DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 387 406 SO 025 303

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TITLE Teaching the "Knowing How" of History: Classroom Teachers' Thinking about Historical Texts. Draft.
PUB DATE Apr 95
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 18-22, 1995).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *History Instruction; *History Textbooks; Knowledge Base for Teaching; Secondary Education; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Education; *Teacher Qualifications; Teaching Experience; *Textbooks

ABSTRACT

This paper builds upon previous research into the history classroom and explores the following questions: (1) How do teachers read and interpret historical texts? (2) How do they construct a "truthful" historical account from analysis of various sources? (3) How do they approach an epistemology of history? (4) How do teachers prepare for the teaching of history; (5) To what extent do various historical sources determine their approach to history teaching; and (6) How can teachers most effectively prepare for instilling historical thinking in their students? Three secondary school history teachers, selected from the general pool in the local public school district in Texas, provided data for this exploratory study. The teachers revealed divergent interpretations of the discipline of history and its ways of knowing, as manifested specifically through the reading and analysis of historical texts. Though not the focus of this study, the strikingly divergent range and quality of these three teachers' inservice and preservice education in history suggest a closer look at the role of such experiences in the development of teachers' historical thinking. Much research suggests that the teaching of historical thinking is a viable context for students' learning. Contains 37 references. (EH)

# Teaching the "Knowing How" of History: Classroom Teachers' Thinking About Historical Texts

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For presentation to the American Educational Research Association
April 18, 1995
San Francisco, California





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## INTRODUCTION

Research on the teaching and learning of history generally has assumed the likelihood of a strong relationship between teachers' ability to think historically and the development of their students' historical understanding. Research, on the other hand, has seldom revealed an empirical relationship between the two, and inquiry into the nature of classroom teachers' historical thinking remains a relatively unexplored territory. Indeed, recent reconceptualizations of students' capabilities in history necessitate a more robust understanding of teachers' epistemologies of the subject and their translation into effective pedagogical practice.

The historical thinking and understanding of students has received much-needed attention in a growing body of research, most of which has centered on the interests and capabilities of students at various developmental levels (Downey and Levstik, 1991; Friedman, 1978, 1982; Thornton and Vukelich, 1988; Hallam, 1966, 1967, 1972; Levstik and Pappas, 1987; Booth, 1980). Downey and Levstik (1991) concluded that "sustained study of significant material appears more likely to develop the habits of mind relevant to the domain of history." They also emphasized that the study of history can be a legitimate undertaking for students because of these unique habits of mind. Other studies have shown that students can reason with historical evidence from a variety of sources; Booth (1980), Blake

(1981), and Drake (1986) and others have concluded that the use of primary sources enabled students to become aware of historical problems and better able to grasp the interpretive nature of history.

The crucial significance of instruction in the development of students' historical understanding has been explored in a number of studies (e.g., Downey and Levstik, 1991; Thornton and Vukelich, 1988). Recent research especially emphasizes the importance of teachers' historical habits of mind and ability to translate these pedagogical ideas into effective teaching practice (Shulman, 1986). A few important studies of history teaching have been conducted in high schools. For example, Goodlad (1984) reported a persistent pattern in students' activities during history lessons: a preponderance of listening to lectures, reading textbooks, doing worksheets, and taking quizzes. Also, McNeil's (1986) ethnographic study in Midwestern high schools reported wide variations of practice and quality of history instruction from teacher to teacher and explained instructional dynamics that influenced students' negative perceptions of history. Additional research that specifically describes what teachers do (or do not do) in their instruction of history is warranted.

Clearly, history teachers' knowledge of their subject is a major factor in the way history is taught and, according to some researchers, a significant indicator of teacher competence (e.g., Downey and Levstik, 1991;

Gudmundsdottir, Carey, and Wilson, 1985; Shulman, 1986; Wilson, Shulman, and Richert, 1987; and Wineburg and Wilson, 1989). This body of research focuses on how different content and contexts influence effective teaching. Nonetheless, these recent findings neither support nor imply that teachers' simple accumulation of more historical facts better prepares them to teach history.

## TEACHERS AND HISTORICAL THINKING

Stanley (1991) described the emerging research base in the area of history teachers' knowledge of subject matter, citing an increasing number of "rich, thick descriptions of instruction that yield insights into how subject matter knowledge relates to teacher competence in various classroom contexts" (252). However, he lamented the lack of a "comprehensive history of practice" in the teaching field. In the field of history, a significant aspect of teachers' knowledge, with implications for their classroom practice, is the formulation of teachers' historical "habits of mind" and their disciplined perspectives toward history. Teachers' deep and personal understanding of the discipline of history and of historical thinking enables them to be more sensitive to the role of interpretation, to multiple causation, and to the importance of seeing events in a broad context (Downey and Levstik, 1991).

A particular shortcoming of the current state of "rich, thick descriptions" of history teaching is the absence of

information on the role of teachers' reading and analysis of historical texts. This analysis constitutes a critical dimension of historical thinking, or history's "knowing how" (Ryle, 1949). Because historians routinely deal with the analysis of evidence in texts to construct reasonable portrayals, accounts, and explanations of past events, history teachers in schools should understand and be able to apply fundamental aspects of historical thinking to a variety of historical texts and evidence. These aspects include considerations of perspective, context, authorship, and bias; the ability to sift through and sort facts into different explanations and tentative conclusions; and a healthy skepticism that permeates the historical thinking process and demands new information before committing to particular ideas or explanations. As teachers incorporate these aspects into their instruction, their students may be able to adopt these habits of mind into their own inquiry of how history is made, both by the individuals who actually were involved in an event, for example, and by historians who have studied the event long afterwards.

Wineburg initiated a research focus on the analysis of historical texts (1991a, 1991b). His research participants, academic historians and high school students, "thought aloud" while reading eight documents about the American Revolution and attempted to construct meaning and to assign credibility to particular sources for portraying the truth of history. In his interpretation of the findings, Wineburg

argued that each group brought to the texts a unique epistemological stance, one that shaped and guided the meanings that they derived from the texts. He further suggested implications for the role of history in the school curriculum and for the substantive improvement of teaching school history.

## STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

This study extended Wineburg's research into the history classroom and added to the authors' previous research on teachers' historical thinking, which focused on elementary student teachers (Yeager and Davis, 1994) and secondary student teachers (Yeager and Davis, in press). The purpose of the present study is to contribute to the body of knowledge on history teaching by examining how three history teachers thought historically in order to analyze historical texts. As in their two earlier studies, the authors explored the following questions:

- How do teachers read and interpret historical texts?
- How do they construct a "truthful" historical account from analysis of various sources?
- How do they approach an epistemology of history?
- How do teachers prepare for the teaching of history?
- To what extent do various historical sources determine their approach to history teaching?
- How can teachers most effectively prepare for instilling historical thinking in their students?

Three secondary school history teachers provided data for this exploratory study. The researchers selected the three participants, identified here as Jordan, Meredith, and Julie, from the general pool of secondary history teachers in the local public school district. They were selected largely from general information provided by the university social studies education coordinator and student teaching supervisors. (However, only one of the teachers, Jordan, had supervised student teachers for the university's teacher education program.) Jordan had taught honors and "regular" American history for twenty-five years in a public high school. Meredith had had seven years' American and world history teaching experience in a liberal arts magnet program at a public high school. Julie was beginning the second semester of her first year, teaching Texas and American history at a public junior high school.

In their undergraduate studies, all three had taken a substantial number of history courses (at least ten to twelve) covering a wide range of historical topics, using a variety of primary and secondary sources, and dealing with a broad spectrum of historical perspectives, from traditional to revisionist. Jordan and Meredith had earned master's degrees in history; Julie had just completed her undergraduate teacher certification program. Also, all three had taken social studies methods courses for teacher certification. None could recall explicit attention in these courses to the teaching of history or to aspects of

historical thinking. Rather, the courses focused on a broad conception of the social studies curriculum. Julie, for example, explained that her methods course contained "nothing on history teaching, just on general social studies topics like using computers and getting teaching ideas from journals."

Furthermore, these three participants had divergent experiences with inservice education and other professional activities related to the teaching of history. Julie had not yet participated in any professional development activities related to social studies or history. Meredith described numerous positive experiences with inservice history education, both locally and nationally. She remained active in several social studies organizations and interest groups, and she regularly attended their conferences, often to lead or participate in activities related to history teaching. Jordan took a negative view of his prior experiences with what he called "generic inservice workshops" in social studies. He described these as "cursory" and "impractical" because they did not address the specific concerns of history teachers and students.

The authors took Wineburg's (1991a) research design as a point of departure. For this study, one of the authors conducted a single, individual interview with each teacher. In these audiotaped sessions, the author gave each participant typed copies of eight historical documents, the same as those used by Wineburg (1991a). She explained to

the participants that they were to read aloud eight documents on the Battle of Lexington and to "think aloud" about them; that is, they were to verbalize the contents of their thoughts, saying whatever came to mind, as they attempted to determine what happened at Lexington on April 19, 1775. After this exercise, the participants were asked to rank each document in order of its credibility as a source of information about the Battle of Lexington. The length of the sessions varied because of differences in the ways each participant was willing and/or able to talk about the historical documents. The author remained silent during this part of the session, only occasionally prompting ("What are you thinking?") if the participant paused for several seconds.

Wineburg's (1991b) research describing the historical thinking of historians and high school students informed the analysis of the data obtained in the present study. The authors advance specific implications of their findings for the preparation of history teachers as a critical factor in the improvement of the teaching of history in schools and, especially, for the stimulation of students' historical thinking.

## ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Each teacher manifested quite different historical understandings, interpretations, and conclusions as they engaged in analysis of the eight documents. The quality and

nature of their experiences with history were diverse and illuminating. The emergence of three distinct profiles in this study provides a possible framework for sorting through the experiences of history teachers in order to form a basis for understanding their historical thinking.

## Meredith: History as Construction of Meaning

Meredith demonstrated awareness of many aspects of historical analysis and interpretation. She especially called attention to students' understanding of these aspects in order to foster their own construction of meaning. Meredith approached the task of analyzing the documents in much the same way as the academic historians in Wineburg's study. When she began to read the documents, she appeared to know exactly for what she was looking: the author's assumptions and perspective, the audience for which the document was written, the circumstances and context in which the document appeared and from which it arose, and the purpose of the written text. Moreover, she explicitly referred to these matters throughout the interview and later enumerated them as important criteria that students must adopt in order to construct historical knowledge and meaning from historical sources. Like Wineburg's historians, Meredith constructed subtexts of "latent meaning" of the documents she read (Wineburg, 1991b, p. 501).

Given the opportunity to think through historical evidence for herself, Meredith appeared to be a skilled

reader and eager student of history because of her "active participation in the fabrication of meaning...pretending to deliberate with others by talking to (herself)" (Wineburg, 1991b, p. 503). In her engagement with the texts, she compared accounts, acknowledged contradictions and subjectivity, and recognized that stories may have gotten mistranslated in their retelling. She pointed out nuances of tone, grammar, literacy, and choice of vocabulary. Perhaps most importantly, she often speculated about the documents' authors, the source of the text, dates and the passage of time, and authors' biases and frames of mind, acknowledging that "details are tied to witnesses" (Wineburg, 1991b, p. 511).

A partial list of the questions she raised while thinking aloud includes:

Why was this account written?
Who were these people? What were they like?
What might the difference be between accounts written by civilians and accounts by military people?
Why is Paul Revere only mentioned in the textbook account?
What does this document say about how strategically important Lexington was?

What is the difference between an account by "people of circumstance" like Ezra Stiles and one from an "average person" like Jeremy Lister?
What was it like to be a British officer during this time? How did they get to America? How educated were they?
What "contemporary factors" were at play? What was this time in history like?

Furthermore, she constantly attended to how her students would use the documents in class, and to how she

would guide their historical thinking. For example, she remarked:

> (On the minutemen's statement):
> I would ask students to look at the details of this document and see what they could find out about the people of the time, such as what it meant to be "of lawful age."
>
> (On Barker's and Stiles' diary entries, the Lister account, and the newspaper account):
> I would have them compare these to other accounts and talk about different perceptions of the same event, particularly with regard to who fired first. They could see the confusion in things, both for the British soldiers, who probably were taken aback by what happened when they got to Lexington, and for us, when we try to draw conclusions about what happened after the fact.
>
> (On Stiles' diary entry):
> I would be interested in having my students explore just who this man was, and why this account was written, because he's actually supporting Pitcairn's assertions. Who was he in terms of his loyalties? He implies some admiration for Pitcairn, as well as some loyalties to the colonists' cause - he refers to "our people" and Pitcairn's "bad cause." He uses the words "indeterminateness," "promiscuous," and "impetuous" to show how confusing things were.
>
> (On the textbook account):
> A very biased account...I would use this as an example of bias embedded in a seemingly objective source. Also, does this book elaborate on Paul Revere, or does it just assume students know who he was? If there's no other mention of him, I would suggest a New England bias in the book, in addition to an obvious American one. One tends to find a New England bias in a lot of textbooks in American history...I would also use this to have students analyze the historical context of the writing of this textbook, including the events of the early 1960s, and why the account has such a super-patriotic tone. Also, students could explore they use of the word "atrocity" in different contexts, from the Boston "massacre" where five people were killed, to the "atrocities" of World War Two.

(On the Lister account):
First, I would have students examine his grammar and spelling and speculate on his education. The fact that he can write suggests something about him. I would want them to try to create a profile, based on some research of people of the time. What was a typical young British officer like then? Because he seems like such an average guy, I'm intrigued by the social history implications of his account. This (document) has so many possibilities for students' analysis.

Meredith's "healthy skepticism" and her understanding of the tentativeness of historical conclusions led her to the following conclusions about the credibility of the documents:

> The novel is obviously problematic, until we can find out more about its provenance and authorship. The diaries and personal accounts are good, especially Barker's because it is a fresh recollection, a quick "snapshot" of what happened. But on the other hand, what was his motivation in writing this account? What were the circumstances? To what extent did he choose his words and the statement he was making? The Lister account is good, but it bothers me that it was written so many years after the fact. Why was that?

More importantly:

> I could not really say which of these documents is the most credible, because I simply need to know more about them before trusting them. They all have strergths and weaknesses and different motivations. People always have different perceptions of the same event, and they depict them in different ways. The credibility of sources hinges on many factors, not all of which can be discerned just from the limited information I have here.

Indeed, in her reading, she often commented upon "what was left out" and emphasized the importance of "elaborative detail" and corroboration of facts in constructing meaning through historical analysis. Nonetheless, she found all of the documents "useful" in some way, not just to discuss the

Battle of Lexington, but also to stimulate students' historical interpretation and historical research skills.

## Julie: History as Entertainment

Julie viewed history as a "story to be brought to life." For her, this meant that sources must "grab my attention"; she repeatedly referred to particular documents as her "favorites" or as "the ones I like." She was drawn to sources that she believed were the most "vividly written" and "easiest to read," frequently dismissing those she had difficulty deciphering because of "stilted language," "rambling sentences," and "dense ideas." On the whole, Julie preferred for historical sources to be captivating, clear, and comprehensible stories that entertained her, and she believed that these kinds of sources best suited her thirteen-year-old students as well.

In several ways, Julie's reading of the documents approximated that of the high school students in Wineburg's study. For these students, reading was a process of "gathering information, with texts serving as bearers of information" (Wineburg, 1991b, p. 510). Julie had some difficulty at times gathering and processing information from the documents; however, unlike the high school students, she did not "fail to engage" with the documents. Clearly, to some extent she did engage with sources that she found entertaining. But like the high school students, she "rarely saw subtext in what (she) read; (her) understanding

of point of view was limited to which 'side' a document was on" (Wineburg, 1991b, 510). She made few probing comparisons of one account to another, or speculated about authors. Julie occasionally exhibited difficulty in interpreting both factual and contextual information. At many points in the interview, Julie appeared to overlook the identifying information at the end of each document about authorship, bias, dates, type of source, and the location or context in which the accounts were written.

Julie's interview was relatively brief because she simply skimmed each document, attempted to summarize the main idea, and decided if the document had captured her attention - after limited analytic commentary or dialogue with herself. Often silent and unsure of what to say about the documents, she occasionally required prompts from the interviewer ("What are you thinking...") in order for her to continue her commentary. She stated a few times that she was not "sure what she was supposed to be doing" with the documents. Like Meredith, she was left with a fuzzy impression of what happened at Lexington as a result of the conflicting accounts, but she implied that this resulted from her difficulty in sorting through layers and textures of meaning and language in her analysis.

Some of Julie's remarks include:

(On the letter to Franklin):
I have to go back and look at this again because the language is really difficult...(very long pause) This is hard for me to understand...(restates facts in the document in the author's words). I think

what has happened is that there has been some inhumane stuff going on, some people died, and others escaped. It's kind of stilted, like a speech. I may need to come back to this...(later) I think I would need to spend a lot more time on this.

(On the minutemen's statement):
This is much easier to understand, because it's a first-person account...(restates facts in authors' words). Sounds like they are just swearing what happened in front of three judges. The vocabulary in this is easy to understand. It makes it sound more like you're there.

(On the Barker diary):
(frequently pauses to restate facts in her own words)
This is from a different perspective, a British guy. It was pretty interesting. It's my second favorite next to document three. It's clear and easy to understand, and with a different point of view.

(On the newspaper account):
I'd have to reread this one because it goes on and on without any breaks in the sentences. It's not really clear (restates a few key phrases and facts from the document).

(On the Stiles account):
This is nice and clear. Is Ezra a she or a he? He seems to have an unbiased view of things...he's presenting both sides, whereas all the other ones have been one-sided...(restates key ideas in her own words). This is more of a secondhand account. The story has gone through a few people, so it's like gossip...It's probably been changed and probably is not very believable. I think it's interesting, clear, and storylike, like you'd see in a storybook. It's a lot of fun. But it's the least believable of all the ones I've seen so far. More like a legend or a tale, I guess.

(On the textbook account):
This is really short and very clear, but it's very dry and doesn't have the good details that make you want to read more. I don't remember a lot of what it said because it's just not too interesting. It doesn't make the story very juicy and soap-operish. It doesn't give you that feeling of, "Oh, I can't wait to read more. What's going to happen next?" It just tells you fact, fact, fact, just tells you what happened, with nothing personal to make reading interesting.

(On the Lister account):
(restates main ideas in her own words) I think this is good. It doesn't have as many details, but it's a nice, short, understandable personal account.

On the issue of the documents' credibility as sources of historical information, Julie seemed to equate credibility with interest and readability; hence, her preference for the fictional account. Julie clearly preferred **April Morning** as a source of information because it was the "most fun...It has vivid details, and it's full of emotion." However, she appeared unaware that this source was fictional and seemed to accept it as a factual account. She talked about the source in this way:

> It's more credible because of the way he talks about it. He's had a gut-wrenching experience, so he's able to remember a lot more than other people might - what he said and everything that happened. The emotion of the moment makes him believable. It's a very personal account. Also, this (source) is even easier to understand. It grabs your attention at the very beginning. I like this account a lot; it's my favorite so far. It's a good introduction to what happened and gives you the feeling of actually being there - you're right in the room. Lots of good adjectives and powerful expressions. It's much more exciting.

Her rejection of the textbook account as a credible source of information was strictly on the grounds of its lackluster version of events:

> The textbook is not credible to me because there's no substance. It's short, clear, but dry, and it has no interesting details. It's just a shell. Some of the other sources are better for making the story juicy. This account is just a bunch of facts...It just tells you exactly what happened. But it's not fun reading. It sounds more like a news program or the **New York Times**.

Interestingly, however, she believed that the textbook account was unbiased. Her conclusion about this source evoked some of the high school students in Wineburg's study, who believed that the textbook excerpt they read simply reported "the facts - just concise, journalistic in a way, just saying what happened," or as "straight information, a neutral account of the events" (Wineburg, 1991b, 501).

The lack of credibility that she assigned to the Stiles account was based on her view that it was "too gossipy...It's gone through too many people." Her assessment of this account highlighted another way in which she overlooked the nature and context of particular documents; that is, Julie believed that the Stiles account contained no bias. Even though Stiles' recollections were taken from his personal diary, she applied a different definition of bias to his version of events, describing it as "unbiased" because he "tried to see both sides of the story."

Clearly, Julie indicated that she appreciated the narrative aspects of history, and also that a story framework appealed to her junior-high students. Indeed, her assumptions about the significance of a narrative structure for younger learners are well supported in the literature (e.g., Levstik, 1986, 1989; Levstik and Pappas, 1987; Downey and Levstik, 1991; McKeown and Beck, 1994). However, for Julie, like the high schools students in Wineburg's study, "the textbook, not the eyewitness accounts, emerged as the

'primary' source" (Wineburg, 1991b, 501). She indicated that the textbook would be authoritative as a "basic tool" for "reliable facts and information." Julie explained that she would select other sources to "liven up the story," and acknowledged the value of different sources for a more entertaining version of history. Nonetheless, she did not mention the idea of using different sources together, comparing them for the purpose of corroboration, or for providing students with a richer, more complete understanding of historical events and perspectives.

## Jordan: History as a Search for Accuracy

In his analysis, Jordan's primary concern was for the accuracy of the sources, and he seemed to judge the credibility of the sources strictly on the basis of their corroborative capacities. Accuracy was often the only interpretive factor that he mentioned, with an occasional acknowledgment of point of view. Jordan commented minimally and did not appear engaged in the story that each document told. Like Julie, he frequently disregarded the identifying information about authorship at the end of each document. Some of his remarks were as follows:

> (On the legal statement):
> This was written to convince Franklin about the cause, so it didn't necessarily have to be accurate.
>
> (On the minutemen's statement and Barker's diary):
> This is relatively accurate, because he was there.

(On the newspaper account):
I think he has put two accounts together, the Concord story and the Lexington story, because his doesn't match the other accounts. It's probably relatively accurate, although it does reflect the royal point of view.

(On the Lister narrative):
I'm not sure how accurate this is, written so long after the fact. He could have had time to change that.

(On the Stiles account):
He's had half a year, but it sounds like it's relatively accurate because he talked to someone who did talk to Pitcairn, and he does try to show both viewpoints.

To the extent that Jordan incorporated different historical sources into his own teaching, he continued to emphasize his students' analysis of their accuracy. For example, he explained that he would have students read Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride" and compare it to "other documents" he provided in order to "see what parts of the poem are correct and incorrect."

Although Jordan pointed out that students' inquiry must be placed in context in order to determine "accuracy" and to "document conclusions," he did not explore contextual factors in his own analysis. For him, context meant "providing students with an outline of what happened before they use these documents...Otherwise, the document is out of context, and it just doesn't fit." Jordan occasionally referred to bias and perspective; however, like Julie and the high school students in Wineburg's study, his understanding of point of view was limited to which side a document was on. Indeed, Jordan seemed to imply that the

purpose of historical inquiry was eventually to take sides, to clearly come down on one side of a particular historical issue. He explained:

> I would read to them a British version and an American version, and then just say, "This is an American history class, so which one are you going to go along with?" We're going to go along with the American, and if people don't like it, that's just our prejudice. We do the same thing with the U.S.-Mexican War, with Mexican and American versions of what happened.

Jordan did not emphasize students' involvement in the construction of meaning. Rather, he explained that, in using different historical sources, he tended to select and interpret sources for his students, mostly because he believed that most of his students would find it "too difficult" to analyze and interpret historical information for themselves. For example, he said that his students would fail to recognize **April Morning** as fictional and would not understand the nature of this source; he remarked that "they don't see any difference between a primary and a secondary document." Jordan suggested that his students also had difficulty with ambiguity:

> If it's not cut and dried, I've lost them. I try to embroider, but I know that when it really gets down to what I need them to know, it had better be the cut and dried version.

Also:

> I use a lot of documents, but I use them after I've already made up my mind, based on college and high school texts that I get a composite of information from. I try to read as many sources as possible, and then make up my mind based on my own prejudices. I am teaching American history, and I'm not really interested in some of the

> revisionism that might confuse my students, some of the more bizarre theories. I try to give them some kind of an idea about exactly what happened.

Besides his assessment of his students' capacities to think historically, Jordan also seemed to believe that teaching historical thinking to students was impractical. In other words, this approach did not fit into his "practicality ethic" (Doyle and Ponder, 1977-78). For example, Jordan suggested that he had "too much material to cover to spend a lot of time on students' analysis." Also, he explained that the American Revolution unit was "just too early in the year" for students to know how to engage in historical analysis with documents and that students could handle this task "maybe later on in the course." However, he did not suggest how he might help students to reach that point later on in the course.

## DISCUSSION

Clearly, the teachers in this study revealed divergent interpretations of the discipline of history and its ways of knowing, as manifested specifically through the reading and analysis of historical texts.

The acquisition of a fund of historical knowledge clearly was not the primary issue for the teachers in this study. Each appeared to know a great deal of historical information. All three had taken a substantial number of history courses as undergraduates; Meredith and Jordan had earned master's degrees in history. Although Julie recently

had emerged from a teacher certification program, she had taken even more undergraduate history courses than the other two teachers. Nonetheless, for Julie, as well as for Jordan, the types and amount of knowledge gained from their history courses seemed not to have been a factor in stimulating their analysis of the documents. Julie seemed to have difficulty with reading and constructing meaning from the documents on Lexington; whereas Jordan's reading was cursory, and he appeared uninterested in engaging his students in a similar activity.

As mentioned earlier, several observers have commented on the relationship between teachers' academic coursework and effective teaching practice. In particular, Adler (1991) concluded that arguments for more of one course or another are not well supported, and that the link from more coursework to better teaching simply has not been made (215). Instead, her question, "To what extent is a teacher's social science education ongoing, rather than completed during the preservice?" may be crucial. Shaver (1983) went so far as to argue that teachers' professional education ought to focus on their inservice education, instead of the preservice period. He believed that teachers were likely to be more reflective about their teaching only after they had experienced classroom realities.

Though not the focus of this study, the strikingly divergent range and quality of these three teachers' inservice and preservice education in history suggest a

closer look at the role of such experiences in the development of teachers' historical thinking. Inservice workshops and other professional activities beyond university degree programs may or may not contribute to history teachers' epistemologies of their subject. Unfortunately, no well-defined body of research exists on inservice teacher education in history and, especially, in the development of historical thinking. In particular, as Adler pointed out, research on inservice education has not focused on "whether teachers have become more reflective practitioners," nor has it focused on "whether they've become better teachers in any sense" (216).

The role of preservice teacher education must not be discounted. Clearly within the purview of preservice social studies education courses and field experiences are the same historical and epistemological issues that inservice education must address. As previously discussed, these matters are as essential to the education of student teachers as is the accumulation of history courses. More research is needed on the role of preservice education in determining how teachers approach the teaching of history. Goodman and Adler's (1985) study of the perspectives of preservice teachers towards social studies education marks a significant starting point; in particular, they concluded that preservice education was a "crucial period for examining the development of teachers' perspectives" (p. 2). They lamented, moreover, that little research evidence

informs how preservice teachers "incorporate, or fail to incorporate, their thinking about social studies in actual practice" (p. 3). This observation subsequently was confirmed by Evans (1988), who concluded that teacher conceptions of history "are directly related to instructional issues and may shape student learning" and beliefs (p. 206). Student teachers, he argued, should "devote more explicit attention to the lessons of history, and more research is needed to clarify conceptions of the meaning of history and their impact on the educative process" (p. 203). In addition, secondary student teachers who go into the classroom with increasingly clearer conceptions of history likely will avoid the problem Evans described, in which "muddled" and "unclear" thinking of teachers plays a role in "poorly formed student conceptions...probably due to the lack of explicit attention to meaning" (p. 223).

## CONCLUSIONS

All three teachers' perspectives described in this study contain elements that, taken together, provide insight into aspects of the teaching of historical thinking. Students' construction of meaning from a variety of sources, the search for accuracy in historical accounts, and the appeal of narrative are all viable issues for inservice and preservice education in history and historical thinking. For example, Meredith's constructivist approach, nurtured by

her rich inservice experiences, led her to suggest that students could use these Revolutionary War sources in an intensive "document study activity" early in the school year in order to "really work on their skills of analysis." She reported that she would ask students to use the documents as a basis for identifying and discussing key factors in the examination of historical evidence. Then, later in the course, "I would be able to give them documents on other events and ask them interpretive essay questions that were more content-driven, and their analysis would come to them fairly easily." Clearly, Meredith was confident that she could teach historical understanding by introducing students to and guiding them through different historical sources from day one of the course.

Julie's concern for narrative and story, as well as Jordan's concern for accuracy, also have a significant place in the teaching of historical thinking. Preservice and inservice education experiences may help teachers to forge links between these concerns and the processes of engagement with text, to assemble and use a variety of historical sources, and to explore the relationships and contexts of these sources.

Levstik and Pappas (1987) concluded that "the context in which history is presented, examined, and discussed may be the crucial factor that will decide whether elementary children come to understand and engage in history...The present elementary history curriculum is too narrow...and

appears to underestimate children's ability to deal with historical content" (p. 14). The same conclusion seems applicable to secondary students. Because students are not likely to think historically unless their teachers do so, future research must continue to expand the discussion of how teachers think historically and how they deal with historical content.

Research involving more history teachers in a variety of settings is needed in order to confirm and extend the findings of this exploratory inquiry. Moreover, additional study of aspects of teachers' historical thinking seems warranted. Finally, these teachers' actual classroom use of historical texts and different genres of historical literature - including biography, fiction, letters, diaries, and secondary texts - constitutes a rich area for further exploration. In order fully to comprehend the impact of different historical sources upon students' historical thinking, additional knowledge is needed about how teachers themselves perceive and interpret these sources.

Clearly, much research suggests that the teaching of historical thinking is a viable context for students' learning. Research in this area is essential to the exploration of both teachers' and students' understanding of history and the relationship between the two. Illumination of that relationship should lead to enhanced history teaching practice and a more powerful history curriculum for students.

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