University of Nevada, Reno

Multiple Perspectives in United States History: Shifting Perspectives in High School Students

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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by

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Abstract

As secondary social studies education in the United States moves toward inquiry and constructivist models of teaching, much of the history that is taught is stuck in a fairly rigid narrative. This narrative has been written and refined by historians and high school textbook writers until the canon is homogenous across the United States (Brinkley et al., 1997; Henretta et al., 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore high school students' reactions when presented with two plausible opposing viewpoints to a specific event. Utilizing the Johnson and Johnson (2003) method of structured academic controversy, students were studied to determine how much information would cause cognitive dissonance and a subsequent resolution of the discomfort. This study presented two opposing narratives of the reasoning behind the use of the atomic weapon in the bombing of the Japanese mainland in World War II.

The sample for this study was four sections of 97 students comprising both Advanced Placement (AP) students and non-AP students. Of the original participants, 24 were selected to participate in the research portion of this study. The participants were placed into two groups, 12 AP and 12 Non-AP students. The study's findings and resulting recommendations are that using inquiry and constructivist methods increased student interest and deeper understanding of a controversial and complex event in United States history. Further findings and recommendations are found in the findings and recommendations section of this dissertation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I began this journey, it seemed like the natural next step in my education, the final "actualization" development, to borrow from Abraham Maslow: the opening of a magical door into a world I was ready to explore. Little did I know at that time what the journey would entail or of what would be asked in return. To be sure, it has been a privilege and honor to take this journey. And one that requires a recognition of the sacrifice and cost to those closest to me.

First and foremost, to my children Becky, Hannah, and Joseph; they have unfailingly supported their father as he took time from them to pursue a doctoral degree. To my spouse Marilyn Savage, who with love and care supported me with kind words and open ears, listened to me complain, shout, cry, and feel discouraged, and sometimes just let me be weary and overwhelmed. Too, they have shared in my triumphs and eureka moments as well. And at the right times a very needed Snickers candy bar.

On this journey as well has been my advisor Margaret Ferrara who has persevered with me, cajoled, berated, and pushed when I needed it. Dr. F., as I have called her with affection, praised me, helped me, and kept me writing through many edits and rewrites, and helped keep me going through sickness and health, and even retirement. And when it seemed the marriage might be over, in stepped the quiet man, the rock I could cling to while the ship was righted and repaired. Dr. Todd Felts helped with encouragement, support, and advice on how to make it to the finish line.

To my students who were at the center of my endeavor to attain the heights of academia. Little did they comprehend how central they would be to my education, for as

I taught them, they educated me. So, it is for them, my students, past, present, and future, that I made the decision to take this journey.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Introduction to the Problem

Typically, conquerors use their scribes to write the history they want others to accept as true or the only perspective to be used by everyone. With the voices of those vanquished, suppressed, and hidden for the most part, it is only a partial biased history at best. So too, it is with United States history that the dominant voices are heard (Salinas & Alarcón, 2016). That is, those voices heard represented the winners, status quo until the last few decades. In the United States, the winners are European-Americans, and the voices that are inhibited in that dominant cultural narrative are those of Native Americans, people of color, and women. Most of those who are marginalized have minimal power (King, 2014; Salinas & Alarcón, 2016). To teach only the dominant narrative is to marginalize students of color in a learning environment. This study explored how high school juniors respond to an alternate viewpoint to a world-changing event: the use of atomic bombs in the closing days of World War II (WWII). The event is one that until very recently was monolithic in its teaching. Typically, textbooks and teachers taught the dominant narrative that the use of the atomic bombs on Japan resulted in a saving of American lives (Henretta et al., 2014). There was no mention of any other factors or events that may have had an impact on the Japanese Emperor's decision to surrender to the United States.

This was the history content I was taught in my formative years—first in grammar school (grades kindergarten through Grade 5), then middle school (Grades 6-8) and

conclusively, in high school. What started out for me as wonderful stories of bravery and heroism eventually lost their luster when I realized the stories were one-sided with few voices other than those of the victors. To be sure, there were the voices of Frederick Douglass, Harriot Tubman, Carrie Nation, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mostly silent were the voices of Tecumseh, W.E.B. Dubois, Malcolm X, Eldredge Cleaver, Caesar Chavez, and many more who stood up to power and dared to push back against the rolling tide of assimilation. I did not know what was missing, but even as a teenager, I knew what I was being told was incomplete. As a result, in my teenage mind, I disliked history. I struggled to go to class and to keep up on the reading so I could pass a test. It was not until college that I finally was made aware of the screened materials, the voices of the marginalized that I had been denied or I failed to note in my high school learning about United States history. My love for history was requited during the higher education level, and I found comfort and understanding in the eloquent voices I began to hear. The pain, oppression, the marginalization of people of both sexes and of all colors was now a recognized part of my history as an American, and I felt the narrative was more complete.

As a high school teacher of United States history, I make an effort to recognize and honor those marginalized voices and perspectives to my students. Now, my students and I have a more complete history, more voices to celebrate, and a more complete fabric of our national history. Additionally, I am compelled to teach those shrouded aspects of

our history because to teach less is to dishonor not only the students in my room, but our uniquely shared stories in United States history, as well.

Statement of the Problem to be Researched

As children become educated through their own personal experiences and the sharing of others, they are exposed to many differing and sometimes conflicting ideas. Some minor differences that arise in the learning process are resolved or discarded quickly with little confusion or mental dissonance. Multi-faceted information, however, that may have equal weight or create a deeper psychological conflict or cognitive dissonance must be resolved generally with more information. This presents the problem of how much, or how powerful, must new information be to change a high school junior's schema, perception, or way of thinking?

Purpose and Significance of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the processes of how high school juniors in a United States History course resolved cognitive dissonance when presented with dissimilar historical information and presented with a balanced presentation of content. Numerous studies about cognitive dissonance have been published since Festinger (1957) completed his study, further developing his theory (Egan et al., 2007; Guerra & Wubbena, 2017; Vinski & Tryon, 2009). Also, there is a paucity of study conducted in high schools on alternative perspectives of United States history. This possibly happens as a function of the textbook industry in the United States. In the United States, textbook creation is a massive industry where change seems to happen at glacial speed

compounded by using establishment authors (e.g., Brinkley et al., 1997; Henretta et al., 2014), for the most part, to write the new history books; therefore, change in textbook history content changes slowly.

Teacher-researched outside materials, guest lecturers, and more progressive authors produce most of the alternative, or opposing, viewpoint historical content for students. Students engaged in understanding multiple perspectives in history have longer knowledge retention and recall with a clearer understanding of the event (Doppen, 2000). Further, inquiry and constructivist models (e.g., Johnson and Johnson; Piaget) fit the state teaching standards in place now (Nevada Department of Education, n.d.).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how much select information is needed for a high school student to modify his or her knowledge base. At what point is the challenge of a student's understanding of an historical event sufficient enough to cause cognitive dissonance and a corresponding shift of his or her schema to another perspective.

RQ1: When do students have enough relevant knowledge to begin to have conflict with their schema, or prior knowledge, and the new information, and then must reconcile the conflict, or cognitive dissonance?

RQ2: How do students justify the decision choice they make when they have high internal conflict?

Conceptual Framework

One area suffused in nationalism and a singular American point-of-view (POV) is the use of atomic bombs on the nation of Japan in the closing days of WWII (August 1945) in the Pacific. It is widely held by United States history authors that it was the use of the bombs that caused the Japanese to surrender (Brinkley et al., 1997; Henretta et al., 2014; Tindall & Shi, 1984; Wittner, 2005). This POV has been widely taught to almost all United States history students from the post-war decades to the students currently in school now. Until quite recently, there has been no alternative POV, such as the promise by Josef Stalin to join the war in the Pacific and invade China from the north to expel the Japanese occupation forces (Kuznick & Stone, 2014). Moreover, this POV has been explained by Hasegawa (2005) in his book *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan*, wherein he explained in detail the machinations and decisions of the Japanese War Council as the atomic bombs were dropped. Although many United States history texts do recognize the involvement and contribution of the Soviets in fulfilling their promise of expelling the Japanese, the mobilization of a million-man Soviet force is portrayed as a minor event. Whereas for the Japanese, the Soviet entry into the war coupled with the loss of their 400,000-man army in Manchuria to the Soviets was the turning point to ending the war. Kuznick and Stone (2014) presented this information as a very convincing alternative to the war using an impressive set of statistics: troop movements (Soviet and Japanese); casualty numbers (about 400,000 Japanese); impact of

the American fire-bombing of Japanese cities; and statements made by leaders of the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States.

The POV held by Hasegawa (2005) and Kuznick and Stone (2014) is that the combination of fire-bombing old Japanese cities, Japanese casualty losses to the Soviets, and the inevitability of losing the war in contrast to our not using atomic weapons caused the Japanese to surrender. The atomic bombs, as devastating as they were, inflicted less damage than what was caused by the fire-bombing (Kuznick & Stone, 2014, p. 176). Furthermore, by this time in the war, the world knew of the barbarism committed by both the Soviets and Japanese armies during their invasions and occupations. Therefore, it is probable the Japanese did not want to surrender to the Soviet Union (Anonymous, 1945; Hasegawa, 2005). Additionally, the Soviets concluded the atomic bomb was used more to signal the willingness to use the bomb rather than to force the surrender of the Japanese (Hasegawa, 2005; Kuznick & Stone, 2014).

A review of the literature discussing how decisions are made and the beliefs and values humans have contributed to the decision making process help illuminate how this history might impact, or change, the POV of a high school junior.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Beliefs, Values, Cognitive Dissonance

A review of the literature on the topic of teaching history strategies begins with Festinger, Maslow, and Rokeach, each a towering figure in the field of human psychology and understanding how people think, make decisions, and resolve conflicts. Festinger (1957) began his career as a researching psychologist, but within four years of graduation, began his most important work as a social psychologist while at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is this work that made him the fifth most cited psychologist researcher in academia. Leon Festinger developed the theory of cognitive dissonance in 1957 while at Stanford University (Festinger, 1957), a theory that serves as the foundation to understanding how and why new information is incorporated into a person's schema or world view.

Abraham Maslow (1943), an American psychologist, spent a career developing his theory of self-actualization and the hierarchy of needs. It is Maslow's theory of needs that helps explain how humans have intrinsic motivation to move forward and become all they can be, or what Maslow labeled Actualization (Maslow, 1943). Maslow studied mentally heathy people to develop his ideas of self-actualization and human growth. During this research, he noted that people used the same thought processes when they had their "peak experiences." That is when a person experiences euphoria by being in harmony with the world and themselves, perhaps experiencing love or peace. Some would explain it as that "ah ha" moment when a difficult problem has been solved.

Those thought processes were expanded on and more fully developed by Milton Rokeach (1973) in his study of racial prejudice in the American South. What Rokeach found in developing the concept of terminal and instrumental values is one's ability to predict human behavior when confronted with decision-making (Rokeach, 1973). Values, both terminal and instrumental, are those guiding beacons a person uses when making a decision, helping humans decide every aspect of their lives, from the trivial (should I have nuts on my ice cream) to life changing (should I move to another city if it means leaving my family).

The theory leads to research questions on how high school juniors (i.e., 16-17-year-olds) make decisions relieving conflict or cognitive dissonance involving internal values. The researchers who support the rationale of the study support the purpose of this paper to address the research questions presented:

RQ 1: When do students have enough relevant knowledge to begin to have conflict with their schema, or prior knowledge, and the new information, and then must reconcile the conflict, or cognitive dissonance?

RQ 2: How do students justify the decision choice they make when they have high internal conflict.

Beliefs

Cognitive dissonance is the internal feeling, from intensely chaotic to mild, that humans experience when presented with conflicting information. The intensity of dissonance is directly related to the strength of our beliefs and values (Festinger, 1957;

Maslow, 1973). Human beliefs are those ideas or thoughts created by culture, consciously or unconsciously, that one holds to be true (Atiles, 2017). An individual tends to use beliefs to test the veracity of the information received through one's senses (Maslow, 1943). Each student's beliefs are shaped by his or her family and culture in which he or she is raised (Aronson et al., 2007; Creswell, 2012).

In typical human development, beliefs are formed in infancy with children as young as a 4-year-old understanding what a false belief can be (Wiesmann et al., 2017). As infants develop, their survival depends on the ability to determine the truth or veracity of the situation, and they may find themselves engaged with agents who present false belief patterns (Wiesmann et al., 2017). Children as young as 4 years old can "build representations of others' mental states which can thus differ from reality" (p. 2). The development of the infant's executive brain function parallels the growth toward autonomy. As the belief system is developed, additional characteristics are introduced (e.g., judgements of false or true are supplemented with judgements of good or bad; Kuzmanovic & Rigoux, 2017). Human beliefs are built cognitively by episodic experience as well as cultural, or institutional, knowledge (Nespor, 1987, 2012). In other words, beliefs are built in a person's schema layer by layer, modified over time, tested and retested, modified, replaced, and refined. Beliefs are different from attitudes and are less likely to shift due to evidence or argument but may not be founded in reality (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). One's beliefs are typically "deeply personal," not "universal, and unaffected by persuasion" (Pajares, 1992, p. 309).

Values

A value is defined by Milton Rokeach (1973) as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (as cited in Tuulik et al., 2016, p. 154). Maslow (1943) and Rokeach (1973) have done foundational work on values. Maslow (1943) developed the hierarchy of needs with the idea that a person would move up the pyramid to self-actualization as the lower needs were met. In 1973, Milton Rokeach developed the theory of 18 terminal and instrumental values (see Table 1).

Table 1

Rokeach (1973) Terminal and Instrumental Values

Terminal Values (End-States)	
Social (Focus on others)	Personal, self-focused
A World at Peace	A Comfortable Life
A World of Beauty	An Exciting Life
Equality	Personal Accomplishment
Family Security	Happiness
Freedom	Inner Harmony
Mature Love	Pleasure
National Security	Salvation
Social Recognition	Self-Respect
True Friendship	Wisdom
Instrumental Values (Behavioral)	
Moral (Focused on morality)	Personal Competence
Broadminded	Ambitious
Forgiving	Capable
Helpful	Clean
Honest	Courageous
Loving	Imaginative
Cheerful	Independent

Table 1 (continued)

Instrumental Values (Behavioral)	
Obedient	Intellectual
Polite	Logical
Responsible	Self-Controlled

Rokeach developed a survey that helped capture a closer understanding of values that individuals use for terminal and instrumental values. A terminal value is used when evaluating situations such as national elections, protecting one's family, or volunteering in the community. Instrumental values are engaged when a personal decision is contemplated. Instrumental values guide our reactions to authority, a perceived slight by a close relative, or the priority when paying bills. Rokeach (1973) defined terminal values as those applying to "desirable end-states of existence" (p. 5). Additionally, instrumental values are those "preferable modes of behavior that will help achieve terminal-value-end-states-of-being" (Tuulik et al., 2016). Rokeach's Value Survey is widely used today for exploring human research (Rokeach, 1973; Tuulik et al., 2016) and is also considered a valid and important tool used for research on human values (Yang, 2016).

Rokeach's (1973) value list has been added or adapted to specific research context by many researchers but never modified in any meaningful way (Ariely, 2009; Atiles, 2017; Tuulik et al., 2016; Yang, 2016). Maslow (1943) created the theory of motivation (Hierarchy of Needs) setting the foundation for Rokeach's work on values. Both theories work together to explain human cognition and motivation (Daniels & Spiker 1997).

Beliefs and values affect every decision a human makes (Maslow, 1943). This is also true that students, in every hour they spend in the classroom, are making a judgment about what they are being instructed (Schulte, 2018). It is during this instruction that students will make a judgment about some information and experience intrinsic mental discomfort (Festinger, 1957). This mental discomfort is labeled cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). It is the state of cognitive dissonance that causes a student to add to their knowledge by accepting or rejecting the new information (Brubacher & Payne, 1994; Guerra & Wubbena, 2017).

 Cognitive dissonance. Rokeach's (1973) values concept correlates to Maslow's (1943) theory of motivation because it is human nature to stop the psychological discomfort and regain homeostasis whether the discomfort is hunger or dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Guerra & Wubbena, 2017). Cognitive dissonance causes a review of beliefs and of attitudes and values, as well (Guerra & Wubbena, 2017). When new information is introduced to a person's knowledge system, that information must be incorporated into that person's schema or understanding of how they perceive the world around them (Pajares, 1992). If the new information is consistent with the assumptions held and worldly constructs of that person's perception, the information is reinforcing. If the new information is inconsistent with the person's POV, that is psychological conflict, or what Festinger (1957) labeled cognitive dissonance.

 Learning for the typical human being begins in infancy. For most learners, this is a time of development of the foundations of perspectives, values, and mores (Freitas,

2011; Maslow, 1973). Throughout a student's schooling, layer after layer of information is built upon that foundation of the student's developing body of knowledge. As new information is acquired, and the student becomes a more sophisticated learner, new information is challenged and filtered as the schema grows and changes (Ormrod, 2009). Understanding how to effectively make changes to a student's schema is a goal of every educator.

Constructivism. Piaget developed his principles of cognitive development (1936) and continued to revise his theory throughout his life. Piaget's theory outlines four stages of development: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete, and formal. While much of brain development occurs before the age of 8, human brains, according to constructivist theory, will continue to adapt to new conditions throughout one's life. It is assumed most high school students function at Piaget's stages of concrete and formal development (Gredler, 2005). Constructivism is a penumbra bringing learning theories together. By using the lens of constructivism as a unifying theory in this research, the data presented a cohesive concept allowing for deeper understanding.

Opposing-Viewpoint History

It is said that "the winners write the history," and certainly that appears undeviating until time passes and the dust settles (The quote has been attributed in variations to both Sir Winston Churchill and Sen. Marcy of New York in 1832). Once the air is clear and the victorious voices quieted, the vanquished survivor stories begin to emerge (Kuznick & Stone, 2014). Just as the victors have a perspective of the events

recorded, so too, do the survivors. England, a country with a much longer history than the United States, still struggles with out-of-the-mainstream historical concepts (Grosvenor, 2018).

> The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. Part of this reluctance to accept alternative narratives may be a by-product of disciplinary practice. Within the discipline of history, surprising little has been written about migration and settlement and it remains only a peripheral area of academic concern. Further, Marc Depaepe has referred to the formal and informal rules, values, and norms of history writing: rules, values, and norms that in reality operate to privilege particular narratives of national pasts, marginalize or neglect other possible narratives. In sociology the dominant focus has been on documenting, analyzing, and reporting the nature and workings of racism and xenophobia in society. (Grosvenor, 2018, p. 162)

Using film to explore another perspective can be particularly helpful for students to develop an understanding of the "other" and perhaps even some empathy of the other side of mainstream history (Doppen, 2000; Morris, 2005). Viewing film as part of the social studies classroom curricula helps students develop deeper understanding of historical events on an emotional level (Morris, 2005).

> The entertainment value of film allows students to relate to the content, form bonds to the characters, and "feel" history. Films can be entertaining and educational. For instance, WWII films often present serious content, containing such themes as death, human rights, broken families, and psychological trauma. The solemn and somber nature of many war films naturally evokes empathy; however, they always require sensitivity to students who may get upset. *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Life is Beautiful* (1998) provide powerful and realistic images of the Holocaust. (Morris, 2005, p. 65)

It is those realistic and emotionally moving images in a film that help make historical events and people more relevant and relatable for students (Doppen, 2000). Further, using film moves the curriculum beyond rote memorization of facts (boring!) to

development of critical thinking and inquiry (Doppen, 2000; Morris, 2005). Film meets state standards for the social studies and frees teachers from the textbook to develop their own curriculum (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009; Nevada Department of Education, n.d.).

Paramount to this study is that film can be used to present opposing viewpoints of an historical event. Doppen (2000) reported, "that while teaching multiple perspectives secondary teachers should pay attention to the concept of historical emapthy" (p. 160). It is empathy and emotion that taps into our values (Rokeach, 1973). With film, students get to see "what if" from a distance, they get to "see" what consequences a character's actions may have, and they can understand what happens when a nation uses an atomic weapon on a civilian population.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

As a high school social studies teacher for 8 years, the researcher held several assumptions that may have influenced this study.

1. High school students accept, for the most part, the classroom teacher as an authority on the content presented in the classroom.
2. High school students may have difficulty withholding judgment on conflicting information before fully exploring the basis for the conflict.
3. High school students may have difficulty recalling prior years' social studies information.

4. High school students may be influenced by a prior social studies teacher's bias and opinions, family members' perceptions and recall, and peer misperception and recall.

These assumptions were recognized, and the researcher worked to minimize the influence on the analysis of the data.

The implications for this research are multiple. First, the research will directly influence how information is used in the classroom. The results will hopefully influence social studies teachers and developing social studies teachers-in-training who may read this report. Secondly, the research will be an addition of information to the cannon of education, as it is a new direction for student engagement. If opposing-viewpoint history is included in the college classroom now, it will be a reinforcement to good teaching in the high school classroom of the future.

Summary

Humans beings, which includes students, have struggled with cognitive dissonance, achieving consensus with other students, and understanding alternate history. Values and beliefs play a crucial role in helping humans with survival, making decisions, and living their lives. Values and beliefs help individuals and friends inform one regarding who are one's enemies along with many everyday decisions like what color shoes to wear with a black blazer. Values and beliefs are developed when children are influenced by those around them—their parents, grandparents, family members, for example, as well as strangers in chance encounters, teachers, heroes, and villains. Our

values and beliefs are who we are and who we become and are, at the terminal level, very difficult to change (Maslow, 1943).

Cognitive dissonance is one function of our intelligence helping us to learn and make decisions every day of our lives. Resolving the internal conflict, or cognitive dissonance, is part of the process of engaging in the world. Cognitive dissonance is part of thinking and analyzing the world as it is presented to us. Students in school, as part of the learning process, will encounter cognitive dissonance many times every day. For secondary education students, cognitive dissonance encompasses everything from what is on their social media, who was talking to their significant other, to what they just learned in the classroom. Alternate narratives, multiple perspectives, or counter-factual, the label does not matter because they can be opposing-viewpoint perspectives indicating another voice to be heard. Though, alternate history is not to be confused with the genre of science fiction stories and "what-if" scenarios found in popular literature (Schmunk, 2020).

The dominant mainstream narrative here in the United States is historically the White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant voice. It is the voice that came across the Atlantic Ocean on the ship Arabella with John Winthrop and has continued through wars for independence, the frontier, foreign land seizures, rebellion, oppression, and suppression. The voice that is not heard is alternate history, alternate narrative, multiple perspectives, the opposing-viewpoint perspectives. It does not matter what it is called because it is the same—in United States history, it is the voice that has not been heard consistently, or

until relatively recently, and has not be taught in our secondary schools until after the rise
of the Civil Rights and Equality movements in the United States (Salinas & Alarcón,
2016).

Foundational work has been completed over time on concept development and the
place and importance of values and beliefs in our lives (Maslow, 1943; Rokeach, 1973;
Tuulik et al., 2016). Opposing-viewpoint perspectives, multiple perspectives, and
historical narratives help the history student engage in the content and develop empathy
for the participants (Salinas & Alarcón, 2016). In addition, females have traditionally
been left out of the mainstream narrative as well (Adams, 1983; Salinas & Alarcón,
2016). Members of the Latin and American Indian communities are often ignored and
many times hidden (Salinas & Alarcón, 2016). When heroes and voices of these
communities are published and heard, they are still just footnotes of their true
contribution of the common narrative (VanSledright, 2008).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Learning for the typical human being begins in infancy. For most learners, this is a time of development of the foundations of perspectives, values, and mores (Freitas, 2011; Maslow, 1973). Throughout a student's schooling, layer after layer of information is built upon that foundation of the student's developing body of knowledge. As new information is acquired, and the student becomes a more sophisticated learner, new information is challenged and filtered as the schema grows and changes (Ormrod, 2009). Understanding how to make changes to a student's schema effectively is a goal of every educator. The method of Structured Academic Controversy (SAC; Johnson & Johnson, 2003) was utilized in the study to explore how changes in a student's schema can be made.

Research Overview

This study used qualitative research methods as outlined by Piantanida and Garman (2009). The discipline of qualitative research relies upon unstructured and non-numeric data. The researcher may use field notes, written survey instruments, polls, games, interviews, recordings, and stuctured activities by particants to gather information based on observation and interviews. That data are then coded and used to form ideas and concepts to attempt to understand human phenomenon (Piantanida & Garman, 2009). Qualitative research methods began in the "social sciences where fieldwork required an alternative to laboratory-based methods of inquiry" (Piantanida &

Garman, p. 6). Piantanida went on to explain that educational researchers began using qualitative methodology in the 1970s when a more "natural classroom setting" was needed in place of a laboratory utilized by educational psychologists" (p. 6). Soltis (1984) used the "discriptors: emperical, interpretive, and critical as a conceptual frame for distingushing among fundamentally differently philosophical approaches to educational research" (Piantanida & Garman, 2009, p. 6). Considering the above information, it is appropriate this study of human phenomenon utilizes qualitative research methodology with a focus on observation, written data, and interviews with participants.

The research instrument utilized was student-driven SAC (Johnson & Johnson, 2003; see Appendix A). This method of teaching is an inquiry-based approach to helping students engage in critical thinking when presented with new information (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). The SAC method begins by instructing the whole group of students with the basic information, e.g., a historical event. Once the initial information has been taught, the group is divided in half, two sub-groups (1 and 2). Within each sub-group, participants are paired up (A and B) so there are identified pairs of individuals (1A, 1B; 2A, 2B). Group 1 is isolated from Group 2 for different and specific information taught on the historical controversy. Ideally, as in this study, the participants are given specific predetermined websites to gather information from about the controversy. Once the participant inquiry phase is completed the sub-groups are brought back together and paired up in diverse groups of four individuals. At that point, the participants follow a

strict time protocol of exchanging information before engaging in any open discussion.

When the information exchange and discussion is concluded, participants are instructed

to write a reflection to capture their thoughts and impressions as they completed the SAC

process.

All student participants were instructed with a foundation of the typical American

historical perspective of the use of atomic weapons on the Nation of Japan during the

closing days of WWII (Brinkley et al., 1997; Henretta et al., 2014). This is widely

considered a mainstream American narrative as recommened by the College Board for

use in Advanced Placement United States History classrooms. Brinkley et al. and

Henretta et al., as well as other United States history textbooks, do mention the fact of the

Soviet Union entering the war as promised by Josef Stalin at the Allied Conference at

Yalta, 1945 (Brinkley et al., 1997, p. 776; Henretta et al., 2014, p. 789). The American

cause of using the atomic bombs is viewed as the surrender and is the typical high school

instruction that was given to the participants in the study.

Research Design and Rationale

This instruction included the use of reviewing textbook materials, videos, and

PowerPoint notes and lecture (Henretta et al., 2014). The participants were grouped in

pairs to share ideas and information. Subequent to the treatment, observations and

interviews were conducted using Piaget's theory of constructivism (Ormrod, 2009).

Piaget developed his principles of cognitive development (1936) and continued to

revise his theory throughout his life. Piaget's theory has four stages of development:

sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete, and formal. While much of brain development occurs before the age of 8, human brains according to constructivist theory, will continue to adapt to new conditions throughout life. Most high school students function at Piaget's stages of concrete and formal development (Gredler, 2005).

Site and Population

The site was a suburban comprehesive public high school located in Northern Nevada. The total student population averages around 1,100 teens, Grades 9 through 12. The graduation rate is about 86% (946), fluctuating a few percentage points on a given year, with the trend generally increasing toward a state target rate of 90%. The population consisted of 44% (484) females and 56% (616) males that included approximately 75% (825) Hispanic, 14% (154) White, and 3% (33) Asian, Black, and multiple races. Twenty-four percent (24%; 264) of students were English language learners (ELL), 12% (132) had an Individual Education Plan (IEP), and about 57% (627) qualified for free and reduced lunch and breakfast. The principal had lead education at the school for over six years. Many classes are co-taught with a content teacher and a teacher with a special education endorsement or a foreign language endorsement to assist students with an IEP, or those who may be Special Education students.

While the school is an older complex of buildings, it has been modernized continuously and boasts three computer labs that seat over 100 students at one time. Each classroom is equipped with a 90-inch-flat-screen television to assist with instruction. Every classroom has an Internet connection for the television. Additionally,

each teacher has an ipad or Surface that will connect with the television for enhanced

direct instruction. The school has Wifi throughout all classrooms, and some students

bring personal laptops and or other devices to maintain lecture notes and complete other

class projects. Further, about 16 computer carts contain up to 36 computers for

classroom student use. The ability to assign whole classes to a computer lab allows for

teacher-directed student research and independent study.

Social Studies (e.g., World History, United States History, United States

Government, Psychology, Civics, and Economics) classes generally average between 35

and 40 students and each section is spread across five class periods. Classes meet four

days-a-week, with two classes of 55 minutes and two classes at 70 minutes.

A typical day, as was used for this study, involves an introduction or review of the

lesson planned for the class, then a short video or discussion. After the introductory

activities, the class may work in small groups to determine an outcome or set of answers

to a worksheet or puzzle with the class wrapping up with a short, whole-class discussion

as a summative assessment and review of the topic. Groups may be self-selected or

randomly assigned to allow for specific skill mixes depending on the activity. A

variation of the day may involve computer work researching a topic or writing a response

to a prompt to be emailed to the instructor for grading.

Research Methods

The partcipants for this study were the instructor's assigned classes, wherein

students were assigned by the high school's counseling department and placed on the

instructor's roster over the summer prior to the start of the school year. Most rosters stabilize after new additional students are enrolled, then student schedules are adjusted and instructor class size loads are balanced. All of this had been completed by September of the study year, with the study completed in April and May. Students in the established advisor classes were selected for this study. All students in the study were included in the traditional instruction on the ending of the war by the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan. Susequent to this instruction students were informed of the study, given information packets with study information, and given parent permission and student consent forms (see Appendix B).

All participants were instructed on the traditional theory of how the war may have ended with the use of atomic weapons (Henretta et al., 2014). Again, participants were observed and interviewed as part of an informal formative assessmant to determine the impact of this information on the prior knowledge of the surrender of the Japanese. The participant pool was then divided into two groups. Participant Group A explored further how the use of the atomic weapon contributed to the end of the war in Japan. Participant Group B was assigned to another room for instruction on the alternate theory developed by Peter Kuznick, Professor of History at American University and Oliver Stone (2014). Using Chapter 4 from Kuznick and Stone's book, *The Untold History of the United States*, as well as viewing Stone's (2014) video of the same name, the participants were introduced to the other possible ending to WWII. All participants were instructed to clarify their information and to develop three positions they could defend, i.e., the Yalta

agreement with Stalin was working, the Japanese were ready to surrender without the atomic bombing. The student participants returned to original classroom where they were paired into teams of four students (two Team A, and two Team B). Using the SAC process, Team A explained the information to Team B. At this stage, Team B only took notes and asked questions for clarification. The teams reversed positions and continued presenting and asking only questions of clarification. This process continued until both teams were satisfied they had been heard and positions understood.

The student teams were then free to discuss the topic (causation for Japan to end the war) until they reached a consensus as to which end theory (traditional or alternative) they accepted. It was anticipated cognitive impasse would be avoided. Teams were encouraged, if cognitive impasse was reached, to continue discussion and clarification until the schema block was identified.

At the conclusion of the exploration of the competing theories (Kuznick & Stone and Henretta et al.), participants were asked to write a personal reflection on their understanding of the ending of WWII in Japan. All data were maintained in a secure locked cabinet. Any identifying materials were securly disposed of at the end of this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data (notes, observations, reflections) were collected, transcribed, and coded following the analysis procedures as outlined by Creswell (2012). Due to the large amounts of data needing to be coded and analyzed, open coding was used to catagorize

the raw data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As themes and patterns are identified, what the data reveal regarding the purpose of the study becomes clear (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The conceptual framework helped develop the catalyst for framing the data.

Coding

In vivo coding was used to "enhance and deepen a high school junior United States History student's understanding of their cultures and worldviews" bringing alive the voices of the participants themselves (Saldaña, 2009, p. 74). A process of discriptive coding was used for information collected from each of the interviews, as well as for the essays, and observations. The results are summarized thematically (Saldaña, 2009).

Thematic Data Analysis

Further reduction of the codes, along with the categorization of codes and patterns, brought forth themes from the data. The researcher used theoretical construct coding (Saldana, 2009); hence, themes were categorized according to commonality to develop theoretical constructs to provide "illustrative examples that support the interpretation" (p. 144).

The statements were examined to determine how each student resolved his or her cognitive dissonance. This threshold is vital in understanding how much information is needed by the individual to change his or her thinking about an historical event. In other words, at what point is that level reached? If that information can be obtained, understood, and applied to the classroom, there can be many benefits to both teacher and student. First, the new information should be interesting but not redundant. If too much

information is taught, the student becomes bored. If there is not enough information, then a state of cognitive dissonance is not reached or maintained. This methodology allowed for nuance and clarity because of the opportunity to interview the participants. Specifically, qualitative analysis allows the voice of the participant to be heard. This is vitally important to the research questions because it is close to the mind and thought processes being examined in the research. It is those voices that are at the center of understanding how a high school student creates knowledge and then becomes an educated person.

The implications for this research are multiple. First, it was anticipated that the information would directly influence how information is used in my classroom. Secondly, it was hoped that the results would have a transformation on every classroom of every teacher who may read the report. Thirdly, it is anticipated that the research would be an addition to the canon of education if it is a new direction for student engagement. At minimum, it was anticipated it would be the reinforcement of what is known to be good teaching and how knowledge is accumulated by the student.

Ethical Considerations

The University of Nevada Internal Review Board (IRB) required review and approval of this research due to interactions with underage individuals in a high school setting. Additionally, the controlling school board and school principal approved the research. To ensure ethical procedures and methods, all research elements were disclosed to the approving authorities. Further, the researcher disclosed and explained to all

participants: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the methods and process to collect the data,

(c) how the findings and conclusions would be used, (d) that the participants could

withdraw from the study at any time, and (e) that there was no penalty for that

withdrawal. Included with the verbal description and discussion with students, letters

were sent home with them for parent signature giving permission, and the students had to

indicate assent with a signature as well (see Appendix B). This researcher assured

students this study was a part of doctoral research and there was no impact on their grade

regardless of their participation or not.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS, RESULTS, AND INTERPRETATIONS

Introduction

The findings presented in this study emerged through data collection, coding,

verbatim transcriptions of in-person interviews, and analysis using in vivo coding. A

total of 97 participants in two different classes (classrooms and two different instructors)

were divided into two groups in each class. Group One (Group 1, A and B) was an

Advanced Placement United States History class (APUSH). The second group (Group 2,

A and B) was a general survey high school course of United States History. All

participants were between the ages of 16 and 17 years old. Both groups were presented

with the same materials pertaining to the deployment of the atomic bombs on Japan as

well as the traditional theory of America ending the war. Additionally, for the purpose of

in-person interviews, 46 students were randomly selected for data collection of their

perceptions, experiences, and opinions. They were divided into three groups: Group 1A

with eight males and eight females, Group 1B with seven females and nine males, and

Group 2A with five females and nine males. There was no Group 2B for the regular

United States History class. From this initial group of 46, 12 students were interviewed

by the researcher.

The interviews were conducted at the students' high school. Most were taken at

the convenience of the instructor and student and conducted in the instructor's classroom.

There were interruptions from other students coming into the room as well as intercom

announcements and, once, a fire drill. All the interruptions stopped the interview until

calm was restored and both the researcher and student were ready to continue with the interview. All interviews followed the same questions, with the student participant able to elaborate and explain their position or thought to their satisfaction.

The first round of coding involved reading through each student's data. The second round involved the researcher reading through the student's data coding recurring words and phrases. These codes were then used to develop themes, informing what becomes theory (see Appendix C). Subsequent to triangulation, five themes emerged and are presented in this section: (a) inhumanity, (b) racism, (c) saving lives, (d) strategy, (e) "other." Each finding is supported with several codes and phrases, then organized into themes and discussed at length in this chapter. A graphic chart of the findings is shown in Figure 1.
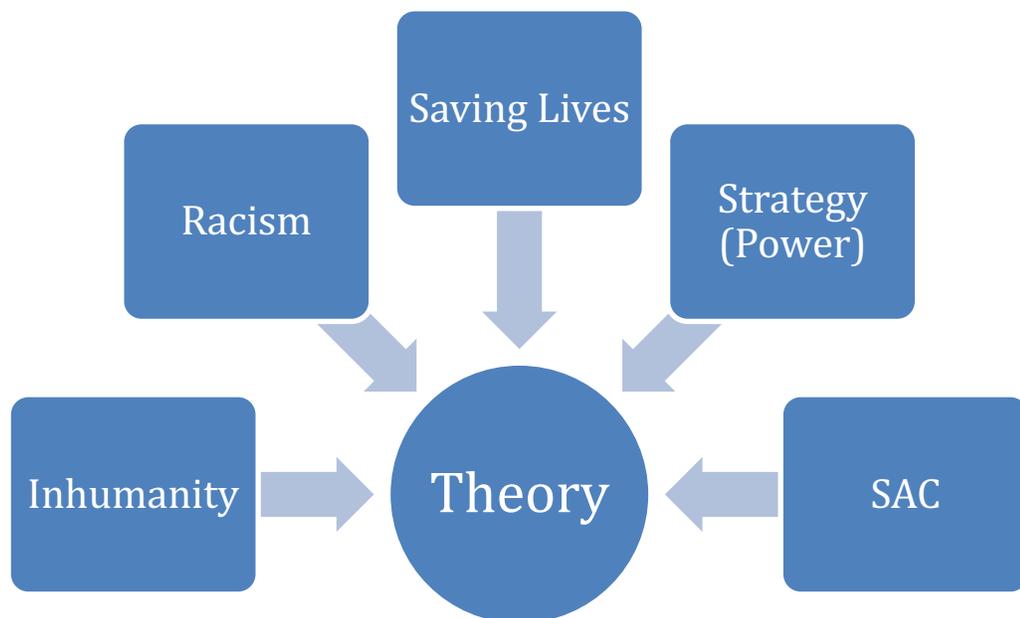

Figure 1. Five themes.

Findings

Inhumanity

Inhumanity is an instrumental value (Rokeach, 1973). It is a judgment of a way of behaving or specific mode of conduct with inhumanity as the opposite of forgiveness, morality, and self-controlled. Twelve participants used this descriptor as their first choice when writing about the atomic bomb's effect on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their concern centered around the number of civilians killed. "Killed civilians rather than soldiers. Killed innocent people, bombing was inhumane, not a good moral choice." They added up the number of casualties ("726,000 deaths") and subsequent generations (5) affected by the radiation and found the use of that type of weapon unacceptable. Another participant added, "it [the bombs] killed a lot of very innocent civilians, women and children." One participant believed the "bombs [were] as worse as outlawed weapons of war." Another participant stated her objection to the cruelty of using the bombs on civilians with even more condemnation.

> Many families were killed, babies and animals. How could we be so cruel and be so coldhearted to do something like that? It did end WWII, but there should have been other options instead of killing a whole population. What if it was the other way around? Didn't they think of what would have happened if they (Japan) had an atomic bomb dropped on us and our families? They did not put themselves in their shoes. That was selfish. (Participant 57A)

Inhumanity is a dominant thread present throughout most of the participant responses. While many participants viewed war as cruel and inhumane, most viewed the war as having a binary ending. The United States would either use the atomic bombs or invade the Japanese homeland. One team added a third option. One of blockade and

wait because Japan was on the brink of mass starvation of their civilian population, with their theory that once that happened, the United States could do a massive food airdrop to save the Japanese and force and end the war that way. A few participants with military tradition in their families, looked at the use of atomic weapons in Japan as a 'payback,' "because Japan started the war and it saved American lives and to not use it would have been a waste of nuclear advancements." Another participant with a military family tradition cited the Japanese Samurai Bushido code of "dying in battle was the honorable way to die, it gives honor to your family too." (See Appendix D).

Racism

Racism is the opposite terminal value of equality and a world at peace (Rokeach, 1973). Racism in the United States is endemic against communities of color. Many of the students within this high school and many People of Color within the larger community experience racism, some frequently in their daily routines. In coding, the racism element was found in four participant responses. Participant 17A stated, "President Truman had a *hatred* for the Japanese making the bomb racially motivated." The participant went further to say, "the atomic bomb was inhumane, and a demonstration of the bomb could have been done to see the true devastating effects the bomb has." Participant 31B said, "The Americans hated the Japanese, they viewed them as something inferior to them." Another participant, 17A explained his reasoning this way. "dropping the bombs was an ultimate decision which had numerous countries backing, but whether it was morally right is up for debate."

Saving Lives

Saving lives was a theme taught in both classes as one of the government's reasons for dropping the atomic bombs on the Japanese. Almost 50% of participants said saving American military lives was one of the reasons to use nuclear weapons in WWII. Many of the participants reflected about the Japanese Bushido Warrior Code and the tenet of no surrender, and that surrender was a dishonor to oneself and to one's family for generations to come. Conversely, 20% of participants expressed that the bombs saved Japanese lives. They considered the death of 140,000 Japanese to be less loss of life in the context of a possible invasion by allied troops. Troubling for many participants, the idea was summed up by one student: "I made the decision because the atomic bomb didn't end WWII. Japan was going to surrender anyway, and the Soviet Union was about to attack, and it (the bomb) killed many more civilians rather than soldiers."

It appeared a slight difference in subject matter was taught in the two classrooms. The researcher insured all students fully understood that the Soviet Union had invaded Manchuria already at the time of the atomic bombing. This instruction included a brief review of the atrocities committed by the Soviet troops when they invaded Germany in April and May 1945, information that was only touched on briefly in the other teacher's participant group. This was reflected in the participant responses. The researcher's students used the Soviet atrocities in Europe as a motivation factor for surrender by the Japanese while the associate teacher's students did not when reflecting on the reasons the Japanese surrendered.

Strategy (Power)

For the participants, the concept of the United States using strategy during an international war was an assumed element used by all combatants. The participants examined strategy for motivation, and in doing so, revealed their use in both the instrumental value of "modes of behavior" and the terminal value of the "end state of being." Participant statements included, "bombs were the only option to save American lives. And it stopped the war" (Participant 22B) and "We reached the conclusion that the bomb was a quick and effective way to end WWII" (Participant 9B). Conversely, Participant 17A believed the bomb was "wrongfully used to find out more of the affects" and "the first bomb would have been enough to ensure Japan's surrender." Or as a display of strength "[A]fter the attack on Pearl Harbor, they would have thought us weak if we didn't do anything back." There is a third point-of-view as well: one of wasted time and resources. "Also, since the atomic bomb was already invented, it would be a large waste of resources, time, and knowledge. The time of the scientists, labor workers, and everyone included. It would be like spitting in their faces after all the hard work" (Participant 71A).

SAC

SAC is a way to help students discuss a topic that might otherwise generate more heat than light if left unstructured. SAC provides a process of inquiry discovery for the individual and then gives the individual a process in a small group setting to examine and test the new knowledge. From interview 9A, "I got to see a whole different perspective

from everybody else. Like nobody had the same perspective. I used this in my

government class, and it helps to see different perspectives." Participant 7 added, "it

helped me look at both sides and then to write my points off that." What several of the

participants made clear is the SAC process works because it allows for their voice to be

heard.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

After review and analysis of the findings presented in Chapter 4, the conclusions of this chapter are presented in the context of the data, notes, and interviews of the participants following the guidance of the two research questions of this study. In this chapter, some ideas are explored about the implications of when high school students make decisions about their education. There were some interesting insights of when the student had enough information to resolve their own internal conflict and the frustration they experienced when trying to convince another student. This chapter finishes with several recommendations to increase teachers' awareness on engaging students in controversial topics and becoming more prepared pre-service to engage high school students on an emotional level with their education.

Conclusions

Review and analysis of the evidence in the findings presented in Chapter 4, the conclusions, are presented in the context of the data, notes, and interviews of the participants following the guidance of the two research questions of this study.

Research Question 1: When do students have enough knowledge to begin to have conflict with their schema, or prior knowledge, and the new information and then must reconcile the conflict or cognitive dissonance?

The high school students who participated in this study had varying degrees of engagement with the material before the study. Some participants expressed prior

knowledge of the atomic bombing from what they knew from watching Hollywood movies or a story told by a parent, grandparent, or friend. Many had very distorted viewpoints and deep misunderstanding of the historical facts. A few had some facts with a hazy memory of what they had been taught four years prior in middle school. Generally, everyone needed more information regardless of the foundation they were building upon.

Once the participants were instructed with the traditional theory of how the use of atomic weapons caused the Japanese to surrender, thereby saving thousands of American lives, the POV of some participants was reinforced and almost no amount of information was enough to cause them to experience conflict. The information they were hearing was from a trusted authority and matched what knowledge they had. When the gained knowledge reinforced the foundation knowledge, or schema, one concern was those participants would not be open to more conflicting information. Surprisingly, this was not the result for most of the participants. This did not become evident until the participants engaged with the SAC process. At that point, the participants who rejected the new information and stayed with the traditional POV were few but adamant about their position and would not entertain the other historical theory regardless of the argument and skill with which it was presented. Out of the complete contingent of student teams, only two teams (four participants) held to the traditional theory of the war ending. There may be many reasons for the steadfast refusal to accept or analyze the new information by those four students. Rokeach (1973) and Festinger (1957) would offer

that they did not get to a discomfort stage of cognitive dissonance or were not

emotionally engaged. This would be consistent with two students who were tired,

actively playing athletes and just wanted to get the assignment finished. Along with this

possibility is Piaget's (1936) theory of development indicating these students may have

been at a more concrete level of development and there just was not enough information

to challenge their schema. It is a limitation of this study and beyond the research

parameters to determine if these particular students were psychologically at Piaget's

concrete stage of brain development.

Additionally, two of the students were Junior Reserve Officer Candidate (JROTC)

members, and it is reasonable to consider they would strongly endorse the traditional

American military position. This is reinforced with their data, which reads as a battle

plan for victory with minimal loss of American lives. I believe the training these students

received in JROTC as well as being members of families with a military tradition of

several generations has honed a tribalism that does not allow any quarter to the enemy.

Research Question 2: How do students justify the decision choice they make when

they have high internal conflict?

Choice justification was very evident from the participants in both the data and

interviews. As Rokeach (1973), Festinger (1957), and Maslow (1973) predicted,

participants who were emotionally conflicted did change their schema and resolve the

internal dissonance. The deeper the emotional impact, the greater the emotional response

with descriptors like "inhuman," "cruel," and "hatred." This indicates empathy and

works toward Maslow's end states of being and terminal values. These participants could identify with the plight of the Japanese and impose their values on the lives of others. While observing, the groups that had the longest debates were those participants who had the deepest convictions about the use of the atomic bombs used on the Japanese cities. Listening to their conversations, those opposed to the atomic bombs were those participants whose notes reflected the most comments about killing civilians, especially children. Concern too was expressed about the long-term effects of radiation on humans.

One of the more heated debates involved the use of justification that Japanese civilians worked in the weapons factories; the counter to that was United States military POWs were forced labor in the factories and rail yards. This group had followed the SAC process reasonably well and had been very civil through the process, but once both positions and evidence had been exchanged, the veneer of decorum quicky dissolved and they became four angry teenagers. The class time was about over, and it was time to reassemble the room for the next class or the researcher would have had to intervene to keep the peace. What this gulf between the two pairs of four participants shows is the depth of emotion triggered by terminal values when perceived to be under attack by another person. For the pair in support of using the atomic weapon, it was the terminal value of "national security" with an instrumental value of "patriotism and strategy." The terminal value of those opposed to the other team was "world peace and security" with the instrumental value of "forgiving."

As deeply held as the terminal values (national security; world peace) were, these participants would not have reached a consensus in that class time. The impasse between the two pair was observable and, given the strength of their convictions, there was no possible outcome but to agree to disagree.

Recommendations

The following recommendations focus on ways to increase student engagement and participation in social studies. The implications are for all grade levels but are particularly directed to high school teachers and secondary grades. While this researcher used a new methodology to present an emerging body of historical research, tried and true content could produce similar results as long as a controversy was presented to the students.

Recommendations for Teachers, Curriculum Developers, and Policymakers

Introduce controversy into the curriculum every chance there is to stimulate engagement and student interest in the social studies. Because students have mores, values, and beliefs, they will rise to the challenge. Balance the information and let them do the research into the selected topic. There is great value to letting the students explore their values with each other. Help them understand what is happening and to develop their metacognition into their own thinking.

Be clear in the goal of the activity and of the controversy. Students need to know what is expected of them and how to meet those expectations. By front-loading the lesson with goals and expectations, the student will take charge of their learning. It is

incumbent upon the teacher to keep the task age appropriate as well. Many of the photos of the atomic bombing aftermath my high school students encountered would not be appropriate for a grade-school child. The same idea applies to materials for high school students in that the materials chosen for an activity should be challenging but within grade level.

Do not be overly concerned about discussing values with the students. All humans have feelings based on emotions, unless of course the human is a sociopath. Help your students understand feelings have a foundation in intrinsic, personal values as explained by the research, i.e., Maslow (1943), Rokeach (1973), Tuulik et al. (2016). Helping students understand why they may believe one way or another is developing their understanding how and why the world is constructed the way it is from their point of view. Of course, this also means the teacher must know their own values and mores. Without developing self-awareness, it is too easy for a teacher to fall into a trap of an inappropriate imposition, or even coercive pushing of their own values on their students.

Education programs should require more psychology classes for developing teachers. Educating teachers is the primary goal of Colleges of Education. To require more than a class of developmental psychology would help educators with the real demands of today's teachers as surrogate parents. The many demands on teachers require them to help their students with life's tragedies big and small. For many of these students, the teacher in the front of the room is the only stable adult in their life and the teacher is the initial person to triage the student. Today, many programs train teachers in

creating a trauma-informed classroom. Helping children build resiliency and strength

requires more than just empathy. To really help, the action must be based on observation

and training. That training should take place during pre-service education in the form of

several developmental psychology classes. This allows the teacher to have a strong

foundation to build the appropriate relationship with students enabling them to balance,

allowing students to be receptive to engagement in their education.

Recommendations for Further Studies

It could be beneficial to expand this study into multiple high schools. By doing

so, the process of increasing engagement of high school students into deeper

understanding of their values and why they make the choices they do as they go through

the day would be invaluable. As Socrates said, "a life unexamined is not worth living;"

so too high school students can engage in self-awareness as well.

Expand self-awareness into pre-service teacher training. In the required

psychology classes for pre-service teachers, expand the required classes to include

curriculum on values, mores, and norms. By increasing self-awareness in pre-service

teachers, they will be better equipped to handle their students. Understanding what a

student's action or behavior means increases a teacher's effectiveness and keeps the

student engaged.

Conduct research in other content areas. Does the SAC process work in other

content areas such as English, Math, or Art? There must be controversial issues in those

content areas as well as social studies. By examining those controversies, it will stimulate curiosity and critical thinking in general in students.

Summary

This chapter underscores and emphasizes the purpose of this case study. Moreover, it details the conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research. The key findings are that when high school students are engaged with controversies that directly affect their values and mores, their sense of fairness, and right and wrong, they will become intrinsically motivated to remain with the controversy until they can resolve their cognitive dissonance. Piaget (1936) would describe this as constructive knowledge building. Maslow would say the student is achieving a higher level of actualization. Festinger (1957) would posit the student's cognition is at equilibrium.

Students want to learn. Even the most disengaged student was won over and engaged with the material. They cannot not be involved. Anytime a challenge to a value or emotion is issued, most humans have to respond. Further, a teacher with deeper psychological understanding of juvenile development and behavior will be able to know how to engage emotion and appropriately respond to students enhancing the quality of the students' education.

By engaging students at that deeper level, teaching is enriched and becomes the rewarding profession, that higher calling most educational professionals remember motivated them through their pre-service day when we dreamed of having that

transformative effect on a classroom full of bright minds. It is possible to have that

classroom we dreamed of by embracing controversy and our students at a deeper level

sharing our understanding of American values. By engaging our students at that level, it

is possible to have that profound effect on generations throughout a career.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

Participant code _____   Pseudonym_____

1. Do you recall when you did this broad project. Did anything stand out?

2. Just suppose that the bomb was a dud. What do you think could have happened

    in? (Use a big picture stuff).

3. How do you approach your classmates when there is controversy?

4. When you had a controversy with the contrast partner for the topic of dropping

    the bomb on Hiroshima, how did you resolve that controversy?

5. With your position partner?

6. How did you resolve moving to the next steps?

7. Do you have any insights into this way of resolving conflict?

Question on the issue:

How did you agree with?

Moment when you had an ah ha moment?

Literature – it has some formula and in it a place where you can bring to select a side

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

University of Nevada, Reno

Parent Permission /Child Assent Form for Educational Research

Title of Study: Cognitive Dissonance: Are High School Students
Able to Resolve Conflict Between Two Historical Perspectives
Principle Investigator: Margaret Ferrara, Ph.D.
Co-Investigators / Study Contact: Rick Savage,
M.Ed.
Study ID Number:1035948-2
Sponsor: N/A

Introduction
Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to your child's participation in the study, read this form carefully. It explains why we are doing the study and the procedures, risks, discomforts, benefits and precautions involved.

At any time, you or your child may ask the researcher to explain anything about the study that you or your child does not understand.

It's important you are completely truthful about your child's eligibility to be in this study. If you are not truthful, your child may be harmed by being in the study.

Your child does not have to be in this study. Her/his participation is voluntary. If you do not agree for your child to participate, your child will receive the care/education she/he would have received if the study was not taking place.

Take as much time as you need for you and your child to decide. If you agree now but change your mind, you may withdraw your child from the study at any time. Just let the researcher know you do not want your child to continue.

Why are we doing this study?
I am doing this study to find out how high school students resolve two issues that tend to compete with each other. This will help provide more avenues for students to use critical thought processes especially in historical events that are not clearly explained and actually tend to contradict each other.

Benefits of research cannot be guaranteed; however, it is anticipated that students will gain a richer understanding of controversial issues and how to delve into these issues with

logic and critical thinking. The course that is that students will gain new knowledge that is influenced by new information and text analysis

<div align="center">Why are we asking your child to be in this study?</div>
We are asking you to allow your child to participate because she/he is in an advanced placement course and part of the expectation of the course is that the student will be able to distinguish fact from opinion and use evidence on which to base this decision.

<div align="center">How many people will be in this study?</div>
We expect to enroll about 60 participants at [ ]High School.

What will your child be asked to do if you agree to allow your child to be in the study?
If you give permission for your child to be in this research study, she/he will be asked to examine an alternative perspective on a major historical event. The information will be in the form of books, documents, video presentation, and lecture. The students will discuss and talk with each other about the new information. With a structured academic controversy process, it is anticipated that students will have a whole class instruction. The intent of the teacher is to be a passive observer especially as students move from large group discussion to small group discussion based on a set of questions. As a follow-up, individual students may be informally interviewed by the researchers.

Participants will discuss the new information within their small group, move to a whole class discussion to then develop a consensus, and then they will write a reflection of the experience. The reflections will be collected for analysis by the researchers. Some students will be selected for follow-up one-on-one interviews.

Written notes, audio recordings, and observations of the students while they are in discussion groups and individually will be collected while they are involved in the study. The records will be kept and maintained by the researchers in a locked, restricted access file cabinet. Only the researchers will have the key to the file cabinet. These records will be collected to analyze and understand more fully the thought processes students experience while incorporating new and conflicting information on an historical event. The records will be destroyed after the study is finished.

<div align="center">How long will your child be in the study?</div>
The study will take place during normal class time; she/he will participate for about 2 weeks in the set of lesson plans that accompany the unit.

What are your choices if your child does not volunteer to be in this research study?
If you and/or your child decide not to be in the study, your other choices may include:
- Getting no treatment. Rather than the child will receive traditional instruction in a corresponding US History class.

What if you agree to have your child be in the study now, but change your mind later? Your child does not have to stay in the study. You may withdraw your child or your child may withdraw from the study at any time by informing the teacher.

What if the study changes while your child is in it?
If anything about the study changes or if we want to use your child's information in a different way, we will tell you and your child, and ask if your child will remain in the study. We will also tell you about any important new information that may affect your willingness allow your child to stay in the study.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for your child?
No, the study objectives are aligned with the curriculum that is used for the Advanced Placement curriculum that is part of the overall curriculum for the course.

Will being in this study help your child in any way?
We anticipate that the child will benefit from being in this study through large group and small group discussions that help foster critical thinking and different ways of problem solving.

Who will pay for the costs of your child's participation in this research study?
No costs are associated with participation in this study.

Will you (or your child) be paid for your child's participation in this study?
Neither you nor your child will receive any payment for being this study.

Who will know that your child is in this study and who will have access to the information we collect about your child?
The researchers, University of Nevada, Reno Institutional Review Board, US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the school district, will have access to your child's study records.

How will we protect private information about you and your child, and the information we collect about your child?
We will treat your identity and that of your child with professional standards of confidentiality and will protect your and your child's private information to the extent allowed by law. We will do this by keeping all student produced materials in a locked file cabinet and destroying them when the study is completed.

We will not use your name or your child's name or other information that could identify you or your child in any reports or publications that result from this study.

Do the researchers have monetary interests tied to this study?
The researchers and/or members of their families do not have any monetary interests in this research.

Who can you contact if you have questions about the study or want to report an injury?
At any time, if you have questions about this study or wish to report an injury that may be related to your child's participation in this study, contact Margaret Ferrara, (775) 682-7530; or Rick Savage, (775) 353-5550.

Who can you contact if you want to discuss a problem or complaint about the research or ask about your child's rights as a research participant?
You may discuss a problem or complaint or ask about your child's rights as a research participant by calling the University of Nevada, Reno Research Integrity Office at (775) 327-2368. You may also use the online *Contact the Research Integrity Office* form available from the *Contact Us* page of the University's Research Integrity Office website.

Agreement to be in the study
If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, you must sign this permission form. We will give you a copy of the form to keep.

_____
Child's Name Printed

_____   _____
Signature of Parent   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Participant (Student)   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

APPENDIX C: CODES TO CATEGORIES

726.000 deaths
Killed civilians rather than soldiers   **Inhumanity**
Killed innocent people
Cruelty - Bombs struck fear
A cruel and bloody war
High number of lives lost in the bombing
Many innocent lives killed
Innocent lives killed
Bombs as worse as outlawed weapons of war
Bombing was inhuman
I felt sympathy for Japan - Japan was ashamed by surrender
Not a good morale choice

Reasonable explanations
Hatred of the Japanese   **Racism**
Not a great idea/bad idea
Saved 1,000 of American lives

                                                Saving Lives
Invading Japan would cost over one million lives
It (the bombs) saved "countless" lives
Bombs not necessary to save 100,000s of lives

                                                Patriotism
Truman wanted to save American lives
Show of military power
Impacts to U.S. morale
Bombs saved millions of American lives

Morale was low among (Japanese) civilians   **Immorality**
Could've used a less harsh tactic
Bomb still effects people today
Civilians worked in weapons factories

Should have let the Japanese surrender   **Strategy**
Wrongfully used – U.S. wanted military superiority
Truman wanted Stalin to fear him
Bomb was the only solution that would've resulted in zero U.S. lives lost
Conditional surrender
Violence is not an option – except in this case
Surrender used to stop Japan's damage and suffering
Atomic bombs saved resources

Bombs saved lives
Bombs helped end the war
Russia was going to invade (Japan)

APPENDIX D: STUDENT WORK SAMPLES

Inhumanity

"Disappointing. Because I feel like there were other things that he could have done before he killed a lot of people and then destroyed a bunch of land that then killed more people."

"It's horrifying to go through that with your family. And then know that later you are going to go through that same thing all over again."

Racism

"The war could have ended in a more peaceful way. The United States felt there was no other way but to drop it as revenge."

"President Truman had a hatred of the Japanese, making the bombing racially motivated."

Saving Lives

"The bombing saved American lives."

"Dropping the atomic bomb on Japan saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers and was the only way to end the war quickly."

Strategy (Power)

"I made the decision to support the bombing because the United States needed to show their power so other countries know not to mess with them."

"I do believe the use of the bombs on Japan caused the end of WW II because if we hadn't dropped the bombs, they would've thought of us as vulnerable. They would have thought of us as weak if we didn't do anything back."

"The two bombs served the purpose of showing the U.S. military power and not to cause Japan's surrender."

SAC (Structured Academic Controversy)

"Yeah, I thought it was kind of neat, like just the idea of taking something that everybody previously already thought they knew everything about and then being like, hey but that didn't happen and changing it. I think that is a really neat thing to do."

"In my opinion just don't blow things out of proportions like if one person doesn't agree and the other person are butting heads, don't take it to the next level where you are like in each other's faces and saying you're wrong, I'm right! And your wrong! And then it turns into a yelling war and seeing who has the loudest voice, but honestly think if you stay calm and talk to each other and give facts about what your opinion is and then they give facts what their opinion is, then I don't see what the problem is."

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