TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON USE OF MOVIES IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM
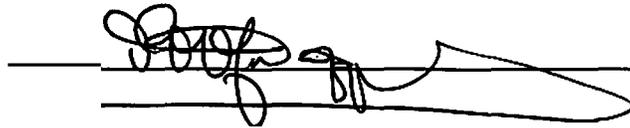
A Master's Research Project Presented to

The Faculty of the College of Education

Ohio University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

By

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August 2012

This master's research project has been approved for the
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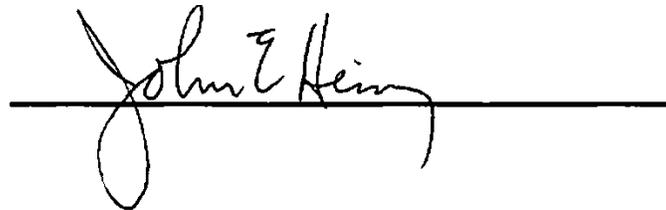
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CHAPTER   1

INTRODUCTION

Background

While different teachers employ different teaching methods in their classrooms, one tool

that many teachers use, no matter the subject, is movies. A movie can allow a student to see how

a diamond is formed or feel the anguish of a soldier at war. Movies can be a vital teaching tool

for the classroom. Thomas Edison once said, "I believe that the motion picture is destined to

revolutionize our educational system and that in a few years it will supplant largely, if not

entirely, the use of books." (Marcus & Stoddard, 2007, p. 317; Nielsen, 2011, p. 43). Although

Edison overestimated the power of the motion picture, movies and videos continue to be an

important part of the classroom.

Although students look forward to watching movies, the movie must be effectively

assimilated into the teacher's pedagogy. This is not a simple task and takes a lot of preparation

by the teacher. Some of what a teacher has to consider is what kind of movie he or she want to

show to the students, such as a documentary, a docudrama, or a historical fiction. While

deciding on what movie to use in the classroom, the teacher must also consider, "age of the

audience, language of the film, consistency with the values that are promoted in the home land

community, and degree of violence" (D'sa, 2005, p. 11).

For a movie to be integrated into the teacher's pedagogy, the teacher must decide what it

is that the students should learn. Movies can be used by teachers to help students develop

analytical or interpretive skills as in Briley's high school elective course "U.S. History through

Film, 1945-Present." (See Marcus, Metzger, Paxton, & Stoddard, 2010). Analytical or interpretive skills are important to acquire for underclassmen to be successful on their high-stakes tests and well as for those seeking post-secondary education..   Although Briley's course was an elective course, it presents an intriguing question as to whether or not teachers can use movies effectively in a required social studies course. Convention wisdom would have it that the social studies teachers would certainly have less freedom to use movies in required courses because watching movies implies a loss of instructional time which could possibly lead to lower test scores. However, it could be possible that a movie about a historical event could be the attention-getter that a student needs to become interested and motivated to excel in social studies. While the current focus is on "no child being left behind," could the use of movies lead students losing interest and doing poorer on testing, rendering the use of movies counterintuitive because more students are now performing worse on high stakes tests.

Thus the question for a teacher is to decide whether to show a movie in its entirety or only selected scenes. Even after making this decision the teacher must decide whether or not to stop the movie and discuss it while watching it or watch the entire movie or selected scene and then discuss it. Further complicating the process of using a movie, the teacher has to also decide what kind of activities the students will need to complete as well as decide how much he or she should disclose of his or her opinion, especially in the case of a documentary.

Because "social studies teachers are using increasing amounts of feature and documentary films on a weekly or even daily basis (Marcus & Stoddard, 2007;Stoddard, 2009, p. 407), it is important to understand social studies teachers' perspectives when it comes to using movies in their classrooms. Clearly the process of choosing whether to show movie in a class is a drawn out process that requires a lot of planning on the teacher's part. No better way to exists

to evaluate such a process than to better understand social studies teachers' perspectives on the use of movies in the classroom.

Methodology

In order to better understand social studies teachers' perspectives on using movies in the classroom, it is necessary to interview them about their experiences. In this Master's Research Project, interview questions centered around social studies teachers in southeastern Ohio middle and high schools', past experiences in using movies in their classrooms. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed with all of the data being deleted after the completion of the project.

Next, the transcribed interviews were analyzed for common themes. Analyzing the data from the interviews and discovering themes and patterns was essential to better understanding social studies' teachers' perspectives.

Research Question

The research question for this Master's Research Project was: *Can movies facilitate meaningful learning in a social studies classroom? Why or why not?* While everyone knows that movies are commonly used in the social studies classrooms, analyzing teachers' perspectives will help others gain an understanding of why teachers believe that the use of movies is or is not important to the classroom.

This is an important topic to look at because movies are not going to be leaving the classroom and can be vital to a student's learning experience, if used correctly. By examining teachers' perspectives, future as well as current educators can get a better idea of what works and what does not. This can help them improve students' learning experiences which is every educator's ongoing struggle and responsibility.

Limitations

While this Master's Research Project study examined social studies' teachers' perspectives on using movies in a classroom, the number of participants was quite small. Therefore is findings are limited only to this case. The participants were asked to participate via an e-mail sent to schools in southeast Ohio. E-mails were sent to the middle and high school social studies teachers of nine different schools in the area. While the original plan was to get a middle and high school teacher from four or five schools in the area to interview, this proved to be impossible due to lack of cooperation from teachers in the area. Thus, a change had to be made in the methodology to garner increased participation.

Instead of being interviewed, the teachers were given the option of responding to the interview questions via email. Consequently, their responses may not have been as meaningful as in a personal interview.

Furthermore, the geographical region in which this project was completed may constitute a limitation because all of the schools are close and it is possible that better data could be acquired by involving a bigger sample of schools from different areas in Ohio. The study is limited but the few schools whose teachers participated differ in terms of size and general academic rating, thus the schools are not all the exact same.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the relevant literature to the use of movies in the social studies classroom. Several teachers/authors, including Jeremy D. Stoddard, Allan S. Marcus, and Scott Alan Metzger, devoted much time to researching using movies in the secondary social studies classroom. They have collaborated together with Richard J. Paxton on the book, *Teaching History with Film: Strategies for Secondary Social Studies* while Stoddard and Marcus have also collaborated on other works as well as having several of their own publications on the subject, respectively.

The following sections will be the focus of the chapter: 1) What movies do teachers use; 2) How do teachers prepare to use movies; 3) How are movies used; 4) Why do teachers use movies; 5) What are the limits of using a movie in the classroom.

What movies do teachers use

Because, as "Weinstein (2001) points out that classrooms today cannot be isolated from the cultural environment, and we cannot overlook the pervasiveness and influence of mass media" (D'sa, 2005, p. 11), movies can be an excellent learning tool for the students. As for the question of what movies teachers use in the social studies classrooms, this can be evaluated on two levels, 1) type of movie and 2) title of the movie. Both are important questions that a teacher has to answer in preparation for using the movie in the classroom. Some teachers may be inclined to show a documentary while others prefer popular movies that can be seen in the theaters.

The three most common types of movies used in the studying of history are documentaries, docudramas, and historical fiction (D'sa, 2005). Documentaries are movies that

represent real world and include social actors rather than professional ones. An example of a documentary is *Bowling for Columbine*. Though documentaries represent the real world, it is important to note what Stoddard (2010) describes as the *History Channel Effect*:

> "Documentary films have long been treated as objective 'windows into history' because viewers feels as if 'we can see (and, presumably, feel) what people in the past saw and felt' (Rosenstone 1995: 52). As a result, students and the general public don't apply the same critical eye as they do when watching a historically inaccurate Hollywood movie. Viewers who suffer from the History Channel Effect are unable to recognize the value-laden ideological perspectives in most documentary-style videos. They believe that all 'documentary' films are objective and neutral sources of historical information." (p. 80)

It is for this reason that it is vital for the teacher to emphasize watching a documentary with a critical eye and not merely accept everything presented in it. This is not to say that documentaries should not be used in the social studies classroom, however, it is important to know that preparations must be made so that the students do not merely accept everything presented in the movie.

According to Barton and Levstik, "three key goals for history education that prepare citizens are: promoting reasoned judgment, promoting an expanded view of humanity, and deliberating over the common good" (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009, p. 281). Documentaries can allow for the promotion of reasoned judgment because they provide viewpoints that differ from those presented in textbooks. Students can use the evidence from the documentary, investigate it, and then draw their own conclusions.

An expanded view of humanity can be achieved because "documentary film can expose students to multiple perspectives, which …are often only marginally included in textbooks, and

can provide students with a mechanism for understanding the beliefs and decisions of people in the past" (p. 281). Because of the controversial issues that documentaries tend to center around, the combination of the reasoned judgment and the expanded view of humanity allow students to deliberate about the common good. All three of these key goals can be achieved if the teacher provides students with the appropriate activities to achieve these ends.

Docudramas are hybrid of documentary and dramatic film and "are designed to persuade the viewer to accept a certain interpretation of historical event that actually did occur[;] they have a basis in truth but are greatly influenced by the writers' and directors' desire to envelop the audience in the story and to entertain" (D'Sa, 2005, p. 9). Two of the most well-known docudramas are *Thirteen Days* and *Schindler's List*. Docudramas present the teacher with an opportunity "to discuss such concepts as historical accuracy, perspective taking, and revisionist history. D'Sa continues addressing the question of why teachers should use docudramas:

> "One rationale for considering docudramas an appropriate and relevant tool for social studies instruction is that they focus the visual and auditory senses of a student on the subject being studied. Because docudramas have a forceful impact on the sense of the student, they engage the interest of the learner. For effective and efficient learning to take place, such engagement is critical." (p. 9-10)

Getting the senses involved in the learning process leads to the involvement of the emotions which can also help a student's learning process. "Retention is also stimulated by the viewers' emotional involvement in the film. When our emotions are activated information is more likely to be retained" (p. 10).

A middle school instructor in history, Mark Dewey, "says that, most important, films help the student to achieve historical familiarity" (p. 10). This historical familiarity is not always

easy to achieve because "students' cultures differ from the culture that surrounds certain historical events" (p.10). Movies, such as docudramas, can create enthusiasm or raise interest level as well as increase the comprehension of the topic taught by a teacher (2005).

Historical fiction movies are movies, according to Hawes, that "provide an explanation of how history could have developed[;] examples are *Gone with the Wind* and *Lawrence of Arabia*. Such films cannot be relied on for their facts but they can allow students to visualize the past, a topic discussed in a chapter of *Teaching History with Film*. These historical fiction movies can also get students involved in the history sensibly and emotionally. The book, *Teaching History with Film*, discusses different teachers from different schools' strategies for using movies that would best be qualified as historical fiction in their classrooms. Some of the topics covered are: teaching contemporary controversial issues, using film as a secondary source or primary document, and using films as an historical narrative (Marcus, Metzger, Paxton, & Stoddard, 2010). These topics will be covered in greater detail in the *How are movies used* and *Why are movies used* sections of this chapter.

Besides type of movie, much of the literature on using movies in the social studies classroom focuses on the specific titles and activities associated with them. Stoddard and Marcus composed a list of movies that teachers used in their classrooms and found that "the most frequently used films on our list represented a range of those made over the past seventy years, which shows that teachers are not afraid to use films that may seem dated" (Stoddard & Marcus, 2010, p. 86). In fact, the time a movie is made can be utilized by the teacher to help "students identify the norms and values of the time when a film was made, thus using film as a primary source" (p. 86).

Movies can be utilized in the classroom to help the students visualize as well as empathize with the characters. It is for this reason that teachers may be use a movie when discussing slavery. In a survey given to social studies teachers in Connecticut and Wisconsin, Stoddard and Marcus found that "fifty-two percent of the teachers who responded to the survey had used or use *Glory*, and 40% had used or use *Amistad*" (2006, p. 27) and were the most used movies among the teachers in their study. As for the purpose of classroom use of the two movies, in the three categories, *Students view most or all of film, Film used to teach subject matter*, and *Film used as tool for helping students to develop empathy and bring a time period to life*, *Glory's* percentages for the respective categories were 75, 77, and 89 compared to 68, 65, and 79 for *Amistad* (Stoddard & Marcus, 2006).

These particular movies are used because they focus on a marginalized group's role in history as well as a theme of freedom. Because these are important historical issues, "there is a heavy burden on how teachers incorporate these films into the curriculum" (p. 27).

"Shohat and Stam argue that a 'burden of representation' that is 'at once religious, esthetic, political, and semiotic' exists whenever a marginalized or underrepresented group is portrayed in film (p. 182), and it has a lasting impact on how people view the world and the groups that are represented, even if they know that the film's portrayal isn't accurate. Historical accuracy aside, an audience's impression of a group is still shaped by how characters from the group are portrayed. Depending on the population of students and context of the viewing, these films could establish or reinforce racist notions of race freedom, and citizenship regarding a student's own cultural group or that of marginalized groups. In the case of representing history in film, this burden requires that members of these underrepresented groups be portrayed in a way that allows the viewer

to understand their points of view, history and language" (Stoddard & Marcus, 2006, p. 27).

The *burden of representation* is as much the burden of the history teacher as it is the filmmaker if the history teacher chooses to use the movie in his or her classroom. While movies such as *Glory* and *Amistad* can help create empathy in a student, the teacher must also be able to recognize when a student is not willing to address the race issues that such movies would present and be willing to challenge the student. Though it is important to challenge the student, if a teacher tries to push too hard to get a student to view something openly, he could find himself in trouble with the student's parents or administration.

Another reason that it is good to use movie in the classroom is that "high school juniors reported seeing historically-based films frequently[;] for instance, a majority had seen *Forrest Gump* (86%), *Apollo 13* (80%), *Saving Private Ryan* (75%), *Pearl Harbor* (61%) and *Glory* (55%) (Marcus)" (p. 28). Because students are seeing these movies, connecting them to history will make it resonate better since these are movies that they have already seen.

It should be noted that "the suggestion of using Hollywood film to teach history is not new" and "numerous articles in social studies and history journals contain critiques of films and creative ideas for incorporating films into classroom practice (Briley 2002; Feinberg and Totten 1995; Goldstein 1995; Johnson and Vargas 1994; Mason 2000; Weinstein 2001)" (Marcus, 2005, p. 62). However, "relatively little has been written about film as a means of promoting historical understanding, and there is insufficient empirical knowledge about the connection between teachers' use of film in high school classrooms and students' historical understanding" (p. 62). Weinburg found in his research that Hollywood movies do "play a role in how students learn and think about historical events, contributing to what he calls collective memory" (p. 62). He found

that students and their parents used the movie *Forest Gump* as a common point of reference when discussing the Vietnam War (2005). This is why Weinburg "advocates that rather than ignoring films as a source of history, 'we might try instead to understand how these forces shape historical consciousness, and how they might be used rather than spurned or, worse, simply ignored, to advance students' historical understanding (Weinburg 2001, 250)" (p. 62).

A teacher has many different options when it comes to choosing a movie for the class. The movie can be a documentary or it can be a more popular Hollywood movie that will almost certainly be more entertaining for the students. Even if the teacher decides on a Hollywood movie, will a more recently released movie be better received or does an older one do a better job of presenting material to connect back to the curriculum? All of these decisions are part of the preparation process that a teacher must go through in selecting a movie and will be the focus of the next section of the chapter.

How do teachers prepare to use movies

Preparation is a vital aspect of teaching and the use of movies in a classroom requires it just as much or more than using any other type of tool in a classroom. Greg Nielsen argues in his article, *Media Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom*, that since students are inundated with media, "teachers must find ways to teach students to be active, rather than passive, media viewers[;] this requires teaching historical media literacy" (Nielsen, 2011, p. 43). He outlines the teaching of historical media literacy with a five-step process: *Choose an Appropriate Film*, *Introduce the Film with Pre-Viewing Activities*, *Provide Students with Active Viewing Tools*, *Engage Students in Post-Viewing Activities*, and *Assess Students' Historical Film Literacy*.

Choose an Appropriate Film

When choosing an appropriate film, it is important to consider the school district's film guideline policy and vital that the teacher view the film for age appropriateness (Nielsen 2011; D'Sa 2005). Teachers also need to have permission slips sent to the parents if there is the slightest possibility that it could offend a student. The permission slip could also include "an explanation of the rationale for showing the clips or film" and "questions answered, thus greatly decreasing the likelihood that parents will express concerns after the fact" (D'Sa, 2005, p.11).

It is important for the teacher to know the students' likes and dislikes when choosing a movie because older movies can cause the students to disengage while the use of a box office smash-hit "can have a powerful immediate appeal but do little or nothing to accomplish active viewing skills" (Nielsen, 2011, p. 44), thus it is imperative that the teacher find a movie that can maintain the interest of the students while still allowing them to actively view and connect the material to the curriculum.

"Dewey keeps the following points in mind when selecting a film: age of the audience, language of the film, consistency with the values that are promoted in the home and community, and degree of violence" (D'Sa, 2005, p. 11). Considering the *consistency with the values that are promoted in the home and community* is an interesting issueg to consider in that doing so may prevent a teacher from showing students a movie that he or she believes would do an excellent job of complementing the students' understanding of a subject; however, this could lead to sanctions against the teacher and more scrutiny from administration and parents alike which would only serve as a detriment to the teaching ability of the teacher.

When preparing a movie for class, the teacher must consider whether he or she wants to show the whole film or use scenes. This will allow the teachers to prepare active viewing activities accordingly. If the teacher decides to show the whole movie, he or she also must

decide at what points he or she wants to stop the movie to discuss the assigned questions or questions that the students may have about the movie in general. It may be beneficial to watch the movie uninterrupted and then discuss it with the last ten minutes of class or watch ten to fifteen minutes and discuss one or two questions at a time. All of these decisions should be decided on before viewing the movie but the teacher always has the opportunity to reevaluate and change activities as is best suited to the students in the classroom.

Introduce the Film with Pre-Viewing Activities

This can best be done by asking students what they already know about the historical focus of the movie, "hav[ing] them formulate questions about what the film addresses and predict what the film addresses and predict what the film may show or not show", and "work[ing] with students to identify the purpose for viewing the film in the larger context of a unit, lesson, chapter, or historical document" (Nielsen, 2011, p. 44). Presenting a plot overview can also be beneficial to the students who are not familiar with the movie. Because the teacher has made the conscious decision to use the movie as a learning tool, he or she must also inform the students of the rationale behind using the movie and guide them so that they can actively view the movie and use it as a meaningful learning tool.

Provide Students with Active Viewing Tools

Examples of active viewing tools could be the aforementioned pre-viewing activities; identifying and jotting down themes; using charts, graphic organizers, and idea maps to accomplish goals and objectives; pausing the film to give time to reflect, write, or discuss; re-watching confusing, controversial, or challenging scenes; and taking keyword notes based on how a movie makes them feel (Nielsen, 2011). Of course all of these activities will help the students to actively view the movie in class but it is the responsibility of the teacher to decide

which activity/activities could be best utilized by the students in the class to obtain the optimal learning experience from watching the movie.

Engage Students in Post-Viewing Activities

The teacher should prepare post-viewing activities to assess how effective the movie was to the students by gauging their perspectives. This can most easily be accomplished by having the students work together to "summarize the important ideas, themes, perspectives, and historical accuracy of the film" and "compare the film to other sources including the textbook, academic quality research, and primary sources" (Nielsen, 2011, p. 44). Working together can also help the students to learn from each other's perspectives which can add some understanding that he or she did not have upon finishing the movie.

Because doing such a task with a whole movie could be daunting, the teacher could choose a specific scene or character for each group to analyze so that the students' will be able to focus on a certain scene or character from the movie rather than attempting to spit out gratuitous facts about the time period or movie to fulfill the requirements of an activity rather than actively engaging the material. An intriguing activity that the students could do with characters is having them write about what the character experienced in the past by "hav[ing] them research the historical record using primary sources like diaries, newspaper accounts, letters and photographs" (p. 44). Depending on the movie, the students can look at the messages of the movie and decide whether the writer, director, or producer had an agenda in making the movie and what that agenda was. It may not be necessary to have all of the post-viewing activities prepared before viewing the movie, yet the teacher should have an idea of what he or she wants to do upon concluding the movie and continue to be open to changing activities as he or she deems necessary.

Assess Students' Historical Film Literacy

To assess the students' historical film literacy, the teachers "can have students present their conclusions using a variety of assessments, such as submitting their journal entries about the film along with their research [or] writing an essay based on primary sources that draws evidence-based conclusions" (Nielsen, 2011, p. 45). Some other ideas include making a one- or two-minute documentary that summarizes the perspectives or authenticity of the movie or "creating and presenting a poster that uses primary source images and historically accurate captions" (p. 45). A less creative, but still effective, way of assessing the students' historical film literacy is by giving the students a test. Much like all of the other activities, the type of assessment that the teacher uses has to be tailored to the students and must be done in such a way that he or she can effectively assess the success or failure of the movie as a learning tool so he or she knows where to improve on the use or perhaps discontinue the use of the movie all together.

How are movies used

While movies can be a valuable tool in any classroom setting, how the movies are used and what activities accompany the use of these movies are integral to a movie being successfully used in the classroom. This is no exception to the social studies classroom as it is vital that the teacher consider that "students may need additional scaffolding to be able to view and examine films as historical documents" (Marcus, 2005, p. 61). A review of the literature suggests that there are many different ways to use a movie and, more importantly, many ways to use it effectively in the classroom.

Although there are many different effective uses of movies in the classroom, one article, by Renee Hobbs of Temple University, looked at less effective uses of movies in her article, titled, *Non-optimal uses of video in the classroom*. The non-optimal uses she compiled and

discuss in the article are the results of six years of observing and interviewing teachers on a regular-basis in two Massachusetts school districts (Hobbs, 2006). These uses seem quite palpable when considering what a teacher's reason for using a movie should be; nonetheless, these uses are still worth mentioning, if not only to provide a contrast to the way that movies should be used in the classroom. The non-optimal uses of video that Hobbs found, this was a K-12 study, were: *no clearly identified purpose*; *no use of pause, rewind, or review*; *large-group viewing experiences give teachers a 'break'*; *teacher mentally disengages during viewing experiences*; *teacher uses TV as a reward*; *teacher uses media only as an attentional hook*; and *teacher uses video to control student behavior*.

These non-optimal uses directly conflict with the aforementioned ways to prepare to use movies in the classroom so it would seem that teachers who use movies in the classroom in this fashion lack the preparation needed to use movies effectively. Some of the non-optimal uses tended to apply more to the lower grades than 7-12, "for example, an elementary teacher showed *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* with no explanation to students of the purpose of the activity and no viewing-related discussion or activity at the close of the session" (Hobbs, 2006, p. 41). Unfortunately, the *no use of pause, rewind, or review* non-optimal use is one that can be applied to the 7-12 classroom:

> "While the invention of video tape (and now DVD) has brought tremendous flexibility to the use of visual media in the classroom, teachers rarely made use of the remote control to pause the tape and discuss interesting, difficult, or controversial segments. On only rare occasions did teachers use 'rewind' to review difficult segments. Even when students were watching challenging videos on scientific, historical or political topics, where they were expected to take notes, the interactive features of video were not used.

Such neglect of the pause, rewind and review functions reflect both the casual and

passive ways in which we use television in the home (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

as well as the 'transmission' model of education, where learning is understood as a

process of sending information by those who know more to those who know less." (p.41)

Thus, when teachers do not use the technology at their disposal to optimize the students' learning

experience they are not doing all they can to assure that a student is gaining as much as possible

from the movie being used in the class.

Now that the way movies should not be used in a classroom has been addressed, it is

necessary to look at how movies can be effectively used. Since "prior research suggests that,

absent direct guidance from teachers, students may not naturally view films critically (Marcus,

Paxton, & Meyerson, 2006; Seixas, 1994)" (Marcus et al., 2010, p.19). In order for this direct

guidance to take place, the teacher needs to prepare how he or she plans to use the movie.

Movies can be used as primary or secondary sources. An example of a movie being used

as a primary source could be *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) which was shown by Mr. Briley in his

elective course "U.S. History through Film, 1945-Present." Though the movie is set in the

Depression-era, "in teaching about the 1960s to students who have already attended a general

survey course, Briley was less interested in 'covering' history and more concerned with training

his students to think and act like historians, digging deep into the important issues and trends for

which that decade is known" (Marcus et. al., 2010, p. 75). Briley used this movie along with *The

Green Berets*, *Platoon*, *The Graduate*, and *Easy Rider* to do a unit on the Vietnam War and rise

of the counterculture. The students watched *The Green Berets* and then *Platoon* while

discussing the Vietnam War. Although *Platoon* would be a secondary source in terms of the

Vietnam War, it provided the students with a significantly different Hollywood conception of the

war, albeit more than ten years after the fact, from John Wayne's "traditional, cheerleading U.S. war-story narrative—an anti-Communist parable that could have been set in practically any U.S. war of the 20th century" (p. 78-9).

Many times movies can be used as secondary sources. In fact, "Hollywood films are unique secondary sources[;] not quite historical-fiction novels and not quite documentary films, movies still serve as 'texts' that can be analyzed, questioned, and discussed just like any other kind of historical document (p. 92). Movies allow students to visualize what they read in a textbook; this harkens back to the need for students to be stimulated sensibly in multiple ways. When this is done, the student is engaging more of his or her brain and is more likely to retain knowledge about a certain subject. "Using Hollywood films as secondary sources provides a resource that can both reinforce and contradict other secondary sources in powerful ways" (p. 92). Seeing things happen differently in a movie than in the textbook can encourage the students to dig deeper and want to find out what is true and what can be better described as dramatic license.

The case of Mr. Hector and his use of the movie *The Alamo* is an excellent example of using a movie as a secondary source. The class that he teaches is the "fundamental level," the lowest track in the school with 14 of the 20 students in the class having identified exceptionalities requiring an IEP or 504 services with most of the students being juniors except for three seniors who previously failed the class last year (Marcus et al, 2010). Mr. Hector hands out key terms for the movie and stops the movie and discusses the key terms to make sure the students understand the terms as well as what is going on in the movie. The reason that Mr. Hector decided on key terms rather than specific discussion questions is that "he is concerned that his students' reading abilities are very deficient and that films offer another medium through

which to learn about the past—both increasing students' content knowledge as well as bolstering their self-confidence" (Marcus et al., 2010, p. 94). Mr. Hector used multiple activities before, during, and after the movie to support his learning activities. Some of the activities he used included key terms, questions, and journal responses. Through the focused activities that Mr. Hector assigned to his students, they "were less likely to be confused or miseducated by fictional elements in the film" and learned "literacy skills to enable them to use secondary sources to understand the past" (p. 103).

Because the teacher will use the movie to make a connection to the class curriculum, many different activities can be used to make this connection and these activities should be adjusted accordingly to the students the teacher has in the classroom. Mr. Briley's class was an elective course that included a prerequisite of a history survey class so his use of movies to teach about the Vietnam War and counterculture movement of the 1960s was more abstract than the activities that Mr. Hector assigned to his class with *The Alamo*. Although both teachers used movies differently, they still ultimately achieved their teaching objectives and their students gained a better understanding of the material as a result of the use of the movies and the accompanying activities. What is demonstrated by these contrasting examples of uses of movies in a social studies classroom is that there are many different ways to diverge from the non-optimal uses of movies in a classroom and many ways in which the students can significantly learn by watching movies and doing accompanying activities.

Why are movies used

Marcus, Metzger, Paxton, and Stoddard's book, *Teaching History with Film*, indicates that there are myriad ways a teacher can use a movie in the social studies classroom. The book

begins with an introduction and a discussion of the issues involved in using movies to teach history; this comprises Part I of the book. Parts II-V of the book detail four other uses of movies in the social studies classroom. Part II discusses *Using Film to Develop Empathy* by breaking the subject into topics (discussed in separate chapters), *Empathy for Caring* and *Using Film to Develop Empathy as Perspective Recognition*. Part III discusses *Using Film to Develop Analytical or Interpretive Skills* with the two chapters, *Movies as Primary Documents* and *Using Film as a Secondary Source*. Part IV details *Using Film to Teach about Controversial Issues*, separating this topic with chapters referring to contemporary issues as well as historical ones. Lastly, Part V is *Using Film to Visualize the Past and Film as Historical Narrative* and the two chapters are just the separation of the title of Part V. These are the main uses of movies in the classroom and taking a look at each will be beneficial in understanding why teachers use movies. Using film to develop empathy

As mentioned earlier, "when our emotions are activated information is more likely to be retained" (D'sa, 2005, p. 10), so developing empathy can be an effective way of getting students to learn something. In *Teaching History with Film*, Marcus et al.write that "the affective elements of Hollywood movies make them unique historical sources when it comes to making us care" (2010, p. 32). Although "it is very difficult for Westerners to truly comprehend the enmity that exists between the tribes of Africa, but a movie such as *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) places viewers in the middle of one of history's most appalling genocides and gets us to sympathize with the powerless caught in tribal violence" (p. 32).

The authors of *Teaching History with Film* did a case study of Mr. O'Brian's high school social studies class in which he used the movies *Gran Torino* (2008) and *The Killing Fields* (1984) to understand the perspectives of the Hmong people. "The Hmong are the epitome of a

misunderstood, misused, and marginalized people and, like the Romani (Gypsies), Native Americans, or Jews, their plight provides an opportunity for the social studies teacher" (p. 32). Though *The Killing Fields* (1984) does not refer directly to the Hmong people, it is used "to portray the horror of war in Southeast Asia and the unambiguous motive for flight" (p. 34). Mr. O'Brian also showed the students documentaries as well as assigned a book for the students to read titled, *The Spirit Catches You*. The unit shifts focus from learning the culture of the Hmong people, from ancient to modern, to the violence of the Southeast Asian wars, to flight from Asia to America, to the Hmong experience in America. The unit is well-designed and includes multiple movies and books that can truly help the student to better understand the perspective of the Hmong people.

When choosing movies to teach empathy for caring, the best-suited movies should be complex, interesting, and humanizing (Marcus et al., 2010). *Gran Torino* is a good choice when introducing a unit on Hmong culture, however, *El Norte* (1983) can be used when teaching about immigration from Central America to the United States or *Smoke Signals* (1998) may be a good choice for someone who wants his or students to study Native American culture.

Using film to develop analytical or interpretive skills

While Mr. Briley and Mr. Hector's use of movie as primary and secondary sources has already been discussed, respectively, it is also important to consider why they wanted to use these movies the way they used them in their classrooms. Both can be described as wanting their students to use the movies that they show to develop analytical or interpretive skills, albeit in varying level as the ability of each class seems to be different. This is not to say that Mr. Hector's class will not gain as much from *The Alamo* on Westward Expansion as Mr. Briley's

class will gain from *Bonnie and Clyde* on the counterculture movement but it is intended to distinguish the different objectives that the teachers have for the students.

For instance, Mr. Briley's class was an elective class and the students were required to take a history survey class before being eligible to take his class whereas Mr. Hector's class included many students who had IEPs or 504 plans and might have difficulty reading. Mr. Briley wanted his students to think and discuss about how the issues raised in *Bonnie and Clyde* reflect the thinking of the time it was made as opposed to Mr. Hector who wanted his students to watch *The Alamo* and answer the questions and write journal responses in order to further content knowledge of content that they might or might not have initially understood when reading their textbooks. Thus, the analytical and interpretive skills that Mr. Briley expected in his class are far more abstract than the expectations of Mr. Hector in his class though it can be argued that the more basic skills that the students in his classroom were gaining could be more valuable because the students might believe that they could not gain such skills.

It is nearly impossible to quantify these skills that each teacher attempted to equip his own students with but the cases of Mr. Briley and Mr. Hector show that there is a large continuum of analytical or interpretive skills that a teacher can use a movie and accompanying activities to achieve and it is up to the teacher to decide what will work best for the students. Thus, how complex an analytical or interpretive skill a movie can teach a student pales in comparison to which analytical or interpretive skills best suit the students in the classroom. Using film to teach about controversial issues

Movies can be used to teach contemporary controversial issues as well as controversial issues in history. It is important to address controversial issues because one of the main goals of

social studies classes, in general, is to ready students to be citizens and this "citizen readiness" can only be attained if the students study controversial issues both of the past and present.

While both contemporary and historical controversial issues are important, "contemporary controversial issues are difficult to teach, and teachers have legitimate reasons to be cautious" (Marcus et al., 2010, p. 114). Such issues may still be evolving, thus requiring the teacher to be vigilant and constantly updating his or her resources or teaching materials (2010). If a teacher does not have the support of the administrators, parents, or community, he or she may not want to risk teaching about such issues especially without tenure. Another pedagogical challenge to teaching contemporary controversial issues is that the teacher needs "to present a balanced perspective beyond the teacher's personal views or the views of a majority of students and the time it may take away from official prescribed curriculum or textbook coverage" (p. 114)

One issue that has pervaded the United States since its inception is the issue of race and the authors of *Teaching History with Film* took a look at Mr. Clark's "social studies elective class that studies U.S. history through film and music at Shermer High School in Central Connecticut" (p. 115). In Mr. Clark's unit on race, then and now, the students watch two movies and the teacher also utilizes a relevant issue that the school has as its board of education is considering a request from African-American parents to ban the teaching of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The first movie that the students watch is *The Jazz Singer* (1927) in which a jazz singer performs in blackface. Mr. Clark tells the students to consider the ways in which racial, religious, generational, and cultural identity conflict are shown in the film (Marcus et al., 2010). In addition, "the students are also required to consider how the film connects to historical trends such as the migration of African Americans from the South to Northern cities, the Harlem

Renaissance, and the entertainment industry" (p. 116). After the movie, the students discuss the

ways that the movie celebrates or demeans African-American culture. Additionally, the students

read about modern examples of blackface or race identity including a blackface college party and

protest against the movie *Norbit*. Clark further illustrates the issue by showing clips from *Norbit*

and *Sponge Bob Square Pants* as well as the movie *Soul Man* in which a man "pretends" to be an

African American to get a scholarship to go to Harvard.

Before, during and after watching all of these movies or clips, the class is engaged in

critical thinking on issues concerning race and how they have evolved from the past to the

present. They also compare and contrast *The Jazz Singer* and *Soul Man*. "Throughout the unit

students were continually asked to reflect on issues of identity (particularly racial) for both the

films/video clips and personally for themselves on how the issue in the present connects to

painful conflicts in the past" (p. 117). Mr. Clark designed and taught a unit that incorporated

racial issues of the past with those of today and challenged the students to constantly be thinking

about these issues while making a connection to history as well as music and film.

There is no shortage of controversial issues in history that a social studies teacher can

address using movies in his or her classroom. "Historical controversies are important to history

education because by their nature they involve multiple perspectives and alternative

interpretations over what they mean for our world today" (p. 136). Possibly one of the most

controversial issues in history is the crusades. The crusades are controversial not only because of

the conflict itself, but the different viewpoints that the multiple sides have today and the fact that

the issue continues today in a slightly different form but it is still essentially the same problem.

The movie *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005) allows the audience to see the view of Muslims as well as the view of the Christians, which is usually not the case in the textbook. It is important to see multiple viewpoints when looking at controversies in history:

> "Unlike basic memorization of historical events, controversies in the past engage students in critical thinking, evaluating arguments, and interpretation of meaning. Fundamental to this learning outcome is helping students to recognize that there is no one simple answer or innately correct way to look at the issue—it can be interpreted in alternate ways depending on the values and identities brought to how it is framed. This can even extend to how the event or issue is labeled or named. Is what happened at Wounded Knee a 'battle' or 'massacre'? Were the Crusades a European invasion of the Muslim lands in the Middle East or a defensive war to protect Christians in the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Land?
>
> Such ambiguities, alternative interpretations, and multiple perspectives can make it difficult to teach controversies in the history classroom. Many students come with established notions that the history is only 'what happened' in the past and that there is just one right answer." (Marcus et al., 2010, p. 136)

Though it is important to get students to consider different viewpoints, this strange new demand will complicate historical thinking of students, which Wineburg (2001) already describes as an "unnatural act."

One strength of *Kingdom of Heaven* is that the movie portrays Saladin as a powerful and wise leader. Rather than focusing solely on the Christian viewpoint, the viewer also sees the Muslim viewpoint and the Muslims are not necessarily viewed as the enemies. Another strength of the movie is that it allows the students to visualize the fighting as well as the armor and

weapons they used. On a deeper level, the students can learn from the the movie that in any kind of war it is important to consider the perspectives of both sides.

After looking at Mr. Jackson's unit on the Crusades, the case seems to suggest four key strategies for using movies to teach historical controversial issues. The first one is that multiple perspectives are essential; "something that happened in the past remains controversial because there is uncertainty or disagreement about what it means, caused or decided it" (Marcus et al., 2010, p. 152). The second key strategy focuses on the teacher "fram[ing] the issues in alternative ways that make explicit the social values and identities at stake" (p. 152). When teaching about a controversial issue in the past, the third key strategy is to remember that it is still, ultimately, a lesson in history (2010). Lastly, "sufficient content knowledge preparation and activities supporting student learning are critical to understanding the complexities of a historical controversy" (p. 152-3). For the students to get the most out of the movie, the teacher, in this case Mr. Jackson, had to do a great amount of prior research including evaluating the historical accuracy in *Kingdom of Heaven*.

Whether a teacher wants to use a movie to teach controversial issues in the present or past, either can be done if the teacher takes the time to prepare activities that will help the students think about how issues affect them today and going into the future or consider alternative viewpoints and breaking the natural instinct of "presentism," or "evaluating the past exclusively in terms of present-day attitudes, values, and knowledge" (Marcus et. al., 2010, p. 136). Both Mr. Jackson and Mr. Clark's units showed that there is merit in looking at multiple perspectives when looking at any kind of controversial history; it does not matter if it is a contemporary one or one from the past.

Using film to visualize the past and film as historical narrative

Visualizing the past can be a reason why any social studies teacher may be inclined to show a movie because the value of involving multiple senses in the learning process has been mentioned and "helping students to 'see' the past is very difficult to accomplish using textbooks and lectures" (Marcus et. al., 2010, p.159). Although primary documents can also be helpful, it is hard to argue with the authors' assertion that "films are potentially the most powerful mechanism for visualizing the past in ways that motivate students, enhance their understanding of the past, deepen their appreciation for the past, and connect the past to the present" (p. 159). Teachers must also consider a potential drawback of the movies being "too real" for students and upset them emotionally, like *Schindler's List* (2010).

The case that the authors of *Teaching History with Film* looked at for using film to visualize the past was Mr. Irwin's eighth grade class at Monet Middle School in Northeast Connecticut. Mr. Irwin used the movie *Glory* to visualize the past as well as develop empathy in the students. *Glory* was used "as a tool for visualizing life Civil War soldiers with a focus on the African-American soldier" (p. 163). Before watching the movie, Mr. Irwin assigned readings on the Civil War, presented and discussed the causes and effects of the Civil War, watched Civil War documentaries and did group projects and presentations on war highlights. During the movie, Mr. Irwin stopped for discussion centered on African-American soldier life and African-American-White relations.

Relating the content of the movie to the community, Mr. Irwin assigned readings about the Connecticut 29th, Connecticut's own black regiment during the Civil War, "and compared their experience with those of the soldiers in the film (Massachusetts 54th)" (Marcus et al., 2010, p. 163). Overall, the movie helped the students to visualize the past by seeing what kind of

hardships the African-American soldiers faced during the Civil War and connected the unit in Massachusetts to a black regiment in the students' own state of Connecticut.

The case of using film as a historical narrative is an interesting one in that the movie is used to focus on the " 'Causes of the American Civil War' section of the North Carolina standardized U.S. history curriculum" (Marcus et. al., 2010, p. 177). This is a contrast from other cases discussed in their book because several of the cases describe units that are in an elective social studies course. What also makes this an interesting case is that North Carolina is a state that puts some of the most pressure on its schools to do well on high-stakes testing. Ms. Reed teaches a junior-level U.S. history survey course at Jackson High School, a major suburban district in North Carolina. Ms. Reed used the selected clips from the movie *Ride with the Devil* (1999) along with an educational film, *Causes of the Civil War* (2003), "took some notes on the main causes of the war that align with the state curriculum, and did a timeline activity to help them organize all of the events and chronology" (p. 178).

After utilizing handouts, the textbook, and movie clips to study main battles, strategies, and turning points of the war, the students looked at the Reconstruction period and its legacy in the South completing Goal 3 of the North Carolina "standard course of study" U.S. history curriculum. Here is "North Carolina Goal 3: Crisis, Civil War, and Reconstruction (1848-1877) - The learner will analyze the issues that led to the Civil war, the effects of the war, and the impact of Reconstruction on the nation" (p. 179). In addition to fulfilling a state objective, the unit also managed to achieve multiple school division goal objectives.

A recurring theme when using movies in the classroom is to identify specific goals for using the movie. Here are the four specific goals that Ms. Reed identified for her class using the movie *Ride with the Devil*:

"(1) that students would gain an understanding of a major cause of the war, the Missouri-Kansas Border War (1854-1861) and its impact on popular culture today; (2) to ' emphasize the importance of learning about lesser known historical events,' such as the raid on Lawrence, which she notes is barely mentioned in the textbook but is shown vividly in the film; (3) to 'encourage multiple perspectives in understanding historical events' as the film provides a complex history through the perspectives of the Missouri 'Bushwhackers,' Kansas 'Jayhawks,' the people caught in the middle of the fighting and the U.S. Army; and (4) 'challenge the common historical narration of the Civil War as beginning with Fort Sumter (1861).'" (p. 179).

These particular goals address multiple objectives on a school level as well as at the state level. The last two goals also harken the uses of movie to develop analytical or interpretive skills and making the material relevant to the students by incorporating popular culture will make the material better resonate with the students and they will be able to more easily retain the material and do well on future high-stakes testing by watching a movie.

Summary

This review of the literature on using movies in the classroom has shown that there are many different movies that can be used in many different ways for many different purposes. Preparation was found to be the most important part of using a movie in a classroom because the teacher must determine how he or she plans to use a movie. Flexibility is also important because the teacher has to be willing to reevaluate the activities he or she has planned and adjust accordingly. Adjusting does not mean completely scrapping one's initial plans and starting from scratch but making minor adjustments and providing more for the students so they can successfully complete the activities and achieve the lesson objectives the teachers set.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

In order to obtain participants for the study, I sent out emails to the 7-12 social studies

teachers at middle and/or high schools in Southeast Ohio. Because I would have to drive to the

schools to conduct the interviews, I gathered potential participants by viewing the middle and

high school websites of schools within a forty-five minute drive from my home in The Plains. I

coordinated a date, time, and place to conduct and record an interview about social studies

teacher perspectives on using movies in the classrooms. Although I made sure to emphasize that

I was willing to accommodate their schedules and that the interview would not take long, in spite

of these assurances it was difficult to get 10-15 participants to agree to take the time to be

interviewed. Of the 30 teachers I contacted initially, only two responded and agreed to be

interviewed. Some teachers cited commitments to spring sports as reasons to not participate,

others flatly did not respond at all, and one said that she would but failed to respond back to me

with a day and time that would work for her. However, it should be noted that one teacher

agreed to participate and multi-tasked by announcing a middle school track event while

simultaneously doing my interview in between announcing winners.

Because others unfortunately did not agree participate, except for the aforementioned high

school social studies teacher, changes had to be made to how I obtain participants for this

master's research project. Upon consulting and gaining the approval of my advisor, I expanded

my search for participants by providing the option to respond to the interview questions as an

extended survey and e-mail me their responses as an attached word document. I contacted the

teachers that I previously contacted as well as contacted 20 other teachers from three other schools. Despite the decrease of involvement required from the teacher, the response was rather similar. However, I was able to obtain ten teachers who agreed to participate. Of the ten participants, five were interviewed and five filled out the answers to the interview questions. Two of the ten participants were female while the other eight were male social studies teachers. The teachers in the study represented three middle and four high schools in Southeastern Ohio.

Teachers from eight different schools participated in this study. Each teacher was given a research consent form to sign to participate in the study. The eight different schools represented six different school districts. One school district, Bobwhite School District, had a teacher from the middle and high school level who agreed to be interviewed while the school with the most participants had three (Lowestown), one interview and two extended survey. Two teachers from the northernmost middle school, Ravenville Middle School, completed the extended surveys. The following charts show the break-up of interview and survey per school (middle and high; MS and HS) and the number of participants per school district. Table 1 shows the interview survey breakdown of individual schools while Table 2 illustrates the number of participants per school district; both tables can be found on the next page.

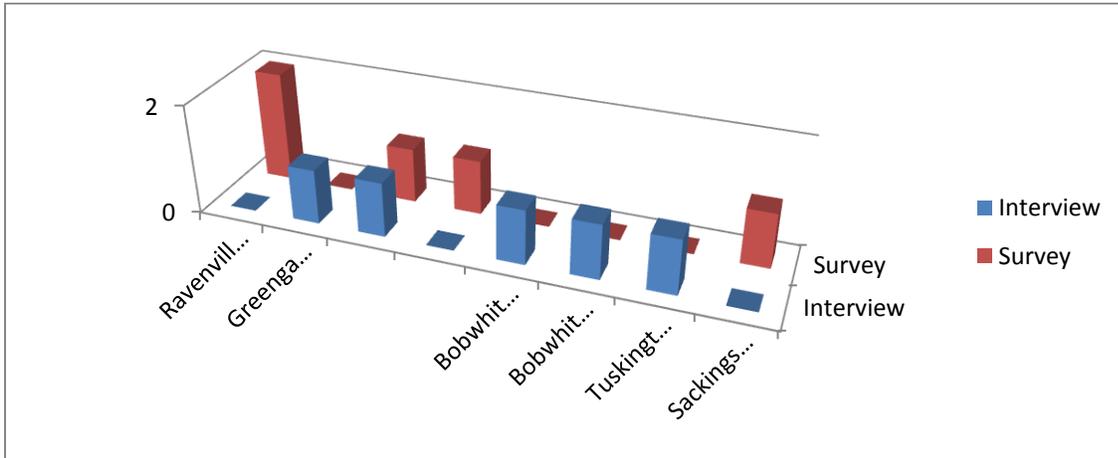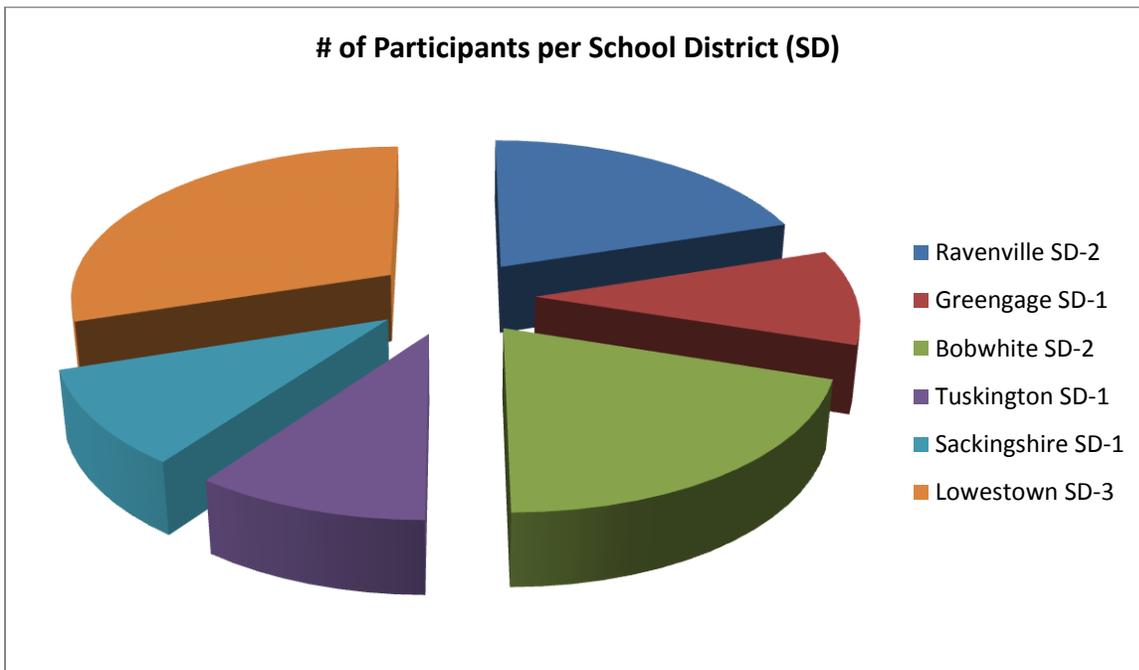**Table 1. Interview/Survey Breakdown of Individual Schools**

Table 2. Number of Participants per School District

Interview/survey

Constructing the questions for the interview/survey was a vital part of the methodology process. The questions served to both elicit the individual teacher's opinion on using movies as well as gain insight into what kind of successes or failures he or she had had using movies. The interview and survey questions were identical (see Appendix A).

A second set of questions concerned the most positive and negative experience the teacher had had using a movie in the classroom, what the movie was and why it was this type of an experience. Some teachers gave specific examples while others were banal and said it was a positive experience if they were engaged and negative if they fell asleep. In addition, some teachers believed that they had their most positive experience when a group of students has this particular experience, i.e. being engaged and not asleep, but one teacher cited specific experiences with two different students that had profound impact on either them or himself as the negative experience he used as an opportunity to reevaluate the movie he used while the positive experience served as a turning point for the young man who came back years later to tell the teacher the impact the movie had had on him.

Data collection

Upon sending emails to social studies teachers and coordinating dates, times (either after school or during the teacher's planning period), and places (all were interviewed at the school they taught at) to meet the five teachers who agreed to be interviewed, I subsequently traveled to the respective school and conducted the interviews. I recorded each interview using the voice memo app of an iPod. After I finished each interview I recorded my personal response to the

interview at the end of the recorded interview itself, with the exception of one that was recorded

separately from the recorded interview because I forgot to after the interview.

The extended surveys also provided insightful information because the teachers took the

time to condense their perspectives into shorter responses. Though more insight probably would

arise as a result of talking to the teachers, reading their responses also gives an essence of what

they believe is important since they wanted to contribute but did not want to necessarily be

interviewed.

<div align="center">Data analysis</div>

To analyze the data I began by identifying general themes. For instance, I identified who

amongst the participating teachers tended to be proponents or opponents of using movies in the

classroom and whether they shared similar opinions. In the next phase, I proceeded to identify

the participants' opinions on using documentaries or theatrical movies. The questions about the

different styles (theatrical, documentary) of movies ranged from the strengths and weaknesses of

each to the importance of dispelling inaccuracies in a theatrical movie (see Appendix C).

 I identified similarities and differences in their opinions on documentaries and theatrical

movies and paid attention to which movie the teacher tended to support using more and the

teacher's reasoning for this support. By analyzing the transcriptions of the interviews and the

extended survey responses in a question-by-question manner, certain themes became prevalent

like whether a teacher was more likely to show the whole movie or clips as well as differences in

opinions on how important it is to dispel inaccuracies in theatrical movies.

Generally, the analysis and coding process utilized triangulation. By analyzing several

different responses to the same questions, certain themes arose. The teachers who agreed to be

interviewed had a lot more to say and provided more data. Yet, similarities did emerge between

the oral and written responses. To code the data, I looked at the teacher's responses to each question to see if any similarities or patterns arose in their answers. This was done so that the data could be presented in charts to make it easier to understand.

For instance, one of the first questions concerned teacher's perspectives on parents' conceptions of movies in the classroom. The first step was to look at each teacher's response to the question and write possible categories that could be displayed in a chart. A few examples of the designations I gave teachers' responses initially is *OK*, which came to be the designation for the category, *Think it's okay/value their use*, and *U2O* came to be the category, *Used too often*, in Figure 4.1 of Chapter 4.

To take another look at this process, consider question 12 of Appendix C, concerning teacher's opinions on the use of movies in the future based on advances in technology. *M* was used to represent more and became the category *More* while *UIF* came to be the *Used in more interactive fashion* category of Figure 4.5 of Chapter Four.

After coding the data, I analyzed the data further to see if any of the codes could be combined. Since the codes had been developed and condensed, the next step was to reevaluate the codes to establish themes and determine whether any codes or themes needed to be added, changed or combined, or completely deleted. As I reevaluated the codes, I found that the breakdown of codes by questions provided meaningful data for analysis. The findings will be examined in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Teacher Perspectives

        The following are the results of the research on the social studies teachers' perspectives

on movies in the classroom. To make these connections clearer, graphs have been included to

clarify and illustrate general observations on the teachers' perspectives. In addition to the graphs,

quotes have been included from the teacher interviews/survey responses that were worth noting

and will be further analyzed in Chapter Five.

Figure 4.1. Teacher Perspectives on Parent Conceptions of Movies in Classroom

Legend:
- Think its okay/value use-2
- Entertainment/space filler-3
- Have little interest in students-1
- Used too often-3
- Fine with approval of movie-1
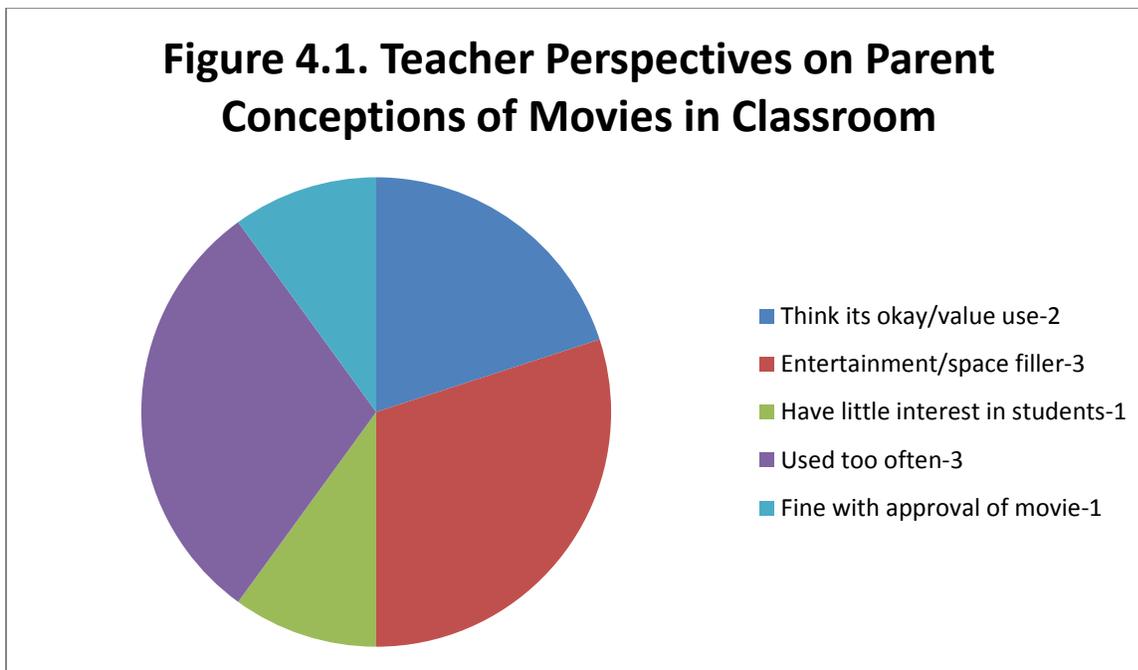
It is important to note that some teachers had multiple perspectives on parents' stances regarding

the use of movies in the classroom, but Figure 4.1 illustrates their primary perspective. Three of

the ten teachers believed parents thought social studies teachers used movies too often. Among

the responses, Mr. Wallace of Lowestown High School stated that "parents may think it is a

waste of time" in his response which was included in the *Entertainment/space filler* category of

the chart. Entertainment and space filler simply means that the teacher is doing to entertain the

kids and does not intend to teach anything by using the movie; some teachers believed this to be

the perspective of parents on using movies. An example of a multiple perspective of a parent,

perspective in which a parent has multiple views, was mentioned by Mr. Downey from Bobwhite

Middle School who believed that parents valued the use of movies in the classroom but also

believed that some "perceive that we use them too much." Mrs. Martin, a teacher at Greengage

High School, thought that "many parents feel that the teachers are just using it to fill space [and]

that they're not really teaching." She also stated that "they don't see the connection" when it

comes to using movies in the classroom but she does because she is a teacher and also a parent.

Figure 4.2. Teacher Perspectives on Students' Conceptions of Movies

- Like/Love-5
- Mixed (based on # of movies shown)-3
- Depends on Movie/Activities-2
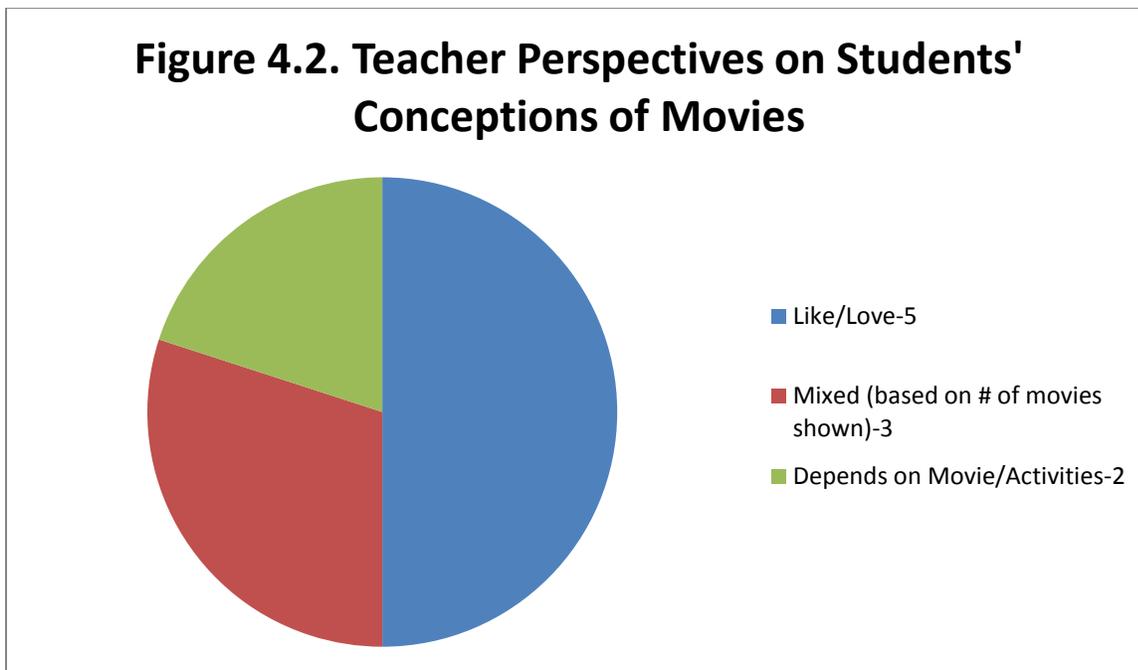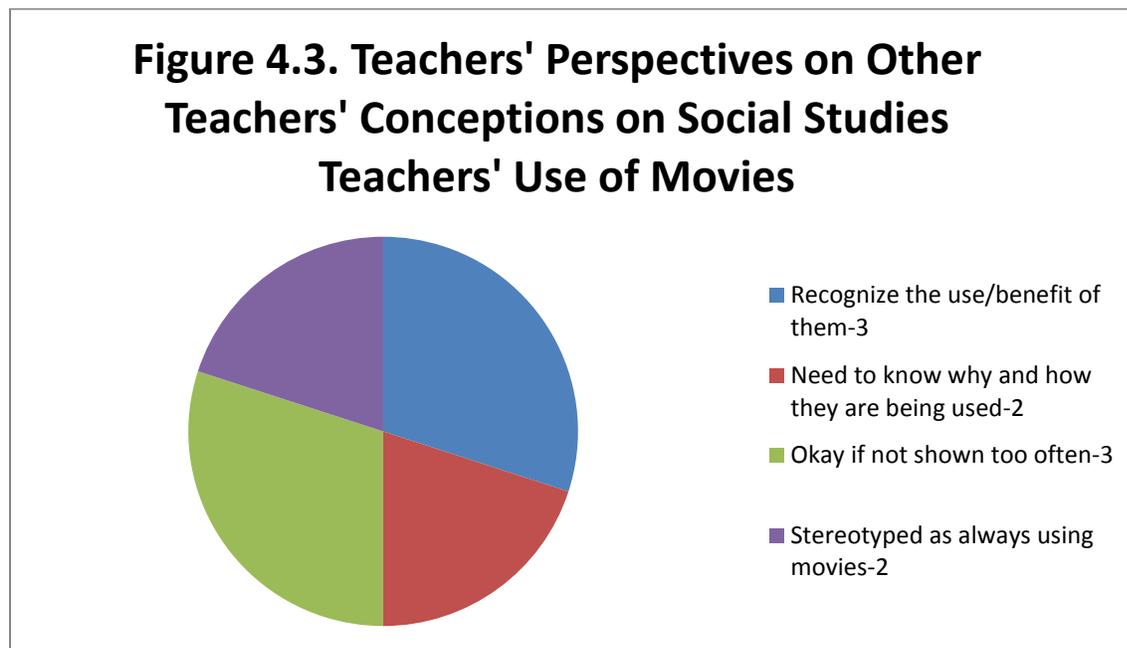
Figure 4.2 suggests all teachers agreed to some extent that students like to watch movies in the

classroom. Some of the different reasons for this were that the students are visual learners and

movies break up the monotony of conventional classroom activities. The teachers felt that the

students' conceptions on the use of movies in the classroom correlated with the number of

movies as well as the quality of movies. This is to be expected as students can get tired of anything if it is used too much. Mr. Butler from Bobwhite High School believed that "they [students] would tell you they'd watch one every day if you'd let them but I think you get diminishing returns if you use movies too much." Miss Lynn from Ravenville Middle School believed that how the students react to a movie "depends on the quality of the movie shown and then what activities [the teacher] plan[s] around it[;] if there is something they can relate to or have an interest in, students are very receptive to watching." Mr. Rush of Lowestown High School found that "students very often clamor for films" but believed this is attributable to their desire to "avoid learning of other material, rather than a belief that the films enhance their understanding.

Figure 4.3. Teachers' Perspectives on Other Teachers' Conceptions on Social Studies Teachers' Use of Movies

- Recognize the use/benefit of them-3
- Need to know why and how they are being used-2
- Okay if not shown too often-3
- Stereotyped as always using movies-2

All teachers believed that other teachers recognize that social studies teachers use movies in the classroom. In fact, almost all made some mention of at least a combination of two of the responses highlighted in the chart. Mr. Pitt of Tuskington High School believed that "teachers

like to tease one another about how much they perceive they're showing in their class" and while he thinks math teachers may find movies a waste of time he believed that the use of movies in a social studies classroom is integral to a balanced approach of teaching. Mrs. Martin of Greengage High School recounted an experience with a colleague who she believed used too many movies, but after talking to the teacher and finding out what the movies taught the students, the use of movies made sense and thus she highlighted the importance of finding out why and how the movies are being used before making a snap judgment about the teacher and his or her teaching. Mr. Michaels believed that other teachers "will be the ones that kind of jump on that (using too many movies) the quickest as far as they're not doing their jobs or they're just going to history class and showing a video;" this is an example of teachers holding each other accountable.

<center>Advantages of Using Movies in a Social Studies Class</center>

All teachers seemed to agree that movies definitely have potential to help students learn material in a social studies class. Movies can make the class more interesting and break up the monotony of a normal lecture. They also can provide a visual representation of what is being studied that pictures in a textbook cannot match in quality. Mr. Butler believed that the use of theatrical movies can serve as a "way to reach kids that aren't normally interested in social studies."

Mrs. Martin, teacher at Greengage High School, believed that movies "can enhance topics you are discussing" and "makes it easier for the kids to understand the discussions you have with the reading." Students can discuss how the movie relates to the different standards being covered in class.

Miss Lynn makes a good point that "it's impossible to know everything [and] the use of movies helps get more information to students." She also believes that the movies can help the teachers learn the material better. Thus movies can be a resource for students and teachers alike. She echoed the sentiment that movies "help make the material more engaging to students."

As for the debate about documentaries vs. theatrical movies, the teachers voiced different opinions. Everyone seemed to agree that documentaries are more accurate and according to Mr. Butler, "usually mesh better with an educational curriculum." Documentaries also tend to include primary and secondary sources as well as interviews with experts.

However, theatrical movies are significantly more interesting and the "cinematography is always better", according to Mr. Pitt of Tuskington High School. He indicated he tends to use more theatrical movies because the students are more likely to pay attention to them. The question is whether or not it is worthwhile to show a movie that a student is going to be more interested in and discuss its inaccuracies or show one that is going to be more accurate and risk the student tuning out while the movie is being shown in class

Disadvantages of Using Movies in a Social Studies Class

Teachers cited different disadvantages of using movies in their classrooms. Some of the disadvantages varied based on the type of movie, documentary or theatrical ("Hollywood") but some also were general disadvantages of using movies. Among the most common disadvantages cited by the participating teachers was that using movies in the classroom meant lost class time and the difficulty of showing movies in class periods that are 40-50 minutes long.

Mr. Downey, from Bobwhite Middle School, mentioned a few disadvantages to using movies in the classroom. He made the point that since students have become some intertwined with the interactivity of technology, students may not be interested in the movie shown in class

which is one of the main purposes for using a movie, i.e. to get students interested in social studies. Another point that he brought up was that "kids will believe just about anything in a movie." The example that he brought up was that many of his students, when talking about the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, thought that Jack Dawson was a real passenger on the Titanic but he was actually a fictional character made up for the motion picture. Because things are added for entertainment (a point made by Mr. Michaels), it is important that students know this so that they can get the most out of the movie.

Many of the teachers had similar comments about the disadvantages of using documentaries, namely that they are boring. Mr. Michaels, social studies teacher at Lowestown Middle School, described documentaries as "brutal" while Mr. Rush at the high school believes that "many students will not find it (a well-done documentary) as interesting as a full-length theatrical movie."

As far as disadvantages for using theatrical movies, the teachers made the point that it is difficult to show a whole theatrical movie, albeit sighting different issues. Mrs. Martin stated that it is not practical to show a whole movie, harkening back to the disadvantage of lost class time, while Mr. Michaels made the point that students may not understand an aspect of the movie that is irrelevant to their understanding of what is being taught in class. Mr. Jackson of Ravenville Middle School opined that even theatrical movies "could be boring to a few and they lose out on two or three class periods."

The content of theatrical movies manifested itself as a disadvantage amongst several of the teachers. For instance, Miss Lynn of Ravenville Middle School commented about theatrical movies: "I'm always worried there is something I did not catch and will need to fast forward or the kids might accidentally see or hear something inappropriate." Parental approval of content in

movies may vary greatly from one school to another and Mr. Butler made the point that some

PG-13 movies may have controversial things in them and parents, in this case of high school

students, may not approve of their sons and daughters watching it which makes this a concern for

middle school social studies teachers as well.

<div align="center">Most Positive and Negative Experiences with Movies</div>

The most positive and negative experience with a movie differed from teacher to teacher

as some provided specific examples while others provided general qualities of a positive or

negative movie experience. Further discussion of these experiences will be found in Chapter 5.

One vivid positive experience that Mr. Pitt provided was his use of the movie, *Sergeant York*

(1941). He remembers one young man who "was very disengaged with learning and he really

connected with the character in that film, and became a model student after the film and years

later came back and told me how big of an impact that film had on his life."

Mr. Downey had had a lot of success using the *Engineering an Empire* (2006) History

Channel documentary series and felt that it "do[es] a really good job of [presenting] the ancient

civilizations that we use in class." These two examples provide a stark contrast to the type of

movies one can use in a class, theatrical or documentary. In fact, when Mr. Downey became a

teacher at Bobwhite Middle School, he intended to use some clips from theatrical movies to

provide a visual representation of the time periods the students would be studying and sent

permission slips to parents before showing them. The parents did not want their students to see

PG-13 or R-rated movies in any capacity. He had no problems showing the movies at a high

school he previously taught at but the school he moved to had more parental involvement.

A particularly interesting experience of a movie was Mr. Michaels' with the movie *Roots*

(1977). It is interesting in that he said he had a positive experience and took a lot away from the

movie when he watched it but he believes that he had his most negative experience using it. It is not because of the movie itself but because it sometimes can be difficult to deal "with some of those stereotypes that students in our area have towards African-Americans still." In fact, he claimed that 99% of the students "come away with [ ] a better understanding of why racism is bad and come away with a better understanding of [ ] how terrible slavery was, but there are always the one or two that almost total upset the apple cart whether it's because they want attention or [ ] they're used to hearing those kind of negative things at home." Some of the students may be too immature for the movie and can try to distract others from learning from it.

Mr. Butler recounted his most negative experience as an instance when he showed the movie, *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (1992), to his first *History on Film* class. He admitted that he didn't have time to screen the movie before showing it to the class and it turned out to be a disaster. Mr. Butler was surprised to find out that the movie "turned out to be really long and boring and the acting was substandard [and he] couldn't wait to finish it."

<center>Movie Activities from Social Studies Teachers</center>

Movie activities that teachers assign so that the students will pay attention to the movie and learn from it are vital to effectively using movies in the classroom. Further discussion of the importance of assigning activities to accompany movie-viewing in the classroom was mentioned in Chapter 2 and shall be revisited in Chapter 5. All of the teachers seemed to agree that it was important to keep students engaged while watching a movie and many thought that guiding questions are an effective means of keeping the students engaged and paying attention to the movie. Mr. Ringer and Miss Lynn also cited the importance of intermittently stopping the movie to discuss it and make sure that the students understand it. Some activities can be based on the interest level of the students in the movie. For instance, Mr. Butler had a class, one of his *History*

on Film classes, that was really into conspiracy theories, so he assigned an activity in which "they had to fact-check many of the numerous claims [in the movie *JFK* (1991)] in the class and then give a presentation on their findings." This activity harkens back to effective preparation for using a movie and took a lot of preparation in that he had to find 20-25 concepts in the movie (one per student) for the students to fact-check.

Movies as Effective Supplements in the Social Studies Classroom

The teachers unanimously agreed that movies do have the potential to be effectively implemented in the classroom. However, their reasoning differed, which will be evaluated further in Chapter 5 by analyzing the reasoning for the teachers' support for movies and connecting it to the relevant literature on the subject (Chapter 2).
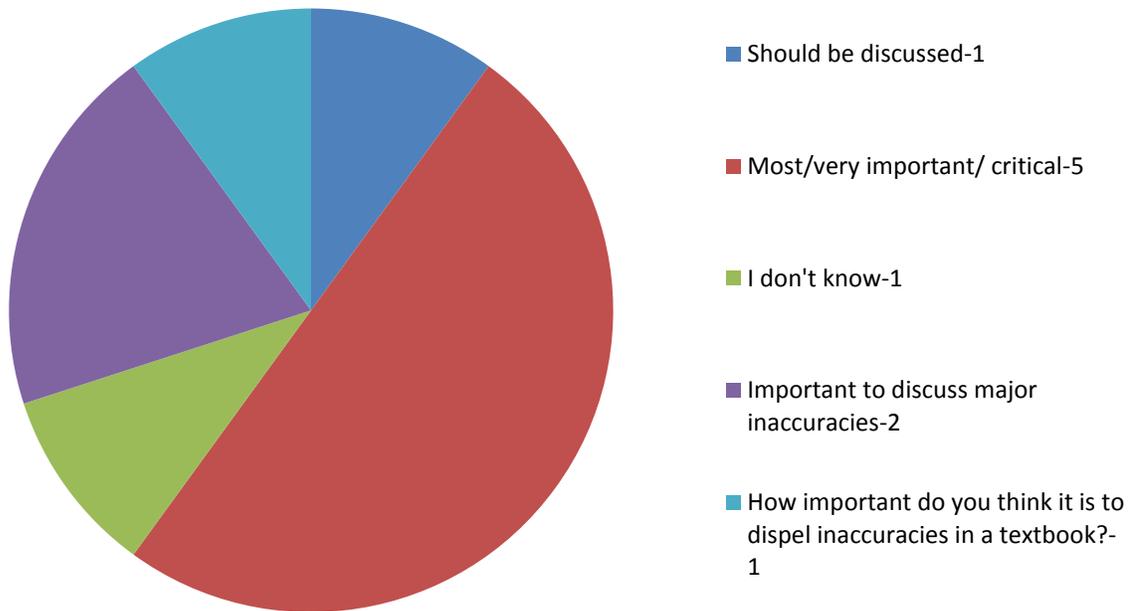
Importance of Dispelling Inaccuracies in Theatrical Movies

The teachers appeared to agree that inaccuracies should be discussed on some level. Most teachers felt that it was very important to dispel such inaccuracies while others felt it was less important because he or she was using the movie to give a visual representation and not for the story itself. Opinions also varied on the types of movies as some teachers used theatrical or "Hollywood" movies exclusively, some documentaries exclusively, and some a blend of the two. The only exception to this was Mrs. Martin who responded she did not know because she did not have a lot of experience in using theatrical movies in her class and another teacher answered the question with a thought-provoking question of his own, "How important do you think it is to dispel inaccuracies in a textbook?" This question was not a category or question posed to the teachers but Mr. Rush's response to the question regarding dispelling inaccuracies in theatrical movies which is important to consider because textbooks can be viewed by many as an authority

on accuracy. The issue that textbooks may have, however, is what they leave out as opposed to the issues that movies have with what they may embellish for entertainment's sake.

Figure 4.4, located on the next page, illustrates the teachers' responses to the importance of dispelling inaccuracies in theatrical movies. Note that the teachers' responses like "very important," "most important", and "most critical" have been combined into one category because the teachers seem to have similar opinions in terms of dispelling inaccuracies but just worded it differently, hence the *Most/very important/critical* category in the chart. While this question may seem at a place as a category, the reason it is included in a chart is because while it shows that half of the teachers feel it is important, the other half is quite a grab bag of responses which illustrates that teachers' opinions can differ a good bit although half of them tended to agree. Thus half of the teachers believed that it was very important while three others also believed that it should in some capacity be discussed. This means that 80% of the teachers in the study valued the importance of dispelling inaccuracies in movies in some capacity and an argument can be made that Mr. Rush, who responded on his survey, "How important do you think it is to dispel inaccuracies in a textbook?" also values dispelling inaccuracies in movies.
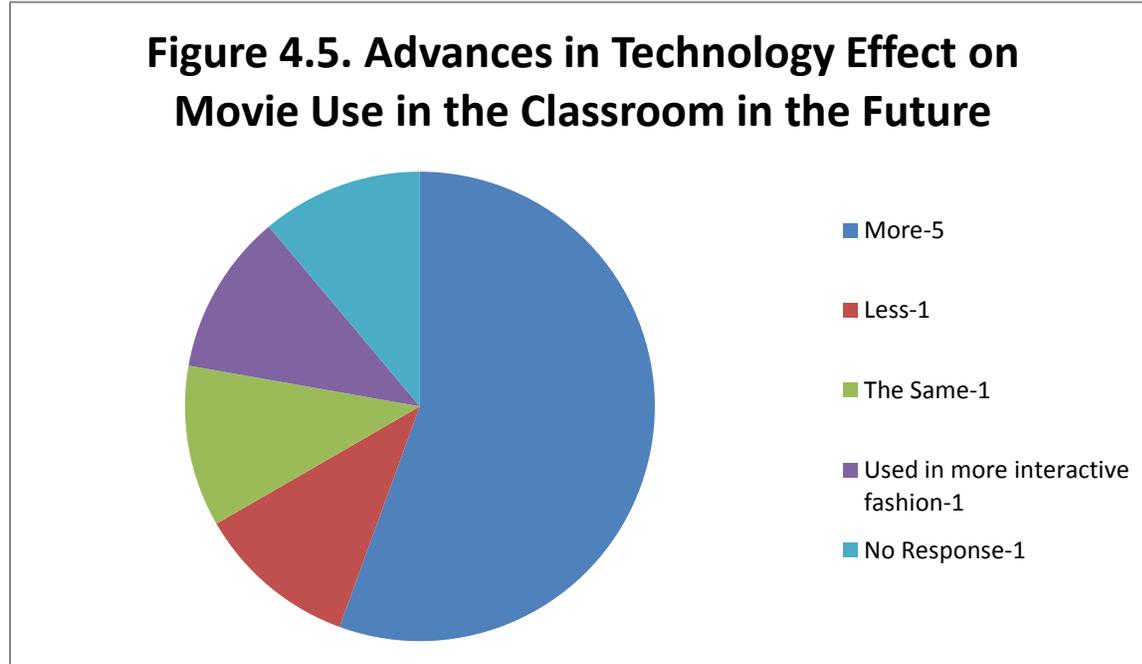
Figure 4.4. Importance of Dispelling Inaccuracies in a Theatrical Movie

- Should be discussed-1
- Most/very important/ critical-5
- I don't know-1
- Important to discuss major inaccuracies-2
- How important do you think it is to dispel inaccuracies in a textbook?-1

Movie Use (based on advances in technology) in the Future

Looking at the Figure 4.5., it is easy to see the majority of social studies teachers believed that the advances in technology will result in an increase in movie usage in the classroom. One teacher responded that movies will be utilized in a more interactive fashion so that today and tomorrow's students who are inundated with technology can take more out of their use in the classroom. Mr. Rush made the point that the use of digital media can allow a teacher to more easily create his or her own clips to utilize in class and no longer have to fast forward or rewind. Ultimately, the use of movies really depends on the personality of the teacher, according to Mr. Michaels. Mr. Butler also mentioned the advantages of services like Netflix which allows teachers to access movies that they may have not been able to otherwise find at a video store. Teachers also mentioned the advantages of using a DVD over VHS as well as the advantage of

YouTube to watch smaller clips from movies.

Figure 4.5. Advances in Technology Effect on Movie Use in the Classroom in the Future

Legend:
- More-5
- Less-1
- The Same-1
- Used in more interactive fashion-1
- No Response-1

Experiences with Movies as a Student in Social Studies Classroom

The teachers themselves tended to watch few if any movies at all when they were students in middle or high school The movies that they typically watched were documentaries that were boring to many of their fellow classmates. More often than not, the social studies teachers were interested in the movies no matter how boring they were to their classmates. For instance, Mr. Downey from Bobwhite Middle School stated that he "was interested in them so it wasn't something that was an experience of the lights went off and out, out I went, I paid attention to them, but not everybody else was of the same interest." Mr. Butler of Bobwhite High School also stated that the movies helped him get more interested in social studies and still believes that they can have the same effect on his students today.

Research Literature

The findings in this study connect well with the research literature review, which will be discussed in the next five sections aligned to the questions posed in Chapter Two.

What movies do teachers use?

According to D'Sa, the three most common types of movies used in studying history are documentaries, docudramas, and historical fiction. The data that I collected distinguished between documentaries and theatrical or "Hollywood" movies, thus combining the docudramas and historical fiction into one category. Though a relatively small sample size of ten teachers from around the southeastern Ohio area the teachers held a wide range of beliefs about using movies in the classroom. They varied from not using movies very much at all – one teacher said that she had shown maybe parts of two movies as the school year drew to a close – to showing movies fairly often, another stated that he usually shows one movie per unit.

As far as what movies are used by teachers is concerned, some teachers used documentaries exclusively, some theatrical exclusively, and some preferred a combination of the two at different points for different lessons. In fact, Mr. Wallace, a teacher at Lowestown High School, stated he was "more likely to use theatrical [movies] because students respond to them better and seem to get more from them" and used documentaries "in small amounts because students are easily bored with them."

Although some of the teachers may have preferred one to another, they certainly understood the merits of the other types of movies. An example of this was Mr. Butler at Bobwhite High School, who taught regular history classes as well as an elective course, *History on Film*, and thought that "documentaries are much more classroom friendly" (few rated-R documentaries) and "usually mesh better with an educational curriculum." It is of note that he

prefered to use theatrical movies because students tend to be more interested in them and may help them to become interested in social studies. His most positive experience with a movie in class was *Downfall* (2004), a German language film with subtitles. Although the students weren't excited to watch a movie with subtitles, they became interested in it and learned a lot about Hitler's inner circle.

The inverse of this example would be that of Mr. Wallace at Lowestown High School. He tends to use documentaries almost exclusively except for the occasional clip from a war movie to illustrate an attack or battle scene, e.g. he showed a five-minute clip from *Pearl Harbor* (2001). Although he prefers to show clips of documentaries or educational pieces he recognized that "many students will not find it (a well-done documentary) as interesting as a full-length theatrical movie." In spite of his apprehension to use theatrical movies because although "Hollywood is entertaining [, it] is, however, a poor historian." With such an opinion on Hollywood, it may come as a surprise that his most positive experience with a movie in class was *Dances with Wolves* (1990). He was complimentary of the movie and described it as a "period piece" that "is a great tool to illustrate the look and feel of the era."

How do teachers prepare to use movies?

How movies are used?

A quote from Greg Nielsen's article, *Media Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom* (2011, p. 43) was used to highlight the importance of effectively preparing students to learn from watching movies in the classroom: "Teachers must find ways to teach students to be active, rather than passive, media viewers[;] this requires teaching historical media literacy." He breaks this important procedure up into five steps: 1) *Choose an appropriate film*; 2) *Introduce the film with pre-viewing activities*; 3) *Provide students with active viewing tools*; 4) *Engage students*

with post-viewing activities; 5) *Assess students' historical film literacy*. In addition to preparing students for watching movies, these five steps also serve as the explanation for how movies are used.

The process of choosing an appropriate film is important and *appropriate* can mean either appropriate in terms of teaching the class or actual content. It is vital to cover both types of appropriateness because the teacher obviously wants to make sure that the movie can be used as a learning tool but also wants to be sure to use movies that the school and district approve but also that the parents will permit their sons or daughters to watch.

One example of a teachers' experience with the parents being at odds with use of movies in the classroom arose in the interview with Mr. Downey at Bobwhite Middle School. He had taught at a high school and was in his first year at the middle school and sent permission slips home because he was going to show clips from some PG-13 and R-rated movies and the parents objected to this fervently. Although he had no trouble showing clips from the movies at the nearby high school he taught at before, the parents were considerably more involved with their students at this school so he did not show the movies.

Mr. Butler had an unpleasant experience with the movie, *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (1992), which can be attributed to a lack of preparation on his part. He knows that he should have screened the movie first but did not have the time to do it and the movie "turned out to be really long and boring and the acting was substandard." Another experience that he had was with the movie, *Glory* (1989). He had shown the movie many times before but three Mormon students could not watch the movie because it was rated-R. He did prepare to use the movie, but because the three students could not watch it, he had to think on his feet and come up with an alternate assignment for them.

Some of the pre-viewing activities that teachers alluded to when using movies included pre-viewing questions and/or discussions. Doing these helps prime the students' minds to make the connections between the class material and the material that they see in the movie. Such pre-viewing questions can be intended to help the students "identify the purpose for viewing the film in the larger context of a unit, lesson, chapter or historical document" (Nielsen, 2011, p. 44).

In a similar fashion, for active viewing tools many of the teachers stated that they provide students with questions to be answered during the movie so that the students can be held accountable. Students can gain these active viewing tools through discussion. In fact, many of the teachers stated the importance of stopping movies at certain points to discuss what is going on as well as answer any questions that any student may have concerning questions they have to answer or about something that is going on in the movie. Mr. Pitt, teacher at Tuskington High School, preferred to use study guides for an active viewing tool for his class.

The study guides that Mr. Pitt required his students fill out during the movie helped them prepare for a post-viewing activity, a quiz. Quizzes and tests are some of the most common types of post-viewing activities; however, a teacher can use other activities. Post-viewing activities can vary and may also include a discussion of the questions the students answered during the movie or a general discussion of the movie and the class material. Mrs. Martin, a teacher at Greengage High School, stated in her interview that she gets the students together in groups to discuss the symbols or ideas in the movie that support the indicators they are studying in class at the time.

Assessing a student's historical film literacy requires the student to dig deeper and may require a student to "present their conclusions using a variety of assessments, such as submitting

their journal entries about the film along with their research [or] writing an essay based on primary sources that draws evidence-based conclusions" (Nielsen, 2011, p. 45).

An activity that Mr. Butler had his students complete in his *History on Film* class is an example of a way of how to asses a student's historical film literacy. Because his students were interested in conspiracy theories, after watching the movie *JFK* (1991), each student was assigned a claim made in the movie and had to fact-check it.

Fact-checking activities, such as those Mr. Butler used in the classroom, were a more rewarding experience for students because "prior research suggests that absent direct guidance from teachers, students may not naturally view films critically (Marcus et. al., 2010, p. 19; Seixas, 1994). Mr. Rush, teacher at Lowestown High School emphasized the importance of dispelling inaccuracies in movies as well as textbooks.

<p style="text-align:center">Why are movies used?</p>

Probably the most basic reason for movies to be used in a social studies classroom is that they give a visual representation of the material being taught that a textbook simply cannot rival. Beyond merely the visual representation, a movie can make content come to life and help students empathize with the "actors." Empathy is important to the learning process because "when our emotions are activated information is more likely to be retained" (D'sa, 2005, p. 10).

Teaching History with Film, argues that "the affective elements of Hollywood movies make them unique historical sources when it comes to making us care" (Marcus et. al., 2010, p. 32). An example of this would be the movie *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) which "places viewers in the middle of one of history's most appalling genocides and gets us to sympathize with the powerless caught in tribal violence" (p. 32).

Mr. Michaels used parts of the movie *Roots* (1977) in his classroom to teach about the horrors of slavery and many students gained "a better understanding of why racism is bad and come away with a better understanding of [] how terrible slavery was." He also made the point that in spite of the fact that 99% had a positive learning experience, there is always one or two students that may not be mature enough to get it or might have negative feelings towards African-Americans as a result of learned behaviors at home or in the community.

Mr. Briley's class was an elective course that had a prerequisite history survey course requirement while Mr. Hector's class included many students with IEPs or 504 plans who had difficulty reading. Both used movies to develop analytical and interpretive skills but Mr. Briley expected more because his students were higher achieving than those in Mr. Hector's class and already had a background in history due to the prerequisite history survey course. Both teachers knew the abilities of their students and knew what kind of skills to expect them to gain as a result of using movies to supplement classroom instruction. Interestingly, Miss Lynn at Ravenville Middle School argued that movies can also teach the teachers something that they may not have known. This could be the result a student guiding the teacher to view something from a different perspective.

Mr. Pitt at Tuskington High School shared two of his most compelling stories about experiences, positive and negative, using movies in the classroom. As the most positive experience he described one "very disengaged with learning" male student who "he really connected with the character in that film (*Sgt. York*-1941) … became a model student after the film and years later came back and told [him] how big of an impact that film had on his life." Mr. Pitt described this experience as "a really neat moment." His negative experience involved a girl's reaction to a rape scene in *Platoon* (1986). The girl's mother called him and they discussed

the situation but the experience caused him to reevaluate the movies he selected as he came to realize that a negative effect on a student could impede his or her learning process.

Conclusions

The different teachers at the different schools had different opinions when it came to what kind of movie to use (theatrical vs. documentary), how much of movie to show (entire vs. clips), and what activities to use with movie (questions, discussion, group project, etc.), but every teacher was confident that movies can be used as a supplement to classroom instruction. The teachers' opinions on what kind of movie to use was directly affected by their assessment of which movie would meet best the lesson's objectives.

The teachers tended to agree that students like to watch movies. They might like them because they feel they do not have to do work while watching them or they might like them because they are interesting and break up the monotony of the ordinary classroom routine. Because teachers should like using a tool that their students enjoy, a movie is an important tool for a teacher to use and when properly planned can enhance student learning. As one teacher suggested, it might well simultaneously enhance teacher learning.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Research has shown that movies can be used effectively in the social studies classroom provided the teacher is well-prepared and has taken adequate steps to assure his or her students will be engaged. The different teachers analyzed in the book, *Teaching History with Film*, provided many different ways that movies can be well implemented in the social studies classroom. The research literature suggests that, absent direct guidance from teachers, students may not naturally view films critically (Marcus, Paxton, & Meyerson, 2006; Seixas, 1994)" (Marcus et al., 2010, p.19). In order effective guidance to take place, the teacher needs to plan how to use the movie.

One of the best resources for preparing teachers to use movies is Nielsen's article titled, *Media Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom* (2011). The five-step process he describes is as follows: 1) Choose an appropriate film; 2) Introduce the film with pre-viewing activities; 3) Provide students with active viewing tools; 4) Engage students in post-viewing activities; 5) Assess students' historical film literacy. All teachers who participated in this Master's Research Project believed that movies can be effectively used as a supplement to classroom instruction and would likely agree that these five steps are integral to effectively using movies. Consequentially, any problems that a teacher in this study had with a movie can be attributed to failing to carry out this five-step process. Therefore it is important to consider both the limitations and implications of this Master's Research Project. An assessment of its limitations will suggest the significance of the project for educators and the implications for future research.

Limitations

The limitations of this Master's Research Project must be considered to assess its significance. The project consisted of five interviews and five extended survey responses. The extended survey responses consisted of the interview questions completed by the teachers and returned via email. Because of the failure to enlist ten teachers who would agree to participate in a personal interview, this step had to be taken to procure additional data. The data in these survey responses lacked the depth or insight that the teachers who agreed to be interviewed provided, yet some of the responses did provide rather meaningful musings while others fell short. It is possible that the lack of motivation to participate was a result of the time the data was being collected, spring of 2012, or the teachers' lack of enthusiasm to discuss the use of movies in their classrooms.

Although some teachers offered rather specific examples of the use of movies in their classroom, another limitation of this research project was it did not include direct observation of how any of the participating teachers actually used movies in their classrooms. In addition, assessing a unit plan involving the use of movies, including guiding questions or other activities for the students, would have provided more data to analyze and allowed the researcher to better understand any one teacher's perspective.

Implications

When teachers use movies in the classroom, there are several important factors he or she should consider to ensure students will gain new knowledge. The findings in this Master's Research Project suggest several implications:

- Social studies teachers should consider whether any part of the movies can be construed as controversial. It is of utmost importance that the teacher sends home a permission slip so he

or she will not have to confront angry parents, principals, or superintendents. It is important to have back-up lesson as well as consider the movie's rating.

- Social studies teachers should develop assignments that help their students to realize that not everything they see in a movie is true and expose them to different sources so that they can personally determine the accuracy or inaccuracy of a claim and enhance their media literacy.

- Future research projects should involve an in-depth assessment, through direct observation, of how social studies teachers actually use movies in their classrooms, what learning activities they develop, and how their students respond.

- Movies can serve as an excellent lesson supplement and help students develop analytical and interpretive skills. In the face of pressure to "cover" the curriculum standards, social studies teachers should be encouraged to present justifications for why they have selected to use a particular movie.

- In an effort to limit time spent watching a movie, social studies teachers need to carefully select specific "chapters" that address the required curriculum standards so that their students will be more engaged and develop new analytical skills.

- Social studies teachers should use movies to help bring textbook content come to life by helping students make personal and meaningful connections with material they cannot get from reading text only.

Ultimately, the question that every teacher must answer is, "Will this movie help my students learn?" If the answer to this question is "yes", then it is his or her job to find a way to use it in the classroom because everything that a teacher does in his or her classroom should be geared towards helping students learn.

Appendix A-Interview/Survey Protocol

1.) What conceptions do you think parents have about social studies teachers using movies in class? Students? Other teachers?

2.) What are the advantages of disadvantages of using movies in a social studies class?

3.) How likely are you to use a certain type of movie (documentary, theatrical) in your class? Is this decision influenced by how well your students understand the material?

4.) What are the strengths and weaknesses of showing a documentary in a social studies class?

5.) What are the strengths and weaknesses of showing a theatrical movie in a social studies class?

6.) What is the most positive experience you have had with using a movie in a classroom? What was the movie and why do you feel that it was such a positive experience?

7.) What is the most negative experience you have had with using a movie in a classroom? What was the movie and why do you feel that it was such a negative experience?

8.) What kind of activities can you assign for a movie so that the students will pay attention to it?

9.) Can a movie be effectively implemented in a classroom as a supplement to classroom instruction? Why or why not?

10.) How important do you think it is to dispel inaccuracies in a theatrical movie?

11.) If someone told you that teachers use too many movies, how would you respond to this person?

12.) Do you think that with the advances of technology, now and going into the future, that movies will be used more or less? Why do you feel this way?

13.) What experiences did you have as a student in a social studies classroom with videos?

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