'Oh, the White people were wrong, they started it, everyone was bad'" (interview, September 22, 2020), even though she believed it would have been possible for Sally to have done so. Her recognition of Sally's racial identity in combination with her perspective that "there will always be some bias" (interview, September 22, 2020) led Emilia to conclude that it would have been easy for Sally to portray a one-sided historical narrative that laid all blame upon White people. Despite this perceived possibility,

Emilia concluded that "it [was] fair" and did not prioritize or discount "one side of the truth" in favor of another (interview, September 22, 2020).

Aligned with Sally's own desire to withhold her electoral preferences, students perceived Sally's approach to addressing political issues and current events as apolitical. Lacy, Emilia, and Eliza noted from her bitmoji and her real-life expressive t-shirts that Sally believed in the Black Lives Matter movement, but separated that support from her political beliefs, which the students said she "hasn't really mentioned … very much" (interview, Emilia, September 22, 2020). Instead of attempting to sway students' beliefs, Emilia perceived Sally and her co-teacher Anne as "very neutral" (interview, September 22, 2020), offering balanced perspectives on the 2020 presidential candidates and election-related issues. Both Nate and Emilia commented that Sally "show[ed] us the facts" (interview, October 15, 2020) rather than advocating for any particular stance on a historical issue or event or political candidate. Recalling their emphasis on the value of their voices in their humanities classroom, none of the students believed that Sally's political opinions, even if they knew what they were, would influence their own opinions about those issues. While parent pushback indicated that parents linked Sally's identity, support for the Black Lives Matter movement, and/or instructional materials with a particular political ideology, the students in follow-up interviews did not seem to connect critical citizenship education with a particular political orientation. Together, these interpretations bolstered students' perceptions of the fairness of the classroom.

Willingness to Renegotiate Knowledge

Sally approached her eighth-grade humanities class with the knowledge that Community School students would not have had an American history-focused course since fifth grade. In follow-up interviews, students confirmed this dearth of social studies instruction and conveyed

their perception that "social studies has kind of been just overlooked" (interview, Lacy, September 21, 2020) in prior grades. Emilia, a student at Community School since second grade, felt that students "have learned very little about history just all together" (interview, September 22, 2020), while Eliza asserted that she had never learned history chronologically "in order of how stuff happened" (interview, September 25, 2020).

Students responded to the renewed emphasis on history content in the eighth grade with a general willingness and desire to learn more about history, particularly in light of their previously limited formal social studies experiences. They demonstrated their openness to ask questions and offer critiques of their preexisting knowledge or beliefs as well as their own school experiences (see Table 11). When learning new information, students were willing to consider new and alternative narratives and renegotiate the ways in which they conceptualized particular historical events, trends, or patterns.

Table 11

Sub-Themes: Willingness to Renegotiate Knowledge

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
Openness to learning and desire for more knowledge	Students are interested to learn more about historical narratives they previously did not know about	*I want to be more open-minded about everything. I want to learn more about things as a whole, not as one part of it.*
Willingness to question and critique	Students critically reflect upon historical issues and what they learned in previous social studies classes	*I don't think I really learned about it. I think people only taught us what they wanted us to know.*

Openness to Learning and Desire For More Knowledge. Classroom observations indicated that students responded to the intentional focus on social studies with a general openness to learning new information and new narratives, evidenced by expressions of surprise or shock at history they had not previously known. This was particularly true when students

learned about Christopher Columbus; one student commented in the chat that Columbus was "so much worse" than she thought, explaining out loud that she "didn't realize he was such a bad person. 'Cause no one ever talked about how he was a bad person, they just talked about, 'Oh, he's so amazing, he discovered new land'" (observation, October 12, 2020). Nate similarly remembered learning about Columbus and "thinking, this can't be true. People aren't that evil. But they obviously were" (interview, October 15, 2020). On another occasion, after students watched a video that described Jamestown, John Smith, and Pocahontas, a student exclaimed in the chat, "Pocahontas was TEN?!" in reference to the revelation that Pocahontas was a child of about ten years old when she met John Smith (observation, September 17, 2020).

Although students learned some hard historical truths for the first time, particularly those related to America's traditional heroes like Christopher Columbus and Thomas Jefferson, there were no instances during the study period in which students publicly doubted or questioned whether these facts could be true. Motivated by her own learning through the first two months of humanities class, Lacy grappled with her recognition that "I've only learned part of some things, so I don't know the whole story" (interview, September 21, 2020) and set a goal for herself "to be more open-minded about everything. I want to learn more about things as a whole, not as one part of it" (interview, September 21, 2020). In particular, she felt that she had already become more aware of racial injustice, the truths about Christopher Columbus, and a more accurate history of Native Americans:

> The White settlers weren't the first people to live here, and I feel like I didn't know that before, really. I guess I thought there was only a small amount of people. And the White settlers just kind of moved around them; not, you know, that they [White settlers] moved them [Native Americans] out. (Interview, October 19, 2020)

Students were forthcoming in the classroom with their desire to learn more about history, particularly about people and groups that are traditionally not emphasized in the curriculum. When Sally asked students on the fifth day of school to type into the chat box one thing they would like to learn about American history during their eighth-grade year, students responded with a wide variety of responses that included: “more about slavery,” “Native American culture,” “literally anything,” “I’d like to learn more about why people had a problem with race,” “LGBTQ history,” “more about Native Americans/ their culture,” “America’s first inhabitants,” “overfishing for shark fins,” “history through the eyes of native peoples,” “how the war on drugs was an attempted genocide,” and “Harlem Hellfighters” (observation, August 25, 2020). Students demonstrated their growing interest in society and learning about their country's history, and many students in their responses displayed their interest in learning about historically marginalized populations and other narratives that may have been traditionally excluded from their schooling. Students’ willingness to learn, and in particular their openness to considering that they may not have learned “the whole story” were reflective of their desire for deeper historical knowledge.

Willingness to Question and Critique. Students demonstrated a willingness to ask critical historical questions as well as to critique what they had learned in previous classes in school. During observations, students engaged in active questioning through classroom dialogue and written chat entries. For example, as students read excerpts from Christopher Columbus’ journal as part of the lesson on Columbus Day, Eliza typed in the chat “i wonder if columbus lied in his journal,” and when prompted by Sally to explain the impetus for her thought, Eliza replied, “i dont know *[sic]*, but i was just wondering if there are things that he kept from the monarchs or his crew” (observation, October 12, 2020). Eliza did not fully articulate the reasons behind her

question but demonstrated a more critical perspective and inclination to ask questions. On this same day, a dialogic exchange in the second class block also portrayed students' active questioning and critical perspectives about the past. When considering whether Columbus Day should continue to be celebrated as a holiday, students Beckett and Adira were vocal about their critiques:

> Beckett: I don't agree with it. Just because it's a part of history, we don't need to celebrate it.
>
> Sally: So you're saying there's a difference between celebrating and learning?
>
> Beckett: We should learn about it, but we shouldn't celebrate it. He murdered a lot of people, he enslaved a lot of people, I don't see why it should be a holiday.
>
> Adira: There are some parts of history that under no circumstances should be celebrated, such as slavery and White supremacy, just people bringing down other people. Those should not be celebrated under any terms. (Observation, October 12, 2020)

Beckett and Adira advocated for a more critical interpretation of history and questioned the purposes behind celebrating historical figures who to them represented the larger issues of slavery and White supremacy. Other classmates disagreed with Beckett and Adira's interpretation, but these two students continued to advocate for this more critical vision of history and the need to differentiate between what Sally described here as "celebrating" versus "learning" about history.

A similar moment of questioning occurred as students studied Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence. Lacy volunteered to share a translation from an excerpt from the Declaration that stated, "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal"

(artifact, October 20, 2020). As Lacy shared her interpretation of the meaning of that section, she commented,

> Whoever was writing this, he was saying these are the rights that people have, no matter who they are. Which I find, actually, a little sadly ironic, because in this time there was probably slavery. So not all men are created equal. (Observation, October 20, 2020)

While she may not have identified Thomas Jefferson as the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, instead attributing it to "whoever was writing this," Lacy was able to contextualize the writing of the Declaration of Independence within the American history of institutionalized slavery. The tone of her comment and acknowledgement that the line was "sadly ironic" demonstrated Lacy's critical perspective of this historical document.

Students demonstrated their willingness to turn their critical perspectives onto their own experiences when comparing their eighth-grade humanities class with previous social studies classes. In a follow-up interview, Lacy, who was struck by the seeming relevance of the history they were learning in eighth grade, mused, "I feel like stuff we're taught, and stuff that's actually relevant, is a little different" (interview, October 19, 2020). Here, Lacy was reflecting upon her previous education about Christopher Columbus, which she now perceived to be "one-sided" due to its focus on him being "amazing," rather than addressing "the people who he moved out" (interview, October 19, 2020). Lacy recognized that her prior history education omitted some of these complexities that really make history important to study for understanding the world today.

Similarly, reflecting on what she had learned to that point in eighth-grade humanities, Nate identified slavery to be an important topic for her to learn about "what actually happened, because no one ever talked about that before – they just skipped over it" (interview, October 15,

2020). Emilia also identified these discrepancies in her prior knowledge and learning experiences. In an interview, she stated,

> I have learned things that I did not expect would be true, and that kind of were - this is what's true, and what you have heard are kind of what most people think, or what most people wish would be true. (Interview, September 22, 2020)

Through these comments, Emilia pinpointed the danger of learning one unexamined narrative of history – the narrative may be simply "what most people think" or what they "wish would be true" rather than being truly accurate. As she considered the evolution of her own experiences with history, Emilia demonstrated her ability to adopt a more critical perspective towards history and her own learning experiences.

Students' varied perspectives on their own education and knowledge was most evident when Sally shared students' anonymous responses to the pre-assessment questions she asked about slavery and the contributions of Black Americans to the country's history. Most student responses referenced learning about slavery in elementary school, but many critiqued these experiences as they recalled that the "teacher tried to water stuff down," that "it was presented as it being sort of a one-and-done type situation where racism magically went away," or even that "I don't think I really learned about it. I think people only taught us what they wanted us to know" (observation, September 22, 2020). Other student responses were less critical and referenced learning about figures like Harriet Tubman through textbooks or notes from the teacher. One student response revealed incomplete and inaccurate prior knowledge when they stated, "i know that george washington and abraham lincoln both help[ed] free slaves" (observation, September 22, 2020). Sally asked students to type into the chat the themes they noticed throughout the responses, and while the initial pre-assessment entries varied in criticality,

the thematic analysis was much more critical. Students noticed that "a lot of people learned from harriet tubman books" in elementary school, but also that "we were never really taught everything," "most of us don't know much," and "it got watered down" (observation, September 22, 2020). A similar phenomenon occurred when Sally shared student responses to the third pre-assessment question regarding the contributions of Black Americans. When students again identified themes of these responses in the chat, they recognized that "we don't know much," "many people don't know or haven't learned the answer to this yet," and even that "the school system has failed to teach us about it" (observation, September 22, 2020).

Connecting Past and Present Events

Students were responsive to Sally's efforts to emphasize the relevance of history and its utility for understanding current events (see Table 12).

Table 12

Sub-Themes: Connecting Past and Present Events

Sub-Theme	Description	Example
Awareness of and interest in current events and issues	Students are generally aware of and express opinions about current events, such as the presidential election and COVID-19 pandemic	*From [student]: 1 Crona. What are we going to do? 2 BLM!!! opinion? 3 lgbtq+ opinion? 4 economy. How are we getting it back up? 5 job loss. How to help?*
Perception of history as relevant to today's world	Students perceive learning history to be useful as a way of understanding the present and improving the future	*I mean, we can use the past to fix our mistakes now. And use it to learn from, because the past has shaped how things are today and I think it's important to realize that kind of stuff.*

Students demonstrated a general awareness of current events, which at the time of the study included the upcoming 2020 presidential election, the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement for racial justice and against police brutality, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond these immediate concerns, students indicated an interest and desire to learn

about a wide variety of other contemporary issues. Students also expressed a belief that history is relevant to contemporary society, seemingly internalizing Sally's messages about the usefulness of studying history for making improvements upon past actions and decisions.

Awareness of and Interest in Current Events and Issues. Students demonstrated a general awareness of current events, particularly around the 2020 presidential election, the racial justice protests that marked the summer of 2020, and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Students' comments and questions demonstrated social awareness and a concern for justice.

Students regularly expressed opinions about the election and about Trump in particular. Reactions to Trump tended to be like-minded and quite negative. While one male student regularly wore a Trump 2020 hat to class and had his video turned on most days, he rarely participated in class discussions or in the chat. Two other White female students in his class, known to their classmates and the teachers to be supportive of Trump, rarely participated in class at all, whether discussing the election or any other curricular topic. Those who were most frequently engaged about the election were a small group of students who were consistently vocal about their dislike of Donald Trump. In preparation for the 2020 presidential debate, the students learned about the intended purpose of debates and the role that the 1960 televised debate between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy had played in helping people decide who to vote for. When one student in the first class block commented in the chat that she had heard that "apparently 16% of americans haven't made up their minds or something like that," a quick series of chat messages followed from a group of four students:

From [student 1]: well theres only one good option

From [student 2]: exactly

From [student 1]: *acceptable

From [student 2]: at the same time though its either nice old white man with 11 sex offenses or mean old white man with 50 sex offenses.

From [student 1]: plus one is homophobic. and transphobic

From Eliza: old *straight white man

From [student 2]: and mysogonistic *[sic]*

From [student 1]: and racist

From [student 2]: yeah old straight white man

From Adam: what?

From [student 2]: im tired of the old straight white men wheres the diversity

(Observation, September 29, 2020)

Sally did not respond to this chat interaction and instead continued her lesson about presidential debates, but these chat interactions, particularly between student 1 and student 2, demonstrated their awareness of and interest in current events and social issues. Student 2 from the exchange, Aubrey, was regularly critical of Trump and his inflammatory and negative rhetoric. After Sally had reminded her to have empathy for Trump upon his positive coronavirus diagnosis, Aubrey responded to Sally in the chat, saying, "oh of course.. empathy... you know, like how hes empathetic for the assylum seeking immagrants *[sic]* leaving a dangerous, war filled country..." (observation, October 2, 2020). After students had all left the class meeting that day, Sally commented to her co-teacher Anne about Aubrey's interest in and passion for politics and civic awareness: "I think we have a budding RBG on our hands!" (observation, October 2, 2020).

The passionate interactions and opinions from Aubrey and her classmates illustrated their interest in society and public affairs and displayed for many students their concern for social justice. At the same time, while Adam did not explain his response of "what?," his questioning

indicated his desire to know more, perhaps about the comments about each candidate's sex offenses or about the perception of Trump as homophobic, transphobic, misogynistic, or racist.

Students displayed their interest in other current events outside of the election itself. During the lesson in preparation for the presidential debate, Sally asked students to share in the chat box what issues the students hoped the candidates would discuss in the debate that evening. In the first class period, student responses mostly centered around students' awareness and care for current events and concern for social justice, related to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and protests for racial justice:

> From Eliza: Race and COVID-19
>
> From [student]: 1 Crona. What are we going to do? 2 BLM!!! opinion? 3 lgbtq+ opinion? 4 economy. How are we getting it back up? 5 job loss. How to help?
>
> From [student]: Racial justice and police brutality and Covid-19 response
>
> From [student]: LGBTQ+ rights, police brutality towards POC, environmental issues in the US, corona
>
> From Adam: Climate change Being more firm with rioters Plan to reopen safely How they will handle healthcare Get the economy back to good condition. (Observation, September 29, 2020)

In the second class block, student chat responses illustrated a wider variety of interests and passions while still largely centering the immediate sociopolitical context:

> From [student]: abortion laws
>
> From Beckett: Health care
>
> From [student]: Covid 19
>
> From [student]: economy

From Lacy: Global Climate Change

From [student]: Racism/Systematic Racism

From Lacy: Lowering Unemployment Rates

From [student]: homeless people

From [student]: gun control

From Nate: Refugees and immigrants. (Observation, September 29, 2020)

Once again, student responses indicated their interest in the events going on around them with particular attention to issues of justice, equality, and racism. These issues seemed to be filtering into students' purview through a variety of sources, and students mentioned in particular the influence of social media on their social awareness. In response to how students learned about slavery, one anonymous student shared that "I've learned a lot about poc *[people of color]* history from tiktok and other social media because of the uprise in the BLM movement over the summer" (artifact, September 22, 2020). In an interview, Lacy echoed this sentiment, saying that she learned about news and current events through social media when "you see things on Twitter and Instagram and stuff like that" (interview, October 19, 2020). While she was interested in learning about the events, Lacy also maintained a critical perspective in her media consumption. She noticed that when her connections shared news on social media, "it's just opinions, not like, what is actually facts and real information" and she therefore considered it to be "more direct and one-sided" and "not as fair as seeing it on the news" (interview, October 19, 2020).

Particularly observant students at times verbalized the connection between the many concurrent events of the time, reflecting that "the [COVID-19] pandemic gives rise to ethical dilemmas such as choosing to go protest … about something very important, like racism, or choosing to stay home" and noting President Trump's role in perpetuating discrimination against

"Asians, Asian Americans etc. by calling the virus the Chinese flu or the kong *[sic]* flu" (observation, September 11, 2020). These written comments demonstrated some students' knowledge of the interconnectedness of structures or systems.

Despite being too young to vote in the 2020 election, many of the students were still highly invested in the candidates, the election results, and the potential paths that each man could offer for the future of the country. In a follow-up interview, Lacy highlighted her perception that these discussions of the election and other issues were unique to Community School. Recalling that she told friends at other schools about her assignment to watch the debate, she commented, "One of [my friends] was like, 'We never get into politics at my school - they never even mentioned that.' So I feel like at Community School, I think they try to inform us the best that they can" (interview, October 19, 2020). Lacy's perceptions about the Community School curriculum align with the school's mission to empower learners, engage students in authentic issues, and help them understand how to change the world around them. Teaching students about politics and current events and asking them to engage with and reflect upon related issues are elements of the school's vision to empower learners to improve the world.

Perception of History as Relevant to Today's World. Student comments in class and in interviews acknowledged the usefulness of learning history for the purpose of understanding the present and improving the future. The responses to the "Pandemic!" *Upfront* article that prompted the ethical dilemmas described above also illustrated students' recognition that one of the purposes of learning history is what we can learn from it in terms of the relevance of historical events to life today. Students were tasked with answering a set of questions as they read the article aloud together (artifact, September 8, 2020). As they shared out their responses, students considered the negative developments that came out of the 1918 flu pandemic. Their

responses applied to both the article about the 1918 pandemic as well as the current 2020 pandemic as students commented on the negatives that "government says that it's not as bad as it is and that it's getting better when it's not" and "not wearing masks" (observation, September 8, 2020). These initial responses, relevant to both time periods, prompted other students to bring their verbal reflections firmly into the present:

> Student: I'm still a little bit mad about how people aren't taking precautions. And if they were, it would be over by now - 2 weeks is how long it is
>
> Student: I think I saw this on Instagram… If every single person wore a mask whenever they went out for 4 or 6 weeks, then we could have crushed the pandemic into the ground. But no… everyone doesn't want to wear masks. (Observation, September 8, 2020)

When Sally followed up the second comment with the revelation that there were anti-mask groups in 1918, students again noted in the chat the immediate relevance of this historic issue to current life in 2020:

> From [student]: of course i can believe there were anti maskers, people are stupid
>
> From [student]: see people only care about themselves and don't seem to care about all of us sitting at home on computers all day with no real interaction. (Observation, September 8, 2020)

While the lesson was focused around the 1918 flu pandemic, the relevance of the event immediately resonated with students' current realities and challenges during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.

Sally consistently and directly told students that she believed in their ability to recognize, address, and improve upon past mistakes, and three of the four students who participated in

follow-up interviews identified this refrain as one of Sally's primary goals for her humanities students. While Nate rather hesitantly commented that history is relevant to today's world because of "how it connects to now … using history to kind of help current issues" because "you can learn from mistakes, kind of, I guess" (interview, October 15, 2020), Emilia and Lacy more confidently asserted that learning history is important because of the connections between past and present and the ability to use reflection upon past mistakes to address current problem. Emilia highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic as an example of the "whole 'making sure history doesn't repeat itself and learn from it'" phenomenon and framed history as a means for people to "understand where we came from, understand our ancestors' mistakes, and know that we might still make mistakes, but we should still learn from them, and always keep in mind that we can make a difference" (interview, September 22, 2020). Lacy adopted a slightly more critical lens when considering the relevance of past events. She said, "I mean, we can use the past to fix our mistakes now. And use it to learn from, because the past has shaped how things are today and I think that's important to realize that kind of stuff" (interview, September 21, 2020). The lasting legacy of slavery was a particularly important moment for Lacy, who confessed that she had not previously thought about it: "I've always thought of it really as history, not as being present-day an issue. It was just like, oh yeah, that happened a long time ago, it's not relevant. But it is" (interview, October 19, 2020).

These student responses demonstrated the ways in which students seemed to be internalizing Sally's message about the use and value of learning history for its relevance and connections to today's world. In alignment with Sally's goals for teaching history, students articulated that understanding mistakes of the past will help people make better decisions in the present and future.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter explored findings from this qualitative case study. In this case, Sally's own K-12 schooling experiences and beliefs about citizenship significantly influenced her instructional decision-making. Her beliefs led her to conceptualize history education as citizenship education, in which students should learn to critically interrogate the past, share human stories, and engage with uncomfortable topics. Sally adamantly believed in eighth graders' capacity for critical citizenship and remained committed to this goal despite external pressures. She enacted critical citizenship education in her classroom by adopting a humanizing approach to teaching about historical and contemporary actors, providing opportunities for students to make connections and see the relevance of history, affirming students as co-creators of knowledge, discussing controversial issues and topics, and building positive student relationships. In response, students perceived the value of their voices and the fairness of their classroom, expressed a willingness to learn new things and critique their preexisting knowledge, and made general connections between past and present events in recognition of the relevance of history.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This qualitative case study examined the implementation of critical citizenship education by a self-identified critical social studies teacher. The purpose of this study was to understand how the teacher enacted critical citizenship education in her eighth-grade US history classroom and the varied ways in which students reacted to this type of critical citizenship education. The results of this study reveal the influences of Sally's own critical citizenship on her instructional practices and the importance of sharing her identity with her students. Results of this study offer new understandings about the relationship between professional goals and personal identity and the role of a teacher's racial identity in making decisions about political disclosure. Findings have implications for other teachers who may seek to reorient students' engagement with history so as to emphasize relevance and the need to study the past in order to understand the present.

The results of this study offer possibilities for enacting critical citizenship education in a middle school setting. Much of the existing literature on citizenship education focuses on high school students, and most typically on civics and government courses (Castro & Knowles, 2017). There have been few if any comprehensive studies that utilize this particular framework for critical citizenship education (Johnson & Morris, 2010) as a lens for exploring the enactment of critical citizenship education in a classroom context.

Major Findings

I used the findings of the study to develop four assertions related to the enactment of critical citizenship education in this case in an eighth-grade social studies class:

1. The teacher models critical citizenship for her students, with a particular emphasis on the sharing of her own identity.
2. The teacher's humanistic approach to history education supports her enactment of critical citizenship education.
3. The teacher's professional judgment about what to treat as controversial and how much to disclose about her own beliefs is informed by the tensions between her personal identity and professional goals.
4. The teacher infuses her critical curriculum with messages of hope to prevent cynicism and empower students to believe in their ability to make change.

These assertions outline how Sally enacted critical citizenship education in her classroom in a way that was accessible to students who entered eighth grade with varying levels and depths of prior knowledge about American history and social studies. Each of these assertions is explored in more detail below.

Teacher's Critical Citizenship and Sharing of Identity

As is true for many teachers of color (e.g., Rodríguez, 2018; Vickery, 2017), Sally's conceptualization of citizenship is informed by her experiences as a Black woman. The lack of representation she felt in her early education and her experiences living as a Black woman in the United States revealed to her the need to consistently question the content of historical narratives and interrogate the legacies of historical events. Sally considered a critical citizen to be someone who questions everything, considers multiple viewpoints, recognizes the existence of flaws in the nation's past, and engages with others to build a more just society. Her understanding of citizenship influenced the way she taught history and presented historical events and actors to her students.

Sally modeled many elements of the framework for critical citizenship education, which demonstrated for students the possibilities of knowledge and citizenship. Her commitment to a more critical vision of social studies and citizenship education led Sally to incorporate instructional strategies that support the skills needed for social change, such as utilizing multiple perspectives (e.g., Dilworth, 2004) and emphasizing student agency and empowerment (Kincheloe, 2008a). Sally's rejection of singular, unexamined narratives of American history compelled her to engage students in similarly questioning this narrative. She wanted students to think critically about the flaws of American history before buying into American exceptionalism.

Notably Sally modeled her self-reflection and shared her identity with students. Sally vocally expressed her support for the Black Lives Matter movement and rightly presented the unjust treatment of Black people in America as fact. During the study period she refused to participate in conversations with parents who sought to dehumanize her by attacking the core tenets of Black Lives Matter. When teaching about institutionalized slavery, Sally openly reflected upon her own family's history and uncertain ancestry as a testament to the legacy of slavery and racism in the United States. As a Black female teacher in a predominantly White school, Sally's experiences may have even served as a "direct and personal" counter-narrative for some students who had little exposure to these narratives in their own lives (Conrad, 2020, p. 233).

Sally's openness about her identity also served a relational purpose in her classroom. She incorporated elements of her identity into her teaching in ways that were meant to build relationships, like the "Where I'm From" poetry assignment. The results of Conrad's (2020) study with an "out" gay male teacher suggest that "purposeful disclosure for teachers with marginalized identities implicated in issues under deliberation" may foster greater honesty, trust,

and mutual respect in classroom relationships (p. 235). While Sally in this case did not offer her identity as an issue for deliberation, she did intend to foster an open classroom climate in which students felt empowered to speak up, ask questions, and offer historical critiques. Sally's efforts here aligned with the context of Community School, which emphasized relationships as one of the school's core values. As part of this relational approach to teaching and learning, students called teachers by their first names. Sally's sharing of her own experiences and identity contributed to this nurturing and positive environment.

Humanistic Approach to History Education

The Johnson and Morris (2010) framework does not explicitly name historical content knowledge as being essential to critical citizenship, but Sally's practice offers an example of what is possible in a middle grades history classroom and supports the assertion that "every class teaches citizenship in some way" (Chiodo & Martin, 2005, p. 24). Rather than teaching and learning history "for its own sake," guided by the "dead hand of tradition," Sally's approach to history education aligned more with Barton and Levstik's (2004) vision of "humanistic education geared toward preparing students for participatory democracy" (p. 26-27). Barton and Levstik (2004) posited that a humanistic approach to history education must be guided by three key elements: the promotion of reasoned judgment, with opportunities for students to weigh alternatives and determine significance, an "expanded view of humanity," and "deliberation over the common good" (p. 38).

By focusing on human stories, exploring human complexity, and directly addressing potential stereotypes and misconceptions, Sally reoriented students' engagement with history by presenting history as something that exists "in the form of narratives that are told from a specific point of view" (Dyches & Boyd, 2017, p. 482), rather than as a static "body of established facts

about … great men and great events" (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 167). From this perspective, students are permitted to consider history as alive and open to interpretation, potentially more worthy of study because of the ways in which past and present are connected. This approach focuses on developing critical thinking by asking students to consider alternatives to the narratives of American exceptionalism (Salinas, 2006), or even of a nation that is "imperfect but best" (Cornbleth, 1998, p. 628) that are frequently still conveyed in social studies classes.

Students often feel disconnected from traditional social studies curricula due to perceived irrelevance and lack of representation in the historical narrative experienced by many students (Choi, 2013). In response to this phenomenon, Sally taught students about the complications and controversies within past and present narratives so that students had the opportunity to reach their own conclusions about historical events. By critiquing textbooks and other traditional curricula, Sally showed students that knowledge is socially constructed and they can and should question these sources. From this perspective, history education becomes a place for reasoning to take place as students grapple with questions and contradictions, rather than simply accumulating a set of inert facts or learning about an "inevitable unfolding of a preordained sequence of events" (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 36).

Leveraging the power of stories (Barton & McCully, 2012), Sally engaged students in history by providing them with primary sources, photographs, videos, and fiction and nonfiction texts for insight into the lives and varied viewpoints of famous historical actors as well as those of contemporary teenagers alive today. Sally sought to provide students with many different models of people who are actively engaged in shaping the world around them, both as a model of active, participatory citizenship and also as a way of broadening students' understanding of what it means to be human. Sally offered her students a chance to grapple with a complex and nuanced

portrait of traditional American heroes like Christopher Columbus and Thomas Jefferson. Problematizing these heroes as flawed humans who made enormous mistakes and committed atrocities while also making positive contributions to America's legacy underscored the humanness of all people. Connecting with the stories of teenagers today affirmed students' agency and the power of their own voices as they saw different ways that other young people experience the world. Engagement with multiple perspectives helped students to "recognize, understand, and even embrace the range of human diversity" that is central to democratic society (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 37). Sally's emphasis on peer teaching and elevating student voices in her classroom gave students a chance to "reason together with others" (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 39) as they considered some questions of the common good. Drawing and sharing conclusions with peers about how to remember historic figures like Christopher Columbus, the lasting legacy of slavery and contemporary impact of racism, and how to resolve ethical dilemmas that set economic wellbeing against public health were all opportunities for students to consider collective, social issues.

Asking historical questions, critiquing knowledge, widening students' views of humanity, and considering the common good all contributed to students' citizenship education in their history class. Like other critical history teachers, Sally's goal was for students to "apply all of these skills … to understand the roots of current injustices and recognize their capacity to effect change" (Parkhouse, 2018, p. 301). Her efforts were supported and reinforced in this case by the school's mission and student population. The students in this study generally liked this more humanistic approach to history; interviewed students in particular reported that they were interested in their humanities class and that they felt the history they learned was more meaningful than in previous years. Many students seemed to be "aware of disparities between

the school curriculum and the history they have learned elsewhere" (Barton, 2008, p. 247) or in the past, and were generally open to learning about human stories and alternative narratives as opposed to a compendium of discrete facts. The politically conservative students did seem less engaged in the class, although they did not publicly contest or refute the existence of these alternative narratives during the observation period.

Research about students' engagement with history has found that students' backgrounds are important to the way they interpret and internalize historical narratives (Barton, 2008). Families chose to enroll their children in Community School, which likely meant that the political values taught at home often aligned with the school's values. The educational approach at Community School was grounded in a mission of justice and student empowerment, committed to project-based, experiential, student-centered learning, and a humanistic approach to history education is well-aligned with this mission and vision. Sally's approach to history education did not result from Community School's mission, as she held these beliefs prior to employment at the school, but her conception of good citizenship and goals for her students were supported and reinforced by the values espoused at Community School.

Controversial Issues, Teacher Disclosure, and Identity

As part of her broader humanistic approach to history, Sally viewed uncomfortable topics and controversial issues as essential elements of her eighth-grade history curriculum. She made decisions both about what content to treat as legitimately controversial and about withholding or disclosing her own beliefs and opinions about those issues. The nuance of these decisions reflected Sally's professional judgment, which is informed by the tensions between her personal identity and professional goals.

Hess and McAvoy (2015) have argued that when making "professional judgments" regarding classroom practices teachers should "consider the *context* in which they teach, the available *evidence*, and their educational *aims*" (p. 12). Sally's school and community context was politically left-leaning, with a supportive school administration, a school mission grounded in justice, and a charter school structure that meant parents and their students must choose to attend the school in the first place. At the same time, this study took place during a unique social and political moment in American history in the midst of the 2020 presidential election campaign, an ongoing global pandemic, and renewed public discourse about issues of racial equality. As a Black woman, these current events had direct connections with Sally's own identities and experiences. Her lived experiences and her understanding of history influenced both the questions and types of issues that she considered to be open or closed to controversy in her classroom and her understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. Sally conceptualized a good citizen as one who asks questions about the past, thinks critically, evaluates multiple perspectives, and takes action, and she equally believed that citizenship education is a component of how students learn about and engage with history.

As a result of the school, community, and sociopolitical context, her understanding of particular issues as open or settled, and her educational aims, Sally made decisions about which issues to treat as controversial and how much to disclose about her own beliefs. Rather than either always sharing her views or never sharing her views, Sally chose to disclose some things and not others; she might be categorized as an "occasional discloser" rather than an explicit discloser or a staunch advocate for "pure neutrality" (Hess & McAvoy, 2009, p. 100).

While Sally directly named racism and White supremacy, asked students to consider the possibility of modern legacies of slavery and racism, and shared some elements of her identity as

a Black woman, she also intentionally withheld her opinions about public policy issues and current events and did not ask students to interrogate the impacts of race on current events like the coronavirus pandemic or the 2020 presidential election. She encouraged students to ask questions and modeled for them her own critiques of historical actors and the portrayal of history in traditional social studies textbooks, but stopped short of directly raising questions about justice or equity in similar ways about contemporary figures like then-presidential candidates Donald Trump and Joe Biden.

"Neutral Impartiality" and Controversial Issues. The tensions Sally experienced between her professional goals and personal identity were reflected in her treatment of controversial issues and controversial topics in her classroom. Sally considered election- and candidate-related dilemmas to fall within the realm of controversial issues, or "public policy questions that generate disagreement among students" (McAvoy & Ho, 2020, p. 29). Sally treated these issues as open to debate with multiple possible responses and viewpoints (Ho et al., 2017).

When teaching about the presidential election, responses to the coronavirus pandemic, or even considering the legacies of flawed historical figures, Sally's instructional decisions reflected the perspective of "neutral impartiality" as described by Kelly (1986), believing that students should actively discuss controversial issues but at the same time remaining committed to silence about her own views on those issues. In alignment with previous research exploring social studies teacher disclosure (e.g., Geller, 2020; Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Journell, 2011b), Sally stated that her efforts at, what Hess (2004) has labelled "balance," stemmed from her desire for students to draw their own conclusions and make up their own minds without the potential influence of the teacher's beliefs. However, Sally's underlying motivations contrasted with

research that describes these teachers as seeking to enact "neutrality" in their classrooms (Ross, 2000) or simply hesitant to engage younger, less mature students in difficult discussions (Miller-Lane et al., 2006). Instead, Sally's decisions about disclosure or withholding of particular views was reflective of her own perception of the influence of her identities in and on her classroom.

Disclosure and Controversial Topics. In contrast with her approach to teaching about issues of public policy, Sally treated the controversial topics of racism and White supremacy as what Hess and McAvoy (2015) labelled, "settled empirical issues" (p 161). In other words, Sally presented as historical fact that racism is at the root of many of America's past and present social problems, a view supported by historians. As a social studies teacher, Sally understood that the legacy of racism is a crucial topic for inclusion in her American history curriculum, even though some adults may find the topic "objectionable" and not appropriate for discussion in a school setting (Ho et al., 2017, p. 323).

While Sally did not ask her students to explore the issues of inequality and injustice woven into the presidential election or coronavirus pandemic, she did directly teach on the existence and reality of racism and White supremacy and planned to continue this instruction throughout the year. Sally also chose to vocalize her support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement through her apparel, her classroom bitmoji avatar, and other expressions of her identity. These decisions to name racism and White supremacy and to express her pride in her own identity, while withholding her opinions on other topics, reflected her perception that racism is objectively wrong and not open for debate.

Sally's choices aligned with the context of her school environment, which provided additional support for her inclusion of these topics in her curriculum and her disclosure of her own support of the BLM movement. Sally was supported by both the school administration and

the school mission, which promote justice and sustainability. The school's educational approach and core values are built upon the pillar of social empowerment, which requires students to engage in current, relevant issues and authentic problems. The school's mission, the self-selection inherent in parents choosing to apply for their students to attend the school, and the school's location in the downtown of a politically liberal city meant that the student and family population was more politically "like-minded" and relatively liberal (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 136).

The parental pushback that did arise from Sally's expression that Black Lives Matter is an indication of the ways in which teachers may send political messages in the classroom even when they choose not to disclose all of their beliefs about policy questions or controversial issues (e.g., Geller, 2020; Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Journell, 2011b; Niemi & Niemi, 2007). This "political seepage" (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 199) occurs when teachers choose to not explicitly state their views to students but their political opinions still "seep" into their instruction in the classroom. In this case, Sally's openness about her identity and her inclusion of the legacy of racism in an American history curriculum seemed to some parents to be an indication of Sally's political beliefs spilling over into her instruction.

Disgruntled parents at Community School contended that Sally's support of BLM indicated that she opposed Trump in the 2020 presidential election, which they considered to be a political viewpoint to which they did not want their children exposed. When BLM was questioned this way by parents, Sally pushed back against the idea of BLM as a partisan statement, instead affirming that parents could not know her election preferences since she did not share them with her students and subsequently removing herself from the confrontation when she felt her own humanity to be under attack. These parents considered racism and White

supremacy to be controversial issues up for debate (Ho et al., 2017), but Sally's lived experiences and critical study of history informed her perspective that this was not the case. Sally's humanity as a Black woman in the United States was not a "polarizing" or "controversial" issue but was instead anchored in her commitment to justice and affirmation of her own and others' humanity (Dunn et al., 2019, p. 468).

Sally's approach to controversy and disclosure in her classroom offer an interesting portrait of how a teacher's race or other identities might influence the way they frame issues in their classes. Particularly in the context of 2020, in the midst of protests for racial equality and heightened political awareness leading up to the presidential election, Sally's identities were at the "political forefront" in ways that could not be shed when she entered her virtual classroom (Journell, 2018, p. 177). In this case, Sally's race influenced how she framed various issues and potential controversies in her classroom and the extent to which she shared her opinions about political candidates or issues of public policy (Journell, 2018).

Infusing a Critical Curriculum with Messages of Hope

A key feature of Sally's enactment of critical citizenship education for eighth-grade students was that she wrapped her critical instruction around a message of hope, which stemmed from her ardent belief in her students' ability to be the impetus for change. Sally repeatedly assured her students that it was possible to do better than had been done in the past, affirming "that the world can be changed and even improved" (Stitzlein, 2020, p. 14).

Students' adoption of this philosophy of hope is necessary for critical citizenship so that they can avoid or overcome potential feelings of cynicism or helplessness when learning about injustices or oppression in their communities and the systems in which they live (Schmidt, 2008). Students must be empowered to believe that they can disrupt the replication of injustices by

acting to change and reconstruct the world around them (Kincheloe, 2008a; Stitzlein, 2020). Hope is the essential component that links critique with possibility, enabling students to develop a sense of agency and imagination for change (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986).

Importantly, Sally's students seem to have internalized her message of hope. Even when students in this study learned of the horrific actions done by historical figures, their reactions did not reveal any increased cynicism or discouragement. Instead, students highlighted the purpose of history as improving upon the past to create a better future and identified their teacher's belief in their abilities to make change.

Sally adopted a "language of possibility" (Giroux, 2001, p. 81) to advance her message of hope in explicit ways. She directly expressed to her students that she had hope for a better future, one in which students could play a transformative role in society (Moore et al., 2011). She consistently reminded students that their generation would right past wrongs and make improvements over the actions and decisions made by previous generations. She viewed students as capable co-creators and producers of knowledge (Freire, 1970/2018), and intentionally integrated youth voices and experiences into her instruction as a means of affirming the power of young people's voices.

Her message of hope, agency, and possibility also factored into Sally's inclusion of controversial topics and current events in her classroom. Some teachers cite students' age and lack of maturity as reasons to avoid political issues or controversial topics in middle school (Conklin, 2011), particularly presidential elections because the "political season [is] so aggressive and nasty" and sometimes perceived as inappropriate for children (Dunn et al., 2019, p. 455). By contrast, Sally regularly incorporated election-related current events into her class because she viewed the social studies classroom instead as a "[site] to cultivate youth

empowerment and engagement precisely *because* of students' age" (Dunn et al., 2019, p. 455). Sally very clearly understood eighth grade to be a time in which students were beginning to develop their own political identities, and her inclusion of these issues into her class sent an implicit signal to students that she deemed them capable of thinking critically and forming their own opinions.

Belief in her students' ability to think critically and ask critical questions were foundational to Sally's intent for students to critically interrogate the past. Sally again employed the language of hope (Freire, 1992) to tell her students that her purpose in being critical about the past was not to demean or berate historical actors, but instead to help students understand the ways in which they might be able to envision something better for themselves and for society. In other words, Sally believed that students "have to know history to know how to answer, 'What should I hope for?'" (Stitzlein, 2020, p. 118). Her purpose in providing students with "access to stories that have not been sanitized to produce happy endings, but [instead] include accounts of struggle and failure in decision-making" was to help students better understand how the present arose out of the past (Stitzlein, 2020, p. 118). The many examples of flawed decisions and moral complications were intended to support students' ability to "make a difference by being able to imagine otherwise" (Giroux, 2020, p. 121).

Sally's message of criticality wrapped in hope was essential not just for critical citizenship education within her history class but also for the fulfilment of Community School's core values and vision. The school prized social empowerment, which by necessity requires a foundation of hope. The premise of social empowerment is that when students engage with meaningful, complex, and authentic issues, they realize that they have the power to change how the world works. Community School stakeholders intended for their students to learn that they

were capable of making change in addition to understanding the logistics of navigating the systems necessary to be able to do so.

Rather than becoming visibly discouraged and succumbing to cynicism about the missteps in American history, students believed Sally that they could and would make a difference in the future and do better than people had done in the past. Sally engaged her students in historical critique, but by infusing those critiques with messages of hope, she was able to maintain students' optimism and build upon a core school value, social empowerment.

Implications

The findings and major assertions from this study suggest implications for students, teachers, and teacher educators (see Table 13).

Table 13

Implications for Stakeholders

Students	Social Studies Teachers	Teacher Educators
• Explore relevance of history and connections between past and present • Offer students a critical curriculum paired with messages of hope • Engage with voices of other young people	• Develop rationale for teaching history aligned with goals • Critically deconstruct and reflect upon own identities • Exercise professional judgment to make decisions about controversy and disclosure • Rethink standards of neutrality in the classroom	• Enact critical citizenship education to facilitate teacher candidates' development of critical citizenship • Problematize typical historical narratives and possibility of neutrality in the classroom • Provide content support alongside pedagogical best practices

Students

Students benefit when they are told the reasons and purposes behind what they are learning. When teachers emphasize and make explicit the relevance of history to contemporary issues, students are better able to understand and articulate the importance of studying history to

understand the present (Barton, 2008; Haydn & Harris, 2010). Students in history classes must be guided to discern the relevance of history and consider the possibility that events are connected throughout time and that actions and decisions of the past may continue to exert influence in today's world. Students will only be able to develop the political, social, and practical knowledge necessary for critical citizenship if they begin from a premise that current events might have historical roots. If there is no connection between past and present, then there is little need to investigate the causes of systemic issues.

As Sally's use of language of possibility demonstrates in this study, a critical curriculum wrapped in hopeful messages about the possibility to make change is essential for avoiding cynicism and upholding students' belief in their own agency. Students need messaging from their teacher and school that affirms the power of students' voices and their ability to think critically, solve problems, and make real change. By engaging with multiple sources and perspectives about historical events, figures, and social issues, students will have the opportunity to make claims and judgments and take some ownership over their learning process. As part of these various perspectives, students also benefit from the incorporation of young adult literature (Groenke et al., 2010) and stories from other teenagers, past and present. These perspectives again serve to reaffirm the power of students' voices and legitimize young people as sources of real potential action and change. This confidence in young people, expressed directly by the teacher and indirectly through instructional materials and class environment, imbues critical citizenship education curriculum with hope and possibility.

Teachers

Since teachers must make choices about what narratives to include in their history curricula and how to treat the stories and content that they do choose to include, teachers need to

explore their own rationales for teaching history. There is no "objective" approach to teaching history, so teachers must be guided by the goals they develop for their students (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 27). As this study demonstrates, Sally's humanistic approach to history, with a focus on expanding students' perspectives, making reasoned judgments, and working in cooperation with peers, is supported by her school and student context. Yet, the approach was still novel to Community School students, and the students in this study found more relevance and meaning in history class than they had before in previous social studies classes. Students' perspectives about history are in part shaped by their teacher's decisions about what aspects of history to emphasize – relevance versus coverage of content – so teachers' intentional emphasis on the relevance of history to the contemporary world may help facilitate these understandings (Barton, 2008).

In addition, the results of this study reaffirm and broaden the understanding of the influence of teacher beliefs and teacher identities on instructional decisions and practices (Castro, 2014; Richardson, 1996; Thornton, 1991). The salience of Sally's expressions of identity and her related choices about disclosure and controversy in her classroom suggest the complexity of the influence of a teacher's racial identity on their practice. Sally's prior reflection upon her own identity and past experiences manifests in the ways in which Sally brings her identity into the classroom and her goals for her eighth-grade history students. Thus, teachers will require supportive spaces in which to critically deconstruct and reflect upon their own identities in order to recognize the impact of race and other identifiers (Jupp et al., 2016; Santoro, 2009) to advance their own critical citizenship and to acknowledge these differences in their students. Teachers should explicitly interrogate their own positionalities and identities and

consider the ways in which their identities and past experiences influence their political and social perspectives and teaching philosophy.

Teachers will need to exercise professional judgment, based on the context, evidence, and aims of their teaching environment to make their own decisions about political disclosure (Hess & McAvoy, 2015). At the same time, teachers must recognize that maintaining "neutrality" in their classroom is an impractical goal that functions as a tacit acceptance of the status quo (Geller, 2020; Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Journell, 2011b). Teachers who want to teach toward critical citizenship should rethink personal standards of neutrality and instead critically reflect upon their teaching and community context, personal identity, and professional goals when making decisions about disclosure.

Teacher Educators and the Field of Social Studies

As is evident from existing literature and supported by the findings of the current study, teachers' educational philosophies and beliefs about citizenship education influence their pedagogy and instructional practice. Given the continued prevalence of more traditional approaches to teaching social studies (Saye & SSIRC, 2013) and the influence of teacher beliefs on enacted pedagogy (Thornton, 1991), it is unlikely that teachers who are not themselves critical citizens would organically teach their students from this perspective. To advance critical citizenship education, then, teacher educators must themselves enact critical citizenship education to facilitate preservice and in-service teachers' development of the requisite knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions. Teacher educators must help teacher candidates explore the historical roots of present inequalities in social and political spheres as well as institutionalized systems like education. In social studies teacher education specifically, teacher educators should support preservice teachers in problematizing the typical historical narrative

and asking questions about whose history is told, in what ways, and for what potential purposes. Teacher educators must help their teacher candidates reframe their perspective on education as inherently political and question the ability for any teacher to be truly "neutral" in their classroom (Kincheloe, 2008b).

Teacher educators will also need to provide content support for preservice and in-service teachers. Since alternative narratives like the ones advanced by critical citizenship education remain elusive in K-12 social studies classes, it is possible or even probable that future teachers may not themselves be knowledgeable about the content. Teacher educators should teach relevant content alongside pedagogical best practices to build preservice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). For example, teacher educators might lead their teacher candidates in an *Opening Up the Textbook* activity[5] around typical heroic figures like Christopher Columbus or Thomas Jefferson that would both model the instructional strategy and offer teacher candidates a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the context and circumstances behind the heroic myths (Wineburg, 2007).

The current sociopolitical context offers a plethora of reasons to suggest that developing a new generation of critical citizens is an urgent and immediate need. To do so, teachers must not only recognize this urgency but also realize the connections between a curriculum for critical citizenship education and state and national social studies standards. Stakeholders in the broader field of social studies education must continue to integrate the necessary knowledge of content and best practices into teacher education and strive to bridge the theory-practice gap with

[5] The *Opening Up the Textbook* (OUT) strategy is designed to help students critically analyze their class textbook by pairing a textbook excerpt with additional documents or sources and asking students to compare sources and accounts. For more, see Wineburg (2007).

practicing in-service teachers so that critical citizenship education becomes the expectation rather than the exception to tradition.

Future Research

While this study provides valuable and needed insight into the enactment of critical citizenship education in an eighth-grade social studies classroom, there is still much to be learned about critical citizenship education. Of course, the unique sociopolitical context of late 2020 had a significant impact on the current study, as the entire learning experience was virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic. Conducting a similar study in an in-person classroom when safe to do so would be a valuable extension of the research that might also offer clearer understanding of the possibilities of critical citizenship education. If I were able to replicate this study in the same teacher's in-person classroom, I would be able to compare the virtual and in-person classrooms through cross-case analysis and identify the unique challenges and affordances of each learning environment.

While this study was designed with a primary focus on the teacher's instructional decision-making and conceptualization of critical citizenship education in her teaching, understanding student learning related to critical citizenship education remains an essential component of this research and should be extended in future studies. Given that the student participants in follow-up interviews in the current study were all White girls who were supportive of Sally's practices, future analyses of responses from students with more varied racial, ethnic, gender, and political identities would offer greater nuance to understanding the student response. All four student interview participants were open to critical citizenship education and interested in learning more, so it would also be important to consider responses from students who are more resistant to this perspective. Broadening the sample of student

participants will provide a deeper illustration of how students with varied identities, experiences, and prior beliefs respond to critical citizenship education and may offer more nuanced insight into the effectiveness of various instructional practices, strategies, or resources employed by critical citizenship social studies educators. The time period and duration of the study is another factor to consider in future research. It would be a useful extension of this study to observe the class for the entire year, or to follow up with the students at the end of the school year. These extensions could offer a deeper understanding of students' evolutions in perspective and development of critical citizenship over time.

Finally, experts in the field need to build upon these findings to further explore how the framework for critical citizenship education can be applied to other educational contexts. This case study focused on one specific teacher in one course who was supported by the school's administration, the school's stated values, and the parent community. While tuition-free, Community School is a charter school, so parents and guardians of students who attend this school must actively select the progressive school environment for their children and are thus more likely to support the overall school mission and vision.

Future research could explore teacher experiences in varied educational contexts with varied levels of administrative support. There is an urgent need for more research that deeply explores how teachers' identities influence their approach to addressing politics and controversial issues in their classroom (Journell, 2018). Given the significant influence of Sally's identities on her teaching in the present study, it would be valuable to explore the implementation of critical citizenship education by other teachers with different sets of characteristics and identities, including race, gender, sexuality, and political ideology. In particular, it is not clear from this study how politically conservative teachers might enact critical

citizenship education, especially in the wake of former President Trump's 1776 Commission report demonizing this kind of critical historical inquiry (The White House, 2020). The field would benefit from the valuable insights gleaned from studies with politically conservative teachers who still choose to enact critical citizenship education in their social studies classrooms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Observation Protocol

Field notes will be taken on a computer using this template as a guide.

Observer comments will be included within text of field notes and identified by [bracketing] & *italics* and initials "OC"

Observer:	**School:**	**Date:**	**Time:**
Teacher:	**# students:**	**Lesson topic/objectives:**	
Description of [physical] setting:			
Field Notes			

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Protocol

Teacher Interview Questions - First Interview

1. Tell me about your professional background.
    a. How long have you been teaching?
    b. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. Tell me about your professional background.
3. Describe your current school.
    a. Why did you choose/want to work at this school in particular?
4. Describe your teaching philosophy.
5. What do you see as the purpose of history education?
    a. What do you see as the purpose of United States history education, specifically?
    b. How do you try to accomplish this in your classroom?
6. Do you perceive any problems with the way US history is typically taught? What kind?
    a. Do you try to resolve/challenge/confront these issues in your own teaching? How so?
7. Tell me the story of America as you understand it.
8. What is your understanding of what it means to be a "good citizen?"
    a. What knowledge should "good citizens" have?
    b. What skills should "good citizens" have, or what should they be able to do?
    c. What values or beliefs should "good citizens" have?
9. Do U.S. history teachers have a role in citizenship education? *(please explain)*
    a. How do you try to meet these goal(s) in your teaching?
10. How would you define "critical citizenship" (or a critical citizen)?
11. Imagine your ideal classroom community. How would you describe this vision if you were explaining it to a colleague?
    a. Why is this type of community important/worth striving for?
    b. Put yourself in the shoes of a math or science teacher at your school. How do you think the change of subject would change your vision of the classroom community? *(how so/why?)*
    c. How do you try to build that classroom community?
12. How do you select resources and teaching materials for your students?
    a. How do you approach the state social studies standards?
13. What topics or issues in your curriculum are your favorite to teach? *(please explain)*
14. What topics or issues in your curriculum are your least favorite/most challenging to teach? *(please explain)*
15. What types of instructional strategies do you find to be most effective for students' learning? How so? *(please explain)*
16. Tell me about a time in your career when you received pushback or resistance from school leadership or parents/guardians about your approach to teaching history or your instructional practices. *[If the answer is that no such time exists, probe why the teacher thinks they have not ever received this kind of response, and follow-up with sub-question (d) here.]*

   a. How did you respond to this feedback?
   b. Potential follow-up: have you received this kind of resistance from students?
   c. Have you found this kind of reaction to be common throughout your career? *(please explain)*

17. What does a supportive school administrative team look like?
   a. School culture?
   b. Parent community?

Teacher Interview Questions – Second Interview

1. How would you describe your relationship with your students?
    a. How have those relationships changed (or not) since the first day of school/beginning of the observation period?
    b. Are these relationships important to your teaching? *(please explain)*
    c. What do you do to build/maintain those relationships? *(please explain)*
2. How have you tried to meet your teaching goals related to U.S. history education during the observation period?
    a. What kinds of evidence (ex: specific pieces of student work, discussions, etc.) do/have you use(d) to monitor whether/how you are meeting these goals?
3. How have your lessons related to citizenship education during the observation period?
4. How have you tried to meet your teaching goals related to citizenship education during the observation period?
    a. What kinds of evidence (ex: specific pieces of student work, discussions, etc.) do/have you use(d) to monitor whether/how you are meeting these goals?
5. Have you perceived any of your students undergoing a change in their understandings of history or citizenship over this period? If so, explain.
6. *Give the teacher a copy of the critical citizenship framework as proposed by Johnson and Morris (2010) and offer several minutes for them to look over the framework.*
    a. What do you think about this framework?
    b. Are there any knowledge, skills, values, dispositions that you think are missing and would want to include? Are there any present there that you would exclude?
    c. What elements (if any) do you think are most important/foundational in this framework?
    d. Take another moment to look over the framework. Which of these elements (if any) have you specifically tried to teach/help your students develop over this observation period?
    e. Do you think each of these elements can be addressed through history class? *(explain)*
    f. Do you think 8th grade students can demonstrate each of these elements in your classroom? *(explain)*
7. (How) has this research process/my presence affected your teaching? *(explain)*

Appendix C

Student Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been attending this school?
    a. What do you like about it?
    b. Not like about it?
2. Why do you think you learn about history in school?
    a. What do you learn about in history class?
3. Can you tell/what would you say are your teacher's goals for you as her history students in this class? (What does she want you to know or do?)
    a. *Alternative: How do you think Ms. (Teacher) would define "history?"*
4. *First interview only:* What do you hope to learn this year in your history class?
   Second interview only: What have you learned since the beginning of the year?
5. Tell me the story of America as you understand it.
6. What kinds of activities or assignments have been your favorite(s) in your history class? Has there been one that stands out in particular? *(explain)*
7. Have any of the questions, viewpoints, or issues that have been brought up in your history class surprised you? *(first interview*- in past history classes; *second interview*- this class)
    a. Made you feel proud?
    b. Made you feel angry?
8. What is a "good citizen?"
    a. What knowledge should "good citizens" have?
    b. What skills should "good citizens" have, or what should they be able to do?
    c. What values or beliefs should "good citizens" have?
9. Do you think you learn about any of this knowledge or these skills and/or values in your history class? *(explain)*
10. Would you consider yourself to be a good citizen? *(explain)*
11. *For first interview only:*
    a. How do you identify in terms of race/ethnicity?
    b. How do you identify in terms of nationality?

Appendix D

Gatekeeper Permission Email

Dear *(gatekeeper name),*

I hope you are staying safe and as well as possible during these circumstances. My name is Casey Holmes and I am a former *(school district name)* high school social studies teacher and current doctoral candidate at NCSU. I am currently planning for my dissertation study, which centers around critical social studies teaching at the secondary (MS/HS) level, what this looks like in practice, and students' responses to this type of orientation. In my capacity at NCSU I now work with pre-service middle school teachers, and I am really becoming increasingly interested in what critical social studies work can look like for our middle grades students.

The purpose of my study is to gain a better understanding of what teaching looks like in a middle school social studies classroom when the teacher approaches their teaching with a critical lens. I am writing to you to seek permission to potentially conduct research in your school with one (1) or more of your teachers. I would like to conduct research in your school because it appears that your school mission and core values align with the fundamental elements of critical citizenship education. If a teacher at your school consents to participate in this research with me, I plan to: conduct observations of the teacher's class, review assignments sheets and other instructional materials, including lesson plans, and conducting interviews with the teacher and some of their students. Participation will be voluntary for all teachers and students and all participants will be able to withdraw their consent at any time. The study is not intended to be evaluative or pass judgment on how "good" a teacher is; instead, I wish to deeply understand how and why teaching and learning look the way they do in the social studies classroom. Your permission to conduct research at your school does not mean that a teacher is required to participate; they will still be able to voluntarily consent or not.

If you and a teacher in your school agree to this research, I plan to observe and audio record the teacher's classroom for the entire period, 4 days per week, for approximately 4-6 weeks (depending on lengths of units). I will obtain lesson plans, instructional materials, and a teacher's researcher journal from the teacher and conduct 2 formal audio-recorded interviews with the teacher. I will also conduct 2 formal interviews with approximately 5-8 students in the teacher's class who, along with their parents, have consented to participate in the study.

I hope to be able to begin this research at the very beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, this August, alongside the teachers and students. I am interested also in the relationship- and classroom culture-building that happens at the beginning of the year, and how these elements may be connected to critical instruction. I know that we do not know yet what school will look in this age of COVID. Once plans are clearer and more certain, I am happy to follow up with you about my plan for maintaining my own and others' safety. I do hope to be able to conduct this research regardless of whether school returns in person, totally online, or some kind of combination of the two. If school is conducted in a remote environment, I will conduct all interviews virtually and hope to be able to stream in to "observe" the class sessions, whatever

those may look like. I will follow COVID safety procedures from NCSU or your school's practices, whichever is more restrictive.

Since this is my dissertation study, I do plan to write, talk, present, and publish around this data in the future. In any writing or presentation that I do, all data will be de-identified, with direct identifiers (like person and school names, geographic location, etc.) removed. I will assign pseudonyms to all participants and to the school itself. Even with these precautions, there is still some risk that a third party may be able to re-identify your school name and/or the teacher or student participants, mostly through triangulating multiple pieces of information. I will attempt to report findings in the aggregate as much as possible and may potentially change or combine participant stories or experiences to strengthen confidentiality. All data will be securely stored in an NCSU-managed and encrypted digital file location.

If you would like, I am happy to meet with you virtually over Zoom at your convenience to address any questions or concerns about this study or my plans, or to discuss anything I've already mentioned here in greater detail. Or, if you are ready to grant (or deny) permission at this time, you can simply respond to this email and let me know your decision.

At any time throughout the study you may contact me at this email address, [xxx], or via phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. You may also contact my dissertation faculty advisor, Dr. Meghan Manfra, at xxx-xxx-xxxx or [xxx].

Thank you so much for your time!

Best,
Casey Holmes

Appendix E

Parent/Guardian Recruitment Email Script and Flyer

Dear *(parent/guardian name),*

My name is Casey Holmes and I am a former *(school district name)* high school social studies teacher and current doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University pursuing a doctorate in social studies education. This school year I will be working with your child's social studies teacher on a research project for my dissertation study, which is centered around critical social studies teaching in your child's classroom, what this looks like in practice, and students' responses to this type of instruction.

I would like to invite your student to take part in a research study titled "Teaching Critical Democratic Citizenship Education," examining how your child's teacher teaches social studies class through a lens of critical citizenship education. This study explores what goes in this particular classroom through classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, and analysis of teacher lesson plans and other instructional materials.

I will be observing and audio recording your child's classroom for 4-6 weeks, and I hope to speak with a small number of students in interviews to learn about their perceptions of history, social studies, and citizenship. If you choose to allow your student to participate in this study, they will be eligible to participate in these interviews with me. If selected to participate in interviews, your student will be asked to participate in two (2) formal interviews with me, the researcher, each lasting 30-45 minutes in length. These interviews will take place after school as is convenient for you and your child, one near the beginning of the year in mid-August, and one in late September or early October.

Your child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Participating in this study is neither a requirement nor expectation of your child's school, teacher, or role as a student. All of the information that is seen, heard, or collected will remain confidential and protected, including all names, which will be represented in any final reports with a pseudonym. There is some risk of re-identification of your student's identity, although this risk is anticipated to be minimal. This study is not evaluative of students or their behavior. I will not collect any information about your child if you do not wish for them to participate in this study.

If you agree to allow your child to join the study, I will need your formal permission since your child is a minor. If you provide your permission your child may also provide their assent to participate in the study. Both you and your child will use an online system called Qualtrics to provide permission/assent. I will provide you with a link to the Qualtrics form, and you will be able to download a copy of the form for your records. You and your child have a right to decide to be a part of this study, choose not to participate, or to stop participating at any time.

If you have questions about the research study, please feel free to reach out to me, Casey Holmes, at any time throughout the study by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx or email at [xxx]. You may

also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Meghan Manfra, by calling her at xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mailing her at [xxx].

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Casey Holmes
Doctoral Candidate- Social Studies Education
North Carolina State University

Appendix F

Teacher Consent Form

Title of Study: Teaching Critical Democratic Citizenship Education **(eIRB #** 20824)
Principal Investigator(s): Casey Holmes, (*email, phone*)
Funding Source: NCSU College of Education Dissertation Support Grant

Faculty Point of Contact: Dr. Meghan Manfra, (*email, phone*)

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are invited to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, and to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of what teaching looks like in middle school social studies classrooms when the teacher approaches their teaching with a critical lens. I will do this through conducting virtual observations of your class, reviewing your digital assignments and other digital instructional materials, including lesson plans and a teacher's journal that I will ask you to keep, and conducting virtual interviews with you and some of your students.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. You may want to participate in this research because you will be able to reflect critically and deeply upon your own teaching and instruction, learn about the way(s) your students respond and react to your instruction, and potentially add to the knowledge base for teacher educators to help prepare future preservice teachers for the field of education/teaching. You may not want to participate in this research because it will involve talking to a researcher about issues of justice, fairness, citizen action, and social studies, and these conversations will be audio recorded. You may also not want to participate in this research because it will involve a researcher attending your online class and conducting virtual observations of classroom activities that will be audio recorded.

Specific details about the research in which you are invited to participate are contained below. If you do not understand something in this form, please ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If, at any time, you have questions about your participation in this research, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office. The IRB office's contact information is listed in the *What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?* section of this form.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of the study is to explore how one teacher teaches a middle school social studies class remotely from a lens of critical citizenship education. I seek to explore and understand what happens in the virtual classroom, what kinds of assignments and work the students complete, how the teacher plans for and makes decisions about instruction, and how the students respond/react to the instruction. I also seek to understand how and why the teacher teaches in the critical manner that they do and how they conceive of the purposes and intents of social studies, history classes, and citizenship education.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?
There will be one (1) to two (2) teacher participants in this study.

In order to be a participant in this study, you must voluntarily agree to be in the study, be a secondary social studies teacher (grades 6-12), and identify as a critical citizenship educator based on the following definition: A critical citizenship educator is one who views students as creators of knowledge, encourages students to actively question the status quo, recognizes injustices of society, and advocates for students to take individual and/or collective action towards a more just society.

You cannot participate in this study if you do not meet the inclusion criteria or you do not agree to have your classroom virtually observed.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do all of the following:

1. Facilitate the recruitment process for student participants through a message (flyer) sent home to parents/guardians and students.
2. Teach your class, as normal, with a researcher present in the virtual class, for one (1) class period per day, four (4) days per week, for a total duration of four to six weeks. Virtual class sessions will be audio-recorded to capture conversations.
3. Share digital lesson plans and teacher-created assignments or other instructional materials with the researcher. These assignments will be blank copies of assignments and instructional materials with no student identifiers.
4. Keep a digital teacher researcher journal each day of the study to share with the researcher. In this journal, you will briefly record your reactions to the day's lesson, with a focus on general student reactions and differences between planning/implementation. This journal should be no more than 1-2 paragraphs in length and can be in the form of a bulleted list or full sentences.
5. Participate in two formal virtual interviews with the researcher in addition to one weekly unstructured and informal virtual interviews (for a total of 4-6 depending on final length of study). The interviews will take place virtually and outside of teaching hours during a planning period or after the school day, depending on your preference and availability. Formal interviews will last about 1 hour each for a total of approximately 2 hours. Informal interviews will be quick conversations and may be as few as three (3) to five (5) minutes or as many as fifteen (15) minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded and conducted via Zoom.

The total amount of time that you will be participating in this study is up to 6 weeks and approximately 9-10 hours (in addition to normal classroom teaching time) for all of the research activities described above.

Risks and benefits
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. The primary risk is the risk of re-identifiability of the data and breach of your personal privacy. When I write or talk about the study data, all of your direct identifiers (like your name, your school's name, geographic

location of the school, voice recordings) will be removed. When possible, I may also try to modify or alter some of your personal experiences or demographic information to strengthen confidentiality. Even with these precautions, there is a chance that a third party may be able to identify you by triangulating different pieces of information. Should harm occur, I anticipate the magnitude of this harm to be small. If identified, it is possible that you may face some kind of response or backlash from community members, administrators, or parents, and it is possible that this may affect your professional reputation. All of your data will be securely stored in an NCSU-managed and encrypted file location for added security.

There are no direct benefits to your participation in the research. The indirect benefits are deep insights and critical reflection upon your teaching strategies, decisions, and worldview, in addition to a more comprehensive understanding of how your students are responding/reacting to your instruction. Considering the influences or reactions to a critical curriculum may serve as a catalyst for course modifications, highlighting ways to engage with students who might resist the intentions of critical teaching. Other indirect benefits of this study include contributing to knowledge of teacher practice for practicing and pre-service teachers and teacher educators.

Right to withdraw your participation

You can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. In order to stop your participation, please contact Casey Holmes (*email, phone*) or the faculty advisor for this project, Dr. Meghan Manfra (*email, phone*). If you choose to withdraw your consent and to stop participating in this research, you can expect that the researcher(s) will securely destroy any data that have been collected from you and prevent future uses of your information for research purposes wherever possible. This is possible in some, but not all, cases.

Confidentiality, personal privacy, and data management

Trust is the foundation of the participant/researcher relationship. Much of that principle of trust is tied to keeping your information private and in the manner that we have described to you in this form. The information that you share with me will be held in confidence to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Protecting your privacy as related to this research is of utmost importance to me. There are very rare circumstances related to confidentiality where I may have to share information about you. Your information collected in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies (for example, the FDA) for purposes such as quality control or safety. In other cases, I must report instances in which imminent harm could come to you or others.

How I manage, protect, and share your data are the principal ways that I protect your personal privacy. Data that will be shared with others about you will be re-identifiable.

> **Re-identifiable**. Re-identifiable data is information that can identify you indirectly because of my access to information, role, skills, combination of information, and/or use of technology. This may also mean that in published reports others could identify you from what is reported, for example, if a story you tell in class is very specific. If your data is re-identifiable, I will report it in such a way that you are not directly identified in

reports. Based on how we need to share the data, I cannot remove details from the report that would protect your identity from ever being figured out. This means that others may be able to re-identify from the information reported from this research.

Compensation
You will receive a $300 VISA gift card for your full participation in this study and completion of all research activities.

If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will be eligible to receive partial compensation if you complete one formal interview before you withdraw from the study. In those cases, you would receive a $100 VISA gift card. If you withdraw from the study prior to the first formal interview, you will receive no compensation.

What if you are an employee?
Your participation in this study is not a requirement nor expectation of your employment at your school, and your participation, or lack thereof, will not affect your job.

Sponsorship and Funding
This research is funded by the North Carolina State University College of Education Dissertation Support Grant. This means that the sponsor is paying the research team for completing the research. The researcher does not, however, have a direct financial interest with the sponsor or in the final results of the study. If you would like more information, please ask the researcher listed in the first page of this form about the funding and sponsorship.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the researcher, Casey Holmes (*email, phone*) or the faculty advisor for this project, Dr. Meghan Manfra (*email, phone*).

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) Office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State IRB Office via email at irb-director@ncsu.edu or via phone at (919) 515-8754.

Consent To Participate
By electronically signing this consent form, I am affirming that I have read and understand the above information. All of the questions that I had about this research have been answered. I have chosen to participate in this study with the understanding that I may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I am aware that I may revoke my consent at any time.

Please access a copy of this consent form here [link to form] – you should download and keep a copy of this document for future reference.

Your Name:

Date:

- **“Yes, I consent to research” <insert Qualtrics button>**

- **“No, I do not consent to research” <insert Qualtrics button>**

[If Yes is selected, participant will be taken to the Broad Consent form page in Qualtrics]

Appendix G

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Title of Study: Teaching Critical Democratic Citizenship Education **(eIRB #** 20824**)**
Principal Investigator(s): Casey Holmes, *(email, phone)*
Funding Source: NCSU College of Education Dissertation Support Grant
Faculty Point of Contact: Dr. Meghan Manfra, *(email, phone)*

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
Your child is invited to take part in a virtual research study. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child has the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, and to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of what teaching and learning looks like in your child's online middle school social studies class. I will do this through conducting virtual observations of the class, gathering teacher assignments and other digital instructional materials, and conducting virtual interviews with the teacher and students.

Your child is not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study, although they may benefit from being able to voice their opinion and offer reflection upon their learning experiences. Research studies also may pose risks to those who participate. You may want your child to participate in this research because your child may be able to reflect upon their own learning experiences, and this research will help prepare future teachers for teaching social studies. You may not want your child to participate in this research because it will involve your child speaking in virtual interviews with a researcher about their experiences related to citizenship and civic engagement in social studies class.

Specific details about the research in which your child is invited to participate are contained below. If you do not understand something in this form, please ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If, at any time, you have questions about your child's participation in this research, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office. The IRB office's contact information is listed in the *What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?* section of this form.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of the study is to explore how a teacher and their class of students engage in an online social studies class around citizenship education. I seek to explore and understand what happens in the virtual classroom, how the teacher makes decisions about his/her teaching, what kinds of assignments and work students are asked to complete, and how students respond to this instruction. I am interested in learning about what these things look like in an online middle school classroom where the teacher teaches more critically, meaning that the teacher talks about things like inequality, justice, and power, and that students have an active voice in the classroom and are encouraged to take an active role in society outside the classroom.

Is my child I eligible to be a participant in this study?

There will be approximately 5-8 student participants in this study.

In order to be a participant in this study, your child must have your permission to participate, your child must agree to be in the study, and be a student in the teacher's classroom.

All minors who do not meet the inclusion criteria will be excluded.

What will happen if your child takes part in the study?

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, they will be asked to do all of the following:

1. Participate in their online classroom activities as normal, with the researcher in the virtual class space. Virtual class sessions will be audio recorded.
2. Potentially participate in two formal virtual interviews with the researcher, each lasting 30-45 minutes in length. These interviews will take place either between online synchronous class sessions or after school. All interviews will be conducted virtually using Zoom. The first virtual formal interview will take place in mid-August and the second virtual formal interview will take place between mid-September to early October. Not all students who consent to participate will be asked to participate in an interview with me, but your student will only be interviewed if you and they have agreed to participate in this study.

The total amount of time that your child will be participating in this study is approximately 1.5 hours.

Recording and images

As a part of this research, I would like your consent to audio record your child during our virtual interviews. Please initial next to the sentence(s) that you agree to.

_____I give permission for my child to be audio recorded.

_____I do not give permission for my child to be audio recorded.

Risks and benefits

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research. The risks to your child as a result of this research include some minor risk to personal privacy and the potential re-identification of the data about your child. All students will be assigned pseudonyms, but there may still be some potential that someone may be able to identify your child due to the small number of students in this study and some combination of information about your child, the school, or their teacher. When I write and talk about this study, I will remove all direct identifiers (names, geographic location, etc.) and I will combine or change details of stories or personal experiences when necessary to strengthen confidentiality. If your student is re-identified, I anticipate the risk of harm to your child to be minimal. This study is not intended to be evaluative or to judge whether your child is a "good student" or not. A range and variety of student responses, experiences, and backgrounds is welcomed and desired in this study.

Your child may directly benefit from being in this study as they have the opportunity to express their opinions and feel seen and heard in regards to their experiences with social studies and school. Indirect benefits of your child's participation are that students may come to understand and engage with their course materials in more thoughtful and critical ways than they may have done before. The indirect benefits are also helpful for current and future practice of social studies teachers who seek to teach social studies from a critical lens.

Other options

Instead of participating in this research, there are alternative procedures available to your child. These include participating as normal in the everyday experiences in their virtual classroom, but not participating in the virtual interviews.

Right to withdraw your participation

Your child can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. In order to stop your child's participation, please contact Casey Holmes *(email, phone)* or the faculty advisor for this project, Dr. Meghan Manfra *(email, phone).* If you or your child choose to withdraw consent and to stop participating in this research, you can expect that the researcher(s) will redact your child's information from their data set, securely destroy your child's data, and prevent future uses of your child's information for research purposes wherever possible. This is possible in some, but not all, cases.

Confidentiality, personal privacy, and data management

Trust is the foundation of the participant/researcher relationship. Much of that principle of trust is tied to keeping your child's information private and in the manner that I have described to you in this form. The information that your child shares with me will be held in confidence to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Protecting your child's privacy as related to this research is of utmost importance to me. However, there are very rare circumstances related to confidentiality where I may have to share information about you or your child. You and your child's information collected in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies (for example, the FDA) for purposes such as quality control or safety. In other cases, I must report instances in which imminent harm could come to you, your child, or others.

How I manage, protect, and share your child's data are the principal ways that I protect your child's personal privacy. Data that will be shared with others about your child will be re-identifiable.

> **Re-identifiable**. Re-identifiable data is information that can identify your child indirectly because of my access to information, role, skills, combination of information, and/or use of technology. This may also mean that in published reports others could identify your child from what is reported, for example, if a story your child shares with me is very specific. If your child's data is re-identifiable, I will report it in such a way that your child is not directly identified in reports. Based on how I need to share the data, I cannot remove details from the report that would protect your child's identity from ever being

figured out. This means that others may be able to re-identify your child from the information reported from this research.

Compensation
Your child will not receive anything for participating.

What if your child is a student?
Your child's participation in this study is not a class requirement and their participation, or lack thereof, will not affect their class standing or grades.

Sponsorship and Funding
This research is funded by the North Carolina State University College of Education Dissertation Support Grant. This means that the sponsor is paying the research team for completing the research. The researcher does not, however, have a direct financial interest with the sponsor or in the final results of the study. If you would like more information, please ask the researcher listed in the first page of this form about the funding and sponsorship.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the researcher, Casey Holmes *(email, phone)* or the faculty advisor for this project, Dr. Meghan Manfra *(email, phone)*.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you feel your child has not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or their rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) Office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State IRB Office via email at irb-director@ncsu.edu or via phone at (919) 515-8754.

Consent To Participate
By electronically signing this parental permission form, I am affirming that I have read and understand the above information. All of the questions that I had about this research have been answered. I have chosen to allow my child to participate in this study with the understanding that my child may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. I am aware that I may revoke my consent for my child to participate in this research at any time.

Please access a copy of this consent form here [link to form] – you should download and keep a copy of this document for future reference.

Your Name:

Your Child's Name

Date:

- **“Yes, my child can participate in this research” <insert Qualtrics button>**

“No, I do not want my child to participate in this research” <insert Qualtrics button>

[If Yes is selected, participant will be taken to the Broad Consent form page in Qualtrics]

Appendix H

Student Assent Forms

Assent Form for 11 to 13 years old

Title of Study: Teaching Critical Democratic Citizenship Education **(eIRB #** 20824)
Principal Investigator(s): Casey Holmes, *(email, phone)*
Funding Source: NCSU College of Education Dissertation Support Grant

Faculty Point of Contact: Dr. Meghan Manfra, *(email, phone)*

I am inviting you to participate in a research study about critical citizenship education. This study is about the teaching and learning that happens in your social studies classroom- the way your teacher decides what and how to teach, the types of assignments and conversations you have in class, and your reaction as a student to your teacher's instruction.

Your parent(s)/guardian(s) know I am talking with you about the study. This form will tell you about the study to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in the study.

What will I do?
If you decide to be in the study, I may ask you to participate in 2 interviews with me to talk about what you learn in social studies and how you feel about the things that you learn. Each of these interviews will last between 30 and 45 minutes. I will audio record the interviews so that I can remember everything that we talk about.

What benefits do I get for participating in this study?
Taking part in this study may directly benefit you because you will have the opportunity to reflect upon and voice your opinions and feelings about your social studies learning. It will also help me learn about how your teacher teaches and how you learn as students in your classroom. This could help your teacher and other teachers think about their teaching and how their students are learning.

Can anything bad happen if I am in this study?
I do not expect anything bad to happen to you but some kids may get bored or tired when talking to me during an interview. If you become tired, let me know. We'll take a short break. Some kids may also feel anxious talking to a researcher. Nothing that you say to me will have an impact on your grades or your classwork.

Will anyone know what I said or did in this study?
If you decide to be in the study, I will not tell anyone else how you respond or act as part of the study. No one besides the research team will know your name, though the stories you tell may be re-identifiable to be associated with you. Even if your parents or teachers ask what you said or did, I will not tell them.

Everything will remain private unless I think you are being hurt by someone else or in danger. In those rare and unusual circumstances, I am required to tell someone only enough information in order to help you be safe.

Will you share what you learn about/from me with other people?
I plan to share information that we learn from you with others in written research reports. I will not tell anyone your name, but I may use quotations of some of the things you said or descriptions of things you did. I will use a pseudonym (fake name) when I describe you in the report. I also want to keep the information that we learn about you for life so that it can be used in other research projects.

Do I have to be in the study?
No, you do not. The choice is yours. No one will get angry or upset if you do not want to do this. You will not lose or miss out on anything. You can also change your mind anytime if you decide you do not want to be in the study anymore.

What if I have questions?
If you have questions about the study, you can ask me now or anytime during the study. You can also call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mail me at [xxx]. You can also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Meghan Manfra, by calling her at xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mailing her at [xxx].

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been hurt as a result of this research, contact Jennie Ofstein at the IRB Office at irb-director@ncsu.edu or (919) 515-8754. She will be able to help you.

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Typing your name below and selecting "Yes, I want to participate" means that you have read this form or have had it read to you and that you want to be in this study. As a reminder, you can stop being in the study even after you say "yes."

Your Name:

Date:

- **"Yes, I want to participate in this research" <insert Qualtrics button>**

- **"No, I do not want to participate in this research" <insert Qualtrics button>**

Are you okay if I keep the information about you and use it for future research? You do not have to say "yes" to be in this study.

- **"Yes" <insert Qualtrics button>**

- **"No" <insert Qualtrics button>**

Assent Form for 14 to 17 years old

Title of Study: Teaching Critical Democratic Citizenship Education **(eIRB #** 20824)
Principal Investigator(s): Casey Holmes, *(email, phone)*
Funding Source: NCSU College of Education Dissertation Support Grant

Faculty Point of Contact: Dr. Meghan Manfra, *(email, phone)*

I am inviting you to participate in a research study about critical citizenship education. This study is about the teaching and learning that happens in your social studies classroom- the way your teacher decides what and how to teach, the types of assignments and conversations you have in class, and your reaction as a student to your teacher's instruction.

Your parent(s)/guardian(s) know I am talking with you about the study. This form will tell you about the study to help you decide whether or not you want to participate in this research.

What is the purpose of this research study?
The purpose of this study is to learn about what citizenship education looks like in your classroom. I want to understand what happens in the classroom, what kind of assignments and projects you are asked to complete, and how you feel about the social studies instruction in your classroom.

What will I do in this study?
If you decide to be in the study, I may ask you to participate in 2 interviews with me to talk about what you learn in social studies and how you feel about the things that you learn. Each of these interviews will last between 30 and 45 minutes. I will audio record the interviews so that I can remember everything that we talk about.

I expect that you will be in this research study for approximately 6 weeks from the first interview to the last interview. Each interview conversation will be about 45 minutes, so your total time commitment for the interviews will be about 1.5 hours.

Can I participate in this study?
You are invited to participate in this study if you agree to be in this study, your parent or guardian allows you to participate in this study, and you are a student in this class.

All teens who do not meet the inclusion criteria cannot participate in this research.

What benefits do I get for participating in this study?
Taking part in this study may directly benefit you because you will have the opportunity to reflect upon and voice your opinions and feelings about your social studies learning. It will also help me learn about how your teacher teaches and how you learn as students in your classroom. This could help your teacher and other teachers think about their teaching and how their students are learning.

Can anything bad happen if I am in this study?

There are minimal foreseeable risks; some teens, however, may get bored or tired when talking to me during an interview. If you become tired, let me know. We'll take a short break. Some teens may also feel anxious talking to a researcher. Nothing that you say to me will have an impact on your grades or your classwork.

Will anyone know what I said or did in this study?
If you decide to be in the study, I will not tell anyone else how you respond or act as part of the study. No one besides the research team will know your name, though the stories you tell may be re-identifiable to be associated with you. Even if your parents or teachers ask what you said or did, I will not tell them about what you say or do in the study. In the rare and unusual circumstance that I think you are being hurt by someone else or in danger, I am required by law to tell someone only enough information in order to help you be safe.

Will you share what you learn about/from me with other people?
I plan to share information that we learn from you with others in written research reports. I will not tell anyone your name, but I may use quotations of some of the things you said or descriptions of things you did. I will use a pseudonym (fake name) when I describe you in the report. I also want to keep the information that we learn about you indefinitely for future research purposes.

Do I have to be in the study?
No, you do not. The choice is yours. No one will get angry or upset if you do not want to do this. You will not lose out on anything if you do not want to do this. You can also change your mind anytime if you decide you do not want to be in the study anymore.

What if I have questions?
If you have questions about the study, you can ask me now or anytime during the study. You can also call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mail me at [xxx].You can also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Meghan Manfra, by calling her at xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mailing her at [xxx].

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- **“Yes” <insert Qualtrics button>**

- **“No” <insert Qualtrics button>**