Native American History and Perspectives in United States History Textbooks

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by
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Background

According to the National Council for the Social Studies (2013), “the primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.” In order for students to learn how to make well thought out decisions, they must practice the skills required to do so. Engaging in historical thinking and examining content from multiple perspectives provides students with the necessary tools to participate as citizens of the United States.

Social studies textbooks in primary and secondary education play a major role in social studies education and are utilized across the United States, often on a daily basis and as the only source of information (Parker & Jarolimek, 1997). Textbooks as the sole source of information are a huge disservice to the millions of students across the nation. Educators have come to rely on content that is dull and presented in a fashion that does not allow students an opportunity to think critically about what the information is actually providing which creates a lack in historical thinking and historical empathy. Additionally, a deficiency of multiple perspectives in social studies textbooks creates an inaccurate portrayal of content, “content coverage is broad and shallow, often glossing over controversial issues. The writing format remains overly expository, featuring language restraints reflected by limited sentence length and vocabulary” (Sanchez, p. 311).

Content and questions that facilitate historical thinking skills are often absent from social studies textbooks. Historical thinking skills are a vital part of understanding and comprehending
events that took place in the past, as well as thinking critically about the world today. According to the National Center for History in the Schools at the University of California, Los Angeles (1996), historical thinking skills are required so that students have opportunities to create historical narratives and arguments of their own by encouraging that students do their own research to discover the complexities of history and historical thinking.

For the purposes of this research paper, it is necessary to focus on specific historical content in order to narrow the massive amount of textbook content to be analyzed. I chose Native American history and culture because it is often glossed over, presented from a narrow perspective Native American history plays an essential role in the history of the United States and it is necessary to investigate the portrayal of Native Americans in history textbooks in order to provide a tiny glimpse into what textbooks leave out regarding content.

Statement of Problem

Textbooks typically lack the ability to provide students with adequate tools to engage in historical thinking and examine multiple perspectives. The inadequate coverage and content of Native American history in social studies textbooks provides a glimpse into the inability of textbooks to be utilized as the sole source of information for an effective social studies curriculum.

Research Questions

Based on the statement of the problem, this Master’s Research Project seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. In examination of Native American culture and history in social studies textbooks, whose perspectives are included and excluded?
2. What stereotypes are represented about Native Americans in social studies textbooks?

3. What are the similarities and differences between grade levels and textbooks when comparing sophistication and complexity of materials?

4. How should the content change to address a lack of multiple perspectives and historical thinking skills?

5. How will these content changes improve students’ understanding of Native American history and culture, while also improving historical thinking skills and exposure to multiple perspectives?

Purpose/ Significance

The purpose of this paper is to examine Native American history and culture in textbooks in order to suggest a lack of multiple perspectives and historical thinking skills that are necessary for students to demonstrate a well-rounded social studies education. The significance of this study is to provide suggestions for improving history textbook content.

Limitations

1. Articles that offered subjective examples were included, not all were based on scientific research.

2. The literature search focused on articles about social studies education in primary, middle, and secondary levels.

3. Articles found in various electronic search engines were only used if they were available online, available through the Interlibrary Loan (ILL), or at the main branch of the Alden Library at Ohio University.
Definitions of Terms

The following definitions were utilized for the purposes of this research paper:

- **Content analysis**: “information is condensed and made systematically comparable. Then an objective coding scheme is applied to the data” in order to draw conclusions from the data (Berg, 2007)

- **Historical thinking**: “the reading, analysis, and writing that is necessary to develop our understanding of the past” (National History Education Clearinghouse, 2011)

- **Historical empathy**: “the ability to see and judge the past in its own terms by trying to understand the mentality, frames of reference, beliefs, values, intentions and actions of historical agents using a variety of historical evidence” (Yilmaz, 2007, p. 331)

- **Multiculturalism**: a philosophy that appreciates cultural diversity within a society and that encourages people to learn from the contributions of those of diverse ethnic backgrounds

- **Multiple perspectives**: the presentation of an event, issue or topic from several different points of view

Methodology

The methodology used in this Master’s Research Project consisted of a review of the research literature, a qualitative content analysis of the coverage of historical thinking and multiple perspectives that were presented about Native American history and culture in United States history textbooks.

Using electronic resources provided by Alden Library at Ohio University, the literature review was carried out. The following electronic databases were utilized; Electronic Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Google Scholar. Three searches were conducted using ERIC, while two were performed through Google Scholar. During the searches, the synonym
“American Indian” was utilized in order to broaden the amount of research articles in the search results. The first search in ERIC consisted of the terms, “Native American history,” “textbook analysis,” and “social studies” as key words or phrases. Articles were selected by reviewing abstracts of the search results that included analyses of textbooks of Native American history content. The first search was done to evaluate effective methods of analyzing textbooks for Native American history content. The second search done in ERIC included the terms “historical thinking,” “social studies,” and “textbooks” as key words or phrases in order to obtain articles by reviewing abstracts that discussed the prevalence of historical thinking skills in social studies textbooks. The third search utilized the terms, “multiple perspectives,” “social studies,” and “Native American” as key words or phrases. Articles were then selected based on abstracts that included relevant information about the presentation of multiple perspectives in textbooks with regard to Native American history and culture.

The searches conducted through Google Scholar were done in an attempt to retrieve additional research literature. The first search done using the search engine Google Scholar included the terms, “American Indian” and “historical thinking” as key words or phrases. Abstracts were reviewed and articles were selected that dealt directly with using historical thinking skills pertaining to Native American history and culture. The second search on Google Scholar used the terms above and added the term “textbook” in order to gather articles that dealt directly with historical thinking skills involving Native American history in textbooks. References from the articles obtained through the searches were examined for pertinent articles that were not otherwise found in ERIC and Google Scholar. Other sources used were reference books on Native American history and culture, and Internet websites on historical thinking, multiple perspectives, and Native American history and culture.
The content analysis was conducted using six United States history textbooks, two at the elementary level, two at the middle childhood level, and two at the secondary level. The textbooks are listed next and the grade level is indicated prior to the citation:

- **Elementary level:**

- **Middle Childhood Level:**

- **Secondary Level:**

The above listed textbooks were obtained by either purchase or rental from Amazon.com or by
donation from their respective publishing companies. The textbooks were first selected based on
the publishing companies that are major players in the textbook market. Additionally, textbooks
were selected to reflect content that could contain Native American history in the United States
from 1830 to 1876 based on the following chosen events to narrow research content purposes.
The events were chosen based on their significance in Native American history and culture after
conducting Internet research. The event descriptions were gathered from Encyclopædia
Britannica online. The events and a brief description of said events are listed below:

- **Indian Removal Act (1830):** authorized the president to grant unsettled lands west of the
  Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders (Encyclopædia
  Britannica, 2013)

- **Trail of Tears (1838):** refers to the forced relocation during the 1830’s of Eastern
  Woodlands Indians to areas west of the Mississippi River (2013)

- **Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868):** guaranteed to Indians exclusive possession of the Dakota
  territory west of the Missouri River (2013)

- **Indian Appropriations Act (1871):** declared that “hereafter no Indian nation or tribe”
  would be recognized “as an independent power with whom the United States may
  contract by treaty” (2013)

- **Battle of Little Big Horn (1876):** also called Custer’s Last Stand, was a battle at the Little
  Bighorn River in Montana Territory, U.S., between federal troops led by Lieutenant
  Colonel George A. Custer and a band of Northern Plains (Dakota [Eastern Sioux] and
  Northern Cheyenne) Indians; Custer and all his men were slain (2013)
Organization of Study

This chapter presented the background information. It included the statement of the problem, research questions, and the purpose and significance of this Master’s Research Paper. The limitations, term definitions, and methodology of the paper are also incorporated.

Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature that comprises applicable research articles on historical thinking, multiple perspectives, and Native American history and culture in United States History textbooks. The impact of the findings and suggestions for further studies is discussed.

Chapter Three presents a content analysis of the research literature historical thinking, multiple perspectives, and Native American history and culture in United States History textbooks.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the analysis of whether selected historical events in Native American history and culture were included or excluded, various stereotypes that emerged, and the similarities and differences between grade levels and textbooks that emerged. Additionally, it will address whether or not multiple perspectives and historical thinking skills were included.

Chapter Five summarizes the four previous chapters and offers conclusions and recommendations for further research and analysis of Native American history and culture in United States History textbooks.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Are Historical Thinking Skills Absent in Textbooks?

Knowledge that is presented without using historical thinking skills and accompanying multiple perspectives ends up in textbooks that Diane Ravitch (2010) describe as “obligatory… 1000 or more pages stuffed with facts but lacking in narrative or intellectual excitement… a listless parade of names, themes, wars, and nations…” (pp. 234-35). Textbooks typically do not give students opportunities to practice historical thinking skills or examine multiple perspectives. In social studies, when students are able to use historical thinking skills to examine an event, people, or culture, their comprehension and understanding of the past is deeper and more meaningful. Improving historical thinking skills in social studies curriculum and in textbooks is crucial to assist students in not only improving the way they think about history, but also how to participate as a citizen in a democratic society (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Paul & Elder, 2000).

The National Center for History in the Schools (2013) encourages historical thinking in order to have “true historical understanding.” The purpose of historical thinking skills is to enhance the ways that students think about information, allowing them to learn and think for themselves, and connect history to their own lives.

Often, the quality of textbook information offers students little to no opportunities to engage in historical inquiry and develop thinking skills. Lavere (2008) researched pedagogical exercises associated with Native Americans in thirteen United States history textbooks that are used in South Carolina public schools. The purpose of his action research study “was to determine the extent to which U.S. history textbooks offer, or fail to offer, opportunities for
students to engage in and develop higher-order thinking skills” (p. 3). Lavere (2008) points out that many studies have been conducted to examine the content of textbooks, but little has been done to address the quality of the exercises in the textbooks.

To Lavere (2008), Native Americans were a topic of choice to examine pedagogical exercises as he was “fascinated by Native American history,” Native Americans have been working persistently to have accurate portrayals of their culture integrated into United States textbooks, and it provided a way to focus the analysis of the pedagogical exercises with the textbooks (p. 4). The analysis was conducted by first counting all questions related to Native Americans in the textbooks, for a total of 691. Then the questions were divided into levels using Bloom’s Taxonomy to determine the level. Finally, 200 of the 691 were randomly selected to be evaluated by a Bloom’s Taxonomy expert to compare to what the author believed to be appropriate for Bloom’s Taxonomy levels.

After Lavere (2008) analyzed the textbooks, findings were that nearly 91 percent of the questions analyzed were recall questions and many of the questions were very similar, even though the textbooks were from grades three, four, five, eight, and eleven. Lavere (2008) suggests this is due to the fact that textbooks are not written by historians, but rather by writing teams who have “inadequate qualifications as historians”, and there are issues of “developmental appropriateness” for students (pp. 3-4). Another result of the findings was that pedagogical exercises often lacked questions that engaged students in historical reasoning and processes. Furthermore, Lavere’s (2008) research found several other issues with the pedagogical exercises including; questions that had no historical foundation, questions with a lack of historical inquiry, questions that allowed no opinion or interpretation of the text, critical thinking questions in which the term critical thinking was ill-defined or nonexistent and in actuality the critical
thinking questions were recall-type questions (pp. 4-6).

Lavere (2008) concluded that the majority of textbooks have many issues with the quality of pedagogical exercises and because many educators rely solely on textbooks as the main source of instruction, students are left unengaged with little practice for analysis and evaluation of what they are learning. Also, although contemporary textbooks do have more thorough coverage of Native Americans, they are doing a disservice when roughly 90 percent of the questions are recall (p. 6). Lavere (2008) proposes that textbook authors and publishers need to create better quality exercises that “provide opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking” (p. 6). Textbooks often do not require the higher-level historical thinking skills that are important to the well-rounded development of students. Therefore, primary sources must be integrated into the curriculum to supplement the lack of thinking skills. Wineburg suggests that “History teachers must encourage students to think historically, which involves interpreting and analyzing historical artifacts and primary sources and constructing and critiquing narratives about the past” (as cited in Waring & Robinson, 2010, p. 22). The key to constructing the historical thinking skills is to utilize primary sources for instruction. Research by Tally and Goldenburg (2005) suggests that primary source documents allow students a much deeper understanding of historical content because they are actively engaged with actual pieces of history, both intellectually and emotionally. Primary sources allow students to develop their own opinions, perspectives, and experiences from the particular information, rather than information the textbook is telling the students to think.

The Importance of Primary Sources and Multiple Perspectives

Presenting multiple perspectives and primary sources to students about a historical event, person, or theory is another important component of an effective social studies curriculum.
Frequently, textbooks do not provide students with access to multiple perspectives and/or primary sources. Wineburg (1999) points out this inadequacy of textbooks when he writes:

…traces of how the text came to be are hidden or erased: textbooks rarely cite the documentary record, and - if primary material appears - it is typically set off in "sidebars" so as not to interfere with the main text. Finally, textbooks speak in the omniscient third person. There is no visible author to confront the reader; instead, a corporate author speaks from a position of transcendence, a position of knowing from on high (p.493).

Textbooks do not provide the necessary tools, primary sources and the presentation of multiple perspectives that allow students to engage in historical thinking.

In order for students to practice historical thinking skills, certain methods or strategies can be used that involve primary sources and multiple perspectives. Waring and Robinson (2010) discuss the effectiveness of teaching middle school students how to think historically and examine multiple perspectives using primary sources in a series of lessons in a mini-unit. To begin the unit, students discussed and discovered how to assume the role of a historian through various activities. By participating in the activities the students were able to discover exactly what a primary source is through an activity called a “mind-walk,” from the Library of Congress (as cited in Waring and Robinson, 2010, p. 23). During the mind-walk activity, students were asked to remember all of the activities they participated in during the previous day, and whether while completing those activities, there was any evidence left of their existence, or primary sources. Then, students examined and discussed historical artifacts from the American home front during World War II. The relevancy and historical significance was discussed as students inquired about the importance of each artifact and eventually, “through instruction and open
discourse, [the students learned] how primary sources are the tools that historians use to tell a story” (Waring & Robinson, 2010, p. 23).

Waring and Robinson discuss a few more activities that were carried out in the mini-unit, a hide and seek activity with the purpose of encouraging students to envision themselves as part of the photograph being analyzed, looking at a photograph in sections and finding evidence piece by piece, which eventually culminated in the realization of one student who said that historians “look for and investigate evidence to develop facts and stories about the past” (2010, p. 25). Next students began to investigate history from multiple perspectives. First, the teacher held up a piece of paper with an “I” written on one side and a “T” written on the other. When the teacher stood in the middle of the class asked what letter was on the paper, the room was divided with about fifty percent of the room saying “I,” and the other saying, “T.” The purpose of the lesson was to “show that people see things differently from different standpoints. The teacher reminded the students that this is true when historians interpret and retell what happened during historical time periods and, thus, they needed to keep this in mind whenever they read historical accounts” (2010, p. 26).

Waring and Robinson’s (2010) study provides a suitable lesson that encourages the use of critical thinking skills and promotes historical thinking and multiple perspectives through work with primary sources, unlike social studies textbooks that often do not encourage such deep historical inquiry.

The Lack of Historical Empathy in Textbooks

For social studies students, a crucial skill in order to exercise historical thinking skills and viewing history from multiple perspectives is the ability to practice historical empathy. Historical empathy is defined as “the ability to see and judge the past in its own terms by trying
to understand the mentality, frames of reference, beliefs, values, intentions and actions of historical agents using a variety of historical evidence” (Yilmaz, 2007, p. 331). Textbooks rarely provide activities or information that allow students to practice historical empathy. Social studies textbooks often include information that is dry and provides a small amount of dimension to the perspectives that are being presented, giving little to no opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking and empathy.

According to Davis Jr. (2001), “National standards published during recent years… generally recognize empathy as an important goal of teaching history. History teachers and textbooks, however, are not ready for this kind of emphasis” (p. 2). However, additional research suggests that historical empathy has a vital role in the future of social studies education. In order for students to engage in historical empathy, previous research (as cited in Yilmaz, 2007) indicates that:

Students must:

- access authentic historical sources, engaging in critical examination of those sources and understanding the nature of historical conclusions,
- have a balance of imaginative speculation and methodical investigation,
- relive the thoughts of past individuals through the heuristic of contextualization,
- examine, appreciate, and understand the perspectives of people in the past and to render them intelligible to contemporary minds,
- make reasoned evidential reconstruction in addition to taking a position to reconstruct a set of beliefs, values, goals, and attendant feelings that historical agents had,
• engage in sustained effort and thoughtful strategy to suspend their present world views when examining the past in order to avoid a presentist understanding of the past, i.e., understanding the past events on their own terms without judging them through our contemporary criteria (p. 333-334)

Furthermore, Brooks (2009) points out, “some scholars emphasize the increased self-awareness that exercises in empathy might foster, while others highlight the positive implications for civic engagement” (p. 231). The value of historical empathy being present in social studies curriculums is evident. When textbooks have information that is presented from multiple perspectives, include primary sources, and engage in historical empathy, they will be adequate sources of knowledge in an effective social studies curriculum.

Research of Native American Peoples in Textbooks

In order to narrow the focus of this Master’s Research Project, Native American history and culture was chosen to provide a glimpse of the lack of multiple perspectives, primary sources, and coverage of this topic in social studies textbooks. The Native American peoples are an important part of United States history. Unfortunately, the history and culture of Native Americans is often only included in textbooks when it concerns how it affected the founding of our nation. Moore and Clark (2004) conducted a study to examine the portrayal of Native Americans in Nebraska history textbooks. Their study was conducted through the use of content analysis within qualitative research Framework. Information was gathered in elementary classrooms in Nebraska, at archives of the Nebraska Historical society, and at the Nebraska Department of Education with publication dates ranging from 1913 to 1999. All information gathered was then sorted, read, and analyzed for major themes.

The first theme that Moore and Clark (2004) found was Discovery. They found that
textbooks often used the term “discovery” rather than “invasion” of the Native American lands. The second theme they found was Prehistoric Occupation and Tribe Diversity. Prehistoric occupation “refers to the existence of peoples in this territory prior to written evidence,” while tribal diversity refers to recognizing the differences between Native American tribes that were found in Nebraska textbooks from the state of Nebraska (p. 19). The third theme they discerned was Personal Characteristics of the Native Americans, referencing such terms as “thievery, brutality, laziness, and alcoholism” to describe Native Americans and fuel stereotypes in the textbooks (p. 19). The fourth theme they developed was the Loss of Native American lands, which all textbooks addressed. The final theme the authors identified was Guilt and Shame of the White People, which referred to the unfair treatment of Native Americans.

Research findings bring forth issues about how information is presented to its intended audiences; of overgeneralizations, decontextualized observations making it difficult to interpret the information, and blunt and lackluster descriptions of Native American people. Moore and Clark (2004) also found a lack in the presentation of conflict, which they argued could be damaging to students because the non-existence of difficult issues leaves nothing to challenge them. Recommendations for combating the issue of inadequate textbooks involves teaching students how to critically analyze the information they consume, presenting a curriculum that provides multiple perspectives and resources of information, and avoiding stereotyping peoples and cultures (pp. 21-22).

Sanchez (2007) also examines the portrayal of Native Americans in more recent textbooks and “introduce(s) the practitioner to an authenticity guideline while illustrating how it can be used to evaluate books” (p. 312). His research analyzes fifteen secondary American history textbooks, from public schools and universities in two Mid-western states, to assess the
representations of Native Americans and the degree to which these observations are correct. His action research study was carried out through the use of content analysis and constituted a follow-up study to the previously conducted studies by Costco and Henry (1970) and Loewen (1995). Sanchez’ authenticity guideline refers to:

A respectful instrument with which teachers and students can evaluate and question the accuracy of Native depictions in order to further seek accurate knowledge… [the guideline] measured the Five Great Values… generosity and sharing; respect for elders and women; getting along with nature; individual freedom and leadership; and courage (2007, p. 313)

The function of the authenticity guideline was to determine whether a textbook featured a range of accurate depictions of Native Americans.

Sanchez (2007) makes the points that the scoring of the textbooks was done “as objectively as possible” with ratings between 0 (weak and/or inaccurate depictions of Native Americans) and 5 (strong and/or accurate and plentiful depictions of Native Americans), with the score of 3 being “satisfactory” (p. 313). The results of the study showed that all textbooks had certain similarities that included referencing prominent Native American leaders and events, early Native American history overviews, quantity of Native American history (as compared to earlier textbooks of the 1970’s and 80’s), a lack of density and surplus of brief accounts in the lower half of the rated textbooks, omissions of Native American history, negative accounts of origins, and inaccurate conquests of Native American lands (pp. 314-315).

The results of the study led Sanchez to the conclusion that teachers must not use textbooks as the only source of information in their teachings. They must go beyond the textbook and find their own information to supplement the textbook in order to provide multiple
perspectives on Native American peoples. Also, Sanchez (2007) suggests that teachers should push for more accurate textbooks when asked for input in choosing textbooks for purchase. Social studies teachers must be advocates for accurate information of Native Americans through teaching true accounts, correcting inaccuracies/stereotypes, demanding better textbooks, and providing an unbiased and multi-perspectival history of Native Americans when teaching (Sanchez, 2007).

Summary

In summary, the research literature suggests that textbooks do not offer students significant opportunities to practice historical thinking skills because the included pedagogical exercises are inadequate to do so. Textbooks lack exercises that engage students in historical reasoning and processes, are not developmentally appropriate, and provide little practice using critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the research literature has shown there is little use of primary sources and multiple perspectives in textbooks. The benefits of engaging students in primary documents allow them to develop their own opinions, perspectives, and experiences. Examining historical evidence from multiple perspectives provides a window for students get a glimpse of history through different lenses. Furthermore, developing historical empathy is a vital component of a multi-perspectival social studies curriculum.

Many teachers continue to rely on the textbooks as their main source of instruction and students are left unengaged with little opportunity to practice analyze and evaluate what they are learning. When textbooks are the only source of information, especially in the case of Native American history and culture, the perspective that students may have can be very one-sided or misguided. The research literature provides significant evidence that that information about Native American history and culture is lacking. The poor quality of social studies textbooks
amounts constitutes disservice to social studies students. The lack of multiple perspectives, and primary sources, as well as the absence of historical thinking and historical empathy exercises results in a social studies curriculum that fails to promote higher-order thinking and intellectual engagement.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Chapter Two presented a review of the research literature on the lack of historical thinking skills and multiple perspectives in social studies textbooks, focusing specifically on Native American history and culture. The methodology used in this Master’s Research Project consisted of a review of the research literature, a qualitative content analysis of the coverage of historical thinking and multiple perspectives that were presented about Native American history and culture in United States history textbooks. Schreier (2012) describes qualitative content analysis as “an option if you have to engage in some degree of interpretation to arrive at the meaning of your data” (p. 2). When using qualitative research for documents, such as the textbooks that were researched for this paper, the researcher must remember that most documents do not provide an objective truth, a downside of qualitative research. The role of the researcher is critical in qualitative research because the researcher must interpret the data that is collected and give it meaning.

Qualitative research can be beneficial to expose certain perspectives and communicate viewpoints, record and interpret situations or data within a specific context or time, observe issues from simple to complex perspectives, and to generate theory from data (Woods, 1996). Some argue that qualitative research cannot provide grounds for generalizing and is only useful for single study cases and “qualitative studies are often accused of being impressionistic, subjective, biased, idiosyncratic and lacking in precision” (Woods, 1996, p. 101). While qualitative research is very time-consuming and can yield little results, it allows for closeness with the subjects or material. Finally, Lichtman (2013) points out that in quantitative research,
the researcher tries to keep biases to a minimum, while qualitative research places the researcher at the center of the study as the “interpretations are based on [the] researcher’s experience and background” (p. 14).

A qualitative content analysis was chosen for this Master’s Research Project because this method allows for analysis of social studies textbook content. The analysis utilized six United States history textbooks, two at the elementary level, two at the middle childhood level, and two at the secondary level. The following textbooks are listed and the grade level is specified prior to the reference:

- Elementary level:

- Middle Childhood Level:

- Secondary Level:
McDougal Littell.


The textbooks were acquired by either purchase or rental from Amazon.com or by donation from their respective publishing companies. The textbooks were first selected based on the publishing companies that are major players in the textbook market. Additionally, textbooks were selected to reflect content that could contain Native American history in the United States from 1830 to 1876 based on the following chosen events to narrow research content purposes. The events were selected based on their significance in Native American history and culture after performing Internet research. The event descriptions were gathered from Encyclopædia Britannica online.

The events and a brief description of said events are listed below:

- **Indian Removal Act (1830):** authorized the president to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013)

- **Trail of Tears (1838):** refers to the forced relocation during the 1830’s of Eastern Woodlands Indians to areas west of the Mississippi River (2013)

- **Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868):** guaranteed to Indians exclusive possession of the Dakota territory west of the Missouri River (2013)

- **Indian Appropriations Act (1871):** declared that “hereafter no Indian nation or tribe” would be recognized “as an independent power with whom the United States may contract by treaty” (2013)
• Battle of Little Big Horn (1876): also called Custer’s Last Stand, was a battle at the Little Bighorn River in Montana Territory, U.S., between federal troops led by Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and a band of Northern Plains (Dakota [Eastern Sioux] and Northern Cheyenne) Indians; Custer and all his men were slain (2013)

Data Collection and Analysis

The textbooks were reviewed for content coverage based on the events listed above. The textbook material was examined for firstly, whether or not the event was located in the material, and secondly, the extent to which the event was covered, either briefly or in detail. Then, the content was analyzed for the inclusion or exclusion of a Native American perspective. Excerpts of these perspectives were recorded and categorized based on education level and the viewpoint of the perspective, either from a Native American point of view or not. Next, the content was assessed for emerging stereotypes at each division level, elementary, middle, and secondary. The material was then analyzed for the presence of historical thinking skills by focusing on any pedagogical questions that could accompany the content material. Finally, the similarities and differences between grade levels were observed for difficulty and common themes were recorded. The following research questions constituted the basis for the assessment of the content:

1. In examination of Native American culture and history in social studies textbooks, whose perspectives are included and excluded?

2. What stereotypes are represented about Native Americans in social studies textbooks?

3. What are the similarities and differences between grade levels and textbooks when comparing sophistication and complexity of materials?
Chapter Four will present the findings of this Master’s Research Project qualitative content analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of this Master Research Project’s qualitative content analysis. First, the perspectives presented in the selected textbooks that were mentioned in Chapter Three will be discussed. The content was analyzed for the inclusion of a Native American perspective and the amount of coverage for each of the selected historical events as presented in Chapter Three. The results of the analysis are broken down by historical event chronologically. The similarities and differences between grade levels and textbooks are discussed. Additionally, the textbooks are compared for sophistication and complexity of material. Any stereotypes that emerged during the content analysis are discussed and labeled as either a positive or negative portrayal of Native Americans. This chapter concludes with an analysis and critique of the quality of pedagogical questions of textbook content that is related to the selected historical events. The prevalence of critical thinking questions and the results of the analysis of pedagogical questions will be discussed as well.

The Native American Perspective in Textbooks

The Indian Removal Act of 1830. The first historical event that was chosen for the purposes of this research project was the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which authorized the president to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders. This event was located and discussed in all six United States history textbooks that were analyzed. Beginning with an elementary grade level textbook, *The United States: Making a new nation*, the coverage of the Indian Removal Act was often from the perspective of Native Americans. Berson, Howard, and Salinas (2007) included aspects of the event that portrayed the point of view of the Native Americans when the authors wrote:
In 1830, President Jackson signed a law called the Indian Removal Act. It forced the Cherokee to leave their lands and go to an area called the Indian Territory… The government of Georgia gave land owned by the Cherokee to new settlers looking for land. John Ross, the Cherokee Chief, went to court to protect the Cherokees’ right to their own land. The United States Supreme Court sided with the Cherokee. (p. 440)

By including the above selection, the authors were aware of Native Americans being illegally forced from their lands and made the readers aware of the impact of this event on the Cherokee. Unfortunately, Social Studies: The United States, the other elementary grade level textbook that analyzed for this research project, did not accomplish this. Boyd, Gay, Geiger, Kracht, Pang, Risinger, and Sanchez, (2008) kept the Indian Removal Act of 1830 very brief in Social studies: The United States. In this textbook, the information provided about the Indian Removal Act was not from the perspective of the Native Americans as it presents forced removal only from the perspective of white settlers:

In search of good farmland and gold, settlers continued moving onto the land of the five groups [of Native Americans]. President Jackson supported the settlers… In 1830, Jackson encouraged Congress to pass the Indian Removal Act. This act gave the President the power to move Native Americans to land west of the Mississippi River. They would be moved to Indian Territory… (p. 405)

The previous excerpt does not provide the reader with any sense of historical empathy with regard to the forced relocation of Native American nations and makes this event seem unimportant, glossed over, and not pivotal to United States history.

The middle grade level textbooks provide very little Native American perspective. Both textbooks are brief when discussing the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and how it affected the
Native Americans. The textbooks are more focused on President Andrew Jackson. In *America: History of our nation, Beginnings through 1877*, Davidson (2009) briefly mentions the Indian Removal Act of 1830 concerning President Andrew Jackson, “The law gave [President Jackson] authority to offer Native American nations land west of the Mississippi in exchange for their lands in the East. It also provided money so the law could be carried out” (p. 357). Davidson offers little detail about the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and does not provide the reader with a good introduction into the extensive issues regarding the relationship between white settlers and Native Americans.

The second middle grade level textbook, *Discovering our past: A history of the United States*, provides an elusive Native American point of view and then proceeds to take on a point of view that entirely ignores a Native American perspective. Appleby, Brinkley, Broussard, McPherson, and Ritchie (2013) included the following background information to assist readers in understanding the Indian Removal Act:

The Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw peoples… had created successful farming communities. As a result, Americans considered them “civilized” and referred to them as the “Five Civilized Tribes.” Though Americans recognized the success of the Five Civilized Tribes, they did not necessarily respect their rights. In fact, some white people wanted the Native Americans’ lands for themselves. (p. 330)

When the authors choose to use the words ‘not necessarily,’ they are implying that Americans may or may not have disrespected the rights of Native Americans. Furthermore, Appleby, et al., (2013) argue that a heroic “Andrew Jackson supported the white settlers’ demand for Native American land. He had once fought the Creek and Seminole in Georgia and Florida to give the settlers more land,” the words make Andrew Jackson sound heroic and disregard the perspective...
of Native Americans (p. 330). More issues arise regarding the lack of a Native American perspective when the authors discuss the Indian Removal Act itself:

When [Jackson] became president in 1829, he stated that he wanted to move all Native Americans to the Great Plains. Many people believed this region to be a wasteland where American settlers would never want to live. Many people thought if all Native Americans moved there, conflict with them would be ended. In 1830, President Jackson pushed the Indian Removal Act through Congress. This law allowed the federal government to pay Native Americans to move west. Jackson then sent officials to make treaties with the Native Americans in the Southeast. (pp. 330-331)

The excerpt includes several examples that completely disregard a Native American point of view. First, when the authors refer to ‘many people,’ they are presenting the perspective of President Jackson and the settlers. Secondly, the authors use the term ‘them’ to refer to Native Americans. Both of these items create a mentality that does not allow the reader to experience an un-biased perspective. Clearly, multiple perspectives are lacking in both middle grade level textbooks that were researched. Also, neither book allows for the reader to experience historical empathy in regards to the hardships that Native Americans endured as a result of the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

The secondary grade level textbooks reflected the elementary grade level textbooks in that Danzer, Klor de Alva, Krieger, Wilson, and Woloch’s (2009) textbook, *American passages: A history of the United States* did a more sufficient job in providing a Native American perspective. Both books are brief when discussing the Indian Removal Act of 1830, but one book outweighs the other in terms of providing multiple perspectives. The textbook, *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21st Century*, is vague when discussing the Act but does mention that the
“government provided funds to negotiate treaties that would force the Native Americans to move west... [and] the Cherokee Nation refused and fought the government in the courts” (Danzer et al., 2009, p. 124). The second secondary grade level textbook, American passages: A history of the United States, gives the reader a vague but multi-sided perspective of the Indian Removal Act of 1830:

Jackson told the Native Americans he was their friend, even their “father,” but that he could do nothing to stop their mistreatment except move them beyond the Mississippi River, where, he promised, they would be safe. The Native Americans and their supporters, mostly religious people in the North, responded bitterly to such claims, arguing that the rights of the Constitution should certainly extend to people who had lived in North America since time immemorial. But the Jacksonians quickly pushed through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. (Ayers, Gould, Oshinsky, and Soderlund, 2009, p. 292)

This excerpt provides an opinion by Jackson while also responding with a Native American point of view by including the Native American response to President Jackson. However, the information about the Act itself and the effects of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 are overall very brief.

The sophistication and complexity of the materials, meaning the difficulty of vocabulary and specific details about the Indian Removal Act of 1830, seem to have little range from elementary to secondary level textbooks. When comparing the excerpts from the elementary grade level textbooks to the secondary grade level textbooks, the only major levels of difference can be found in the selected vocabulary words. For example, Ayers et al. (2009) used the word “immemorial” in the paragraph that discusses the Indian Removal Act of 1830 (p. 292).
Elementary readers most likely have not heard this word before and could be confused by its meaning.

When comparing all six textbooks for the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the middle grade level textbooks were the poorest in presenting of multiple perspectives. The views of the Act in the middle grade level textbooks were non-dimensional and only offered an outsider’s perspective on the Native American experience. The elementary textbook, *The United States: Making a new nation*, and the secondary textbook, *American passages: A history of the United States*, provided a Native American perspective as well as more details about the background and consequences of the Act. The two remaining elementary and secondary textbooks, *Social Studies: The United States* and *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21st Century* merely included brief descriptions of the Act and did not offer multiple perspectives.

The Trail of Tears in 1838. The second historical event in Native American history that was chosen for this research project was the Trail of Tears, which refers to the forced relocation during the 1830’s of Eastern Woodlands Indians to areas west of the Mississippi River. This event was found and examined in all six of the selected social studies textbooks. First, the elementary grade level textbooks were researched. Berson et al. (2007) give the reader some detail about the journey of the Native Americans and the perspective of the Native Americans is also presented:

On March 27th, 1838, [President] Van Buren sent the United States Army to force the remaining Cherokee to move west. In 1838, the Cherokee started their long journey… the Cherokee had to walk to about 800 miles through bad weather. Soldiers guarded them, making escape difficult. One out of every four Cherokee died on their way to Indian Territory. This journey was known as the Trail of Tears. (pp. 440-441)
By using the word “force” and providing aspects in the description that allow the reader to perceive the Native Americans as prisoners, the information, although brief, is presented from a Native American perspective. Unfortunately, the event is not presented in a way that allows for any historical empathy skills to be developed.

In Boyd et al. (2008) also give the reader a brief description, but use the word “terrible” to describe the journey (p. 406). The authors chose to describe the Trail of Tears from the perspective of a soldier who witnessed the Trail of Tears:

A soldier named John Burnett never forgot what he saw on the Trail of Tears: “I saw the helpless Cherokees arrested and dragged from their homes… I saw them loaded like cattle or sheep into six hundred and forty-five wagons and started toward the west.” By 1839, the Trail of Tears had ended. Of the 15,000 Cherokee who began the journey as many as one-fourth did not survive the trip. Many died from disease and bad weather. (p. 406)

This excerpt does offer some of the horrific details about the Trail of Tears, but it does not go in depth enough for the reader to feel any empathy towards the Cherokee. Additionally, the perspective is that of a soldier, not of a Native American who actually experienced the journey to Indian Territory. Furthermore, the use of the word “trip” to describe the Cherokee’s trail may well mislead students to interpret their removal as a positive rather than negative experience.

The middle grade level textbooks offer more extensive details about the Trail of Tears. While Davidson (2009) did not offer much detail about the Indian Removal Act of 1830, he was more thorough regarding the Trail of Tears. Davidson (2009) writes about the Trail of Tears:

President Martin Van Buren forced the Cherokees to move. In the winter of 1838-39, they went to Indian Territory, guarded by 7,000 soldiers. The route is called the Trail of
Tears. A soldier’s description helps explain why: “On the morning of November 17th, we encountered a terrific sleet and snow storm with freezing temperatures, and from that day until we reached the end of the fateful journey on March the 26th, 1839, the sufferings of the Cherokee were awful, the trail of the exiles was a trail of death.” –Memoirs of Private John G. Burnett, December 1890. (p. 358)

Again, an ‘outsider’ perspective is given that offers a glimpse of what the Cherokee had to go through but does not allow the reader to understand this event from the perspective of a Cherokee. Perhaps, the reader could pretend to be the Private and imagine watching this unfold before their very eyes, but most students would be unable to accomplish this without guidance.

Appleby et al. (2013) give perhaps the best description and details to describe the Trail of Tears. The authors provide more specifics and to explain how the Trail of Tears acquired its name, which none of the other textbooks do at all:

Under guard, the Cherokee began their march…The forced relocation of some 15,000 Cherokee was a terrible ordeal… As the Cherokee crowded in camps and awaited the command to begin their march, illness broke out… Once on the trail, the Cherokee suffered from hunger and from exposure to the weather… When the relocation was over, about one quarter of the Cherokee population was dead. The Cherokee came to call their forced journey west the Trail Where They Cried. Historians call it the Trail of Tears. (pp. 332-333)

Providing details about what the Cherokee called the Trail of Tears gives the reader the opportunity to understand how the journey impacted the Cherokee. When textbooks do not offer this information, the reader could assume anything about how the name was acquired. Appleby et al. (2013) was the only selected textbook to explain the origin of the name “Trail of Tears.”
Once again, the secondary grade level textbooks do not provide much detail about the Trail of Tears. Danzer et al. (2009) focuses more about what happened prior to than what actually happened on the Trail of Tears. They provide an account by someone other than a Native American, who witnessed the ordeal:

U.S. troops rounded up the Cherokee and drove them into camps to await the journey west. A Baptist missionary described the scene… “The Cherokees are nearly all prisoners. They had been dragged from their houses and encamped at the forts and military places, all over the nation. In Georgia especially, multitudes were allowed no time to take anything with them except the clothes they had on. Well-furnished houses were left as pretty plunderers.” (p. 124)

Danzer et al. (2009) continue with details about the “800 mile journey” and many Cherokee dying on the trail in the wintertime (p.124). The authors conclude the paragraph with stating the name of the journey and the textbook definition, “The Cherokee buried more than a quarter of their people along the Trail of Tears, the forced marches the Cherokee followed from Georgia to the Indian Territory” (p.124). The previous selection suggests a lack of respect for the horrific events that the Native American people had to endure. The account of the Trail of Tears is presented as insignificant and unworthy of more detail in a textbook that is geared toward secondary grade level students. By encouraging student to engage with material that is more descriptive about the Trail of Tears, students may be able to comprehend the subject matter from a more historically empathetic perspective.

The second textbook, Ayers et al. (2009), in the secondary grade level was similar to Danzer et al. (2009) in terms of coverage and depth. The description is short and dull, offering little incentive for the reader to engage with the material:
… Seventeen thousand [Cherokee] refused to leave by the deadline. General Winfield Scott then led seven thousand troops against them, driving people from their homes empty-handed, marching them to stockades, and shipping them out by rail and water. About a quarter of all eastern Cherokees died on what they called the Trail of Tears. (Ayers et al., 2009, p. 293)

The previous selection refers to the Cherokee as ‘them’ and makes a point to skip any information about why the Cherokees refused to leave. Details from the perspective of the Native American people during the Trial of Tears are left out and the reader is left with little indication of the monstrosities that the Cherokee went through.

The Trail of Tears was discussed more in depth in the middle grade level textbooks than in the elementary level textbooks. This could be due to the nature of this event, meaning that the authors of the elementary textbooks did not want to expose the horrific details to the potentially young readers. Additionally, the material in the selected secondary textbooks is most often vague and boring. The lack of descriptive words does not invite the reader to want to read the material. When comparing the middle and secondary grade level textbooks, the middle grade level textbooks were much more descriptive in terms of the Trail of Tears. A possible explanation may be an unjustified assumption of prior knowledge. It is interesting, however, that the middle grade level textbooks lacked multiple perspectives about the Indian Removal Act of 1830, yet did a much better represented multiple perspectives concerning the Trail of Tears. A likely reason for the authors’ choice to focus on the Trail of Tears to present multiple perspectives could be due to their perception of the Trail of Tears as more critical due to frequent inclusion in standardized testing.
The Treaty of Fort Laramie and The Indian Appropriations Act. Concluded in 1868, the Treaty of Fort Laramie guaranteed Indians exclusive possession of the Dakota Territory west of the Missouri River. Three years later, in 1871, the Indian Appropriations Act declared that, “hereafter no Indian nation or tribe” would be recognized “as an independent power with whom the United States may contract by treaty.” (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013). In the elementary and middle grade level textbooks, neither one of these two events was listed in the index of any of the six textbooks. The Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 was not discussed in any of the textbooks. The Treaty of Fort Laramie is briefly referred to only in Danzer et al. (2009).

Skirmishes continued until the government agreed to close the Bozeman Trail. In return, the Treaty of Fort Laramie, in which the Sioux agreed to live on a reservation along the Missouri River, was forced on the leaders of the Sioux in 1868. Sitting Bull (Tatanka Iyotanka), leader of the Hunkpapa Sioux, had never signed it. (p. 204)

This paragraph suggests that the Sioux agreed to live on a reservation while at the same time writing that this treaty was ‘forced’ on the Sioux. The construction of this ambivalent sentence could be very confusing for any reader because generally, an agreement indicates consent by both parties so there should be no need for force. The omission of the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1868 in five out of the six textbooks and the Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 from all of the textbooks suggest that these events are unimportant to the history of the United States and that the Native American perspective is not worth being presented.

The Battle of Little Big Horn. The Battle of Little Big Horn of 1876 is often referred to as Custer’s Last Stand as it was a battle at the Little Bighorn River in Montana Territory, U.S., between federal troops led by Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and a band of Northern Plains (Dakota [Eastern Sioux] and Northern Cheyenne) Indians; Custer and all his men were
slain. In the elementary grade level textbooks, the descriptions of the Battle of Little Big Horn are short and offer little detail. Berson et al. (2007) describe the battle as follows:

In June 1876, Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer attacked the Sioux and their allies at the Little Bighorn River. Chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse led more than 1,500 warriors into battle. All the soldiers were killed. Both chiefs were later defeated, and their people were forced onto reservations. (p. 528)

Berson et al. (2007) never use the phrases ‘the Battle of Little Big Horn’ or ‘Custer’s Last Stand’ when writing about this event. This description is vague from all perspectives and offers the reader little evidence of or insight into the effects this battle had on the Northern Plains Indians. Similarly, Boyd et al. (2008) do not discuss the effects of the battle but do provide some additional details of events leading up to the battle:

In June of 1876, Sitting Bull and several thousand Lakota were camped near the Little Bighorn River in Montana. On June 25, George Custer led an attack on the Lakota camp. A Lakota leader named Crazy Horse helped lead the fight against Custer. The American soldiers were badly outnumbered, and they were quickly surrounded. Custer was killed, along with his entire force of over 200 men. This became known as the Battle of Little Bighorn. (p. 556)

In both the elementary grade level textbooks, the authors make a point to note that all of the American soldiers were killed. However, there is no mention of how many Native Americans were killed in the Battle, thus placing more emphasis on the importance of the lives lost on the American side.

The two middle grade level textbooks offer a rather divergent coverage in terms of length and detail. Davidson’s (2009) clearly indicates in the textbook title that the historical content
only goes until 1877, however, the Battle of Little Big Horn occurred in 1876 indicating that there will be information in the textbook about the Battle. Unfortunately, the only reference is made in the *Epilogue* of the book, briefly, about Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse leading their people in wars with government troops. Appleby et al. (2013) offer a more significant coverage for the Battle of Little Big Horn. First and foremost, Appleby et al. (2013) give the reader background information that led up to the Battle of Little Big Horn, “…rumors that the [Black] hills held gold brought many white miners into the area. The Sioux protested. Instead of protecting the Sioux’s rights, the U.S. government tried to buy the hills” (p. 536). The authors then continue by providing Sitting Bull’s perspective: “I do not want to sell any land… Not even as much as this,” he said, holding a pinch of dust” (p. 536). Sitting Bull’s words represent the only instance of a direct quote from an original of a Native American primary source in any of the six textbooks in this master’s research project.

Appleby et al. (2013) continue by discussing the details of the Battle, noting that, “with only about 250 soldiers, Lieutenant Colonel George Custer of the U.S. Army faced thousands of warriors. Still, he attacked. In the battle, Custer and almost all of his men were killed” (p. 536). Again, the authors choose to only mention the loss of lives of American soldiers. Then following the Battle:

News of the U.S. Army’s defeat at Little Bighorn shocked the nation. Yet the army soon crushed the Native Americans uprising, sending most of the Native Americans to reservations. Sitting Bull and his followers fled north to Canada. By 1881, starving and exhausted, the Lakota and Cheyenne agreed to live on a reservation. (p. 536)

The use of ‘crushed’ and ‘uprising’ portray the Lakota and Cheyenne in a negative way. The use of ‘crushed’ implies an admiration of the U.S. Army, rather than empathy for the defeat of the
Native Americans and loss of their lands. Defending land that was rightfully theirs implies a more just cause than rebellion.

Ayers et al. (2009) secondary text offers the reader both a non-Native American and Native American perspective. The authors describe Battle of Little Big Horn as follows: “The discovery of gold in the Black Hills of Dakota brought white settlers into an area where the Sioux had dominated. The Indians refused to leave, and the government sent troops to protect the gold seekers” (p. 464). The authors chose to present this information as protecting the white settlers, rather than discussing the issue of Native Americans protecting their land. Furthermore, Ayers et al. (2009) chose to recognize the perspective of the “whites” twice within one paragraph, “Near what the Indians called the Greasy Grass (whites called it the Little Bighorn), Colonel George Armstrong Custer led a force of six hundred men in 1876... Custer and his soldiers perished. The whites called it “Custer’s Last Stand” (p. 465). However, the Native American perspective is introduced at the very end of the paragraph when Ayers et al. (2009) discuss the hardships that Native Americans had to endure, “Native Americans now faced cruelty, exploitation, and oppression that extended through the rest of the nineteenth century and beyond 1900. In the face of the relentless pressures from white society, Indians struggled just to survive” (p. 465). Unfortunately, though, Native Americans were faced with cruelty, exploitation, and oppression well before the aftermath of the Battle of Little Bighorn, as indicated by the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Trail of Tears.

Danzer et al. (2009) list the Battle of Little Big Horn in the index of the book but when discussing the Battle in the chapter, it is only referred to as “Custer’s Last Stand” (p. 206). Interestingly, the authors include details about “the Sioux and Cheyenne [holding] a sun dance, during which Sitting Bull had a vision of soldiers and some Native Americans falling from their
horses” which provides the reader with a tiny bit of exposure to a Native American custom (p. 206). The paragraph continues by describing the event as follows, “Led by Crazy Horse, Gall, and Sitting Bull, the warriors—with raised spears and rifles—outflanked and crushed Custer’s troops. Custer and all of the men of the Seventh Cavalry were dead. By late 1876, however, the Sioux were beaten” (p. 206). Again, the authors chose to mention that Custer and all of his men were killed, as did the other textbooks.

Overall, the elementary textbooks by Berson et al. (2007) and Boyd et al. (2008) offered very few specifics on the Battle of Little Bighorn and lacked any significant Native American perspectives. The lack of detail in the elementary grade level textbooks could be due to the nature of the event, specifically the loss of life on the United States side and the authors’ intent to evoke empathy towards the U.S. rather than the Native Americans. Davidson (2009) mirrors the elementary textbooks in that he barely mentions the Battle of Little Bighorn in his middle grade level textbook. In contrast, Appleby et al. (2013) offer more significant coverage and provide a direct quote by a Native American, which nonetheless yet only presents one perspective. Ayers et al.’s (2009) secondary text is similar to Appleby et al.’s (2013) middle level text because it provides both a Native American and non-Native American perspective. Danzer’s (2009) secondary text only refers to the Battle of Little Bighorn as Custer’s Last Stand.

Pedagogical Questions

Most of the pedagogical questions about Native American history that accompanied the selected historical events from the textbook material consisted of short-answer response questions. The majority of the questions were recall-type questions that merely asked the reader to restate information already listed in the text. One elementary textbook (Boyd et al., 2008) stated, “Why did the United States pass the Indian Removal Act, and what was the result?” (p.
406), while the other elementary textbook (Berson et al., 2007) asked, “How did the United States government treat Native Americans?” (p. 529). Furthermore, Boyd et al. (2008) included two questions, on the same page and in the same chapter review, that seemingly answered one another, “How did railroad lines and new settlers affect Native Americans?” and “How and why were Native American lands threatened by newcomers?” (p. 559).

Interestingly, the middle and secondary grade level textbooks asked equivalent recall questions in terms of complexity and sophistication. In his middle grade level textbook, Davidson (2009) asked, “Why would the Cherokees be particularly opposed to removal from their land?” (p. 358). Appleby et al. (2013) used a guiding question for the chapter that pertained to the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which read, “Why were native Americans forced to abandon their land and move west?” (p. 330). Finally, Ayers et al.’s secondary grade level textbook reflected the main idea of even some of the elementary questions, but included more words, “Why did the U.S. government finally decide to remove Native Americans from the eastern part of the country after they had lived alongside whites for so many generations? (p. 306). Danzer et al.’s secondary grade level textbook did the same by asking, “How did the federal government initially try to enforce the Indian removal act” (p. 124)?

Another issue with pedagogical questions in the selected textbooks was questions labeled as “critical thinking.” Ideally, the critical thinking questions should encourage readers to analyze and dissect the information by using historical thinking skills and processes. Unfortunately, most of the questions that were “critical thinking” questions from the selected textbooks did not require the reader to actually think critically and were merely asking for an opinion. From the elementary text, Berson et al. (2007), the question, “How would you feel if you were forced to
move from your home to a new place?” is not asking for anything that involves historical inquiry (p. 441).

It is assumed that the pedagogical questions would improve for the secondary textbooks because they are geared towards readers that should be able to engage in thinking processes that require more knowledge and experience. However, the majority of the critical thinking questions did not improve when comparing the elementary grade level texts to the secondary texts. Danzer et al.’s secondary textbook (2009) labels the following question as “critical thinking” and actually directs the reader’s thought process, “What factors set the stage for the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Trail of Tears? Think About: U.S. expansion to the west, removal treaties, and Jackson’s response to *Worcester v. Georgia*” (p. 127). In fact, the secondary textbook, Ayers et al. (2009), had the least amount of pedagogical questions per chapter, only averaging eight questions per each chapter review. In total, both secondary textbooks asked few questions about Native American historical events and focused predominantly on Manifest Destiny and westward expansion.

The middle grade level textbooks fared the best in terms of pedagogical questions as both texts used primary Native American sources. Appleby et al. (2013) included “document-based questions” that used selected primary sources to engage the reader (p. 344, p. 546). Unfortunately, the majority of the questions are multiple-choice questions, which give the reader no opportunity to practice critical thinking skills with primary sources and engage in historical inquiry. Short-response questions are provided after the excerpt, “We had never sold our country. We never received any annuities [payments] from our American father! And we are determined to hold on to our village!” – Black Hawk, leader of a group of Sauk and Fox Native Americans” (p. 344). The short response questions are “What do you think Black Hawk means when he states
that his people “never sold our country”?” and “What does Black Hawk’s statement suggest about Native Americans’ level of trust toward the federal government?” (p. 344). These questions ask the reader to try to comprehend the meaning of Black Hawk’s words, requiring him or her to understand the Native American context.

The middle grade level textbook by Davidson (2009) includes a key pedagogical exercise that encourages readers to work with primary sources. Following the unit on “The New Republic” an exercise, labeled “Think Like a Historian” (p. 372), asks the student to:

Analyze the following documents from the period of the new American republic. Answer the questions that accompany each document or series of documents. You will use your answers to build an answer to the unit question: What problems might a new nation face? (p. 372)

Each document consists of one question to answer after reading the source. However, a “Historian’s Checklist” was offered that consisted of guiding questions to assist the reader in thinking like a historian:

- Who produced the document?
- When was it produced?
- Where was it made?
- Why was it made and for what audience?
- What is its viewpoint?
- How does it connect to what I’ve learned?
- Why is the document important? (p. 372)

The activity includes excerpts of nine primary sources, only one of which is a Native American perspective, a letter from the Cherokee Nation. Other primary sources include quotes from

This activity represents the only historical thinking exercise in the any of the six textbooks in this project. It provides a unit question that requires synthesizing each primary source and gathering information from those sources to answer the question. Although, this activity does provide opportunities for students to engage in historical thinking skills, it does not give them an authentic experience as a historian. The author of the textbook, specifically for the purpose of answering the unit question, selected the primary sources. Historians must seek out their own primary sources and must not rely on selected excerpts, maps, and quotes that are handpicked in order to aid answer their research questions. In a middle school classroom, it is somewhat unrealistic for students to access lengthy primary sources for the purpose of an activity similar to this one; however, the students are missing out on valuable inquiry skills when the primary sources have been selected for them. Thus they miss opportunities to investigate and select sources that provide present multiple perspectives of an issue. The selected primary sources for this activity fail to present multiple perspectives and focus predominantly on the opinions of white male leaders, which in turn leads students to predetermined conclusions rather help them reach their own conclusions.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This Master’s Research Project sought to examine the presentation Native American history and culture in textbooks in order to assess the inclusion of multiple perspectives and historical thinking skills that are necessary for students to demonstrate a well-rounded social studies education. The textbooks examined for this study are listed as follows according to developmental level:

- Elementary level:

- Middle Childhood Level:

- Secondary Level:


Social studies textbooks lack necessary components that teach students to be critical thinkers and how to engage in material utilizing historical thinking skills. The textbooks in this study generally failed to include multiple perspectives but rather mostly provided a one-sided perspective leading students to make inaccurate assumptions about important historical events.

In terms of Native American history, the “white” perspective was commonly presented and often referenced Manifest Destiny as to justify the actions of the settlers and prominent white leaders of the time. Additionally, events in Native American history, such as the Trail of Tears, provided primary accounts of the event from journals, diaries and such, but, the perspective was generally from someone who was not Native American and did not actually endure the hardships of the event. A great deal can be said about the omissions of the Native American historical events. Three out of the five selected events for this Master’s Research Project were included in all six social studies textbooks: The Indian Removal Act of 1830, Trail of Tears, and Battle of Little Bighorn. While the Treaty of Fort Laramie was briefly referenced only in Danzer et al. (2009), the Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 was not discussed in any. Textbook authors, by ignoring critical historical events that concern Native Americans, elude the conversation of the fate that befell ten to twelve million Native Americans as white settlers and government powers overran their lands.
The textbook content analysis also revealed various stereotypical assumptions about Native Americans. Native Americans were often portrayed negatively through the use of vocabulary that suggested attacks on American settlers whereas the same event from the Native American point of view would be considered a tactic of defend or protect the lands that they had occupied for thousands of years. In addition, Native Americans were often portrayed as foreigners who happened to occupy land that was inevitably destined for white settlement. Furthermore, other stereotypes portraying the American perspective of settlers and prominent white leaders as heroic, brave, and fearless individuals while simultaneously evoking sympathy towards American loss in battle.

The findings also suggest a prevalent lack of complexity and sophistication. The textbook information failed to demand deeper and more sophisticated understandings at higher-grade levels. The pedagogical questions and content do not increasingly challenge. The lengths of descriptions in the elementary textbooks were of similar length as those in the secondary textbooks. The descriptions were dull, offered little to no opportunities to engage in historical empathy, and provide little, if any, incentive to engage with the content.

The two middle grade level textbooks in this study included the most extensive use of multiple perspectives as well as posed critical thinking question. In comparison to the elementary textbooks, the middle grade textbooks included more detail and engaging student activities based on primary sources. While one might assume that secondary textbooks would require a deeper, more analytical understanding, they did not. The secondary textbooks contained the most material overall, having hundreds of pages more than both elementary textbooks and one middle level textbook, Davidson (2009). Excluding references and the index, the secondary textbooks by Danzer et al. (2009) and Ayers et al. (2009) respectively contained 976 pages and 917 pages. The
middle grade level textbook, Appleby et al. (2013), included 940 pages. However, the second middle grade level textbook, Davidson (2009), included 605 pages while the elementary level textbooks, Berson et al. (2007) and Boyd et al. (2008), respectively included 552 pages and 691 pages of content. The older textbooks, i.e. the elementary textbooks in this study, had the least amount of pages. Appleby et al.’s (2013 middle grade level textbook contained approximately 300 more pages than Davidson’s (2009) suggesting that more recently published textbooks have more content. In addition, Appleby et al. (2013) was the best overall textbook in presenting Native American perspectives, primary sources, and pedagogical questions that require students to use historical thinking skills.

While the secondary textbooks in this study contained the most pages, which might suggest a more extensive coverage of Native American perspectives, they did not. Thus the number of content pages in a textbook does not constitute an indication of its quality in terms of including Native American perspectives. A possible reason why the middle grade level textbooks in this study included more coverage of Native American perspectives than the secondary textbooks is that publishers base the inclusion and exclusion of certain events on state curriculum standards.

The Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies (2012) for Kindergarten through grade eight, do not refer to Native Americans until grade four under the History strand of Heritage:

3. Various groups of people have lived in Ohio over time including prehistoric and historic American Indians, migrating settlers and immigrants. Interactions among these groups have resulted in both cooperation and conflict…

6. The inability to resolve standing issues with Great Britain and ongoing conflicts with
American Indians led the United States into the War of 1812. Victory in the Battle of Lake Erie contributed to American success in the war (p. 9)

The content standards refer American Indians as well under the Geography strand of *Human Systems:

8. American Indians developed unique cultures with many different ways of life. American Indian tribes and nations can be classified into cultural groups based on geographic and cultural similarities.

11. The Western Hemisphere is culturally diverse due to American Indian, European, Asian and African influences and interactions, as evidenced by artistic expression, language, religion and food (p. 11).

Not until grade eight do the standards refer to Native Americans once again under the History strand of *Colonization to Independence:

2. North America, originally inhabited by American Indians, was explored and colonized by Europeans for economic and religious reasons,”

and under *Expansion:

10. Westward expansion contributed to economic and industrial development, debates over sectional issues, war with Mexico and the displacement of American Indians” (p. 17).

The Ohio Academic Content Standards for the American History course, which covers the period from 1877 to the present, focus on industrialization and the country’s emergence as a world power while omitting any reference to Native American history.
Recommendations

A decision to replace the six textbooks in this study because of an inadequate inclusion of Native American history and perspectives would be difficult as well as costly. Consequently, teachers should be aware of the shortcomings of social studies textbooks and make a deliberate effort to provide supplementary lesson materials rather than solely rely on the textbook. The findings of this study suggest social studies textbook content is in dire need of including multiple perspectives on Native American history, especially because Native American history is not a recurring priority in the K-12 Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies. In addition, social studies textbooks should include lesson activities that engage students in critical thinking (Lavere, 2008, p. 6).

Based on the Ohio Academic Content Standards, one might expect that textbook publishers would include Native American history primarily in elementary kindergarten through fifth grade textbooks. However, the findings presented in this project revealed that the middle grade level textbooks, defined for the purposes of this Master’s Research Project as grades 6-8, offer the most inclusive coverage of Native American history. The middle grade level textbooks in this project would be appropriate for grades 4-5 as well as their content addresses the Ohio Academic Content Standards for these two grade levels. However, from a developmental perspective, they would not be appropriate for grades K-3. Although the Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies only require teachers to teach about Native Americans in grades four, five and eight, the presentation of Native Americans and multiple perspectives is integral towards helping students develop a deep understanding of the complexity and richness of United States’ history.
Secondary textbooks should still include coverage of Native American history because providing multi-perspectival primary sources beyond those of traditional white American settlers and soldiers will enrich students’ learning experience and understanding of historical events. Although Native Americans did not disappear after 1877 they were absent in both secondary textbooks and are omitted by the Ohio Academic Content Standards as well. Adding multi-perspectival, authentic primary sources to social studies textbooks will enhance students’ historical thinking. Social studies textbooks at all division levels, be it elementary, middle or high, should include multiple perspectives, historical thinking activities as well as rich content that will allow students to develop the skills they will need to become engaged and reflective citizens.
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