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Summarizing Instruction in 11th-Grade U.S. History Course

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Introduction

An area of common concern in U.S. education is student achievement. Educators are evaluated on the performance of their students, and poor performance by students on standardized assessments can be viewed as a reflection of ineffective teaching. Faced with this dilemma, teachers look for ways to increase student achievement. Along with helping students master content standards to increase student achievement, non-cognitive development (e.g., attitude and engagement) is also important to academic success (Corso, Bundick, Quaglia & Haywood, 2013). Also, school leaders search for new ways to foster teacher pedagogy and to support student comprehension and retention of content while weighing the additional work on the part of students and teachers (Easton-Brooks, 2015; Freire, 1997; Paris, 2012). The use of summarization strategies was considered in this study to examine its effects on students' academic achievement, attitude, and engagement within U.S. History.

A need exists for instructional strategies that help students acquire knowledge of U.S. History effectively, particularly with adolescent learners, to set the stage for a critical lens about U.S. societal norms and how race is a much-needed addition to the conversation within social studies education. While the focus of this study does not include Critical Race Theory (CRT) within contemporary social studies pedagogy (Chandler, 2015; Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011), the researchers

acknowledge this void and the importance of CRT and the conversation on how to teach about race within the social science disciplines to avoid the colorblind notion about teaching (Alexander, 2012, 2014; Gabriel, Martinez, & Obiakor, 2015; Valencia, 2010).

This study focused on a best practice strategy to help students learn social studies by using summarizing strategies for learning new content knowledge. Summarizing strategies can also increase levels of attitude and engagement for all students, and may help support struggling students, and/or Emergent Bilinguals (Ennis, 2016; Szpara, & Ahmad, 2007). Further study using summarizing strategies, along with CRT, may help social studies students develop the content knowledge and necessary critical dialogue so that all students, including racialized or oppressed students from diverse backgrounds, can further participate democratically and make better decisions, empowered to voice their informed positions.

Student Achievement in U.S. History

Many students participate in United States History standardized exams. Standardized U.S. History exams assess students' "knowledge of democracy, culture, technological and economic changes, and America's changing role in the world" (National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2014, 1st para). According to NAEP, from 1994—the first time the test was administered—until 2014 eighth grade student average scores on the U.S. History exam increased eight points from 259 to 267.

The results of this national assessment revealed that overall there were no significant gains made in U.S. History scores between the last time that the test was administered in 2010 and the most recent assessment in 2014 (NAEP, 2014). The

scores reflect that approximately 18% of students performed at or above the proficient level. The only groups to see a marginal increase in test scores were Latin@s (Martinez, 2016; NAEP, 2014). Scores from this test reflect that there is room for improvement in the comprehension of U.S. History by students across the United States (NAEP, 2014).

According to a report from the Washington, D.C.—based Center on Education Policy, a majority of the nation’s school districts report an increase in learning time for the areas of language arts and mathematics in elementary schools since the NCLB Act became law in 2002, while learning time spent on other subjects has fallen by nearly one-third during the same time (Dadi, 2015). These findings suggest that, starting from an early age; students are not spending as much time learning social studies. In addition to increasing time spent on the areas of language arts and mathematics, many school districts appear to be changing their curriculum to provide a greater emphasis on content and skills covered on high-stakes state tests used for the purposes of measuring student performance and college readiness, which does not include the area of social studies (Banks, 2012; Duncan, 2011).

Students’ performance on the state’s standardized assessment are evaluated as *beginning*, *developing*, *proficient*, or *distinguished* for each content standard. Scores at the high school where this study took place, a small Southeastern city school with a large student population, were slightly higher than the average 2015 state scores. However, results of this test showed that approximately 49% of the students at the research school tested in the area of U.S. History scored as beginning or developing levels. Based on the information gained from the state standardized assessment, almost half of U.S. History students are not

demonstrating the expected achievement level for the mastery of U.S. History (State Department of Education [State DOE], 2015).

Additionally, the 2014 College and Career Ready Performance Indicator (CCRPI) suggests that the school’s student subgroups – African American, Hispanic/Latin@, students with disabilities and students who are economically disadvantaged—have failed to meet their state or subgroup performance goals (State DOE, 2014). These results reflect the need to improve instructional strategies to promote increased performance across the board for all students (Banks, 2012).

State Standardized Assessment in U.S. History: Research school.

As part of the school’s commitment to excellence in the area of student achievement, the School Improvement Plan at the target school identified as one of its goals, the attainment of high academic success by all students, as measured by achievement on the statewide U.S. History End of Course Test. One of the specific objectives identified in this goal was to increase the number of students who meet or exceed the standards on the state standardized assessments. Within each academic department, scores were analyzed, and plans were made to increase student achievement. The social studies department met in course-specific grade-level groups to gain a better understanding of where curriculum or instructional changes might improve students’ performance. Once areas of weakness were determined, strategies for improving scores were discussed, and expectations for implementation of these strategies were expected. One of the strategies discussed for improvement of student scores included summarization strategies. The goal ultimately was to help all students increase their level of

proficiency on the state's standardized assessment. The strategy relevant to this study was the use of summarizing strategies to improve reading comprehension and retention of content knowledge for improvement of 11th grade U.S. History state standardized assessment scores. Summarizing strategies were incorporated into the instructional curriculum to gauge the use of this strategy on student comprehension and performance. Teachers also periodically met within their own subject-specific Performance Learning Communities (PLC) to discuss the results of the incorporation of these strategies.

Summarizing Strategies

Students' limited achievement on U.S. History standardized tests suggests a need to improve student's comprehension of U.S. History. While no one strategy will solve this problem on its own, there are data to suggest that teaching students to "chunk" information and decide what is important from what is not, can increase their chances of long-term memory of information, as well as comprehension (Dadi, 2015; Tate, 1997). According to Joseph (2009), summarizing strategies during instruction are very versatile and can be used at the beginning, middle, or end of the lesson and across all academic areas. Having students summarize at the conclusion of a topic is also a quick way to assess what students have learned. Short summarizing activities can help teachers easily determine what standards students are mastering and which they are still having difficulties with before high-stakes standardized tests are administered (Dadi, 2015). For example, a summarization strategy known as "ticket out the door" can be used at the end of a lesson to gauge student comprehension. Using this strategy, teachers can ask students to explain the key ideas learned in the lesson. This assignment can quickly assess students' knowledge. A

lack of mastery may reflect the need to reteach or review the content again (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

Teachers of social studies are faced with the task of assisting students in the acquisition of important knowledge, concepts, and skills (Easton-Brooks, 2015). The social studies curriculum can include a variety of engaging summarization strategies that are both beneficial for student content retention and comprehension (Banks, 2012; Fiorella & Mayer, 2016; Jeanmarie-Gardner, 2013).

Review of the Literature

High school social studies courses, like U.S. History, cover a vast array of topics spanning many years and with numerous references to people, places, and events in history. This amount of information can be overwhelming for many students. There are a number of teaching strategies that can be used with students to help them with content retention. The use of content knowledge summarization strategies is a promising strategy to improve academic achievement and non-cognitive development of students in U.S. History courses.

Low Student Achievement in Social Studies

Different research studies suggest that students completing high school social studies courses struggle with comprehending and retaining content knowledge (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Heafner, & Fitchett, 2015). According to data collected from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), there was no significant change in the average score for U.S. History students between the 2010 and 2014 tests. Furthermore, despite marginal increase in test scores for Latin@s, data also show that there were no significant changes in the racial/ethnic U.S. History score gaps since

either 1994 or 2010; however, the score difference between male and female students widened since 1994, with male students scoring four points higher than female students in 2014 (NAEP, 2014). According to the NAEP (2014), only two out of ten students showed proficient knowledge of U.S. History.

According to Jeanmarie-Gardner (2013), “the lack of proficiency in reading and writing in social studies is exacerbated by the fact that schools are spending far less time on social studies instruction in the face of increasing pressure to improve standardized test scores in reading and mathematics” (p. 25). A challenge faced by social studies teachers is in students’ competency to interpret different genres of texts that are read more frequently in social studies than in other subject areas (McKeown et al., 2009). For example, in a U.S. History class, a student may be asked to read and interpret from the class textbook, a primary source such as a speech, or interpret information from a visual text, like a map or timeline. While these texts may provide more variety and flexibility in teaching, it may also be perceived as confusing and difficult for students, especially for those who may also have other learning challenges. Therefore, the teacher may devise grade-level appropriate strategies within the curriculum to help students make sense of the texts they encounter so that they can make long-term connections to the content they are learning (Easton-Brooks, 2015; Heafner, & Fitchett, 2015; Mateos, Martín, Villalón, & Luna, 2007).

According to the National Council for the Social Studies (2008), many students have not learned effective comprehension strategies needed to be successful social studies learners, as evidenced by poor performance of many students on national measures of social studies knowledge.

Heafner and Fitchett (2015) suggest that all students need opportunities to learn, especially for increasing the comprehension of social studies knowledge. McCulley and Osman (2015) found that when social studies instruction embeds text- processing activities such as student led summarization, learning outcomes improved. Research shows that there are several active reading strategies that help support students’ learning of social studies (Banks, 2012). However, reading strategies must be taught and modeled before being effectively used by learners and the progress of their results measured (Dadi, 2015). For example, students who have not been taught how to use a storyboard graphic organizer may have to be shown an example of what a finished product may look like before they begin. However, possibly because of time-consumption, some teachers become frustrated with the process of scaffolding comprehension strategies and may choose not to do it all (Easton-Brooks, 2015; Marzano et al., 2001).

Summarizing and Student Achievement in High School Social Studies

Summarization is among the most effective teaching and learning strategies (Fiorella & Mayer, 2016; Marzano et al., 2001). Summarizing strategies support comprehension in reading by helping students to monitor for comprehension, determine the relative importance of ideas, and organize the connections between ideas (Littlefield, 2011; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, McGoldrick, & Kurita, 1989). Bennett and Hinde (2015) list the ability to organize ideas in summary form as an essential process for learning social studies. When teachers summarize key ideas throughout their lesson and also have students summarize their learning, they often note an increase in students’ retention of content knowledge. For example, teachers

can provide a “bell ringer” assignment at the beginning of the class period requiring students to write a brief two-three sentences summary of the main idea from the previous day’s lesson. Students can then share these summaries with peers before new content is addressed. In this effort, writing and sharing of ideas also support language development, particularly for struggling readers and English language learners (Bowman-Perrott, deMarín, Mahadevan, & Etchells, 2016; Ennis, 2016; Szpara, & Ahmad, 2007).

When students are asked to summarize, they pay closer attention to what is read (Dadi, 2015). This process allows them to integrate ideas and create generalizations about the content that is read. Although condensing the information may not be an especially easy task for students to perform, research suggests that when students chunk content knowledge into short summaries using their own words, they are more likely to retrieve that knowledge to accomplish a learning task (Buehl, 2001). This process is evident when students are able to connect their summaries to their own prior knowledge and experiences about the topic (Joseph, 2009).

Summarizing as a Strategy for Learning

There are many different types of summarizations strategies, but most are very short and quick activities that require students to take content information that they have learned, and then summarize main ideas using their own words (Jeanmarie-Gardener, 2013). Summarizing strategies help students look at the “big picture,” and then decide what information is most important and what information is irrelevant to the topic (Dadi, 2015). As a strategy, summarizing can help students synthesize information in more purposeful ways, which will help with long-term comprehension (Dunlosky et al., 2013). An instructional benefit of summarization strategies for

teachers is that they can be used effectively as formative assessments without requiring much instructional time (Riddell, 2016). Additionally, summarizing strategies can be used in almost every academic area with a minimum amount of scaffolding by the teacher (Barnes, 2015; McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009).

There are different types of summarizing strategies that be used as both an activation strategy and as an end of lesson close. Marzano et al., (2001) suggest the GIST summarizing strategy. In this strategy, students who used the GIST strategy explain the “gist” of what they read by writing a short and precise summary about what they read in 20 words or less. Also, requiring students to restate the main idea(s) in their own words helps students build understanding and brings to light misunderstandings and misconceptions about the content. It also helps students make their own connections and raise questions about the reading or learning experience (Marzano et al., 2001). Buehl (2001) suggests using the magnet summaries which help students expand on key terms or concepts from a reading. These “magnet” words help students organize information that becomes the basis for student-created summaries. Buehl (2001) shares that just as magnets attract metal, magnet words attract information. As another strategy, he also suggests the use of graphic organizers such as the KWL Chart or summary frames. Joseph (2009), suggests using the summarizing strategy of Think-Pair-Share, where students think individually about a topic they have read and then decide what is most important to share with another student, who is the partner in this activity. McKeown et al., (2009) suggest that students summarize knowledge through writing, orally, individually or with other students, and using music or pictures.

Though many studies report on various

types of effective summarizing strategies on student learning, there was limited research specific to its benefits in the high school social studies setting (Banks, 2012). Moreover, studies specifically related to the topic of summarizing in U.S. History are scant. There are also concerns about whether the use of summarizing strategies will boost students' performance on later criterion tests that address national and state standards. More research was needed to fill in the gaps about the use of summarizing strategies, especially in the U.S. History classroom (Carter, Welner, & Ladson-Billings, 2013; Gorski, 2013; Tate, 1997). For example, teachers may benefit from knowing which groups of students see the most gains from the use of summarizing techniques (Easton-Brooks, 2015; Massey & Heafner, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if the use of summarizing instruction, as compared to direct instruction has an effect on students' academic achievement, attitude, and engagement towards learning U.S. History. Findings from this study may better inform teachers, academic coaches, school leaders, and parents at the target school, school district, and other similar national schools about the effects of this strategy on student learning.

Research Questions

Research question 1. Will 11th-grade U.S. History student achievement increase with summarizing instruction compared to direct instruction?

Research question 2. Will 11th-grade U.S. History student attitudes toward content improve with summarizing instruction compared direct instruction?

Research question 3. Will 11th-grade U.S. History student engagement increase with summarizing instruction compared to

direct instruction?

Definitions of Independent Variables

Summarizing instruction. Summarizing instruction is a concluding strategy and set of statements and procedures used to show how students have condensed content knowledge to get to the core ideas of a larger chunk of knowledge; a set of steps that students followed to determine the gist of the information.

Direct instruction. Direct instruction is the use of straightforward, explicit teaching techniques to teach a specific skill. Direct instruction was used with the control group of U.S. History students.

Definitions of Independent Variables

Academic achievement. Academic achievement is defined broadly as the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic achievement was measured by the growth gained by U.S. History students between their unit pre and posttest scores.

Attitude toward learning. Attitude is defined as the feelings or perceptions that a student has toward his/her ability to learn a specific subject or concept. A Likert scale survey was used to measure students' attitudes of both groups of participants toward learning U.S. History at the beginning and at the conclusion of the intervention.

Student engagement. Engagement is defined as "the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education" (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2016, first para). Student engagement was measured by a student engagement checklist to observe behaviors such as body language, participation, focus, and confidence. Fieldnotes describing students' engagement were also recorded

during the study.

Methods

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at a high school in a small city located in a Southeastern state. There were 12 schools in the local school district. Seven of the schools were elementary, three were middle schools, and there was one high school and one alternative school. Together, the schools were populated by 10,166 students. Sixty-four percent of the district population was White, and 22% were Black.

Hispanics/Latin@s made up 8%, and another 4% were classified as Multiracial. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students was 49%, and the percentage of students with disabilities was 13%. Those classified as migrant students made up less than 1% (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2013).

The enrollment of the high school was 2,911 students. Whites were the largest identified racial group, at 65%. An additional 23% of the students were identified as Black, 6% as Hispanic/Latin@, and 3% as Multiracial. Those identified as economically disadvantaged made up 41%, and disabled made up 11%. Less than 1% of the students were identified as migrant (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2013).

There were 59 U.S. History students who participated in the study. Participants were a convenience sample and were randomly assigned based on scheduling needs and student choice of coursework. Twenty-seven ($n = 27$) of the students were in first block. Twelve of the students were male, and 15 were female. There were 18 White students, two Multiracial, and seven were Black. There were ten students who were identified as economically disadvantaged. This class served as the

control group, and as such, did not receive the intervention strategy. The group receiving the summarizing instruction in the study was fourth block. There were 32 ($n = 32$) students who participated, 28 of whom were identified as White, two who were Multiracial, and two Latin@s. Fourteen of the students were males, and 18 were females. Seven of these students were identified as economically disadvantaged. Demographic information is depicted below in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Direct Instruction and Summarizing Instruction Groups

| Characteristics | Total Sample $N = 59$ | Direct Instruction Group $n = 27$ | Summarizing Instruction Group $n = 32$ |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 44% | 44% | 44% |
| Female | 56% | 56% | 56% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | |
| White | 78% | 67% | 88% |
| Black | 12% | 26% | 0% |
| Hispanic | 3% | 0% | 6% |
| Multiracial | 7% | 7% | 6% |
| Students with Disabilities | 5% | 3% | 6% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 29% | 37% | 22% |
| Prior Test Scores | | | |
| Mean | | 85.15 | 87.25 |
| SD | | 5.12 | 4.18 |

The two groups were, as shown in Table 1, similar in terms of ethnic, gender, economic, and ability measures, and the two classes were similar enough for comparison.

The teacher-researcher was a veteran teacher with 17 years of teaching experience in various areas of the social studies disciplines, and was a class sponsor for the junior class. The teacher-researcher conducted the study with the support and guidance of the school leader and numerous other classroom teachers as advisors; however, there were no other researchers participating in this study within the classroom.

Intervention

This research project was approved by the school leader and curriculum director, and had university IRB approval. Parents

were notified in writing that the study was being conducted and were given the opportunity to have their child excluded from the study by informed consent. No parent excluded their child from the study in either class. The teacher-researcher provided instruction to students on how to use the summarizing intervention. It was also part of the teacher-researcher's role to examine student examples of summarizing as evidence of students' knowledge of the content standards.

During the period of this study, the state standards from the U.S. History course were taught to both the direct instruction class and the summarizing instruction class. U.S. History is a required course for all 11th-grade students at the school. Students chose to take this advanced course, but were not able to choose the teacher or block in which they would take the class. Students were selected and placed into a U.S. History class at the beginning of the semester using a computerized scheduling program created specifically for this school.

Both first and fourth block classes were taught following the same U.S. History curriculum standards set forth by the State. The instructional format for both classes utilized information from the U.S. History textbook and teacher-generated PowerPoint lectures. Students in both classes were given summative evaluations in the form of unit assessments, and both took the same final assessment worth 20% of the final course grade. However, in the Summarizing Instruction group, instruction also included frequent informal formative assessments administered as part of the summarizing instruction. Summarizing strategies in the form of activities were provided to students at the conclusion of a new topic or idea. The teacher-researcher then gauged students' understanding of the content by evaluating students' ability to correctly summarize knowledge in their own words. The pacing

of both classes was identical regarding the content addressed in each block. The one identifiable difference between the first block class and the fourth block class was the utilization of a strategy for summarizing instruction with the Summarizing Instruction group. However, all students in both classes were expected to demonstrate mastery of the unit standards.

On the first day of a new unit, both groups completed a pretest to establish students' prior content knowledge. This initial pre-assessment included questions addressing content knowledge to be taught throughout the unit, but students were not expected to demonstrate mastery of the content standards. Students in both classes were also administered the same posttest after instruction for the unit had occurred. Progress between the initial assessment and the post-assessment was measured to determine the gains made by students in each group.

Students within the first block class were taught using direct instruction. Direct instruction involved the teacher-researcher presenting students with new U.S. History content using the textbook, handouts, and PowerPoints. Students in the Direct Instruction group also completed teacher-generated questions and graphic organizers designed to engage students in content, but which did not specifically require students to summarize concepts learned using their own thoughts and ideas.

Students within the fourth block class were taught to use summarizing instruction. The students receiving this type of instruction were also presented with new U.S. History content using the same methods as students receiving the direct instruction; however, these students were also required to summarize the information on new content using their own words. In the Summarizing Instruction group, the teacher-researcher used summaries on a

daily basis, either as an activating or closing strategy. Each summarizing strategy was designed as a 10 to 15- minute formative assessment activity. The teacher-researcher also collected student assignments to assess learning for the purpose of making adjustments to lesson plans for the following day to address concepts that students had not mastered.

Data Collection

In this study, summarizing instruction was used to determine whether its use could increase students' academic achievement, attitude, and engagement toward U.S. History. Unit assessments, an attitude survey, a student engagement checklist, and fieldnotes were instruments used to measure the effects of summarizing instruction on secondary U.S. History students.

Assessment. A United States History assessment for the unit taught during this study consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions that pertained to the unit (Lapsansky-Werner, 2012). The assessments were administered to students before and after unit instruction. Students in both the Direct Instruction group and the Summarization Instruction group were given 60 minutes to complete the assessment. Assessments were scored using a scanner to ensure accurate scoring. Results from the pretest were not shared with students until students had completed the unit test. This procedure was followed to ensure results on the posttest reflected students' acquired knowledge and not memorization skills.

Content of both pretests and posttests were reviewed by another teacher-researcher and by members of the school's social studies Direct Instruction group compared to the Summarizing Instruction group to ensure that assessments were aligned with the State performance standards (Creswell, 2014). Gains in achievement were statistically

compared using a two-tailed t test to determine if there was a difference in mean academic gains from pretest scores to posttest scores of the direct instruction group compared to the summarizing instruction group.

Attitude survey. The attitude survey measured student attitudes toward their own learning and their understanding of U.S. History (Lapsansky-Werner, 2012). The survey was reviewed for validity by other teacher-researchers and members of the school's social studies department to assure that items appropriately addressed the specific uses of the survey (Creswell, 2014). The survey was comprised of two sections: personal information (4 questions) and attitudes about knowledge and understanding of U.S. History (9 questions). The personal information section of the survey required students to circle the answer that best applied to them. Students in both the direct instruction group and the summarizing instruction group completed the survey using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The teacher-researcher analyzed students' responses to each question. The same survey was administered to the same sample of students at the beginning and end of the study.

A two-tailed t test was used to compare data collected at the beginning and end of the study to determine the strength of attitudes toward the two strategies and whether their attitudes toward summarizing instruction in U.S. History had changed (Creswell, 2014).

Student engagement. A Student Engagement Checklist developed by the International Center for Leadership in Education (Jones, 2009) was used to measure classroom engagement during classroom vocabulary instruction. Students' body language, verbal participation, and

confidence were areas of focus of the student engagement checklist. The checklist was utilized in both classes and was scored by the teacher-researcher while students were involved in class activities and from memory. Data from the checklist were recorded, and percentages of the classes who were engaged at the checklist levels were computed. Those percentages were considered in order to compare students' levels of engagement in U.S. History for the two groups.

A two-tailed *t* test was performed to determine if there was a difference in student engagement between the Direct Instruction group and the Summarizing Instruction group. A comparison of the means and standard deviations for both groups was also used to determine if the group receiving summarizing instruction was more engaged than the students receiving direct instruction. The data from the checklist was also supplemented by information obtained from the teacher fieldnotes to help construct an accurate analysis of student engagement (Creswell, 2014).

Fieldnotes. The teacher-researcher fieldnotes were used to record student activities during class discussions and small-group activities. While students worked in small groups and engaged in class discussions, the teacher-researcher circulated and recorded observations of conversations, affect, and dialogue indicating levels of student confidence. Collected qualitative data supplemented information from the student engagement checklist to determine the level of student engagement in U.S. History (Creswell, 2014).

Results

The purpose of this research was to compare student achievement, attitudes, and engagement between two U.S. History classes using two different types of classroom instruction. The unit test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions covering state performance standards for this unit. The achievement scores for the two groups were analyzed using means and standard deviations and a two-tailed *t* test assuming equal variances. The results of the pretest and posttest for the Direct Instruction group ($n = 27$) and the Summarizing Instruction group ($n = 32$) are found in Table 2.

Table 2

| | Pretest | | Posttest | | Mean Increase | Comparison of Means | |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------|---------------------|----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | | <i>t</i> value | <i>p</i> |
| DI ($n = 27$) | 50.67 | 11.42 | 82.15 | 6.97 | 31.63 | -0.81 | 0.50 |
| SI ($n = 32$) | 48.63 | 16.53 | 83.25 | 7.30 | 34.38 | | |

Note. DI- Direct Instruction group; SI- Summarizing Instruction group
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The results in Table 2 indicate that, while both groups showed significant improvement between pretest and posttest unit test scores, the students in the group that received summarizing instruction ($M = 34.38$) made slightly higher gains in their scores than the group that received direct instruction ($M = 31.63$). However, the results do not indicate that the gains made by the students receiving summarizing strategies were statistically significantly different ($t(57) = -0.81, p > .05$) from those of students receiving direct instruction. Cohen's *d* was also calculated to determine the effect-size correlation of the treatment in this study. The effect size was determined to be small ($d = 0.22$), which suggests that an average student receiving summarizing instruction would be expected to outscore approximately 58% of the students who received direct instruction.

Both groups in the study were given a nine-item attitude survey before the research period began and again at the end of the study. The purpose of the survey was to measure students' attitudes toward topics in U.S. History, as well as their preference for how they learned these concepts. The survey was scored using a Likert scale with ratings ranging from 1 to 5, with 1= *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. The data collected for the group that received direct instruction can be found in Table 3, while data obtained for the summarizing instruction group is noted in Table 4.

The data in Table 3 related to direct instruction were obtained using a paired, two-tailed *t* test assuming equal variance. The results of the survey indicated that there were a number of items reflecting a significant improvement in students' attitudes from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Participant responses showed statistically significant improvements for survey items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, which indicates that while students find U.S History to be a difficult subject to learn, they believe that summarizing the information in their own words helped them to understand and remember the information longer. While the students in the direct instruction group were not provided with summarizing strategies during the intervention period, the data reflect that students believed that this is a valid strategy for helping them to develop a deeper understanding of the information they are learning. Because summarizing activities can be used in any disciplinary area, most students have participated in these activities before.

Table 3

Comparison of Survey Results Pre- and Post-Intervention for Direct Instruction Group

| Survey Item | Pre-Intervention | | Post-Intervention | | p |
|--|------------------|------|-------------------|------|----------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | |
| 1. I find the information in U.S. History to be difficult. | 3.30 | 0.68 | 2.70 | 0.83 | 0.002** |
| 2. I find US History to be intriguing and exciting. | 2.96 | 0.96 | 3.19 | 0.77 | 0.14 |
| 3. I find the textbook and other supplemental materials in U.S. History to be difficult to understand. | 3.22 | 0.41 | 2.89 | 0.72 | 0.009** |
| 4. When learning new information in U.S. History, I learn best by having the teacher explain the information using notes and worksheets. | 3.30 | 0.52 | 3.78 | 0.56 | <.001*** |
| 5. After learning new information in U.S. History, I can put the information into my own words. | 3.33 | 0.38 | 3.63 | 0.32 | 0.004** |
| 6. Summarizing information in my own words helps me to develop a deeper understanding of the information. | 3.63 | 0.32 | 4.19 | 0.31 | <.001*** |
| 7. When learning new information, I can remember it longer if I put it into my own words. | 3.63 | 0.32 | 3.96 | 0.34 | 0.009** |
| 8. When learning new information, I prefer to do activities which require me to immediately interact with the information (i.e. group activities, peer instruction, etc.). | 4.00 | 0.46 | 4.67 | 0.23 | <.001*** |
| 9. I believe another form of instruction will help me retain new U.S. History information. | 4.11 | 0.48 | 4.19 | 0.54 | 0.69 |

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

The data in Table 4 showed that students' attitudes about the use of summarizing instruction were significantly more positive after the intervention period. There was a statistically significant increase in their beliefs in their ability to put new information into their own words ($t(31) = -7.13, p < .001$), as well as their confidence in remembering the information longer ($t(31) = -4.71, p < .001$). Students in the summarizing instruction group also indicated that the summarization of information into their own words helped them to develop a deeper understanding of the information.

Table 4

Comparison of Survey Results Pre- and Post-Intervention for Summarizing Instruction Group

| Survey Item | Pre-Intervention | | Post-Intervention | | p |
|--|------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | |
| 1. I find the information in U.S. History to be difficult. | 3.06 | 0.90 | 2.69 | 0.93 | 0.008** |
| 2. I find US History to be intriguing and exciting. | 2.94 | 0.51 | 2.94 | 0.71 | 0.10 |
| 3. I find the textbook and other supplemental materials in U.S. History to be difficult to understand. | 3.00 | 0.65 | 2.81 | 0.67 | 0.14 |
| 4. When learning new information in U.S. History, I learn best by having the teacher explain the information using notes and worksheets. | 3.81 | 0.42 | 4.12 | 0.63 | 0.04* |
| 5. After learning new information in U.S. History, I can put the information into my own words. | 3.25 | 0.39 | 4.06 | 0.38 | < .001*** |
| 6. Summarizing information in my own words helps me to develop a deeper understanding of the information. | 3.50 | 0.32 | 4.28 | 0.34 | < .001*** |
| 7. When learning new information, I can remember it longer if I put it into my own words. | 3.44 | 0.25 | 4.09 | 0.60 | < .001*** |
| 8. When learning new information, I prefer to do activities which require me to immediately interact with the information (i.e. group activities, peer instruction, etc.). | 3.94 | 0.51 | 4.44 | 0.38 | < .001*** |
| 9. I believe another form of instruction will help me retain new U.S. History information. | 3.78 | 0.50 | 3.63 | 0.69 | 0.33 |

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

During the study, the teacher-researcher collected information on student engagement for both groups. The Student Engagement Checklist was used three times per week in each group during the research period, to record information about students' body language, focus, participation, confidence and excitement about the content. The results were tallied and recorded as percentages to show the level of student engagement for each item on the checklist. The results show that there was a much larger percentage of students in the Summarizing Instruction group who exhibited positive body language, such as keeping their eyes on the teacher and nodding in response to questions, than in the direct instruction group. The summarizing instruction group also had a significantly higher number of students who participated by volunteering to answer questions and/or

contributed to class discussions over the content. The results gathered to determine students' levels of engagement are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Student Engagement Checklist: Comparison of Direct Instruction and Summarizing Instruction.

| Observation Criteria | Positive Body Language | Consistent Focus | Participation | Student Confidence | Fun and Excitement |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| DI | 69% | 72% | 71% | 70% | 65% |
| SI | 82% | 79% | 85% | 78% | 77% |

Note. DI- Direct Instruction group; SI- Summarizing Instruction group

Another instrument used by the teacher-researcher to determine student engagement was the Teacher Fieldnotes Form. Fieldnotes were recorded for both groups on the days when the Student Engagement Checklist was not used. Specific observations about students' engagement and understanding during instruction were recorded and then later analyzed to make connections between the two. The overall findings gathered in the fieldnotes revealed that students' in the summarizing instruction group were more actively engaged and focused during the explanation of new content because they understood the expectation to immediately interact with this information. On one day, the teacher-researcher noted several students making real-world connections from present political parties to the past political parties being discussed by the teacher (Sleeter, 2015). Also noted in the fieldnotes was that the students receiving direct instruction were less likely to ask questions and participate in class discussions over new content than were students receiving summarizing instruction.

Discussion

In order to determine the effects of summarizing instruction on student achievement, attitudes pertaining to U.S. History information and instruction, and

engagement during instruction, the teacher-researcher compared the results of data in all three areas with the data of students who received direct instruction during the same unit of study. The data collected during the study was obtained from students who were enrolled in an 11th-grade U.S. History class. One group of students received traditional direct instruction, while the other group of students received summarizing instruction.

Did the use of summarizing instruction improve achievement scores for 11th-grade U.S. History students when compared to those of students who received direct instruction? After examining the data, it was determined that students who received summarizing instruction ($M = 34.38$) made slightly higher mean gains from pretests to unit posttests than students who received direct instruction ($M = 31.63$); however the difference in achievement between the two groups was not statistically significant ($t(57) = -0.81, p > .05$). It was also noted that the treatment of summarizing instruction had a small effect ($d = 0.22$). Students receiving summarizing instruction were not expected to experience a significant gain in academic achievement. These results support the notion made by Massey and Heafner (2004), that the differences in groups of students may yield differing levels of achievement using summarizing instruction. Both groups that participated in this study were pre-advanced placement U.S. History students who overall have higher achievement scores than do most of the students enrolled in college-preparatory U.S. History classes at the research school. It is also possible that consistent use of a summarizing strategy over a longer period of time may yield more positive achievement gains, or it is possible that the differences in gains may not change.

Did 11th-grade U.S. History student attitudes improve with summarizing instruction compared to students having only direct instruction? Results from the

survey administered to both groups revealed that, while both groups of students showed more confidence in their abilities to understand and interact with information in U.S. History, students in the summarizing instruction group ($M = 4.06$) showed a higher level of confidence in their ability to summarize new information learned in U.S. History in their own words than the group that received direct instruction ($M = 3.63$). Additionally, post-intervention survey results showed that students who received summarizing instruction ($M = 4.09$) also believed that summarizing new content knowledge into their own words helped them to remember the content longer than those that received direct instruction ($M = 3.96$). These results are consistent with research by Buehl (2001), who asserted that although summarizing may be a difficult task for some students, students who summarize new content knowledge into their own words are more easily able to retrieve the content knowledge with future learning tasks. While students in both groups found the content in U.S. History to be challenging, a higher number of students in the direct instruction group responded on their post-intervention survey that they preferred a different method of instruction than they received during the study. Data from these surveys suggested that students who received summarizing instruction believed that this type of instruction was an effective method of instruction for acquiring and retaining new content in U.S. History, which is consistent with the findings of Fiorella and Mayer (2016) and Marzano et al. (2001), who assert that summarizing strategies help students connect to their reading or learning experience. Connecting to the content can improve students' confidence and their attitudes toward the subject. Student confidence may pay off larger dividends in the future for non-cognitive skill development than academic

achievement on a unit test.

Did student engagement increase with summarizing instruction as compared to students having only direct instruction? Student engagement was measured in this study by using a student-engagement checklist combined with observations recorded in the teacher-researcher's fieldnotes. The checklist was used 3 times a week in both groups to gauge students' engagement and behaviors in the following areas: body language, focus, participation, confidence and excitement about the content. The results from the engagement checklist revealed that students who received summarizing instruction were more engaged in different areas of learning compared to the students who received direct instruction during the research period. The two areas in which the summarizing instruction students scored the highest when compared to direct instruction students was in positive body language (SI 82%, DI 69%) and participation (SI 85%, DI 71%). These results reinforce Barnes' (2015) assumption that for students to be successful in social studies courses they must become active learners. In addition to the checklists, the teacher-researcher also recorded observations about student engagement using a FieldNotes. Observations were recorded about students in both groups two times a week. Information was obtained regarding students' specific responses to activities and understanding of U.S. History lessons. Based on the information gathered from both of these instruments, the teacher-researcher concluded that the use of summarizing instruction had a positive impact on student engagement.

Significance/Impact on Student Learning

A number of researchers suggest that summarizing strategies have a positive impact on student learning (Barnes, 2015; Buehl, 2001; Fiorella & Mayer, 2016;

Marzano et al., 2001). The findings of the current study reflected that while there was not a statistically significant increase in achievement data for students who received summarizing instruction, summarizing strategies improved students' attitudes about U.S. History, as well as their engagement during instruction. In addition, students who received summarizing instruction reported higher retention rates of knowledge and understanding of new content knowledge in U.S. History than did students who received direct instruction. It is also important to note that while the effect size of the treatment group was relatively small, these findings suggest that students receiving summarizing instruction were expected to outscore approximately 58% of the students who receive direct instruction.

Factors Influencing Implementation/Limitations

There were different factors that may have influenced the results of this study. Students participating in this study were on a voluntary basis. While most students were eager about helping the teacher-researcher obtain valuable information for their learning of social studies content, some students in the summarizing instruction group viewed the strategies being used as "more work" than the other group had. This type of attitude may have played a role in students' academic achievement, especially if they were more worried about what the other group was doing, as opposed to learning the content. Another factor that played a part in student achievement was absenteeism and tardiness. In this study, students receiving direct instruction were in the teacher-researcher's first class of the day. Student tardiness and absenteeism was common in block 1, and effectiveness of direct instruction strategies may have been minimized. The class that received the summarizing instruction was the teacher-

researcher's last block of the day. Generally speaking, there were fewer absences and tardies during this block, which may account for differences between the two groups in achievement.

Other possible limitations were minimized; however, most of the activities conducted with the group who received summarizing instruction were not assigned for a performance grade and students in this group were informed about this grading condition at the beginning of the research period. Because many students are grade-driven, this lack of grade designation may have affected their effort toward the summarizing activities. This study was also limited by the time period designated for the research. The research-period for this study lasted only one unit of study. More testing may be done over a longer period of time to gauge student achievement and behavior using summarizing instruction to validate the results of this study. Finally, because all students who participated in this study were pre-advanced placement students, the data do not include information about how summarizing instruction can impact different levels of students and those with more diverse backgrounds. To improve and continue exploring social studies education in a variety of settings, further studies are needed with the inclusion of student populations more representing the U.S.'s multicultural society; investigating differences in race/ethnicity, locality, and school structure, sharing successes / failures to enhance academic achievement of all high school learners (Easton-Brooks, 2013; Sleeter, 2015).

Implications

The data obtained in this study provide evidence to support future studies on summarizing instruction to enhance non-cognitive development, particularly on student attitude and engagement. With

increased attitude and student engagement in the social studies classroom, teachers have opportunities to increase critical dialogue (Zamudio et al., 2011) by (a) providing student voice on how to discuss race, (b) how race is reflected within the U.S History curriculum, and (c) U.S. History should be inclusive of multiple perspectives (Banks, 2012; Chandler, 2015; Gabriel et al., 2015; Valencia, 2010). Teacher researchers are encouraged to develop curriculum incorporating summarizing instruction for U.S. History courses.

Moreover, it is important to move beyond the generalities and platitudes of the colorblind notion to show what teaching and curriculum bring to the classroom for diverse learners (Alexander, 2012, 2014; Chandler, 2015). Future studies can build from the current study's methodology and branch out to take concepts and theories and make them practical to enhance teacher ideas and model the actual implementation of each within their own teaching (Chandler, 2015; Easton-Brooks, 2015). According to McKeown et al., (2009), summarizing activities can be implemented using a variety of strategies and methods, as different types of summarizing strategies used during the research period. Some of the activities required students to work individually, while others were done in partners. In addition, differentiated activities within the summarization strategy helped prevent students from becoming bored with the same, redundant type of instruction (Tomlinson, 2005). Like Chandler (2015) suggests, some of the strategies were used in conjunction with graphic organizers, while others were done by having students verbally respond to a prompt. Overall, the students' favoring the use of summarizing instruction provides merit to continue its use in the classroom toward decreasing the opportunity gap (Carter et al., 2013; Chandler, 2015; Gorski, 2013). The teacher-

researcher shared the findings from this study with members of the social studies department and other stakeholders, as well as examples of different types of summarizing strategies that may be used specifically within the social studies curriculum (Banks, 2012; Easton-Brooks, 2015). These administrators, teachers, parents, and students highlighted the importance of these implications and the need for further research on how summarizing instruction can impact students with diverse backgrounds, different levels of achievement, and investigating social studies education in a variety of settings to advance the learning and educational success of all learners.

Because race/ism is a foundational part of the U.S. classroom experience, social studies classes must reflect this reality (Banks, 2012). While the current study did not focus on the difficulties of teaching about race within the context of Social Studies classrooms, the researchers acknowledge the need and follow the direction of Chandler's (2015) "Doing Race in Social Studies: Critical Perspectives," to assist teachers at all levels with research in social studies and critical race theory (CRT), with important topics like (1) U.S. History Textbooks' Coverage of Indigenous Education Policies (e.g., Shear, 2015), (2) Learning to Teach Culturally Relevant Social Studies: A White Teacher's Retrospective Self-Study (e.g., Martell, 2015), (3) White Social Studies: Protecting the White Racial Code (e.g., Chandler & Branscombe, 2015), (4) "The Only Way They Knew How to Solve Their Disagreements was to Fight": A Textual Analysis of Native Americans Before, During, and After the Civil Rights Movement (e.g., Craig & Davis, 2015), and (5) Teaching Race in High School Social Studies: Lessons from the Field (e.g., Castro, Hawkman, & Diaz, 2015). Such

research will help serve to fill the gap between the theoretical and the practical in action and educational research, as well as help teachers and all educators learn and provide a better understanding of how teaching social studies from a CRT perspective can increase academic, engagement, and attitude in Social Studies classrooms (Carter et al., 2013; Chandler, 2015; Gorski, 2013; Tate, 1997).

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Appendix A

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Direct Instruction and Summarizing Instruction Groups

| Characteristics | Total Sample <i>N</i> = 59 | Direct Instruction Group <i>n</i> = 27 | Summarizing Instruction Group <i>n</i> = 32 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 44% | 44% | 44% |
| Female | 56% | 56% | 56% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | |
| White | 78% | 67% | 88% |
| Black | 12% | 26% | 0% |
| Hispanic | 3% | 0% | 6% |
| Multiracial | 7% | 7% | 6% |
| Students with Disabilities | 5% | 3% | 6% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 29% | 37% | 22% |
| Prior Test Scores | | | |
| Mean | | 85.15 | 87.25 |
| SD | | 5.12 | 4.18 |

Appendix B

Table 2
Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results of U.S. History Unit Test

| | Pretest | | Posttest | | Mean Increase | Comparison of Means | |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------|---------------------|----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | | <i>t</i> value | <i>p</i> |
| DI (<i>n</i> = 27) | 50.67 | 11.42 | 82.15 | 6.97 | 31.63 | -0.81 | 0.50 |
| SI (<i>n</i> = 32) | 48.63 | 16.53 | 83.25 | 7.30 | 34.38 | | |

Note. DI- Direct Instruction group; SI- Summarizing Instruction group

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Appendix C

Table 3

Comparison of Survey Results Pre- and Post-Intervention for Direct Instruction Group

| Survey Item | Pre-Intervention | | Post-Intervention | | <i>p</i> |
|--|------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | |
| 1. I find the information in U.S. History to be difficult. | 3.30 | 0.68 | 2.70 | 0.83 | 0.002** |
| 2. I find US History to be intriguing and exciting. | 2.96 | 0.96 | 3.19 | 0.77 | 0.14 |
| 3. I find the textbook and other supplemental materials in U.S. History to be difficult to understand. | 3.22 | 0.41 | 2.89 | 0.72 | 0.009** |
| 4. When learning new information in U.S. History, I learn best by having the teacher explain the information using notes and worksheets. | 3.30 | 0.52 | 3.78 | 0.56 | < .001*** |
| 5. After learning new information in U.S. History, I can put the information into my own words. | 3.33 | 0.38 | 3.63 | 0.32 | 0.004** |
| 6. Summarizing information in my own words helps me to develop a deeper understanding of the information. | 3.63 | 0.32 | 4.19 | 0.31 | < .001*** |
| 7. When learning new information, I can remember it longer if I put it into my own words. | 3.63 | 0.32 | 3.96 | 0.34 | 0.009** |
| 8. When learning new information, I prefer to do activities which require me to immediately interact with the information (i.e. group activities, peer instruction, etc.). | 4.00 | 0.46 | 4.67 | 0.23 | < .001*** |
| 9. I believe another form of instruction will help me retain new U.S. History information. | 4.11 | 0.48 | 4.19 | 0.54 | 0.69 |

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Appendix D

Table 4

Comparison of Survey Results Pre- and Post-Intervention for Summarizing Instruction Group

| Survey Item | Pre- Intervention | | Post- Intervention | | <i>p</i> |
|--|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | |
| 1. I find the information in U.S. History to be difficult. | 3.06 | 0.90 | 2.69 | 0.93 | 0.008** |
| 2. I find US History to be intriguing and exciting. | 2.94 | 0.51 | 2.94 | 0.71 | 0.10 |
| 3. I find the textbook and other supplemental materials in U.S. History to be difficult to understand. | 3.00 | 0.65 | 2.81 | 0.67 | 0.14 |
| 4. When learning new information in U.S. History, I learn best by having the teacher explain the information using notes and worksheets. | 3.81 | 0.42 | 4.12 | 0.63 | 0.04* |
| 5. After learning new information in U.S. History, I can put the information into my own words. | 3.25 | 0.39 | 4.06 | 0.38 | < .001*** |
| 6. Summarizing information in my own words helps me to develop a deeper understanding of the information. | 3.50 | 0.32 | 4.28 | 0.34 | < .001*** |
| 7. When learning new information, I can remember it longer if I put it into my own words. | 3.44 | 0.25 | 4.09 | 0.60 | < .001*** |
| 8. When learning new information, I prefer to do activities which require me to immediately interact with the information (i.e. group activities, peer instruction, etc.). | 3.94 | 0.51 | 4.44 | 0.38 | <.001*** |
| 9. I believe another form of instruction will help me retain new U.S. History information. | 3.78 | 0.50 | 3.63 | 0.69 | 0.33 |

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Appendix E

Table 5
Student Engagement Checklist: Comparison of Direct Instruction and Summarizing Instruction.

| Observation Criteria | Positive Body Language | Consistent Focus | Participation | Student Confidence | Fun and Excitement |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| DI | 69% | 72% | 71% | 70% | 65% |
| SI | 82% | 79% | 85% | 78% | 77% |

Note. DI- Direct Instruction group; SI- Summarizing Instruction group