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Teacher Approaches to Women's History, Gender, and Feminism in Secondary Social Studies

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Teacher Approaches to Women's History, Gender, and Feminism in Secondary Social Studies

A thesis/dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of (list degree, for example, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy) at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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love you.

For Taylor, who was unafraid to dream big dreams

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

While several scholars have worked to reimagine social studies curriculum from a feminist perspective, there are few studies that look at how teachers understand and experience gender equity work (Bohan, 2017; Engebretson, 2018). This study seeks to bridge that gap between theory and practice in order to progress toward a more gender-equitable social studies education. Utilizing a hermeneutic circle design to facilitate dialogue across participants, I conducted one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with seven secondary social studies teacher participants and collected participant-provided curriculum materials. Using techniques from constructivist grounded theory, I analyzed how teachers made sense of their experiences trying to include and promote women's history, gender, and feminism in their practice. This analysis resulted in the development and exploration of three approaches to gender equity work: angling, exposing lightly, and avoiding. I discuss the implications of each of those approaches for work on gender and social studies education and also reflect on certain teacher considerations that complicated curriculum and instructional decision-making regarding how to do the work of gender equity in the classroom.

Keywords: *gender equity, feminist theory, social studies education, curriculum practices*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

For the past few decades, feminist educators have been engaged in "a comprehensive knowledge transformation project to bring women's issues, biographies, and histories into mainstream social studies curriculum" (Crocco, 2004, p. 145). They have envisioned new curriculum models, (McIntosh, 1983; Tetreault, 1985), constructed historical inquiry techniques (Woyshner, 2006), and created or recommended texts and other curriculum materials (Berkin et al., 2009; Crocco, 2001; Crocco, 2011) to help "correct both the *invisibility* and *distortion* of the female experience" (Lather, 1991, p. 71). While evidence does indicate that curriculum materials for social studies classrooms have improved their attention to women's history, those improvements have not always been substantial or sustained over time (Bohan, 2017; Engebretson, 2018; Hahn et al., 2007). For example, although some materials have demonstrated a quantitative increase in the amount of women represented, many of those same materials only offer superficial attention to women's history, gender, or feminism. This leaves traditional, androcentric narratives largely intact (Coffey & Delamont, 2000). It is clear from these studies that the knowledge-transformation project is still ongoing in social studies education and that more work is needed to address how we would like women's history, gender, and feminism to appear in social studies classrooms.

While significant research has been done to identify those underrepresentations and misrepresentations in curriculum materials, few studies have been undertaken to better understand the teacher experience relating to gender-equity work in social studies education (Bohan, 2017; Engebretson, 2018). Furthermore, many of those studies focus on the pre-service teacher experience with this work (Colley, 2017; Engebretson, 2016; Monaghan, 2008). In this

study, I worked with in-service teachers with a variety of years of teaching experience. By

having an established practice within schools, the teachers in this study were able to reflect on

their practice in relation to their school contexts in a way that pre-service teachers might not be

able to articulate yet.

Teachers are often positioned as crucial decision-makers regarding curriculum content,

structuring, and delivery (Coffey & Delamont, 2000; Thornton, 2005). Because of this, teachers

have the potential to be powerful allies in the feminist knowledge transformation project.

Working with teachers on this project means not only engaging them in gender-focused

professional development or continuing education opportunities, but also learning from their

wisdom and experience as curriculum consumers and producers. Davis (1997) articulated a kind

of unique wisdom that teachers can come to possess given their situatedness in schools. This

wisdom is gained through contextualized teaching experiences where one must respond to the

educational realities of their school environment and make practical as well as goal-oriented

decisions. Feminist theory has long championed situated knowledges as more "objective," or

truthful, than decontextualized knowledges that claim universality (Haraway, 1988). By

discussing with in-service teachers how they do and do not incorporate women's history, gender,

and feminism into their practice, I aimed to center that situated knowledge and wisdom in the

ongoing pursuit of gender-equity in social studies education.

Having been a middle school social studies teacher for six years in Virginia, I struggled at

times to promote the topics of women's history, gender, and feminism in my own practice and,

thus, came to the world of academia wondering what mindset or combination of factors was

either holding me back from or propelling me forward toward my vision for gender-equity in

social studies education. I began this project looking to investigate how other secondary social

studies teachers articulated their vision for a more gender-equitable social studies and in what ways they felt they could realize their vision. This resulted in the following initial research question: "How do secondary social studies teachers construct the idea of a feminist social studies curriculum as they discuss including women's history, gender, or feminism in their practice?" My research question evolved over the course of the study, a process which I describe in Chapter 3. The final research questions that guided my data analysis and writing were:

- How do secondary social studies teachers describe their approach to women's history, gender, and feminism in their curriculum and instructional practices?

- What do teachers consider when determining their approach to those topics?

These final research questions better captured the sense of struggle that the teacher-participants in this study revealed early on in the interviewing process and that I originally felt in my own teaching practice.

By asking those research questions, I had two primary goals. First, I aimed to uncover how teachers are making curriculum decisions regarding the inclusion of women's history, gender, and feminism. As curriculum gatekeepers, teachers have some control over what and how content is delivered to students. By discussing with teachers how they incorporate the topics of this study into their curriculum and instruction, I sought to better understand how they chose to exercise that control. Those discussions also give a window into how teachers understand women's history, gender, and feminism and what they prioritize when incorporating those topics into their teaching. My second goal was to develop an understanding of the kinds of factors or concerns that impact teachers' work toward gender-equity. Because teachers are not the sole arbiters for classroom curriculum, I wanted to gain insights into how they navigated curriculum

pressures within their teaching contexts and what influenced their decision-making or priorities when delivering content on the topics of this study.

It is important to note that I am intentionally using the terms *women* or *women's history* in addition to *gender* and *feminism* in order to reinforce that these terms should not be thought of as interchangeable. By addressing women's history in my research, I addressed a subset of gender. Gender is a far more inclusive framework that provides considerable analytic power for the study of histories beyond the male/female binary. While addressing the histories of other gender categories is both necessary and important, there is still work to be done in telling women's history at the K-12 classroom level in particular. In her assessment of whether or not we still need women's history as a special focus in historical scholarship, Kessler-Harris (2007) wrote, "I want to fight for a history of women and gender where gender constitutes the relational category, and the history of women the arena that we have yet to excavate" (para. 19). By emphasizing women's history, this study was designed to help teachers continue that excavation project at the classroom level. As my research questions suggest, I also had an interest in whether and how teachers think about feminism. In the next section, I explore the challenge of defining the term "feminism." This discussion sets the stage for the myriad of ways teachers can and do understand the term feminism and how I understand and used the term as a theoretical framework for this study.

The Plurality of Feminism

Today, there are many different faces of feminism. How one chooses to define feminism may depend on their ideological beliefs, widespread socio-cultural influences, personal subjectivities, local contextual factors, and more. This plurality of feminism is not new. In fact, Kohli and Burbules (2012) argued that the act of fostering and accommodating "the multiple and

conflicting internal conversations" that result from such plurality "is partly constitutive of

feminism as a theory and practice" (p. 3). Indeed, past conversations within the feminist

movement have been essential to uncovering problematic feminist beliefs and questioning

assumptions. For example, in the latter half of the twentieth century, many critiques from those

left out of the essentialized category of "women" helped contribute to the development of a more

inclusive feminist movement (Lather, 1991; Fraser, 2005). This is not to say that the feminist

movement or feminist theory is now unproblematic in how it recognizes and includes people

from diverse backgrounds; rather, what this does say, is that the practice of critical reflection can

serve to keep feminism accountable to its most firmly held commitments while also keeping

feminism relevant by allowing for the possibility of changing those commitments.

Certainly, having a multiplicity of opinion about the definition of feminism has not been

without its disadvantages. hooks (1984) considered this multiplicity a "central problem within

feminist discourse" because feminists cannot speak and act from "points of unification

[when]…we lack a sound foundation on which to construct theory or engage in overall

meaningful praxis" (p. 17). Indeed, leaving the door too wide open has perhaps caused some of

the most recent concerning appropriations of feminism. I refer here to expressions of

postfeminism found in western culture. Sometimes described as a "sensibility," postfeminism is

characterized by

> a focus upon empowerment, choice and individualism; the repudiation of sexism and thus
>
> of the need for feminism alongside a sense of 'fatigue' about gender; notions of make-
>
> over and self-reinvention/transformation; an emphasis upon embodiment and femininity
>
> as a bodily property; an emphasis on surveillance and discipline; a resurgence of ideas of
>
> sexual difference. (Gill et al., 2017, p. 230)

Examples of postfeminism are often intimately connected with neoliberalism and individualism. For example, in analyzing expressions of celebrity and style feminism prominent in today's popular culture, Gill (2016) found that feminism had been "rebranded" to a point where it might be more accurate to call it "not just feminism-lite, but feminism weightless" (p. 618). With this new, rebranded feminism, almost anything can be termed "feminist" because it is deemed to be more about celebrating an identity than having any sort of politics (Gill, 2016). These new appropriations of feminism can be especially contradictory in their expressions, such as proclaiming resistance to systems of oppression while ultimately being complicit with them.

Recent work done on social studies education indicate that these multiplicities and contradictions also exist in how feminism gets expressed in the classroom. In her dissertation, Scheiner-Fisher (2013) explored why six teachers chose to go "above and beyond" to include women's history even though it was not part of their official social studies curriculum in any significant way. She found "no overarching belief system that united the participants, no common goal, and no deep understanding or appreciation of women's history as a whole" (Scheiner-Fisher, 2013, p. 139). Only two of her six participants even accepted the label of "feminist." Even when researchers specifically seek out self-described feminist teachers, as Stevens and Martell (2019) did, they still find evidence of a variety of feminist beliefs and behaviors among their participants. Stevens and Martell (2019) mapped their diverse participant beliefs and behaviors onto two models of feminist teaching: critical feminism and liberal feminism (Stevens & Martell, 2019). Although the models overlap on certain points, critical feminist teaching practices are "focused more on gender-equity" while liberal feminist teaching practices are "focused more on the coverage of women" (Stevens & Martell, 2019, p. 7).

This plurality and contradiction in how we understand and enact feminism should not preclude taking action. Lather (1991) hailed how feminism's embrace of self-reflexivity gives feminists experience with "both rendering problematic and provisional our most firmly held assumptions and, nevertheless, acting in the world, taking a stand" (p. 29). In working to understand teachers' experiences with women's history, gender, and feminism in their practice, I did not set out to find one right approach to this work. That said, I did set out to find ways we, as members of the social studies field, can engage more deeply with the concepts of gender and feminism in addition to pushing for more and better representations of girls and women in the curriculum. As I discuss in Chapter 2, we have a particular need in our field to address gender as a social construct and engage with feminism as a critical theory suitable for investigating and responding to instances of gender inequity.

I utilized feminism as a theoretical framework to help shape both my goals for this study and my research design. As a critical paradigm, feminism foregrounds "how our lives are mediated by systems of inequity such as classism, racism, sexism, and heterosexism" (Lather, 2004, p. 205). Because feminism has long been concerned with issues of social justice and power, it offered me a framework whereby I could explore with the study participants the many different dimensions that make up the problem of curriculum visibility. Additionally, feminism encourages researchers to "recognize a range of connections among discourses, and institutions, and identities, and ideologies that we often tend to consider separately" and "inhabit contradictions and discover what is productive in these contradictions. (Davis, 2016, p. 104). I set out to inhabit those contradictions that might arise during the course of this study and still produce actionable and justice-oriented recommendations that support the inclusion of women in

the curriculum, the exploration of gender as a framework for understanding identity, and the investigation of gender-inequity in the past and present.

Current Trends in Feminism and Education

In feminist praxis, collective action and theorizing tend to go hand-in-hand (Crocco, 2004; Lerner, 1993); therefore, in the absence of a significant feminist movement, those who do feminist intellectual work may be less likely to gain traction for their work. Evidence suggests that feminist social studies curriculum work had been in retreat for the last couple of decades (Crocco, 2004; Schmeichel, 2011; Schmeichel, 2015). During that time, a postfeminist sensibility circulated in the media, asserting (among other things) that gender equality had been achieved and there was no need to continue fighting for feminist causes (Gill, 2007). This narrative was problematic both because it deemed feminism unnecessary and because it discounted the feminist goal of ending oppressive structures rather than seeking to gain equality within them. Nevertheless, over the last four years, the United States has witnessed a resurgence of feminist political action.

On January 21st, 2017, millions of people participated in women's marches around the world to advocate for civil and human rights (Przybyla & Schouten, 2017). That Fall, many survivors of sexual violence used Tarana Burke's #MeToo to raise awareness of the prevalence and nature of abuse and harassment. The Times Up campaign followed shortly after, focusing on achieving legislative and policy changes to improve workplace safety and equity (Lagone, 2018). At the start of 2018, many people participated in the second annual Women's March around the country, reaffirming commitments to justice and equity (Bailey et al., 2018). The 2018 mid-term elections brought about a record-breaking number of women in Congress (Cooney, 2018) and the 2019 democratic primary saw a record number of female candidates running for president of the

Unites States (Becker, 2019). With this recent wave of collective action, it may be more possible to make gains within the feminist knowledge transformation project than in years prior when discourses about feminism's obsolescence were more popular. That said, a current challenge alongside this possibility is the continuing presence of competing feminist discourses in the form of liberal feminism, geared more toward equality within current systems, and critical feminism, aimed at radical transformation of systems to create equity (Arruzza et al., 2019).

This renewed national interest in feminism is also occurring alongside a reduction in high-stakes, standardized testing in education policy. This shifting accountability context opens up possibilities for curriculum change. Accountability measures can be powerful mechanisms for curricular-instructional control. High-stakes testing policies, for example, have been associated with tightly regulating what subjects get the most instructional time, what pedagogical strategies are implemented the most in classrooms, and what content gets covered in the curriculum (Au, 2009; Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Recently, under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015), the federal government relinquished much of the control over designing and implementing state accountability systems that it had built up under *No Child Left Behind* (2002). With this shift in assessment responsibility, some states have scaled back their use of high-stakes, multiple-choice testing. In 2014, the Virginia State Assembly removed several end-of-year, multiple choice exams and replaced them with a call for "alternative assessments" in the classroom (H 930, p. 3). Three out of the five courses affected by this new policy are social studies courses: Grade 3 History, United States History to 1865, and United States History: 1865 to the Present.

This change is especially significant in the context of Virginia given that the policies adopted by the Virginia Department of Education over the last few decades have been heavily influenced by the standardization and accountability movements since the mid-1990s. The first

History and Social Science Standards of Learning (SOLs) in Virginia were released just five

months after the national history standards were debated on the floors of Congress in 1995

(Stearns et al., 2000). According to van Hover et al. (2010), the state's standards-based reform

effort that included those social studies standards "pushed Virginia to the forefront of the

accountability movement" (p. 81). They further argued that Virginia's prominence within this

movement makes it a "representative case of what could occur (and, in some cases, did) occur in

other states where high stakes testing and cultural literacy are the doctrine of the day" (van

Hover et al. 2010, p. 82). Ultimately, the SOLs in Virginia rejected a more progressive approach

to social studies education in favor of a more traditional, content-focused approach modeled after

E.D. Hirsch's "cultural literacy" (van Hover et al. 2010).

Since their adoption, the SOL exams have become so much a part of the school culture

that their influence is "as undetectable as it is pervasive" (van Hover, 2006, p. 215). In van

Hover's (2006) study of seven beginning social studies teachers in Virginia, she included an

anecdote that illuminates how the SOLs have become an invisible hand in social studies teaching

among new teachers. Although the seven teachers interviewed for the study did not identify the

SOLs as especially influential in their curriculum planning process, when van Hover (2006)

visited three different World History I teachers in three different schools on the same day, she

found that all three were covering the exact same core content.

Now that the accountability context is changing again for social studies in Virginia, new

research is needed to see what is occurring at the classroom-level. By rolling back standardized

testing and encouraging local control over assessment design, Virginia state officials may have

reduced some of the barriers facing teachers who wish to supplement or enhance the state's

standardized curricula. Participants involved in this study reflect this newly diversified

accountability landscape that currently exists in Virginia. Some participants only teach courses

with alternative assessments while others teach courses with end-of-year, high-stakes SOL

and/or AP testing. Because of these current trends in feminism and education, this study is

uniquely positioned to contribute early data on how those diverse accountability contexts in

Virginia might be affecting teachers' work with historically marginalized curriculum content.

Brief Overview of Methodology

Black feminist epistemology has long held that "connectedness rather than separation is

an essential component of the knowledge validation process" (Collins, 2000, p. 260). So, in the

task of striving for a feminist social studies curriculum, I sought dialogue and connection so that

I could see with others. My study design and methods reflect that desire.

I designed a qualitative study using ethnographic tools for data collection and interpretive

analysis techniques from constructivist grounded theory. I used purposeful, criterion and

snowball sampling to identify seven secondary social studies teachers in Virginia public schools

who used women's history and gender-related topics in their practice and have an interest in

promoting those topics. Although all the teacher participants in this study were motivated to use

those topics in their practice, many of them also identified as struggling at times to do so.

For data collection, I conducted two rounds of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews

and collected curriculum documents from each teacher participant. I utilized a hermeneutic circle

design to structure the interviews, allowing me to facilitate the co-construction of knowledge

across all participants over time. As part of this design, after each round-one interview, I created

a written summary construct describing the ideas that emerged during the interview. Then, at the

end of the next interview, the next participant reviewed and responded to the previous

participant's summary construct. Because of this structure, I began the process of data analysis alongside data collection.

To further analyze the data, I deconstructed interview transcripts into small meaningful units called quotes and began the process of reconstructing the data through coding during the data collection phase. During the reconstruction process, which continued on after data collection had ceased, I primarily used gerunds and in vivo codes to stay close to the data and capture the meaning of participants as much as possible. Through this process, I developed certain themes relating to the two research questions. In Chapter Four, I present those themes as a thematic array followed by individual teacher profiles. Rather than a totalizing framework intended to be applied to a variety of dissimilar contexts, a thematic array is a visual display of the study's themes intended to help facilitate the discussion of findings. Each teacher profile features a brief introduction followed by quotes from the teacher interviews. I structure these profiles to further develop the three thematic approaches to the topics of women's history, gender, and feminism and to develop some of the primary teacher considerations regarding the teaching of those topics.

Summary

This study provided a space for teachers to share their experiences handling content that has been largely marginalized in official social studies curricula and consider how they currently struggle or succeed in promoting gender equity in their practice. Their reflections can help advance the field of social studies education by offering us valuable insights into the lived experiences of trying to promote the topics of women's history, gender, and feminism in curriculum and instructional practices. Our collective efforts toward the goal of gender equity have the potential to affirm the identities of more students and create a better foundation from

which to educate the next generation about structures of oppression and how to bring about

change.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to make further progress toward a more gender equitable social studies education, it is important to identify what we already know about doing that work. This literature review begins by discussing how curriculum is implicated in systems of knowledge and power. I discuss where teachers are often located within these systems of knowledge and power and why I think teachers should have a more prominent place in curriculum conversations. By better understanding the act of selection in the process of curriculum design, we can see the mechanisms by which women are overlooked or superficially included in historical narratives and curriculum materials. The second half of this chapter explores how "early" feminist historians and educators intervened in the knowledge production process to center women, women's experiences, and historically feminized topics. Using insights from poststructuralist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, and citizenship education, I suggest how the goals of the feminist knowledge transformation project may be changing. Then, I review empirical studies on gender and social studies curriculum to better understand the current state of the feminist knowledge transformation project at the classroom level. I chose those three areas of scholarship to investigate how others have understood the work of including and promoting women's history, gender, and feminism and to consider what that means for current and future work toward gender-equity in social studies education.

Curriculum Control and Teacher Expertise

The Act of Selection

Schools are complex sites of knowledge generation, communication, and evaluation (Bernstein, 1996/2000; Coffey & Delmont, 2000; Apple; 1993). Much of the knowledge that gets circulated through schools is transmitted through the curriculum. The term "curriculum" has

sometimes been narrowly defined as that which gets formally taught in classrooms. A classic

broader understanding of the term comes from Lawton (1975):

> School curriculum [is]…*a selection from the culture of society*. Certain aspects of our
>
> way of life, certain kinds of knowledge, certain attitudes and values are regarded as so
>
> important that their transmission to the next generation is not left to chance in our society.
>
> (p. 6 & 7)

While this broader definition rightly gets at how curriculum is more than a particular type of

document, it fails to interrogate the underlying power dynamics inherent in the act of *selection*.

Over the last few decades, critical theorists have challenged the idea that selection can be neutral

or objective (Giroux, 1986; Segall, 2004). Using Raymond Williams' notion of the *selective*

tradition, Apple (1993) underlined how knowledge and power are intimately connected in the

process of curriculum design. He explained that the selection of knowledge for official school

texts can never be neutral because it will always be "someone's selection, someone's vision of

legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group's cultural

capital disenfranchises another's" (p. 49). Elwood (2016) echoed this last point in her chapter

Gender and the Curriculum, noting that selection "is in fact dominated by particular powerful

groups who dictate what is taught, how it is taught and also how it is assessed," which often

makes the culture of groups with comparatively little power "unselected and invisible" (Elwood,

2016, p. 250).

Controversies and conflicts over the content of curriculum texts can, therefore, be

understood as a struggle for power. With social studies curriculum, that desire for power can be

read as a desire "to shape young peoples' world views" (Thornton, 2008, p. 15) or a desire to

influence one's standing in society (Tyack, 1999). In his book *The Social Studies Wars,* Evans

(2004) represented the various constituencies involved in the shaping of the social studies as different camps with "competing visions of the worthy society" battling it out for supremacy over the curriculum (p. 2). In his history of the politics of social studies textbooks, Tyack (1999) described textbooks as a kind of public display that can either validate or undermine a group's identity, values, and experiences. It is, therefore, no wonder when he goes on to detail how various groups in the United States have spent considerable time and resources organizing and lobbying to get their version of the "official truth about the past" included in these official texts (Tyack, 1999, p. 922).

In his book *Critical Curriculum Studies*, Au (2012) argued that these struggles over curriculum content and structuring are, ultimately, about consciousness. According to Au (2012), "the intent of all curriculum is to influence student learning and, by extension, shape student consciousness about not only subject matter, but also their worldview and their view of themselves" (p. 92). Acknowledging that this can sound like a conspiracy designed to brainwash our nation's youth, Au (2012) stressed that the desire to shape student consciousness is a mere "fact of all education" (p. 92). While he openly advocated for a specific political perspective (namely, a critical, antioppressive, and progressive agenda) throughout *Critical Curriculum Studies*, Au's (2012) underlying premise - that curriculum is really about consciousness – is not tied to any particular political ideology. In other words, knowledge can be selected and curated to shape student consciousness in either critical or hegemonic, antioppressive or oppressive, progressive or conservative ways. Because of this, disagreements and conflict over curriculum content and structuring may be inevitable or, even, normal. Those engaged in these struggles to shape student consciousness know that, in the words of Nelson Mandela, "the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow" (as cited in Schworm, 2013, para. 7).

In the above descriptions, we can understand how the act of selection is inherently social. It involves struggle or negotiation between individuals or groups of people operating in specific socio-political contexts. Although dominant groups may wish to simply impose their vision of official knowledge onto an educational institution, final curriculum materials tend to be a product of compromise. This does not mean, however, that those compromises are made on an equal playing field. In fact, the end results often favor those in power (Apple, 1993). This tends to be the case because curriculum decisions are made within complex and changing social, economic, and political contexts governed by certain power relations. Those relations can either work to block or advance certain curriculum content and structuring decisions. When people try to advance curriculum that challenges existing power relations, their efforts are more likely to meet with significant resistance than those who advance curriculum that fits within "the boundaries of the hegemonic commonsense" (Au, 2012, p. 92).

The act of selection is also inherently subjective. The individual curriculum author plays a key role in the process of selection. Because of this, we must consider how the individual curriculum author both consciously and unconsciously controls what knowledge they make available to students via their curriculum product. According to Au (2012), "what we know and learn about the world has a profound impact on how we both view and act within the world" (p. 11). The dynamics of power and knowledge also tell us that the reverse is true: how we both view and act within the world has a profound impact on what we know and learn about the world. Essentially, this means that a curriculum author is limited by their own knowledge, experiences, and actions. Or, put differently, a curriculum author's products will be an expression of their own knowledge, experiences, and actions. This realization aligns with a basic

tenet of feminist standpoint theory: that our knowledge is always subjective and partial

(Haraway, 1988).

Standpoint theory also tells us that what knowledge we have access to and what action

we can take is, in part, shaped by where we are located in the material world. This means that

curriculum authors from different locations are likely to produce considerably different

curriculum products. In what follows, Harding (2007) provides a succinct explanation of the

effect location has on the accessibility of certain experiences:

> What people can typically "do" depends in part on their locations in social structures –
>
> whether or not they are assigned the work of taking care of children, and of people's
>
> bodies and spaces they inhabit, or of administering large agencies, corporations, or
>
> research institutes. Material life both enables and limits what people can come to know
>
> about themselves and the worlds around them. (p. 50)

Harding (2007) went on to describe how interlocking systems of oppression further complicate

this picture by hierarchically organizing those structures by class, race, gender, sexuality, and

more. Consequently, our identities are implicated in the process of curriculum selection. Those

with dominant-group identities may be unable to see the mechanisms that uphold their privilege,

whereas those who occupy dominated-group identities may be more aware of the mechanisms

that work to keep them oppressed. It is because our location influences what knowledge we have

access to that this is the case. As Harding (2007) explained, "the understandings available to the

dominant group tend to support the legitimacy of its dominating position whereas the

understandings available to the dominated tend to delegitimate such domination" (p. 50). This

means that, depending on their identities, a curriculum author may be more or less likely to be

aware of certain systems of oppression.

In this section, I have described how curriculum is a selection of knowledge from our culture and, because curriculum control is ultimately about shaping student consciousness, struggles over curriculum content and structuring are common (if not the norm). I also stressed that not everyone has equal access to perform that act of selection. Curriculum decisions are often governed by the dominant power relations in our society. Finally, I argued, using feminist standpoint theory, that even when positioned to perform that act of selection, not everyone can create the same kind of curriculum products. A curriculum author's selection of knowledge is influenced by *what they know* and *how they understand and act* in the world, which is partially determined by *who they are* and *where they are* located in the material world and its hierarchies. In what follows, I bring together Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device (1996/2000) with the concept of situated knowledge from feminist standpoint theory to outline today's system for curriculum reproduction and argue that teachers should have more control over school curriculum.

Fields of Curriculum Knowledge

Bernstein's (1996/2000) theory of the *pedagogic device* allows us to visualize the social fields within which struggles over curriculum control play out. Through his theory, Bernstein develops a dynamic and changing structure that allows us to see how inequities can be reproduced, but it does not follow a fixed, deterministic pattern of reproduction. I utilize this theory to better conceptualize the complex interplay between and among individuals, groups, and organizations that influences and constructs our current school knowledge and practices.

The pedagogic device is comprised of three interrelated social fields within which discourses are selected and adapted for classroom use: fields of *production*, *recontextualization*, and *reproduction*. Collin (2014) defined a social field as a "human-made domain[] in which

actors mobilize ways of understanding themselves, relating to others, distributing social goods, acting in the world, and knowing and representing the world" (p. 314). I provide a brief description of each of the three categories of social fields below before discussing some of the structural challenges teachers face today as curriculum producers and consumers.

The *fields of production* are sites wherein knowledge is negotiated as either "thinkable" or "unthinkable." Those who exert control within a field of production can select and legitimate knowledge and, by extension, can "place limits of possibility on consciousness, identity, and social relations" (Au, 2008, p. 642). It is important to note that one may also attempt to regulate who has access to a field of production and, thus, control over "the right or power to set the limits of possibility" (Au, 2008, p. 642). Collin (2014) provided a brief description of several major fields of production relevant to secondary public schools: "university disciplines (e.g., university-based biology, university-based [history], etc.); workplaces, in general, and professional workplaces, in particular; the public sphere; and everyday life" (p. 315).

It is, then, within the *fields of recontextualization* that knowledge generated in the fields of production are adapted for a classroom context. Bernstein (1996/2000) distinguished between *official recontextualizing fields* (ORF) and *pedagogic recontexualizing fields* (PRF). The former consists of "the state and its selected agents and ministries" and the latter consists of "pedagogues in schools and colleges, and departments of education, specialized journals, private research foundations" (Bernstein, 1996/2000, p. 33). We will see in the next section how the boundary between these two distinct recontextualizing field classifications is becoming more and more blurred as corporate interests increasingly intersect with and influence political agendas for education.

The *fields of reproduction* are defined by their evaluative rules. These rules "measure and norm how students use discourses distributed to and recontextualized for content areas" (Collin, 2015, p. 318). These fields of reproduction are, therefore, largely made up of school content areas where the focus is on the communication and acquisition of knowledge between teachers and students at the classroom level.

To reiterate, the pedagogic device is ultimately about who is shaping consciousness. As Bernstein (1996/2000) put it, "the purpose of the device is to provide a symbolic ruler for consciousness" (p. 36). In the next section, I recreate our current educational landscape in order to locate teachers within this pedagogic device and better understand their current degree of curriculum control.

The Bulk of Curriculum Control

Over the past few decades, especially under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001), government bodies at the federal, state, and district level have expanded their control over school curriculum in the form of policies that produced or legitimated high-stakes, standardized testing. In Bernsteinian terms, this means that the influence of the official recontextualizing fields (ORF) has increased. Au (2008) pointed out that that the majority of the United States testing industry associated with those policies are part of the pedagogic recontexualizing fields (PRF). This signals "a weakening of the autonomy of the PRF" as it comes to resemble the ORF (Au, 2008, p. 647). With the narrowing of curricular power around the ORF, the potential for curricular autonomy among actors outside of the ORF decreases which, subsequently, reduces the potential for healthy dialogue and democratic competition over educational discourse (Au, 2008).

The Texas Board of Education provides us with a concrete example of this changing relationship between the ORF and PRF that has resulted in the overall consolidation of social

studies curriculum control around the ORF. In 2010, the conservative- and evangelical-led Texas Board of Education revised their state social studies standards. Those revisions included the removal of "the Seneca Falls Convention as well as women's suffrage activist, Carrie Chapman Cat from the standards. They also removed Harriet Tubman from the list of examples of good citizenship, and increased the inclusion of Christianity throughout" (Au, 2012, p. 93). Au (2012) explained how these kinds of ORF-initiated reforms can heavily influence how the PRF functions:

> With a $22-billion education fund in 2010 and the purchase and distribution of 48 million textbooks annually, the State of Texas represents one of the largest textbook markets in the country. Thus…the State of Texas is still influential in its ability to shape textbook content nationally as publishers curry favor to grab a share of such a market (p. 94).

This also demonstrates how state-level standards can matter on a much broader curricular-level. In this case, seemingly minor changes in state standards or other curricular materials can have a far greater impact on the access both teachers and students have to certain kinds of information, sometimes even outside the state where the changes originated.

Locating Teacher Curriculum Control

Bernstein's (1996/2000) pedagogic device is meant to be understood as a hierarchical model, which places the bulk of teacher discourse at the bottom. This placement reflects a tendency within educational systems to leave teachers out of curricular-instructional conversations that occur at the other levels, particularly at the level of recontextualization where many far-reaching curriculum decisions are made. A recently-published 3-year study on the reform-accountability culture in Oklahoma began with the following quote from a 28-year veteran teacher: "I'll try and help any way I can. It's been a while since I've been asked 'what I

think'" (Houser et al., 2017, p. 8). The study goes on to detail the ways in which teachers navigate and cope with oppressive reforms and structures. Part of the reason teachers are not characterized as thriving in this education culture is because of the subtle and not-so-subtle ways they are de-professionalized within a reform-accountability culture. In general, there was little evidence that administrators and leaders in the study viewed teachers as a source of wisdom and expertise to help create educational change. In fact, education leaders sometimes characterized teachers as obstacles. For example, one high-ranking administrator in the study characterized veteran social studies teachers as "cows that need to be tipped" (Houser et al., 2017, p. 26). According to Hoy (2003), a reform-accountability context fosters more hierarchical control. Houser et al.'s (2017) findings support this claim by demonstrating how teachers can be occluded from conversations about education policy and reform through reform-accountability structures.

Certainly, there have been some attempts to more directly engage teachers in curriculum design and educational reform efforts. Between 1993 and 1998, Kirk and MacDonald (2001) researched curriculum reform initiatives for Health and Physical Education in Australia that engaged teachers and other stakeholders as "partners" in curriculum change. Using Bernstein's (1990) pedagogic device, Kirk and MacDonald (2001) sought to locate where teachers were acting as agents of change in those reform efforts. They found that institutional and structural pressures prevented teachers from working as producers of instructional discourses. Instead, teachers were primarily located in the field of reproduction, where the reception and delivery of instructional discourses were prioritized. Reformers perceived teachers to primarily be experts in local contexts and conditions for curriculum implementation, not experts in their subject matter. This indicates that some attempts at formally redistributing curriculum control to teachers can

actually end up resulting in a kind of "pseudo-participation" (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). In these situations, teachers are included in curriculum discussions in some capacity but their input is often limited. Either their expertise is too narrowly defined by those in power and, therefore, teacher input is not often recognized or the bulk of curricular work has already been completed when teachers come to the table and they are then reduced to choosing between prescribed curricular packages.

Although there is not much evidence that teachers hold significant power in the fields of production and recontextualization, teachers are often seen as the final crucial decision-makers regarding curriculum selection, structuring, and delivery. Thornton (2005), for example, referred to teachers as "curricular-instructional gatekeepers." Webb (2006) called them "policy brokers." More recently, Lipsky (2010) nicknamed them "street-level bureaucrats." These framings, therefore, situate the bulk of teacher curriculum control within the fields of reproduction where evaluative rules can put heavy sanctions on that control.

Au's (2009) *Unequal by Design* detailed how evaluative rules, as defined by high-stakes testing under *NCLB* (2001), put significant constraints on teacher control over both curriculum and instruction. Regarding how these constraints are made manifest in the classroom, Au (2009) found that the "most prevalent and consistent finding in empirical research" was a narrowing of instructional curriculum (p. 86). This means that in schools most affected by high-stakes testing policies, there is often an increase in instructional time spent on tested subjects and, subsequently, a decrease in time spent on untested subjects (Au, 2009; Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Even when instructional time is left unaffected, high-stakes testing can still exert control over curricular form, which includes "the order in which we are introduced to content and the very form that knowledge itself takes" (Au, 2009, p. 87). In other words, the curriculum in tested

subjects may start to "match what the tests require" (Au, 2009, p. 87) or, at least, what

administrators and teachers believe the tests require (Reich & Bally, 2010). Therefore, when

multiple-choice testing rewards students who have memorized a collection of discrete facts and

mastered lower-level thinking skills, the curriculum in that tested subject may also represent

knowledge in a more fragmented or decontextualized manner and it may similarly prioritize

knowledge associated with lower-level thinking skills (Au, 2009).

The evaluative rules can also have a significant impact on teacher work load that can, in

turn, diminish teacher curriculum control. In 2007, Valli and Buese published a 4-year

longitudinal study where the researchers tracked teacher tasks in relation to federal, state, and

local policy changes and found that teacher "role expectations increased, intensified, and

expanded" over the course of the study (p. 519). In the case of role intensification, new or

changing policies can place additional responsibilities on teachers without taking any away or

providing any extra time or compensation. With this extra burden, teachers can find themselves

looking to outside experts for support rather than relying on their own professional expertise.

This is another way that accountability policies can create opportunities for more hierarchical

control, moving authority over curriculum decisions further away from local classroom teachers

(Au, 2009; Hoy, 2003). Using data from a Schools and Staffing Survey, the National Center for

Education Statistics confirmed that teachers' overall perceptions of autonomy have been steadily

decreasing over time. They found that 87% of teachers reported "moderate" or "low" levels of

autonomy in 2011-2012 school year compared with 83% in the 2003-2004 school year (Sparks et

al., 2015, p. 5). When asked about five specific aspects of their planning and teaching, teachers

reported that they experienced the lowest levels of control over those aspects that most directly

relate to curriculum: "selecting textbooks and other classroom materials" and "selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught" (Sparks et al., 2015, p. 3).

I have thus far focused on demonstrating where teachers are located in our current system of curriculum reproduction, but I also want to be clear on why this positioning is not ideal. Some might assume that already-overburdened teachers would prefer to have curriculum work taken off their plates. This assumption, however, ignores how integral curriculum control is to teacher job satisfaction. A 2006 MetLife survey on the expectations and experiences of American teachers named "Teacher has adequate involvement in shaping the school curriculum" among the list of "significant predictors of a teacher's satisfaction with his/her career" (p. 77). Research on teacher attrition and morale reveal that many teachers desire greater curriculum autonomy because it helps them realize their vision for good teaching and learning.

High attrition rates and low teacher morale have become huge issues facing United States public schools today (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001; Senechal et al., 2016). Analyzing staffing surveys, Ingersoll (2001) found that a significant factor contributing to rising teacher shortages was what she termed a "revolving door – where large numbers of [qualified] teachers depart their jobs for reasons other than retirement" (p. 501). Crocco and Costigan (2007) collected over 200 interviews with New York City English and social studies teachers. All participants had five or fewer years of teaching experience. The five-year window is a crucial time period in the teaching profession because many teachers decide whether or not to stick with their school, specifically, or the teaching profession, in general, within the first five years. Crocco and Costigan's (2007) findings demonstrated that curriculum conditions were among the major reason that beginning teachers decided to leave:

Some new teachers are resilient in the face of such conditions but others find that test

pressures, scripted lessons, and mandated curriculum are the proverbial straw that breaks

the camel's back… Highly qualified new teachers chafe at the diminished control they

have over their classrooms, which erodes one of the only arenas in which they experience

opportunities for decision making in a field in which teachers have little control. (p. 530).

The experience of lack of control can also be understood as a "misalignment" between "the

values of curricular and pedagogical mandates …[and] teachers' values and ideas about

pleasurable teaching" (Rooney, 2015, p. 477). Findings in a recent Virginia study echoed the

notion that a sense of misalignment can contribute to low morale or attrition. The study,

involving 48 participants across three schools, found that low teacher moral often had to do with

an overall sense of "fit" with their work environment and school community (Senechal et al.,

2016).

In the next section, I turn to why it would be advantageous for teachers to be more

involved in designing and reforming curriculum and other education policies and guidelines.

However, before I do, I want to highlight how the alienation of teachers from their work as

curriculum producers cannot be disentangled from the gendered history of teaching. Although

women make up 47% of the general U.S. workforce, they constitute about 75% of the education

workforce (American Federation of Labor, 2015). Data from 2011-2012 tell us that even though

women comprised a little over three-quarters of all public school teachers in the U.S., only

around 52% of principals were female (National Center for Education Statistics, [NCES], 2016).

In the *American School Superintendent: 2010 Decennial Study*, only 24% of respondents

identified as women (Porterfield, 2010). These numbers reveal a clear and continuing trend: the

higher up we look into the education hierarchy, the lower the percentage of female

representation. With expanded ORF (government) control over curriculum, it is also worth considering the representation of women among political leadership positions. Women make up just 20% of national and 23% of state legislatures (Center for American Women in Politics, [CAWP], 2018a).

For women of color, in particular, one's chances for influencing the development of school curriculum in either education or politics is even lower. In 2011-2012, roughly 18% of teachers were people of color (NCES, 2016) and, in 2018, women of color make up just 7% of the national congress membership and under 3% of the state elected executives (CAWP, 2018b). Having a predominantly white and male leadership overseeing a predominantly white and female teaching workforce certainly has curriculum implications that will be borne out in the literature presented throughout this chapter.

The Situated Knowledge of Teachers

As introduced earlier in this chapter, feminist standpoint theory provides a robust framework for understanding how location informs the production of knowledge. In general, feminist scholars have used standpoint theory to help "examine[] the scientific and epistemic resources made available by starting off research from the lives of people who have been disadvantaged by the dominant conceptual framework" (p. Harding, 1998, p. 90). In the previous section, I argued that our current education system does not often afford teachers the opportunity to select knowledge for curriculum content and structuring. Bernstein's (1996/2000) pedagogic device allows us to conceptualize how teachers are disadvantaged within this system. In this section, I argue that we need to be building an educational system that treats teachers as genuine collaborative partners in designing and reforming curriculum. In this section, I use the concept of *situated knowledge* to describe the unique wisdom generated from the lived experiences of

teachers. This group-knowledge can offer a much-needed addition to existing curriculum conversations in education.

Defining Situated Knowledge

The concept of situated knowledge is foundational in feminist standpoint theory. It is generally understood as a conceptual "point of departure" for those developing the case for a group's standpoint (Wylie, 2004, p. 343). Situated knowledge is forged from a particular location that exposes a group to certain potential resources, dangers, and possibilities (and not to others) (Harding, 1998). Once that knowledge is recognized by the group existing within that location, the journey to develop a fully-formed group standpoint can begin. A standpoint is an "engaged vision" that "requires both systematic analysis and the education that can only grow from political struggle to change [unjust material] relations" (Hartsock, 1998, p. 229). Because a standpoint is negotiated and developed over time through both critical reflexivity and collective action, my goal here is *not* to speak to a fully-formed teacher standpoint. Instead, by trying to articulate some of the shared situated knowledge of teachers, I am taking up the task of "working to construct some theoretical bases for political solidarity" (Hartsock, 1998, p. 239).

Situated knowledges, like the potential standpoints they help cultivate, are meant to be understood in relation to groups, not individuals. Collins' (1997) posited that "groups have a degree of permanence over time such that group realities transcend individual experiences" (p. 375). This is not to say that individuals within a group are all the same or act and think in unison. What those individuals have in common – what ultimately makes them a group – is their position within "hierarchical, multiple, and changing structural power relations" (Collins, 1997, p. 377). People often recognize the benefit of group solidarity in working to change those structural power relations that continue to disadvantage them.

Theorizing the group reality of teachers allows us to conceptualize the resources and limitations afforded to them by their location. We can think of teachers as occupying a socially-constructed location (such as the field of reproduction in Bernstein's pedagogic device) and a physical location (such as a classroom), both of which contribute to their situated knowledge. With a location that offers a more direct view of the classroom dynamics that constitute the core of education, teachers as a group occupy an advantageous position for curriculum and instructional conversations. I explore those potential group advantages in what follows.

Teacher Expertise

Much has been written about the knowledge and wisdom of "able," "expert," or "ambitious" teachers. While it is important to recognize that not all teachers live up to those descriptions, I argue that it is equally important for us to recognize the professional demands of teaching and the multitude of ways in which teachers strive to meet those demands. Shulman's (1987) *Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform* kickstarted many conversations about what teacher expertise looks like in many different subject areas. At one point in his article, Shulman (1987) imagined how one might organize an encyclopedia of teacher knowledge. He came up with seven distinct categories, which he qualified as a "minimum" number. Among these categories is *pedagogical content knowledge* (PCK); which, unlike the other categories, is "uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). This implies that other forms of knowledge on the list are more likely to be shared with non-educators, such as content knowledge or knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values.

PCK is a unique fusion of content and pedagogical knowledge specifically for the purpose of teaching. In 2013, Monte-Sano and Budano developed a framework for what PCK

looks like for history teaching. They came up with four key aspects of PCK for history teaching that I summarize in Table 1. We can see from these descriptions how important it is for teachers to consider student needs when thinking about their disciplinary content and pedagogical options. Grant (2005) built on the idea of PCK to develop his concept of *ambitious teaching*. Whereas PCK emphasized the importance of knowing one's subject matter and students, ambitious teaching also centers the importance of context. Grant (2005) explained that ambitious teachers must know "how to create the necessary space for themselves and their students" in environments where contextual factors may work against their efforts, such as state curriculum and testing or unsupportive administrators and colleagues (p. 117-118).

Table 1

Monte-Sano & Budano's (2013) Key Aspects of PCK for Teaching History

Key Aspect	Definition
Represent history	How teachers communicate the nature and purpose of history.
Transform history	How teachers select and adapt historical content for classroom use to help build up students' historical knowledge and thinking skills.
Attend to students' ideas about history	How teachers recognize and respond to students' developing understandings about history and the act of "doing" history.
Frame history	How teachers select and organize topics into a clear story to help students recognize patterns, relationships, significance, and other big themes in the study of history.

Indeed, there are several studies that have narrated how social studies teachers navigate complex working worlds and handle multiple and, often, competing messages in order to achieve their vision of wise practice (Grant, 2005; Grant & Gradwell, 2010; Houser, et. al., 2017; Picower, 2011; Wills & Sandholtz, 2009; Yeager & Davies, Jr., 2005). Houser et al. (2017)

identified four ways that social studies teachers dealt with Oklahoma's oppressive reform-accountability context: surviving, resisting, transcending, and transforming the culture. In order to transform the culture, teachers often need to have access to a community of like-minded professionals. Such was the case with participants in Picower's (2011) study who supported each other's vision of teaching for social justice by participating in a critical inquiry project group. This group became a kind of "safe haven" where the new teachers could unpack the challenges they faced when trying to enact their vision for wise practice in their respective classrooms.

From understanding one's students to mastery of a content area to being able to make ethical decisions regarding competing contextual pressures, we ask a lot of our teachers and many rise to the challenge over and over again. In a recent MetLife survey, 98% of principals considered their school's teachers to be either "excellent" or "pretty good" (MetLife, Inc. 2013, p. 43). In the same survey, 97% of teachers described their teaching colleagues as either "excellent" or "pretty good" (MetLife, Inc. 2013, p. 43). Teachers can come to acquire a great deal of knowledge and wisdom over the course of their careers. This knowledge and wisdom is forged in the heart of the education system. Why would we *not* want to seek out and prioritize the knowledge of individuals situated so closely to the learning experiences of our students?

While I hope to have imparted the urgent need to include teachers more in curriculum conversations, I do want to end this section with a note of caution: *All situated knowledges and standpoints are partial*. Teachers do have an advantageous perspective in some respects, but they cannot be considered the ultimate authority on all things education. To claim to have discovered a location of truth would be to undermine a foundational tenet of standpoint theory: "feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge…It allows us to be answerable for what we learn how to see" (Haraway, 1988, p. 583). Standpoint theorists argue that certain

locations can offer "better accounts of the world" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590) or "less false

accounts" (Harding, 1991, p. 269), not absolute truth. In essence, when we make a knowledge

claim from a particular location, we are seeking a kind of provisional truth-stand-in that is

neither meant to be universal, nor relativistic. It must be met with other knowledge claims from

persons that occupy differently obstructed and advantageous perspectives from alternative

locations. In the next half of this chapter, I bring different academic voices together to explore

the past goals and consider the future goals of the feminist knowledge transformation project.

Early Feminist Curriculum Interventions

Because American institutions (like schools) and systems (like the education system)

have been shaped by hundreds of years of overwhelmingly white, male leadership, it is important

to consider the ways in which feminists have challenged the resulting nature of those institutions

and systems by centering women's experiences and feminist theory. In this section, I begin by

discussing the 1970s and 1980s as a crucial period in the early feminist knowledge

transformation project. After describing some of the important products for curriculum reform

that resulted from this early period, I consider how developments in poststructuralism, queer

theory, critical race theory, and citizenship education offer new directions for the ongoing

feminist knowledge transformation project.

"Early" Feminism

In progress narratives about feminism, the 1970s is often referred to as an "early" period

in feminism (Hemmings, 2011) and is characterized as "thoroughly unified in its aims,

unreflexive in its theorizations, yet bold in its ambitions" (Hemmings, 2011, p. 39). Feminist

texts produced during this period tended toward essentialism, often centering the experiences of

white, middle-class, heterosexual women. However, in her analysis of feminist progress

narratives, Hemmings' (2011) reminded us that there is a danger in *only* situating these issues within the "early" period of feminism because doing so can imply that more recent decades are somehow exempted from similar expressions of essentialism. She also warned us that by *only* talking about the problems with early feminism, we can foreclose the possibility that critiques of essentialism emerged earlier than the 1980s. The 1980s and 1990s did see a proliferation of writing that centered identity, difference, and deconstruction, but there were also earlier expressions of these ideas that get underwritten by consistently locating these kinds of critiques firmly within the late-twentieth century. As stated above, in this section, I explore early expressions of the knowledge transformation project in both history and education. By "early" I am referring to texts written in the 1970s and 80s. Aware of the narrative pitfalls of painting feminist decades with too broad a brush, I try to stay close to each text, summarizing the argument being made and pointing out some of the implied or explicit goals for the feminist knowledge transformation project. As you will see, these texts can possess some of the same essentializing features typically associated with 1970s feminism as well as some of the corrective critiques more characteristically associated with the 1980s and 90s.

One major theme I will highlight in these early texts is the privileging of the term "women" over terms like gender or feminism. These early acts of centering women and women's experiences can be understood as part of a larger project, or process, of *displacement*. This process can be particularly useful for understanding how knowledge is constructed and used. Lather (1991) described the process of displacement thusly:

> 1) identify the binaries, the oppositions that structure the argument; 2) reverse/displace the dependent term from its negative position to a place that locates it as the very condition of the positive term; and 3) create a more fluid and less coercive conceptual

organization of terms which transcends a binary logic by simultaneously being both and

neither of the binary terms. (p. 13)

When trying to understand this crucial early period in the feminist knowledge transformation

project, I find it helpful to think about the second step in the process of displacement. The

histories and curriculum possibilities imagined during this period resemble feminist attempts at

reversal: moving women from the negative, subordinate position (both as a historical figure and

as a subject of curriculum knowledge) to the dominant position by centering women and

women's experiences.

Women's History

Women's history is often said to have emerged in the United States during the 1970s;

however, this claim can be easily challenged. Smith (2010) detailed many earlier accounts of

histories of women, including those accomplished by amateur scholars before the discipline of

history was ever professionalized. Therefore, what makes the 1970s unique is not that women's

history was new, but that it was becoming a newly legitimized field in the academy. As a result,

"the period from the 1970s to the early 1980s was an age of titans producing titanic studies of

women in which striking new ingredients shaped investigations" (Smith, 2010, p. 728-9). Here, I

outline some of those "new ingredients" and, then, I discuss how they influenced some of the

early feminist curriculum reimaginings of the 1980s and early1990s.

Kelly-Gadol's (1976) *The Social Relation of the Sexes* characterized women's history as

much more than "adding" women to historical knowledge. The field, she wrote, "has shaken the

conceptual foundations of historical study" (Kelly-Gadol, 1976, p. 809). She identified three core

concepts of historical thinking that women's history had successfully destabilized: "(1)

periodization, (2) the categories of social analysis, and (3) theories of social change" (Kelly-

Gadol, 1976, p. 809). Periodization, refers to how historians determine ages, movements, or any other such set of connected historical events. Feminist historians, by considering women as valid historical subjects, necessarily changed how those historical periods are either determined or understood. Kelly-Gadol (1976), in particular, highlighted how periodization can be *relational*. By this, she meant that traditional periodization can often be mined for institutional reasons and situations that produce the advancement of one group and the oppression of another.

The second destabilized core concept, "the categories of social analysis", refers to the legitimization of gender as a lens for historical analysis. Gender had finally joined the ranks of other socially-constructed categories, such as class and race, that historians utilize to better analyze and understand continuity and change over time and space. This new positioning of gender as an important analytical category also related to the final identified concept destabilized by women's history, "theories of social change." For Kelly-Gadol (1976) women's history required historians to work out "the connections between changes in class and sex relations" (p. 817) in order to more fully understand human history.

In the first chapter of Scott's (1988/1999) *Gender and the Politics of History*, she reviewed the tensions and contradictions that emerged in the field of women's history during the 1970s and 80s. To do so, she outlined three major approaches women's historians had taken to write women as historical subjects and rewrite history in the process: 1) her-story, 2) social history, and 3) gender analysis. Since her goal was to identify tensions and contradictions, Scott (1988/1999) discussed the potential risks or challenges associated with each approach. I summarize each approach along with their corresponding risks and challenges in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Scott's (1988/1999) Approaches to Women's History

Approach	Summary of Approach	Risks/ Challenges
Her-Story	Historians using this approach focus on female agency and how women's experiences are unique from those of men in the past.	Can conflate the project of valuing women as valuable historical subjects with the idea that we should not assess women's actions and opinions as anything other than positive. Can also treat women's history as separate from other historical topics.
Social History	Historians using this approach speak to major historical processes and systems, but do so by focusing on the "lives of particular groups of people" (Scott, 1988/1999, p. 21).	Can reduce the role of human agency, and therefore female agency, by focusing too heavily on economic forces.
Gender Analysis	Historians using this approach see gender as an important category for historical analysis. This approach often takes the form of relational history – comparing women's experiences to those of men, often in service of political histories.	By focusing more on political histories, this approach can overlook historical arenas where women are often more visible, such as familial spaces.

Rather than being a hinderance to the development of the field, Scott (1988/1999) viewed

the tensions between these differing approaches as productive for the field. They can, for

example, stimulate the growth of new theories, such as those offered by Scott (1988/1999) at the

end of her chapter. For example, she argued that it is not enough to simply "add" women as a

particular and specific historical group because that would do little to unsettle the positioning of

men's experiences as universal. Instead, Scott (1988/1999) advocated for a history that

understands all human subjects as particular and specific. This idea echoed Haraway's (1988)

call for privileging situated and partial knowledges in research and scholarship. Scott

(1988/1999) also advocated for broadening the notion of "politics" to include all "unequal

distributions of power" in order to better capitalize on the analytical power offered by gender as

a category of historical analysis (p. 26). Scott (1988/1999) concluded with what she believed

should be the two primary goals of women's history moving forward. First, she pushed for

continuing the project of writing histories focused on women's experiences. Second, she pushed

for the continuing analysis of ways in which gender and politics co-construct one another, with

politics being understood in its broader conception.

Phase Models

One of the earlier attempts to conceptualize the emerging field of women's history came

from historian Gerda Lerner (1975). She theorized three different "levels" of how historians

included women in history: 1) women worthies/compensatory history; 2) contribution history;

and 3) transformative history. Education scholars took inspiration from Lerner's (1975) attempt

to categorize women's history and, subsequently, created phase models in order to reimagine

curriculum from a feminist perspective. Both McIntosh (1983) and Tetreault (1985) developed

their own five-level phase models that are summarized and related to one another as well as to

Lerner's (1975) levels in Table 3. While sometimes described as "interactive" rather than

"hierarchical" (McIntosh, 1983), these phase models can still be understood as a kind of tiered

classification system. They can and have been used, even in recent studies, to evaluate and rank

existing curriculum as more or less feminist. While these models are often intended to be applied

to multiple disciplines, I focus here solely on their application for interpreting and transforming

history curricula.

Table 3

A Side-by-Side Comparison of Three Early Feminist Phase Models

Lerner (1975)	McIntosh (1983)	Tetreault (1985)
	Phase 1: Womanless History - History by and about the "winners" (the publicly powerful) - Serves to reinforce dominant social and political systems	Phase 1: Male Scholarship - Male experience as universal - Knowledge by and about men - Women as disciplinarily significant
Level 1 : Women Worthies / Compensatory History - History of "notable women" - Women appear as exceptional or deviant - Not reflective of the experiences of the majority of women	Phase 2: Women in History "Famous few" women - Exceptional historical women treated as role models (Susan B. Anthony, Cleopatra, and Queen Elizabeth) - Women admitted into history based on male standards of excellence and greatness	Phase 2: Compensatory Scholarship - Women appear as deviant or inferior historical figures - Women admitted into history based on male standards of excellence and greatness
Level 2: Contribution History - Women's contributions are included based on their overall impact to the historical event/movement under study - Details the economic, social, and political oppression of women and how women have fought against that oppression - Details the expectations, roles, and ideals of women in the past	Phase 3: Women as Problem, Anomaly, or Absence in History - Understands that women have been excluded *on purpose* - Characterized by anger at having been left out or seen as an anomaly, a problem, or a victim in history - Anger can turn into disillusionment or action	Phase 3: Bifocal Scholarship - Emphasizes the differences between men and women - Women seen as an essentialized group with a unique culture - Emphasizes the oppression of women - Explores the advancement and maintenance of patriarchal authority

Level 3: Transformative History • Need for multiple methods and conceptual frameworks as well as new disciplinary tools in order to capture the diverse and complex experiences of women in the past • Encourages both the study of women as a separate and unique cultural group and as a group conversation with other cultural groups (emphasizing interactions, tensions, and differences)	Phase 4: Women As History • Rejects hierarchical thinking • See women of all backgrounds as worthy of historical inquiry • Emphasizes histories that show humanity's capacity for inclusion and compassion (specifically within the domestic/private sphere and the care professions)	Phase 4: Feminist Scholarship • Women's activities and experiences are the measure of historical significance • Acknowledges and investigates how gender interacts with other variables, such as race, class, and sexual orientation • Women are seen as a pluralistic group (emphasizes the personal and the contextual)
	Phase 5: History Redefined or Reconstructed to Include Us All • All-inclusive • History as a fully re-imagined discipline • Emphasis on patterns and systems • Values based on inclusion and compassion	Phase 5: Multifocal or Relational Scholarship • A holistic view of human experience • Formerly binary concepts are seen as continuums • Emphasizes the relationship between women and men's cultures (interactions, differences, overlaps, etc.)

These phase models provide an important epistemological foundation for what it means to include women in history and they offer efficient frameworks for evaluating curriculum materials. After analyzing curricula according to her phase theory, McIntosh (1983) noted that "superficial curriculum change" is often arrested in Phase 2 and 3. This means that there are fewer examples of women in curricula that fulfill the description of Phase 4, "Women As History," or Phase 5, "History Redefined." As you will see later on in this chapter, more recent curriculum research using these phase models have shown similar results.

The Culture of Women

When Lerner (1975) predicted the next stages of women's history, she may very well have been

envisaging Noddings' (1992) exploration of how the social life and culture of women should

transform social studies curriculum. Noddings (1992) acknowledged that curriculum makers had

made certain strides in regards to bringing women's history into social studies education;

however, those strides could easily be mapped onto the earlier phases of the feminist phase

models of McIntosh (1983) and Tetreault (1985). In other words, social studies curricula still

tended to only include extraordinary women (according to men's standards) and women as

contributors to patriarchal historical narratives. Those efforts at inclusion often trivialized

women's history by including images and achievements of women that were not particularly

relevant or noteworthy simply so that there would be the appearance of a more gender-balanced

curriculum.

Noddings (1992) argued for a fundamental shift in the way social studies curriculum is

understood and written. At the heart of this change is the intention or motivation of curriculum

makers and reformers. When the intention of the curriculum reformer is simply to fulfill a quota

for female faces, adding a female historical figure only "because she was a woman and important

publications today must include women" (p. 231), social studies curricula will continue to

undervalue and underutilize women's history. If curriculum makers instead considered the

importance of historically feminized topics and the significance of work done predominantly by

women throughout history, their products would be more equitable *and* more meaningful. In her

article, Noddings (1992) cleared space for a feminist reimagining of social studies education by

articulating women's culture and asking questions about what curricula might look like that

emerged from such a culture. She explored a myriad of topics to that end, including peace and

peacemaking, family membership and homemaking, sense of self and relation, and spiritual

education. In doing so, she challenged us to consider how formerly marginalized content or topics previously considered unworthy could, in fact, be the cornerstones of a new, feminist social studies.

Goals of the "Early" Knowledge Transformation Project

Based on these early feminist works, I attempt here to outline some of the major goals of the early feminist knowledge transformation project for social studies curriculum work. As stated earlier, this period can be characterized as a time of *reversal*. By bringing women and women's experiences center-stage, feminist historians and educators were working toward a goal of displacing men and men's experiences as the default in history and curriculum design. In doing so, these scholars were simultaneously working toward the goal of articulating what history or curriculum design might look like from the new vantage point of women's history. They explored new periodization, grappled with the meaning of "women's culture," sought out new opportunities within social history, and investigated how men's history and women's history related to one another.

Many of these early feminist curriculum scholars indicated to some extent that they knew their ideas would be added to or changed overtime. For example, Tetreault (1985) saw her model as a living document, in need of alteration "as new phases take shape or current ones are revised" (p. 380). Since feminist scholarship and the field of women's studies have, indeed, continued to develop, it is important to consider in what ways these early frameworks for feminist history and curriculum are in need of updating. In the next three sections, I explore some new directions for the feminist knowledge transformation project based on literature from poststructural theory, queer theory, critical race theory, and citizenship education. At the end of each section, I discuss implications for the goals of the feminist knowledge transformation project.

Changing Concepts of Sex and Gender

Early on in academia, "gender" was regularly and inappropriately referred to as "sex," which was understood as a fixed, biological concept at the time (Francis, 2006). When scholars began distinguishing between gender and sex, they did so in order to undermine the "biology-is-destiny" narrative perpetuated by using sex as the sole identifier (Butler, 1990, p. 8). Under this new model where sex and gender were considered distinct concepts, gender became understood as "a socially constructed concept with characteristics and traits specific to many cultures" (Schafer & Bohan, 2009, p. 301). In other words, sex was still a referent for fixed, biological characteristics, but gender was now known as a socially- or culturally- constructed identity that may or may not correlate with one's sex. Butler's (1990) *Gender Trouble* complicated this distinction by questioning whether sex was truly a fixed, binary concept and, therefore, whether sex and gender were really distinct categories. She posited that sex was also a socially- and culturally-constructed phenomenon, "with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (Butler, 1990, p. 10). In other words, how we represent sex can change over time and space, just like gender. For example, different cultures may define sex based on different biological traits, such as "anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal" characteristics (Butler, 1990, p. 9), or some cultures might conceive of more than two sexes whereas other cultures might only acknowledge sex as a binary concept.

In the field of history, the significance of the term "gender" has certainly changed overtime. Gender history, as a field of study, formally emerged in the 1980s (Zook, 2002). Rather than signaling any major shift in how we conceptualize sex or gender, this new naming appeared, at first, to be more about conforming to institutional norms. At the time, the term "gender" was thought to have "a more neutral and objective sound than 'women'" (Scott,

1988/2018, p. 31). Historians who preferred the term gender tended to perceive "women's history" as too controversial. Readers felt that by "asserting (contrary to customary practice) that women are valid historical subjects," (Scott, 1988/1999, p. 31) women's history more readily invoked the politics of feminism (Schafer & Bohan, 2009). This implies that early users of the term "gender history" were really just signaling "women's history" in a way that was considered less overtly political.

Historians have since broadened their definition of gender history, resulting in a more robust analytic framework for studying the past:

> Gender history is relational history; a history of the power relations between men and women that are constantly changing, being negotiated, challenged, subverted, adopted, and adapted. Gender history also seeks to decode the cultural meanings associated with such terms as "female," "male," "masculine," "feminine," "womanly," and "manly."
>
> (Zook, 2002, p. 374)

No longer being used as a synonym for "women's history," gender history now offers scholars a space where they can engage more with poststructuralist theory when examining the past. This suggests that feminist historians have started to move beyond the *reversal* step in the process of displacement and move more into the work of *transcending* (Lather, 1991). In other words, historians were proving more willing to explore gender as a more culturally-constructed and relational concept in the study of the past and, to some extent, think beyond the binary of male and female.

So, what does the changing understanding of gender and gender history mean for the goals of the feminist knowledge transformation project? For some, these developments can be (and have been) interpreted as a call to end work focusing on women and women's history.

Certainly, understanding gender as a social construct calls into question the concept of "women" and historians should be going beyond narrating the histories of women. However, I would argue that rather than ending the work on women and women's history, these changing concepts have fueled innovative areas of feminist work that still include women's history.

Reflecting back on her now classic article *Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis* (1988/1999), Scott (2010) considered how the interim scholarship on gender and its relationship with sex had changed the way she viewed gender as a category of historical analysis. When it comes to the topic of women' history, her thoughts can be summed up in the following statement: "I am now arguing that no history of women is complete without a history of 'women'" (Scott, 2010, p. 12). This means that there is no "essence of womanhood," no stable female subject, that can be applied to the past; instead, she must be constructed again and again as we move through time and space. Gender provides us with the tool of analysis to accomplish that task. If, as Butler (1991) suggested, there is no distinction between sex and gender, then gender as a category of historical analysis "requires us to historicize the ways sex and sexual difference have been conceived" (Scott, 2010, p. 13).

Beyond the category of women, there is still a need to ensure that the feminist knowledge transformation project is more inclusive. Queer theory scholars, in particular, have laid important groundwork for representing the histories of genderqueer individuals and communities as well as transforming those histories for classroom use. A recent example of this in the field of social studies education include Sheppard and Mayo (2013). Sheppard and Mayo (2013) described how teachers can explore gender and sexuality as social constructs using a lesson on Native American Two Spirit traditions. Dozono (2017), a secondary social studies teacher, similarly encouraged teachers to investigate with their students "How does gender function in society?" using

alternative and indigenous gender systems to understand different ways of being in the world (p. 441). To be clear, though, the field of social studies education as a whole has not fully embraced a more expansive understanding of gender. Education scholars still sometimes use "gender" when they are only referring to the category of "women" and still have a tendency to adhere to a male/female binary in their work (Engebretson, 2018).

These developments in how we understand sex and gender suggest that the goals of the feminist knowledge transformation project must include 1) historically narrating how gender categories are constructed in whatever time and space we are studying and 2) contributing to the histories of non-binary gender categories so that we might see past a history entirely structured by male or female experiences in order to provide fair and equal representation to multiple gender identities.

Critical Race Theory and Feminism

While the early phase models do acknowledge that there are racial differences between women, they still leave the concept of race and its relationship with gender oppression largely undertheorized. Tackling the feminist knowledge transformation process today requires a more robust understanding of how racism structures American society and intersects with other systems of oppression, such as sexism. Critical race theory (CRT) forms a strong theoretical foundation for this kind of work. Ladson-Billings (2013) described in detail five tenets of CRT first identified by Delgado and Stefancic (2001).

The first is the notion that racism is not the exception, but the rule in US society. This tenet further clarifies that racism operates on an institutional level, not simply at the individual level through personal beliefs and actions. The second tenet tackles the nature of "racial remedies," those proposed solutions for solving society's racial problems. These racial remedies

often do little more than pay lip service to solving instances of institutional racism. The concept of *interest convergence* or *material determinism* reveal how "white people will seek racial justice only to the extent that there is something in it for them" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 38). This explains how the primary beneficiaries of racial remedies are often white people (often white women, in particular), not people of color. A third tenet of CRT is the idea that race is a social construct and, as such, has been defined and redefined over and over again throughout history. This can be observed in both the creation and transformation of non-white racial categories throughout history as well as in the ongoing readjustment of the boundaries of whiteness over time and space. The fourth tenet identifies the need for both an understanding of *intersectionality* as well as *essentialism* in order to successfully do the work of CRT. The final tenet of CRT invites storytelling as a powerful CRT tool for "illustrat[ing] and underscore[ing]broad legal principles regarding race and racial/social justice" (p. 42).

While all of these tenets can and should be brought to bear when theorizing a rebirth of the feminist knowledge transformation project, I want to expand here on the concept of intersectionality as a particularly key ingredient for curriculum work. Kimberlé Crenshaw is often attributed as the first to fully articulate the theory of intersectionality. Her 1989 article "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" introduced the theory of intersectionality by demonstrating how the experiences of black women are either marginalized or erased within frameworks that only focus on one system of oppression. In other words, because black women experience both racism and sexism, their experiences cannot be fully captured by any single-axis framework. For feminist theory, this means that "the entire framework that has been used as a basis for translating 'women's experience'…into concrete policy demands must be rethought or recast" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140).

Kandaswamy (2012) emphasized the need for such a rethinking or recasting of frameworks by detailing why it is not enough to simply "include" the experiences of women of color into existing feminist frameworks, rather than fundamentally transforming those frameworks or abandoning them to create new ones. First, the inclusion approach means analyzing the experiences of women of color in relation to the experiences of white women, who are left unchallenged as the central female subjects of many early feminist frameworks. Second, the inclusion approach "often fails to take into account the relationality of different women's experiences" (Kandaswamy, 2012, p. 28). In other words, frameworks may not question how the experiences of one group of women differ from another in ways that are structured by institutionalized systems of oppression. Finally, the inclusion approach may not create frameworks that are capable of investigating how raced and gendered identities are produced.

These thoughtful critiques of feminist theory lead me to the conclusion that CRT is calling for a transformation of the knowledge transformation project itself – a fundamental rethinking of feminist curriculum frameworks like the early phase models. This is the case because the goals of the early feminist knowledge transformation were too often built on a single-axis framework of how to understand women's experiences in history. Instead, curriculum work should aim for revealing how interlocking systems of oppression operate in US society to create gendered experiences that are also raced and raced experiences that are also gendered. CRT invites us to view "the official school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a White supremacist master script" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18). This master script serves to erase or obscure the historical narratives of people of color whose stories are potentially threatening to the racial status quo. Intersectionality helps us further understand how this erasure

can be compounded for women of color. Feminists need to rethink curriculum frameworks in ways that go beyond simply including people of color.

Women, Citizenship, and Politics

In her ongoing efforts to make room for women in social studies education, Crocco (1999; 2018) advocated for the use of the term "social education," which "includes, but is not limited to, social studies" (Crocco, 1999, p. 2). She defined social education as:

Teaching and learning about how individuals construct and live out their understandings of social, political, and economic relations – past and present – and the implications of these understanding for how citizens are educated in a democracy. (Crocco, 1999, p. 1)

This definition provides a broader conceptual landscape for discussing ideas important to social studies education, such as democracy and citizenship. For one, it makes visible the work of disciplinary theorists who have historically been left out of traditional histories of social studies education. Women who were influential to the field of education often worked outside of official teaching and learning spaces, such as in women's clubs, to formulate their ideas and take action to shape the future of the social studies discipline. Using the term social education, therefore, encourages disciplinary historians to look beyond the history of the official social studies professional organizations and make the efforts of those women working in the margins more well-known (Crocco, 1999).

A long-established goal of social studies education is the preparation of students for their role as citizens in a democracy (Thornton, 2004). The specifics of how to achieve that goal, however, have been the subject of much debate. For women, the idea of being civic educators can invoke a history of inequity. Women's status as citizens in the United States has been significantly different than that of men in the past. Pointing to our country's recent and historical

failure to have elected a female president, Crocco (2018) reasoned that "women serve as a bellwether of the mood of the country regarding its self-definition and the boundaries the nation wants to draw around its identity" (p. 7). Because of women's historically unequal status as citizens, curriculum-makers should thoughtfully consider what we mean by citizenship education.

Noticing the "formal" ways in which education scholars tend to think about citizenship in social studies education, Woyshner (2002) proposed redefining what we mean by "political engagement" so that women's history can take a more central role in social studies curricula. It is clear that political and economic history still drive much of what is covered in history classrooms. Because of this, when we only associate citizenship with formal activities, such as voting or running for office, women's history is largely excluded from social studies courses. What gets included tends to be limited in both number and scope. The Suffrage Movement, for example, is a "commonly accepted contex[t] for women" in social studies curriculum (Schafer & Bohan, 2009 p. 294). An over-emphasis on topics like women's suffrage can reinforce the notion that women must conform "to a male-centered definition of politics and public engagement and of citizenship generally" in order to be included in the official curriculum (Schafer & Bohan, 2009, p. 300).

Women are similarly disregarded as political agents when we ascribe to the "separate spheres" notion of public and private spaces that emerged from early women's history texts:

> The separate spheres idea suggests that society is divided neatly into two categories: male-political-public and women-apolitical-private. The notion of the political-as-public has kept the history of women out of political history, in large part because of a literal application of the separate spheres construct. (Woyshner, 2002, p. 367).

Borrowing from newer theoretical developments in the field of women's history, Woyshner's (2002) proposed redefining how curriculum theorists in social studies education understand "political engagement." This would mean acknowledging "the role of women in social movements and voluntary associations and … recogniz[ing] women's political involvement on their own terms" (Woyshner, 2002, p. 367). In other words, political history would include "any action taken to influence the government or community" (Woyshner, 2002, 367).

One of the goals of the early feminist knowledge transformation project was to explore the opportunities within social history and try to articulate women's culture. By focusing on those goals, women's history as political history may have been underrepresented in early women's history scholarship. Therefore, these developments in citizenship education point us to a new goal for the feminist knowledge transformation project: the reclaiming of historically masculine spaces. This echoes the earlier goal of *transcending* binaries, only here it is the transcendence of siloed historical spaces that is sought rather than the transcendence of gender categories. Embedded within this goal is the need to redefine or reject commonly-used concepts or phrases within social studies education such as "citizenship," "public," and "private." This harkens back to Scott's (1988/1999) push to redefine the notion of "politics."

Current Representations of Women, Gender, and Feminism in Social Studies Curriculum

The theories outlined in the previous sections identify new directions for the feminist knowledge transformation project, but what does the current state of social studies curriculum tell us about progress toward any of the those goals identified so far? In this section, I attempt to answer that question. I began this process by analyzing two recent literature reviews on gender and social studies education for research that included the topics of curriculum development and implementation: Engebretson's (2018) "Toward a Gender Inclusive Vision" in *Social Studies*

Teacher Education: Critical Issues and Current Perspectives and Bohan's (2017) "Gender and

Feminist Scholarship in Social Studies Research" in *The Wiley Handbook of Social Studies*

Research. To ensure I had not missed any key pieces of social studies curriculum literature, I

selected additional articles from the following major scholarly journals geared toward

educational researchers and practitioners interested in either social studies and history or gender,

feminism, and women: *Theory & Research in Social Education, Gender and Education,* and *The*

Journal of Social Studies Research. I only selected articles that dealt with a secondary social

studies context (as opposed to an elementary or higher education context) to better align with the

context of this study's participants. Depending on the journal's primary focus, I used the

following search terms to locate relevant articles: "feminism," "feminist," "gender," "women's

history," "women," "social studies," "history," and "school history." Each journal's primary

focus made it impossible to use all of these search terms for every journal. For example,

searching for "gender" in *Gender and Education* would prove too vague a search term to be

useful, so I used terms like "social studies" that were more effective for discriminating between

articles in that context.

I tried to keep this discussion primarily focused on a United States context because of the

potential differences among countries' educational systems, but that was not always possible

given the paucity of research on certain topics. I similarly tried to keep this discussion focused

on the last ten years, but you will find that I, like the authors of other literature reviews on this

topic, have included some literature dating back several decades ago. Since research on gender

and feminism has not always been a priority for many in the larger social studies research

community, older literature may actually be some of the only literature available on a particular

topic. Bohan (2017) confirmed in her review that research attending to gender and/or feminism "continues to reside on the edges" (p. 228).

Overall, several trends emerged from the literature. First, there is very little research on how curriculum impacts the development of gender identity among girls and young women (Levstik & Groth, 2002; ten Dam & Rijkschroeff, 1996). Second, women remain underrepresented and narrowly defined in social studies curriculum materials (Engebretson, 2014; Schmidt, 2012; Woyshner & Schocker, 2015). Third, there are several missing or hidden discourses regarding both gender and feminism in curriculum materials (Engebretson, 2014; Schmeichel, 2014; Schmeichel, 2015).

Curriculum and Gender Identity

Only two studies have analyzed the development of gender identity among girls and young women in relation to a women's history curriculum (Levstik & Groth, 2002; ten Dam & Rijkschroeff, 1996). We know that young people spend much of their crucial gender developmental years at school. The "tweenage" and teenage years, in particular, are a time of significant body change and they are also a time when young people become increasingly aware of "body meanings and the image repertoire of bodies" (Davison & Blye, 2006, p. 152). Messages that young people receive about masculinities and femininities can be contradictory and confusing to navigate. Furthermore, categories beyond gender, such as race, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status, can also influence the meaning of terms like "woman" and "man." Given all of these competing messages and multiple identities, "the development of a gender identity is not without conflict" (ten Dam & Rijkschroeff, 1996, p. 85). Because so many of these crucial developmental years are spent at school, the official school curriculum can be an important space for students to explore and disrupt gender practices and discourses.

It makes logical sense to assume that by focusing on women's history in social studies classrooms, teachers can help reveal past narratives about gender identity and, in turn, help students make sense of their own developing gender identity. The work of ten Dam & Rijkschroeff (1996) as well as Levstik & Groth (2002) helped interrogate this assumption. In their study of twenty-two history classes in the Netherlands, ten Dam and Rijkschroeff (1996) investigated whether the explicit meanings "pertaining to women, femininity, and gender" made visible through learning women's history would reveal an impact on the gender identity of girls (p. 73). Half of the classes studied traditional history during a four-week intervention period while the other half studied women's history. At the end of that period, the researchers asked students to reflect on their learning experiences in open-ended questionnaires. Although the questionnaires of girls in the women's history classes generally showed that they "found women's lives interesting and worth knowing," their answers also revealed a major disconnect between the past and the present (ten Dam & Rijkschroeff, 1996, p. 84). Most girls in the study did not reflect on any present gender inequality. Instead, their responses attempted to distance themselves from the notion that their gender was in any way "deficient" by describing their present world as one in which "women's struggle is over" (ten Dam & Rijkschroeff, 1996, (p.84). Therefore, simply presenting women's history content was not enough to ensure the examination of current gender discourses.

Levstik and Groth's (2002) study showed a similar disconnect between middle school student insights on gender inequity in the past and the ways in which those same students navigated their present social worlds. The researchers collected qualitative data from fifty middle school students who participated in a unit on antebellum U.S. history told from the perspective of women. When the researchers specifically asked students about whether they would feel

comfortable being called feminists, their answers revealed how the fruits of historical analysis do not always translate to a student's way of being in their current social world:

> Their responses pointed out a basic contrast between the world students wished for and could describe so articulately – a world of increasing open-mindedness, of cross-cultural understanding, and gender equity – and the social world they inhabited where gender identification was problematic, and labels, including 'feminist,' were too often used as weapons. (Levstik & Groth, 2002, p. 247)

The researchers observed students policing each other in the hallways using labels relating to both gender and sexuality even though they also observed students developing and expressing ideas about inclusivity in their classrooms. The language of inclusivity cultivated in their social studies lessons was just not translating to their peer interactions outside the classroom – at least not at the time of the study.

If one of our goals as social studies educators is to help students navigate gender discourses and support their gender identity development, then these studies demonstrate that it is not enough for students to simply study representations of women in the past. It is clear from this research that students struggle with relating knowledge and themes from women's history to current struggles for gender equity. This suggests that these past/present connections should be made more explicit in curriculum if there is to be a measurable impact on students' own developing gender identities. Having said that, it is important for social studies scholars to conduct more empirical research on women's history and gender identity development in the current educational policy context of the United States to see if these results remain true today among students. Both studies are well over a decade old and ten Dam and Rijkschroeff's (1996) study is based out of the Netherlands.

The Subjects of Women's History

In her study of the National Council for the Social Studies' (NCSS) revised curriculum standards, Engebretson (2014) used Tetreault's (1985) phase model to categorize the appearance of women in these standards. She found that the new documents occupied the lowest two phases of that framework. In other words, gender imbalance was prevalent, especially in the high school standards, and the female historical figures that were included tended to align with traditional male standards of excellence. A similarly narrow view of men also persisted. The male historical figures present in the standards indicated a "limited view of what important men do" that centers on political power and holding public office (Engebretson, 2014, p. 29).

Schmidt (2012) performed an inquiry analysis of how depictions of women and women's issues "produce a concept of woman" in South Carolina's United States (US) History standards, accompanying indicators, and supporting documents and resources (p. 708). She coded and categorized the data to understand where, in what context, and why the majority of references to women were being made in these materials. Consideration was also given to how curriculum designers framed the impact that women had in shaping history. Findings suggested that the "woman" presented to students through the state's US History curriculum is not intersectional; rather, she is largely reflective of White, middle class experiences. This narrow representation of women is further limited by the materials' normalization of the Cult of True Womanhood, a term used to describe the stereotypical nineteenth century portrayal of woman as "mother, wife, pure, pious, submissive, and domestic" (Schmidt, 2012, p. 719). To help explain the preponderance of neoconservative values in the portrayal of women found in South Carolina's social studies curriculum materials, Schmidt (2012) reflected on the substantial influence of the Fordham

Institute (a conservative education think tank) in determining content and teaching materials for the state's public school curricula.

When representations of Black women are the subject of analysis in curriculum materials, researchers have found that those representations are similarly limited in scope (Woyshner & Schocker, 2015). Woyshner and Schocker (2015) completed a content analysis and compositional interpretation of images in three textbooks used in the surrounding Philadelphia school districts at the time of publication. They compared the results of the two mainstream American history textbooks, *America: Pathways to the Present* (Cayton et al., 1998) and *The Americans* (Danzer, 1988) with the results of the one textbook adopted for a Black history course, *African-American History* (Hine et al., 2006). The overall number of women represented were greater in the two mainstream textbooks (34% and 45%) than in the Black history textbook (14%); however, Black women constituted far more of the overall images of women in the Black history textbook than the two mainstream ones. Black women made up 87% of the women depicted in *African American History* whereas they only made up 21% of the women in *America: Pathways to the Present* and 17% in *The Americans*.

In order to better theorize how Black women were being portrayed in these textbooks, Woyshner and Schocker (2015) created codes based on Schmidt's (2012) analysis of women's roles and they created a new phase model to better categorize the representations of Black women in curriculum materials. The codes they adopted to analyze women's roles were "domestic/ submissive" and "leader/ powerful". They found that in all three texts white women were more likely to be portrayed in domestic or submissive roles. The authors hypothesize that this may have something to do with the frequency of "famous firsts" among Black women's images and/or it may have to do with white women being the default female subject in textbooks.

The authors further noted the differences in how enslaved African American women are portrayed in each text. Images of enslaved women in the Black history textbook tended to be more graphic, depicting scenes of rape and the separation of families, than the mainstream textbooks. Additionally, enslaved women in the Black history text were more often depicted as agentic beings compared to the mainstream texts.

Woyshner and Schocker's (2015) new phase model, entitled "Framework on Researching and Teaching Black Women in History," is an amalgam of Tetreault's (1985) phase model, McIntosh's (2000) phase model for curricular revisioning regarding race, and Banks' (1993) writings on multiculturalism. I have reproduced Woyshner and Schocker's (2015) phase model in Table 4. The breakdown of data according to these phases of Black women's history tell us that two mainstream history texts are overwhelmingly described best by Phase I (All-white women's history) whereas the Black history textbook is best described by Phase IV (Oppression narrative) and Phase II (Famous firsts). The periodization of the Black history text tended to focus on the theme of overcoming oppression, which may explain the heavy presence of Phase IV images and the lower presence of Phase III (Contribution history) in that text.

Table 4

Woyshner and Schocker (2015) Framework on Researching and Teaching Black Women in History

Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase V
All-white women's history: virtually no Black women pictured	**Famous firsts:** the accomplishments of great Black women are highlighted	**Contribution history:** what Black women were doing in mainstream historical events	**Oppression narrative:** how Black women overcame injustices	**Afro-centric history:** reorders history around the experiences of Black women

In sum, research indicates that social studies curriculum materials still woefully underrepresent women as a whole. When they are represented, women tend to either adhere to

male standards of excellence or uphold the standards of the Cult of True Womanhood. The typical woman in social studies curriculum materials is white, middle class, and occupying a domestic or submissive role. Black women are even further marginalized in these mainstream curriculum materials. Even when curriculum materials aim to center the African American experience, research suggests that Black women are still underrepresented compared to Black men and are portrayed in narrow roles.

Missing or Hidden Discourses

In addition to her use of Tetreault's (1985) phase model, Engebretson (2014) also used discourse analysis to make visible the gendered discourses embedded within the revised NCSS curriculum standards. She notes how previously gendered terms, such "man-made," have been made gender-free or –neutral (e.g. "human-made). While this practice of removing explicitly gendered terms appears to be more inclusive of not only women but also transgender or gender-queer communities, Engebretson (2014) suggested that in the absence of a gender-balanced curriculum such a gender-free discourse can actually indicate a false-realization of a post-gender society (Engebretson, 2014). More research needs to be conducted to confirm how teachers and students understand gender-free terminology in practice, but Engebretson's (2014) analysis is certainly reminiscent of how race can be papered over with the language of "colorblindness" in curriculum materials.

Two discourse analyses of published lesson plans available in social studies publications revealed how attention to women in teaching materials tends to stop far short of critically analyzing the structures of gender inequity or problematic gendered discourses in the past or present (Schmeichel, 2014; Schmeichel, 2015). Studying the representation of women and women's experiences in those lesson plans, Schmeichel (2014) only found three eligible for

categorization as "critical representations," meaning that they clearly intended to "engage

students in a consideration of gender inequity" (p. 245). The majority, nine out of sixteen, fit best

into the "add women and stir" category which "is characterized by the inclusion of women in

accounts of the past or present which are not fundamentally changed by their presence"

(Schmeichel, 2014, p. 239). Studying the rationales provided in lesson plans for teaching about

women, Schmeichel (2015) uncovered a general avoidance of critical feminist goals. The most-

identified rationale was skill building, which tends to deemphasize the topic under study.

Schmeichel (2015) theorized that the "un-critical tone" reflected in many of these lesson plans

may be a product of a culture of civility promoted in academic writing (p. 12).

Summary

At the start of this chapter, I outlined why I believe teachers should be included in

curriculum conversations. I then reviewed the early feminist knowledge transformation project

and suggested new directions for that project based on poststructural theory, queer theory,

critical race theory, and citizenship education. Finally, I reviewed the literature on gender and

social studies curriculum to better understand what we know about the current state of the

feminist knowledge transformation project at the classroom level. These studies demonstrated

how important it is to examine the nature of our progress toward gender-equity. The number of

women in curricular documents may have increased but, as Noddings (1992) put it, "the gaps

that interest me cannot be closed by raising the count of female names and faces" (p. 231). The

literature outlined in this chapter indicates that we need to 1) diversify the representations and

roles of differently gendered peoples 2) find ways for the curriculum to reveal how interlocking

systems of oppression effect identity development across time and space, and 3) ensure that the

resulting curriculum supports deep and meaningful engagement with social studies content in ways that support students' own identity development.

Social studies classrooms are especially rich environments for change-making. Scholars have long espoused citizenship education as a primary goal of social studies teaching and learning (Thornton, 2004). While citizenship can certainly mean different things to different people, embedded within the term is the notion of people living in community. It is important that teachers bring women's history, gender, and feminism into the classroom in order to help students consider what it means to live in a community of differently gendered peoples. By teaching those topics, social studies educators can create a more inclusive educational experience for their students and one that might significantly contribute to a child's capacity for realizing their own ability to bring about change. In the next chapter I present my theoretical framework and outline the research methods used to capture teachers' experiences grappling with these topics in their own curriculum and instructional contexts.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

I begin this chapter by defining the epistemological commitments that constitute my identity as a feminist researcher. Then, I describe my research methods, including participant selection and recruitment, data collection and analysis techniques, and strategies for ensuring the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study process and product.

My Commitments as a Feminist Researcher

Sprague (2016) identified two points of consensus among feminists: 1) "gender… is a key organizer of social life," and 2) feminist projects should aim "to make the social world more equitable" (Sprague, 2016, p. 3). My research aligns with these two points by using gender as a lens to make sense of teachers' curricula and instructional talk for the purpose of making social studies education more equitable in the United States. Beyond those two points of consensus, feminist projects tend to defy homogenization because feminists tend to appreciate nuance or a diversity of opinion on many issues. So, while feminist researchers may have a shared goal (creating positive social change), they typically do not utilize the same techniques for collecting and analyzing data. In fact, most theorists agree that it would be counterproductive to the feminist movement for the research community to identify a common feminist method (Coffey & Delmont, 2000; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Kitzinger, 2004; Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999; Stanley, 1990a).

Rather than endorsing one method, feminist researchers instead promote a certain way of approaching the research process - a kind of research praxis (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Below, I outline three such ways of approaching feminist research that reappear frequently in texts on feminist methodology. Because these ways have been influential in shaping my own attitudes and behaviors as a researcher, I refer to them from here on as my feminist "commitments." Like

feminist theory as a whole, the commitments I describe are not meant to be read as dogmatic.

Instead, they should be read as my own interpretation of feminist methodology. I introduce each

of these commitments in the following order: 1) Acknowledging subjectivity and partiality; 2)

Examining issues of power and authority, and 3) Being reflexive.

Acknowledging Subjectivity and Partiality

Alongside other critical theorists, feminists have contributed much to the critique of the

"view from nowhere" (Nagel, 1986). Those critiques put forward that positivism's concept of the

neutral researcher untethered by values and politics "misconstrue[s] the nature of cognition" and

"can have pernicious consequences" (Hawkesworth, 2007, p. 477). Instead, feminism advocates

that researchers be open about their own subjectivity and partiality. When a researcher embraces

their subjectivity and partiality, they give up the positivist search for a positioning that

transcends boundaries or promises all-seeing objective vision – a positioning that does not exist.

By abandoning this positivist quest, researchers can pursue new and, ultimately, more successful

methods for establishing trustworthiness and legitimacy in their work. Put differently, by

acknowledging our own biases and limitations as researchers, we can learn how to broaden or

enhance our vision without the false promise of omniscience. In this spirit, I began this research

project with a commitment to acknowledge my own subjectivity and partiality as a researcher.

Feminism is certainly not alone in its understanding of how researchers and participants

are all situated and partial in their ability to construct knowledge. Constructivism, for example,

assumes that reality is a subjective experience. A constructivist researcher, therefore, believes

that "what is constructed, what makes sense, is reflective of the minds of the individuals

involved in the inquiry process only" and, "at the conclusion of an inquiry, an infinite number of

alternatives remain possible and, as yet, unconstructed" (Rodwell, 1998, p. 28). What feminism

and other critical theories add to this perspective is a grounding in material reality. Those

subjective and partial constructions that result from a research inquiry must depend upon the

existence of a material reality in order to make real progress or change, which is a fundamental

goal of feminist projects. Put differently, an extremist interpretivist or postmodern position in

which the existence of a material reality is called into question does a disservice to social justice-

oriented work. Au (2012) explained that such extremist positions "negate[] our ability to change

material and social conditions, because within the postmodern epistemological-philosophical

paradigm we can never establish that those conditions – whether socially just or unjust – actually

exist" (p. 8).

Examining Issues of Power and Authority

Research necessarily involves people (participants, other researchers, the public) at

varying stages of its development and dissemination. Inequities will inevitably exist between the

power and authority of a researcher and those other parties. As such, it is crucial for a researcher

to give considerable thought to how they involve others during the research process and how

they go about curating their research product for other people. This is why my second

commitment, to examine those issues of power and authority, was important for me to establish

at the outset of the research process.

In traditional, positivist research, the researcher is understood as unproblematically

dominant to the researched. So, following this dynamic, subjects are studied as if they were

objects. Feminists have thoroughly critiqued this hierarchical dynamic, pointing out that it "can

lead to justifying exploitation and abuse" (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999, p. 32). Initially, some

feminists tried to transform this research dynamic by centering collaboration and empathy

instead of "control and domination" (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999, p. 32). Those efforts,

however, revealed that there are limits to a researcher's ability to collaborate and empathize with their participants. For instance, Smith and Stewart (1983) highlighted how some researchers tended to subsume the Black female experience under the experiences of either Black men or white women.

A related feminist response to the hierarchical, positivist model was for researchers to attempt to cede power to participants whenever possible. Sprague (2016) found both practical and epistemological fault with this approach. For instance, when a researcher supposes that they can give their participants power, the researcher is assuming that their participants either have no power or have less power in relation to the researcher. This assumption may not be accurate to how their participants actually experience power during the research process. Sprague (2016), therefore, concluded that feminist researchers who commit to examining issues of power and authority in their research should avoid these kinds of assumptions and try not to treat power as a commodity that can be given and taken away. Each researcher-participant interaction may have a different power dynamic at play than the last interaction and those dynamics can and sometimes do change over time. This changing dynamic should, therefore, be continuously reevaluated by the researcher.

Rather than thinking about power only in terms of domination or understanding power as a transferrable asset, Hartsock (1985) and Sprague (2016) encouraged feminist researchers to think about their power from "the standpoint of caretakers" (Sprague, 2016, p. 93). In order to adopt this mindset, the researcher should be asking themselves how their inquiry can produce knowledge that shines a light on structural inequalities and systems of oppression and creates alternatives to hegemonic narratives (Sprague, 2016). This comes back to the idea that feminist projects should work toward creating greater social equity.

Feminist researchers can also ask themselves how the research process itself (in addition to its outcomes) can promote social justice, equity, and transformation. One lens that researchers use to think about the empowering or transformative intent of their research process is the concept of reciprocity. Lather (1991) argued that researchers should be thinking about reciprocity in terms of what our research projects can do for our participants, not solely in terms of what choices can get the researcher better or richer data. This must involve considering what is realistic within the scope of the research project itself. Harding (2007) reminded us that a researcher is unlikely to affect systemic change within the scope of one study. A researcher is also limited by their role in determining what their participants are actually getting out of a study. They might intend for an empowering, transformative, or even just worthwhile experience for our participants, but the researcher cannot assume these outcomes for our participants (Wolf, 1996).

Being Reflexive

From my first two commitment descriptions, it should be clear that my understanding of feminist research involves continuously asking myself both methodological and political questions. This act of questioning brings me to the last commitment I want to highlight: being reflexive. According to Hesse-Biber (2014), reflexivity is

> a process by which [researchers] recognize, examine, and understand how their social
>
> background, location, and assumptions can influence the research…[It] is a way for
>
> researchers to account for their personal biases and examine the effects that these biases
>
> may have on the data produced. (p. 3)

This process of reflexivity is always going to be somewhat imperfect because we are not always able to see our own biases and assumptions regardless of the enthusiasm with which we embrace

reflexivity; however, this practice is still vital for trustworthiness and transparency in our work. As Anyon put it, "scholarship that makes its biases part of its argument arises as a new contender for legitimacy" (as cited by Lather, 1991, p. 3). When we discuss our positionality and background in an attempt to "get at" our own biases and assumptions, we provide clues for our readers about the potential strengths and limitations of our work. Those readers, in turn, may be able to identify what we might not have considered.

Part of this reflective work means considering whether the researcher occupies the status of "insider" or "outsider" in relation to the communities involved in their research project. Feminist scholars have been quick to point out that this can be a false dichotomy. Collins (1986), for example, reinforced the importance of the "outsider within" status for articulating the experiences of Black women living within a community that historically excludes them. Even thinking of these statuses as static can be problematic. Sometimes it is helpful for the researcher to examine their status of belonging throughout the data collection process as this status can shift as we have new encounters or take on different roles (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007; Mendez & Wolf, 2007). Sprague (2016) argued that the epistemological value of the researcher's positionality emerges not from their individual psychology, but from their ability to cross those socially constructed boundaries that divide those who belong from those who do not.

In order to begin the process of reflexivity and establish transparency on my own perspective as researcher, I offer in the next section a short narrative about my own interest in this research topic.

Situating Myself as Researcher

All of my high school social studies teachers and college history professors were men. Women taught me about mitosis and meiosis, Irish poetry, coordinate planes, and Spanish verb

tenses, but not history (at least not officially). This gendered division did not seem important to me growing up. I learned a lot from all of my male history teachers and became genuinely passionate about the discipline under their guidance. While that fact has not changed, I have since come to a new understanding of why gender matters in history education.

It was during my senior year of college that my understanding of history shifted, almost imperceptibly but irrevocably, when I joined a search committee for a new history professor. Each of the final four candidates came in for interviews, meals, tours, and an observed classroom lesson. Out of all those search committee activities, one specific lesson stood out to me. From start to finish, it transfixed me. A candidate with a background in European history delivered a lesson all about women during the Renaissance. She did not just mention a female historical figure in passing; she constructed the entire lesson around women's experiences and traditionally feminized subjects. In particular, I recall some interesting and gory details about Renaissance birthing practices from her lesson. I am happy to report, she got the job.

I often ask myself why her lesson surprised me and stayed with me all these years, and I realize now that the candidate opened me to a truth widely held but quietly circulated: simply put, her lesson shattered my image of "normal history." I had become used to women being added to historical narratives, not playing a central role. There were nods to women's history in class and I made time to explore the biographies of a few women using assigned projects and papers, but women were not consistently woven into the narrative of my history education. This candidate, however, told history by focusing on where women were in the past, not by waiting for them to accomplish some grand historic gesture (like rallying for the right to vote) or to fill some grand political position (such as pharaoh or queen). She tackled a feminized topic, midwifery, often overlooked by an overwhelming focus on politics and economics in school

history (Engebretson, 2018; Symcox, 2002). She talked about gender roles and norms as well as how those Renaissance women bent and broke them. In sum, her lesson suggested to me the ways in which my history education did not reflect my gender identity.

Recalling this event, I am not surprised that it was a female-identifying educator that broke my perception of what constitutes "normal history." While I believe educators of all genders are fully capable of constructing such a lesson as the one described above, feminist standpoint theory reminds us that "certain social positions…allow for developing better understandings" (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999, p. 27). Au (2012) explained this perspectival advantage thusly: "If we want to understand patriarchy and sexism, then, given the power and privilege of men in our current social relations, we stand a better chance of getting a clearer, more strongly objective understanding of patriarchy and sexism if we take up the standpoint of women" (p. 70). It is important to note that a standpoint is *not* equivalent to a subjectivity. A standpoint is "achieved rather than obvious" (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999, p. 27); it is "born of struggle" rather than a given (Au, 2012, p. 66). Just as I did not immediately see how patriarchy and sexism had structured my own sense of "normal history," women in general are not simply born into a deeper understanding of how gender structures their experiences. In other words, having a perspectival advantage does not mean that things cannot still block your view. Furthermore, a standpoint is not something that can be achieved once and for all; it is something that changes as we continue to learn and grow and can become obsolete if we disengage from that process of critical inquiry for long enough. I believe all educators, regardless of their subjectivities, have the potential to bring a critical eye to issues of identity and the past. Achieving and maintaining that critical orientation requires rigorous and sustained effort,

especially from those who occupy dominant identity markers or, in Freire's (1970/1996) words, the position of the "oppressor."

Through my own school experiences, I had begun to see the ways in which my history education had not reflected my gender identity. When I decided to pursue a career in teaching, I wanted to deliver content to my students in such a way that they would not feel similarly underserved by their history education. I completed my student teaching in a state that had skill-focused social studies standards and no high-stakes tests in most social studies courses. Student teaching in that context, I saw many opportunities in the official curriculum to center women in history lessons, particularly in the form of inquiry- and project-based learning. After moving to Virginia and accepting my first teaching position, I started to understand what a difference state standards and assessments can make. Virginia's history standards focused much more on facts than skills and students' knowledge of those facts were tested at the end of the year by the Standards of Learning (SOL) exams. In my new teaching context, I felt much more boxed in by the state standards and assessments. I felt my commitment to promoting women's history being tested by institutional pressures. Each year, I was able to add more content on women and asked more questions about gender and, sometimes, gender-equity, but I still struggled with the feeling that I could be doing more or better.

My own subjectivities constitute my epistemic partiality. As a cisgender, white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and middle class woman, I currently occupy many positions of privilege. I name these subjectivities to invite my readers to bring to bear their own perspectives and experiences in critically interrogating this contribution to educational research. Feminist research and knowledge production thrive on dialogue and critique. What my standpoint affords me in terms of identifying assumptions and reaching some kind of "truth" must be met with the

wisdom of others who can identify unseen assumptions and reach alternative truths that may

challenge or expand this work for future educators and researchers alike. I use the term

"alternative truths" here to convey that there are multiple, valid ways of answering the same

inquiry question, not to imply a false reality or indicate deliberate misinformation (as some have

done in recent national conversations).

I will end this narrative by noting that my examination of my own subjectivities and

partiality does not end here. I offer my own researcher reflections to the reader whenever they

are especially salient to understanding the development of the methods and findings.

Methodology

Entering the Research Process

Kitzinger (2004) advised that feminist researchers should select their methods based on

"the questions you want to answer, the kinds of answers you expect to find, and the uses to

which you want your research to be put." (p. 115). In what follows I outline my research

question, expectations, and goals at the beginning of the research process and, then, describe the

evolution of those factors over the course of the project's lifetime.

The Question I Wanted to Answer

I began my project with the following research question: "How do secondary social

studies teachers construct the idea of a feminist social studies curriculum as they discuss

including women's history, gender, or feminism in their practice?" By asking this question, I

wanted to shed light on how teachers articulate their vision for a more gender-equitable social

studies education and how they work to realize their vision through their curriculum choices. In

the study design section below, I go over how this research question evolved as I got to know the

participants and their reasons for wanting to be a part of this research project.

The Kinds of Answers I Expected to Find

In addition to my personal interest in the research topic and question, I also entered the research project with certain expectations about outcomes. In order to account for my own expectations and assumptions at the start of the research project, I wrote out my "working hypotheses," a practice I borrowed from constructivist research. Rodwell (1998) described those hypotheses as "tentative descriptions about reality that can be investigated and said to be true only in a specific time, situation, or context" (p. 152). In other words, those hypotheses are *not* intended to be "tested" in the traditional, positivist sense of the term. Below are my initial working hypotheses based on my expectations and assumptions at the outset of the research process:

1) When women's experiences, the analytic framework of gender, and feminism occupy a more central role in social studies discourse, the teacher-constructed social studies curriculum will reveal significant differences from the state curriculum as written.

2) Teachers will have different, sometimes contradictory, attitudes and beliefs regarding what is considered curriculum content that promotes either gender-equity or feminism.

My first working hypothesis was built from my understanding of how feminist work has changed disciplinary knowledge in the past. In her work on feminism and science, Harding (1991) concluded that "when one tries to add women and gender to conventional subject matters and conceptual schemes, it quickly becomes obvious that the two have been defined against each other in such a way that they cannot be combined" (p. 20). Additionally, as demonstrated in chapter two, current research clearly indicates that history education is still dominated by androcentric narratives. My second working hypothesis was built from my understanding of the pressures of teaching and the plurality of feminism. Because the teachers in this study operate

under certain state and district curriculum expectations while they attempt to incorporate women's history, gender, or feminism, I expected to find tension and contradiction among participant views and contributions to the idea of a feminist social studies curriculum. Adding to this complexity are the multiple and contradictory messages about what constitutes feminism circulating in mediated public spaces (Gill, 2016). As discussed in chapter one, postfeminist sensibilities can even work to rearticulate overtly sexist attitudes and behaviors as "feminist."

The Uses to Which I Wanted My Research to Be Put

Given that feminism is grounded in praxis-oriented and political work, the pragmatic goals of any feminist research study are especially important to define at the outset. My overarching reason for building this study was to promote the teaching of women's history, gender, and feminism in secondary social studies classrooms through both policy and practice, especially in regards to curriculum design. At times, that means improving the representation of girls and women in educational spaces and considering what those representations should look like. Other times, that means considering when and how we teach about gender and feminism. Among current curriculum materials that focus on women, gender, and feminism, we know there are very few that demonstrate features of a critical feminist discourse, such as a focus on systems of power and oppression (Schmeichel, 2014; Schmeichel, 2015). Critical feminist theory has the potential to support students in making sense of the world and learning how to take action toward social change and, thus, it deserves more attention in social studies education.

Once I initiated the data collection process, my initial research question, expectations, and goals started to evolve. In the next section, I describe my final study design and explain how that design is a product of the interaction between researcher, participants, and context.

Study Design Overview

From these initial research question, expectations, and goals, I selected my methods for data collection and analysis. I designed a qualitative study using ethnographic tools and interpretive analysis techniques from constructivist grounded theory. Utilizing a hermeneutic circle design to facilitate the co-construction of knowledge across multiple participants, I primarily collected data by conducting one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Using constructivist grounded theory (GT), I set out to analyze how teachers make curriculum and instructional decisions regarding the inclusion and representation of women's history, gender, and feminism. Once I initiated the data collection process, my initial research question, expectations, and goals started to evolve in relation to participant interactions and other contextual factors. Emergent study designs are a common feature of qualitative research projects (Charmaz, 2014; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rodwell, 1998). These emergent designs can better support research aimed at exploration and discovery (Hesse-Biber, 2014) and they can allow for increased flexibility, "internal validity," and "contextual understanding" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 88).

While I kept much of my original plan for data collection and analysis intact throughout the study, my focus changed in response to the unanticipated circumstances and interesting insights I encountered during the research process. Davis (2016) encouraged feminist researchers to embrace the unpredictable and the surprising in their pursuit of knowledge:

> Oftentimes our scholarly and activist projects are formulated just so that they reconfirm what we already know. But that is not interesting. It is boring. And so how to allow for surprises, and how do we make these surprises productive? (p. 103)

One way I allowed for surprises was by revisiting my research question throughout the study and questioning whether the participants were offering answers to a different question. In considering the collected data and what surprised me about that data, I reformulated my original research question into the following final two questions:

- How do secondary social studies teachers describe their approach to women's history, gender, and feminism in their curriculum and instructional practices?

- What do teachers consider when determining their approach to those topics?

Participant Sampling and Recruitment

I utilized purposeful, criterion sampling to recruit seven full-time, secondary social studies teachers who had an expressed interest in promoting and enhancing women's history and gender-related topics in social studies education. In feminist methodology, objective inquiry is better achieved through diversity and inclusion (Hawkesworth, 2007). Theoretically, a more diverse group of participants would be better able to expose or critique assumptions about women's history, gender, feminism, and curriculum that might otherwise go unchallenged across a more homogenous group. GT is also "more conceptually dense and potentially more useful if it has been 'grounded' in widely varying instances of the phenomenon" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 98). I sought variation among the participants according to the following five criteria:

- **Gender** – Social studies teachers statistically skew more male than most other subject areas (Bohan, 2017). Because my research questions specifically investigates how teachers talk about gender and their curriculum and instructional practices, it is important to capture the voices of differently gendered peoples. For example, it might be that female teachers express more comfort teaching women's history and can provide more examples of what that looks like in their curriculum or teachers who identify as trans or

gender-queer may offer a more nuanced vision of gender in their curriculum than

cisgender male- and female-identifying teachers.

- **Race** – Race is an important part of how we connect with and construct history (Epstein,

  2016). A participant's race may, therefore, influence how they interpret and teach history.

  Race also intersects with gender in constructing our experiences as situated peoples in the

  world. Differently raced and gendered people, therefore, may have unique perspectives

  on women's history, gender, and feminism as they relate to social studies teaching.

- **Number of Years of Teaching Experience** – A participant's number of years of

  teaching experience can influence their level of comfort with their content and

  curriculum. Differing years of experience can also result in variances among participant

  philosophies of teaching and learning due to changing discourses in teacher education

  programs and professional development opportunities.

- **Primary Subject/ Grade Level** – In 2014, the Virginia State Assembly called for the

  removal of several end-of-year tests in social studies content areas (H 930). Therefore,

  some social studies teachers are still in content areas with high-stakes testing while others

  are in content areas with alternative assessments, such as project-based assessments.

  Because of this recent shift in the assessment landscape, teachers in different grade levels

  and subject areas may experience different assessment pressures which, in turn, can

  impact their relationship with their official course curriculum documents.

- **School Demographics** – School demographics can reflect different school cultures and

  result in different experiences for teachers in those schools. Those unique experiences

  can influence teaching beliefs and practices. I specifically looked at the percentage of

students enrolled in free and reduced lunch as well as the racial and linguistic make-up of the schools when sampling for maximum variation for school demographics.

Recruitment began with an email campaign. I identified several "gatekeepers" that were not eligible for the study themselves but had the potential to reach those that were. Gatekeepers included teachers in non-social studies positions, former colleagues, social studies education and history professors at local universities, individuals involved with a local educational research organization, an education and outreach coordinator at a public history institution, and the officers in a local grassroots organization for area teachers. Each gatekeeper received an email that included information on the study, a recruitment flyer (see Appendix A), and a request to forward the email content to anyone they think might be interested in participating. With this recruitment design, teachers could choose whether or not they wanted to reach out me.

To ensure that I had appropriately sampled for teachers interested in promoting and enhancing women's history and gender-related topics in social studies education, I set up a phone call with each teacher that emailed me. During those phone conversations, I asked teachers about their teaching background (their number of years of teaching experience, what content areas they have taught/ are currently teaching, what grade levels they have taught/ are currently teaching) and about their interest in women's history and other gender-related topics. I also provided participants with a brief description of the study and its expectations for participants. Finally, I asked participants if they had any questions for me. At the end of the phone call, I sought verbal confirmation that the teacher was still interested in participating. If they indicated that they were interested and they met the study criteria, I set up an interview date and time with them and emailed them the study "Information Sheet." This sheet detailed all participant rights and protections in accessible language.

Because I recruited specifically for "teachers interested in promoting and enhancing women's history and gender-related topics," (see Appendix A) I assumed that I would hear mostly from teachers who felt a sense of expertise or comfort with these topics in their practice. After my initial recruitment conversations, however, two things became clear to me: 1) many of the teacher participants were primarily interested in learning more about how to incorporate women's history and gender-related topics into their teaching practice and 2) many of them did not seem comfortable identifying as an authority on women's history, gender, or feminism. The following excerpt from my reflexive journal, which I logged after a recruitment phone call, reveals my emerging awareness of how participants were positioning themselves as learners, not as experts:

> When I asked about his interest in women's history and gender, he seemed a little thrown by the question… He immediately started discussing how he was not an expert and, so, if that's what I am looking for, he's not really the *right* participant. But, then, he went on to talk about how he took a course in women's history, thinks about these topics in his history teaching, and mentioned a lesson plan on transgender people. He clearly does have an interest in these things, but the idea of being an expert was not a label he felt comfortable with. (reflexive journal, February 14, 19)

This early realization about participant positioning, ultimately, changed the trajectory of the study analysis. Positioning themselves as learners, rather than authorities, some teacher participants struggled to convey a vision for gender equity work during our interviews. Because of this, the study's interviews seemed to serve more as a platform for teacher self-reflection regarding their own gender-equity work than as a platform for co-constructing the idea of a feminist social studies curriculum. The final two research questions, presented earlier, better

reflected this unanticipated positioning by refocusing my investigation on how the teachers were making sense of their own experiences regarding the topics of this study.

The Teachers

Recruitment efforts ultimately resulted in seven teacher participants. This smaller sample size was expected given that there are so few studies on the teacher experience with women's history, gender, and feminism in social studies education (Bohan, 2017). We, as a field, have no evidence that an interest in women's history or other gender-related topics is commonplace among social studies teachers. In order to produce more fully-developed themes with a small sample size, I designed the study to interact with each participants more than once.

Teacher Identities

All participants were asked to fill out a short self-identification form. While I aimed for a diversity of characteristics on a number of criteria, my final participant group had some common characteristics that bear keeping in mind when interpreting the findings. The table below (see Table 5) summarizes the participant variation across the first four criteria (gender, race, number of years of teaching experience, and primary subject/grade level). The order in which you see the participants listed in Table 5 is the order in which I interviewed them. All names provided are pseudonyms to protect participant identities.

Table 5

Participant Data Relating to Sampling Criteria

	Gender Identity	Racial Identity	# of Years Teaching	Primary Grade Levels Taught	Primary Subject Areas Taught
Chris	Male	white	6	11th Grade	VA & U.S. History
Audrey	Female	white	7	11th and 12th Grade	AP U.S. History and Economics & Personal Finance
Sara	Female	white	7	11th Grade	VA & U.S. History
Mary	Female	white	1	6th and 7th Grade	U.S. History to 1865 and U.S. History to the Present
Evan	Male	white	2	6th Grade	U.S. History to 1865
Kelly	Female	white	7	9th Grade	World History to 1500 and AP Human Geography
Lisa	Female	white	26	6th Grade	U.S. History to 1865

While there is some variation in gender, teaching experience, and primary grade level/subject areas, there is no variation in participant race. Because all teachers identified racially as white, the findings of this study should be understood as limited to the experiences of white secondary social studies teachers in Virginia public schools. Even within that smaller population of teachers, these findings are specific to the group of teachers involved in this study and any transferability to other contexts would have to be determined by those familiar with those other contexts.

While considering participant identity, it is also important to note that no teachers chose to self-disclose their sexuality, which makes it difficult to determine whether or not there is any LGBTQ+ representation in this group. Self-disclosure of gender fell along binary lines, so it may be that there is no representation of non-binary gender identities in this group of teachers. While not ideal, this lack of racial diversity and LGBTQ+ representation was also not entirely surprising. The teaching profession is largely dominated by white women and the social studies teaching profession, more specifically, is largely dominated by white men and women (Bohan, 2017). Furthermore, my identity as a white, female researcher may have also limited my access to a more diverse cross-section of participants.

School Contexts

I recruited for teacher participants in three neighboring public school districts in Virginia. Given that I used purposeful, criterion sampling, I needed to identify districts that offered many potential candidates that met the sampling criteria outlined above. The final seven participants ended up coming from four schools in Dodson County Public Schools (DCPS) (a pseudonym) and two schools in Elizabeth City Public Schools (ECPS) (a pseudonym). All schools exist within the changing assessment landscape outlined in Chapter 1, meaning that some teachers in this study teach SOL or AP-tested courses while others teach courses using alternative assessments. DCPS schools are located in both suburban and rural settings while ECPS schools are located in both urban and near-urban settings. Table 6 displays the enrollment and demographic data for each of those schools, roughly in the order of each participant interview.

Table 6

Participant School Data Relating to Enrollment and Demographics

School	School District	# of Participating Teachers at School	Accredited?	Total Enrollment	Student Demographics at School	# Economically Disadvantaged	# English Learners
Mason High School	ECPS	1	Yes (with conditions)	1,300	65% Black or African American 30% Hispanic 5% White	50%	20%
Fitzgerald High School	DCPS	1	Yes	2,200	70% White 10% Black or African American 10% Hispanic 5% Asian 5% Other	10%	1%
Hamilton High School	DCPS	1	Yes	2,300	40% White 30% Black or African American 20% Hispanic 5% Two or more races 5% Asian	30%	5%
Sturgill Middle School	ECPS	2	Yes (with conditions)	800	70% Black or African 20% Hispanic 10% White	70%	10%
Marshall High School	DCPS	1	Yes	2,000	40% Black or African American 30% White 20% Hispanic 10% Two or More Races	40%	10%
Gibbons Middle School	DCPS	1	Yes	1,200	70% White 10% Hispanic 10% Black or African American 5% Two or more races 5% Asian	25%	10%

Research Relationships

Before data collection began, I reflected on how I saw myself in relation to the teacher participants. This gave me an opportunity to interrogate some of my assumptions and consider how they could influence the research study. What follows is an excerpt from that early memo in which I considered my positioning as both "insider" and "outsider" in relation to the research participants:

> The participants represent a community that I still feel connected to in many ways. I was a middle school social studies teacher for six years in Virginia public schools and, during that time, I further developed my interest in promoting women's history. Given this background, it is tempting to see myself as an "insider" and assume that the participants will similarly view me this way. An insider status would assume that the participants and I share common experiences with regard to the pressures and the responsibilities of teaching and the role of curriculum in practice. Despite these similarities in our professional backgrounds, I also know that an insider status is not a given. An equally compelling case can be made for my status as an "outsider." First, despite any surface similarities between our professional backgrounds, my own experiences and those of the participants will be unique due to both contextual and individual differences. For example, several participants might teach 6th grade USI, but they may do so in very different school contexts with distinct student populations. Second, as I am no longer a full-time public school teacher, I will more likely represent the perspective of an academic outsider to participants. This tension between insider and outsider status will inevitably drive some of my self-reflection during data collection, analysis, and interpretations. (reflexive journal, November 1, 2018)

After meeting and getting to know the teacher participants in this study, the ways in which I understood my own positioning continued to develop. In that early memo, I did reflect on how I might be perceived by participants as an "academic outsider," but I did not completely examine how I saw myself in relation to academia. My middle school teaching experiences informed much of the work I pursued as a doctoral student, including designing this study. In this sense, graduate students, including myself, are "boundary crossing" (Sprague, 2016) in ways that I did not initially consider: "Graduate students who are just confronting the disjuncture between their private experience and the discourse of social science knowledge are also in a dual location, compared with those who have been thoroughly schooled in a discipline's worldview" (p. 86). This tension between being an academic insider and outside played out most obviously to me as I prepared for and wrote Chapter 4. Identifying with many of the ideas and experiences teachers shared with me during their interviews, I had to push myself at times to see beyond what the teachers were saying and consider, instead, what they were doing. I go into what that self-prompting looked like in practice during the next section.

Data Collection

I collected three types of data during this study: interviews, curriculum documents, and electronic communications. My primary focus for data analysis were interviews, which included 14 one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with seven teachers-participants. Each teacher was interviewed a total of two times. All interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Curriculum documents and electronic communications were considered a secondary form of data to help triangulate and contextualize interview data. Prior to the start of each interview, I asked the teacher-participant via email to provide me with a curriculum document (lesson plan, activity, assessment, etc.) that they have used in their classroom and that includes

women's history or gender-related topics to some degree. Those curriculum documents helped me get to know the teachers' current practice regarding those topics. They also helped me shape pertinent interview questions by eliciting stories about the delivery of those materials. If the participant referenced any additional curriculum documents during the interview, I asked for copies of those documents after the interview. Electronic communications with participating teachers took the form of emailing. The curriculum documents and electronic communications created opportunities for triangulation. By juxtaposing these sources of data with the interview data, I was able to either confirm or complicate statements made during the interviews.

All fourteen interviews occurred over a five month time frame. This allowed me time to analyze data in between each interview before proceeding to the next. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, with first-round interviews often going longer than the second-round interviews. I conducted interviews away from the participant's school setting in a reserved room at either a local university or a public library. In the first-round interviews, I utilized an interview protocol (see Appendix B) that consisted of two main introductory prompts, four main construct-related questions that remained unchanged throughout the study, and five potential clarifying questions. The construct questions, which emerged from my initial research question, were aimed at eliciting each teachers' vision for how they are and would like to be representing and including women's history and gender-related topics in secondary social studies classes.

The second-round interviews were shaped by my initial data analysis of the first-round interviews. Each second-round interview consisted of three distinct parts. The first part included three or four interesting quotes I pulled from the teacher's first-round interview transcript and I asked follow up questions about each of those quotes. For the second part, I organized data across all seven first-round interviews into a visual representation of teacher curriculum

suggestions and a list of desired supports or resources and, then, showed those to each teacher, asking them about their initial impressions and whether they would like to add anything. In the last part, I asked questions based on overlooked topics and surprising insights from the first-round interviews.

As stated earlier, dialogue and connection are an important feature of a feminist research project. In order to facilitate dialogue across participants, I organized the interviews using the concept of the hermeneutic circle (see Figure 1), which Rodwell (1998) described as "a circle of information sharing…[where] perspectives regarding claims, concerns, and issues are presented, considered, evaluated, understood, rejected, or incorporated into an emerging understanding of the phenomenon under discussion or investigation" (p. 81-82). Using this design, I took on the role of capturing the thoughts/ideas from one participant and, then, sharing those thoughts/ideas with the next participant. In other words, after each initial first-round interview, I produced a written construct summarizing the thoughts/idea that emerged from the interview. Then, that construct was tested and critiqued by the next participant at the end of their interview. This process went on until all participants had been able to interact at least once with the thoughts/ideas of another participant. I detail this process even more in the "data analysis" and "trustworthiness" sections of this chapter.

Figure 1:

Hermeneutic Circle for Interview Structuring

C = Construct (of a Feminist Social Studies Curriculum)
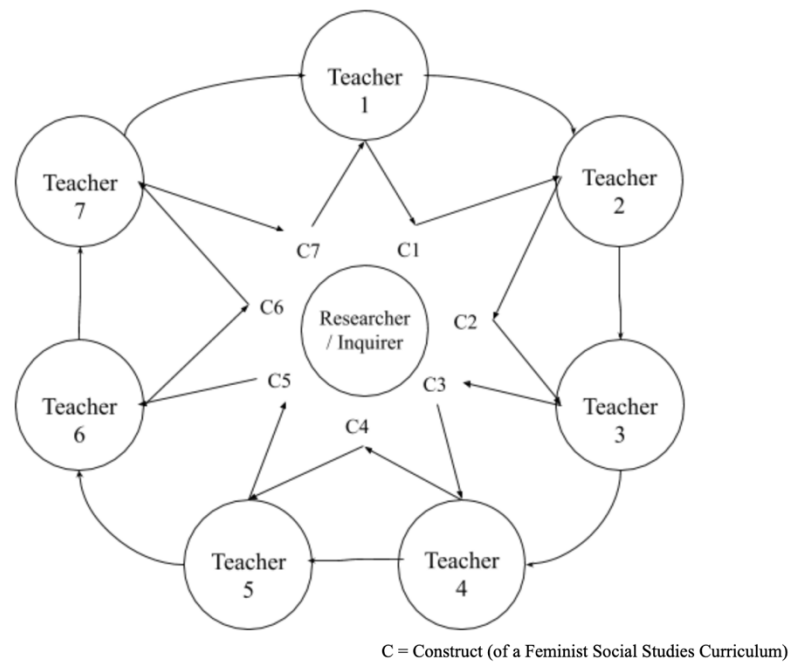
I should note that this structure was disrupted in one instance where two participants who knew

each other were scheduled so that one would have been analyzing the other's written construct.

Not wanting to breach participant privacy by potentially sharing identifiable information, I

decided to instead share an earlier written construct with their acquainted colleague and ask a

different, unfamiliar teacher to analyze the skipped teacher's written construct during second-

round interviewing.

The idea behind the hermeneutic circle design is that it allows for a deeper, more fully

developed understanding of the phenomenon under study to emerge as it gets analyzed and

shaped over time (Bhattacharya, 2017; Rodwell, 1998). However, rather than seeking one

agreed-upon, wholistic vision for the how women's history, gender, and feminism should be

represented and included in secondary social studies curriculum, I was more interested in

accommodating multiple visions that may emerge. For research such as this that aims to support

change, a hermeneutic circle provides an advantageous model for study design. It can be both engaging and educative. The participants, facilitated by the inquirer, co-construct knowledge, making it possible for those involved "to have a genuine and reciprocal impact on one another" (Geertz as cited by Rodwell, 1998, p. 84).

Blumenfeld-Jones (2006) challenged researchers "to consider a renewal of the field in the public interest through more direct research engagement both with those people who practice curriculum creation and with those people who make daily curriculum decisions" (p. 231). By establishing a hermeneutic circle with teachers, this study answers that call. It directly engages teachers as curriculum creators and decision-makers in the process of critical reflection and knowledge creation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began during the hermeneutic circle process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Rodwell, 1998) and concluded with a constant comparison data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As part of my role as facilitator of the hermeneutic circle, I spent time in between each interview going over recordings and transcripts to try to understand and distill the thoughts and ideas of each teacher-participant. That process proceeded as follows:

1. After each initial interview, I summarized the teacher's thoughts/ideas relating to their current experiences with women's history, gender, and feminism in their practice and to their vision for how they would like to be representing and including those topics in their future practice. These summaries, which I refer to from here out as "summary constructs," were typically one to one-and-a-half page-long, single-spaced documents. I kept them short to respect each teachers' time. I go into more detail about how I generated summary constructs in the "trustworthiness" section at the end of this chapter.

2. I then sent the resultant summary construct to the teacher via email to determine whether I had adequately represented their thoughts/ideas. In those emails, I encouraged the teacher to make corrections or clarifications. I also encouraged them to expand on or add any ideas as they saw fit. Both via email and in person, I made clear my intention to share their summary construct at my next interview.

3. Once the teacher had responded to and approved of their summary construct, I printed it and brought it to the next interview to share with the next teacher-participant. At the next interview, I shared the summary construct with the teacher after we were finished with the interview protocol questions. By presenting the summary construct at the end, I could separate the teacher's own thoughts/ideas from those generated in response to the previous teacher's thoughts/ideas. This was helpful for me to distinguish from whom an idea originated during data analysis. When presented with a summary construct, the teacher was provided quiet reading time before being asked about their first impressions. After first impressions, I asked follow-up questions about the construct's main ideas.

4. Steps 1-3 were then repeated in preparation for the next interview.

As part of my preparation for second-round interviews, I created maps and graphics to sort the existing topics and ideas that emerged during the first-round interviews. In performing these exercises, my goal was to capture some of the complexities or messiness of the data, find any interesting units of data that stood out early on, and identify some preliminary patterns. Because this was so early on in the analysis phase, I was not looking to come to any conclusions or determine what was significant versus not-significant. In one of these exercises, I created a "Messy Situational Map" (see Figure 2), which can include "human, nonhuman, discursive,

historical, symbolic, cultural, political, and other elements in the research situation of concern and provoke analysis or relations among them" (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 100).

Figure 2

Messy Situational Map for Early Analysis Process
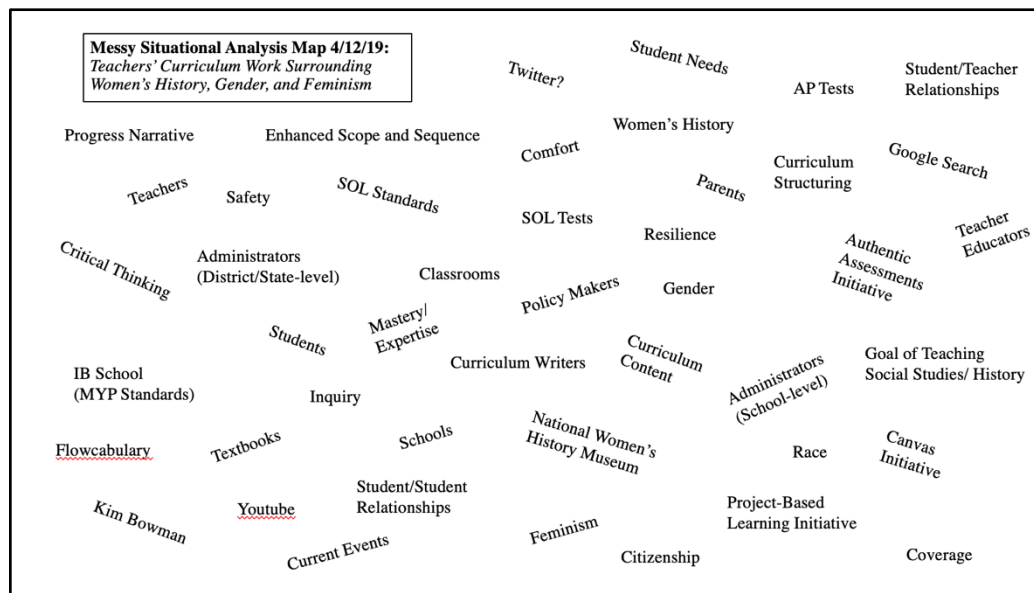
In a memo that followed this exercise, I noted that some of these topics did not surprise me, such as those related to curriculum and assessment policy. What did stand out to me were the references to student needs and to student comfort and safety. Those ideas and topics that stood out to me as needing more context or explanation became the focus of several second-round interview questions. In one instance, it was the absence of data that stood out to me. I assumed that if a teacher identified as a feminist, they might divulge that information at some point during the first interview – perhaps when I asked them if they addressed feminism in their current practice. However, when none of the teachers chose to discuss how they identified with the term, I designed an interview question that included Stevens and Martell's (2019) framework for critical and liberal feminist social studies teachers in order to ask more directly about their feelings about the label "feminist."

While interviews were ongoing, I started the process of *deconstruction* and *reconstruction* following techniques from constructivist grounded theory (GT). I began the deconstruction process by entering interview transcripts and all collected curriculum documents into ATLAS.ti and, then, unitizing each transcript by dividing the raw data into concise but meaningful chunks called "quotes." Rodwell (1998) described a successful unit of data as "the smallest piece of information that can be understood by someone with minimal knowledge or experience with the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 155). My typical unit was several sentences to a paragraph in length.

The reconstruction phase of analysis began as I started to corral and build up the data into categories and themes. To reconstruct my data, I moved back and forth between the two iterative coding phases of constructivist GT: *initial coding* and *focused coding* (Charmaz et al., 2018). During the initial coding sessions, I "stay[ed] close to the data," to let themes arise from the data in a more inductive manner (Charmaz et al., 2018, p. 424). I used two coding techniques to stay close to the data: 1) coding with gerunds and 2) in vivo coding. These two techniques emphasized the actions and words of the teacher-participants, respectively (Charmaz, 2014). Coding with gerunds helped me see past the surface-level meaning of a unit by asking myself what the teacher was *doing*, not just what they were *saying*. To illustrate the difference, consider the following unit from Audrey's transcript:

> I do feel like the class is sort of chronological, and it's this inevitable step of time, and I think part of the reason that I'm most comfortable teaching it that way is because of how the standards are set up. And so while it isn't the best way to teach it, again, it's just kind of how we land.

Rather than coding the above quote with a noun, such as "curriculum standards," I can code it

with a gerund, such as "sticking to the curriculum standards," and get a better sense of Audrey's

relationship to this data through her action. She is taking action in the form of following or

"sticking to" the standards because it is comfortable. Whenever possible, using in-vivo codes

helped me capture the meaning of the data by using the words of the participants. The reason I

used the term "sticking" in the above coding example and not a similar terms, such as

"following" or "staying close to," is because "sticking" was the way that Sara described her

relationship with the curriculum standards when covering certain topics:

> …because of the strict curriculum, sometimes teachers do stick with it. I know I, for
>
> example, do. There are certain topics where I stick with the curriculum, and it is because
>
> I don't want to be on the radar (laughs) for any type of reason.

Her use of the term "sticking" invoked the idea of the curriculum standards being a companion

of sorts, as in when you might "stick with" a friend or a sibling in an uncertain situation. It also

invoked the idea that the curriculum standards can be thought of as "sticky," or having a certain

gravitational pull to them. This second meaning gets at some of the pressures or forces at work

when teachers consider how to approach the topics of this study.

During the focused coding sessions, I worked toward identifying significant codes and

coding families (categories) among large groups of data to better combine and narrow codes,

sometimes using a more abductive and deductive manner than the initial coding phase. This

approach to the reconstruction process follows a feminist "middle-order approach" to data

analysis. More traditional approaches to data analysis tend to choose either an inductive or a

deductive approach to analysis. For example, traditional GT is intended to be entirely inductive

and assumes that the researcher can remain atheoretical in their analysis so that theory may arise

solely from the data. Some feminist researchers have questioned the assumptions of those who approach the research process from this either/or perspective, pushing instead for a middle-order approach. An inductive approach can "avoid theoretical over-determinism and researcher-enforced definitions" and a deductive approach can allow researchers to situate their work "in feminist theoretical perspectives, objectives, assumptions, ethics and politics" (Wickramasinghe, 2010, p. 45). Therefore, allowing for a combination of these two approaches is more aligned with the feminist goals of theorizing power and authority at all stages of the research process and the feminist assumption that research can never be value-free or atheoretical.

An example of a deductive approach during the focused coding phase would be my use of Stevens and Martell's (2019) framework for liberal versus critical social studies teaching. This framework formed the basis of a second round interview question meant to capture each teacher-participant's ownership of the term "feminist." Because this framework was front-of-mind, it is no surprise that I began noticing some quintessential "critical feminist" traits appearing in the category I labeled "angling." For example, the codes "encouraging student responsibility/action" and "teaching about hierarchy/ power" both have counterparts in the critical feminist teacher framework.

While the influence of existing theories and ideas are never absent from the researcher's analytic process, I tended toward more inductive approaches for much of the reconstruction process. In order to let themes emerge more from the data, I followed Charmaz's (2014) tactic of "using certain initial codes that had more theoretical reach, direction, and centrality and treating them as the core of my nascent analysis" (p. 141). A code I moved to this "core" status early-on was "giving them the angle." Mary used this phrase when reflecting on how she taught a lesson on Sacagawea, stating "I guess I was giving [the students] the angle the whole time." I came to

understand this phrase as knowingly delivering content in a way that made explicit teachers'

content messaging or ideological commitments. The idea of "giving students the angle" appeared

to me to have relevance and connection to other emerging codes that described similarly

committed ways of approaching the topics of women's history, gender, and feminism. To better

capture these similarities, I turned "giving them the angle" into a theme called "angling" and

turned those relevant codes into subcodes.

As I mentioned, initial and focused coding do not proceed in a linear fashion. Sometimes

important codes emerged later on in the analysis process and prompted me to go back and review

earlier data to look for topics or ideas that were "glossed over, unstated, or may have been too

implicit to discern initially" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 141). Thus was the case with the code "exposing

lightly," a phrase that Audrey used during her second-round interview. Her use of this phrase and

her explanation made explicit something that I had been trying to get at with other codes but had

failed to fully conceptualize until reviewing her second-round interview data. This prompted me

to return to round-one interviews to see how this new code shed new light on earlier data.

Eventually, "exposing lightly" also became an important theme with several relevant subcodes.

This process of sorting and clustering data and determining analytic power and level of

abstraction is the work of the *constant comparison method* in GT. To facilitate the comparison of

data, I regularly asked myself the following questions when analyzing data: "What units of data

and codes go together?," "What is this unit of data or code an instance of?," "What patterns are

present in my initial codes?," and "Does this code belong to a different level of abstraction?"

(Charmaz, 2014; Miles et al., 2019).

My goal in using GT techniques was *not* to discover "an empirically-based substantive

theory" (Clark et al., 2018, p. 5). Nor, as I described earlier, was my goal in using the

hermeneutic circle for data collection to capture the whole of a phenomenon. Kuhn (1962/1996) made it clear that even in the natural sciences such expectations for theoretical universality or stability are inappropriate. Instead, I intended to highlight both tensions and areas of commonality or agreement that arose from the data. In order to explore the themes that emerged from this study in a way that revealed both conflict and unity across teacher experiences, I present the data in Chapter 4 as a thematic array followed by individual teacher profiles. Those teacher profiles illuminate the themes presented in the thematic array and highlight several important considerations regarding how teachers understand and experience gender-equity work. In order to take concrete action toward a more gender-equitable social studies education, it is crucial to be immersed in how teachers currently make sense of their experiences regarding the topics of this study. The thematic array and teacher profiles offer such a window into those experiences.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Feminist researchers have often worked to demystify "research" by being reflective about their thinking and research processes (Coffey & Delamont, 2000). Stanley (1990b) referred to this work as an "intellectual autobiography:"

Much less a narrative format…and much more the teasing out of *how* research processes are understood so as to produce any particular product. This is for me the major way in which the power differential between the researcher/writer and the consumer/reader can begin to be broken down. After all, if readers know how I understand what I understand, you have a realistic chance of being able to make up your own mind rather than having to take things on trust because I only let you in on 'the findings.' (p. 120-121).

Crucial research processes for researchers to demystify include how they build rigor within a project or establish the quality of a study. Whereas earlier qualitative work suggested that trustworthiness or authenticity was something to be "awarded after completion," researchers now broadly recognize that it is "something that should be achieved during the process of inquiry" (Morse, 2018). There are many different strategies deployed by qualitative researchers to establish trustworthiness or authenticity in their work, but the feminist tradition of research process transparency reminds us that it is more important to discuss how and why such strategies were utilized throughout the study to strengthen the study's claims rather than simply explaining what strategies were selected.

I structured this section according to the kinds of strategies I used to increase the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study. For each strategy, I include a brief description of the strategy and how it relates to relevant trustworthiness or authenticity criteria before discussing how those strategies shaped my work as researcher. Whenever possible or prudent, I also offer evidence to support the claims I make in the final two chapters or explore challenges that emerged over the course of the study and how I handled them.

Documenting Reflexivity

I stated earlier in this chapter that being reflexive was one of my commitments as a feminist researcher. In order to document my reflexivity throughout the study, I utilized a reflexive journal, a methods journal, and Atlas.ti memos. By regularly using those journals and memos, I worked to "claim" my subjectivity and "own" how it shaped this study (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 13). My reflexive journal, for instance, was where I worked out that my final seven participants seemed to be representing themselves more as learners than experts: "I'm thinking about some commonalities between the participants so far. It seems fair to say that most of them

want to do 'better' or identify as 'trying' and do not really see themselves as authorities on these topics." This realization prompted me to rework the original research question to better align with how the teachers in this study were positioning themselves in relation to the topics on this study.

Using these journals and memos, I also documented how I was relating to each participant. For example, sometimes I discussed in memos which interviews seemed to flow more easily and, by doing so, was able to reveal some of my own biases as an interviewer. For instance, after one interview, I noted in my reflexive journal that "getting [this participant] to tell stories/experiences was a little challenging" whereas, after another interview with a different participant, I wrote that they were a "thoughtful respondent who thought deeply about examples of teaching and learning women's history in their practice." By reviewing such memos prior to data analysis I became aware of which interviews I may have been more likely to privilege in my analysis process. Because I made a habit of memoing my impressions after each interview and reviewing those notes, I became aware of my potential to privilege certain interview data and, therefore, pushed myself to engage with all interview data thoroughly despite those personal preferences.

By being rigorous about documenting my own subjectivity, I enhanced the *fairness* criterion of authenticity. According to Rodwell (1998), "the fairness criterion ensures that different constructions, perspectives, and positions are not only allowed to emerge, but are also seriously considered for merit and worth" (p. 107). While I cannot eliminate or completely ignore my own biases, I can become more aware of them through the process of reflexive journaling to better ensure that participant voices and perspectives are well-represented.

Member Checking

Member checking provides a formal avenue for participants to challenge, correct, or validate my representations of their ideas. I asked each participant to read and react to selected data reports at two crucial points in the research process. As I detailed in the data collection section, the first member check occurred after a participant's construct summary was written. I reached out to each participant via email to ensure that my written summary of our interaction was accurate and complete before I presented it to the next participant for critique.

In choosing to present participants with a summary construct rather than the raw interview data of the previous teacher, it is important to consider how I generated those constructs. In Table 7, I offer a side-by-side look of Lisa's raw interview data and an excerpt from Lisa's summary construct that relates to that data. I wrote each construct summary as a response to the study's first research question, which means I transformed those ideas and experiences the teacher shared in an interview into the form of curriculum and instructional recommendations for the next participant to consider and respond to.

Table 7

Side-by-Side of Raw Interview Data and Summary Construct Excerpt

Raw Interview Data from Round-One Lisa Interview	Excerpt from Lisa's Summary Construct
Lisa: I mean, I would say a little of both. Part of one activity that we do is the students have a reading that they do, and they compare women in Colonial times to women in the 1800s to women in the present time. And when I say compare I mean like politically, economically, socially, educationally, like opportunities that women did or didn't have in all three or those time periods. And the last portion of that, where they have to think about women in modern times is not part of the reading. Like that part they do just by their own background knowledge and their own personal experience, which is kind of neat, because that's when I can get them to call upon like women they know. Like think about your own family. You know, did your mom go to college? You know, does your mom – Have a career? You know, things like that. Do you – You know, people in your own family. So I mean, I guess that's probably the one way that we, you know, relate it to the modern world, and women in the modern world… Kim: So what's the benefit of making those past-present connections and incorporating more about modern women's history? Lisa: I think it makes it more tangible for the students. They – It's the real world connection when you, you know, make that comparison from, you know, the 1700s up to now, I think it helps them to really see something that isn't necessarily visible to them, and understand it, you know, and to really – sometimes it's the shock value. Like "Oh my gosh, you know, women couldn't do that?" Or "Really? A woman had to give her husband her paycheck?" You know, things like that. And a lot of my students live with a single mom who is the breadwinner, you know, and they probably find that just shocking. You know, so I just think helping them to make that real world connection to women today helps them to understand where women have come, yeah, how far women have come. How far society have come, too.	When teaching about women's history, educators should consider ways to help students understand how far women (and society) have come. Students can make comparisons between women in the past and present in terms of their economic, political, social, and educational opportunities. When determining the opportunities afforded to women in modern times, students can call on their own background knowledge and experiences: "Did your mom go to college?" "Does your mom have a career?" Giving students an opportunity to connect something to the real world often creates more student engagement in the classroom. Making comparisons between the past and the present benefits students because it can help them understand something about history that is not often easily understood or immediately "tangible." Sometimes these comparison activities can have a certain "shock value" for students. For example, a student who lives with a single mom who is the sole breadwinner for their family, might be especially shocked to learn that women used to have to give their husbands their paychecks.

My two priorities as the summary construct writer was 1) to fairly represent the teacher's ideas in a way that spoke to the initial research question and 2) to make it easier for each participant to access their colleague's ideas in the time we had allotted for interviewing. The member check performed after creating each summary construct helped me determine whether I had been fair to the teacher's ideas. In response to my member check email with her summary construct, Lisa sent me the following: "I read through everything and it looks great! It's almost creepy how similar it is to what I said. Great job! I don't there is anything I would add or fix." (personal communication, April 16, 2019). It is possible that teachers, including Lisa, might respond positively regardless of how accurately I represented their ideas; however, the teacher member check responses present valuable evidence for the fairness of the summary constructs that should not be dismissed.

The second member check occurred when each participant was provided their final teacher profile and any other relevant excerpts developed in reference to the data they provided. In the email I sent along with those pages, I instructed the teacher participants to ask themselves three questions: 1) "Is my privacy maintained throughout these pages?", 2) "Are my ideas and experiences accurately represented?", and 3) "Is there anything I want to add or respond to?" By asking the second and third questions, I was aiming to uncover whether I accurately understood and adequately captured the participants' ideas and experiences which, like the first member check, speaks to the criterion of *fairness*. Lincoln and Guba (2013) described fairness as "open- and even-handed treatment, with no information withheld" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 82). The responses from participants to this final member check offer valuable evidence for fairness. One teacher said "your descriptions feel honest" and offered additional thoughts to build on one of the ideas I analyzed in regards to their data (personal communication, April 3, 2020). Other

teachers sent back shorter responses such as "I do not have any questions or changes" or "It looks great" (personal communications, April 3, 2020).

Beyond fairness, member checks are also an important strategy to increase the trustworthiness criteria of *credibility* and *confirmability*. Credibility seeks to establish the accuracy of the study's findings and interpretations (Rodwell, 1998). Member checking supports this trustworthiness goal by helping to avoid researcher misinterpretations. Confirmability focuses on ensuring that the "results as reported are linked to the data" (Rodwell, 1998, p. 100). These results need to relate not just to the researcher's perspective, but to all participant perspectives.

Seeking Informal Participant Feedback

While member checks are planned opportunities for formal participant feedback, other, less-formal opportunities arose during the research process where I was also able to collect feedback. Those other opportunities were often a chance for me to consider what the teachers were getting out of their experience participating in the study. Lincoln and Guba (2013) described *tactical authenticity* as "the extent to which individuals are empowered to take the action that the inquiry implies or promotes" (p. 70). Given that the goal of this research project is to promote gender equity in social studies education, I took note of when teachers indicated that their experience in the study helped make them feel more empowered toward that goal. With this criteria in mind, Kelly and Sara seemed to offer some evidence of tactical authenticity.

At the end of our first-round interview, Kelly said: "I think these are good questions to ask, and I think it will make me a better teacher preparing for next year. I think this will be in the back of my mind as I plan my curriculum." Later, in an email exchange, she also stated "our discussion has inspired me to search for more gender related resources and to also devote more

time in general to women's history and gender." Sara also seemed to indicate that the topics of

this study were now more front-of-mind for her, but she was not as certain about how this

experience might affect her future plans regarding gender and teaching:

> It might be a little too stressful to do it towards the end of the year, but for next year, and
>
> especially with the SOLs kind of going away, it'll give me more freedom on what to
>
> incorporate and what not, and I do think it would be important.

Even Kelly acknowledged the systemic pressures that might get in the way of or slow her ability

to work further toward gender equity in her practice:

> I know that the time constraint will always catch up with me, but I think little by little if I
>
> have this in the back of my mind and it is important to me, I think I will add more things
>
> like this to my lessons.

Triangulation

I primary collected data through the use of semi-structured interviews, which offered

insights into teacher beliefs and interpretations of their current curriculum and instructional

experiences. Because this method of data collection has certain limitations, such as increased

subjectivity, I designed the study to also collect two secondary sources of data: participant-

provided curriculum documents and informal communications. Having those secondary sources

of data helped me confirm or complicate some of the ideas that emerged from the interviews. For

instance, one teacher discussed a lesson on Pocahontas during which they paused the Disney

video on the title card and their students responded that Pocahontas might not have wanted her

name to appear that way. It appeared to me that the teacher set out to teach her students the

"real" story of Pocahontas, which included learning what may have been her preferred name:

Matoaka. To corroborate whether or not I had accurately understood the lesson, I turned to the

curriculum resources provided by the teacher, which confirmed that a strong message in the

lesson materials was to debunk the Disney version of events. In this instance and others like it,

triangulation increased *credibility* by developing a clearer or more comprehensive picture of the

participant's perspective and *confirmability* by providing multiple data points with which to

build a reasonable assertation in the final reporting.

Thick Descriptions

As Stanley (1990b) pointed out in her description of research writing as a form of

"intellectual autobiography," providing an adequate level of detail in reporting is essential to

ensuring that the reader can understand both the research process and product enough to make up

their own minds about the findings. The term "thick description" is used as a way of capturing

what that level of detail looks like where the researcher has given enough information to the

reader for them to be informed, critical consumers without providing too many extraneous details

that might only serve to frustrate meaning-making on the part of the reader. I solicited feedback

from colleagues throughout the course of the writing process to help ensure that I had provided

adequate descriptions of my findings without too many unnecessary details.

Thick descriptions can support *transferability* to other contexts by offering the right level

of description for readers to determine the applicability of a study's research findings to other

contexts. It is the reader who knows their own unique context and should, therefore, be the judge

of whether a study's findings can be of use in that context in any significant way (Lincoln &

Guba, 2013; Rodwell, 1998).

Summary

This chapter outlined how I established my study design and how I went about the

research process in a way that built rigor and established quality. At the start of the chapter, I laid

out my commitments and goals in an effort to acknowledge my subjectivity, partiality, and

authority and make known my intentions as the study's researcher and writer. The feminist

qualitative study design I presented align with those commitments and goals. I continue to

engage with the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity in the chapters that follow by

discussing how I developed the study's themes and offering thick descriptions to illuminate the

study's findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

I began this inquiry in order to encourage the teaching of women's history, gender, and feminism in secondary social studies. My two final research questions helped me anchor this goal in the experiences of the participants. While all of the teachers involved in this study expressed a similar desire to promote women's history and (to some extent) gender and feminism in their practice, they did not all share similar ideas about what that could look like or how possible it was in their current teaching contexts. In order to better capture how they made sense of their experiences with the topics of this study, I used the following two research questions to guide my analysis: (1) How do secondary social studies teachers describe their approach to women's history, gender, and feminism in their curriculum and instructional practices? (2) What do teachers consider when determining their approach to those topics?

In this chapter, I present my findings in the form of an overview followed by teacher profiles. The overview begins with a "thematic array," defined here as a visual display of the study's analytic themes (Miles et al., 2020), and continues with my descriptions of each of those displayed themes. The teacher profiles that follow include background information and edited passages from first- and second-round interviews. Those profiles are much more focused on preserving the participants' words and meanings. They provide evidence in the form of thick descriptions from teacher interviews to substantiate the thematic categories. The interview passages and quotes immerse the reader in the voices of the teacher-participants and the context of the interview format. Throughout this section, I reveal my presence as the researcher by introducing the selected passages and, whenever practical, including my questions and responses as interviewer in the passages themselves. These reveals are meant to remind the reader that my presence as a researcher and my use of an interview format affect what was shared. They also

serve as a reminder of my responsibilities as researcher to both analyze the data and curate the findings (Sprague, 2016). In order to not to let my presence overshadow the teacher voices, I often present longer passages of interview data and, in one instance, use the teachers' own words to help title within-profile sections.

It is important to note here that by presenting "edited passages" from interviews, I am referring to editing for readability by taking out phrases including "like" and "you know" when they are extraneous to the meaning of the original statement. Whenever I made eliminations beyond those small extraneous phrases, I included ellipses to indicate where those words have been elided. Whenever shortening quotes, I also made sure to preserve the meaning of the participant's ideas.

Thematic Array: Teacher Approaches and Considerations

Miles et al. (2020) defined a thematic array as "a visual reference and road map for preliminary review before the reader begins our complex narrative journey" (p. 176). Figure 3 displays the three approaches to the topics of women's history, gender, and feminism that emerged from the data: *angling*, *exposing lightly*, and *avoiding*. The same teacher may describe using one approach in one situation and a different approach in another. The determination of which approach to use does not appear to be random, but rather contingent upon certain considerations. The evaluation of those considerations is indicated by the presence of *assessing risk* overlaying the three approaches. I chose to frame those considerations around the idea of "risk" to reflect that there are perceived consequences to curriculum and instructional decisions. A teacher might be risking their time, their relationships, their sense of freedom or security, or their vision for the future – "of the worthy society" (Evans, 2004). Each subcode for assessing risk captured a type of consideration that appeared to influence how teachers chose to handle the

topics of this study. Most of those subcodes can be rewritten into the form of a question that the teacher is asking themselves. For example: "readiness/comfort level of self" can be rewritten into "Am I ready to teach this topic in this way?" or "Am I comfortable teaching this topic?" How a teacher answers these unspoken questions can help explain their chosen approach.

Figure 3

Thematic Array of Teacher Approaches
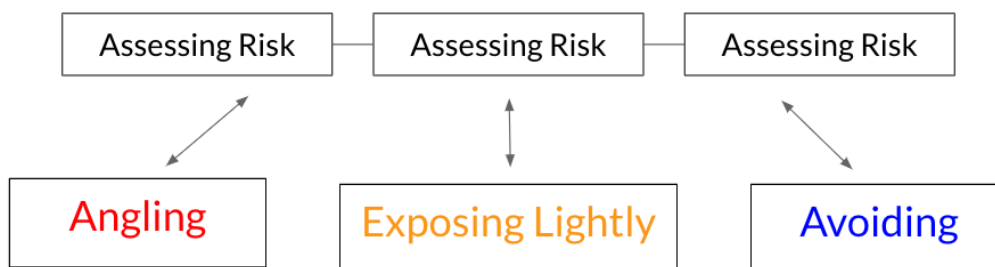
The term "angling" comes from Mary's first-round interview: "I guess I was giving them the angle the whole time." I used the subcodes under this theme to capture instances where teachers discussed teaching women's history, gender, or feminism in a way that is openly partial or committed to a particular opinion or perspective. When angling, teachers seem to not be concerned about presenting "all perspectives" or "both sides" because they do not view all sides as equally deserving of attention or consideration. For instance, a teacher might unapologetically focus only on women's experiences in the past rather than try to balance their coverage of all genders. An angling teacher may also readily articulate a specific message about women, gender, or feminism that they are trying to communicate to students through a lesson. They may favor a more direct style of delivering that message to students, such as revealing their personal opinion to students rather than trying to appear unbiased.

The term for the middle approach, "exposing lightly," first appeared in a quote from Audrey's second-round interview: "I don't want to shock them into something. I just want to expose lightly." I used the subcodes under this theme to capture instances where teachers discussed teaching women's history, gender, or feminism in a more indirect or traditionally safe way. When exposing lightly, teachers seem to be trying to sidestep controversy while still engaging with those topics to some extent. They may describe altering or packaging content in such a way that it appears less sensitive. They may also make attempts at balancing perspectives or removing bias, especially their own, to appear more neutral.

I chose the term "avoiding" to describe the final approach, which I used to capture those instances where teachers discussed not engaging with women's history, gender, or feminism for whatever reason. While occasionally unintentional, many of these instances of avoidance were due to specific teacher concerns. When avoiding, teachers may worry about their students' comfort levels or their own readiness level. During her second-round interview, Sara invoked the term "avoid" to discuss her trepidation over covering controversial content without enough preparation: "I don't think I have the time or training to do as such, which I prefer to avoid just because of the ugliness that could come from not doing it the right way."

Developing the Approach Themes

As stated in the theme descriptions, the first two approaches are defined by certain curricular or instructional strategies that served as subcodes. For example, the theme of "angling" included such subcodes as "revealing personal opinion/ taking a stand," "investigating inequalities/injustices," "disrupting student thinking/ unsettling assumptions." Because of the interview format, it is important to keep in mind that teachers sometimes toggled back and forth between offering an example of their current classroom practice and sharing more general

thoughts and opinions about the topics of this study. I handled those shifts from practical to theoretical by not applying approach subcodes to statements that I found to be too abstracted from each teacher's own practice.

A handful of statements seemed to straddle the line between practical and abstract, requiring further evaluation. In those instances, I considered whether the statement seemed especially relevant to other statements made by the teacher during the same interview. To explain, consider the following quote from early on in Kelly's first-round interview in which she is describing why she feels it is important to include women's history in social studies curriculum:

> I think it's important, because women have always been a part of whatever civilization you're talking about, and so their story, even if they were not able to get into those positions of power is very significant, very important. And even just the story of why they weren't able to get in those positions of power and why don't we have as many examples of females from, I don't know, medieval Europe. You know, why is that? And kind of exploring why that is…Talking about why that's the case.

Here, Kelly invoked the strategy of "pointing out a lack of women," an angling subcode. I initially was not sure if Kelly was talking about this strategy in the abstract or as one she used in her own classroom. Because she referenced this same strategy in several other parts of the same interview, I felt more confident that it was something she associated with her own practice. When deciding which of those several instances I should code with the angling subcode, I also considered which question of mine Kelly was answering. In those instances where my question was more about the abstract, I did not code her statement with the angling subcode.

As I developed certain subcodes, it became necessary to carefully define them and ensure that only relevant statements were included. Under the theme of "exposing lightly," the subcodes with the highest frequencies (in order) were "'sticking' to official standards," "curating facts and letting the students decide," and "removing bias/ personal opinion." When considering the boundaries of a subcode like "'sticking' to the official standards," I had to keep in mind that teachers could be following official state standards when describing many different strategies, some of which better align with an angling or avoiding approach. What made this specific subcode unique to an exposing lightly approach was how I defined and operationalized it. I only included those instances where teachers indicated they were teaching the topics of this study in a way that stayed close to what was immediately required of them in an official state standard. The use of phrases such as "they have to know" and "you need to go over this" and "because it's how the curriculum tells it" were signifiers that the teacher may be only engaging with a topic related to women's history or gender according to how it appeared in a state standard. As an exposing lightly subcode, "'sticking' to the official standards" was a *strategy* not a *starting point* for teaching the topics of this study. If there were indicators that a teacher went more in-depth or beyond what was immediately apparent in state standards, I did not deploy this code.

The theme of "avoiding" is unique from the other two approaches in that it represents an absence of engagement with the topics of this study. Because of this, the subcodes under this theme refer not to specific strategies but to motivations behind avoidance. The subcodes encompassed under "avoiding" that had the highest frequencies were "in response to institutional pressures," "by self-censoring," and "unintentionally." Sometimes it was necessary to code a statement with subcodes from two different approaches to best capture the spirit of what the teacher was saying. Consider the following quote from Sara when I asked her about her process

for finding resources on the topics of this study: "I really didn't do too many searches because of the curriculum not having too many women related topics." With the overall underrepresentation of women, gender, and feminism in official curriculum, following the official standards can sometimes also mean avoiding the topics of this study. I used the following two codes to capture that meaning: "Exposing Lightly: 'sticking' to official standards" and "Avoiding: in response to institutional pressures"

Determining Approach Tendencies

While none of the teachers interviewed utilized only one approach, they all tended toward one approach over the other two. Throughout the process of analyzing the data, I recorded in my reflexive journal my impressions about which teachers in the study tended toward which approaches. To keep myself "analytically honest" when determining each teachers' dominant approach, I corroborated my impressions by using counts (Miles et al., 2020, p. 280). The process for developing those counts proceeded as follows. First, I transferred all the quotes coded with an approach subcode into a separate document. Then, I removed any redundancies where a subcode appeared more than once as a teacher expressed the same thought or discussed the same lesson. Next, I considered the level of description provided by the teacher and highlighted any quotes that appeared to be less detailed or more aspirational in nature. Sara had a near tie between two approaches based on solely the number of counts: eight counts for exposing lightly and nine counts for avoiding. However, when I took into account how many exposing lightly statements were highlighted (five out of eight), I felt more confident that her tendency was toward avoiding. Finally, I considered the teacher's interview holistically. In one case, the way the teacher seemed to position their own practice in regards to the topics of this study contradicted my own impression as well as which approach appeared more in their counts. In

that instance, I determined its placement in this chapter by defaulting to the teacher's

perspective, but presented the counts in that teacher profile as I determined them. I discuss that

particular case in Teacher Profile #7. As a final note on the process of developing counts, I chose

only to include each teacher's first-round interview when creating counts because I directed the

second-round interview around ideas that emerged during the first-round interview. I present

each teachers' final counts in their respective profiles to offer a quick snapshot of their use of

different approaches. By offering this description of how and why I developed counts, it should

be clear how those final counts go beyond simple frequencies.

The remainder of this chapter is broken up into three parts according to the three

approaches. The first profile in each part is focused on illustrating one of the three approaches.

The remaining profiles in each part are focused on discussing a teacher consideration that either

complicated or helped explain their use of a particular approach. Figure 4 is a visual display of

where each teacher profile appears in this chapter.

Figure 4

Visual Display for Locating Teacher Profiles

Part I:	**Part II:**	**Part III:**
ANGLING ----------------------	EXPOSING LIGHTLY ----------------------	AVOIDING
Mary	Audrey	Sara
Kelly	Lisa	Chris
Evan		

The following table (see Table 8) is intended to provide a brief overview of some of the relevant

background information provided by each study participant. I also provide background

information relevant to each participant at the start of their respective profiles. Additional

background information can be located in Chapter 3.

Table 8

Relevant Participant Background Information

Name	School Level	# of Years Teaching	Age	Gender Identity	Racial Identity	Feminist Identity
Chris	High	6	Early 30s	Male	white	"Aspiring"
Audrey	High	7	Early 30s	Female	white	Yes
Sara	High	7	Mid 30s	Female	white	No
Mary	Middle	1	Mid 20s	Female	white	Yes
Evan	Middle	2	Mid 20s	Male	white	Yes
Kelly	High	7	Early 30s	Female	white	Yes
Lisa	Middle	26	Early 50s	Female	white	No

Part I: Angling

In this section, I present and discuss three teacher profiles: Mary, Kelly, and Evan. Mary's profile is focused on illustrating the angling approach and is immediately followed by a discussion of that approach. Both Kelly and Evan's profiles are focused on teacher considerations that affected whether or not teachers in this study felt they could or should take an angling approach. Kelly's profile explores the importance of preparation while Evan's profile explores the idea of fairness. I discuss the implications of those teacher considerations throughout Kelly and Evan's profiles.

Teacher Profile #1: Mary

The Angling Approach

Mary is a 6th and 7th grade social studies teacher at Sturgill Middle School (SMS) in Elizabeth City Schools. She has one year of teaching experience and self-identifies as a white

woman. SMS is a large, predominantly African-American middle school located in a suburban area. When asked about her impression of SMS, Mary describes enjoying the high-level of parent/guardian-teacher contact at her school while also being frustrated by the high teacher-turnover rate. When asked about the political-leaning of her school community (parents/students), Mary explains:

> I think that the majority of my students' families… just have a general distrust of the school system/government/police, and so I've never really gotten to know their opinion on it. I would say definitely probably more liberal leaning just because of their persistence that the system is not built for them or their children, and I agree with them a lot…I will say all of my kids are constantly just like "F Donald Trump."

Mary primarily teaches U.S. History. Both of her courses have mandated performance-based assessments rather than end-of-year, standardized tests. She describes her social studies department as flying "under the radar because there's such a high focus on English and math." This affords her some relief from administrative oversight: "I've never had an administrator come to my room unless it was like a formal observation. And I've never had somebody ask to see my assessments or my students' progress."

Within this context, Mary often feels comfortable approaching the topic of women's history "from an angle," meaning she is typically transparent about her particular perspective or opinion when teaching about women in the past. In her first interview, I coded 21 instances of angling, zero instances of exposing lightly, and seven instances of avoiding. For Mary, teaching from an angle means she can create more opportunities, or "moments," where she can *disrupt student thinking* and *set the historical record straight*. In the following excerpts, Mary describes some of those moments.

Moment #1: "She was a boss."

I spent about a day doing the "Should Harriet Tubman –" Not should, but "Why hasn't Harriet Tubman been put on the $20 bill yet?" and we looked at both bills, and read news articles from 2016 when it was approved, and then read news articles from almost a few days ago because it got brought up, why hasn't it happened yet? because it happened like three years ago - It was approved three years ago last week, but it hasn't been put into print... So my students are reading that, but some boys – like some male 6th grade students are like, "Oh, I mean, she does look rough," like in the $20 bill picture, right? And you know, the girls are giving some sass back, like "Well, of course she does, like she's a slave. What do you think happened to her?"...And then we watched this – we earlier in the class had watched a Ted Ed video that tells the story of Harriet Tubman in like two minutes. It's really good. It's a nice little animated thing, and it starts by saying that when she got hit in the head with a rock, she wasn't allowed to do a lot of stuff inside the house because she would just fall asleep, then her job is to chop wood. And so I'm like "If you chop wood outside all day, how are you supposed to have your hair, and your makeup, and your physique be anything like dainty or –" It's like, "No, she was a boss. She didn't have time to worry about her hair or worry about her body, like the way she looks. Like are you serious? She's just trying to survive." And then I was like "How many times did she go back and forth on the underground railroad to get all her family members?" Because they had just read through this, and they're like "Wow, 13 times." I'm like "Who has time to do their hair if they're going on the underground –?" And so then the boys were all kind of like, "Hmm." And then all the girls were like real justified. You know, it's like I want moments like that all the time

Moment #2: "She was the hero in this story."

Kim: Can you tell me about a time that you felt like a lesson or activity fit really well

with the vision that you described of how you'd like to be teaching these topics?

Mary: Actually, teaching about Sacagawea was I thought a bit before I started teaching

about Lewis and Clark all the way, and I didn't one day talk about them and then the next

day talk about her. I talked about her from the beginning, and I don't know if you're a

lover or a hater of Flocabulary... I love to like hype up Flocabulary, because I know that

the songs are corny, and sometimes not the best, but they're always like hip. Like they're

always hitting the most important theme. Like they don't say 'Westward Expansion.'

Their Westward Expansion video is 'Removal of Indians.'…They have a Thomas

Jefferson video, and it's about him owning slaves. Like it's not – They're never trying to

tell this like cute story.

Kim: Yeah. It's not like sanitized.

Mary: No. And so the – literally I searched like, okay, is there Lewis and Clark, and the

video that comes up is Sacagawea, and I'm like "Okay, yeah, let's go," and it's the cutest

video ever, and it tells her story, but it's really good. The kids, that's been their favorite

one so far…The chorus is like "I'm the girl with the baby on her back," and then it like

turns, and she's like got a baby, and the baby's like [makes a peace sign] – She and the

baby have sunglasses on. (laughs)…But like that's how I see her, you know?…I love that

they showed this like cool looking girl like leading these two clueless men through the –

Because that's probably how it was. Like I can just imagine me telling my boyfriend and

dad how to do something, like explaining – We just moved into a new place and me

being like, no, do it like this, and I'm imagining this woman being like "You have no idea

what you're talking about. Let me talk to them. I know the language. Let me do it," you

know? That's how I see it. And then when [the students] see this video, it's like that's

how we're going to learn about it…I'm like "They walked all this way. They didn't know

what they were doing. Thank God they met this girl, because if they had not met her, they

would be so screwed." And I like showed them all the times that they could have failed

and then she – and because of her connections and everything she had going on, she was

able to help them, and then you know, we did the coin activity where it's like she's on the

coin, it's like "Who is this?" and, then, "She was never paid – She was never paid a

dollar, but she's on the dollar coin. She was never paid anything, but her husband was,

but she was never paid a dollar." And that's just like the mic drop where it's like,

"Whoa," you know? So, that one – I feel like that went really well. When she was part of

the notes, she was in all of the secondary and primary sources we read and/or looked at,

and then she was in the video that we watched…

Kim: So what were the goals of that lesson?

Mary: I did feel like they had a context for Lewis and Clark, because I did a KWL chart

with them at the end of the day before, and they all knew a bit about Lewis and Clark,

and so then I guess my goal was to like enrich that story on the middle school level so

that we're not talking about two – what I remember from elementary – or even middle

school, which is like two men with raccoon hats on finding –going in the wilderness, you

know, and like no, scratch that, we're not learning that story. We're learning a different

story. And then also I guess my second goal, after like building on the foundational

knowledge they had, my second goal was to make her look like the hero. And I don't

think that I was recreating that story, because I had read a lot about it, and so I felt like I

was well read on it enough to be like "She was the hero in this story." And so I really

wanted her to be like the one, that it's like, no, Thomas Jefferson can send whoever he

wants. This woman is the one who like won this thing, you know? So I just – I guess I

was giving them the angle the whole time, which I don't know if it's fair, if I was

teaching civics or something, but – or even if I was teaching high schoolers, but I just like

adamantly wanted it to be like about her the whole time.

Moment #3: "We don't know if she wanted to be called that."

When we learned about colonial America, I was in a professional development at the

time … and then as just a practice warm up thing, they gave us this thing on Pocahontas,

and I was like "I'm going to teach about Pocahontas tomorrow." And I just like took it in

tomorrow… We spent like two or three days doing like primary sources and like

uncovering her life, and like what could be – What we don't know, what we do know, da,

da, da, the two different sides of all the stories, how she met – Like how it all happened.

You know, who she married. It's not this John, it's this John. So, then, we did watch – It

was the day before Thanksgiving break, we did watch Disney's *Pocahontas*, and as soon

as her name came on the screen – because I wanted them to – I was pausing it to be like

"What is that?" Right? And as soon as her name came on the screen [the students] were

like "I don't think she would have wanted her name to be up there like that, because we

don't know if she wanted to be called that." Like they were getting all sassy about it. And

I was like "Exactly." But I did that the day before. I literally – If I had not been to that

thing, I don't know if I would have taught about Pocahontas the same way or at all if it

didn't work out like that. You know?

Analysis of Mary's Angling Approach

In all three moments, Mary describes how she brings her students toward her own

understanding of these three women in history. In the first two moments, she explicitly states that

she perceives Harriet Tubman as a "boss" and Sacagawea as a "hero." Mary uses primary and

secondary sources to help transmit her understanding of these women to her students. In the first

moment, the boys' reactions to the article about the $20 bill prompts Mary to defend Harriet

Tubman and her legacy using the TED-Ed video. In the second moment, the Flocabulary video

portrays Sacagawea as the most important person during the Lewis and Clark expedition. In the

third moment, Mary pauses on the title card of Disney's *Pocahontas* (Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995)

and prompts her students to recall information from their reading about the historical figure's

birthname, Matoaka. In doing so, Mary reminds her students that popular narratives of historical

women do not always treat those women with the respect they deserve.

Those three moments also reveal that Mary is going beyond what is required of her in

state curriculum documents to teach about those women of color. Of the three women mentioned

in those moments, only Harriet Tubman appears in the official curriculum standards for either

course that Mary teaches. Furthermore, even though Harriet Tubman is included in a state

standard, Mary's lesson about Tubman goes beyond the scope of that standard. While the

standard focuses only on Tubman's role as a conductor on the Underground Railroad (Virginia

Board of Education, 2016), Mary focuses her lesson both on Tubman's life experiences and on

the current administration's failure to place Harriet Tubman's image on the $20 bill.

In addition to going beyond the state standards to center the experiences of these women

of color, Mary is also making decisions about how to cover the men that are present in state

standards. In the same curriculum document where Tubman is mentioned once, Lewis and Clark

are mentioned a total of five times, either in reference to the men themselves or the expedition

named after them. Despite their prevalence in the state standards, Mary chooses to downplay

their involvement in the expedition west by focusing instead on the perspective of Sacagawea.

She declares "we're not talking about… two men with raccoon hats on finding – going in the

wilderness." In this statement she reduces Lewis and Clark down to their gender and clothing

choice in order to make a point about her determination to teach this story from the perspective

of Sacagawea, a person she views as much more deserving of the spotlight in this historical case.

When teachers in this study used an angling approach, they delivered messages about

women's history, gender, or feminism in a more direct manner to their students. While angling,

as an approach, is not associated with a specific ideological or political commitment, the

messages transmitted using this approach are intended by the teacher to "shape student

consciousness" (Au, 2012, p. 92). In other words, the teacher is aware of certain messages or

values they are trying to impart to their students through their lesson. In Mary's case, she is

striving to impart to her students an appreciation for the leadership and heroism of these specific

female historical figures. This messaging aligns most closely with descriptions of a

"contribution" or "compensatory" method of including women's history in curriculum. In terms

of the phase models introduced in Chapter 2, this method maps onto level one for Lerner's

(1975) model and phase two for McIntosh's (1983), Tetreault's (1985), and Woyshner and

Schocker's (2015) models. At this level or phase, "famous" or "exceptional" women are

included in the curriculum, often to serve as role models for students. In terms of Stevens and

Martell's (2019) framework for feminist teaching, Mary's messaging more closely aligns with

liberal feminist teaching practices. Liberal feminist teachers tend to focus lessons around

covering more individual women in the curriculum and "empower[ing] students to see

themselves represented in history" (Stevens & Martell, 2019, p. 10).

When I presented Mary with the Stevens and Martell's (2019) framework for feminist

teaching and asked her if either of the categories resonated with her, she too felt her current

practice fell more into the liberal category. In the following excerpt from that conversation, she

also expressed a desire to incorporate more critical feminist practices alongside liberal practices

in the future:

> I definitely feel like this is in the liberal category is like all true, but deep down inside I'm
>
> like this is what I really want to be doing [pointing to the critical side], not that they're
>
> like conflicting, but I'm just like maybe if I show them things, I'll change the system.
>
> Like if I can like get them to see themselves, but what I'm doing is I feel like I'm trying
>
> to trick them because they're middle schoolers, so I'm like "Look at what this is," and
>
> then I'm like maybe one day that will change the patriarchy if I had shown them more
>
> photos of women, you know? I don't know why I think that's going to work, but that's
>
> like the dream, you know?...

In the above excerpt, Mary recognizes that a liberal feminist approach may not have the capacity

to achieve the same results as a critical approach when she states: "Maybe one day that will

change the patriarchy if I had shown them more photos of women,' you know? I don't know why

I think that's going to work, but that's like the dream." Critical feminist social studies teachers tend to focus lessons around "reveal[ing] structural inequality," "promot[ing] social change," and "challeng[ing] students' belief systems" (Stevens & Martell, 2019, p. 10). Although we do hear Mary working to challenge her students' belief systems in Moment #1, she does so in a way that still maintains the status quo. When the boys in her class describe Harriet Tubman's appearance as "rough," Mary excuses Tubman's appearance on the basis that she was busy surviving and helping people on the Underground Railroad. By reasoning away Tubman's "rough" appearance on the basis of her circumstances, Mary implies that under different circumstances Tubman may have been able to live up to her students' expectations that women should appear feminine or polished. A critical feminist intervention into these boys' belief systems would instead work to dismantle their expectation that women should appear in a certain way. In other words, a critical feminist approach would work to "expose norms as norms, denaturalizing them" (Spade & Willse, 2016, p. 4).

While Mary positions working with critical feminism in the classroom as a future goal, her current work to promote women in social studies education should not be discounted. Mary's strong commitment to teaching about women came through in her interviews and curriculum documents. She found and created opportunities to include women of color in her curriculum and pushed back on traditional and often misguided or one-sided narratives that her students may have grown up hearing. She also discussed with her students the current injustice regarding Harriet Tubman and the $20 bill. Mary's use of angling demonstrates that this approach does have the capacity to help teachers include more women in social studies education. When she delivers lessons on women's history, it is clear that Mary has already thought about her angle. Having considered her messaging about women's history, she then delivers that messaging in a

direct manner to her students. She does not leave to chance whether her students encounter her understanding of these women as heroes and leaders.

Women's history, gender, and feminism can be understood in a variety of ways and teachers may feel more or less capable of delivering content on those topics based on a number of factors, some of which will be discussed later on in this chapter. While it is possible for teachers using this approach to build their lesson plans and messaging around critical feminist theory, it is not certain that that potential will be realized without more dialogue about feminism in the social studies field as whole. As Schmeichel (2015) put it "the feminist subject position – and the critical orientation toward the promotion of gender equity in social studies classrooms that can come along with it – may not be a readily available subjectivity in our field." The absence of this dialogue may be hampering educators like Mary who "deep down inside" want to incorporate more critical feminist practices into their teaching.

Teacher Profile #2: Kelly

Teacher Consideration: Am I prepared to teach this?

Kelly is a high school social studies teacher at Marshall High School (MHS) in Dodson County. She has seven years of teaching experience and self-identifies as a white woman. She primarily teaches World History and AP Human Geography at MHS. Although Kelly was "told that SOLs were going to be completely done away with," currently the courses that she teaches are either AP- or SOL-tested.

MHS is a mid-sized, racially-diverse high school located in a suburban area. Around 40% of the student population at MHS identifies as African-American, 30% as white, 20% as Hispanic, 10% as two or more races. When asked about her school context, Kelly highlights the supportive faculty and administration at MHS:

Marshall is very, I think unique in that you just have a very supportive faculty.

Administration is great. There's a real family atmosphere. We don't turn anyone away. I

mean, you hear about some high schools who, you know, the student is ESOL, they may

not want that student to go to their school, because they just don't have the resources or

the teachers don't have the experience with that type of student. I feel like at Marshall I

like that we have a lot of teachers who have a lot of knowledge and experience working

with a wide range of students, and so that just makes for a really fun place to work.

Kelly describes the politics of her school community as "diverse," although she notes a pattern of
social conservativism within some sub-communities at MHS:

We have some very conservative parents and students and very liberal as well. Yeah, it

really would just depend on who you were speaking to… A lot of my Hispanic students,

it is just not common to have their mothers out in the workforce. It's very common for

the father to be the breadwinner so that's kind of their cultural understanding of who

works in the family. And so, you know, you just have a lot of different students coming

from a lot of different understandings of women's roles. So I don't think I could pinpoint

one [political leaning].

Kelly describes her own political leaning as "progressive and liberal." When asked if she felt the
politics of her school community had any bearing on her ability to teach about the topics of this
study, Kelly explains:

It's nice, because you always have just different people sitting in front of you. You

always have some people who – At least some people who are going to be maybe more

willing to listen to what you have to say. So, I think I would have difficulty if my whole

school – if all the students and their parents were very, very conservative-minded. I think

that would be – that would make it much more difficult for me to comfortably teach some

of the topics that I teach.

Within this context, Kelly tends to approach the topics of women's history, gender, and

feminism by angling. In her first interview, I coded 11 instances of angling, four instances of

exposing lightly, and three instances of avoiding. Rather than discuss Kelly's use of angling, I

am focusing this profile around a teaching consideration that emerged as a recurring theme in her

first-round interview: *the importance of preparation*. For Kelly, having access to curriculum

materials and time to locate and transform them for her students are necessary conditions for

teaching the topics of this study.

Starting this project, I assumed that some teachers might indicate that there are a lack of

curriculum materials on the topics of this study, but that was not the case with Kelly (at least in

regards to women's history). She feels that "there's plenty of historical evidence and primary

sources of women." For her, the challenge of finding resources on women's history lies not in

their availability to teachers, but in the teachers' capacity to "take the time" to find them:

> It does take planning. You do – Like I said, I guess you do have to be purposeful, at least
>
> as the standards are written now, you do have to be purposeful, and I need to be more – I
>
> mean, getting these materials together for you made me realize how much more
>
> purposeful I need to be about going out and finding those materials because they are
>
> there. You just have to take the time.

When asked what advice she would give to a new teacher trying to promote the topics of this

study in their classroom, Kelly reiterates the importance of being "purposeful:"

> I would say to go out there and try to find as many resources as you can, -- And to – if
>
> you're having trouble finding resources, at least ask those questions and raise it as a

question for your students, you know, "What's the gender of everyone we've talked

about today?" "Male." "Okay, well, how do you feel about that?" I mean, even something

as simple as that is a good – I think a good question to ask them and a good jumping off

point, but there definitely are resources out there. I just think that you would have to be

purposeful in going and finding them.

For teachers in this study who expressed some frustration regarding resources, their

frustration seemed more about a struggle to find the *right* resources rather than the struggle to

find resources in general. For instance, Audrey, a teacher who tends toward exposing lightly,

mentioned that she is "signed up with the National Women's History website" and received

curriculum materials from them regularly, but found that "frequently it's such an in-depth issue.

I'm just not sure if I can take the time, and I know that that was on me, but it's just hard."

Audrey's ideal curriculum resources would cover or connect several official curriculum

standards:

So instead of just, you know, the 19th amendment, which I can't focus on for an hour and

a half, if it was the entire women's rights movement somehow or like, you know,

women's rights from the 14th amendment to the 19th amendment, and it was something

that I could do in place of hitting it there and hitting it there and hitting it there, if it had a

more complete narrative connecting standards that I needed to hit, I could do it.

Lisa, another teacher tending toward exposing lightly, described similar frustrations with finding

the right resources. For her, curriculum material overload is the primary issue with finding

resources:

I can pull primary sources, but it's very time consuming and it's overwhelming how

many and how – I mean, sometimes the amount of information that's out there can be

paralyzing. I feel that way a lot of times, because there are so many good things, and you

almost get stuck in this, "Well, which one do I use?"

Time was not just an issue raised in regards to finding the resources. It was also raised in

regards to finding the time to teach those resources once they were located. Teachers in this

study often considered the demands of the official curriculum when determining the extent to

which they could take time to implement resources relating to the topics of this study. In the

following excerpt, Kelly explains how she sometimes struggles to find the time in her curriculum

to devote to the topics of this study:

> As the standards are written now, you would have to be comfortable with veering off of
>
> the standards for half a day or a day at least. I mean, that sounds awful, but you know,
>
> you'd have to be comfortable veering off from the standards and focusing on that female
>
> historical figure that they're not going to see on the SOL, but be okay with that and
>
> devote some time to it. But that is, like I said, very, very difficult when you have students
>
> who you're worried about them passing the SOL, just even if you drilled and killed every
>
> day, you're worried about them passing the SOL, let alone taking time, you know, to talk
>
> about something they don't have to know.

Kelly went on to explain that even when she "spent a little bit more time than [she] had to talking

about [Joan of Arc]," she still "did not do a whole activity around her" because she "just always

feel[s] that time pressure." In comparing her AP and SOL standards, Kelly finds the AP

curriculum tends to have more entry points for gender-related content:

> In my AP class I feel much more supported as far as talking about it, because it really is
>
> in the curriculum, and the AP curriculum does focus a lot on gender. And they've had
>
> free response questions about gender, and so it's not only something that I think is

important to learn, but it is something that I – it's spelled out that you need to go over

this, and so we talk about it a lot in my AP class.

When thinking about whether or not they are prepared to teach the topics of this study,

Kelly, Audrey, and Lisa considered whether they have the time to find the right resources and

whether they have the time to then utilize those resources given the demands of their official

curriculum standards, pacing, and assessments. While all three teachers struggled with structural

issues (standards, pacing, and assessments) exacerbating their concerns about time, there was a

noticeable difference in how Kelly, an angling teacher, chose to navigate those issues in her role

as a curriculum gatekeeper and how Audrey and Lisa, both exposing lightly teachers, chose to do

so in theirs. Kelly stayed focused on opportunities to incorporate women, gender, and feminism

throughout her interview. She took note of the abundance of resources available on those topics

and offered ways to incorporate those topics even when she observed a lack of resources. She

also identified when her official curriculum standards supported teaching the topics of this study.

Mary, introduced in the previous profile, demonstrated a similar mindset. She was able to

reconcile some of the demands of her official standards with her interest in creating a more

gender-equitable curriculum by covering those standards from the perspective of women. For

instance, when covering Lewis and Clark, Mary started from the perspective of Sacagawea.

In contrast, Audrey and Lisa were more focused on the structural barriers preventing

them from engaging in these topics more. Audrey identified what she "can't focus on" or what

she could do if certain conditions were met. Lisa described feeling "paralyz[ed]" and "stuck"

when searching for the right resources for her students. While the larger structural issues with the

official curriculum standards, pacing, and assessments still need to be addressed, Kelly's mindset

toward focusing on curriculum opportunities offers a way for teachers to exercise their agency to

center the topics of this study in the face of strong institutional pressures that often do not

prioritize teaching those topics.

Teacher Profile #3: Evan

Teacher Consideration: Am I handling this fairly?

Like Mary, Evan is also a middle-school social studies teacher at Sturgill Middle School

(SMS) in Elizabeth City Schools. There, he primarily teaches 6th grade US History. He has two

years of teaching experience and self-identifies as a white male. One of the features that attracted

Evan to SMS is its status as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. While new to the IB

curriculum, Evan has found it to be helpful cover for topics he feels are not traditionally taught

as part of the standardized curriculum:

> Evan: It's cool to be able to excuse anything I'm teaching as like "Oh, I'm trying to tie
>
> things into like the global theme." Because really I feel like if I want to go in on an extra
>
> thing that's not included or something like that, I feel like I can just say, "Oh, I'm doing
>
> it in the way of talking about communities" or "I'm doing it in the name of talking about
>
> people and places," like all these different little strands that IB has. That's cool.
>
>
> Kim: Is that something that – when you feel like you have to say "I'm doing it in the
>
> name of this," is there an audience that you're sort of speaking to?
>
>
> Evan: Only a hypothetical one. I guess that this is a very important point in Social Studies
>
> in general, which is that because we're not the main test class, and I don't even mind it,
>
> because I really like having my own interpretation of the curriculum, I don't even – I
>
> don't even mean I'm like going off road or anything, but I just mean if I was to be talking

about something random, and you know, some school official from central office came,

it'd be nice to say, "Oh, well, you know, within the global context of IB curriculum, I

wanted to make sure to include that in my –" Yeah, I always have that ready. I think it's

really just a hypothetical.

In the above quote, Evan echoes Mary's description of not feeling particularly "on the radar" as a

social studies teacher at SMS. Evan identifies as a "progressive liberal" and, when asked about

his school community's political leaning, he described SMS as "progressive." He went on to

explain how that might play a role in his ability to talk about certain topics in the classroom:

I don't know if it's because it's middle school or – I don't know what. I feel like at times

I do have a lot of openness to kind of talk about things in any regard, just because I don't

feel like parents – either it's that the things that we're talking about are often times

values-aligned with the area or the local community, or maybe it's just students a lot of

times don't relay the specific conversations. Like I'm sure that students, you know, say

random things about my class, but I've never – Even though we have had many, many

like very on-politically-charged-topics kind of conversations, I've never had a parent be

like – So like I guess I feel very open to do it.

Within this context, Evan tends toward an angling approach regarding the topics of this

study. I coded seven counts of angling, two counts of exposing lightly, and zero counts of

avoiding in his first interview. Although both he and Mary tend toward an angling approach,

they both also had moments during our interviews where they considered the *fairness* of that

approach. For Evan and Mary, context matters when using an angling approach.

During our second-round interview, while discussing the impact of social media on the

middle school student culture, Evan shared that he "had a student today who said…'How about

that abortion ban?'" This prompted me to ask how he handled that question. In his response,

Evan considers the concept of fairness when it comes to taking an angling approach to current

political topics in the classroom:

> Evan: My instant response – Because, I don't know, again, like I hate being just so out
>
> about how I feel about things. Like I don't want to overdo that, but also I guess I know
>
> where I am, so if I'm talking in like a private conversation with a student in a way that I
>
> don't know if in teacher school they said (laughs) to do this, but I was just like, "Yeah,
>
> man," I was like "It's pretty shocking," and that's all I said, because– I was like… he
>
> knows what that means. But also I didn't outright say like "Yeah, I'm so upset about all
>
> the like – personal opinion, yeah…I think people should be upset." But my very
>
> intentional response I was like I know how he'll read it, and I know how I could defend
>
> myself as someone – but, yeah, I felt as though because he was bringing it to me, and
>
> because I could tell what he was thinking, I didn't want to discourage –
>
> Kim: As a one-on-one?
>
> Evan: Right. I didn't want to discourage him from feeling, you know, a way that I was
>
> like "It's cool that you are thinking about that. I really respect that you're, you know,
>
> looking out." I don't know. But also that's one of those tricky ones, because…coming
>
> from a school that was a different place, would I have had to guard myself? Yeah.

Even though Evan handles the student's question about the abortion ban in a brief, private

conversation without revealing his own views, he still wonders whether "in teacher school they

said to do this." By wondering about "teacher school," Evan is framing his concerns over the

fairness of the angling approach in terms of professional norms in teaching. In this exchange, he reveals two chief concerns: 1) "overdo[ing]" it and 2) school context. With the first concern, Evan indicates that there is certain sense of balance he likes to maintain in not wanting to "overdo" it with regard to being "out about how he feels about things" (angling). I speak to this concern more in Part II. With the second concern, he hints at how the influence of the surrounding school community can sometimes dictate what a teacher feels they can and cannot endorse or reveal as a personal opinion. In Swalwell's (2013) work researching how teachers implemented social-justice pedagogy with urban and suburban elite students, she noted: "grappling with how far to push their [social-justice] pedagogy in communities of privilege without alienating their students, being accused of indoctrination, or losing their jobs is an incredibly difficult task" (p. 87). Angling may not always feel like an option for teachers given those potential risks.

Later on in the same exchange, Evan reaffirms the value of taking an angling approach to more general political issues by considering a different set of risks – namely, his students' feelings of comfort and safety.

> Evan: The age of the presidency – the current presidency, I found it – I've told every one of my classes this at least once or twice this year. When I learned to be a teacher, when I was attending school for education, I was told "Never tell your students how you feel about political things a Social Studies teacher." … None of my teachers did, mostly, none of my teachers really did. But I said to my students, "Being honest with you, I think that like our country – And I say this as a person that really likes teaching about US history, and for all of its goods and bads, and there's been both. Like this country is genuinely deprived of moral leadership to a point that I feel like I have to speak out against certain

things, because you need to know that I come from a place that you – a place that

understands that you might feel uncomfortable right now," and that's not a conversation I

think that – I never had a teacher say something like that to me, but I don't think it was

required – Like morally speaking. I feel like as a Social Studies teacher in, you know, --

in [Elizabeth City] to a demographic of many, many African-American students, I just – I

couldn't imagine leaving that untouched or having students be like "Oh, so you like him."

I mean, and that's not to say I'm like "Yeah, vote for someone else," although like –

(laughs) – That's obviously how I feel. But I think I could – I feel like I have to say that. I

have to be honest about that.

Kim: It's almost like a comfort, like creating a safe classroom for students who might feel

really scared under the current administration, right?

Evan: Right. And if he's done a good job of anything, it's like he's made everyone feel

bad. You know, if I had students of certain background – talking about like, perhaps,

sexual orientation, the students I'm quite sure feel bad right now. Students of like

certainly almost every ethnicity in our country are feeling a little weird or unsettled, or

you know, this public racism that's now cool. I say "cool" in terms of like people feel as

though it's okay.

Kim: Like more open and out there.

Evan: I remember learning about like the KKK in the '30s and '40s and how – or how

open it was, and you know, just being shocked, but then I'm like "Oh, Charlottesville."

Like, you know? And to think that students see that, I don't know, -- (sighs)

In this exchange, Evan reveals how he utilizes an angling approach to try to create a safe and

inclusive classroom environment for his students. He feels that disclosing at least some of his

thoughts regarding the current president is "required – Like morally speaking." By doing so, he

is signaling to his students that he is not supportive of a powerful political figure that might be

making many of them "feel bad right now." This decision to disclose stands in contrast to his

decision to be more circumspect and withhold his personal opinion when addressing a specific

policy that largely impacts women, as with the abortion ban.

Mary and I discussed the fairness of the angling approach more in terms of subject-area

norms and students' developmental needs. In our second-round interview, I asked Mary about

what she meant when she said: "I guess I was giving them the angle the whole time, which I

don't know if it's fair if I was teaching civics or something, but – or even if I was teaching high

schoolers." In the following excerpt, she explains how teaching a different content area or a

different grade level might require using a different approach:

Mary: I feel like in a civics class you're supposed to be down the middle.

Kim: Like politically?

Mary: Yeah. Mhm. Or even devil's advocate. Like you could – If they're leaning one

way you could, "Oh, no, what about this," you know? And, in a high school level, I feel

like sometimes in high school US history I remember there would be a lot of things that

my teacher would say like "This is just my opinion, like JFK or something or Vietnam,"

right? So he'd be like "This is my opinion now," and he would switch over to be like –

So I felt like teaching [my lesson] through the lens that [Sacagawea] was the hero of that

story, I was thinking like "Is that bias?" or like "I'm definitely going at it with an angle,"

but I think the angle is true, but I would probably be more hesitant if I was teaching like a

higher grade or a civics – not that I'd teach that in a civics course, but you know, -- I

guess in a civics –

Kim: If you were in like a high school setting, teaching the same content, would you feel

more pressure to balance like Sacagawea's story with Lewis and Clark's perspective or

how would you handle that?

Mary: Yeah. I think what's – like what's cooler I guess about high school is they can

analyze a primary source, and so, then, they could come to their own conclusions about

whatever it is that I read. They could even do some secondary sources or whatever, but

middle school, I'm like – I have to deliver – I have to lead them to the water, you know?

They're not really going to – Like any time I'm like what's the first thing you see when

you look at this picture. You know, they're like "He has a hat." Cool. Okay, let's keep

going. (laughs) That takes forever.

During this exchange, Mary considers what would be expected of her in other content areas

(Civics) and grade levels (high school). In those other subject-area and grade-level contexts, she

posits that an angling approach may undermine students' intellectual struggle to create meaning

or make informed judgements on their own when presented with multiple or competing perspectives.

Despite her concerns around subject-area norms and developmental needs, Mary also offers a compelling reason to sometimes move forward with an angling approach. She notes that younger students may need more guidance to understand which perspective or narrative is more accurate or deserving of our attention. For instance, when teaching about Pocahontas, Mary angled by helping her sixth grade students debunk the myth of the Disney version of events. By guiding her students to the conclusion that the Disney version of events was inaccurate and misleading, Mary is guiding her students through the process of making informed judgements, preparing them to do this process on their own in the future. Furthermore, by choosing that particular lesson to use an angling approach, Mary is ensuring that her students do not conclude their investigation of the life of Pocahontas by assuming that the Disney version of events is equally deserving of their consideration.

Even though Mary indicates that in other contexts she might be more inclined to play "devil's advocate" or "be down the middle," she also asserts that her "angle is true." Spreading the truth is an important commitment for Mary and one that she returns to later on:

> If I'm going to take the effort to teach them what I feel are the real stories about women
> and minorities in general, then I want them to take the responsibility further to not just
> remember that or be like 'Oh, thank you for teaching me.' No, but like to spread that truth
> about what actually happened.

When thinking about what is fair when approaching the topics of this study, these teachers consider what they were trained to do "in teacher school," what they are expected to do within their field of social studies, what is best in terms of supporting their students' comfort,

safety, and learning, and what they consider their moral imperative as educators. This last

consideration appears to be a powerful motivator for Evan and Mary. Evan seems especially

motivated toward an angling approach by what he thinks might contribute to a positive

classroom climate. Right now, that means assuring his students that he does not support an

administration that is potentially making his students feel "bad" or "uncomfortable," but it does

not mean taking a more public stand against the latest wave of state laws placing extreme

restrictions on the obtainability of abortion services. How Evan and other teachers determine

when to disclose their personal opinion may have to do with what is considered an open and

closed issue in their school community. Both Mary and Evan indicated that their SMS

community largely disapproves of the current administration, so Evan's choice to reveal his

opinion on the matter may not be deemed controversial within his context. The abortion ban

issue raised by his student may represent uncharted territory for Evan. Without knowing whether

his community deems an issue open or closed, he may feel more comfortable reserving his

personal opinion. For Mary, choosing an approach other than angling means potentially risking

her ability to spread the truth or to correct a skewed historical record.

In Part II, I continue to examine the idea of teacher neutrality and teacher disclosure in

the context of the exposing lightly approach.

Part II: Exposing Lightly

In this section, I present and discuss two teacher profiles: Audrey and Lisa. Audrey's

profile is focused on illustrating the exposing lightly approach and is immediately followed by a

discussion of that approach. Lisa's profile is focused on a teacher consideration that affected

whether teachers felt confident teaching certain aspects of women's history and gender. In

particular, Lisa's profile explores how identity can affect feelings of authority. I discuss the implication of that teacher consideration throughout Lisa's profile.

Teacher Profile #4: Audrey

The Exposing Lightly Approach

Audrey is an 11th and 12th grade social studies teacher at Fitzgerald High School (FHS) in Dodson County. She has seven years of teaching experience and self-identifies as a white woman. FHS is a large, predominantly white high school located in a suburban area. When asked about her school context, Audrey notes that "most of the students do have access to any kind of support that they would need." Audrey characterizes the political leanings of her school community as "very conservative." When asked about what sorts of topics might be considered political in her school community, she offers "that maybe very political would be – like obviously abortion, because we have to talk about Roe versus Wade in US history, and so the religious views behind that are definitely political for my kids." She goes on to add that "things that have already sort of been established, like the right to vote, that's not as political. They're like 'Oh yeah, of course, women should vote.'" When asked about her own political leanings, Audrey shares that she "grew up in a more conservative, military family but I've become more liberal in my leanings, especially as an educator relying on public funding to do my job *and* witnessing the varying needs of students."

While not new to teaching, Audrey is a relatively new addition to her school social studies department and, as such, she is somewhat wary of rocking the boat:

> There are five teachers who teach US history at my school, and so if one person does this radical thing, there's just going to be an element of either push back or favoritism or whatever. It's just not – It's not worth it. For me, where I am right now.

At FHS, Audrey teaches AP United States History and an Economics and Personal Finance Course. While there is talk in Dodson district about a move toward more authentic assessments at the high school level, she has always taught SOL- or AP-tested courses.

Within this context, Audrey tends to approach the topics of women's history and gender by exposing lightly, meaning she tries to frame her lessons in non-controversial terms. In her first interview, I coded 15 instances of exposing lightly, four instances of avoiding, and three instances of angling. An important strategy she uses to expose lightly is that of *balancing multiple perspectives*. Early on in our first interview, I asked Audrey to share a moment that sparked her interest in the topics of this study. Her answer reveals both her passion for learning about women in science and one way she tries to create balance in her approach to curriculum design:

> I read a book about World War II women code breakers, and that was really eye opening, and it just hasn't really received any press, and so I've actually started actively looking for more examples of that. I mean, the curriculum is sort of set, but I do have some flexibility in, you know, whose story I tell, and what I use to exemplify whatever standard it is. So I'm trying to do one sort of standard one that everyone would know, and then try and get a diverse perspective. And since it's World War II season, the lady code breakers are what I have on the brain.

Audrey later explains that the strategy of creating balance among perspectives is even more important when she finds herself wading into potentially political or controversial waters with her students:

> Audrey: The other thing that you just kind of have to be careful with is the politics of it, and I work in a very conservative school. And so I have to be really careful when I'm

portraying all the different perspectives to make sure that they're all equally portrayed, and that I do not offend.

Kim: Can you talk a little bit about how you navigate that?

Audrey: Carefully. I usually just put a lot of notes in my PowerPoint so that I am sure to say everything I want to. It's just a lot of prep work. All the scripting. It wasn't the same at my old school. I didn't have to worry about it as much.

Kim: To sort of script how you're delivering it?

Audrey: Mhm…

Kim: Can you tell me about an example of a time that you had to do that?

Audrey: Yes. Let me think. I feel like it happens so often, and yet – I don't know. I think for women's rights I'm not coming up with a lot, because we haven't really gotten there yet. We've just been doing all the different threads, but it does happen all the time with race and politics. So like when we're doing race riots, for example, I'm very careful to explain like the context of the riot and have the facts of what happened, and then let the students draw their own conclusion. So instead of like "The Harlem race riot was police brutality," I say, "A woman was struck by a White – a Black woman was struck by a White police officer. Sergeant So-and-so stepped in to help her. He was struck, and

that's, what started the riot." …I try and give them the facts, versus – try to give them the

facts and let them decide, versus just telling them the quick and dirty SOL version.

Rather than offer an example of how she ensures that different perspectives are "equally

portrayed," Audrey instead describes additional strategies she uses to "not offend." I coded these

three strategies as: 1) scripting lessons, 2) "sugarcoating" content, and 3) curating facts for

students to consider and letting them make up their own minds. In the above excerpt, we can see

how sometimes these strategies can be utilized in combination. Audrey avoids using the term

"police brutality" by only providing students with a description of incident ("the facts of what

happened"). This is an example of sugarcoating content by way of curating facts and letting

students decide. The term "sugarcoating" was introduced by a different teacher in this study to

describe instances where a teacher alters or camouflages content to appear less controversial. A

third teacher distinguished sugarcoating from a related strategy she called "simplifying," which

describes instances where the teacher alters content to be more comprehensible for students.

In our second-round interview, I circled back to the idea of portraying perspectives

equally and asked about the potential for false equivalence:

Kim: What do you do when one perspective is really based on a robust set of facts and

the other is sort of lacking in facts?

Audrey: So that is so hard…So I think I've said this already to you, but I mean, I really

try and have conversations that I have scaffolded with facts, and I try and make sure

there's a spectrum of facts on both sides. So in other words, I wouldn't just open the floor

on a topic like that and say like "What are your thoughts on women's equality in the

work place?" You know, I wouldn't just say that. I would have them look at sources that

are legitimate or provide them with sources so that what they're arguing is based in fact.

Kim: So in terms of like making sure that the two sides are equally portrayed, you would

go out and find the resources to make sure that if one side was sort of lacking in factual

content, you would find something that was sort of legitimate to – ?

Audrey: That's the ideal. I'm not super comfortable with it always, because I'm not going

to be there in five years when they are debating, you know, with their spouse or

whatever. I try to use websites like The Balance that sort of set themselves up as having a

balance, although even that sometimes is not enough. Even that can be biased.

When Audrey prepares a potentially controversial lesson, she anticipates facing some

resistance from her students. When describing how she navigated one such lesson, Audrey

returns to the strategy of curating facts for students and letting them decide. In the following

excerpt, she explains how she teaches about the gender and race pay gap in her economics class:

We're coming up in econ – we're coming up on a project where we have students like

choose jobs and choose credit cards and choose – like do all the things they have to do for

this econ class, and I typically try and do a gender gap day and a race gap day, and it's

always just so stressful for me. Like the economic policy Twitter account just posted this

infographic, and it shows like definitively, statistically that women earn less at every

education level than men, and I can show that to my students, and I know they're going

to – they're going to rationalize it. So it's like how do I – Like how do I present facts

about women getting paid less and handle this really sensitive content about how it's then

further stratified by each race, and get my majority affluent students who have never

wanted for anything to understand this very real situation for others? And I end up just

kind of throwing it out there and asking them to reflect on it, because I'm not sure what

else I can do.

When trying to facilitate discussions on controversial topics, Audrey also employs the strategy of

removing bias/ personal opinions. This is an expectation she tries to adhere to herself and she

tries to promote amongst her students. In the following excerpt, Audrey describes her students'

contributions to a discussion on transgender rights:

When we talk about…The Civil Rights Act of 1965, we talk about how women are

included, like in Title IX, this, that, and the other, and then I sort of say, you know, "Who

is the next group who is left out?" And it usually comes up, you know, someone's brave

enough to say, "Well, the LGBTQ community," and then we'll talk about the transgender

decision that was in the news like a year and a half ago – the student, I think, in North

Carolina that was denied bathroom use – and some students are really able to disassociate

their personal views and talk about what role the government can have and how it can be

complicated for schools to set this rule definitively, and how really we need to have a

more flexible option, but some students just cannot disassociate, and they're just like,

"Well, what if I want to identify as a girl?" "Well, what if I want to be in the Olympics

and I identify as blah, blah, blah?" And then typically, you know, just – it's this – this

spouting of things that (sighs) makes it hard to talk about. So, it is so complicated, and in

order to have a good conversation with your students, you need to have like the perfect

environment that you fostered, and it has to be a really great day. Like kids have to be on

that day to have that talk. Sometimes it's gone really well, and sometimes it's just been a

disaster, and I've had to say like "Back it up. This is what the 14th Amendment says. Let's go back to that."

It is possible for a teacher to begin a lesson using one approach and end using another. In the following excerpt, Audrey describes how she uses a Constitutional Convention role play activity that she adapted from the Zinn Education Project:

This activity that I sent you, it has a women's history or like a feminist component in it, because it asks for the perspective of women, but it also asks for the perspective of indentured servants, enslaved African-Americans, free African-Americans, male southerners, northern merchants, and Native Americans...The original lesson is supposed to be like three class periods. Not happening. But what drew me to it is that I thought it was a different way to look at the constitutional convention, the typical way you see it is like you pick a senator that was there, and you just rehashed whatever they said, and I liked this one because it comes with a sheet, like a background sheet for each perspective, and so they read that, and then have to extrapolate, and I think that's a good perspective exercise, and it's different from the normal one… But that's the other reason that I really liked this is because it did such a good job of doing what I like to do, which is just attacking the problem from every single perspective, and then at the end we vote – like "Who should get to vote?" and whatever the other question is. Like "Who should be able to own property?" I think. And it's interesting because when they're fighting from their perspective, they see how close the vote is, and then when we just look at how the white plantation owners voted, they just – they understand why our constitution was written the way it was, and then I'm able to leverage that into a conversation about the importance of inclusion, like just a seat at the table. It's not necessarily that – It's not necessarily that

male plantation owners just wanted to preserve their power, it's just they didn't have

these other opinions and groups represented. So of course they're going to do what's in

their own best interest. I mean, that's what humans do. So it's a good way to set the tone

early on in the year about the importance of political power.

At the start of the above description, Audrey approaches the topic of women and the

Constitutional Convention by exposing lightly. She engages multiple perspectives in the form of

curated information sheets and, then, guides students to use those information sheets to vote.

After the voting is over, Audrey appears to change her approach to that of angling by directing

the conversation toward the importance of inclusion in political decision-making rather than

hoping her students come to that realization about the role play experience on their own.

Analysis of Audrey's Exposing Lightly Approach

Throughout the above excerpts, Audrey describes the caution with which she tends to

approach some topics relating to gender and race in her current classroom context. Statements

like "I have to be really careful" and "It's always just so stressful for me" give some indication

of her level of anxiety when handling certain topics. This caution is representative of the

exposing lightly approach. Audrey shared with me two primary reasons for using such caution:

1) a concern over student responses and 2) a concern over parent responses.

Throughout her interviews, Audrey described both experiencing and expecting pushback

from her students when tackling certain topics related to this study. For instance, when

discussing her lesson on gender and race pay gaps, she revealed that some of her students try to

"rationalize" away those pay disparities. Because of the potential for student resistance, how to

handle this content is still an open question for Audrey:

How do I present facts about women getting paid less and handling this really sensitive

content about how it's then further stratified by each race, and get my majority affluent

students who have never wanted for anything to understand this very real situation for

others?

While Audrey has not yet settled on an answer to the above question, for now she says she is

staying away from open classroom discussions on potentially political or controversial topics.

Audrey believes that those kinds of open classroom discussions require "the perfect

environment" and "a really great day."

In our second-round interview, I circled back to Audrey's comment about portraying

perspectives equally to "not offend" to try to better understand who she was imagining offending

in this statement. She responded:

It's mostly the parents. I think kids are a really great sponge in that way. They really

listen to adults around them, whether or not they'll admit it. And so I know when my

students go home they hear what their parents have to say about politics and, whether or

not they understand it all, they definitely have that lens they're looking through, and so I

know if I present something that is categorically against whatever they're used to it could

be offensive instead of eye opening. You know, I don't want to shock them into

something. I just want to like expose lightly.

In this excerpt, Audrey hints at what she feels she would be risking by taking a more direct,

angling approach. While she begins the quote by stating her concern for offending parents, she

ends by considering what approach affords her the best chance at helping her students learn and

grow. By considering where students are at (politically speaking), Audrey reasons that she has a

better chance of creating "eye opening" learning experiences with which her students feel

comfortable engaging rather than "offensive" ones that cause her students to check out. Given

her concerns regarding both parents and students, Audrey appears to use the exposing lightly

approach primarily to avoid conflict and promote a positive learning environment. It is a way for

her to navigate the "very conservative" politics of her school community when teaching about

women's history or gender.

While women's history, gender, and feminism are not inherently controversial, what is

considered "controversial can vary among individuals, is often predicated on context, and can

change over time" (Journell, 2011a, p. 352). Audrey illustrated this point in her explanation of

how her students might consider the topic of abortion rights to be "very political" while

considering women's voting rights to be "not as political." In addition to abortion rights, Audrey

indicated that the following topics were also considered sensitive or controversial in her school

context: police brutality, gender and race pay gaps, and transgender rights. In their study of

teaching controversial topics in times of intense political polarization, McAvoy and Hess (2013)

recommended that teachers engage students in "open policy questions," meaning there should be

"significant disagreement" over the "kinds of public policies that should be adopted to address

public problems" (p. 36). By contrast, closed policy questions are "settled" or have a widely

"agreed-upon answer" (McAvoy & Hess, 2013, p. 38). While all of those topics Audrey

identified as controversial in her context can be related to "open policy questions" in our current

political climate, those topics can also be related to other types of questions depending on how

they are framed to students. For example, an open policy question for classroom discussion

would be "How should we as a society work to address the gender and race pay gaps?" By

contrast, asking students "Do gender and racial pay gaps exist?" is not an open policy question,

but a "closed empirical question," meaning there is already an answer supported by sufficient evidence (United States Census Bureau, 2019; see also United States Census Bureau, 2020).

When Audrey states that she "throw[s] it out there and ask[s] [students] to reflect on it," referring to an infographic on gender and race pay gaps, she may be letting students make up their own minds on what kind of question they are answering. Some students may be reflecting on how to close those pay gaps while other may be deciding if they even think there are legitimate pay gaps to begin with. Without further insight into the kind of reflecting Audrey prompted her students to do, it is difficult to tell how her students were invited to engage with this topic. What is important to consider here is what responsibilities social studies teachers have in determining how to frame controversial issues to students. McAvoy and Hess (2013) take a strong stand against "teaching closed empirical questions as open," arguing that such an approach could "increase polarization" and "reinforce the idea that empirical questions are matters of belief rather than evidence" (p. 39 – 40). In the absence of any framing, students may open a closed empirical question on their own.

When discussing and deliberating controversial issues in the classroom, it is also important to consider the teacher's role as the classroom facilitator and regulator. Should teachers be encouraged to disclose their opinions on political and/or controversial topics to their students? How open should classrooms be to all ideas and opinions? How far should teachers push students to consider alternative or specific perspectives or opinions? By asking these questions, I aim to consider the appropriateness of the exposing lightly approach to teaching political and/or controversial topics relating to women's history, gender, or feminism.

Kelly (1986) examined four different perspectives on how teachers are expected to handle the discussion of controversial issues in the classroom. He labeled one of those

perspectives "neutral impartiality." An educator adhering to this perspective remains impartial by presenting their students with "the strongest arguments for competing points of view" and remains neutral by also striving to "remain silent about their own views on controversial issues" (Kelly, 1986, p. 121-122). Audrey's descriptions of how she utilizes strategies to expose lightly are strongly reminiscent of this perspective. In our second-round interview, I specifically inquired about Audrey's stance on teacher neutrality:

> Kim: Do you normally try and remove your bias or do you try and sort of present it to your students outright? How do you handle that?
>
> Audrey: Usually I try not to insert my opinions while they – while we are discussing. I just try and play devil's advocate, and, then, depending on the class, I'll sometimes share my opinion at the end, but I'll always be very clear and say "This is my opinion," and then I always caveat it with, "I'm still learning." … Like every year my students, you know, change my mind. Which is true probably like three-fourths of the time, but sometimes I've already decided. I'm just trying to be an arbiter for them, you know?

Audrey is not alone in following a policy of neutrality (or at least reluctant disclosure with qualifications) when handling political or controversial topics in social studies classrooms. While researching how high school government teachers discussed the 2008 Presidential Election, Journell (2011a) documented that only two out of the six teacher participants chose to disclose to their students their voting preference in advance of the election. In Hess' (2005) work with teachers exploring what she calls "the disclosure dilemma," she noted that secondary studies teachers who adopted a policy of neutrality typically presented this policy "as a criterion of good teaching." In Part I of this chapter, Evan and Mary both grappled with this "good

teaching" narrative when considering whether using an angling approach was a fair way to

present content on the topics of this study. In our current climate of political polarization, it can

be especially tempting to profess a policy of teacher neutrality in the classroom. In their survey

of how teachers and citizens view civics education in the United States, Lautzenheiser et al.

(2011) uncovered that "nearly half of citizens polled feel that 'too many social studies teachers

use their classes as a 'soap box' for their personal point of view'" (p. 4). In addition to this

significant public skepticism of teacher disclosure, educators are also not confident that school

administrators will support them in discussing controversial political issues in the classroom, let

alone revealing their own political opinions on those issues to students (McAvoy & Hess, 2013).

While it may not be possible to actually untether from our own values and politics, it is easy to

see the appeal of at least appearing to be neutral when working in certain school contexts during

politically divisive times. Despite the appeal, it is important to consider how teachers can and do

transmit their own values through their curriculum and instructional choices.

In Chapter 2, I discussed how power is wrapped up in the act of selecting school

curriculum. As curriculum gatekeepers, teachers select learning goals, primary and secondary

sources, discussion questions, instructional strategies, and more. Rather than opening the flood

gates to sources "from the depths of Reddit," Audrey prefers to tightly control the primary and

secondary sources she presents to her students and determines what questions, if any, she will

ask of her students in regards to those sources. She directly acknowledges her power as a

curriculum gatekeeper in the following statement: "I do have some flexibility in, you know,

whose story I tell." Whether consciously or subconsciously, teachers are guided by their own set

of values or their vision for the future of society when making those selections. To be sure, they

are also guided by the selections of others in power (as we saw in Kelly's profile) who are driven

by their own set of values and visions. In Journell's (2011b) study, teachers professing a neutral

stance regarding their 2008 election preferences still transmitted those preferences in subtle ways

through both curriculum decisions and teacher talk in class and students picked up on those

transmissions. In Neimi and Neimi's (2007) study, although five out of the six teacher

participants believed educators "should keep their political opinions out of the classroom," they

all still directly commented on political personalities and policies to students on multiple

occasions during the course of the study.

Teachers who adopt an openly committed stance in the classroom must still grapple with

when and how to disclosure their personal opinions on political and/or controversial issues in the

classroom. Journell (2011a) questioned whether we, as a field, should encourage teacher

disclosure knowing that some teachers may espouse intolerant positions. In those instances, the

concern is that some students may neither be able to recognize their teacher's bias nor be able to

flag the ways in which the teacher's opinion might be perpetuating stereotypes or supporting

systemic inequity. Given this particular concern, advocating the professed neutrality of an

exposing lightly approach may seem an effective safeguard to prevent teachers from problematic

proselytizing. However, it is important to remember that teachers using the exposing lightly

approach keep bias and personal opinion behind a curtain. It is still there, but may not be as

immediately recognizable as such by students or parents. The transparency of an angling

approach may be preferable when it comes to helping our students develop the ability to discuss

and deliberate on political or controversial issues. When a teacher makes their own position

known to students in a more direct manner, those students may be able to better identify and

engage with that position then when it is hidden behind a veil of neutrality. Even when a

teacher's position is problematic, it is not clear that students will simply accept that teacher's

position as correct. Commenting on teachers in their study who chose to disclose their positions

on issues, McAvoy and Hess (2013) "did not find that students were adopting their teachers'

views" (p. 41).

It would be inappropriate for me to only analyze Audrey's tendency toward exposing

lightly as just a matter of theory when it is also a matter of context. Audrey conveyed to me

again and again how the politics of her school community are a major motivating factor in how

she chooses to approach the topics of this study. She uses the strategies associated with exposing

lightly to teach women's history and gender in ways that avoid alienating students or upsetting

parents. McAvoy and Hess (2013) advocated thinking of teacher disclosure as a "pedagogical

tool" that can be deployed by educators as needed to support student learning (p. 42). Thought of

in this way, Audrey may have reason to believe that using this tool or other tools more closely

aligned with an angling approach would undermine rather than support student learning in her

classroom context. Furthermore, the official standards, pacing, and assessments for Audrey's

courses may not support the best practices for deliberation and discussions of open policy

questions outlined by McAvoy & Hess (2013). Without those structural supports in place,

finding the time to properly prepare students to deeply (and appropriately) engage in discussions

can be challenging. In the following quote, Audrey explains how those structures already affect

her ability to teach digital literacy and have discussions:

> I don't really like being the holder of the information. I don't necessarily like being the
>
> filter, and ideally I would want my students to find what they need to find their point, but
>
> in the grand scheme of my eight months of teaching, and it's only seven until the test, and
>
> it's you know, four different writing assessments, blah, blah, blah, you know, the litany
>
> of teacher things, just – it's easier for me to give them the resources and then have a

structured discussion. And it's not that I'm afraid necessarily. I think it's a great

experience for them to find stuff, but then the discussion they have is so disjointed it's

not valuable, and whoever brought in that ridiculous statistic I then have to school and

say, "Alright, your sample size was three, and you don't have a source, and blah, blah,

blah," and then it's just not – I didn't achieve my educational goal that day.

Audrey's profile raises important questions about how educators frame content on

women's history, gender, and feminism. When do we, as educators, frame those topics as

controversial and introduce them as issues open to discussion and deliberation? When do we

present them as closed issues or as historical fact not up for interpretation? When is it appropriate

to present facts on "both sides" or multiple perspectives and when is it misleading or

counterproductive? When does withholding our opinion serve our educational aims regarding the

topics of this study and when does it undermine them? When answering those questions we must

consider our vision for gender equity in social studies education and our individual contexts.

After reviewing her teacher profile and the accompanying analysis section, Audrey

affirmed that her experiences were "well-represented," but also reinforced how crucial

"consistent reflection" and the ongoing "integration of new materials" is to her as a professional.

She wrote, "I'm constantly trying to make things better/clearer for my students (and probably

most teachers are)…As they say, do the best you can until you know better, then when you know

better, do better."

In the next section, I introduce Lisa, another teacher who tended toward exposing lightly.

In her profile I explore how teachers consider their personal identity in relation to teaching about

the topics of this study.

Teacher Profile #5: Lisa

Teacher Consideration: Am I the right person to teach this?

Lisa is a 6th grade social studies teacher at Gibbons Middle School (GMS) in Dodson County. She has 26 years of teaching experience and self-identifies as a white woman. She primarily teaches U.S. History to 1865 at GMS, a course that no longer has an SOL test in Virginia. Lisa mentions struggling somewhat with the project-based learning initiative that supplanted the SOL test: "I personally find it very difficult, and it's hard to find something that meshes with what you're teaching, at least for what I teach."

GMS is a mid-sized, predominantly white middle school located in a suburban area. When asked about GMS, Lisa notes that her school community feels "supportive" but also adds that parent communication has waned somewhat in recent years. When asked about the political leaning of her school community, Lisa responds with: "My gut wants to say conservative, but I feel like we're kind of moving more towards the middle." She adds that she does not think the politics of her school community affects her ability to teach about women's history. When asked about her own political leaning, Lisa shares that she "tr[ies] not to get into the politics of things too much, but I would describe myself as moderately conservative/moderately Republican."

Within this context, Lisa tends toward an exposing lightly approach to women's history. In her first-round interview, I coded eight instances of exposing lightly, four instances of avoiding, and two instances of angling. While Lisa had more years of experience than the other teachers in this research project, she did not always frame her years of experience as an advantage when it came to teaching about women and gender. She was not alone in considering *how identity can affect authority* when handling the topics of this study in a classroom setting**.**

While Lisa focused on identity relating to her age, other teachers focused on identity relating to their race and gender.

At the end of our first-round interview, I invited Lisa to share any initial reactions she had in response to reading Kelly's summary construct. Part of Kelly's construct focused on how students might react to a more gender-equitable social studies curriculum. This prompted Lisa to reflect on how teachers might react:

> They say here "Some students may struggle with such a big shift in the curricula," but I thought some teachers might struggle depending on the age of the teacher. I could definitely see that. Because – And it wouldn't necessarily be purposefully, but I think depending on your age and the time period that you were raised and the type of family you came from, you are just innately – You think a certain way, and it's almost like you have to – It's really hard to think outside of that. Like you know, you may think that it's okay for women to not be allowed to do certain things, or because you were raised in a more traditional – with a more traditional upbringing or – so I think that some teachers might also find it challenging.

In this quote, Lisa raises the point that a teacher's unique set of beliefs and experiences may sometimes breed resistance to some feminist goals regarding education. Teachers with a more "traditional" background may bristle at content that advocates a more progressive view of women's role in society. Teachers' curriculum decisions are, in part, influenced by who they are, which includes their identities. Because of this, it is important to explore how teacher identity is entangled with the work of gender equity and curriculum. I focus in this profile on how teachers in this study brought up their identity in relation to whether or how they feel authority regarding preparing and teaching the topics of this study.

Lisa expressed that her sense of authority over how to work toward gender equity in her

practice was waning in relation to her years of experience as a teacher:

I sometimes feel like because I've been teaching a certain amount of time, I'm starting to

see that – I'm starting to feel that more, because I'm getting close to the end of my career,

and education has changed a lot, and sometimes I feel like I almost need training to help

me to see all of my students the same. And that doesn't sound very good, but – Do you

know what I mean? Like – or to just be aware of those internal biases that I might have

or…because I know that I sometimes probably do things or say things a certain way, not

intentionally, I just – I'm doing it because it's part of who I am, and it's all I know. So

that frustrates me and concerns me sometimes, because I know that I don't see it, but if

my students do, or if I'm making my girl population feel a certain way that isn't positive,

like I would never want that. I would never do that intentionally, but I do think that those

internal biases or whatever are there in all of us and whether it's related to gender, or

race, or religion, I don't know. It's kind of scary…It's a very reflective moment for me if

I am in a situation that calls upon me to realize, you know, did you really realize what

you're thinking or how that might be interpreted, or did you not see that the way that that

person – what that person really meant or how what you said could be interpreted a

different way or a negative way or – ? Those times make me step back and think like

"Wow, you know, what have I said in my classroom or in conversation with colleagues?"

Reflecting on the influence of generational ideas and experiences, Lisa suggests a disconnect

between how she is currently practicing gender equity in her classroom and how she should be

practicing gender equity. Because gender-equity is a moving target in education, it requires

educators to be life-long learners. As Lisa identifies, one focus of that learning should be

exploring ourselves. Educators can engage in internal work in order to uncover and unpack their internal biases, but may not know how to go about that work without some support or guidance.

Where Lisa considered how her age influenced her sense of authority over gender-equity work, other teachers in this study considered how their race and gender influenced their sense of authority. I found that teachers typically expressed a sense of *confidence*, *caution*, or *concern* in regards to how certain facets of their identity impacted their ability to handle certain topics. When confident, teachers felt some facet of their identity afforded them a higher degree of authority over teaching certain topics. They indicated a willingness to try things out without as much (if any) concern for taking a curricular or instructional misstep. When cautious, teachers felt some facet of their identity did not afford them authority over teaching certain topics and were, therefore, uncertain about how to approach or handle those topics. Ultimately, they felt an obligation to try things out even if that meant potentially failing to teach a topics in the "right" way. When concerned, teachers felt similarly to cautious teachers in that they were lacking in authority based on some facet of their identity. Where they differed from cautious teachers was in how they reacted to that perceived lack of authority. Rather than pushing through their uncertainty, concerned teachers typically self-censored in some way to avoid conflict or the potential for irresponsibly handling content.

In the following excerpt, Mary expresses how, as a white woman, she felt confident teaching about the histories of white women:

As a white woman, when I approach something that has to do with white women, I'm like "Let's go." I don't feel like I'm under a microscope. I feel like it's like my time to say –what responsibly from a perspective of a white woman what I think of this situation.

Not what I think, but to provide them sources that I don't feel are inappropriate, because I

feel like I know what would offend or be irresponsible because I am a white woman.

She did not express the same confidence when teaching about the histories of people of color in a

school with a majority African-American student body:

I've noticed like with a lot of the like culturally relevant things that I try to teach them

that are relevant to their race I'm – Like I'm taking like probably a few more steps to be

like am I – What angle am I teaching this from? Is it appropriate for me to be the teacher

of this? Am I giving them enough positive examples and the reality of the situation at the

same time?

Interestingly, when considering content relating to women of color, Mary appears to feel more

confident than cautious:

When it comes to women…I don't feel none of those pauses come up for me, because I

know what's going on. You know, I'm like I know exactly what this is. I can be quick to,

like I was telling you, quick to be like, "No, I'm pretty sure Sacagawea probably ran that

thing," because I just know how that works, you know?

In response to reading Mary's summary construct relating to the above excerpts, Kelly, a white

woman teaching in a racially-diverse school, reveals a similar sense of confidence when talking

about "gender issues" more generally and either caution or concern when covering content on

people of color:

I think about this all the time. I mean, just you know, talking about people of color. I'm

always remembering that, you know, I do not have that perspective. I can't have that

same perspective or that same understanding … I think as a female I feel much more

comfortable talking about gender issues, because I know at the end of the day that, you

know, as a female I – you know, this is very important to me, and I've had to deal with certain issues like this.

Evan, a white male teaching in a school with a majority African-American student body, wondered whether he was the right person to teach his students "the American story from the African-American perspective." However, at the end of that thought, he added: "But also I'm a history teacher, so let's go!" Where he might have been feeling a lack of authority in relation to his race and gender, he drew a sense of authority from his professional identity to teach the African-American perspective.

Given their own racial identity as white, Mary, Kelly, and Evan all expressed feeling cautious, rather than confident, when teaching content about people of color or women of color, more specifically. While they did not indicate that their racial identities prevented them from covering that content, it did give them more "pauses" or make them feel less "comfortable" than content that either aligned with their own racial identity or talked about gender more generally. For Mary and Evan, feeling cautious leads to increased curriculum questioning. Such questioning has the potential to support teachers in preparing respectful and nuanced curriculum materials, such as Mary's "Am I giving them enough positive examples and the reality of the situation at the same time?" Some questions, however, may not be as productive. Considering that the teaching landscape is still largely dominated by white women and men, I wonder whether Mary's "Is it appropriate for me to be the teacher of this?" or Evan's "Am I the one to do that?" are going to support or hinder teachers wanting to teach a more equitable social studies curriculum. If educators answer in the negative to those inquiries, they may be maintaining the marginalization of race- or gender-related content and undermining our ability to be allies in the work toward equity in social studies education.

Teachers who expressed a sense of concern, rather than confidence or caution, felt the need to censor themselves in how they taught certain content based on some aspect of their identity. Both Sara, a teacher I introduce in the next part of this chapter, and Mary indicated that their school communities were a factor in their decision to self-censor at times. Sara told me she "think[s] that teachers do censor how and what they teach based on who they are." While Sara did express that the gender identity of a teacher does, in part, dictate what they can "get away with saying," she struggled to think of an example relating to gender. Instead, she shared how her religious identity as a Muslim impacted how she teaches about 9/11:

> So [students] do know that I'm Muslim, and talking about 9/11, I mean, they are on their toes waiting to hear what you will say. And personally I feel like anything I say can be taken wrong just because of who it's coming from, that I stick to the curriculum and I do not go outside of that….Because of who you are as a teacher, you kind of tend to teach certain things differently.

Given her religious identity, Sara's discomfort with teaching about an event that created a massive wave of Islamophobia in the United States is understandable. She self-censors here in the sense that she does not stray from the official curriculum. What gets shared in a classroom context can depend on a myriad of factors. Ellsworth (1989) reflected that "what they/we say, to whom, in what context, depending on the energy they/we have for the struggle on a particular day, is the result of conscious and unconscious assessments of the power relations and safety of the situation" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 313).

Mary too felt concern over religious identity at her school, but it was not her own religion she was worried about but, rather, that of many of her students:

A lot of my students are very exclusively homophobic, and so for the first time in my life

I feel like I'm in this like huge contradiction because I'm not homophobic, but … then

also my kids are like constantly like "That's gay" or "That's fruity," and I'm not

correcting them because I don't understand their like Southern Baptist home where that's

truly not allowed, but…There's going to be a – just statistically, there's a percentage of

[students] who are most likely homosexual and not saying anything. And so I think about

that a lot.

Mary chooses not to correct her students' homophobic remarks for fear of not fully

understanding her students' religious identities.

In "What Are We Seeking to Sustain Through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy? A Loving

Critique Forward," Paris and Alim (2014) ask the question "what happens when, rather than

challenging hegemonic ideas and outcomes, the cultural practices of youth of color actually

reproduce them, or even create new ones" (p. 92)? Ideally, teachers would feel comfortable

disrupting regressive cultural practices. So, why is that sometimes not the case? One possible

answer may lie in how we talk about culturally relevant pedagogy and other asset-focused

pedagogies. Paris and Alim (2014) identify how the discourse surrounding those pedagogies

typically emphasize seeing "youth cultures through a purely positive or progressive lens" (p. 92).

For teachers engaging with asset-focused pedagogies, identifying and addressing regressive

behavior from youth of color may feel too close to the deficit-style thinking they are trying to

detach from in their practice. It may be worth reinforcing in asset-focused pedagogical work with

teachers that deficit-thinking and critiquing or correcting regressive behavior are not one and the

same. Paris and Alim (2014) advocate for a Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy that "work[s] with

students to critique regressive practices (e.g., homophobia, misogyny, racism) and raise critical consciousness" (p. 92).

Age, gender, race, and religion are just a handful of the different facets that make up our unique identities as educators and the unique identities represented in our school communities. Those comments shared by Lisa and the other teachers in this section on how their identities impact their authority over certain content give us a window into some of the challenges and opportunities facing educators wanting to engage in this work. Some of those challenges may be able to be overcome through sustained inner work designed to confront our own gendered and cultural beliefs and values. When Lisa and the other teachers in this study raise concerns relating to their identities, they are assessing a potential risk in doing this work. Namely, they are wondering whether they will do more harm than good in teaching certain topics if they cannot know or understand those topics based on their own background and experiences. Seixas (2000) in considering the influence of postmodernism on history education, posed a crucial question relevant to the process of self-assessment: "There is something salutary – even scientific – about questioning foundations, examining assumptions, and doubting authority. The question is how much is enough" (p. 27).

It may be worthwhile to reflect on where we, as educators, gain our sense of authority on social studies topics. Some teachers may draw on a wealth of experience based on their identity while others may draw from professional or moral authority. Cultivating multiple spaces from which to draw a sense of authority may be key for sustaining equity work across the boundaries of what educators claim as their own identity. It is also worthwhile to consider whether it is even helpful to think of ourselves as needing to be authorities at all. It may be preferable to approach content with a sense of curiosity alongside our students.

Part III: Avoiding

In this section, I present and discuss two teacher profiles: Sara and Chris. Sara's profile is focused on illustrating the avoiding approach and is immediately followed by a discussion of that approach. Chris' profile is focused on a teacher consideration that affected how teachers understood this work. In particular, Chris' profile explores the idea of what should count when it comes to gender equity work. I discuss the implication of that teacher consideration throughout Chris' profile.

Teacher Profile #6: Sara

The Avoiding Approach

Sara is a 11th grade social studies teacher at Hamilton High School (HHS) in Dodson County. She has seven years of teaching experience and self-identifies as a white woman. HHS is a large, racially-diverse school located in a suburban and rural area. Around 40% of the student population at HHS identifies as white, 30% as African-American, and 20% as Hispanic. 5% as two or more races, and 5% Asian. When asked about her school, Sara notes that the diversity is her "favorite part of it" and its size is her "least favorite part of it." She explains, "I constantly feel like we're short staffed because it's such a large school. You never feel like you have enough eyes or bodies around those kids." Sara characterizes the political leanings of her school community as "very divided," which she describes as having a direct impact on how she chooses to teach or not teach certain topics:

> So even though it's not conservative, maybe overall, it is very divided, and any kind of controversial topics like that, if you're completely honest with the topics, it's almost like putting the kids against each other and creating even more division.

When asked about her own political leanings, Sara describes herself as "a moderate Democrat who always votes for a Democrat."

At HHS, Sara primarily teaches VA and US History, an SOL-tested course. As an educator, she describes herself as "very structured in everything [she] do[es]." She explains that her structure is a benefit to her teaching for two main reasons. First, it helps her connect with her students because "most of them need structure." Second, it helps her "cover a lot," meaning she makes sure to get through the whole standardized curriculum. While she does not consider herself to be "a pro-SOL type of person," Sara does appreciate that the SOLs "force[] people in a way to get through the curriculum" and "hold teachers somewhat accountable."

Within this context, Sara tends to stick closely to the standardized curriculum, moving between avoiding and exposing lightly approaches to women's history. In her first-round interview, I coded nine instances of "avoiding," eight instances of "exposing lightly," and zero instances of "angling." Early on in our interview, when asked about why she felt it is important to include more women's history or gender-related topics in the curriculum, Sara explained that sometimes she unintentionally avoids these topics:

Sara: Well, to be honest with you – (laughs)

Kim: Please do. (laughs)

Sara: You know, it's funny. I've never really – I know this sounds sad, but I've really not thought about it until I got in touch with you and the gender in US history came about. I feel like I was so more focused on minorities being represented, and not just doing one civil rights unit at the end and that kind of be it, or one slavery unit and that be it, but

instead of trying to kind of incorporate it into every unit that I did not realize how not

focused on women I am…

Kim: Maybe this is an opportunity to kind of dig into this topic a little bit more.

Sara: Well, I did kind of think about the fact now – it might be a little too stressful to do it

towards the end of the year, but for next year, and especially with the SOLs kind of going

away, it'll give me more freedom on what to incorporate and what not, and I do think it

would be important, but I did not realize how little we focused on it until this came up.

Kim: So just to summarize a little bit of what you're just saying, like you've had a focus

already on minorities and talking about race in the classroom.

Sara: Mhm.

Kim: But that just hasn't translated to talking about gender yet.

Sara: Not as much as I would have liked it. And did not even realize that it was that little

actually.

At the end of our interview, when asked if there was anything she would like to add to our

conversation, Sara reiterated to the above realization:

Like I said, I did not realize how little we cover that topic until I looked into it and tried

to find lessons, and when I looked, what I could find I was like, "God, this is not good

enough." You know, you don't realize that it's not good enough, because like I said, I

didn't put thought into it. Always put thought into minorities as in racial minorities, but

not gender.

Sara is not alone in expressing more of a focus on race in her practice. Chris, a teacher

introduced in the next section, made a similar assertion.

When she does cover women's history in her practice, Sara tends to follow the lead of the

state curriculum. In response to a question about her experience locating and selecting materials

focused on women's history, Sara admits, "I really didn't do too many searches because of the

curriculum not having too many women-related topics." In the following excerpt, Sara reflects

on the extent to which the state curriculum includes women's history:

Sara: Well, today we discussed World War II on the home front, and I spoke specifically

about women, and then I realized that's probably the most that the curriculum requires

me to cover –

Kim: The World War II on the home front?

Sara: Yes. That's about it. Everything else is – All of this [*referring to the lesson she

brought*] is what I kind of do, because the kids do enjoy it, but it's not necessarily

required to spend more time on this than just mentioning it.

One of the women's history activities that Sara shared with me from her practice focuses

on women in the 1920s. She has her students watch a video entitled "To Live in the 20s,"

prompting them to "write down as many differences as they can notice from what we have

learned about women before and from what they see in the video." Then, she facilitates a class

discussion around the students' observations. This suggests that when Sara does cover women's history in her class, she might tend toward an exposing lightly approach. The technique she utilizes in this description follows a similar pattern to curating facts and letting students decide, an exposing lightly technique used by Audrey. In the following excerpt, Sara describes a part of the activity that she sometimes gets to implement, depending on time:

> Sara: I would love to add on there their personal view on things. Do you think that we're moving in the right direction with the development of women? Just to kind of get them thinking about that, because I know they notice the bathing suits in the video.

> Kim: Oh, yeah. (laughs)

> Sara: Like "Oh my God, what would they think about us today?" And so it would be kind of cool for them to express that in writing, I think, if we had more time, but I don't – You know, unless I leave something out, I probably wouldn't have it, because all my lessons are extremely packed.

> Kim: …So you do a little bit of that like past/ present connection there at the end if time permits?

> Sara: Mhm. if time permits. I try to at least cover the '20s, how things were in the '20s. The women, how they lived in the '20s, but most classes get to that, too.

Kim: Can you talk a little bit about why, like with that last sentence there and then what

you said about prompting them to think about if we're moving in the right direction, can

you talk about why, specifically highlighting those things would be important in a lesson

like that.

Sara: Just to kind of get them thinking about the present. Do women have equal rights

today? Are we moving towards equal rights? Does the – Even with today's lesson, with

the government promoting women working in factories, well, how are we doing that

now? Promoting women doing man jobs, and just kind of getting the kids, giving a kind

of a brief little, see what they think. Because you would not believe how much stuff they

come up with that I did not think about until I read it from them. It's like "Oh, wow."

Kim: Yeah. It's so great getting their reflections on things.

Sara: It is. Yes. Because they have things that have either seen someone experience it or

have heard of it that I haven't, and then reading about it, it's just like, "Wow. I did not

think about that (laughs) that way, so –"

Analysis of Sara's Avoiding Approach

It is clear from the above excerpts that institutional pressures, such as state standards and

expected curriculum pacing, heavily influence when and how Sara feels she can approach

women's history. In order to explore how those pressures interact with Sara's sense of agency as

a curriculum gatekeeper, I turn to Bernstein's (1996/2000) pedagogic device. As outlined in

Chapter Two, the pedagogic device helps conceptualize how school knowledges and practices

are made possible and negotiated within and across social fields. Bernstein (1996/2000) divided

social fields into three broad categories: fields of production, recontextualization, and

reproduction. Those who exert control over the *fields of production* make certain knowledges

available to communities while also attempting to delegitimize others. Those who exert control

over the *fields of recontextualization* work to transform available knowledges for educational

environments. Finally, those who control the *fields of reproduction* regulate how knowledges are

communicated and evaluated on the classroom level. In this analysis, I focus on how Sara both

experiences and affects the pedagogic device as a teacher who tends toward avoiding women's

history, gender, and feminism in her curriculum and instructional practices.

Together, those operating within the fields of production and recontextualization make

certain discourses more or less available in educational spaces. Sara's interview gives some

insights into what discourses are and are not making it through to those spaces. Sara revealed

early on in our interview that she had "really not thought about [gender]" in her practice and that

she "did not realize how little we cover [gender]." In the analysis of Mary's profile, I suggested

that the lack of discourse about critical feminist theory and practices in social studies education

as a whole makes it challenging for educators to incorporate those ideas and practices into their

teaching. Sara's profile demonstrates that there is still a more general lack of discourse about

gender in social studies education with which to contend. As discussed in Chapter 2, the

literature on gender and social studies curriculum materials continues to show that women are

underrepresented or misrepresented and that gender and feminism are concepts that are rarely

discussed, especially not in a way that explore current gender inequities. Furthermore, a review

of recent scholarship in social studies education, found that research attending to gender

"continues to reside on the edges" of this field (Bohan, 2017, p. 228). In order to make

discourses about gender more available to teachers such as Sara, those operating within the field of social studies education must take up the work of not only bringing those topics from the margins to the center of curriculum materials and research, but also handling those topics in a way that supports critical feminism. The work of gender equity cannot get done unless social studies teachers are thinking about the topics of this study and realizing all the different ways these topics can be incorporated into their practice.

While gender did not seem to be an available discourse for Sara in her teaching practice, the same was not true for race. She asserted that she "always put thought into minorities as in racial minorities" and was "more focused on minorities being represented." Chris, another social studies teacher in this study, made a similar claim, stating "I think it was easier for me to do it with race. Like there's just because maybe there's more resources or just like stuff that I've read have made me more thoughtful about it." Alex, a high school social studies teacher in Stevens' (2016) dissertation study of feminist teachers, also made a comparable assertion: "I often go to race because that is what is comfortable for me" (p. 120). While it is impossible for me to say why those teachers were more focused on or comfortable with teaching about race, it is important to unpack the sharp distinction between race and gender implied by their statements. Critical race theorists stress the importance of understanding and utilizing the concepts of "intersectionality" and "essentialism" to make sense of how race interacts with other identity categories, such as gender, sexuality, class, and ability. By naming race as more of a "focus" or "easier" or more "comfortable" than gender, Sara, Chris, and Alex may be revealing how existing discourses in social studies education are de-emphasizing how race and gender intersect. Stevens (2016) noted how "Alex's passions for race translated nicely to gender-equitable

practices" (p. 120). In the next section, I explore how lessons Chris associated with race also support the project of gender equity.

Those within the fields of reproduction (Bernstein, 1996/2000) are operating at the classroom level communicating and evaluating knowledges. As stated in Chapter 2, those fields are where the bulk of teacher discourse is located (particularly in our current educational landscape). In her interview, Sara mentioned several institutional pressures influencing her sense of agency regarding what she feels she can communicate to her students on the topics of this study. In particular, Sara discussed how official curriculum standards and pacing expectations direct her to mostly avoid those topics. She noted that "it's not necessarily required to spend more time on [women's history] than just mentioning it," referring to the official state curriculum. "Because of the curriculum not having too many women-related topics," Sara does not typically search for women's history curriculum materials to incorporate into her practice. Sara also mentioned a lack of time overall for incorporating more content on women's history. What is required of her in the official curriculum makes for a fast-paced and "extremely packed" year of historical content. When discussing how she might add to women's history lessons, Sara used qualifiers such as "if time permits" or "if we had more time." Kelly's profile in Part I featured a similar discussion of the role of state standards and pacing in directing teachers on these topics. There is enough evidence about the lack of attention to women's history, gender, and feminism in official state curriculum documents to know that teachers strictly following the lead of the state standards, will likely find themselves seldom teaching those topics in nuanced or substantive ways.

With a lack of official curriculum structures that support gender equity in education, the work of individual teachers is even more important in moving us closer to an inclusive and

equitable history education. As Engebretson (2018) put it, "if the textbooks and standards present a male-dominated version of history…then teachers need to be intentional about including females and their experiences in order to counteract the limited story told by the textbooks and standards" (p. 122). Sara's interview suggested to me that she largely tended toward the avoiding approach unintentionally. She followed official state documents and recommendations, which mostly led her away from women's history content. One way we can encourage the intentionality that Engebretson (2018) called for is by contributing more critical feminist narratives in social studies education that help educators think beyond the status quo regarding how to teach women's history, gender, and feminism.

Teacher Profile #7: Chris

Teacher Consideration: What does gender equity work look like?

Chris is an 11th grade, VA and US History teacher at Mason High School (MHS) in Elizabeth City Public Schools (ECPS). He has six years of teaching experience and self-identifies as a white male. MHS is a large, majority African-American school located in a near-urban area of Elizabeth City. When asked about the political-leaning of his school community, Chris guesses that probably "98% of people's parents vote for a democrat in political elections," but he also adds that there is a noticeable amount of "social conservatism" in the community. He feels that the social conservatism likely has an impact on how he has "conversations about race and gender and sex and those things." He explains that he tries to "take [community values] into account more explicitly when [having] those conversations" and reminds himself that "here are where my students are coming from" if they say something surprisingly conservative or regressive.

Within this context, Chris states that he struggles to teach women's history, gender, and feminism up to his own standards. Although I coded five instances of angling, two instances of exposing lightly, and 2 instances of avoiding in his first-round interview, I also found that Chris insisted that he was not successfully engaging with women's history, gender, or feminism in his practice. Early on in our interview, when asked about his interest in the topics of this study, he said "I don't do a very good job with it." Despite expressing disappointment regarding his ability to teach those topics, Chris' curriculum and instructional descriptions often aligned with critical race and/or critical feminist theory and practice. While I considered including Chris' profile in "Part I: Angling," I ultimately made the decision to include this profile in "Part III: Avoiding" to better reflect how Chris saw his own practice in relation to these topics.

Chris' critiques of his own curriculum and instructional practices during our interview suggest that he is considering *what counts as teaching about women's history, gender, and feminism.* He sometimes makes comparisons between how he teaches about race and gender in order to articulate what he feels he could be doing better regarding gender. In the following excerpt, Chris shares how he discusses the concept of "hierarchy" in his classes:

> Chris: We spend a long time recognizing like trying to think "What is hierarchy?" and what – like trying to visualize some kind of gender hierarchy where heteronormative people are at the top and then maybe like more gender fluid people are at the bottom, and when – again, I don't do any kind of like historical contextualization of the development of that hierarchy though, because I know so much less about it. And so it's like where I can talk about how those little clubs came to be known – like the racial clubs, like race is just invented, and this word "white" is just like a group that was – and then I can do a better job talking about these – the development of those little groups that had become –

that we call like racial groups, and how if you're getting into one club you get these

perks, and you don't get them if you're not in the group, and we talk about how that's the

same with gender, but I don't do any kind of like historical – again, like I don't – because

I don't know –

Kim: So, when it comes to like bringing the content in, it usually comes in more with

race, is that –?

Chris: Yeah. Right.

Critical feminist practices encourage teaching about systems of inequity, including

hierarchical systems focused on race. Although Chris indicates that he is discussing those

systems with his students, he also feels he is falling short when it comes to discussing gender

hierarchies. Specifically, he feels more capable of bringing in historical content that

contextualizes how racial hierarchies are constructed. He knows that similar hierarchies exist

with regard to gender in VA and US History and, while he makes mention of that to his students,

he does not feel similarly capable of contextualizing those gender hierarchies.

Chris makes a similar distinction between how he discusses the social constructs of race

and gender in his class:

Chris: I've, for the last three years, been spending a lot of time, like "How can I help

students understand the socialized nature of race?" and then in efforts to do that,

recognizing that gender is a social construction and that there's value in talking about that

in pretty similar ways or some ways that are parallel, you know? Talking about race has

made me more interested in – yeah, right? Like if students can recognize these boxes…it

just seems like there's a chance for us to see each other as individuals more when we

have those recognitions or something, so I think that's generally my interest.

Kim: Okay. So it sort of started out thinking about race in the curriculum, and then kind

of linking that to the concept of gender?

Chris: Mhm. Yeah. And I think it was easier for me to do it with race. Like there's just

because maybe there's more resources or just stuff that I've read have made me more

thoughtful about it, but also just there's more – it was easier for me to find room in the

curriculum to fit that in, and I haven't really done that. There's specific mentions of like

women's contributions, but I think when it's phrased like that it's these little just

addendums to what actually is American history or something, and it just further alienates

women and – I don't know.

At the start of this quote, Chris invokes another practice of critical feminist teaching: promoting

social change. He wants his students to be able to "recognize [socially constructed] boxes" so

that they can connect more with others as individuals. Chris also makes a distinction here

between how he feels he is able to speak about the social constructed "boxes" relating to race

versus gender. He offers three possible explanations for thinking it was "easier" to do with race:

1) he has more resources relating to race, 2) he has more background knowledge relating to race,

and 3) it is easier to "find room" in the standardized curriculum to teach content relating to race.

In the previous section, I analyzed the implications of creating sharp distinctions between

gender and race in social studies teaching. I pointed out the need for social studies educators to

spend time thinking about the intersections of race and gender and other identity categories,

especially in terms of the ways identities interact with systems of oppression. What becomes

clear through Chris' profile is the additional need to continue tying together the work of creating

gender equity with the work of creating equity for all in social studies education. When

educators, such as Chris, take time to investigate with students how race and racism operate to

create division and oppress people, they are doing work that advances all genders. Framing this

point in terms of the broader feminist movement, Arruza, Bhattacharya, and Fraser (2019)

declare that "projecting feminism as a 'stand-alone' movement, it associates us with policies that

harm the majority and cuts us off from struggles that oppose those policies" (p. 12).

Critical feminism offers a helpful framework for seeing those equity projects as

interrelated in the field of social studies. When I asked Chris if he identifies as a feminist, he

considers the question carefully before answering:

> I don't really know. I think I'm just not – I'm pretty uninformed about what feminism
>
> means right now and recognize that there have been like lots of different and nuanced
>
> conceptions of what feminism means and just don't feel confident in if I say I am a
>
> feminist what you'll hear, and don't really – Yeah, so I just don't know what – I think
>
> that word, if I use it, and it's not a part of like a really long conversation with somebody
>
> else that I'm having, I don't know how anybody – what anybody else is going to think
>
> when I say "I'm a feminist," if I were to say "I'm a feminist." I don't know. So no, I
>
> don't say it.

Chris' response reminded me of bell hook's (1984) discussion of the feminist identity in

Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center:

> I have found that saying "I am a feminist" usually means I am plugged into preconceived
>
> notions of identity, role, or behavior. When I say, "I advocate feminism," the response is

usually, "What is feminism?" A phrase like "I advocate" does not imply the kind of absolutism that is suggested by "I am" (p. 31).

When seen primarily as an identity, the phrase "I am a feminist" becomes about projecting an image or being perceived a certain way. In his statement, Chris indicates he is both worried about what I will hear and "what anybody else is going to think" if he claims "I am a feminist." It is well known that the term "feminist" can bring to mind a variety of stereotypes. Earlier studies on gender and social studies education have documented some of the different ways students and teachers perceived the term feminist in both progressive and regressive ways (Colley, 2019; Levstik and Groth, 2002; Scheiner-Fisher, 2013).

It is important to note that it is not clear from Chris' statements about feminism that he perceives the feminist identity negatively. By stating "I'm pretty uninformed about what feminism means right now," Chris is signaling that he feels generally outside current feminist conversations. In other words, Chris' response suggested to me that he did not feel ready to answer my question without first engaging more deeply with feminism on his own or with "somebody else." Building up the discourse on feminism in social studies education and how it can be used for and advocated for in a classroom context may mean working to overcome misconceptions commonly associated with the feminist identity and helping both teachers and students understand feminism as a movement more than an identity. As a movement, feminism is about exposing and opposing systems of inequity.

My interviews with Chris highlighted that teachers in this study have different conceptions of what counts as gender equity work. Chris articulates his conception of this work by articulating what he feels he is falling short on in his current practice. He wants to feel more comfortable discussing how sexuality and gender-specific concepts and categories, such as

"heteronormative" and "gender fluid," are constructed by societies and how people within those categories differently experience power and privilege. While I support his goal, I also see Chris' work with race as integral to gender equity. Critical feminism offers a framework whereby we as educators can better see how all equity work is interconnected. Because gender and sexism do not operate in isolation of other identities and systems of inequity, we must teach those connections. While it may be possible to teach those connections without exposure to a critical feminist framework, such a framework can be a powerful resource for teachers doing this work.

When teachers in this study consider what this work looks like, they are also assessing the extent to which they are willing to unsettle their current practice. Like many of the other teachers in this study, Chris articulates a disconnect between what he is doing and what he feels like he should be doing. This disconnect has the potential to lead to change. He might seek out more resources relating to gender or more opportunities in the official curriculum to teach content relating to gender. Feminism can be a catalyst for and an accelerant during such change. If Chris associates feminism with an identity that he is not-yet-ready to claim, he may be shutting himself off from resources that can support him in achieving his vision for gender equity in his practice.

As part of his member check of this profile, Chris reaffirmed my interpretations of his original statements about feminism, but also added the following reflection:

> I was/am hesitant to say, "I'm a feminist," because I know my actions often fail to align with the moral and ethical values that I think feminism stands for. I'd be more comfortable saying, "I'm an aspiring feminist," to better represent my desire, attempts, and failure to align myself with anti-racist, anti-colonial, anti-heteronormative ideologies. (personal communication, April 3, 2020)

In this reflection, Chris clarifies that he is striving toward a feminist identity and identifies some of those values with which he wants to better align. This statement reflects how building a practice that promotes equity and justice is generally not a linear experience as it can involve trying and failing at times.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I began this research looking to be in conversation with teachers about how to do the work of gender equity. I assumed other educators might have the answers I lacked as a middle school social studies teacher trying to figure it out. After connecting with the participants in this study, I understood that they too were searching for answers. At the end of our first interview, I asked Audrey if there is anything else she would like to add to our conversation. In response, she said:

> I just really would like to say that it's ongoing, and that some lessons are better than others, and some years are better than others, and I really feel like most educators – myself included, are really trying to incorporate these things. We're just sort of flummoxed by how to do it.

This statement resonated with me and my own experiences in the classroom and mirrored some of the frustration I heard from the other teachers. The themes that emerged from this study similarly reflect how this work is ongoing and imperfect. I am grateful to the teachers of this study for sharing their practice and reflecting on those things that continue to flummox us as educators committed to gender equity in social studies education but sometimes unsure about how to proceed in doing that work at the classroom level. In this final chapter, I return to my final two research questions to summarize findings and explore the implications of those findings.

The Three Approaches

My first research question, "How do secondary social studies teachers describe their approach to women's history, gender, and feminism in their curriculum and instructional practices?," helped me examine what strategies teachers utilized in order to teach those topics

and how they understood the nature of this work. Three different approaches emerged from the

data, each reflecting different strategies and understandings: *angling*, *exposing lightly*, and

avoiding. When angling, teachers in this study discussed delivering clear and direct messages to

their students about women, gender, or feminism through their curriculum and instructional

choices. They acknowledged their bias (or angle) and did not see it as a problem. When exposing

lightly, teachers discussed their attempts to hide their bias or personal opinions, seeing them as

either hindering student learning or unproductive to maintaining relationships in their school

community. They discussed delivering content on the topics of this study in a way that avoided

or reduced the potential for controversy and was generally in line with the expectations of the

official curriculum. When avoiding, teachers discussed the ways in which they are not teaching

about women's history, gender, or feminism. Sometimes unintentional, avoidance was also

invoked at times to avoid classroom controversy or avoid teaching content in a way that might do

more harm than good.

By discussing how and why they chose to implement certain strategies, teachers also

articulated how they understood the nature of this work. When angling, teachers often

represented this work as a way to set the historical record straighter or to share with students

their vision of a more just or equitable society. Angling is an approach where teachers ensure

that their messages about the topics of this study are in the foreground of their teaching and their

students' learning. When exposing lightly, teachers often represented this work as necessary and

important but also potentially disruptive to the status quo. Exposing lightly is an approach where

teachers engage the topics of this study in a way that minimizes that potential for disruption.

When avoiding, teachers often presented this work as important but inaccessible or too risky in

their current contexts. Avoiding is an approach where teachers do not engage with this work

when they feel especially uncertain about their own ability to teach this content in the "right" way or in a way that minimizes certain perceived risks.

Although these approaches were distinct in many ways, I also found some similarities across teachers utilizing different approaches. Regardless of their approach, teachers in this study overwhelmingly used liberal feminist practices when discussing their current gender equity work. In particular, many teachers focused on including more stories of individual women in their current curriculum practices. This lack of critical feminist practices may relate to a general lack of critical feminist discourse in the field of social studies education as a whole. Schmeichel (2014; 2015) noted this missing critical perspective in published social studies lesson plans about women. It may also relate to a postfeminist sensibility running through current expressions of feminism in popular culture and organizational discourses. Features of a postfeminist sensibility include believing feminism is either no longer necessary or relevant to a particular time/place and focusing on individualism as opposed to structural inequity or collective solutions (Gill, 2016; Gill et al., 2017). This emphasis on the person rather than the collective or the individual rather than structures relates back to those liberal feminist tendencies toward a focus on inclusion of women rather than an examination of structures that create gender inequities.

Sara, who tended toward avoiding the topics of women's history, gender, and feminism did not eschew these topics entirely. She did, however, tend to only include those topics when the official curriculum standards required it of her. This meant Sara engaged in liberal feminist practices largely because the curriculum materials she was following engaged in liberal feminist practices, such as emphasizing the achievements of individual women. While teachers who tended to expose lightly were more engaged in gender equity work, they were still unlikely to incorporate critical feminist practices. By intentionally withholding their own perspective on

issues and asking their students to either encounter or contribute to, rather than evaluate, different perspectives teachers like Audrey may struggle to get their students to understand the realities of structural inequality and oppression. Overly focusing on presenting perspectives and balancing perspectives may mean undermining the validity of those perspectives that are focused more on exposing inequity and promoting social change.

I argue that angling has the most potential to incorporate critical feminist practices, such as investigating issues relating to gender inequity, because teachers who tend toward angling take more ownership of their messaging to students than the other two approaches. In essence, they embrace their role as curriculum gatekeepers and have the potential to use the power of that positioning to present perspectives or opinions about women's history, gender, or feminism that promote social change and an understanding of structural inequality. Even though the angling approach held the most promise for using more critical feminist theory and practices, teachers who tended toward angling in this study, such as Mary, still tended to lack a critical perspective on the topics of this study.

The approaches developed in this study seemed, at times, to interact with or support existing approaches for discussing and practicing history teaching and learning. Seixas (2000) put forward three approaches for history education: *collective memory*, *disciplinary*, and *postmodern* (p. 21). The collective memory approach is about imparting one "best" version of history to students to be committed to memory. The disciplinary approach pushes students to learn how historians construct historical narratives and encourages them to evaluate the validity of those narratives using those expert strategies. Students also evaluate historical narratives when taking a postmodern approach; however, rather than judging narratives using historical thinking skills, students are instead examining the textuality of those narratives and how they are crafted

to serve certain purposes. In general, school history in the United States tends to emphasize the collective memory approach (Barton, 2011; VanSledright, 2008; Reich, 2011). A study of official Virginia World History standards, for example, uncovered "a narrative about the exceptionality and progress of the United States" that students were expected to commit to memory (Kelly et al., 2007, p. 130).

When a teacher is angling, their messages about women's history, gender, or feminism may serve to transmit a particular historical narrative. In this scenario, angling intersects with a collective memory approach. Teachers utilizing an angling/collective memory approach may be replacing one (perhaps more traditional) narrative with another (perhaps more progressive or critical) narrative. The critique of any collective memory approach, whether its narrative is centered around a national identity or a gender identity, is that "if historians, curriculum experts, textbook writers, and school authorities make all the decisions about the right version of the past, then the students' only job is to absorb it" (Seixas, 2000, p. 23). That said, "counter stories" can create a productive kind of cognitive dissonance that has the potential for valuable intellectual growth. When teachers present their students with a counter narrative that challenges an established narrative, they can leverage that cognitive dissonance to unsettle previously unexamined assumptions or to investigate how writing and storytelling are "interpretive activities" (Berson et al., 2017). Consider this example from Tyson (2003):

> Critical race theory can operate as a tool to fill in gaps in the collective memory of civic knowledge. The integration of narratives of those enslaved juxtaposed, for example, with the many founding documents would facilitate a critique of power and the role of oppression and empowerment in what it means to be citizens in a democracy (p. 20).

When Mary presents her students with the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition from the perspective of Sacagawea, she may be creating that kind of productive cognitive dissonance by challenging students assumptions about gender roles and leadership.

An exposing lightly approach, with its emphasis on presenting multiple perspectives and positioning students as decision-makers, appears to intersect more with a disciplinary approach to history education. Disciplinary literacy in social studies engages students in "analyzing diverse sources, asking questions about evidence, weighing the credibility of information, and using evidence-based interpretation to support a claim" (Berson et al., 2017, p. 416). Where the exposing lightly approach seems to break from a disciplinary approach is in de-emphasizing critical evaluation of different perspectives in favor of exposure to different perspectives. Audrey's focus on appearing neutral and presenting facts on "both sides" may end up misrepresenting more than contextualizing historical or contemporary issues for students if one side is represented as worthy of serious consideration despite overwhelming and convincing evidence to the contrary. Disciplinary literacy in social studies education is strengthened by an engagement with critical literacy (Berson et al., 2017; Collin & Reich, 2015), which "recogniz[es] that texts lack neutrality" and encourages students to "critique accepted practices and receive information to transform ways that they make sense of and engage with the world" (Berson et al. 2017, p. 416 - 417). Following the tenets of critical literacy, social studies teachers are encouraged to guide their students in evaluating different sources of information and asking moral questions (Collin & Reich, 2015). Because of the key role that critical literacy plays in a disciplinary approach to social studies, educators committed to gender equity might be best served utilizing an angling approach that intersects with a disciplinary approach. With an angling/disciplinary approach, teachers can ask students to use the analytical strategies of

historians to evaluate historical narratives while also staying committed to a particular outcome of students' historical investigation. Mary seemed to engage such an approach to some extent to help her students debunk the Disney narrative of Matoaka.

The approaches generated by this data help unpack when and how teachers felt comfortable selecting, framing, and delivering content on women's history, gender, and feminism to their students. Sara's profile revealed some of those institutional pressures that make it challenging at times for teachers to prioritize the topics of this study. That said, other profiles in this study demonstrated how teachers also, at times, pushed forward with finding and teaching content on women's history and (to some extent) gender and feminism despite some of those barriers. Audrey's exposing lightly approach demonstrated how the ways in which we frame these topics to our students matters. While not inherently controversial, certain topics relating to women's history, gender, or feminism may at times be considered controversial or sensitive in different school contexts. In those instances, teachers should take care to present open questions as open and promote deliberation and discussion on those issues while also taking care to keep closed questions closed, discouraging students from undermining overwhelming evidence that goes against their personal opinions. The findings of this research also make clear how important it is as curriculum gatekeepers to consider the messages we want to get across to our students about these topics. By having a clear vision for what gender-equity looks like and why it requires us to go beyond adding women to the curriculum, we can be more intentional about how we are selecting, framing, and delivering content on these topics to our students. The angling approach may be the most successful in delivering direct messaging to students about the topics of this study, but there is still room to grow in terms of what messages are available to teachers taking

an angling approach and what messages those teachers feels confident conveying to their

students about the topics of this study.

Teacher education programs across the country are focused on developing the next

generation of teachers to be more engaged with issues of justice and equity. Knowing which

approach to these topics best supports the use of critical feminist practices in the classroom is an

important part of that mission. The angling approach, especially when combined with strategies

associated with disciplinary history, may be particularly well-suited for preparing our students to

make informed judgements about the past while also considering how historical investigations

can resonate with and advance our present-day society toward justice and equity.

<h3 align="center">Teacher Considerations and Risks</h3>

My second research question, "What do teachers consider when determining their

approach to those topics?," helped me identify and understand teacher concerns regarding how to

handle the topics of this study. Those considerations that emerged from the data can help us, as a

field, develop more strategies and curriculum materials that help teachers overcome potential

roadblocks they may face when struggling to teach these topics in a way that promotes equity

and justice. Rather than try to present findings on all of the considerations that emerged, I chose

to select four considerations based on what I heard Kelly, Evan, Lisa, and Chris working though

in their interviews. I presented those considerations in the form of a question at the start of each

of those profiles:

- Am I prepared to teach this?

- Am I handling this fairly?

- Am I the right person to teach this?

- What does gender equity work look like?

By framing these considerations as questions, I wanted to stress that there were no definitive answers. Instead, how teachers tackled those questions invariably revealed tensions that they are trying to negotiate when choosing how to approach women's history, gender, and feminism in their current practice. One tension teachers faced is how to prepare for this work and properly develop their own practice while also not waiting for the perfect conditions to try. Another is how to incorporate or promote the topics of this study while also living up to institutional values and expectations that may not prioritize such work. A final tension that challenges teachers is how to stay true to their own values and vision regarding this work while also being responsive to student and community values and expectations.

The first tension reveals an inner battle some teachers are experiencing regarding this work. Many of the teachers in this study positioned themselves as learners trying to better incorporate women's history, gender, or feminism into their practice. As learners, they identified areas they felt they needed more training or resources. For example, Lisa identified a need to examine her own unconscious biases and Chris identified a need to learn historical cases that illuminate how gender categories are constructed over time and space. Training and resources are undoubtedly important aspects of doing this work. Without those supports, it is likely that teachers may reinforce the status quo in social studies education, such as continuing to only add women to the curriculum when time permits. Training and resources can help teachers think of this work more holistically. Women's history courses in college helped Mary know that she could tell the story of Lewis and Clark from the perspective of Sacagawea. Similarly, Kelly's women's history courses helped her know the importance of asking questions to students about the absence of women in the official curriculum.

Despite the importance of building up teacher capacity to do this work, there was also an acknowledgement among some teachers in this study that perfection can be the enemy of the good. In the absence of external supports or the time to self-teach, some teachers recognized that they still needed to try to do this work. Kelly, for instance, suggested her questioning technique because it is not always possible to find primary sources on women in the past. Even though both Mary and Evan wondered whether their identity as white teachers made them the right person to teach about African-American history, they both used the same phrase to indicate that their doubt would not stop them from trying: "Let's go." A valid concern about trying in the absence of important preparation is that a teacher might do more harm than good. This concern was raised by Chris as he considered how to have a classroom discussion about gender identity in a way that did not offend students or make them feel uncomfortable.

The second and third tensions are about how teachers navigate external factors regarding this work. When asked what they think the future of the curriculum should be to better accommodate women's history, gender, and feminism, each teacher envisioned this work somewhat differently from one another. Their perception of how achievable their vision was depended on a number of external factors. The second tension pits teachers' visions against institutional values and expectations and the third tension pits their visions against student and community values and expectations. Institutional values and expectations were often conveyed through official curriculum standards, pacing, and assessments. Kelly expressed how engaging deeply with this work requires a level of comfort "veering off" of those official guides. Both Kelly and Audrey explained that the pressure to "stick" to the official curriculum was compounded by the presence of high-stakes testing in their course contexts. For Lisa and Sara, curriculum pacing was a major issue as well. They both expressed how "packed" their curricula

are, making it challenging to add anything else beyond what is immediately apparent in the state

standards. Striking a balance between integrating the topics of this study more into their practice

and also following their curriculum standards, pacing, and assessments seemed to Lisa to be

unachievable:

> I don't know that there is a balance for me. I mean, we teach – We cover what needs to
>
> be covered, and there's not a lot of going beyond that. So that's where I would say I wish
>
> things were different.

Student and community values and expectations are not always as easily determined as

institutional ones found in official documents. Regardless, teachers in this study also took those

values and expectations into account when determining when and how to incorporate women's

history, gender, or feminism into their curriculum. Some teachers, such as Mary, felt really

supported by her community in how she chose to approach those topics. Other teachers, such as

Audrey and Sara were careful to avoid conflict with their students or community. They

anticipated pushback and divisiveness should they address certain topics incorrectly or, even, at

all. Audrey, in particular, considered community politics when discussing which gender-related

topics were controversial. In order to tackle those topics, she strived toward a neutral stance,

presenting "both sides" or "multiple perspectives." Sometimes, however, student or community

politics seemed to prompt rather than discourage teacher disclosure. Such was the case with

Evan sharing his views on the current administration with his students. Because teachers work in

different contexts, it is difficult to say how student and community values might impact teachers

interested in promoting gender-equity. For some, those student and community values may make

this work more achievable, while for other it might make it more challenging.

How teachers in this study discussed navigating their own unique combination of external

pressures is reminiscent of an observation that Ellsworth (1989) made about critical dialogue in

the classroom:

> What got said – and how – in our class was the product of highly complex strategizing
>
> for the visibility that speech gives without giving up the safety of silence. More than that,
>
> it was a highly complex negotiation of the politics of knowing and being known. Things
>
> were left unsaid, or they were encoded, on the basis of the speakers' conscious and
>
> unconscious assessments of the risks and costs of disclosing their understandings of
>
> themselves and of others. (p. 313)

In this quote, Ellsworth is referring primarily to student disclosure in classroom discussions, but

teachers are also engaging in "highly complex strategizing" when determining how to do the

work of gender equity in their classroom. Curriculum is an important form of speech. Teachers

express a great deal of ideas through what they select or emphasize in their classroom

curriculum. They can also withhold ideas from their curriculum, choosing to remain in the

"safety of silence."

As the teachers in this study shared their considerations, they were also sharing what they

felt they risked when doing this work. Some teachers chose at times to stay in the silence because

the risks seemed too great. Time spent teaching about topics not in the official curriculum was

judged to be risking their students' ability to pass a high-stakes test. Teaching about

controversial aspects of women's history, gender, or feminism meant risking their relationships

with students or parents. Tackling certain topics without proper preparation meant risking doing

this work the "wrong" way, such as reinforcing stereotypes or perpetuating inequities. But, for

other teachers, staying in the silence meant risking things too. For Mary, staying in silence meant

risking her ability to spread the truth. For several teachers, staying in silence meant risking their ability to support and empower their female students. Teachers assessed risks according to their own circumstances and determined varying degrees of speech and silence on many aspects of gender equity work.

All of us working in social studies education must work to reduce those risks that hinder progress toward gender equity. Official curriculum standards and assessments should not be obstacles to be overcome or things to be put aside when wishing to teach about gender in social studies education. They should, instead, provide direct and clear guidance about how to teach women's history, gender, and feminism. To be sure, this will require a massive redesigning of curriculum standards. Anything short of that will only serve to continue the marginalization of women's history, gender, and feminism. State assessments dictate in many ways what gets the most attention in school. We need assessments that ask students to investigate gender inequity and consider solutions.

Teacher educators and administrators can support teachers by offering training and resources on women's history, gender, and feminism. Training in the form of workshops or professional development (PD) can help teachers confront internal biases, as Lisa suggested, and learn new strategies and practices for integrating gender into their classroom curricula. Creating formal opportunities for teachers to undertake the work of examining their personal beliefs and understandings about gender can help ensure that that inner work is getting done and that teachers are properly supported in those efforts. Online tools like those available through Harvard's Project Implicit (2011) can help start conversations about how people can make unconscious associations with gender or other identity categories. Communities of teachers and teacher leaders can also come together to support each other in expanding their curriculum and

instructional tools and resources relating to gender equity work. This study confirms that

teachers committed to promoting women's history and other gender-related topics are often

engaged more with liberal feminist practices than critical feminist practices. Knowing this,

workshop and PD developers should develop programming that exposes teachers to more critical

discourses and narratives that challenge teachers to go beyond the stories of exceptional women.

Teachers can analyze lesson plans that are deliberately crafted to convey critical feminist

messages or promote additional missing or hidden discourses in women's history, gender, or

feminism in social studies education. For example, Schmeichel, Janis, and McAnulty's (2016)

inquiry lesson, "Why Has There Never Been a Woman President in the United States?," guides

students through an investigation of gender inequity in politics, media, and the workplace,

Dozono's (2017) "Teaching Alternative and Indigenous Gender Systems in World History"

challenges students to think beyond the gender binary and understand how gender functions in

society, and Bowman's (2020) "History in Memoriam: Analyzing Obituaries to Learn Historical

Context" supports students in developing an understanding of how gender and race categories

are socially constructed over time and space. Sharing resources that engage critical feminist

theory and practices to teach about women, gender, or feminism can reduce the burden on

teachers to find or create those resources on their own and help teachers envision how to do that

work in their own practice.

Researchers can also offer support to teachers in developing their gender equity practice.

Feminist research praxis encourages researchers to consider reciprocity carefully when designing

and implementing a study. By approaching this research study as an opportunity for PD, I sought

to create space for teachers to not only share their practice regarding the topics of this study but

also to continue developing their practice in that regard. While related, these goals did not

always align with one another. For example, the hermeneutic circle design allowed both

participants to hear from one another in ways that could challenge and extend their thinking and

it aligned well with my original research question. In choosing to ultimately switch my research

question and keep the study design, I lost some of the potential for the analysis of summary

constructs to contribute to the findings and discussion but maintained the structure of

information sharing for its potential PD benefits. Teachers felt comfortable both agreeing and

disagreeing with each other's ideas during the summary construct reflection portion of each

interview. In some cases, teachers directly commented on how this exercise allowed them to

confront other ideas or perspectives. For instance, when reading Mary's summary construct,

Kelly said "this person brought up a lot of great stuff that I did not bring up." She also expressed

how Mary's ideas clarified or affirmed some of her own thinking: "I guess that's essentially what

I was trying to articulate earlier as well - Is that it doesn't really have to be that different from

what you're already doing." There were also limitations to this style of information sharing, such

as the lack of direct feedback. Although he "really enjoyed reading [the summary construct],"

Kyle also suggested that "the conversation would be so much better if first I read this summary

and then got to talk to [the teacher]." As a result of this limitation, teachers sometimes relied on

me to confirm or disconfirm their interpretations of certain ideas presented in the summary

construct, placing me in the role as a sort of stand-in for the other teacher.

Whether responding to me, their colleague's ideas, or the research findings, overall the

teachers in this study showed a deep capacity for self-reflection. By asking teachers reflective

questions about their own practice and having them review ideas from both their colleagues and

myself, I was able to follow Kennedy's (2016) recommendation that professional development

be "intellectually engaging teachers with PD content, rather than simply presenting prescriptions

or presenting bodies of knowledge" (p. 974). I offered evidence of this study's tactical

authenticity in Chapter 2, which consisted of verbal indications that some teachers intended to

take future action regarding gender equity work in response to their participation in this study.).

As a final note on the topic of offering a professional learning experience in the form of a

research project, I will add that research projects can be a means for providing teachers with

robust and substantive feedback. Audrey commented in her response to my final member check

email that "teachers don't get this kind of feedback from school - and it was definitely interesting

to read!" The word "interesting" came up in other teacher responses as well. While it is hard to

determine a degree of impact from that word choice, I think it is fair to say that offering teachers

the opportunity to read research analyses of their own work can be a valuable reflective

experience on its own.

The results of this study also suggest that another important support for teachers

motivated to develop their gender equity practice may be for teacher leaders and administrators

to stand in solidarity with educators when it comes to openly engaging in classroom discussion

and deliberations about political or controversial issues. When administrators support teachers

who engage with open policy questions about gender in their classroom, other teachers may be

more likely to do the same. This means not only defending teachers against unfair accusations of

indoctrination, but also creating a general school culture that supports dialogue on open policy

issues and making that culture known to the community.

Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

A major limitation of this study is also a source of its strength. In centering the teacher

experience through the dialogue of an interview format, this data is the product of the subjective

and partial perspectives of the teacher participants and myself. While this format allowed me to

explore more completely the ideas and opinions teachers had about the topics of this study, it did not allow me to similarly explore the practical experiences teachers had with those topics in the classroom. How the teachers conveyed their practices to me in our interviews might vary from what I might observe in a classroom context. While the curriculum documents offered me some degree of triangulation, not all of what was shared about each teachers' practice was made accessible in the form of curriculum documents. Furthermore, those documents I did obtain might be implemented a number of different ways in a classroom setting. Due to this limitation, a future direction for those interested in researching the teacher experience regarding gender equity work would be to observe and collect data on the teachers' classroom experience and the approaches they utilize in a classroom context. Another direction would be to observe and collect data on how students react to different approaches to women's history, gender, or feminism.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I tried to make clear how my own subjective and partial perspective directed the course of this study from start to finish by calling attention to my role as both researcher and writer. It is worth mentioning here again how those roles made me the study's primary decision-maker. I selected the topic and study methods, crafted the research questions and interview protocol, decided which codes and themes to develop and how to write about them. Because of my situated perspective, it is certain that others would have made different decisions than I did. I want to briefly call attention to one of those roads not taken. While I did include data on how teachers assessed their existing curriculum structures, I chose not to focus on data representing how each teacher would change those existing structures if given the opportunity. While those proposed changes are absolutely worthy of consideration, I lacked data on how many of those proposed changes would specifically impact gender-equity work. For example, teachers suggested that standards should focus more around themes, inquiry questions,

or case studies and, often, less on specific facts. While I believe that many of these changes would allow for a more gender-equitable social studies education than current curriculum structures, I found that my research methods did not support a more in-depth analysis on those individual propositions. Future research putting teachers in conversation with individuals that can help realize those changes might be better suited to investigating proposed changes and interrogating those assumptions, values, and consequences behind them. The results of this study also suggest that future research on gender and social studies education should focus on when teachers view this content as political or controversial and how they handle such content.

Another important limitation of this study stems from the constructivist nature of this research. On the one hand, changing the research questions after the study design allowed me to better align my analysis with the experiences expressed early on by the teacher participants. On the other hand, it is also important to consider what I might have uncovered with a more direct approach to my final research questions. My interview protocol included questions about their current practice, which aligned well with my final research questions, and questions that were more theoretical in nature, which did not align as well. This sometimes made interpreting teacher responses challenging in the sense that it was occasionally difficult to determine if a teacher response was aspirational or anchored in their current practice. In order to account for this in the analysis and writing, I attempted to code only responses that seemed to be anchored more in practice to develop the three approach themes. I also made sure to include the context of quotes in the write-up whenever necessary to help the reader know to which question teachers were responding. In order to further develop teacher approaches, I suggest that future studies include only questions about teachers' current practice, practice-oriented follow-up questions after

theory-oriented questions, and/or classroom observations of lessons utilizing different

approaches.

Final Thoughts

I am so thankful for having had the opportunity to dialogue with the teachers throughout

this investigation. Their ideas and stories reflected their classroom experiences and, therefore,

illuminated crucial challenges and opportunities for us, as a field, to consider as we continue our

individual and collective work toward gender equity in social studies education. It is clear that

we need to reimagine many of the curriculum structures currently in place before much of this

work can begin in earnest at the school level. Staying in dialogue with teachers can help us

ensure that new curriculum structures speak to classroom experiences and support teachers in

overcoming those challenges they currently face when trying to do this work.

Because of the heightened sense of individual responsibility in the current educational

landscape, it is also important to acknowledge all the ways teachers are currently doing this

work. As Kelly said, "as the standards are written now, you do have to be purposeful." I am

grateful for all the purposeful effort teachers put into bringing women's history, gender, and

feminism into their classrooms in spite of all the barriers in place dissuading them from engaging

with those topics. I am further grateful that the teachers in this study were also willing to share

when they felt like their efforts were not enough. Being open and reflective about our practice as

educators is crucial for professional growth. Those struggles and uncertainties shared over the

course of this study shined a light on important tensions that exist when trying to do this work

and revealed areas in need of our collective attention.

As I conclude this study, I find myself (like many) in quarantine during the COVID-19

pandemic. Although it is not traditional to end a dissertation by presenting a participant quote, it

feels appropriate at this moment in time to emphasize connectedness. To that end, I return to Audrey's concluding interview remarks. In this quote, she reminds us that this work is ongoing and that there is possibility in our continuing to strive toward gender equity: "Teachers collectively, we are trying, and that's what I would like to end with… We're always trying and sometimes it works."

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Appendix A

INVITED TO PARTICIPATE:

SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

(Grades 6 – 12)

Volunteers are invited to participate in a research project through VCU's School of Education to explore curriculum possibilities with teachers regarding women's history and other gender-related topics.

Would you be willing to be interviewed regarding your interest in promoting and enhancing women's history and other gender-related topics in social studies education?

For more information contact
Kim Bowman

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

In the interview intro, I will alert the participant that I will be asking questions where they might want to refer to specific lesson plans, activities, or assessments, so they should feel free to pull up documents or papers that might help them recall those items at any point during the interview. I will remind them that I may ask for a copy of those artifacts.

Intro Questions:
1. Tell me about how you came to teach social studies.
2. Tell me about your school context.
   a. What are the students like?
   b. What kind of relationship do faculty have with administration?
   c. What is the social studies department like at your school?
   d. Are there any major initiatives going on in your social studies department /school/ district?

Construct Questions:
3. Why is it important to you to include more women's history or other gender-related topics in your curriculum?
4. This study is about curriculum possibilities. What do you think the future of the curriculum should be to better accommodate these topics?
   a. Are there some aspects of that idea that you feel you are more or less able to achieve in your current teaching practice?
   b. Tell me about a time when you felt a lesson or activity fit really well with the vision you described.
      i. What were the goals of the lesson/ activity?
      ii. What was it like finding curriculum materials for this lesson / activity?
      iii. How did it go when you implemented it?
5. Imagine you were asked to redesign the current U.S. History SOLs to better fit with your vision. What would you change first?
6. What advice would you give a new social studies teacher who is also interested in promoting and enhancing women's history, gender, or feminism in their practice?

Extension questions for possible clarifications:
7. How would you define women's history?
8. How would you define gender?
9. What would you say is the role of "gender" in social studies?
10. Do you address feminism in your current curriculum? Why/ why not?
11. How do you define feminism?