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The Effects of a Historical Perspective Taking Scenario Activity on Classroom Discussion

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by William Gary Cole entitled "The Effects of a Historical Perspective Taking Scenario Activity on Classroom Discussion." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

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The Effects of a Historical Perspective Taking Scenario Activity on Classroom Discussion

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Abstract

This quasi-experimental, mixed-methods case study examined the effects of perspective taking on the discussion skills of one group of 9th grade World History students. Specifically, this study investigated the impacts of a historical perspective taking scenario activity on student participation in discussions, quality of discussions, student learning from discussions, teacher perceptions of discussions, and student and teacher enjoyment of discussions. The methods used to assess these impacts were classroom observations, frequency counts, teacher interviews, a student focus group interview, and document analysis.

Results indicated that the use of a historical perspective taking scenario activity produced a dramatic increase in student participation in classroom discussions. Quality of student responses increased in scenario-based discussions, though not to a statistically significant degree. Students reported increased learning and enjoyment in scenario-based discussions. Additionally, the teacher's perceptions of classroom discussions changed in numerous ways after participating in discussions that used a historical perspective taking scenario activity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Historical perspective taking, also referred to as "empathy" or "rational understanding", (Lee & Ashby, 2001) is a pedagogical method that involves encouraging students to think historically by placing themselves in historical situations. Levstik (2001) states that perspective taking helps students understand not only the actions of the people of the past, but also their motivations. Lee and Ashby (2001) describe perspective taking as a way to make sense of social practices and institutions, and to see the interconnectedness of beliefs, situations, events, and actions. Historical perspective taking requires the use of imagination, but does not result in fictional tales about people of the past. Instead, historical perspective taking encourages students to combine accurate background knowledge with imagination in an effort to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and values of historical times and situations (Levstik, 2001). This ability can help students surpass basic memorization and move toward higher levels of historical thinking.

Another valuable classroom activity utilized by social studies teachers is classroom discussion. Throughout the history of public education, scholars have recognized the importance of classroom discussion in teaching students to collaborate, communicate, and function in a democratic society (Dewey, 1916). However, in today's increasingly diverse America, the need to teach democratic values, citizenship, and civics to modern social studies students is at an all time high (Hess, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Little research exists which examines the relationship between historical perspective taking and classroom discussion. The literature establishes the usefulness of historical perspective taking activities for increasing students' critical thinking skills, engagement, and achievement in social studies classes (Colby, 2009; DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012; Gehlbach et

al, 2008). The literature also shows the importance of classroom discussion in teaching the skills necessary to function in a democratic society (Dewey, 1916; Hess, 2011). I have found no study that examines the effects of historical perspective taking on the discussion skills of social studies students. This research study will seek to fill this gap in the current research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of perspective taking (if any) on the rate and quality of student participation in classroom discussions. An additional purpose is to determine both teacher and student perceptions of classroom discussions. The use of perspective taking as a pedagogical method has been shown to increase student interest and engagement in social studies classes (DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012; Gehlbach et al., 2008). Additionally, perspective taking can increase students' critical thinking skills (Colby, 2009; DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012), and help students internalize the experiences of the historical figures they study (Rios, Trent, & Castaneda, 2003). Moreover, activities that allow students to take different perspectives can help students test and refine interpretations of text (Colby, 2009) and increase students' long-term retention of information (DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012). At the same time, perspective taking can help students to see social studies as more important in relation to other classes (Gehlbach et al., 2008) and increase student enjoyment of social studies classes (Alvarez, 2008).

Despite these positive effects, researchers have neglected an examination of perspective taking activities on students' discussion skills. This study will seek to fill this gap in the research by comparing the discussion skills of ninth grade World History students before and after the introduction of a historical perspective taking activity.

In order to achieve this purpose, the following questions will need to be answered:

1. Does the use of historical perspective taking activities produce an increase in the number of student responses in a classroom discussion?

2. Does participation in a historical perspective taking activity improve the quality of student responses during classroom discussions?

3. After participating in a classroom discussion prompted by a historical perspective taking activity, do students report higher rates of enjoying discussions and learning from discussions?

4. Does the use of historical perspective taking activities alter teacher perceptions of classroom discussions, and if so, in what ways?

For the purpose of this study, student participation in classroom discussions was measured by the number of student responses in a classroom discussion. Student responses were rated according to a four-topic rubric I developed in order to examine response quality. Student perceptions of discussions were investigated with a focus group interview, and teacher perceptions of discussions were explored by a post-intervention qualitative interview.

Need for the Study

Researchers throughout the history of education have praised classroom discussion for its ability to teach democratic principles (Dewey, 1916; Hess, 2011) and to improve instruction in social studies classes (Henning, Nielsen, Henning & Schulz, 2008; Rudsberg, Ohman, & Ostman, 2013). Yet modern scholars report that lecture and recitation remain the most often utilized methods in social studies courses (O'Connor, 2013; Parker, 2006). With such established classroom discussion benefits, why do teachers cling so tightly to lecture and recitation? Clearly, certain problems exist with classroom discussions which this study will seek to address. First, increasing the amount of student participation in discussions and the quality of

student dialogue within discussions is often extremely difficult for teachers (Henning, Nielsen, Henning & Schulz, 2008). And second, poorly planned and executed discussions can impair students, with results such as disengagement, class disruption, and decreases in discourse (Flynn, 2009). With important benefits and risks, methods for encouraging classroom discussions must be examined in depth. Strategies which may increase the quality of classroom discussions should be examined in depth, so that teachers can be empowered with new tools for fostering this useful pedagogical method. This study will describe for teachers a currently unexamined method for prompting quality, engaged discussions in their own classrooms.

Research Methods

This quasi-experimental, mixed methods study employed several research methods to create the thick, rich description of the phenomenon listed by Merriam (1988) in describing the requirements for case studies. Stevenson High School was selected as the setting for the study due to convenience, since the Stevenson lies within the county where I teach, and I have a professional relationship with the principal of Stevenson. Freshman World History was selected as the class for the study since 11th grade American History is subject to an End of Course (EOC) test, and I did not wish to place the scores of the teacher and the students in jeopardy by taking time away from test preparation.

This study received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval on July 22, 2014 (see Appendix A). Mr. Crane was selected as the teacher participant after conversations with the principal and the guidance counselor revealed that he was the only teacher at Stevenson with a full schedule of freshman World History. Mr. Crane's Honors class was eliminated from the selection process since I hoped to conduct the study with a sample which included students of a

variety of ability levels. The specific class was selected by random draw from the remaining six classes.

Informed consent documents (see Appendix B) and student assent documents (see Appendix C) were handed out on September 8, 2014. All signed documents were returned by September 19, 2014. When the study began, 15 students were enrolled in the class we selected. But before assent and consent documents were handed out, one student was placed on homebound services due to a serious illness and another student was given long-term suspension for violent acts. This student participated in discussion four, but since he never returned assent and consent documents, his data were eliminated from consideration. He was then immediately suspended again due to another violent action.

Of the student participants, seven were males and eight were females. Six of the students were 14 years of age and nine were 15 years old. A total of four of these students were listed as qualifying for special education services, while 6 received free and reduced lunch. All of the students listed themselves as Caucasian in ethnicity.

In order to examine possible differences in student participation during discussions, I observed three discussions using the teacher-participant's normal methods for conducting discussions. I then conducted two teacher-training sessions to introduce the intervention, the historical perspective taking activity, to Mr. Crane. After thorough discussions with the teacher, and after writing the scenarios, I observed three discussions in which the teacher used the historical perspective taking scenario activity as a prompt for classroom discussions. During all six discussions, I used a seating chart to record the numbers of responses by student. Response rates were compared using T-tests for statistical significance.

The quality of students' responses was rated according to a rubric I developed with my advisor, Dr. Thomas Turner. This rubric rated student responses on a scale of 1 to 3, based on four criteria: comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction. My initial plan was to rate 25% of student responses, but low rates of participation in discussions two and three caused me to increase the number of student responses to 50%. Each of the six discussions was recorded with a high definition audio recorder and transcribed. All student responses were then typed into an Excel spreadsheet and every other response was rated according to the rubric. The ratings of the three pre-intervention discussions were then compared to the three discussions which utilized the intervention using T-tests for statistical significance.

During the course of the study, students turned in a variety of written work. After Observation 1 the teacher assigned students to write a letter to the President of the United States asking for a family member to be quarantined or removed from quarantine. After Observation 2, the teacher had students write two paragraphs on whether social media is good or bad. Following Observation 3, the teacher asked students to use to use their smart phones to research the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and decide whether to send the case to trial. In Observations 4-6, students wrote one-paragraph responses to the historical perspective taking scenarios. The quality of these responses was compared to the quality of the writings in Observations 1-3.

This document analysis subscribed to the processes described by Rapley (2007) and Glaser (1965). I read the documents being analyzed several times, took notes on relevant documents, themes, and ideas, and sought comparisons between the documents (Rapley, 2007). I then re-read the documents and made repeated comparisons in order to refine the comparisons

(Glaser, 1965). This constant comparison method of document analysis allowed me to make meaningful contrasts between student work collected before and during the intervention.

I investigated teacher perceptions of classroom discussions with semi-structured interviews conducted before and after the observations. Student perceptions of classroom discussions were examined with a focus group interview with eight of the student participants. All three interviews were transcribed and subjected to two rounds of coding.

Limitations

1. Since the participants for this study were composed of a class that had already been pre-formed, randomization was impossible. However, since students were compared to themselves, not to others, the need to control for ability level was unnecessary.

2. The small number of participants involved and the short duration of the study limited generalizability of the results.

4. Generalizability was further limited by the fact that participants came from one high school in rural east Tennessee.

5. This study was subject to "mortality" and "history" factors due to the instability of the classes and the lack of controls for student attendance. Of the 13 student participants, five students missed one class, and one student missed two classes. No student moved into or out of the class during the course of the study.

Delimitations

1. This study was delimited to a relatively brief period of time within one grading period of the 2014-2015 school year.

2. This study was delimited to include only members of one 9th grade World History class in one high school.

3. This study was delimited to a narrow section of classroom content, as measured against the large number of standards teachers must cover. The specific time period being studied in the classroom (World War I) was determined by the teacher's pre-planned curriculum.

4. Data gathering was limited to six observations conducted over a four-week period.

Assumptions

This study was designed around three basic assumptions. These assumptions are based on current research and on my 13 years of experience as a high school social studies teacher and administrator. The assumptions for this study are:

1. The teacher involved is capable of implementing a historical perspective taking method in his classroom.

2. The teacher involved sees the value of classroom discussions, and seeks new ways to foster quality discussions with his students (as supported by my conversations with this teacher).

3. Students will participate in classroom discussions if given the opportunity.

Definition of Terms

Historical Perspective Taking: Historical perspective taking is a pedagogical method in which students combine accurate background knowledge with imagination in an effort to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and values of historical times and situations (Levstik, 2001). Although historical perspective taking may also be referred to as "empathy" or "rational understanding", (Lee & Ashby, 2001), for the purpose of this study the term historical perspective taking will be used.

Classroom Discussion: Classroom discussion is a pedagogical method which encourages students to defend arguments and analyze differing viewpoints within the context of the subject being studied (Hess, 2011).

Scenario: According to Jonassen (2012), scenarios are stories that use complex interactions, chains of events, and cause and effect relationships to enable students to make decisions and describe possible outcomes. Scenarios are open ended and story-like in structure, presenting students with an intriguing conflict or dilemma (Victor, 1999). Scenarios have traditionally been useful in encouraging decision-making in economics, politics, and military planning (Jonassen, 2012).

Intervention: In this study, the term "intervention" refers to the historical perspective taking scenario activity. Discussions that did not use the historical perspective taking activity were referred to as "pre-intervention" discussions.

Discussion Response Rubric: The discussion response rubric is a Likert-scale rubric with four categories used to assess the quality of student discussion responses. The four categories are comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction. I developed the discussion response rubric with my committee chair, Dr. Thomas Turner, based on the works of Weltzer-Ward, Baltes, and Lunn (2009), Darabi and Jin (2013), and Nandi, Chang, and Balbo (2009).

Freestyle Discussions: During the pre-intervention observations, the teacher used his natural methods for prompting and conducting classroom discussions. These discussions did not use scenarios. In the teacher interviews and the student focus group interview, the term "freestyle discussion" was used to refer to these non-scenario, pre-intervention discussions.

Scenario Discussions: During the intervention observations, discussions were prompted by a historical perspective taking scenario activity. During the teacher interviews and the student

focus group interviews, the term "scenario discussion" was used to refer to discussions that used this activity as a discussion prompt.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this dissertation is organized into four chapters. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature, divided into sections concerning historical perspective taking and classroom discussion. Chapter 3 contains a description of the research methods used in this study, with emphasis on setting and participants, quantitative and qualitative methods, data collection, and methods of reporting. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes the data, and supports the analysis through detailed descriptions, participant quotes, and visual representations. And Chapter 5 describes the conclusions, recommendations for future research, and implications for teachers I gleaned from the study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the research study, beginning with an overview of the phenomena under investigation and the purpose of the study. Chapter 1 continued by discussing the purpose, research questions, and significance of the study. Before investigating the possible effects of a historical perspective taking scenario activity on classroom discussions, bodies of literature must be reviewed for recurring themes. This review of literature presents an overview of historical perspective taking and classroom discussion.

This review begins with an overview of the types of classroom discussions, and continues into a summary of literature on classroom discussions in democratic societies. The various benefits of classroom discussions are then surveyed, and methods shown to encourage discussions are highlighted. The classroom discussion section concludes with a look at problems associated with discussions, including student factors that discourage participation in discussions.

The perspective taking section of the review of literature begins with a discussion of the definition of historical perspective taking. In this section, a comparison of perspective taking and empathy adds clarity to overlapping descriptions of the terms. An examination of the benefits and detriments of perspective taking follows, with particular emphasis on the impacts on students in social studies classes. The perspective taking section concludes with a description of factors that affect student perspective taking in positive and negative ways, including the roles of teachers and students in adopting historical perspectives.

The Search Process

I began the search for articles to include in this review of literature by consulting seminal works in social studies research. The *Handbook of research on social studies teaching and*

learning (Shaver, 1991) and *Handbook of research in social studies education* (Levstik & Tyson, 2008) led me to prominent social studies researchers such as Keith Barton, Diana Hess and Walter Parker. Three articles by these authors, Hess (2011), Barton (2006), and Parker (2010) feature prominently in this review. I then consulted *Research methods in social studies education: Contemporary issues and perspectives* (Barton, 2006) and *Social studies today: Research and practice* (Parker, 2010). A close examination of the reference sections of these works brought other articles to light, and these articles were located through Internet searches of the library database *Education Source* of The University of Tennessee.

After pursuing applicable articles from Shaver (1991) and Levstik and Tyson (2008), searches of online databases were conducted using the term "historical perspective taking" and the related term "historical empathy" along with "classroom discussion," "classroom discourse," "teaching methods," and "social studies teaching methods." The studies were then downloaded and reviewed for quality and relation to the topic under study. The reference lists of those articles were then examined, and multiple studies were located through additional *Education Source* searches.

Several studies proved particularly useful for this purpose: Cunningham (2004), and Colby (2009) provided access to several additional studies concerning perspective taking. Hess (2011) served as a starting point for locating several related studies as well. As general themes began to emerge in the literature, I conducted *Education Source* searches for articles pertaining to these topics, such as "teacher perceptions of perspective taking," "negative effects of perspective taking," "classroom discussion and democracy," and "encouraging classroom discussion." Studies with pertinent information relating to these topics were downloaded, and their reference lists examined for supplementary articles. Finally, I conducted a physical search

of John C. Hodges Library on the campus of The University of Tennessee to locate relevant books dedicated to the topic of historical perspective taking. Several notable volumes were checked out, and the reference lists of these books examined for additional studies, located through additional searches of the *Education Source* database. By the end of the search for pertinent literature, 24 articles had been examined and referenced in this review of literature.

After this search, gaps in the prevailing literature began to emerge. First, no studies were located which examined the effects of historical perspective taking on classroom discussions. Secondly, although the effects of perspective taking on students' critical thinking skills were occasionally examined (Colby, 2009; DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012), no studies were located which assessed the quality of student responses in classroom discussions. This study will help to close these gaps by exploring how historical perspective taking affects classroom discussions, and by assessing the quality of student responses following a historical perspective taking activity.

Classroom Discussion

Teachers have used classroom discussions for centuries. This time-tested method of instruction has many types, uses and benefits. This review of literature provides an overview of several aspects of classroom discussions.

Types of discussion.

Classroom discussion types can be considered as two over-arching types: traditional discussions and online discussions delivered via technology. Traditional discussions involve face-to-face verbal interactions among students and teachers (Larson & Keiper, 2002), and can be seen as variations on either whole class or small group discussions. Finley (2013) reports that whole class discussion is one of the most widely used teaching methods, though the quality of

discussion is sometimes questionable. Small group discussions are often referred to as "buzz groups" and involve smaller groups of students focused on more specific topics and questions (Tuncay, 2013). In a 2013 study, Tuncay found that students who participated in buzz group discussions reported more self confidence and increased success in their studies than students who received instruction through more traditional methods.

Another type of traditional student interaction utilized by teachers is Socratic dialogue or Socratic discussion. In this type of discussion, the teacher asks threads of increasingly probing questions of the students in the hopes of encouraging them to illuminate their own learning (Kristjansson, 2014). A typical Socratic discussion begins when the educator poses a question to the student. The student then puts forth a hypothesis, and the educator postulates a counterexample to that hypothesis in order to call into question the student's previously held knowledge. This process can continue indefinitely, as student and teacher move back and forth through the stages (Boghossian, 2012). Educators value the Socratic method for its ability to encourage students to think critically, though the efficient use of this method requires practice, time, and effort on the part of the educator (Oyler & Romanelli, 2014).

Two other types of traditional discussion often used by educators are spontaneous discussions and text-based discussions. Spontaneous discussions arise without planning, and though they can add value to learning, too much reliance on these "off the cuff" discussions can diminish students' perceptions of the value of the class (Blount & Napolitano, 2014). Text-based discussions use classroom readings as prompts or resources for discourse among students. Discussions planned around reading assignments can allow students to bring their knowledge sources to bear on their learning, refine their opinions, and help students learn to listen and value the opinions of their classmates (Snow & O'Connor, 2014).

Online discussions have been gaining popularity across educational settings. In general, online discussions can be viewed as variations of either synchronous or asynchronous discussions. Synchronous discussions often involve the use of video conferencing programs such as Skype, and require the instructor and all participants to be present and logged on at the same time (Campbell, Gibson, Hall, Richards, and Callery, 2008). Many times, synchronous discussions involve an instructor posing a question or situation, with students immediately typing in responses in turn (Hrastinski, 2008). In asynchronous discussions, responses to instructor questions can be entered into the discussion board at any time, and participants do not need to be online at the same time (Larson & Keiper, 2002). Discussion participants can log onto the discussion board at their convenience, and either reply to another participant's post, or create a post of their own (Gao, Zhang, & Franklin, 2013).

Both online formats have benefits and detriments. Many students report that they enjoy synchronous discussions because they feel more connected to the class, while others complain about the strict time requirements involved. Some students prefer the convenience of participation in asynchronous discussions, though others dislike the detachment they feel from their instructor and classmates (Haslam, 2014). Yamagata-Lynch (2014) found that blending these two types of online discussion can help students feel connected to the class while still offering choice and convenience.

An examination of the benefits of each discussion type reveals a mixed bag of results. Campbell, et al (2008) compared traditional classroom formats to asynchronous discussion models, and found that students in courses delivered through asynchronous discussion designs achieved at higher rates than students taught in traditional style courses. Larson and Keiper (2002) found benefits for students in both discussion formats, though student interaction and

instructors' abilities to redirect the discussion were limited by asynchronous discussions. Tabak and Rampal (2014) found that traditional discussions are easier to plan and carry out for the instructor, though synchronous online discussions benefit students by helping overcome the limitations of space, time, and distance for group activities.

Classroom discussion and democracy.

The importance of classroom discussions in education has long been established. Dewey (1916) saw education as an extension of the setting and ideals of democracy, which he described more as an experience than as a government. Democracy, like education, was a shared method of living in a society according to Dewey (1916), and therefore required its members to learn to interact, to communicate, and to share the experience.

Dewey's views were more recently picked up by Diana Hess (2011), who advocated the importance of teaching discussion skills to students, specifically in relation to educating citizens in a modern democracy. Hess (2011) said that students must be taught how to discuss controversial topics and decide how to achieve the public good, stating that "without controversy, there is no democracy" (p. 69). Discussions, Hess (2011) wrote, help students learn to write and defend an argument, analyze differing positions positively, develop deeper understanding of classroom content, and become more tolerant and civically involved. Similarly, Sheppard, Ashcraft, and Larson (2011) expressed the idea that studying controversial issues could aid in preparing students for participation in democratic society.

Henning, Nielsen, Henning, and Schulz (2008) introduced new ways to encourage discussion in the classroom, citing the ability of discussion-based pedagogy to raise civic involvement of students. These authors state that the use of this method increases student interest in social studies classes, develops tolerance among students, and shows students they can

make a difference in the world. Further, the authors assert that, in the social studies classroom, discussions can increase mastery of content knowledge, ability to solve problems, moral reasoning, and skills in communication. However, increasing the amount of student participation in discussions and the quality of student dialogue within discussions is often extremely difficult for classroom teachers. The authors' approach to designing discussions involves developing an arguable topic that allows for differing perspectives, locating the discussion within the students' existing knowledge base, and selecting a topic that extends previous learning into new areas (Henning et al., 2008).

In 2012, Sara Jorgensen and Joni Schwartz reported on a research study involving the development of the skills of democracy through a discussion format called Circular Response Discussion (CRD). In this method, the researchers had students from international backgrounds sit in circles while discussing the definition and meaning of democracy. Each student was given a minute to speak, and each subsequent speaker was required to build off the previous responses. Once everyone had spoken, the discussion was open for free responses.

Jorgensen and Schwartz (2012) reported a great deal of success in this setting. Students grappled with complex, emotional issues, and through their dialogue with each other, came to a greater understanding of democratic citizenship. Several students who had previously reported having little understanding of the concept of democracy added powerful, poignant insights as the discussion progressed. In terms of skills, students stated that the CRD taught them to listen attentively to others (even those with opposing views), and to think critically about complex concepts.

McMurray (2007) asserted that two key skills needed by citizens of a democratic society are the ability to express dissent and the ability to consider dissenting viewpoints. Both of these

skills, McMurray (2007) reported, can be taught using effective classroom discussion. Similarly, Parker (2010) wrote that enlightened democratic citizenship requires being able to listen to those outside one's normal arena of socialization, and that discussion is the most important method for fostering this skill. Therefore, public schools, with their diverse populations and focus on education, offer teachers the opportunity to improve democratic discourse.

In his book *Beyond Discipline,* Alfie Kohn (1996) proposed a way for students to experience the processes of democracy with the use of classroom discussion. Kohn (1996) wrote that classroom teachers should hold discussions with their students in which standards of behavior are arrived at by consensus. In these discussions, students could be active participants in the democratic process, as opposed to passive recipients of a code of conduct handed down by an autocratic teacher. Kohn (1996) wrote that teachers who used this method could create a positive, democratic community in the classroom by involving students in the discussion of democratic principles.

Benefits of discussion.

As a well established staple of classroom instruction, discussion has been associated with a long list of benefits. Advocates have sung the praises of this teaching method throughout the history of education. And though detractors point out possible problems with the strategy, researchers continue to find advantages in this time-tested teaching method.

Classroom discussion has been associated with active learning, critical thinking, and cooperative inquiry (Bruss, 2009; Goldsmith, 2013). Further, classroom discussion has been shown to increase classroom engagement and encourage deeper understanding of texts (Gritter, 2011). Sorrano (2010) reported that classroom discussions can contribute to the development of listening, synthesis, and integration skills, while Goldsmith (2013) equated discussion with

increased ownership of learning. Sheppard, Ashcraft, and Larson (2011) stated that discussing in the classroom increased students' awareness of their values, understandings, and habits of thought. Moreover, Roehling, Kooi, Dykema, Quisenberry, and Vandlen (2011) found that classroom discussion, which is by nature collaborative and dynamic, holds increased educational value for modern students who thirst for interaction and variety.

Classroom discussion has been shown to increase student enjoyment of class (O'Connor, 2013) and encourage students to think critically and make considered decisions (Rudsberg, Ohman, & Ostman, 2013). Flynn (2009) found that discussions help students form connections to material and challenge preconceived notions. In social studies classes, classroom discussion has been shown to increase students' civic involvement, mastery of content knowledge, problem solving, and communication skills (Henning, Nielsen, Henning & Schulz, 2008).

Current emphasis on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has caused many teachers to reexamine their classroom methods, though many requirements of CCSS can be met through classroom discussion. Introducing claims based on evidence (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1a), critiquing the claims of others (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1b), considering multiple points of view (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3a), and developing events with key details (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3) can be accomplished with well planned classroom discussions. Though no single method of pedagogy can effectively meet all of the standards of the CCSS, classroom discussion can serve as a valuable tool to modern educators who seek to meet and exceed these requirements.

Classroom discussion has also been shown to hold numerous benefits for students in widely varied subject areas. Clary and Wandersee (2012) had graduate science students participate in an online discussion as part of a unit on climate change. Four sections of students

were randomly assigned to groups where they analyzed scientific reports and participated in mandatory discussions. At the end of the study, 91% of the students reported that the discussion increased their understanding of this complex concept.

Yarema, Grueber, and Ferreira (2014) studied one third grade teacher's efforts to include extensive classroom discussions in lessons on minerals and natural resources. This educator took her students on a school yard hike in which students collected items that piqued their interests. When they returned to the classroom, the teacher led a classroom discussion with the goal of classifying the various objects as renewable or nonrenewable. Students were encouraged to research the answers to the questions they asked, and used discussion as a way to reach consensus. When the unit was completed, the researchers reported that the discussions had offered these science students opportunities for meaningful interaction, critical thinking, evaluation, communicating ideas, and making claims based on evidence.

Discussing subject material in class can help increase higher order thinking, active sense-making, evaluation skills, and vocabulary fluency in mathematics (Jansen, 2006; Mackle, 2014). Moreover, classroom discussion has been shown to contribute effectively to public discourse in writing courses (Yuit & Thai, 2010), and to bring texts to life in studies of literature (Gritter, 2011). In civics classes, classroom discussion can deepen students' investigations of the dynamics of government, and help students understand the subtle nuances of citizenship (Marks, 2008). Henning, McKeny, Foley, and Balong (2012) found that discussions centered on application of mathematical concepts often yielded increased student participation and helped students integrate the mathematical concepts they learned into real life situations.

Encouraging classroom discussion.

Researchers have discovered a number of methods for increasing student participation in classroom discussions. In a 2007 study at The University of the South, Bruss discovered that training in public speaking, pre-discussion familiarity with the material, reading about the topic before hand, and peer interaction encouraged discussion participation and quality. Green (2000) studied teachers' perceptions of effective strategies for encouraging student participation, and found that the use of learning pairs and small groups were most often listed. Gritter (2011) used journaling to show students they could contribute positively to discussions, and worked with students to create a positive, accepting classroom atmosphere before discussions.

A number of methods have been proposed to increase student participation in social studies discussions. McMurray (2007) offered controversial topics as a means to encourage discussions, while still teaching students the principles of debate and dissent that make democracy viable. Sorrano (2010) found that assigning students specific roles (such as facilitator, recorder, and participant) increased the participation and quality of classroom discussions. Yannuzzi and Martin (2014), however, stated that meaningful participation in discussions requires students to feel empowered and to have some control over the learning process, while Jansen (2006) stated that teachers should use students' needs to feel like part of the group, to establish social order, and to prove worthiness to peers to increase participation.

Chiaravalloti (2010) developed "Talk Tickets" to encourage reluctant participants, and to help students think about the quality of their discussions. In this study, the researcher provided a large number of colored tickets to each student, then led a small group discussion with the requirement that every time a student talked, the student had to place one of his or her tickets in a pile in the center of the group. When the discussion concluded, the teacher led a more in-depth

discussion about the amount each student participated. Chiaravalloti (2010) discovered that this visual representation of participation in discussions encouraged students to balance their participations in relation to their classmates.

Roehling, et al (2011) found that one of the most important factors in encouraging students to participate in classroom discussions was the attitude of the instructor. According to these researchers, teachers who are seen as open and solicitous to student responses, and classrooms where students are reassured that their comments will not negatively affect their grades can expect to see increased rates of participation. However, students are more reluctant to respond when they believe the instructor will openly disagree with their comments or when the instructor's comments can be perceived as derogatory or aggressive. Moreover, instructors who over-emphasize their own subject area expertise can unwittingly kill classroom discussions, as can instructors who allow discussions to turn into emotionally-charged exchanges between students.

Problems with discussions.

Though the benefits associated with classroom discussion are numerous, and though researchers have found a plethora of methods for encouraging discussion, problems still remain with this teaching method. Below, I review several studies and articles that examine problems with participation in general, discussion problems experienced by English Language Learners (ELL), social factors that impact discussions, and teacher characteristics that affect discussions.

No matter the methods employed, many students remain reluctant to participate in discussions due to fear of embarrassment in front of their peers and teachers (Gayle, Cortez, & Preiss, 2013; Goldsmith, 2013; Green, 2000; Gritter, 2011; Jansen, 2006). Students who have unusual physical features or socioeconomic status may show unwillingness to voice responses,

while those who have opinions that differ from the classroom majority may refuse to participate due to fear of confrontation or ostracization (McMurray, 2007). Further, racism, sexism, and classism often contribute to a lack of student participation (Reda, 2010).

Goldsmith (2013) reported that English Language Learners (ELL) often suffer from diminished participation rates due to fear of embarrassment, though several activities were found to increase these students' responses. Think-Pair-Share activities, in which students are asked a question, given time to think, and allowed to discuss with a partner before responding, were reported to have a profound positive effect on ELL participation rates. Also, the author used randomized methods for calling on students, and found that these methods helped increase participation. Another method reported as useful for increasing discussion participation in ELL students was the use of a "class meeting." In this activity, small groups of students sit in circles and discuss topics with the teacher in more privatized settings, thereby diminishing the fear of embarrassment seen in larger groups.

Several social and cultural factors have been identified by researchers that impact student discussions. Caspi, Chajut, and Saporta (2008) found that males tended to dominate face-to-face discussions, while females took control of online discussions. This tendency of females to increase participation in online discussions was echoed by Wishart and Guy (2009), who also found that females were more critical and challenging, and tended to explain and justify their positions more than males. Moreover, White (2011) reported that minority and immigrant students are often hesitant to participate due to the inability to articulate the nuances of academic language, fear of revealing incompetence, and reluctance to accept the perceived stigma of "selling out".

Students' perceptions of the classroom, the instructor, or the discussion setting can also diminish participation. In a 2010 study, Reda reported that students' views of classroom discussion often differ widely from the views of instructors. Very often, professors see discussions as opportunities to demonstrate learning, while students perceive discussions as verbal tests. Further, many instructors believe that students are empowered by the opportunity to speak in class. But for visual learners, or for those whose backgrounds teach the value of silence and quiet contemplation, spouting opinions in class can be thought of as disruptive to the learning process or disrespectful to the instructor and other students. All of these factors can contribute negatively to student participation rates in discussions.

A number of teacher factors may also negatively affect classroom discussions. Many teachers, for example, lack the training, practice, and skills needed to foster quality discussions (Green, 2000; Sorrano, 2010). Further, many teachers tend to suppress controversial discussion topics that might spark student interest due to the need to maintain classroom control and discipline, or out of fear of the opinions of administrators (McMurray, 2007). Additionally, many educators find difficulty in grading classroom discussions, and lack the ability to evaluate whether discussions meet course goals (Sorrano, 2010).

Gayle, Cortez, and Preiss (2013) discovered an interesting problem in their study of a small college in the American Northwest. Professors, the researchers discovered, often sought to foster critical thinking, classroom participation, and discussion skills by using emotional, controversial issues as topics for discussion. However, marginalized groups often felt increased danger in participating in classroom discussions as the emotionality and complexity of the topics increased. Gayle, Cortez, and Preiss (2013) discovered, however, that these feelings of danger

could often be overcome by early communication by the professor, and by establishing rules of acceptance and fair conduct before discussions began.

Perspective Taking

Encouraging students to take the perspectives of historical people can be rewarding and challenging. Perspective taking takes many forms, and holds many benefits and risks. This review of the literature provides an overview of perspective taking as a pedagogical method.

Perspectives on perspective taking.

Historical perspective taking, also referred to as "empathy" or "rational understanding", (Lee & Ashby, 2001) is a pedagogical method that involves encouraging students to think historically by placing themselves in historical situations. Levstik (2001) states that perspective taking helps students understand not only the actions of the people of the past, but also their motivations. Lee and Ashby (2001) describe perspective taking as a way to make sense of social practices and institutions, and to see the interconnectedness of beliefs, situations, events, and actions. Historical perspective taking requires the use of imagination, but does not result in fictional fairy tales about people of the past. Instead, historical perspective taking encourages students to combine accurate background knowledge with imagination in an effort to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and values of historical times and situations (Levstik, 2001). Although one specific, unifying definition of historical perspective taking as a pedagogical method is difficult to identify, an examination of the various opinions on the nature of perspective taking reveals the nuances of this teaching method.

Perspective taking and empathy.

The terms perspective taking and empathy are used interchangeably in the literature to describe the act or process of trying to understand others' points of view (Foster, 1999;

Gehlbach, 2004). The lack of clarification between the two terms could be partially ascribed to the failure of scholars to define each term as a separate unit. Lee and Ashby (2001) describe the struggles of researchers to distinguish between perspective taking and empathy through the years, but fall short of a hard separation of the two. Instead, the authors settle for a discussion of the commonalities of the concepts, suggesting that perspective taking and empathy are ways of understanding past meanings through historical evidence. Cunningham (2009) called empathy a "fuzzy concept" (p. 681) that lacked the strict defining sharpness of other prevailing historical ideas.

The lack of clarity concerning perspective taking and empathy can be seen in the similarities of the definitions given to the terms. Gehlbach (2011) defines perspective taking as "A process through which a *perceiver* attempts to discern the thoughts, feelings, motivations, and/or point of view of one or more *targets"* (p. 312). To effectively take another person's perspective, according to Gehlbach (2011), students use various strategies that fit their personal characteristics, and rely on numerous sources of evidence.

Similarly, Foster (1999) described empathy as "a process that leads to an understanding and an explanation of why people of the past acted as they did" (p. 19), while Cunningham (2004) stated that empathy is an attempt to understand how people of the past felt and acted. Further, Foster (1999) stated that empathy requires an understanding of the context of history, with background knowledge of important people and events, and some comprehension of the culture being studied. All this should be discovered by the student through an analysis of historical evidence.

The similarities between these definitions for separate terms include the view of empathy and perspective taking as processes, the attempt to understand the motivations behind past

actions and events, the need to have some comprehension of the historical context surrounding people and events, and the need to explore historical evidence (Foster, 1999; Gehlbach, 2011). These similarities add to the difficulty of distinguishing between "perspective taking" and "empathy" in the literature. For the purpose of clarity, the term "perspective taking" will be used exclusively in this paper to describe the pedagogical method being studied, with the acknowledgement that the term "empathy" could have been substituted throughout.

Three types of perspective taking.

Gehlbach (2011) wrote that perspective taking can assume three forms, based on the situation being studied and the characteristics of the student. These three forms include interpersonal perspective taking, academic perspective taking, and collaborative perspective taking. Although each form bears its own distinctions, overlaps and interconnectedness can occur throughout a perspective taking experience.

According to Gehlbach (2011), interpersonal perspective taking occurs when people attempt to better understand the people currently around them with the goal of forming better social connections. When engaging in interpersonal perspective taking, students monitor the body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice of their peers, and seek clarification by asking questions or making statements to encourage others to elaborate on their perspectives.

In social studies classes, teachers most often attempt to encourage academic perspective taking, in which students learn about the lives histories, beliefs, and situations of people of the past, then use that information in attempts to better understand their historical worlds (Gehlbach, 2011). Academic perspective taking is made more difficult by the absence of the social indicators (such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice) that are available to students engaging in interpersonal perspective taking. For this reason, academic perspective

taking requires a variety of rich resources for students to draw from as they seek to take historical perspectives. (Gehlbach, 2011; Stockley, 1983).

Gehlbach (2011) suggests that social studies teachers can attempt to encourage collaborative perspective taking, by planning lessons that combine interpersonal and academic perspective taking. By allowing students to study history in pairs or small groups, and by giving perspective taking assignments to groups instead of individuals, the teacher can encourage students to capitalize on interpersonal perspective taking skills (which are often more natural and practiced more often by students) to achieve academic perspective taking (Gehlbach, 2011; Seng & Wei, 2010).

Benefits of perspective taking.

The use of perspective taking as a pedagogical method in social studies classes has been shown to increase student interest and engagement in social studies classes (DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012; Gehlbach et al, 2008), increase students' critical thinking skills (Colby, 2009; DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012), and help students internalize the experiences of the historical figures they study (Rios, Trent, & Castaneda, 2003), in a way that makes social studies class more enjoyable for students (Alvarez, 2008). Moreover, activities that allow students to take different perspectives can help students test and refine interpretations of text and rhetoric (Colby, 2009), increase students' long-term retention of information (DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012), cause students to see social studies as more important in relation to other classes (Gehlbach et al, 2008), and encourage students to take ownership of their learning while fostering deep understanding of the past (Volk, 2012). One added benefit shown by Alvarez (2008) was that students who completed a perspective taking activity reported that the activity was less difficult than normal class work, though the teacher perception was that the activity was more complex.

Several social benefits have been demonstrated in relation to the use of perspective taking activities, such as increased tolerance for opposing viewpoints, decreased reliance on prevailing dogmas, decreased violent tendencies, increased caring for others, and appreciation for different cultures (Bilali and Vollhardt, 2013; Gehlbach, Brinkman, & Wang, 2012; Gehlbach et al, 2008, Worthman, 2004). Rios, Trent, and Castaneda (2003) found that perspective taking activities can help students become more socially aware, while Worthman (2004) reported that perspective taking activities can increase student appreciation for social justice.

Negative effects of perspective taking.

Critics of perspective taking as a pedagogical method cite several possible detriments. Some researchers have warned that the encouragement of the use of imagination threatens the standing of the study of history as an objective discipline, and that the inferences students make in the process of taking historical perspectives are naïve, counter-productive, and actually impede students making accurate sense of the past (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Cunningham, 2004). Gehlbach (2011) stated that student perspective taking is subject to a variety of biases which can disable a student's ability to interpret history. Gair (2013) reported that identifying too closely with another person's perspective can result in disengagement for self-protection, compassion decline due to fatigue, and burnout, while Barton and Levstik (2004), wrote that identifying with one community or culture can lead students to cut other cultures off completely.

Other critics state that student perspective taking can lead to serious misinterpretations of past events, and that failing to put in the work to fully understand the historical context of the time being studied can cause students to make erroneous judgments and false assumptions (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Gehlbach, 2011). Further, encouraging misinformed students to take historical perspectives can reinforce these misinterpretations while giving students the illusion of

understanding (Bickmore, 2008). Cunningham (2004) pointed out the lack of specificity in defining perspective taking as a pedagogical method, and the lack of accurate and effective instruments for assessing perspective taking.

Two recent studies show possible social detriments associated with perspective taking. Vorauer, Martens, and Sasaki (2013) determined that perspective taking can lead individuals with low levels of prejudice to treat members of different groups less positively, possibly due to the tendency of low prejudice people to become complacent after taking the perspective of a member of the outside group. Additionally, Vorauer and Sucahryna (2013) suggested that attempts by one person in a close relationship to take the perspective of the other person in the relationship resulted in decreased communication on the part of the perspective taker, and a decrease in satisfaction with the relationship. These social effects, though not directly associated with learning outcomes, could have lasting negative impacts on students.

Advocates of perspective taking counter that to walk in the philosophical shoes of people of the past is the ultimate goal of history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Further, supporters of perspective taking claim that historical study should involve more than just memorizing facts, and that encouraging students to see history through other peoples' eyes improves students' historic thinking (Hartmann & Hasselhorn, 2008). And, though critics assert that perspective taking can perpetuate misinformation when students do not have adequate historical understandings, Seng and Wei (2010) found that teachers were able to provide adequate amounts of historical knowledge to allow students to avoid this pitfall. Additionally, the idea that discussions can propagate false information is refuted by Dreifuerst (2009), who reported that debriefings following classroom experiences can serve to clarify and correct students' misunderstandings.

Student factors that affect perspective taking.

Students' abilities to take historical perspectives can be influenced by a number of factors. In a 2012 study, Gehlbach, Brinkworth, and Wang reported that students are more likely to engage in perspective taking if they believe the situation has importance, if they are motivated to help the people in the situation, if they are motivated to understand the situation, if they have a natural curiosity or inclination to understand others, or if they have a desire for self knowledge. Rios, Trent, and Castaneda (2003) found that the ability to take another perspective could be affected by the socio-cultural experiences, personalities, and social constructs of the participants, and the number of previous opportunities given to participants to take other perspectives.

The ability to take different perspectives can be negatively affected in students who experience lack of energy, mental distraction, lack of emotional control, or preoccupation, or in participants with high levels of confidence in their own points of view (Gehlbach, 2011; Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Wang, 2012). Cultural factors, such as disregard for another culture, can also serve as barriers to perspective taking (Rios, Trent, & Castaneda, 2003). Gair (2013) reported that remoteness or lack of familiarity with the situation being studied can block perspective taking abilities, though Levstik's (2001) study demonstrated that students in New Zealand were more willing to take the perspectives of foreign cultures than of cultures from their home nation. In addition, teachers who supply limited sources of historical information can see decreased perspective taking abilities in their students (Yeagar & Doppen, 2001).

Students can also fall victim to mindsets that inhibit historical perspective taking. Barton and Levstik (2004) wrote that students who fail to take historical perspectives often report that the people of the past knew they were acting in old-fashioned ways, or that they behaved in certain ways because of a lack of intelligence. Overcoming these beliefs can require a great deal

of time and attention on the part of the teacher, and can undermine the perspective taking process. To minimize these obstacles, Seng and Wei (2010) suggest small class sizes, teacher attention to students' opinions and beliefs, and the use of collaborative, explorative learning.

Teacher factors that affect perspective taking.

Teachers play vital roles in encouraging students to take different perspectives. Seng and Wei (2010) reported that Singaporian teachers encouraged students to take historical perspectives by giving students freedom within classroom assignments to draw from personal experiences, by providing adequate amounts of historical knowledge, by allowing students to collaborate on assignments, by relying less on examination-based assessment, and by encouraging students to take ownership of their learning. Additionally, some teachers are reluctant to adopt the role of classroom facilitator required by many historical perspective taking activities. These teachers can block student perspective taking by refusing to allow students the time and intellectual freedom to explore historical topics on their own (Seng &Wei, 2010).

Teachers can also inhibit or facilitate student perspective taking with the sources they use to communicate historical information to their students. Yeagar and Doppen (2001) reported that providing a variety of text-based sources as students explore historical situations can help students adopt historical perspectives, though locating quality materials can be difficult. Barton and Levstik (2004) reported a scarcity of sources that communicate the beliefs and values of historical people, which they deemed to be central to students' abilities to take historical perspectives. Further, the few sources that Barton and Levstik (2004) located were difficult for students to interpret due changing social beliefs and language shifts over time.

Methods employed by teachers to foster perspective taking among students include the use of videos, visits to historic sites, decision-making scenarios, imaginative writing exercises,

listening to radio dramas, dressing like historical figures, and role playing (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013; Cunningham, 2004). Further, providing topics and materials that evoke emotional responses from students have proven useful in encouraging student perspective taking (Cunningham, 2004; Seng & Wei, 2010).

Perspective taking dilemmas.

Cunningham (2004) wrote of four dilemmas faced by teachers who seek to foster historical perspective taking in their students: (a) how to encourage students to use their imaginations while keeping them focused on evidence, (b) whether students should frame responses in terms of the student or the person being studied, (c) whether to encourage students to form emotional connections to the characters being studied, and (d) whether to allow students to make moral judgments about the actions of people of the past. These situations created complex tensions for the teachers involved, forcing them to alter lesson plans and strategies from day to day.

Foster (1999) anticipated and addressed most of the dilemmas reported by Cunningham (2004). Foster (1999) stated that perspective taking should steer clear of imagination and emotional connections, which can undermine the objectivity of the historian and lead to erroneous understandings. Likewise, Foster (1999) stated that historical figures should not be morally judged by modern values and belief systems. Instead, students should engage in a scholarly examination of the repercussions of the actions of people of the past, with the goal of capitalizing on the benefit of hindsight to learn from the past.

Conclusion

This review of literature has shown that historical perspective taking is a complex pedagogical method with a number of possible benefits and detriments for students. Teachers

have found a variety of methods for encouraging students to take the perspectives of people of the past, and though obstacles exist for the teaching and learning of historical perspective taking, this review of literature shows that these obstacles can be overcome. Teachers play important roles in the abilities of students to take historical perspectives, by selecting resources for the classroom and giving students the freedom to explore historical situations. Likewise, numerous mental, emotional, and personality factors can block or facilitate students in taking historical perspectives.

Further, this review shows that classroom discussion is a highly valuable teaching tool in a wide variety of subjects and settings, and teachers have developed numerous methods for fostering student participation in discussions. While many problems still remain, teachers and students can work together to create classroom discussions that develop students' skills, increase engagement and retention of material, and contribute to democratic society. Though extensive, prevailing literature neglects the effects of historical perspective taking on classroom. This research study will help close those gaps.

This review of literature has provided the reader with some background on the research concerned with historical perspective taking and classroom discussion. Chapter 3 continues with the methods used for my current study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

For 10 years, I taught Social Studies at the high school level. During this time, I consistently created opportunities for classroom discussion with my students. I hoped for high quality student responses that employed higher order and critical thinking to push their thinking to new levels. At the same time, I needed discussions with both high numbers of responses overall, and with responses from a high percentage of my students. Discussions with low participation were often dull and ended before class time was finished. However, discussions with a great deal of participation but low levels of thinking contributed very little to the growth of my students. For these reasons, I investigated both the quantity and the quality of the classroom discussions in this study.

Chapter 2 reviewed the current literature surrounding historical perspective taking and classroom discussion. In Chapter 3, I discuss the substantive and methodological frameworks which guided my study, and describe the rationale for the methods I utilized. Then, I detail the specific methods used to collect and gather data concerning the effects of a historical perspective taking activity on classroom discussions.

Theoretical Base for the Study

This study was developed with substantive and methodological theory. Substantive theory deals with ways students learn. Methodological theory considers the techniques and processes used to gather, classify, analyze, and report data. The guiding principles within each of these theories are discussed in turn.

Substantive theory.

The principles of constructivism as described by Lev Vygotsky (1978) guided this study. Vygotsky (1978) asserted that learning is a process in which new experiences build upon

previous experiences. Learning is thus an interconnected, longitudinal progression in which the

learner builds his own universe from numerous sources and experiences, each valuable and

inseparable from the others. In the constructivist classroom, meaningful experiences are not

handed down by an all-knowing authority figure, but built, piece at a time by both the teacher

and the student. Likewise, a method that may prove highly effective for one student or teacher

may prove ineffective for another student or teacher, as each comes at the situation with a

different point of view, set of experiences, and way of looking at the world.

Another guiding aspect of Vygotsky's (1978) constructivism is the zone of proximal

development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) defined ZPD as "those functions that have not yet

matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are

currently in an embryonic state" (p. 86). Thus, the learning process does not happen in a single

event. Instead, learning takes place as a gradual progression over time. For this reason, it is the

teacher's responsibility to encourage students to achieve beyond their current states of

development. Perspective taking is of central importance to this study and unifies the methods

employed. When utilized in the classroom, perspective taking employs abstract thinking,

decision-making, and classroom discussion to move students from their current states of

development toward the ZPD.

The constructivist perspective does not rely on a single teaching method as a panacea for

all classroom problems. Instead, constructivists tend to employ a range of different methods to

meet their students' needs. In this study, I attempted to add to the existing knowledge base of

pedagogy by studying perspective taking as an additional device in the tool chest of classroom

methods. Teachers with the right tools can improve learning for students and the process of

education for teachers. Hatch (2002) stated that constructivists spend time in the natural settings

of the people they study, interviewing and observing in the hopes of reconstructing the situation being studied from the point of view of the participants. In this study, I attempted to describe the implementation of a teaching method in rich detail, along with its repercussions for the teacher and students. My goal was for readers to be able to construct their own meaning from this description.

Methodological theory.

This study employed a mixed methods design, and was conducted with one 9th grade World History class of a single teacher at a county high school. In order to describe the effects of a historical perspective taking activity on students' discussion skills, I employed quantitative frequency counts of student responses during classroom discussions, a focus group interview of the student participants, qualitative interviews of the teacher involved, and document analysis of the student work turned in during the study.

To protect the anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were used for the participating teacher and the student participants, as well as the county and the school in which the study took place. Students were assigned random three-digit numbers as identifiers. The teacher was referred to as "Mr. Crane", "M. Crane", or "Crane" throughout this paper. The county was given the pseudonym "Marlon County", and the school was called "Stevenson High School" or "Stevenson".

Rationale for mixed methods research.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods can provide a more thorough description of the situation being studied (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2013), enhance the credibility of findings (Hall, 2013), and challenge commonly-held assumptions while promoting deeper engagement with the phenomenon (Fielding, 2008). Anfara (2006) asserted that mixed

methods research can provide more powerful support for inferences and reveal information that would have been missed when using only one method. Additionally, the use of quantitative data can add precision to qualitative descriptions (Anfara, 2006).

Detractors have contended that the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods is theoretically impossible due to the prevailing paradigms entailed by each. Bergman (2008) however, suggested that these arguments are based on outdated notions that qualitative methods draw only from constructivist ideals and that quantitative methods are strictly positivist. Bergman (2008) contended that these conventions have been undermined by the growth of mixed methods research, and by the "complex, messy, and compromise-laden research process itself" (p. 14). For certain situations, phenomena, and research questions, mixed methods research holds the potential to provide the best descriptions. The modern classroom, with growing diversity, numerous resources, and increasing achievement goals, can be one of these situations.

Rationale for single case research.

Single case studies can be viewed as two overarching types. One type refers to studies of individual participants. The other type examines single groups and organized bodies (Merriam, 1988). Since this study investigated one class taught by a single teacher, before and after the introduction of a perspective taking activity, it met the description set forth by Merriam (1988).

Many factors were involved in my decision to use a single case design. In a single case study, I could seek a more holistic description of the phenomenon under investigation, while remaining flexible and sensitive to local factors in the classroom. Moreover, the single case design enabled me to use repeated measurements of continuous behaviors and to allow participants to serve as their own controls (Barlow, Nock, & Hersen, 2009; Merriam, 1988;

Morgan & Morgan, 2009;). Further, single case research is particularly advantageous in shedding light on new or rare phenomena (Barlow, Nock, & Hersen, 2009). Since this study describes the rarely investigated effects of perspective taking on classroom discussion, the single case design was beneficial.

Studying a single teacher or an individual classroom allows for deep concentration and a rich description. In describing the application of case study methods in the classroom, Merriam (1988) wrote "The decision to focus on case studies stems from the fact that this design is chosen precisely because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing" (p. 10).

This study matched Merriam's (1988) criteria for case studies in education settings. First, single case research in education should be focused on a particular event, phenomenon, or situation. I examined one teaching method in one classroom taught by an individual teacher. Second, single case studies should provide a thick, rich description of the phenomenon under study. I employed multiple measures and data gathering techniques in order to provide an extremely thorough description. Third, the single case study should bring new understanding to the reader in relation to a specific situation. I sought to illuminate the readers' understanding by describing a rarely examined phenomenon. And fourth, single case studies should be inductive, or allow hypotheses to emerge from the examination of the data. Instead of providing the reader with a pre-set opinion, I hoped to create a situation where the reader could form his or her own opinion based on the findings of this study.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the possible effects of a historical perspective taking scenario activity on the discussion skills of one group of 9th grade World History students.

Specifically, I sought to investigate whether a historical perspective taking activity helped increase the quality and quantity of student participation in discussions. Additionally, I tried to explore whether student and teacher perceptions of discussion changed after participating in a historical perspective taking activity.

Approval for this study was given by the principal of Stevenson High School on July 24, 2014 (see Appendix D). The Director of Marlon County Schools also gave written permission for this research project on July 24 (see Appendix E). Institutional Review Board documentation was developed for this study, and was approved by The University of Tennessee on July 22, 2014 (see Appendix A). A description of the setting, participants, and methodology follows.

Setting.

Stevenson (pseudonym) High School serves grades 9-12 in rural Marlon (pseudonym) County. At the conclusion of the study, enrollment at Stevenson High School was 553 students, with 33 full time teachers. Of the student population, 82% was Caucasian, 14% was African American, and 3% was Hispanic. As a comparison, a 2015 report stated that 94% of the population of Tennessee was Caucasian, 2% was African-American, and 4% was Hispanic or Latino ("State & county quickfacts," 2015). Around 58% of students at Stevenson High School received free or reduced meals.

Marlon County is a large, rural county in southeast Tennessee with a population of about 45,000. The median household income in Marlon County is near $38,000 annually, which is substantially lower than the over $44,000 median for Tennessee and the over $53,000 median income for the United States. 19.6% of the population of Marlon County lives below the poverty line, compared to 17.6% in Tennessee and 15.4% in the nation. High school diplomas are held by 78% of Marlon County's population, though less than 11% possess a Bachelor's degree or

higher. As a comparison, 84% of Tennesseans hold a high school diploma, while nearly 24% of Tennesseans possess bachelor's degrees. In the United States overall, 86% of the population received high school diplomas, and nearly 29% hold bachelor's degrees ("State & county quickfacts," 2015).

Participants.

The participants for this study consisted of Mr. Crane (pseudonym) and the 15 students in his ninth grade World History class at Stevenson High School. I asked Mr. Crane to participate in this study after meeting with the principal and the guidance department of the school. The principal, out of concern for American History End of Course test scores, asked that the study take place in a 9th grade World History classroom. The guidance counselor informed me that only two teachers taught 9th grade World History, and only one of them, Mr. Crane, taught this class throughout the day. The principal, the counselor, and I agreed that Mr. Crane, if he was willing, would be the best candidate for the study. Since I had never met Mr. Crane before the study, I introduced myself and the study through an email of introduction. The short meeting that followed revealed that he was willing and excited to participate in the study.

Mr. Crane held a bachelor's degree in education with a concentration in history from a moderately-sized regional university. At the beginning of this study, he was in his third year of teaching, having previously taught World History, Government, U.S. History, and Geography at both the junior high and high school levels.   The academic year 2014-2015 was Crane's first year at Stevenson High School, where he also served as assistant football coach.

Once Mr. Crane agreed to participate, we met to select the class. Stevenson High School utilized an alternating block schedule. From Tuesday through Friday, the day was broken into four, 90-minute block classes. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the classes labeled "Blue Schedule"

met, and on Wednesdays and Fridays, classes referred to as "Gold Schedule" met. Each

Monday, all 8 classes were seen by the teacher for 45-50 minutes each, as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Stevenson High School schedule

Monday Full Schedule	Tuesday Blue Schedule	Wednesday Gold Schedule	Thursday Blue Schedule	Friday Gold Schedule
1st 7:55-8:45	1st 7:55-9:25	2nd 7:55-9:25	1st 7:55-9:25	2nd 7:55-9:25
2nd 8:50-9:35	3rd 9:35-11:05	4th 9:35-11:05	3rd 9:35-11:05	4th 9:35-11:05
3rd 9:40-10:25	5th 11:10-12:40	6th 11:10-12:40	5th 11:10-12:40	6th 11:10-12:40
4th 10:30-11:15	7th 1:15-2:45	8th 1:15-2:45	7th 1:15-2:45	8th 1:15-2:45
5th 11:20-12:05				
6th 12:10-1:00				
7th 1:05-1:50				
8th 1:55-2:45				

Though Stevenson High School's bell schedule was not a factor in the initial selection of

the classes, the schedule did play a strong role in determining specific dates for observations and

interviews. Since the class selected to participate only met Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays,

observations could not be conducted on Wednesdays and Fridays. Further, Tuesday classes and

Thursday classes were composed of 90-minute blocks, while Monday classes met for 50

minutes. The amount of time devoted to each class had to be considered in the planning of

observations.

This alternating block schedule allowed Mr. Crane to teach seven sections of 9th grade

World History through the week. One of these classes was an Honors class, which was

eliminated from the process since we sought a class with mixed ability levels. After looking at

the numbers, Mr. Crane and I numbered his classes 1-5 (based on the order of their meeting

times on the Monday schedule) and drew a random number from a box. The number we selected

corresponded with the class that met from 7:55-8:45 on Mondays, and from 7:55-9:25 on

Tuesdays and Thursdays. Individual identities, behavior tendencies, and achievement potential of students were not considered in making the selection.

The class we selected to participate in this study was composed of 15 students, all in the 9th grade. Of these students, six were 14 years of age and 9 were 15 years old. This class contained 7 males and 8 females. A total of four of these students qualified for special education services, while 6 received free and reduced lunch. All of the students listed themselves as Caucasian in ethnicity.

Two male student participants were unable to take part in this study. One of these students was diagnosed with a serious illness and was placed on homebound for the remainder of the semester.   The other student participant received a long-term suspension for violent behavior at school. This participant missed the first three observations, returned for the fourth, and received another long-term suspension for violent acts. Since this student did not return a signed letter or assent for informed consent, and since he was only present for one observation, his responses during this observation were removed from consideration.

Intervention: The perspective taking scenario activity.

Scenarios, also referred to as "vignettes", are short, hypothetical descriptions of situations which require respondents to make decisions based on given and known information (Jonassen, 2012). Scenarios compel students to use their imaginations in conjunction with background knowledge to consider the possible outcomes of choices (Poulou, 2001). Military planners and politicians have used scenarios for generations to anticipate possible events and outcomes, and psychologists often provide scenarios to patients as a form of therapy (Jonassen, 2012; Poulou, 2001).

Scenarios have several benefits for educators. The generally short length of most scenarios allows them to be used in a variety of classroom settings, and their "real-world" emphasis lends itself to student application and problem solving (Victor, 1999). Moreover, scenarios have been effective in teaching social skills to students, and in fostering empathy for others in children with autism (Schrandt, Townsend, & Poulson, 2009).

During my ten years as a high school social studies teacher, I developed historical scenarios as a means to encourage my students to discuss historical topics. I found that students who were reluctant to participate in classroom discussions increased their participation when the topic focused on people in historical settings, personal dilemmas, and everyday choices. Further, students across grade levels reported that they learned more when they were allowed to discuss historical topics, and that they enjoyed class more during these lessons.

After two teacher-training sessions, Mr. Crane and I collaborated to write four scenarios for each of the final three discussion observations. In Observation 4, I wrote all of the scenarios based on the topic being studied in Mr. Crane's class at the time. In the final two observations, Mr. Crane and I each wrote two scenarios. I compiled the four scenarios into a handout for the students. All of the scenarios were based on the unit of study, provided students with a moral dilemma, and asked students to make a choice based on their learning and on the information given in the scenario.

In the final three observations, Mr. Crane provided students with handouts containing the scenarios. Each handout contained the four scenarios separated by several lines of white space. Mr. Crane asked the students to read the scenarios and write short responses stating what they would do in that situation and why they would make that choice.

When the students had completed their answers, Mr. Crane began the discussion by reading each scenario aloud in turn and asking students what they would do. As observer, I recorded each observation and documented each student response. The teacher-training sessions are discussed in detail later in this chapter. Thorough descriptions of all six observations are included in Chapter 4.

Study Design.

This mixed methods, descriptive single case study utilized quantitative and qualitative data to provide a rich description of the use of historical scenarios as discussion starters in a high school classroom. The repeated measures design of this study sought to allowed me to establish a deep understanding of the pre-intervention classroom, then compare this naturalistic phase to the post-intervention phase.

Overview of the Procedure.

I examined the effects of a historical scenario activity on the amount and quality of student participation in discussions, as well as student and teacher perceptions of classroom discussions. In order to measure the possible effects of the historical scenario activity on classroom discussions, I observed six classes over a four week period, conducted frequency counts, rated every other student discussion response according to the rubric I developed, conducted a focus group interview with the student participants, and interviewed the teacher before and after the intervention. As an added measure of the quality of student responses, I subjected student writings to document analysis utilizing the constant comparison method (Glaser, 1965). Each of these methods is discussed in the sections that follow. All of these varied research methods combine to provide the thick, rich description of the phenomenon under

examination set forth by Merriam (1998) in her criteria for case studies. The methods I employed to create this thick, rich description include:

- Observations of three classroom discussions conducted prior to the introduction of the scenario activity.

- Observations of three classroom discussions in which students completed the historical scenario activity.

- Frequency counts of student responses in all six discussions.

- Ratings of every other student discussion response according to the discussion response rubric.

- Focus group interview with 8 student participants to examine their perceptions of classroom discussions.

- Interview of the teacher participant before observations began to examine his views of classroom discussions prior to the intervention.

- Interview of the teacher participant after observations concluded to investigate whether his perceptions of classroom discussions had changed.

- Document analysis of student writings turned in during the course of the study.

Instrumentation: Discussion response rubric.

The discussion response rubric was developed after my search for an existing method for assessing the quality of student responses in classrooms discussion proved dissatisfactory. Many studies had examined the quality of participation in discussions. However, none of these were found that assessed the quality of discussion satisfactorily. They either addressed what seemed to be extraneous qualities or required the assessor to spend inordinate and unnecessary time on

the assessment. While no single study completely satisfied the requirements of this study, several of these investigations provided helpful starting points and examples.

Models for rubric format.

Three models were examined as the basis for preparing the discussion response rubric. These were Darabi and Jin (2013), Weltzer-Ward, Baltes, and Lynn (2009), and Nandi, Chang, and Balbo (2009). In this section I will describe why two of these were rejected and one was adapted for use in this study.

Darabi and Jin (2013) evaluated the quality of online discussion by arranging student responses into six categories. These categories classified responses based on students' abilities to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. While these classifications appealed to my sense of the quality of discussions, the methods utilized in assessing the quality of the responses were complex and labor intensive. Since I anticipated rating hundreds of responses these methods were impractical.

Weltzer-Ward, Baltes, and Lynn (2009) conducted a study in which student thinking in online discussions was evaluated using the critical thinking assessment framework. This framework evaluated discussion responses through a four step process which sought to determine the purpose of the response, the role of the response in the argument being made by the respondent, the response's relationship to other responses, and the critical thinking demonstrated by the response. Although I valued the in-depth examination demonstrated by this research project, the time and effort involved in subjecting each response to several rounds of evaluation was impossible for my study. Additionally, no rubric was utilized until the end of the assessment. For these reasons, this study was also impractical as a model.

The most influential study in the development of my discussion response rubric was conducted by Nandi, Chang, and Balbo (2009). These researchers developed a Likert scale rubric which rated the quality of online discussion responses from poor to excellent based on three classifications: content, interaction quality, and objective measures of participation. Since my study already contained quantitative measures of participation, I did not want to look at participation in the rubric. However, I found the interaction section useful. Even though several aspects of this category focused on online discussions, I believed that the ideas of engagement with other participants responses and sharing outside knowledge could be applied to the traditional discussion format.

The content section was comprised of several subcategories. These subcategories included clarification, justification, interpretation, application of knowledge, prioritization, and breadth of knowledge. I believed that these aspects of discussion were particularly crucial in examining the quality of discussions, though evaluating each individual response based on each of these six subcategories (in addition to the four subcategories of the interaction quality section) with four levels each would prove time-consuming and unwieldy. I hoped that I could find a way to combine many of the aspects of this study into a more streamlined rubric.

I met with my advisor, Dr. Thomas Turner, and presented him with the Darabi and Jin (2013), Weltzer-Ward, Baltes, and Lynn (2009), and Nandi, Chang, and Balbo (2009) studies. Dr. Turner agreed that we could combine the critical aspects of each of these studies into a more tightly focused version of the Nandi, Chang, and Balbo (2009) rubric. We hoped to develop a rubric that would encompass many positive characteristics of classroom discussion under a few broad headings. We determined the headings for the rubric by reviewing prevailing literature and considering our own experiences with classroom discussion.

Models for the content of the rubric.

The process of developing the rubric began with a thorough review of the literature. Classroom discussion (in both traditional and online formats) has been examined in a large number of studies, and opinions concerning the characteristics of a quality discussion are as numerous as the researchers themselves. After reviewing the literature and collaborating with my committee chair, I found that the majority of these positive characteristics could be classified into four overarching categories: comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction. These categories became the four classifications of the discussion response rubric

Quality discussions have been identified with the characteristics of deep learning, cognitive engagement, development of knowledge, and abstraction (Andresen, 2009; Aufschnaiter, 2008). Murphy and Fortner (2014) studied the effects of instructor interventions on the quality of student discussion, and identified deep thought, coherence, and logic as the desirable characteristics of a quality discussion. Cicchino's (2015) investigation of student discussions in online, curriculum-based games revealed that the best discussions fostered critical thinking and the development of independent knowledge.

In seeking a rubric category that would encompass as many of these positive aspects of discussions, Dr. Turner and I arrived at the term "comprehension". Merriam-Webster.com defines comprehension as "the act or action of grasping with the intellect: understanding" or "the capacity for understanding fully." With this in mind, we created a category in which the highest level response would display deep understanding of the topic, with the possibility of making outside references to show the development of learning.

Comprehension alone, no matter how deep, could not encompass all of the aspects of a quality discussion. Several studies discovered the capability of discussions to advance learning

in new directions and to lead students to new insights. As a classroom teacher I valued these moments when student comments guided discussions in unexpected directions. For these reasons, we created a rubric category based on this capability, which we termed "extension of learning."

Extending learning has been valued in several studies. McNair (2000) asserted that the purpose of discussion in mathematics courses was to encourage students to extend learning through the modification of their understanding of mathematical concepts. Aufschnaiter (2008) discovered that students who participated in classroom discussions were able to build upon the ideas of other students to broaden their own learning, while Grace (2009) found that discussing issues helped students to develop new solutions to real world problems. Murphy and Fortner (2014) developed a rubric for assessing the quality of student responses in online discussions. This rubric gave higher ratings to responses that enriched the discussion with innovative thoughts and ideas.

Based on my review of literature and considering my experiences with classroom discussion, the ideas for the rubric began to solidify. I concluded that students needed to be able to apply a historical topic to their own lives as the basis for learning. Therefore it was an important element in classroom discussions.

Two studies provided insights on discussions and application. Weinberger and Fischer (2006) asserted that discussion and collaboration could help students learn to apply the concepts they learned to real life situations. Grace's (2009) study of discussions centered on biological issues revealed that students were able to apply previous learning to resolve problems in conservation. The scenarios employed by this study provided students with the opportunity to apply their previous learning to hypothetical problems.

The final category of the discussion response category was interaction. Classroom discussions are collaborative by definition, and offer increasing value for educators who seek ways to increase student interaction (Roehling, Kooi, Dykema, Quisenberry, & Vandlen, 2011). Dennen (2008) reported that interacting in classroom discussions can increase student motivation to learn and to refine their ideas. Interaction is one of the foundations of effective teaching and learning, and is essential to the success of online discussions (Sims, 2002).

Matsumura, Slater, and Crosson (2008) studied student interaction in urban middle schools, and determined that high quality interaction included student displays of friendliness, positivity, and helpfulness toward each other. Low quality interaction involved teasing and making fun. The rubric I developed followed these same guidelines for the quality of responses in terms of student interaction.

The discussion response rubric that emerged from this review of pertinent literature was revised several times. The final rubric consisted of four sections which examined one characteristic each. These characteristics were Comprehension, Extension of Learning, Application, and Interaction. I used this rubric to rate alternating responses on a Likert scale of 1 (poor) to 3 (excellent) as seen in Appendix F.

Study timeline.

This study received IRB approval on July 22, 2014, but a complication soon arose. Originally, I planned to conduct the study at the school where I work. However, my doctoral committee requested that I change my location to a different school in the hopes of avoiding participant biases. I completed a Form D Modification Request to add Stevenson High School to my IRB, and was approved on September 4, 2014. Once all proper forms were completed and approved, the study proceeded as follows:

- 7-22-14   IRB #9570 B approved

- 9-4-14   Form D Modification Request approved

- 9-4-14   Met with Stevenson High School principal and guidance counselor. Sent

                 email of introduction to Mr. Crane.

- 9-5-14   Met with Mr. Crane to introduce the study and select the participating

                 class.

- 9-8-14   Met with the class to introduce the study and hand out assent and informed

                 consent statements.

- 9-19-14   All assent and consent forms received.

- 10-3-14   Teacher pre-intervention interview

- 11-17-14   Program for Minors Minor Registration Form #15 approved

- 11-18-14   Observation 1 (pre-intervention)

- 11-20-14   Observation 2 (pre-intervention)

- 11-24-14   Observation 3 (pre-intervention)

- 11-25-14   Teacher-Training Workshop 1

- 11-29-14   Teacher-Training Workshop 2

- 12-1-14   Observation 4 (intervention)

- 12-4-14   Observation 5 (intervention)

- 12-9-14   Observation 6 (intervention)

- 12-15-14   Teacher post-intervention interview

- 12-18-14   Student focus group interview

Assent and consent documents.

When the study began, 15 students were enrolled in the class I was to observe. Before assent and consent documents were handed out, one student was diagnosed with a serious illness and placed on homebound, and another committed a violent act at school and received a long term suspension. This student returned to class for observation four, but was suspended again immediately after. Therefore, these two students did not receive or complete assent and consent documents. The suspended student participated in discussion four, but since he did not complete assent and consent documents, his data were not included.

I received IRB approval on July 22, and Form D (location change) approval on September 4. The following day, I met with Mr. Crane and the students to introduce the study and request their participation. All of the remaining 13 students agreed to participate and received assent and consent documents. On September 12, I returned to Mr. Crane's class to collect the signed documents, and found that all but four of the students had returned the appropriately signed forms. I reminded the students that without the signed forms, they would participate in all classroom activities, but their data would not be included in the study. When I returned a week later, the remaining four students presented me with their signed assent and consent documents.

Procedures.

Data for this study were collected following IRB approval, between October and December of 2014. Data include a teacher pre-intervention interview, three pre-intervention classroom observations, three observations using the intervention, a teacher post-intervention interview, and a student focus group interview. Additionally, I collected the writings completed

during the pre-intervention observations and the completed historical perspective taking activity

sheets for document analysis and comparison. A detailed description of the procedures follows.

Teacher pre-intervention interview.

After receiving IRB and Form D approval, and following the collection of signed assent

and consent documents from Mr. Crane and all 13 students, I met with Mr. Crane on October 3

to conduct the pre-intervention interview. I used a semi-structured interview protocol (see

Appendix G) in the hopes of allowing the teacher to talk about his beliefs concerning student

discussions, and recorded the interview with a high definition digital audio recorder. After

several introductory and background questions intended to increase Mr. Crane's comfort level,

questions were asked concerning teacher and student enjoyment of discussions, the subjects he

deemed as good topics for classroom discussions, planning for discussions, student and teacher

characteristics that lend themselves to discussion, methods for conducting discussions, the

benefits of having classroom discussions, student learning and application during discussions,

and student participation in discussions.

This initial interview lasted over 45 minutes, and contained valuable information

concerning the Mr. Crane's experience with and perceptions of classroom discussions. Once

completed, I transcribed the interview for later comparison with the teacher post-intervention

interview, and deleted the audio file in order to protect the anonymity of the participant.

Following this step, I examined the transcription and removed specific names and references that

could give away Mr. Crane's identity.

Discussion observations.

After considering the possibility of statistical regression in the numbers of student

responses in discussions, I decided to employ a repeated measures design in the hopes of

establishing a more accurate picture of students' participation during classroom discussions. I observed three discussions in which the teacher used his regular methods for prompting and conducting discussions. I then observed three discussions in which Mr. Crane used the historical perspective taking scenario activity as a discussion prompt and guide. In all six discussions, I used a seating chart (see Appendix H) to record the number of responses by each student. To protect the anonymity of the participants, I used a random number generator (www.randomizer.org) to create 13 three-digit codes. Then, I randomly assigned each student a code to ensure that their names were never reported.

Additionally, I recorded each discussion using a high definition digital audio recorder. When the observations were completed, I transcribed each one, and removed all references to specific names and identifiers. In most cases, it was impossible to identify which specific students were commenting in the recordings, so instead of replacing students' names with their actual identifying code, names were replaced with "[student]" in order to show that a student was speaking or being referred to, without risk of giving away their identities.

Start and stop times were recorded for each discussion, with the start time designated as the time when Mr. Crane called the students to attention, and the stop time defined as the moment when Mr. Crane dismissed the students or moved on to the next assignment. In the teacher-training sessions, I asked Mr. Crane to allow the discussions to continue until student responses stopped or until he deemed the discussion as finished. In Observations 1, 2, and 3, the teacher decided the discussion was over when he asked a number of back-to-back questions and received no verbal responses from the students. Observations 4, 5, and 6 continued until the dismissal bell rang and students were allowed to leave. A thorough description of each discussion with duration times and numbers of responses is presented in Chapter 4.

Teacher-training sessions.

I believe that quality teaching occurs when a confident teacher is made a partner in the education process, empowered with knowledge, and given time to form thoughtful plans. As a result of this belief, I conducted two sessions with the teacher participant. These sessions had three main purposes: to establish the purposes of the historical perspective taking activity, to write scenarios specific to the time period being studied in the classroom, and to establish classroom procedures for the use of the historical perspective taking scenario activity and the classroom discussion.

After the three initial observations were completed, I met with Mr. Crane in his classroom after school on November 25, 2014 for approximately one hour. This training session followed a pre-set agenda (see Appendix I) but remained open to the needs and the input of the teacher participant. I began the workshop by presenting Mr. Crane with copies of several articles (Colby, 2009; DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012; Gehlbach et al, 2008; Jonassen, 2012; Lee & Ashby, 2001; Levstik, 2001) that define and identify the purposes of historical perspective taking scenarios. We discussed each article in turn, and Mr. Crane asked several clarifying questions.

After discussing the articles, I related my own experiences with the perspective taking activity, and shared four examples of scenarios I had used in my previous classes. A full list of the scenarios I shared with Mr. Crane is located in Appendix J, though one example was:

> *You and your husband have been in America for over two years. You both have*
>
> *factory jobs, you have both learned fairly good English. You have managed to*
>
> *save some money. One day, your brother writes to you from Russia to say that*
>
> *your mother is dying. He says that she has only weeks to live, and if you want to*
>
> *see her one last time, you should start for Russia right away. You know that it*

will be easy to secure passage to Russia, but very difficult to be able to return. It
will take all your savings just to get back, and jobs are very scarce in your
homeland. What do you do, and why?

Mr. Crane was highly interested in these examples, and immediately identified that the scenario activity presented students with a dilemma, asked them to make a choice, and employed emotional situations to increase student interest. I acknowledged Mr. Crane's observations and added that, in order to fully capitalize on the potential of historical scenarios in history classes, the scenarios should be set in the time period being studied and should allow students to envision themselves in the situation. Further, extra care must be taken to present problems that are arguable and have the potential to garner multiple perspectives.

Mr. Crane expressed some consternation at the prospect of writing scenarios on his own, and asked me to take the lead in writing the first set of scenarios. We decided that, in order to allow Mr. Crane to think about the information he had been given, we would meet for breakfast the following Saturday and collaboratively write the first set of scenarios. After that, we would have Mr. Crane write half of the scenarios for the following observation, and all of the scenarios for the final observation. Ultimately this plan did not entirely work out. Mr. Crane wrote two scenarios for the second observation, but family problems took time away from his work as we neared the final observation, and he was only able to write two of the scenarios for that discussion.

When we met again on November 29, Mr. Crane expressed that he had reviewed the articles and the examples, and that he was excited to begin writing. We started the session by discussing the number of scenarios to use in each observation. Since I had previously found four scenarios per class to be successful, we agreed that we would utilize four scenarios per

observation. Still, we remained flexible to the particular needs of the class, and decided to revisit the number after Observation 3. After this discussion concluded, we discussed the number and agreed to continue the use of four scenarios for the final observations.

Following this discussion, Mr. Crane and I considered the topics his students had recently studied. The class I was observing had just started their unit on World War I. Recent lessons had centered around the causes and early major events of the Great War. Mr. Crane informed me that his students seemed highly interested in the 1914 Rape of Belgium, and stated that he would like to present them with a scenario centered on that event. He also had considered a scenario in which a mother had to decide whether or not to send her son to war. We fleshed out these ideas with details and added a scenario in which a soldier had to choose between saving a friend or a relative. The final scenario was based on the life of Alvin York, a figure Mr. Crane held in high regard.

After writing the scenarios, we established classroom procedures for conducting the historical perspective taking scenario activity. Since Mr. Crane had no experience with an activity of this type, he asked about my methods for using scenarios in the classroom. I described the typical protocol I followed when using the activity, and engaged Mr. Crane in a conversation about the positives and negatives of my methods. Mr. Crane was concerned about the willingness of his students to read lengthy scenarios, and requested that we keep them as short as possible. When I emphasized that students should be allowed to work in pairs in order to meet the requirements of the TEAM evaluation rubric and to allow students to learn from each other, Mr. Crane showed some reservations, stating that he normally desired for students to work independently in order to maintain order and classroom discipline. I informed Mr. Crane that I understood his concerns, but that I would like for him to allow his students to attempt paired

work as part of the activity. He agreed, but only after establishing that if the paired work failed, it could be dropped for the remainder of the observations. Additionally, Mr. Crane expressed that he had been successful in encouraging discussion by calling on students individually by name, and asked if he could continue this method. We agreed that Mr. Crane could employ any methods he had been successful with in the past, and any he felt appropriate to the situation.

Classroom procedures during the intervention.

When finalized, the procedures we established for conducting the historical perspective taking activity were:

1. Hand out copies of the four scenarios to each student.

2. Give students time to read the scenarios.

3. Ask students to form pairs and put themselves in the places of the people presented, then collaborate with their partners to make a decision that is historically appropriate. Emphasize that students in pairs are allowed to have different viewpoints, and that each should write his or her own responses to the scenarios.

4. Ask students to write a short paragraph explaining what they would do in the situation presented by each scenario, and why they would take this action. Emphasize that their decisions should be appropriate to the time period being studied, and explain what this means if necessary.

5. Ask different students to read each scenario aloud, and begin the discussion by asking "What would you do and why?"

6. Allow the discussion to progress until it reaches its natural conclusion. The natural conclusion will be the end of student responses. When student responses have ended, move to the next scenario and repeat.

7. Allow five minutes at the end of class for a small conclusion activity. This activity will be planned by the teacher, and include a short writing assignment over the day's activity.

8. Collect student written responses and concluding activities at the end of class.

Post intervention teacher interview.

Following the completion of all six interviews, I met with Mr. Crane to conduct the post-intervention interview. As with the pre-intervention interview, I used a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix K) to guide the discussion, but remained flexible and open to following new courses of information that could arise during the interview (Glesne, 2011). The post-intervention teacher interview lasted over 29 minutes, and elicited teacher responses about Mr. Crane's perceptions of the historical perspective taking activity, classroom discussion, writing of scenarios, and differences between the pre-intervention discussions and the intervention discussions. This interview was recorded with a high definition digital recorder and transcribed into a Word document, where line numbers were inserted and references to specific names and places that could give away the identities of the teacher or the students were removed. This interview was then subjected to several rounds of descriptive coding, and examined for pertinent data.

Document analysis.

In order to offer a more rich description of student participation in classroom discussion, I collected all student assignments from the study for document analysis. Mr. Crane assigned students to creative writing projects after the first three (pre-intervention) observations. After Observation 1, students were assigned to write a letter to the President of the United States asking for a family member to be quarantined or removed from quarantine. After Observation 2,

students were required to write two paragraphs on whether social media is good or bad. Following Observation 3, Mr. Crane had students research the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and decide whether to send the case to trial. In Observations 4-6, students wrote one-paragraph responses to the historical perspective taking scenarios. Each observation involved four scenarios, meaning that each intervention observation resulted in four paragraphs of student writing.

It is important to note that the final three writing assignments were a departure from the original plan. In the teacher-training sessions, I asked Mr. Crane to end Observations 4-6 with a short writing assignment. Mr. Crane agreed, but the intense discussions experienced in these final three discussions proceeded until the dismissal bell rang. This meant that no final writing assignments were given to the students in any of the final three observations. After consulting with my committee, the decision was made to compare the pre-intervention writings to the paragraphs written in response to the scenarios.

Best and Kahn (2005) wrote that analysis of documents is concerned with describing the condition of some phenomenon at a particular time. The phenomenon being examined in this study is student participation in classroom discussions. Since the writing assignments were given as part of the discussion and as an extension of the discussion itself, these assignments were seen as part of the discussion process, and as a way to further assess the quality of student participation. Seen in this fashion, these assignments provided a great deal of context to the actual student oral responses recorded during the discussions. This contextual information enriched the descriptions of the observations by providing support for the descriptions of the phenomena being studied (Glesne, 2011).

Student focus group.

Once all observations were completed, I asked Mr. Crane to petition the participating

class for volunteers to take part in a focus group interview after school. Mr. Crane informed me

that he had received eight volunteers to participate, which fits the minimum number set forth by

Stewart and Shamdasani (1998). I asked Mr. Crane to confirm each student's travel

arrangements before we proceeded. On December 18, I met with these eight volunteers to

conduct the focus group interview. The interview took place in a computer room adjacent to Mr.

Crane's class. I asked Mr. Crane to stay in the immediate vicinity in case of emergencies, but to

grant the students complete privacy. Though in the initial research plan I allowed for the

possibility of two shorter focus group interviews, the length and quality of this session allowed

me to gather enough data in one sitting to gain a thorough understanding of the students'

attitudes and beliefs. This matches the description of the stand alone focus group as set forth by

Hatch (2002), as well as Stewart and Shamdasani (1998).

I used a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix L) to focus the interview on

the topics of interest (Glesne, 2011). The focus group interview lasted for nearly one hour,

which met the time requirements of Stewart and Shamdasani (1998). During this time, students

responded to questions about learning from discussions, enjoying discussions, and participating

in discussions. Students also compared the pre-intervention discussions to the intervention

discussions, and voiced their opinions and concerns with each. Though the conversation

wandered at times and the students were sometimes reluctant to participate, the information

gathered from the student focus group was rich and valuable to the study.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data.

The teacher pre-intervention interview, teacher post-intervention interview, and student focus group were transcribed, and identifiers were removed. I printed multiple copies of each and began initial coding by highlighting key phrases and topics that arose during the course of the interviews, and jotting possible themes in the margins (Glesne, 2011). After recording the themes I had identified in initial coding, I conducted the second round of descriptive coding by organizing these topics into larger categories, and creating a hierarchy of subcategories (Glesne, 2011). After the second round of descriptive coding, I entered the categories and subcategories in to an Excel spreadsheet, and added the actual phrases from the interviews (with the line numbers) that corresponded with each topic.

In analyzing student writings, I subjected the collected student writings to constant comparison as advocated by Rapley (2007) and Glaser (1965). I read each document repeatedly times, and compiled notes on each in turn. I then noted relevant themes and differences in quality between the documents (Rapley, 2007). Once again, I re-read the documents and made repeated comparisons in order to refine the comparisons (Glaser, 1965).

The ultimate goal of this document analysis was a deeper understanding of student participation in classroom discussions. For this reason, I compared the documents for length of writing and quality of responses. Rather than attempt to quantify the quality of student writings, relevant examples were pulled from the mass of writings and used to compare student responses. In this way, the actual words of the participants could be experienced by the reader.

Quantitative data.

During the course of this study, I observed three classroom discussions using the teacher's normal procedures. Then, I observed three classroom discussions prompted by a historical perspective taking activity. In these six discussions, each student response was recorded and transcribed. Using the transcriptions, I eliminated student statements that did not contribute to the discussion (for example, simple responses such as "I agree" or I disagree" were eliminated, as were statements that were completely off task). I then selected every other response (in order to arrive at a 50% evaluation rate), and evaluated these responses using the discussion response rubric.

I coordinated with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at The University of Tennessee, and made an appointment with a statistics professional. I met with a representative from OIT on February 10, 2015. Under his guidance, I used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to generate descriptive statistics and to run t-tests for statistical significance on student rates of participation. We then conducted t-tests to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the quality of student discussion responses before and after the introduction of the historical perspective taking scenario activity. Results of these tests are reported in Chapter 4 below

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine the possible effects of a historical perspective taking scenario activity on classroom discussions. As seen in Chapter 1, the research questions that guided this study were:

1. Does the use of historical perspective taking activities produce an increase in the number of student responses in a classroom discussion?

2. Does participation in a historical perspective taking activity improve the quality of student responses during classroom discussions?

3. After participating in a classroom discussion prompted by a historical perspective taking activity, do students report higher rates of enjoying discussions and learning from discussions?

4. Does the use of historical perspective taking activities alter teacher perceptions of classroom discussions, and if so, in what ways?

Chapter 4 begins with detailed description of the six observations, complete with quantitative data from each. I then address each of the research questions in succession using quantitative data from the observations and qualitative data from the teacher interviews, document analysis, and student focus group interview.

Pre-Intervention Sessions

All six discussions were conducted entirely by Mr. Crane. During the discussions, I used a seating chart to record the numbers of responses by each student. Additionally, I recorded each discussion with a high definition audio recorder. Mr. Crane took total responsibility for starting, conducting, and ending the discussions as he saw fit.

The pre-intervention discussion topics were selected by Mr. Crane from timely news headlines. He began the discussions by introducing the topic and asking for student thoughts. Each discussion continued until student responses slowed or ceased. At that time, Crane ended the discussion by moving to another assignment. A detailed description of each observation follows.

Observation 1.

Upon introducing the study to Mr. Crane for the first time, I informed him that I would be observing three discussions prior to the introduction of the historical perspective taking scenario activity, and three discussions in which he would use this activity as a discussion prompt and guide. Mr. Crane was somewhat concerned that he had never been exposed to this method. He did, however, profess experience conducting classroom discussions. As a result, I asked him to use his normal methods for starting and managing discussions in the first three observations.

Mr. Crane knew that each of the final three discussions would involve the use of an activity designed to increase student participation, but he was not trained or fully aware of the details of the activity until after the initial three observations. Only after the first three discussions would Mr. Crane be trained in the use of scenarios and made fully aware of the details.

Observation 1 took place on November 18. In the pre-intervention teacher interview, Mr. Crane informed me that he had been successful using items from the news as prompts for classroom discussion. True to form, the topic for the first classroom discussion was the ebola outbreak faced by the United States. The discussion began when the teacher asked the class "Alright guys, just like we talked about last week, about the ebola situation that's going on, how do you guys feel about that?" The resulting discussion lasted for a total of 18 minutes and 25

seconds, and involved 76 total student responses. After transcribing the discussion and recording each student response in an Excel spreadsheet, 19 responses were removed from the spreadsheet due to repetition (teacher did not hear the response and asked the student to repeat), simple agreement (yes or no statements), or being off task. The result was a rate of one student response every 14.5 seconds overall, and one student response every 19.4 seconds after cleaning.

By far, most student comments were in direct response to teacher questions, often targeted to individual students by name. One student was observed wearing ear-phones throughout the discussion, and another student asked to leave class to go to the restroom. Six students had no responses during this discussion. The highest number of responses by a single student was 20. The teacher concluded the discussion when he asked several questions in a row and received no response. He ended the discussion by asking students to write a letter to the President of the United States asking for a family member to either be quarantined or released from quarantine. Examples of the student work are described in the discussion of Research Question 2.

Observation 2.

The second observation took place on November 20, and centered around the topic of social media. Mr. Crane started the discussion by saying "Alright guys. Just like we did last time. Just a different topic this time. Let's talk about social media. Good or bad?" Crane then called on a specific student to respond. This discussion lasted for 14 minutes and 54 seconds, and involved a total of 21 student responses. Four responses were removed after transcription and cleaning. The overall rate of participation for Observation 2 was one student response every 42.6 seconds, and after cleaning the rate dropped to one student response every 52.6 seconds. Three students were absent for this observation, one of whom had been assigned in-school

suspension. Four students had no comments during the discussion. The student who participated most in this discussion responded nine times.

The discussion management methods employed by Mr. Crane during Observation 2 were very similar to the methods he used in Observation 1. He repeatedly directed questions to individual students, and as a result, most student comments were in direct response to his questions. Interestingly, the final six minutes and two seconds of the discussion were comprised entirely of Mr. Crane giving his views on social media. This long discourse comprised 795 words of the 1,857 total words in the entire discussion, without any student comments at all. The teacher ended the discussion by assigning students to decide whether social media was good or bad and write 10-12 sentences about their views.

Observation 3.

The final pre-intervention discussion took place on November 24, and began with the teacher saying "Alright guys, the stuff that's going on in Ferguson, Missouri. Where the white police officer killed an unarmed black teenager." This prompt was immediately followed by five student comments about the topic. However, this discussion resulted in the shortest duration of all, at 7:23, with 23 total student comments and 12 after cleaning. The rate of student participation for discussion 3 was one student response every 19.3 seconds overall, and one response every 36.9 seconds after cleaning. All 13 students were present for this observation, and eight students recorded no responses. The highest number of responses was 10. One student wore head phones connected to a cell phone for the duration of the observation, and another student spent most of the discussion looking at a cell phone. One other student slept through the discussion.

Though Observation 3 was the shortest and recorded the highest number of zero responses, the students were extremely talkative before class began. As I set up the audio recorder, students were very excited about the snow falling outside the classroom window, and they discussed among themselves the prospect of school being cancelled, and whether they would rather freeze or burn to death.

The third discussion ended when the teacher asked a succession of three questions without any student responses. Mr. Crane signified the end of the discussion by asking the students to use their cell phones to research the Ferguson, Missouri riots and write a paragraph on whether the accused police officer should be brought to trial. Though this discussion was the shortest, it was reported by two students in the student focus group interview as the discussion they remembered most out of all six I observed.

Intervention Sessions

Mr. Crane was introduced to the use of historical perspective taking scenarios in the teacher training sessions described in Chapter 3. All three intervention discussions were prompted by historical scenarios written by Crane and me. As in the pre-intervention sessions, the intervention discussions were started and conducted by Mr. Crane. As in the pre-intervention discussions, we agreed that the intervention discussions would continue until student responses slowed or ceased. However, all of these discussions continued until the dismissal bell released students from class. Detailed descriptions of each of the intervention sessions follow.

Observation 4.

The fourth observation (and first involving the use of the historical perspective taking scenario activity) took place on December 1. During the previously held teacher-training

sessions, Mr. Crane and I wrote the four scenarios and established the classroom procedures for using the activity. The four scenarios we wrote were:

Scenario 1. You are a Russian woman, and the year is 1916. You were blessed with three fine sons and a good husband in the years before World War I, but your husband and your two oldest sons have all been killed fighting the Germans. You receive a letter stating that your oldest remaining son, 15 years old, is being drafted to go into battle. You might be able to hide him from the government, but if caught, you could be executed. What do you do and why?

Scenario 2.   You are a German soldier in the attack into Belgium in 1914. It was supposed to be an easy victory, but the tiny Belgian army has stopped your company, and your commanders are becoming angry because you can't defeat them. In frustration, your captain tells you that you are going to attack the little village near your position, and show the Belgians who is boss. "We will kill them all," he says, "and show them no mercy!" You tell him that the village is full of women and little children, but he becomes furious. "You will kill these dirty Belgians, and any German soldier who refuses this order will be shot!" What do you do and why?

Scenario 3. You were born in France, near the border with Germany. As a result, you speak both languages and you have family members who are German. You are drafted into the French army when World War I breaks out. During an attack, you take cover in a deep bomb crater, and find a French soldier and a German soldier wrestling over a knife. In horror, you realize that the French soldier is your best friend Pierre, and the German is your first cousin Gustav. You raise your rifle. "Shoot him!" yells Pierre. "Shoot him!" yells Gustav. What do you do and why?

Scenario 4. You are an American, born in the mountains of east Tennessee. You are a member of a Christian religion that strictly believes any type of violence is wrong. You are a strong believer in this idea. One day, you receive notice that you are being drafted to go fight in World

War I. You are powerfully against violence of any type, but you believe that we should help

France and Great Britain against Germany. You could refuse to go, but you would go to prison

and your family would be humiliated. What do you do and why?

Observation 4 began when the teacher handed out copies of the above scenarios to each

student, and asked them to put themselves in the places of the main characters. Mr. Crane then

asked the students to form pairs, talk about the scenarios, and write a few sentences telling what

they would do in the situation presented. He then gave the students 10-15 minutes to complete

this assignment before they would discuss.

Though Mr. Crane asked the students to form pairs, none of the students did so. For

several minutes the students read and wrote silently, then some of the students turned to their

neighbors and began to talk quietly. Most of this talk was off topic, though some of the students

made short comments about the scenarios.

The discussion began when Mr. Crane read Scenario 1 to the class and asked "What

would you do and why?" During the teacher-training sessions, we planned for Mr. Crane to have

students read the scenarios aloud, but throughout the final three observations, the teacher

continued to read the scenarios to the class. Before Observation 5, I reminded Mr. Crane to ask

students to read the scenarios, but he again expressed fear that students would be embarrassed if

he called them out to read in front of their classmates. I understood and acquiesced to his

requests to avoid this situation.

Observation 4 lasted for 27:17, and received a total of 212 student responses. After

transcribing and cleaning, 55 responses were removed for a net of 157 responses. The overall

rate of participation for Observation 4 was one student response every 7.7 seconds, and after

cleaning the rate fell to one response every 10.4 seconds. One student was absent for

Observation 4, and no students recorded zero responses. The highest number of responses during this observation was 52, and the lowest number of responses was 5. No students were observed wearing ear phones, sleeping, or using cell phones during this observation. Observation 4 progressed until the dismissal bell rang and students turned their papers in to Mr. Crane. The teacher commented to me that he had forgotten to ask the students to complete an ending activity, and I asked him to try to remember for the next observation. Mr. Crane said that he would, and that this discussion was "a lot of fun."

Observation 5.

Following Observation 4, I communicated with Mr. Crane via phone and email to write the scenarios for Observation 5. According to the plan we arrived at during the teacher-training sessions, Mr. Crane was to write two of the scenarios for this observation on his own. We set the date for Observation 5 as December 4, and Mr. Crane indicated that his class would be discussing the naval war and middle years of World War I during that time. I asked Mr. Crane to write two scenarios and email them to me so that I could compile them and prepare the activity for the students. He did so, and his scenarios became Scenarios 3 and 4 below. The scenarios for Observation 5 were:

Scenario 1. The year is 1915, and America is still neutral. You are the captain of a ship that hauls products like clothing from America, across the Atlantic Ocean, to Great Britain. One day as your ship is being loaded, a government official comes to you and says that the President of the United States has asked you to smuggle a shipment of guns and ammunition to the British army. You have many friends in Great Britain, but you know that other ships have been sunk by German submarines for trying to smuggle weapons. "It is your choice" the man tells you. What do you do and why?

Scenario 2. You are an American soldier and you have been in the trenches of France for several months. One day, you are asked to go into the nearby French town and find food and supplies for your men. As you wander through the streets, you pass a bar, and a crowd of drunken men comes bursting around you, screaming and pushing. In the confusion, you hear a scream and feel something shoved into your hand. As the crowd parts, you see a man lying dead from a stab would to the back, and realize in horror that you are holding a bloody knife. You know you did not stab the man, but you have no idea who did. What do you do and why?

Scenario 3. It is December of 1914 and you are a British soldier freezing in the trenches of northern France. Less than 30 yards across from you, the German trench lies occupied by enemy soldiers. To your surprise, you hear what sounds like "Silent Night" being sung in German from the enemy trenches, and you begin to sing along. Then, someone shouts from the German trench in broken English "Hey British soldier! Merry Christmas! I put my gun down! Come out and visit with me for Christmas!" You peek over the top of your trench to see a smiling German soldier waving at you across No Man's Land. He appears unarmed. What do you do and why?

Scenario 4. You are a German mother, and the Great War has drug on now for years. The government has been sending all food, clothing, and supplies to the soldiers for a long time, and in your remote village, starvation has set in. Your nine year old son Fritz and your seven year old daughter Freda are both near death with hunger. You go to the cupboard and realize that you are down to you last bit of food. You know that if you divide it between your children, they both may starve, but if you give all of the remaining food to one child, he or she might survive. What do you do and why?

Observation 5 proceeded much like Observation 4. Mr. Crane read the scenarios to the students, and this time omitted the request to form pairs. Observation 5 lasted for 21:01 and

received 243 total student responses, with a net of 187 after cleaning. The overall rate of participation was one student response every 5.2 seconds, and the rate after cleaning was one response every 6.7 seconds. Though shorter than the other two discussions involving the scenario activity, Observation 5 received the most student responses and had the highest rate of participation.

During this observation, a brief power outage in the school caused Mr. Crane to take extra time turning in his attendance via computer. For this reason, the discussion started several minutes later than the other two intervention discussions, and, even though Observation 5 was shorter in length, the discussion continued to the dismissal bell. For this reason, Mr. Crane was once again unable to assign an ending assignment as requested. No students were absent for Observation 5. The lowest number of responses was 6, and the highest number recorded was 41. One student was using a cell phone after writing his responses to the scenarios, but the student put the phone away when the discussion began.

Observation 6.

Though the initial plan for the final observation had been for Mr. Crane to write all of the scenarios, sudden family problems arose which took time away from his availability. He was still able, however to write two of the scenarios, designated as Scenarios 2 and 3 below. The scenarios for Observation 6 were:

Scenario 1: You are a French Captain in charge of a company of soldiers. It is October of 1918, and rumors say that World War I is almost over. One day, you and three other soldiers are ordered to check some nearby houses for supplies, and in one of the buildings you find a half-starved German soldier. He is unarmed, and begs for mercy in broken English. "Shoot him" says Lieutenant Weaver. "If you take him prisoner, they'll let him go in a few days and he'll be

right back killing Americans." Sergeant Kent says "No. Take him prisoner. If we shoot him, we'll be murderers!" Private Cole says "Let him go. The war is almost over anyway." The decision is yours. What do you do and why?

Scenario 2. You are an American Colonel in charge of a battalion. During a surprise attack, you are taken prisoner by the German army. You are taken to Munich, where a German officer feeds you and treats you very kindly. After a few days, he makes you an interesting offer. He will give you one million dollars in American money in exchange for information about the location, strength, and supplies of American and British units. Also, you will finish out the war in a luxury hotel under house arrest, then get shipped straight home unharmed. You have the information he wants, but you know it is a major crime to give it up. But then the German officer shows you a suitcase filled with more money than you have ever seen. What do you do and why?

Scenario 3. The date is November 11, 1918, and you are an American General on the Western Front. A group of soldiers bring Private West to you, and report that he was caught sneaking away from the trenches in the night. He had left his rifle and changed his uniform for civilian clothes, so the men are sure he was deserting. They remind you that the penalty for desertion is death by firing squad. You are about to give the order when a messenger comes running up to you. "The war is over" he yells. "An armistice is signed!" What do you do and why?

Scenario 4. You are an American soldier in France in November of 1918. Over the past few weeks, as the war has wound down, you have been allowed to go into a nearby village for rest and relaxation. While there, you met and fell in love with Adrian, a local French girl, and you have been learning to speak some French. When you receive notice that the war is over, you rush to the village to tell Adrian. She begins to cry. "Stay with me," she begs. "Stay in France.

Marry me!" You love Adrian, but all your family and friends are in America. What do you do and why?

In Observation 6, Mr. Crane again read the scenarios to the students. Observation 6 lasted for 24:15, and garnered 222 total responses with a net of 149 after cleaning. This observation had the greatest number of responses removed at 73. The overall rate of participation for Observation 6 was one student response every 6.6 seconds, with a rate of one response every 9.8 seconds after cleaning. Three students were absent for Observation 6. The lowest number of responses was seven (recorded by two students), and the highest number was 70. One student was observed to be using his cell phone at various times throughout the discussion.

Observational Data in Relation to the Research Questions

Chapter 4 began with a detailed description of the six discussion observations. Below, each research question is addressed in turn. Thorough discussions of the data related to the research questions are provided.

Research question 1.

Does the use of historical perspective taking activities produce an increase in the number of student responses in a classroom discussion?

Observation 1 prompted 76 student responses, Observation 2 elicited 21 responses, and Observation 3 drew 23 responses, for a total of 120 student responses in the pre-intervention classroom discussions. Observations 4, 5, and 6 utilized the historical perspective taking scenario activity as a discussion prompt, and produced a much larger number of responses. Observation 4 elicited 212 student responses, Observation 5 received 243 responses, and Observation 6 garnered 222 student responses, for a total of 677 total responses using the

intervention. After removing simplistic and off-task responses, the pre-intervention discussions produced a total of 86 viable responses, while the intervention discussions produced 493 viable responses, as seen in Table 1.

Table 2
Participation numbers, durations, and response rates

Observation	Overall responses	Responses after cleaning	Number removed	Duration (min:sec)	Rate overall (responses per second)	Rate after cleaning (responses per second)
1	76	57	19	18:25	1/14.5	1/19.4
2	21	17	4	14:54	1/42.6	1/52.6
3	23	12	11	7:23	1/19.3	1/36.9
4	212	157	55	27:17	1/7.7	1/10.4
5	243	187	56	21:01	1/5.2	1/6.7
6	222	149	73	24:15	1/6.6	1/9.8

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the numbers of student responses in discussions without the historical perspective taking scenario activity compared to the numbers of student responses in discussions using the historical perspective taking scenario activity. After analysis was completed, t-tests revealed a p-value of .001, which indicated that discussions utilizing the historical perspective taking scenario activity produced a significantly higher number of responses. In fact, calculated at the .05 level, a p-value of .001 can be seen as highly significant.

Since Mr. Crane agreed to allow discussions to continue until student responses ceased, the duration of the discussions can be seen as extensions of student participation. Pre-intervention discussions began when the teacher called the students to attention and asked a question concerning the topic of the discussion. Intervention discussions began after the students had completed their written responses to the scenarios, and the teacher called the students to attention by reading the first scenario.

Stop times were decided by the teacher, with the agreement that discussions would continue until student responses ceased. In the pre-intervention discussions, Mr. Crane ended the discussion after asking several questions and receiving no response. The three intervention discussions continued until the dismissal bell rang, signaling for students to depart. I recorded specific start and stop times in order to calculate the length of the discussions.

Observation 1 lasted 18 minutes, 25 seconds, and produced an overall rate of one student response every 14.5 seconds. After cleaning, the rate fell to one response every 19.4 seconds. Observation 2 lasted 14 minutes, 54 seconds, for an overall rate of one response every 42.6 seconds. After cleaning, the total became one response every 52.6 seconds. Observation 3 lasted 7 minutes, 23 seconds and garnered an overall participation rate of one response every 19.3 seconds, falling to one response every 36.9 seconds after cleaning.

Discussion length increased during the intervention discussions. Observation 4 lasted 27 minutes, 17 seconds and produced a rate of one response every 7.7 seconds overall. The rate fell to one response every 10.4 seconds after cleaning. Observation 5 lasted for 21 minutes, 1 second, for a rate of one response every 5.2 seconds (one response every 6.7 seconds after cleaning). Observation 6 lasted 24 minutes, 15 seconds, and produced a rate of one student response every 6.6 seconds overall. The participation rate fell to one student response every 9.8 seconds after cleaning.

Statistical analyses were run to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the durations of pre-intervention and intervention discussions. Results of t-tests indicated a p-value of .046, meaning that a significant difference existed at the .05 level. In other words, discussions utilizing the historical perspective taking scenario activity lasted a

significantly longer amount of time than discussions that did not utilize the historical perspective taking activity.

Table 2 displays the numbers of responses recorded by students during each observation. All of the participants increased their participation in the intervention phase of the study, many to a substantial degree.

Table 3

Individual student responses by discussion

Student Identifier	Obs 1	Obs 2	Obs 3	Pre Total	Obs 4	Obs 5	Obs 6	Post Total
144	0	A	0	0	6	6	A	12
219	0	0	0	0	A	11	8	19
233	0	0	0	0	7	10	10	27
316	10	1	1	12	5	20	A	25
530	12	A	10	22	34	40	46	120
534	14	4	0	18	31	41	44	116
557	20	9	2	31	31	35	A	66
580	1	0	0	1	6	7	10	23
642	0	0	0	0	6	8	8	22
660	17	5	9	31	52	39	70	161
750	0	1	0	1	11	9	11	31
795	2	A	1	3	13	8	8	29
844	0	1	0	1	10	9	7	26
Total:	76	21	23	120	212	243	222	677
Cleaned:	57	17	12	86	157	191	155	503

Note. A=absent

With three pre-intervention observations and three intervention observations, the maximum number of data points for each student in each phase of the intervention was three. Six of the students missed at least one observation, and one student missed two observations. Due to the low number of data points or each student, statistical significance could not reliably be calculated for each student's response numbers between phases. However, it is important to note that all the student-participants increased their participation during the intervention discussions. Four students recorded zero responses throughout the pre-intervention discussions.

These students logged 12, 19, 27, and 22 responses in the discussions that utilized the historical perspective taking scenario activity. Three students had only one response throughout the three pre-intervention discussions. These students recorded 23, 31, and 26 responses in the intervention discussions. The two students who participated the most in the pre-intervention discussions recorded 31 responses each. In the intervention discussions, these students had 66 and 161 responses respectively.

In the first three discussions, student-to-student interaction was rare. Most student responses were simply answers to the teacher's questions. The longest example of student-to-student interaction was five responses in a row. Mr. Crane presented the topic of the day's discussion, which was the Ferguson, Missouri riots. To this, students responded:

Student 1: We talked about it in English.

Student 2: Yeah, we had to write a thing on it.

Student 3: We had to write an essay or something.

Student 4: I was reading about it the other day.

Student 5: Yeah, because they're making the schools stop talking about it. The officials won't let the schools and students talk about it because it's getting them off task.

This example shows that students were willing and able to talk in response to a discussion prompt. However, four of the five comments were low quality, and related only to the fact that students had previously discussed and read about the topic. The final response added to the conversation, but was followed immediately by a teacher comment.

In comparison, the three intervention discussions often involved rapid student exchanges of over 10 responses in a row. This exchange was listed as particularly memorable by Mr. Crane:

> [Teacher mentions talking to the police about a crime]
>
> Student 1: You don't.
>
> Student 2: Because then they change stuff.
>
> Student 3: They change it around. They can do whatever they want.
>
> Student 4: They switch it around and they put words in your mouth.
>
> Student 5: And they are very rude.
>
> Student 6: Like that video we watched in English.
>
> Student 7: And they can do whatever they want. They can go do the same thing you did and get away with it.
>
> Student 8: That's pretty bad.

An example from the final discussion shows another meaningful student exchange. One scenario asked students to put themselves in the place of an American soldier that has to choose between staying with the French girl he loves or going home to his family. One student said that he would move his family to France, and the exchange began:

> Mr. Crane: From America to France?
>
> Student 1: Yeah.
>
> Student 2: Too much work. Just bring her here.
>
> Student 3: Why would you want to take her away from her family? Would you?
>
> Student 4: Well, why would she want to do the same to you?
>
> Student 5: She doesn't.

Student 6: But she's asking you to stay there.

Student 7: Y'all act like it's something that's really going to happen. Just
answer.

Student 8: Yeah, she's asking you to sacrifice your family.

Student 9: I would just stay.

Student 10: I can't believe that.

Student perceptions of their participation in the six discussions mirrored the actual
numbers. All eight student participants in the focus group interview stated that they participated
more in the intervention discussions, although two of these students remarked that they were
guessing and could be wrong. One student had a theory as to why participation increased in the
final three discussions. This student said that the reason participation increased in the
intervention discussions was because they took place later in the year than the first three. It is
important to note, however, that all observations took place in a 22-day time period between
November 18 and December 9, 2015.

Mr. Crane shared the students' views of participation. During the post-intervention
interview, Mr. Crane stated at least seven times that participation increased during the historical
perspective taking activity discussions, and that he was surprised at the amount of participation,
especially from students who are typically reluctant to participate. This speculation on the part
of the teacher is supported by the data, since the four students who recorded no responses in the
pre-intervention discussions increased to at least 12 responses in the intervention discussions.
Further, the three students who had only one response in the first three discussions had at least 23
responses in the final three. Additionally, Mr. Crane described the class I observed as one of his

weaker classes with discussion, so he enjoyed seeing them participate in the intervention discussions.

Research question 2.

Does participation in a historical perspective taking activity improve the quality of student responses during classroom discussions?

All six discussions were recorded using a high definition digital audio recorder and transcribed. I then typed every student response into an Excel spreadsheet. Once all responses were entered, I read the responses several times to remove simple statements of agreement or one-word responses, as well as statements that were completely off-task. In the hopes of representing the discussion as accurately as possible, I attempted to err on the side of discretion. If I had serious doubt as to whether or not to remove a response, I tended to keep that response available for rating.

Once I had compiled a spreadsheet of student responses available for rating, I removed every other response in order to arrive at a 50% rate of consideration. I then created a separate spreadsheet with the final list of student responses to be examined, and rated them according to the discussion response rubric. Working with a statistics advisor from OIT, t-tests were conducted on the ratings of all responses to determine if a significant difference could be detected between responses from the pre-intervention discussions compared to the intervention discussions.

Though the discussions which utilized the historical perspective taking scenario activity elicited more than five times as many overall responses as the pre-intervention discussions, and though the means for all four reporting categories (comprehension, application, extension of learning, and interaction) were slightly higher in the intervention phase compared to the pre-

intervention phase, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between the quality ratings of the responses in any of the four categories on the discussion response rubric. For comprehension, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was less than .05 (p=.000), so unequal variances was assumed. The significance level for comprehension with unequal variances was calculated at .081, which is statistically insignificant (p>.05), though the mean for intervention responses under the comprehension category (1.98) was higher than the pre-intervention mean for comprehension (1.81).

For the extension of learning category, the mean of all responses during the pre-intervention phase was 2.12. During the intervention phase, the response mean climbed slightly to 2.19. Again, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was less than .05 (p=.001), so unequal variances were assumed. This indicated a significance level of .375, which is not statistically significant (p..05).

Under the application category, the mean for responses during the pre-intervention phase was 1.43, which is slightly lower than the 1.45 mean for responses during the intervention phase. This number indicates growth in favor of the intervention phase. For this category, however, Levene's test was higher than .05 (p=.799) so equal variances could be assumed. Still, the significance level was less than the .05 required (p=.868) which is not statistically significant.

Results for the interaction category were similar to the application category. The pre-intervention mean for this category was 1.90, compared to 1.91 in the intervention phase, for a difference of .01 in favor of the intervention phase. Since Levene's test was calculated at .714, equal variances could be assumed, though the significance level of .886 revealed no statistical significance (p>.05). Table 4 provides a visual comparison of the statistics for quality of student

discussion responses as assessed by the Discussion Response Rubric. Means are delineated by

rubric category. .

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for quality of responses

Category	Phase	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Comprehension	Pre	42	1.81	.594	.092
	Post	246	1.98	.409	.026
Extension	Pre	42	2.12	.453	.070
	Post	246	2.19	.633	.040
Application	Pre	42	1.43	.703	.109
	Post	246	1.45	.660	.042
Interaction	Pre	42	1.9	.431	.067
	Post	246	1.91	.410	.026

An examination of the means of the ratings shows that the highest mean score for all
rated responses was 2.125 for Observation 3. This observation also had the highest ratings for
comprehension (2.167) and extension of learning (2.333). However, Observation 3 also had the
lowest number of rated responses (6). The highest mean score for the application category was
1.457 in Observation 5, and the highest mean score for interaction was Observation 2 at 2.125.
The lowest overall mean score was recorded by Observation 1 (1.732) as seen in Table 5.

Table 5
Mean ratings by category

Observation Number	Number of Rated Responses	Comprehension Mean	Extension of Learning Mean	Application Mean	Interaction Mean	Overall Mean
1	28	1.643	2.071	1.393	1.821	1.732
2	8	2.125	2.125	1.125	2.125	1.875
3	6	2.167	2.333	2	2	2.125
4	78	1.987	2.103	1.449	1.885	1.856
5	94	2.011	2.234	1.457	1.904	1.902
6	74	1.932	2.23	1.432	1.96	1.889

Mr. Crane's responses during the post-intervention interview indicated the belief that the

quality of responses was better when using the historical perspective taking scenario activity,

though the main reason for this perceived increase in quality of responses is the increase in participation. Mr. Crane said "I think the quality got better because you had more participation. And, where they have an example, and it's kind of guided, then they can go with that instead of trying to pull stuff out of the air" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 15, 2014). Likewise, Mr. Crane stated that the students were able to apply the historical perspective taking scenario activity to their own lives, stating "I think that was the biggest thing. I think they definitely applied it to what was going on around them" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 15, 2014). Similarly, Crane stated that students were able to apply the historical perspective taking scenario activity to their previous classroom learning:

> Especially in classes where we didn't do the activity, they would refer back to the activity to kind of mesh everything together. So that was good. They were applying what they had learned and what they had read to the new material they were getting. So that was nice (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 15, 2014).

Some examples of student responses can illuminate the aforementioned scores. The topic of discussion for Observation 1 was the ebola outbreak, and two student responses scored higher than the others. In response to a teacher question concerning the effects of social media on the ebola outbreak, one student replied "They're downgrading the seriousness of it." This comment garnered a mean rating of 2.75 across all four categories of the discussion response rubric. Another student responded to a teacher question about travel restrictions for medical volunteers by saying "I feel like if I knew what I was getting into as I was going over there, I wouldn't care because I made the decision to do it anyway." This response was rated with a mean of 2.5 according to the rubric.

The two lowest scoring comments from Observation 1 came when a student responded to a teacher statement that a medical worker with ebola resisted being quarantined by saying "That's stupid." This comment, while on-task, received a rating of 1 on all categories. Two comments scored only slightly better. In responding to another student's idea to send ebola treatments to the afflicted and "let them figure out how to do it themselves" a student commented "Shove them all in a boat. Take them. We don't need them." This response received a mean rating of 1.25. Yet another student replied "Kill them" when the teacher asked what should be done with people who steal vaccines we send to afflicted countries. This simplistic response also received a 1.25 according to the rubric.

Numbers of responses in Observation 2 were much lower than Observation 1, but exemplary responses can still be examined. The highest rated response received a mean score of 2.5. The topic for the discussion in Observation 2 was whether social media are good or bad, and this student commented "It could be bad because kids and stuff could get kidnapped and stuff because of Facebook." The lowest mean rating came from a student replying to the same topic by saying "It's bad." This comment, though it does not show confusion or false information, and though it does make further comments possible, received a mean score of 1.5.

In Observation 3, Mr. Crane asked students to discuss the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson, Missouri. This discussion received the lowest number of rated responses, though two of the comments were exemplary. One student stated "Hey, I read something the other day that said that the way that the bullets entered his body showed that he was like running towards the police officer and resisting arrest, so, like, he didn't have his back turned when he shot him. Yeah. And he was like high or something like that." This comment received a mean score of 2.75 on the discussion rubric. Another student, when Mr. Crane asked her opinion, said

"Honestly, if it's a white cop shooting a teenager, then they should be prosecuted.   And it should be the same for a black cop." This response also received a mean score of 2.75 on the discussion response rubric.

The lowest scoring responses in Observation 2 received a mean score of 1.75. One of these comments came from a student who replied to Mr. Crane's introduction of the topic. This student said "Yeah we had to write a thing on it." When Mr. Crane asked why the National Guard had been called into Ferguson, another student replied "Because it was a cop." And finally, when Mr. Crane asked if students thought there would be riots in response the trial, one student replied "They already have." All these comments showed some comprehension, extended the learning to some extent, and allowed for the possibility of interaction, but showed no evidence of application of the material to the students' lives or learning.

Observation 4 was the first discussion to involve use of the historical perspective taking activity. Overall, this discussion garnered more responses than the previous three discussions combined. Though the numbers of responses greatly increased during Observation 4, some examples stand out. In response to a scenario that had students put themselves in the place of a Russian mother who has to decide whether to send her son to World War I or face execution, one student said "Well, if he goes and he dies, at least he was fighting for his country. And if he doesn't die, then he had that experience." Another student replied "I'd rather die with my son than to lose him and deal with the heartbreak. Sorry, had a romantic scene there." Another student replied to a scenario that had students put themselves in the place of a French soldier who finds his best friend (a French soldier) and his cousin (a German soldier) grappling in No Man's Land. This student said "I said I'd kill my cousin because I came to fight for the French

and they're all my brothers. And it's my job to protect my teammates and my country." All of these responses recorded a mean of 2.75 on the rubric.

The highest rated comment from Observation 4 came when Mr. Crane asked a student why she seemed to want to protect other people's families, but not her own. She replied "Well, if no one cares about you…my mom don't care about me." Aside from the strong emotional qualities of this statement, a great deal of comprehension, learning extension, application, and interaction is displayed by this comment, which earned a rating of 3 in all categories.

The lowest rating of the comments in Observation 4 was mean of 1.25, and this score received by several different comments. In response to a scenario that had students decide whether to attack a village of civilians or face execution, one student said he would shoot the civilians. Another student replied "[Student]! I thought you were a good boy!" This comment showed some application to the student's values and standards, but could be seen as insulting and as discouraging to other students who may have wished to comment. Another student received the same score for a comment about the scenario concerning the French soldier who has to decide whether to save his French friend or his German cousin. When a student suggested shooting both the friend and the cousin in the leg, another student commented "I mean, it's not like it's going to kill them." Though this comment makes other comments possible without extending the learning, the fact that the student does acknowledge the fact that people can and do die of wounds to the leg (especially in World War I) is troubling. Further, the lack of application and the refusal to consider the feelings of others garnered scores of 1 on application and interaction, as well as comprehension.

Observation 5 yielded similar results. The highest score according to the discussion response rubric came in response to the scenario which dealt with the Christmas Truce of 1914.

Students were asked to put themselves in the place of a soldier in the front lines who is confronted with an enemy soldier who requests a friendly cease fire for Christmas. Several students had commented very simply that they would simply shoot the enemy soldier. Until one student questioned that action by asking "You really think you could do it?" On the surface, this comment appeared simple and not very intriguing until I weighed it against the discussion response rubric. This comment seemed to indicate that the student had considered the deep moral, emotional, and psychological consequences of shooting another human being, so a 3 was given for comprehension. The comment was also a complete abandonment of the "I would shoot him" line of discussion, so a 3 was awarded for extension of learning. Further, this comment seemed to apply the scenario to the student's own moral and emotional values in a way what was unexpected given the general course of the discussion, so a 3 was given for application. And since the response was phrased in the form of a respectful question that asked for a thoughtful response, it received a 3 for interaction.

Three comments received a mean score of 2.75 in Observation 5. One of these was in response to the Christmas Truce scenario, where one student very astutely remarked "Well it could be that you make friends with them and the next day you have to kill them. So what's the point of making friends with them?" Another scenario asked students to put themselves in the place of a German mother who has little food and two starving children. She has to decide how to ration the food she has left. In response to this scenario, one students said "I just didn't answer, because I didn't know how to answer. I wouldn't know what to do in that situation." Though it may seem that this response would receive a low score (since the student did not actually make a decision), it is plain to see that the student has a great deal of understanding concerning the emotional implication of such a decision. Further, this response shows serious

application in considering the real life ramifications of the situation. In response to the same scenario, another student asked "Why wouldn't you just split it and see if both of them live? That's a better chance to take than to have to choose your favorite." All of these responses scored a 2.75 according to the discussion response rubric.

The lowest scoring responses in Observation 5 received a rating of 1.25. One student attempted to make a slight joke in response to the scenario in which students had to imagine themselves as soldiers in a serious dilemma. In this scenario, an American soldier is walking through a village in France when a crowd of drunken men surrounds him. He hears a scream and feels a knife pushed into his hand. When the crowd parts, he finds a man dead before him with a stab wound, while he holds the bloody knife. Students have to decide what to do. One student jokingly called out "Pitcher of beer for everybody!" As humorous as this comment is, it neglects the fact that most American soldiers spoke English while most French villagers spoke French. The joking nature of the comment served to stifle the discussion by encouraging laughter, and the farcical viewpoint showed no application to life or learning.

Another student received the same score for a comment in relation to the scenario in which the mother of the starving children has to decide what do with the little food she has left. One student commented that eating the weaker child might let the stronger child live. Then another student said "Or just kill the one that's stronger! You know what? Shut up!" This response shows understanding of the situation, but the aggressive structure of the comment lacks application, stifles the discussion, and could definitely be seen as disrespectful. Later in the discussion, a student comments "Don't even ask [Student] because he says he's going to chop one of them up and eat them." Again, though this comment shows some understanding, the disrespectful structure of the comment seeks to stifle the discussion.

In Observation 6, only one comment garnered mostly 3 ratings across the four categories of the discussion response rubric. The scenario involved asked students to put themselves in the place of an American soldier on the Western Front who has to choose between going home to his family at the end of the war or staying with the French girl he has fallen in love with. After a large number of comments, one student asked the discerning question "Is it that you just think you're in love, or are you actually in love?" This comment received the highest ratings for comprehension, extension of learning, and interaction, but fell slightly short in application due to direct comments about the relation of the comment to the student's life and learning. This comment received the highest rating of Observation 6 with a mean of 2.75.

Several comments received the lowest rating of Observation 6 with a mean score of 1.25. In responding to a scenario in which students had to decide what to do with a captive enemy soldier at the end of the war, one student said "I'm not really sure what to say." Unlike the previous comment in which the student did not make an actual decision, this comment lacks depth and justification. Though it is not disrespectful or insulting, it contains no evidence of comprehension or application, and stifles the discussion through lack of substance.

Another scenario had students decide what to do with a soldier who abandoned the front lines. One student replied "Maybe he had to go pee." This statement appeared to be in earnest, as the student made the statement emphatically at two different times in the discussion. This comment presented me with a difficult choice. As mentioned earlier, some comments were removed from consideration due to repetition. This means that a student would make a comment, the teacher would not hear the comment and would ask the student to repeat the comment, and the student would do so. In this case, the repetition of the comment would be removed from consideration, while the primary incident would be kept.

But such was not the case with this comment. The student made the initial comment, another student offered a comment comprised of three sentences, then the student offered the comment again. Since the student was not prompted to repeat the comment by the teacher or by a classmate, and since some time had elapsed since the initial comment was made, I decided to include both occurrences for consideration.

Since the comment did not appear to be a joke, the initial occurrence received a high score for advancing the discussion in a new direction. However low scores were given for comprehension and application for a mean score of 1.75. The second occurrence of the comment received the same scores for comprehension, application, and interaction, but since this was the second time the comment was given, the discussion was not advanced in a new direction. Therefore the second occurrence received a mean score of 1.25.

In another case, students were discussing the scenario in which they had to decide what to do with the soldier who had deserted. One student stated that this soldier should be lined up and shot, to which another student replied "They ought to line you up and shoot you. You deserve it." Though this response shows some application to the commenting student's life and values, there is no evidence of comprehension and the comment, with its violent personal overtones, stifles the discussion. Further, interaction is damaged by this comment due to its insulting and disrespectful nature.

One other comment received a mean score of 1.25 in Observation 6. In discussing the scenario about the deserter, one student said that he should be released in order to avoid paperwork. A second student commented that a former teacher that several of the students previously had would agree with that statement. A third student commented "Yeah, I'm getting hurt at school, because you're in my class, and I'm going to have to fill out paper, and it's going

to kill me." This comment showed no evidence of comprehension in relation to the topic of discussion, and failed to extend the learning due to its lack of relation to the scenario. Though the response is related to the life of the student, it could be seen as insulting or disrespectful to the teacher being discussed. For this reason, this comment received a 1.25 mean rating.

Statistical analysis of the student comment ratings revealed no statistically significant difference between the responses in the pre-intervention discussions and the historical perspective taking scenario discussions. As the preceding examples have shown, each discussion produced both high-scoring and low-scoring student comments. Though the discussions that utilized the historical perspective taking scenarios produced more than five times as many responses as the discussions that did not use this activity, the quality of the responses as assessed by the discussion response rubric, was similar across the discussions.

Still, each category showed some improvement with the use of historical perspective taking scenarios. Though not statistically significant, this improvement shows that teachers may benefit in several different ways by using scenarios as discussion prompts. It is important to note that the findings of statistical insignificance could be attributed to the low numbers of observations, students, and responses in the pre-intervention discussions.

In addition to the response ratings, I subjected the assignments students completed during the discussions to document analysis. The three pre-intervention discussions concluded with creative writing projects assigned by Mr. Crane. In Observation 1, students wrote a letter to the President of the United States requesting for a relative to either be quarantined or released from quarantine. Observation 2 had students write whether social media was good or bad and justify their choices. In Observation 3, students wrote their opinions of what should happen to the police officer involved in the Michael Brown shooting of Ferguson, Missouri. The writing

assignments in the three intervention discussions consisted of the student written responses to the scenarios. Students were asked to write three or four sentences telling what they would do in the situation depicted in the scenario.

Of the 13 participants, seven were present for all six discussions. Only five students completed and turned in all writing assignments. Once assignments were turned in, Mr. Crane compiled the papers and gave them to me. I analyzed the writings using constant comparison methods, as advocated by Rapley (2007) and Glaser (1965).

In contrast to participation in the discussions, students tended to write more with the assignments of the pre-intervention discussions. This tendency could be attributed to the nature of the assignments themselves. While the intervention assignments asked for three or four sentences following each of the four scenarios, the pre-intervention assignments asked for open-ended letters, opinions, and justifications. Another important contributing factor could be the fact that students completed the pre-intervention assignments after the discussions, while the intervention assignments had students write before the discussions.

Analysis of the writing assignments revealed no major discrepancies in quality aside from the amount of writing. Students were able to show comprehension of the material and to apply their values to the situations, though new or unexpected reasoning was rare. In her letter to the President in regards to the ebola outbreak, one student wrote "I think that my brother should be kept in quarantine because it's better safe than sorry. If he were to be let out, there's a risk that someone else might get it." Then in her response to the scenario in which students put themselves in the place of a mother who must choose whether to send her son to war or not, that student wrote "I would hide him because it's better to protect him and keep him safe than it is to protect me and keep myself safe."

In developing the discussion response rubric, I surmised that quality discussions increase student comprehension, allow students to extend their learning in new directions, help students apply learning to their lives, and provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction. Though interaction is not possible in these writings, the other three discussion criteria can be applied to these examples of student work.

Both of these writings show comprehension in their understanding of the situations depicted. Both examples also demonstrate the students' abilities to apply the topic to their own lives and morals. Neither example, however, provides new or unforeseen reasoning. Therefore students failed to advance reasoning in unexpected directions.

Another student demonstrated her beliefs concerning right and wrong in the assignments. When expressing her opinion of what should happen to the police officer who shot Michael Brown, this student wrote "The judge should decide if he goes to court or not. They should have put Brown in jail and let the judge, but he shot him." In responding to the scenario in which students had to choose whether to attack civilians, this student wrote "I wouldn't let that happen because the children would be innocent and if they done nothing wrong they shouldn't die."

Simple, straight-forward reasoning was demonstrated by one student's writings. In the assignment which required students to write their opinions concerning social media, the student wrote "Social media is bad. Drama can be started on social media and people try to pick fights with others. Also kids are becoming more reliant on phones and electronics that can keep them from being active." Later, in response to the scenario which asked students to decide whether to follow orders in attacking Belgian civilians, this student wrote "Follow my orders, because in the military that's what you're supposed to do."

Though students wrote more in the three pre-intervention writing assignments, some confusion was shown in their writings. Several of the students seemed to be confused about the events of the Michael Brown shooting, even after discussing the subject with Mr. Crane. One student wrote "I think Wilson [the police officer involved] should be took to court. Even though Brown stole cigars and was running." Another student wrote "He shot Michael Brown over stealing cigars. The cop was driving in his car while he was on the ground."

These excerpts reflect the ratings of student responses discussed previously. Using the discussion response rubric, I found that comprehension increased in the discussions that used the historical perspective taking activity. The confusion shown by these student writings exemplify this finding.

Research question 3.

After participating in a classroom discussion prompted by a historical perspective taking activity, do students report higher rates of enjoying discussions and learning from discussions?

I answered this question by conducting a student focus group interview nine days after the last observation. On December 18, I met with eight student volunteers after school to discuss their perceptions of learning from classroom discussions and enjoying discussions. This focus group interview lasted nearly one hour, and used a semi-structured interview protocol to focus the conversation around the central ideas. Though the students at times veered away from the topic at hand (trading shoes and talking about homecoming), some valuable insights were gained from this conversation.

It is important to note a difference in syntax in conversations with the students. I believed that using a technical term such as "pre-intervention discussions" or a long title like

"historical perspective taking scenario activity discussions" to distinguish between the two phases of discussions could cause confusion and reluctance to participate among the students. Therefore, I decided to refer to the first three (pre-intervention) discussions as "freestyle" discussions, and the last three (intervention) discussions as "scenario" discussions. Students grasped these terms readily, and used them throughout the focus group interview. It should be understood that the term "freestyle" refers to the first three (pre-intervention) discussions and the term "scenarios" or "scenario discussions" refers to the final three (intervention) discussions.

Background information.

In the focus group interview, students reported that they never had classroom discussions in Mr. Crane's class before, though they often had discussions in an Honors English class some of the students had in common. Several students reported that they discuss with family and friends outside school, covering such specific topics as football, church, events at other schools, and the news. One student reported that his discussions with his parents always took place around dinner. One student reported never discussing news-type items with her family, and another student stated that she never discussed anything with her family.

Students generally reported liking Mr. Crane's class, though they lamented the fact that they often worked from the book. One student stated "Yeah, we did a lot of book work. We didn't do many lectures. It was just a lot of book work." Several students stated that they liked Mr. Crane as a teacher, and that he was a "…really nice guy." One student said "He cares. A lot of teachers, especially the coaches, just teach because they have to."

Students reported behaving differently when I was in the classroom to observe. Students said they listened more, talked less off topic, and participated more when I was in the classroom. Though this statement shows great honesty and perceptiveness by the students, these claims

seem to be refuted by portions of the data. Participation in Observations 2 and 3 was extremely low, with only 21 and 23 total responses respectively. Additionally, Observation 2 contained a block of time over six minutes in length in which no student comments were recorded. Further, several off-task comments were removed from the discussions, particularly in Observation 6. Still, it is likely that some students took extra care to participate or pay attention during classes I was observing.

The students in Mr. Crane's class held enormous potential for classroom discussion. Though they had participated in classroom discussions in other classes, these discussions often veered off topic and caused the students to hold a low opinion of the method. Still, the students liked their teacher and tended to take their assignments seriously. As an example of their willingness to help, all eight students who participated in the focus group volunteered to stay after school to be interviewed. This eagerness to contribute was greatly appreciated.

Learning from discussions.

Students were somewhat divided concerning the idea of learning from classroom discussions in general. One student reported that he did not feel like he learned anything from discussions, while three reported they did. Other students were skeptical concerning learning from discussions. One student stated "Sometimes they can sway off topic and you don't get much done with them. They don't always go far." Students specifically mentioned their Honors English class in which debates often sway off topic, causing one student to state "We haven't learned anything in there. At all." The one student who did report learning from discussions in general was definitive with her answer when asked what she learned from discussions. She simply said "More about History than there in the book."

Though students throughout the focus group interview seemed to struggle to put ideas into words when asked about their learning, ("It's hard to explain" according to one participant), one student did agree that bouncing ideas off each other helps them go more in depth with the material. Other students reported that participating in discussions taught them about interacting with their classmates.

Of the eight-member focus group, seven students reported learning more with the historical perspective taking scenario activity discussions than with the pre-intervention discussions. The other student participant stated that she learned equally from both. Three students supported the idea that they learned there are very difficult decisions to be made in war. One student reported that the historical perspective taking scenario activity made him think more, and another agreed with that assertion. This student said "It made you think about what you would have done if you were in that situation." Another student thought that the moral dilemmas presented by the historical perspective taking activity encouraged deeper thinking. When asked what he liked about the activity, this student replied "The moral dilemmas. It made you question yourself and your thoughts. It made you think more." When asked what could be done to make students learn more from the historical perspective taking activity, no student offered any suggestions, though this could relate to the students' struggles to discuss their learning as mentioned earlier.

Students reported learning more with the historical perspective taking scenario activity than with typical bookwork. Several students valued the verbal interaction of the activity. One student said "I feel like I learn more when it's being said rather than just giving me a book and telling me to read it." This sentiment was enthusiastically supported by other students. Another

student said "Like, it's more active, I learn more." Other students condemned bookwork in relation to the activity. This idea is exemplified in the following exchange:

Interviewer: You like the verbal interaction.

Participant 1: I agree with that.

Participant 2: I mean, sometimes, yes, it's OK in the book. But it's not all the time. Like sit down and read this book and write down the definitions. And you're just supposed to know it.

Participant 3: Which is what this class was before you came.

Participant 4: Like, the book stretches out, it stretches the words out. But when you talk about it, it shortens it.

In addition, students reported to have learned to participate more with the historical perspective taking scenario activity. All eight members of the focus group stated that they participated more during the discussions with the activity, and this statement is strongly supported by the data. Three students reported that after participating in this study, they would participate more in their other classes. Three other students asserted that they might participate more in their other classes, dependent upon the situation in the specific class.

Student enjoyment of discussions.

When asked which style of discussion they enjoyed more, five students reported enjoying scenario discussions more while three students said they enjoyed freestyle (pre-intervention) discussions more. The students who reported more enjoyment with freestyle discussions gave several reasons. Two students favored the openness of the freestyle discussions, with one student reporting that she felt like these discussions gave her more room to speak. Another student stated that she enjoyed freestyle discussions because the topics were things she already

knew about. Interestingly, a different student reported not knowing anything about the pre-intervention discussion topics later in the focus group interview. One other student asserted that the freestyle discussions were more vivid, though this student reportedly preferred the scenario discussions.

The students who enjoyed scenario discussions more gave several reasons of their own. One student stated that these discussions helped him delve more deeply into the material, while another student, whose goal was a military career, enjoyed that the scenarios were focused primarily on war. Still another student enjoyed the perspective taking aspect of the scenario discussions. This student stated "When I read something, and it says 'You're a soldier back in the olden days' or whatever, I like picturing myself like that. It helps me learn." Another student enjoyed the scenario discussions because they were more focused and centered around a decision: "I liked that we had a certain thing that we had to talk about. And I liked that we had to make decisions on what we chose." One other student agreed that he enjoyed the problem-solving portion of the scenario discussions. A final reason offered by the students who preferred scenario discussions was because the students already had background information on the topics being discussed from the units they were studying.

Even the students who said they preferred freestyle discussions had good things to say about the scenario discussions. One student who preferred freestyle discussions said that she enjoyed them both, but liked freestyle discussions a bit more. And another student who said he enjoyed freestyle discussions had to admit that scenario discussions made him think more.

Additionally, five students reported that they were able to form emotional connections to the material by using scenarios, and that they felt angry and sad when confronted with the difficult decisions presented by the scenarios. Three other students stated that they were able to

put themselves in the place of the people in the scenarios, though one of these stated that taking other perspectives is easy for her, and is something she practices.

All eight students in the focus group interview stated that they would like to have more scenario discussions, and several students thought they could feasibly have scenario discussions in other classes. Specific classes where scenario discussions would be useful were English, Health, and Government. Further, most students thought that they could write their own scenarios for use in discussions. The only suggestion offered by students in relation to what would help them enjoy scenario discussions more was candy. This sentiment was offered by a total of two of the focus group participants.

When students were asked about the scenarios they remembered from the final three discussions, they listed six of the 12. The scenario listed by most students was Scenario 4 from Observation 5. In this scenario, students were asked to put themselves in the place of a German mother of two starving children, and to decide how to ration the food between them. Students referred to this scenario as "terrible", "awful", and "…the one I hate", while at the same time considering it the strongest scenario. One student recalled Scenario 1 from Observation 4, and two students remembered Scenario 2 from that same discussion. Another student cited Scenario 2, and two students recalled Scenario 3, from Observation 5. Scenario 1 from Observation 6 was remembered as well.

Another scenario from Observation 6 garnered a great deal of disapproval from the students. Four of the focus group participants cited Scenario 4 from Observation 6 as the scenario they could not relate to. In this scenario, students were asked to put themselves in the place of an American soldier at the end of World War I who must decide between going home to his family or staying in France with the girl he has come to love. Two students referred to this

scenario as the weakest of the 12. Terms used by the students to describe this scenario were "cliché" and "not real life". Interestingly, though, this scenario sparked one of the longest discussions of any of the observations, and produced more comments than any other of the mentioned scenarios in the focus group interview.

Research question 4.

Does the use of historical perspective taking activities alter teacher perceptions of classroom discussions, and if so, in what ways?

I interviewed Mr. Crane before the study began to discuss his views on classroom discussion. I interviewed Mr. Crane again at the end of the study to discuss his thoughts on the study and to determine whether his perceptions of discussion and of the students had changed. Mr. Crane's responses in these interviews revealed some dramatic changes in his perceptions of this pedagogical method and of his students.

Before the study began, Mr. Crane's responses to the pre-intervention interview indicated that he thought classroom discussions should be open and unscripted. Many times, Mr. Crane made statements such as the teacher should "…let them go wherever they wanted to go with it" or "letting them go with it where they want to take it" (M.Crane, pre-intervention interview, October 3, 2014). Mr. Crane stated that he began his previous discussions by asking students a question, then he would stand aside and let the students proceed: "Just throw it out to the kids and they'd kind of bounce and piggyback off of each other" (M. Crane, pre-intervention interview, October 3, 2014). In fact, Mr. Crane said that he did not plan for discussions, but if he asked a question and students started to discuss, he would not discourage them.

In the post-intervention interview, Mr. Crane never mentioned allowing students to "…go with it where they want to take it." Instead, Mr. Crane repeatedly acknowledged the benefits

scenarios in providing students with a place to begin thinking about the discussion topic. Crane speculated that this ability on the part of the historical perspective taking scenario activity increased the quality of the discussion: "I think the quality got better because you had more participation. And, where they have an example, and it's kind of guided, then they can go with that instead of trying to pull stuff out of the air" M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014). In terms of planning for discussions, Mr. Crane stated that after the study he felt comfortable developing historical perspective taking scenario activities himself. Moreover, he realized that the process of planning for this activity was not complex: "I think I could put it together. I don't think there's a whole lot of effort that goes into it. It's pretty simple to do" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014).

Secondly, in the pre-intervention interview, Mr. Crane seemed to indicate that he viewed classroom discussions as opportunities for the teacher to impart knowledge about current events to his students: "Are you getting your information from another 15 year old? Or are you going to get your information from a knowledgeable educator? Somebody that has a college degree…Somebody that's been out in the world a little bit." Mr. Crane stated that the classes that are best at discussing have students with knowledge of current events. He also worried that students were not getting the proper information at home, and that students were going to graduate and enter adult life as misinformed participants in the democratic process:

> You know, eventually these kids are going to be 18 years old and they're going to
> be out voting, and they're going to be the decision makers. By the time they're
> seniors, they need to be informed. And sometimes they're not getting that at
> home. It's our job to educate. You know? I mean, that's what we're here for"
> (M. Crane, pre-intervention interview, December 18, 2014).

This view of discussions as methods for imparting knowledge about modern events, and this concern that students were not informed caused Mr. Crane to enjoy some discussions because they show students are paying attention to happenings in the modern world.

In the post-intervention interview, Mr. Crane's responses show that he realized discussions could do more than just impart knowledge of the modern world to students. In fact, Crane replied that with the historical perspective taking scenario activity, students were able to form their own opinions. Further, his response actually shows some disdain for discussions of modern events. When asked about the differences between the two discussion types, Crane said "Mostly the participation and the fact that they would form their own opinions. Instead of just kind of regurgitating what they had heard on the news or seen on the news" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014). Mr. Crane suddenly prized the fact that students changed their opinions and beliefs based on the scenarios, and that he was able to witness the students thinking more deeply about their personal philosophies on important ideals.

Mr. Crane's opinions about the best topics for classroom discussion changed dramatically as well. In the pre-intervention interview, Crane stated repeatedly that current events and items from the news were the best subjects for discussion. Specifically, Mr. Crane said that he used the Internet to locate individual items for his classes, by checking Twitter and Yahoo for people and events that were being searched repeatedly across the web. These most searched items are said to be "trending" and before the study, Mr. Crane believed these trending items to be the best sources for discussion topics. This belief is supported by the fact that the subjects he chose for the three pre-intervention discussions were the ebola outbreak, social media, and the Michael Brown shooting.

After participating in the historical perspective taking scenario activity, Mr. Crane saw the value in subject and content-based discussions. Further, Crane stated that this activity was applicable to a wide variety of historical topics, and that scenarios could be written for any subject area topic: "Really you can take one from any chapter that we've got in our book and apply something to it" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014). Further, Crane asserted that the subject-specific nature of the scenario discussions helped him to enjoy the discussions more.

Another teacher perception that changed during the course of the study concerned student participation in discussions, both in general and in the participating class. In the pre-intervention interview, Mr. Crane's responses indicated that he believed some classes were naturally less-inclined to participate in discussions. Crane stated that students with natural curiosity, strong opinions, passion for the topic, personal connections to the topic, and knowledge of modern events tended to participate more in classroom discussions. These ideas carried over to Mr. Crane's perceptions of the participating class. Though he did not say this in the pre-intervention interview, Mr. Crane stated in the post-intervention interview that he considered the participating class as weak at classroom discussion, and that he even worried that "..we might not get much out of them" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014). As an example, Mr. Crane was able to identify three students that he thought may not participate due to their past history of not speaking in class.

After the study, Mr. Crane's perceptions of discussion participation seemed to have undergone a transformation. He expressed his delight at seeing the class he regarded as weak in discussion participating and offering responses in class. He spoke of his surprise at the contributions of the three students he considered as quiet and non-participatory. When asked his

overall opinion of the scenario discussions, Crane stated "I liked it because they seemed to participate more. It grabbed their attention more than just the freestyle", a situation he attributed to the guided nature of the scenarios: "Sometimes it's easier for them to see it and be able to discuss it than to just pull stuff out of the air" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014). Further, Crane stated that the scenario discussions were longer than the pre-intervention discussions, and that encouraging responses was much more difficult in the pre-intervention discussions: "I felt like I had to pry out some with the freestyle. And with the scenarios, because they were able to write, it seemed like they had already formed their opinion" (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014).

Several of Mr. Crane's responses in the post-intervention interview indicate new insights he gained during the course of the study. First, Mr. Crane stated that having students write before discussing could improve student participation. No reference to pre-discussion writing (or writing in general) was made during the pre-intervention interview. Second, Crane reported that larger classes tended to be better with discussions than smaller classes, due to an increased number of opinions. No mention of class size as a factor in discussion quality was made in the pre-intervention interview.

Finally, Mr. Crane voiced new insights after the study concerning the usefulness of the historical perspective taking scenario activity. Crane reported that the scenario activity was valuable to the participating class in lessons that were not part of the study and did not utilize the activity:

> Especially in classes where we didn't do the activity, they would refer back to the activity to kind of mesh everything together. So that was good. They were applying what they had learned and what they had read to the new material they

were getting. So that was nice (M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014).

Additionally, while Mr. Crane still valued discussions as a way to get to know his students, he realized after the study that the subject specific historical perspective taking scenario activity could accomplish this task. In fact, the response that Mr. Crane recalled as the best out of all six discussions involved a student who responded to a scenario by asserting that people should not talk to the police. Crane was impressed by her ability to explain why she held this opinion, and surmised that she had previously been in the situation. In this way, he was able to use a student response from the historical perspective taking scenario activity to get to know his student.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This study investigated the effects of a historical perspective taking scenario activity on classroom discussions. Among the factors I examined were student participation in discussions, quality of student responses in discussions, and student and teacher perceptions of discussions. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. Does the use of historical perspective taking activities produce an increase in the number of student responses in a classroom discussion?

2. Does participation in a historical perspective taking activity improve the quality of student responses during classroom discussions?

3. After participating in a classroom discussion prompted by a historical perspective taking activity, do students report higher rates of enjoying discussions and learning from discussions?

4. Does the use of historical perspective taking activities alter teacher perceptions of classroom discussions, and if so, in what ways?

In Chapter 1, I discussed the need for this study. Chapter 2 summarized the prevailing literature on classroom discussion and perspective taking. Chapter 3 included a detailed description of the data collection and analysis methods I employed in answering the research questions. In Chapter 4, I presented the findings in relation to my research questions.

Chapter 5 begins with the conclusions I derived from the findings of this study. Many other conclusions could be reached based on the data, but these four relate most closely to the research questions. Additionally, Chapter 5 includes five recommendations for future research and six implications for teachers.

It is important to note that this study involved only one classroom of 13 students in a single high school. For this reason, the conclusions drawn from this study are intended to describe this individual experience, and may not generalize to other situations.

Conclusions

My findings led me to four conclusions in regards to the effects of the historical perspective taking scenario activity on classroom discussions. Below, I present these conclusions in their simplest forms. Then I expand on each with more detail. These conclusions are:

1. The use of historical perspective taking scenarios as discussion prompts produces a dramatic increase in student participation in classroom discussions.

2. Engagement in a historical perspective taking activity seems to lead to improvement in student comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction.

3. Students tend to believe that they learn more in discussions that use historical perspective taking scenarios. Students also seem to enjoy discussions that use historical perspective taking scenarios than discussions that do not.

4. Historical perspective taking scenario activities appear to make teacher perceptions of discussions more positive.

All of these conclusions need to be explained more fully. For purposes of clarification, I have provided elaboration on each of these conclusions below. Explanations for how each of these conclusions was reached are provided as well.

1. The use of historical perspective taking scenarios as discussion prompts produces a dramatic increase in student participation in classroom discussions.

I observed three discussions in which the teacher used his normal methods for prompting and conducting classroom discussions. Then, I observed three discussions in which the teacher utilized historical perspective taking scenarios as discussion prompts. The data from these discussions indicate a dramatic increase in the number of student discussion responses when the historical perspective taking scenario activity was employed.

In the three discussions which utilized the historical perspective taking scenario activity, students recorded a total of 677 responses. This number is more than five times the 120 student responses recorded in the three pre-intervention discussions. The percentage of students who participated in the discussions also increased. In Observation 1, 54% of students recorded at least one response. That number climbed to 60% in Observation 2 before falling to 38% in Observation 3. In all three of the discussions in which the historical perspective taking scenario activity was employed, 100% of the students present offered at least one response.

Further, the discussions using the historical perspective taking scenario activity lasted longer than the pre-intervention discussions. Of the three pre-intervention discussions, the first lasted 18 minutes, 25 seconds. The second lasted 14 minutes, 54 seconds. The third lasted 7 minutes, 23 seconds, for a total discussion time in the pre-intervention phase of 40 minutes, 42 seconds. The length of the fourth discussion was 27 minutes, 17 seconds. The fifth discussion lasted 21 minutes, 1 second. The duration of the sixth discussion was 24 minutes, 15 seconds, for a total of 72 minutes, 33 seconds. The end result was that the discussions which employed the historical perspective taking scenario activity lasted more than 30 minutes longer than the discussions which did not use the activity.

Participation rates, percentages of participation, and discussion length all increased in discussions which utilized a historical perspective taking scenario activity. These increases

mirror the findings of other researchers. Both DiCamillo and Gradwell (2012) and Gehlbach et al (2008) found that perspective taking activities increased student interest and engagement in social studies lessons. The dramatic increase in responses in my study demonstrates that student interest in the lessons had also been strengthened. And the strong improvement of discussion length in the scenario discussions shows that students were likewise engaged with the material for much longer periods.

This increase in student participation and engagement could be partially contributed to the emotional connections students made to the situations depicted in the scenarios. In the focus group interview, students reported that the scenarios invoked their emotions, causing them to feel angry, sad, and confused. One student exchange from the focus group exemplified this idea:

[The interviewer asked students which scenarios they remembered]

Student 1: Where that person had to choose between the starving kids. That was terrible.

Student 2: Oh yeah! That one.

Interviewer: Yeah, I thought you might mention that one.

Student 3: Oh it was terrible!

Student 4: That was awful.

I saw this emotional connection during the historical perspective taking scenario discussions, when students engaged each other in emotional exchanges about the scenarios and about their choices. Students appeared to become stakeholders in the situations depicted in the scenarios, often referring to the characters as their children, their parents, or their friends. In commenting about the scenario that asked students whether to hide a son or hide him from the

draft, one student remarked "He's my child. If I can keep him alive, I'm going to." Another

student replied "You know you're going to be shot if you get caught."

Another scenario had students put themselves in the place of a soldier who has been

ordered to fire on civilians. Mr. Crane started one poignant exchange:

> Crane: Some of you said that you'd turn on the other soldiers. Those other
>
> soldiers are your friends, right?
>
> Student 1: Yeah, so they would probably agree with you to some extent.
>
> Crane: But what if they didn't?
>
> Student 2: Yeah, they're not going to just all agree with you.
>
> Student 3: Yeah, what if you asked somebody and they told on you?
>
> Student 1: Then I'm dead.
>
> Crane: What if they don't have the morals that you do?
>
> Student 4: If you tell on me, I'm going to shoot you.
>
> Student 5: They they're psychos.
>
> Student 6: Then we shoot them. You should do everything in your power to
>
> protect those kids.

This portion of the discussion showed the ownership students took of the people and

situations in the scenarios. Students often held varying opinions of the best actions to take, but

most students formed connections to the material. These connections encouraged lively, rapid

exchanges in the scenario discussions.

2. Engagement in a historical perspective taking activity seems to lead to

improvement in student comprehension, extension of learning, application, and

interaction.

All six discussions were recorded using a high definition audio recorder, and all student responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet. I then reviewed the responses several times and removed overly simplistic or off-task responses. Next, I selected every other response in each discussion to be rated. I then entered these responses into a separate Excel spreadsheet and rated each response according to the discussion response rubric I developed. This rubric used a Likert-type scale to rate responses on a scale of 1 (poor) to 3 (excellent) in four categories. These categories were comprehension, application, extension of learning, and interaction.

After the initial ratings, I reviewed the scores of each response multiple times. Once this process was finished and I was comfortable with the evaluations, I conducted t-tests for statistical significance. The purpose of these tests was to determine if significant differences existed between the scores of responses given before the historical perspective taking scenario activity and those rendered while the activity was being used.

As expected with such a small number of participants (13) and with miniscule participation in two of the three pre-intervention discussions, no statistically significant difference was detected. Still, improvement was shown in all four reporting categories of the discussion response rubric when scenarios were employed. Extension of Learning improved by .07. Application saw an increase of .02, and Interaction improved by .01. The greatest growth, however, was seen in the Comprehension category, where the difference between pre- and post-intervention means was .17.

Evidence of quality comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction can be seen in one particular discussion exchange. One scenario asked students to choose between staying in France after falling in love with a French villager or going home to family. Students said:

Student 1: Is it that you just think you're in love, or are you actually in love?

Student 2: There's a difference.

Student 3: I'm not going to waste my life living with somebody that I don't really know.

Student 4: She could just be saying that she loves a soldier to try to get his money.

Student 5: Yeah, so she could be trying to get your money.

Student 6: She's gold digging.

Student 7: I'm going to America, and she can do what she wants. If she can pay for herself, she has the right to come over.

Student 8: Did she ask him to marry her? She said "Marry me." He did not. I would leave her.

The improvement revealed in student responses holds great promise for teachers, since student comprehension of material is one of the main ingredients in student learning and achievement. Modern teachers live in a world where their jobs are determined by scores students attain on high stakes tests. For this reason, methods for increasing student comprehension are highly coveted. The gains in comprehension detected in this study could prove valuable for teachers who struggle to find new ways to increase student learning.

Colby's (2009) study found that participating in perspective taking activities can improve students' thinking skills in the areas of deep comprehension and discernment. DiCamillo & Gradwell (2012) discovered that perspective taking can help students refine and extend their interpretations of classroom learning.   Additionally, scenarios have been used for many years to

help students apply classroom learning to real life situations (Jonassen, 2012; Poulou, 2001). Like these, my study reveals that student response ratings improved in each of the four reporting categories, though the scores were not different to a statistically significant degree.

3. Students tend to believe that they learn more in discussions that use historical perspective taking scenarios. Students also seem to enjoy discussions that use historical perspective taking scenarios than discussions that do not.

I conducted a student focus group interview with eight student volunteers following the completion of all six discussion observations. This focus group interview revealed valuable insights into students' perceptions of classroom discussions. Two of these insights were students' perceptions of learning from discussions and students' perceptions of enjoying discussions.

Of the eight students who participated in the focus group interview, all but one reported learning more during the discussions that utilized the historical perspective taking scenario activity. The other student reported learning equally with both. Students reported that the activity made them think more, made them think more deeply, and taught them important historical concepts. One student remarked, "When I read something, and it says "You're a soldier back in the olden days" or whatever, I like picturing myself like that. It helps me learn." Another student, when asked what he liked about the scenario discussions said "The moral dilemmas. It made you question yourself and your thoughts. It made you think more."

Other students stated that the verbal interaction and the more active nature of the of the historical perspective taking activity helped increase their learning: "I feel like I learn more when it's being said rather than just fiving me a book and telling me to read it." To this statement, another student responded, "Like, it's more active, I learn more."

Students asserted that participation in the study helped them learn to participate more in classroom discussions. This idea is verified by the growth in numbers and rates of participation in the scenario discussions. Several students also conveyed that they would participate more in other classes since experiencing the historical perspective taking scenario activity.

Five of the eight students in the focus group stated that they enjoyed the discussions conducted with the historical perspective taking scenario activity more than those without. One student asserted that he enjoyed the depth of learning he experienced with the scenario discussions, while another student stated that she enjoyed being able to picture herself in the situations depicted by the scenarios. Other reasons given by students who enjoyed scenario-based discussions more included:

- Scenarios provided more focused topics for discussion

- Scenarios contained military subject matter

- Scenarios involved decision making and problem solving

- Students already possessed background information related to scenario topics

One of the students who did not report enjoying scenario-based discussions more admitted that scenario discussions encouraged him to think more. Another student stated that she enjoyed both types, but preferred the pre-intervention freestyle discussions a bit more. In addition, all of the students in the focus group interview asserted that they would like to have more scenario-based discussions.

Like my study, Alvarez (2008) found that participating in perspective taking exercises increased student enjoyment and learning in social studies classes. This study involved two classes of 11th grade American History students who participated in three perspective taking activities. Surveys showed that students reported these activities as their favorites for the year,

and that they learned from the activities as much as they enjoyed them. The students in my study reported similar results.

It should be noted that students' positive reports could be due in part to the novelty of the historical perspective taking scenario activity. This novelty could have been exacerbated by students' reports that they rarely discussed in Mr. Crane's class prior to this study. It is also possible that simply using different methods for conducting discussions may increase student enthusiasm and enjoyment.

The repeated measures design of this study, however, was intended to decrease the impact of these situations. In the three intervention discussions, participation totaled 212, 243, and 222 responses. If novelty was the greatest contributor to student participation, decreases after the first intervention discussion would be expected. Instead, the final two discussions both recorded more numbers than the first intervention discussion.

4. Historical perspective taking scenario activities appear to make teacher perceptions of discussions more positive.

I interviewed Mr. Crane before the study began to examine his pre-conceived notions concerning classroom discussion. I interviewed Mr. Crane again at the end of the study to determine whether his conceptions of discussions had changed. These interviews revealed important differences in the way Mr. Crane viewed discussions after participating in the study. Additional change was seen in Mr. Crane's opinions of the participating class.

Before the study, Mr. Crane asserted that discussions should be open, unplanned, and unscripted. Crane stated that the teacher should select topics for discussion from the news and from trending topics from the Internet, and begin the discussion by asking students a question in relation to the chosen topic. Then students should be allowed to move the discussion in any

direction they chose. Mr. Crane saw his job in discussions to throw out a question and then stand aside as students interacted on their own.

At the end of the study, Mr. Crane's views seem to have changed. In the post-intervention interview, Crane repeatedly mentioned that the historical perspective taking scenario activity gave students a starting point for thinking about the topic. Having this starting point, according to Mr. Crane, increased student participation and the quality of the discussion. Crane also came to value the subject-specific nature of the scenario discussions, and asserted that his enjoyment of discussions was increased by the fact that the scenario discussions were directly related to his class's unit of study.

This view of planning for discussion matches the process advocated by Henning, et al (2008). These authors stated that the quality of discussions and the student participation in discussions can be improved by careful and thoughtful planning. Similarly, Jorgensen and Schwartz (2012) reported that well-planned, structured discussions improved discussions and helped lead students to powerful insights into social studies concepts. Mr. Crane's new understandings mirror these findings.

Additionally, Mr. Crane's views of his role in classroom discussions changed during the course of the study. In the beginning, the teacher believed he should serve as the source of knowledge for his students. Crane saw himself as an authority figure whose purpose in discussions was to provide accurate information and perspective for his uninformed students. Crane worried about his students' ignorance in regards to contemporary issues, and lamented the fact that his students were nearing voting age and lacked knowledge of democratic processes.

After the study, Mr. Crane reported that discussions can help students form their own opinions. He expressed disdain for students regurgitating news reports, and valued students'

abilities to change their beliefs in regards to the scenarios. Mr. Crane also asserted that he valued watching students as they thought deeply about their beliefs and reconsidered their own personal values and philosophies.

The ability of classroom discussion to help change students' existing beliefs has been reported in previous research. McMurray (2007) asserted that classroom discussions can help students consider viewpoints in opposition to their own. Likewise, Flynn (2009) found that classroom discussions were effective in challenging students' preconceived beliefs. Mr. Crane's responses in the post-intervention interview show that he came to these realizations as well.

Mr. Crane also seemed to come to several realizations concerning student participation in classroom discussions. Before the study, Mr. Crane believed that some classes were naturally inclined to participate more or less in classroom discussions. In Crane's view, this inclination was due to varying levels of curiosity, passion, and knowledge of current events. Additionally, Mr. Crane believed that the participating class was weak in discussion, and admitted worrying that their participation might not be sufficient for this study.

Following the study, Mr. Crane repeatedly expressed surprise at the level of participation among the class. He was able to list several students he considered as non-participants, and seemed delighted at their participation in the scenario-based discussions. Mr. Crane attributed this increase in participation to the starting point provided by scenarios, and to the fact that scenario discussions provided students with the ability to write their opinions before the discussion began.

In the teacher post-intervention interview, Mr. Crane reflected on his views of the participation of the class:

Interviewer: Would you say this class that I observed, is it a strong discussion class? Are they the kind that will participate without much prompting?

Crane: No. This is one of the weaker discussion classes. So to see them participate with the discussion and the activity was great…I kind of worried that we might not get much out of them. But I think they've done fairly well considering.

Interviewer: Did it kind of surprise you a little bit?

Crane: Yeah. Because of the level of participation. Some of them, some of the kids you know are going to participate. And then there were some that, if you don't try to actively talk to them, they're not going to say anything the whole time they're here for the entire week, if they can get by with it. So it was good to see some participation out of the ones that are more reserved.

Other researchers have advocated the value of classroom discussion in increasing student participation. Henning, McKeny, Foley, and Balong (2012) reported that classroom discussions increased participation rates in mathematics classes. Similarly, Gritter (2011) found that discussions increased student involvement and engagement. These benefits were reported by Mr. Crane as well, following his participation in the historical perspective taking scenario activity.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, I found that discussions that used historical perspective taking scenario activities brought dramatic increases in numbers of responses and numbers of students responding. Student comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction also increased according to the discussion response rubric. Students reported enjoying and learning

from discussions when using the activity, and the teacher's perceptions of discussions and of the participating class changed in many different ways. These findings led me to several suggestions for future research in relation to classroom discussion and the perspective taking scenario activity. Below I list five of these recommendations. I then provide a thorough explanation of each.

1. **This study needs to be replicated in different settings, with a greater number of students.**

Although this is a standard recommendation in many studies, it seems especially true here. This study involved one classroom of 13 freshman history students, taught by one teacher in a rural high school. Since the number of participants was small and the setting was limited, additional research is needed to determine whether the findings of this study can be replicated. The use of scenarios as discussion prompts should be examined with larger numbers of classes and students and with students of different ages. Scenarios should also be studied in urban settings and in schools of different sizes and demographics.

An additional topic of inquiry involves teacher methods for conducting class. In the focus group interview, students reported that Crane's methods were textbook-based, with little opportunity for discussion. This study should be conducted with teachers who regularly employ methods outside the textbook, and with teachers who have more experience with classroom discussion.

2. **Different kinds of scenarios and topics need to be examined for possible effects on classroom discussions.**

In order to maximize the potential of this teaching method, different types of scenarios should be studied for possible effects on classroom discussions. Some alternative types of

scenarios that could be examined include problem solving scenarios, strategy scenarios, and justification scenarios. Problem solving scenarios present students with a conflict and ask students to propose plans for resolution. In strategy scenarios, students are asked to develop plans for righting a wrong. Justification scenarios involve students defending or critiquing a viewpoint.

This study examined scenarios that were based on the historical topics being studied in class. Further, the scenarios employed in this study were emotional, and sought to engage students in their feelings as well as the historical material. Scenarios that are written around different topics should be examined. Some examples that may be studied could be could be scenarios based on literature, economic situations, or students' own lives. As suggested by Mr. Crane, additional scenario topics to examine could be based on news events of the day.

The scenarios utilized in this study were consistently focused on the historical topic being studied in class. This fact can be seen in the growth in student comprehension detected with the discussion response rubric. If scenarios that focus on topics outside the unit of study are employed in future research, extra care should be taken to determine the possible effects on student comprehension.

3. Having students stage dramatic reenactments of scenarios should be attempted in order to determine whether physically taking another perspective can effect participation.

This study involved students passively taking the perspectives of fictional people in historical situations. This form of perspective taking resulted in benefits for the students and the teacher, though students never left their seats. Increasing the physical involvement of students in the perspective taking process could provide additional improvement.

Role-playing and dramatization are other forms of perspective taking that may yield additional benefits for teachers and students. Teachers could write scenarios with dialogue and action sequences, and have students physically reenact the situation being depicted. The advantages and disadvantages of such a method could provide teachers with additional data on the use of scenarios in the classroom.

4. Students' abilities to write their own scenarios should be studied. Additionally, effects of student-written scenarios should be examined.

In this study, Mr. Crane was fully able to write scenarios on his own for effective classroom discussions. With a small amount of training and minimal exposure to the method, this motivated teacher was able to create well-written emotional scenarios as prompts for engaging discussions. Due to the short time period and focused research questions of this study, we were not able to examine whether students could write their own scenarios, though the students in the focus group interview speculated that they could. As a result, the abilities of students to write their own scenarios should be studied.

Having students write their own scenarios could make additional contributions to student comprehension and application of the material to students' lives and values. Further, increasing student ownership of learning can create added benefits not examined by this study. Researchers should be certain to check for all possible effects of having students write their own scenarios.

5. Student retention of historical information should be examined following historical perspective taking scenario activities.

This study revealed increases in student comprehension, and students reported learning more from scenario discussions. Though it is hoped that short term and long term retention of information was improved by the historical perspective taking scenario activity, student retention

of historical information after the scenario activity was not assessed. For this reason, additional research is needed to determine whether students retain historical information for a longer time after a historical perspective taking scenario activity.

Implications for Teachers

The data gathered during this study hold strong implications for teachers. Below, I list six implications I derived from the data followed by a detailed explanation of each. Other implications may be presented by the data, but I considered these the six most important for classroom teachers.

1. **Historical perspective taking scenario activities can help teachers increase student participation in discussions.**

The discussions that utilized the historical perspective taking scenario activity yielded more than five times as many student responses as the discussions that did not use the activity. Also, 100% of the students present for the scenario discussions participated at least once, compared to a high of 60% without the activity. These large increases imply that historical perspective taking scenarios can play a role in helping teachers increase participation in classroom discussions.

As seen in the three pre-intervention discussions, teachers often struggle with classes that are reluctant to participate in classroom discussions. Mr. Crane also reported that three specific students were highly unwilling to participate. Observations 2 and 3 were particularly difficult to watch, with extremely low rates of participation and long uninterrupted periods of the teacher talking. These situations changed dramatically, however in the three observations that used the historical perspective taking scenario activity. With massive increases in participation and with

every student offering responses, the scenario activity may offer an additional tool for teachers in increasing student participation in discussions.

2. **Historical perspective taking scenario activities can help teachers increase the quality of student responses in discussions.**

The discussion response rubric developed for this study rated student responses for comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction. In all four categories, the quality of the responses increased when students used the historical perspective taking scenario activity. As expected with the small number of participants (13), no statistical significance was detected. However, the improvement revealed in the data show that historical perspective taking scenarios can serve as a tool for teachers to use in improving the quality of their classroom discussions.

3. **The use of historical perspective taking scenario activities can increase student enjoyment and learning during discussions.**

The student focus group interview revealed that participating students enjoyed using the scenarios, and that they learned more with the scenarios than without. This perception on the part of the students demonstrates that teachers who seek to create an enjoyable classroom environment may benefit from planning classroom discussions that use scenarios as prompts. Specifically, students reported enjoying the focused topics of the scenarios, the ability to make decisions, and the fact that most of the scenarios had military subjects.

The opportunity to take outside perspectives was reported as being both enjoyable and beneficial to learning by one student. She said "When I read something, and it says 'You're a soldier back in the olden days' or whatever, I like picturing myself like that. It helps me learn."

This dual ability of scenarios to help teachers increase learning and enjoyment simultaneously can hold great potential for classroom teachers who seek to enhance their instruction.

Further, all teachers hope their students learn from classroom activities. Judging from student responses in the focus group interview, classroom discussions that use historical perspective taking scenarios can be used to help students learn historical material. One student attributed learning more from the scenario discussions to "The moral dilemmas. It made you question yourself and your thoughts. It made you think more." The propensity of scenario-based discussions to encourage students to think and learn could be contribute greatly to teachers' classroom instruction.

4. The use of historical perspective taking scenarios can change teachers'
perspectives on classroom discussions.

Some teachers may view classroom discussion as a means for conveying simple information, as Mr. Crane did before the study. Further, teachers may sometimes fall into the habit of viewing certain classes as non participatory, like Mr. Crane. Through the course of the study, though, Mr. Crane came to view discussions as ways to engage his students in deep and critical conversations about historical learning.

Mr. Crane also moved from seeing the participating class as reluctant to participate to regarding the class as fully engaged. And he saw the benefits of well-planned, subject-focused discussions. Crane stated "I think the quality got better because you had more participation. And, where they have an example, and it's kind of guided, then they can go with that instead of trying to pull stuff out of the air" M. Crane, post-intervention interview, December 18, 2014). Teachers who find themselves with similar views of classes and discussions may be able to

change their views by involving their classes in engrossing discussions through the use of historical perspective taking scenario activities.

5. Scenarios should be carefully written.

Teachers should take great care in writing scenarios for a number of reasons. First, the emotional nature of the scenarios in this study caused students to engage in several heated exchanges. Mr. Crane was forced repeatedly to enter the discussion and redirect students who were in danger of insulting or threatening their fellow students. Though the participation of students greatly increased with these emotionally charges scenarios, care must be taken to avoid topics that will result in insulting or threatening behavior.

Second, several scenarios were recalled as particularly upsetting emotionally by students in the focus group interview. In particular, the scenario that asked students to put themselves in the place of a mother who must decide how to feed her starving children was referred to as "awful". Though these scenarios resulted in lively and involved discussions, great care must be taken in writing scenarios that do not traumatize students. The children in classrooms come from diverse and sometimes detrimental backgrounds, and scenarios may recall past events students would rather forget. For this reason, teachers should get to know their students before using scenarios, and exercise caution when writing them.

Third, teachers should consider the community and the administration when writing scenarios. Some topics, though useful to the classroom teacher, may be considered off limits to the people of the surrounding community. And this perspective may result in a school administration that frowns on wrinkling local feathers. Teachers must weigh the benefits of controversial topics against the potential debate, and choose wisely when writing scenarios.

6. Scenarios may not be the best choice for all teachers.

The emotionally charged discussions I observed when Mr. Crane used scenarios as discussion prompts could have become chaotic without his ability to step in at opportune times and defuse perilous situations. Teachers who are not confident in their abilities to control the classroom and re-route hazardous discussions may need to reconsider using scenarios in classroom discussions. Though with practice, I believe almost any teacher can benefit from the use of scenarios.

The discussions that used historical perspective taking scenarios yielded massive increases in student participation and slight increases in comprehension, extension of learning, application, and interaction. Teachers whose classes already excel in these areas may not experience great benefits through the use of scenarios. Still, teachers in these classes may see benefits in other facets of the classroom experience.

Conclusion

Classroom teachers struggle every day to plan engaging lessons that captivate their students while still teaching subject material. And every day, the demands forced down on teachers by local administrators, state officials, and federal mandates increase. Teachers must have an arsenal of effective teaching weapons to meet the challenge of the modern educational battlefield. The historical perspective taking scenario activity holds great potential for teachers seeking methods for increasing discussion participation and student engagement.

No single method can serve as a "magic bullet" for correcting all possible problems experienced by teachers in conducting discussions with their classes. In fact, the modern, diverse classroom is always evolving, and teachers must evolve with it in order to reach their students. Though not intended as the ultimate solution for reluctant classes, the historical perspective taking scenario activity can serve as another tool in the teacher's chest of instructional methods.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

THE UNIVERSITY *of* TENNESSEE **UT**

KNOXVILLE

Office of Research & Engagement
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

1534 White Ave.
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7697
fax 865-974-7400

July 22, 2014

IRB#: 9570 B

Title: Effects of historical scenarios on classroom discussion

William G. Cole	Thomas Turner
Theory & Practice in Teacher Education	Theory & Practice in Teacher Education
616 McCord Avenue	A222 Bailey Education Complex
Athens, TN 37303	Campus - 3442

Your project listed above has been reviewed and granted IRB approval under expedited review.

This approval is good for a period ending one day less than one year from the date of this letter. Please make timely submission of renewal or prompt notification of project termination (see item #3 below).

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.

2. If signed consent forms are being obtained from subjects, they must be stored for at least three years following completion of the project.

3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

The Committee wishes you every success in your research endeavor. This office will send you a renewal notice (Form R) on the anniversary of your approval date.

Sincerely,

Brenda Lawson
Brenda Lawson
Compliances

Attachment

Big Orange. Big Ideas.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Documents

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT: Historical scenarios and classroom discussion

Participants are invited to participate in a research study with the purpose of determining the effects of a perspective taking activity on students' discussion skills. Participants will be observed in a classroom setting, where discussion responses will be recorded. They will also complete pre- and post-intervention surveys to assess their discussion skills.

RISKS: Risks of physical harm are extremely low for participants. Risks for the failure of anonymity will be controlled by the researcher.

BENEFITS: Possible benefits for participants include increased discussion skills, which may benefit participants inside and outside of school.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link participants to the study.

_____ Participant's (student's) initials
_____ Parent/Guardian initials

UTK EXPEDITED Approval:

JUL 2 2 2014 - JUL 2 1 2015

COMPENSATION: None
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

The University of Tennessee does not "automatically" reimburse subjects for medical claims or other compensation. If physical injury is suffered in the course of research, or for more information, please notify the investigator in charge.

CONTACT INFORMATION If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,) you may contact the researcher, William Gary Cole, at 423-442-9230. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466. **PARTICIPATION** Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's (student's) name:_____

Participant's (student's) signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian signature_____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C

Student Assent Document

STUDENT ASSENT STATEMENT

Historical Scenarios Research Study

Dear Student,

Your class has been asked to participate in a research study involving classroom discussions. Although participation in this study is totally voluntary, I would appreciate you taking part. If you choose not to, however, your grade will not suffer, and your choice will not be held against you in any way.

Your teacher will teach class as normal, and I will observe three of your classroom discussions. Then, your teacher will ask you to complete a historical scenario activity in class, and I will observe three more discussions. At the end of the study, I will ask for volunteers to participate in an interview. In this interview, I will ask you some questions about your learning during the study. Your grade will not be altered by participation in this study, and no information that will identify you will be gathered at any time. Everything will be kept strictly anonymous.

This should be an interesting and informative study. Please talk to your parents or guardians. If you both agree that you should participate in this study, sign your name below. If your parents or guardians have questions, please call me at 423 442 9230.
Sincerely,

Gary Cole

Student Name: (Print) _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Appendix D

Approval to Research: High School Principal

Sweetwater High School

South High Street
Sweetwater, Tennessee 37874
Phone 615-337-7881

July 24, 2014

The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee

To Whom It May Concern:

I give William Gary Cole permission to conduct the research study entitled "Effects of a Historical Perspective Taking Activity on Classroom Discussion" at Sweetwater High School. I understand that a variety of research methods will be employed in this research project.

Sincerely,

Eric Weaver, Principal
Sweetwater High School

Appendix E

Approval to Research: Director of Schools

Board of Education

JANIE HARRILL
1215 Stephens Dr.
Madisonville, TN 37354
2nd District

DEWITT UPTON
236 Washington Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874
1st District

JERRY SNYDER
212 Board Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874
1st District

LARRY STEIN
601 Morris Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874
1st District

**Monroe County
Department of Education**

TIM BLANKENSHIP
Director of Schools
205 Oak Grove Road
Madisonville, TN 37354
Telephone: (423) 442-2373
Fax: (423) 442-1389

BOB LOVINGOOD, Chairman
527 Mountain View Dr.
Vonore, TN 37885
2nd District

JANET MARTIN
P.O. Box 464
Madisonville, TN 37354
2nd District

STEVE ROGERS
207 Cagle Rd.
Tellico Plains, TN 37385
3rd District

SONYA LYNN
240 Martin Road
Tellico Plains, TN 37385
3rd District

JO T. CAGLE
127 Oak Street
Tellico Plains, TN 37385
3rd District

July 24, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I give permission for William Gary Cole to conduct research toward his dissertation in Monroe County Schools. This research project concerns the use of historical scenarios and classroom discussions, and will take place during the academic year 2014-2015. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tim Blankenship
Monroe County Director of Schools

Appendix F

Discussion Response Rubric

Comprehension

1	2	3
Response shows confusion or contains false information. Vocabulary may be used incorrectly.	Response shows adequate understanding of the topic. No false information is displayed, but response lacks depth and outside references.	Response shows deep understanding of the topic being studied. May incorporate references to previous units of study, and use those references correctly.

Extension of Learning

1	2	3
Response discourages other responses, or stifles the discussion.	Response makes further responses possible, but fails to advance the discussion.	Response advances the discussion in a new direction, includes new reasoning, or contains new insight.

Application

1	2	3
Response contains no application of the topic to real life situations, previous topics, or outside learning.	Response shows some application to the student's life, emotions, or values.	Response applies the topic to real life situations, previous topics, or outside learning in unexpected or particularly insightful ways.

Interaction

1	2	3
Response could be seen as insulting or disrespectful. Response refuses to consider the thoughts, values, or welfare of others.	Response is respectful, could not reasonably be construed as insulting, and does not preclude the thoughts, values, or welfare of others.	Response welcomes and encourages other insights. Response acknowledges other points of view.

Appendix G

Teacher Pre-intervention Interview Protocol

1. How many times per semester do you allow your students to engage in classroom discussion?

Probes: How do you decide when to have a discussion? What types of topics lend themselves to discussion?

2. Is classroom discussion part of your formal lesson planning?

Probes: Do you build discussions into your lesson plans? Do you try to emphasize discussions? If so, what factors tell you to insert discussions into individual lessons?

3. In general, do you enjoy classroom discussion with your students?

Probes: What factors cause you to like or dislike discussions? Give examples of good and bad discussions.

4. As you observe and guide a discussion, what factors tell you that a discussion is going well? Poorly?

Probes: How would you distinguish a bad discussion from a good discussion? How does the student makeup of the class affect discussions?

5. Do certain types of students participate more in discussions than others?

Probes: What kinds of students are they? Do certain types of students participate less in discussions than others? What kinds of students are they?

6. Imagine you are planning a lesson for the following day or week. You consider the class, and decide it would probably have an engaging discussion. What kind of class would that be?

Probes: Now imagine you are planning another lesson. You consider the class, and decide not to have a discussion with that class. Describe the class you would be reluctant to have a discussion with.

7. What types of historical material or subjects are good fodder for classroom discussions?

Probes: Why are these subjects better for discussion than others? Do boys or girls respond in different ways to these topics?
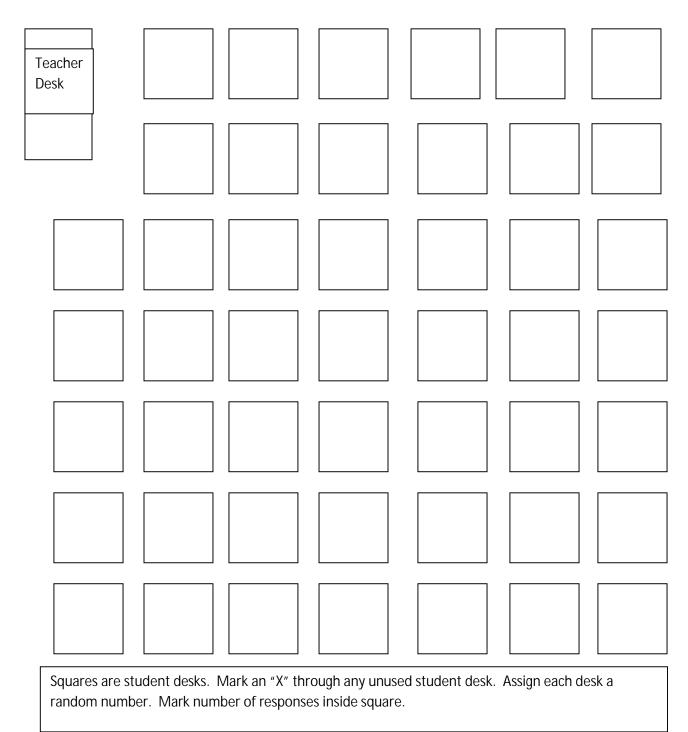
9. Overall, do you think that your students are capable of participating in sustained, lengthy, engaging discussions?

Probes: Why or why not? What skills do they have, or are they lacking?

10. Do you think that students learn from participating in classroom discussions of material?

Probes: Why or why not? What specific types of learning do they demonstrate or miss out on?

Appendix H

Seating Chart for Participation Counts

Teacher
Desk

Squares are student desks. Mark an "X" through any unused student desk. Assign each desk a random number. Mark number of responses inside square.

Appendix I

Teacher Training Session Agenda

Scenarios and Discussions: Teacher Workshop Agenda

I. What are historical perspective taking scenarios?

    A. Definition: (Jonassen, 2012; Lee & Ashby, 2001)

    B. Examples I have used in the past.

    C. Purposes: (Colby, 2009; DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012; Gehlbach et al, 2008; Lee & Ashby, 2001; Levstik, 2001)

        1. Deeper understanding of the people being studied.

        2. Help students understand actions, motivations, and beliefs of the past.

        3. Increasing critical thinking, engagement, and achievement in social studies.

IV. Writing historical perspective taking scenarios.

    A. Set in the time period being studied, for which students have background knowledge.

    B. Write scenarios in such a way that students are encouraged to envision themselves in the period, in the situation being presented.

    C. Present students with a dilemma; force them to make a historically accurate choice.

    D. Make the scenario emotional; relate the situation to family, or to real life crises.

    E. Be sure the situation is arguable; present a situation which will garner multiple opinions.

V. Classroom procedures.

    A. Teach historical material as usual, using interactive lecture, Powerpoint, readings from the textbook, videos, etc.

    B. Scenarios should be presented the following day:

1. Hand out pre-printed copies of 3-4 scenarios.

2. Give students time to read the scenarios.

3. Ask students form pairs to think deeply about the situations being presented in the scenarios, to put themselves in the places of the people presented, and to make a decision that is historically accurate (matches their previous learning about the situation).

4. Ask students to write a short paragraph explaining what they would do in the situation presented by each scenario, and why they would take this action.

5. Emphasize their actions must be as historically appropriate as possible.

6. When students have finished writing their responses, begin the discussion by reading the first scenario and asking "What would you do?"

7. Allow the discussion to progress until it reaches its natural conclusion. The natural conclusion will be the end of student responses. When student responses have ended, move to the next scenario and repeat.

C. Collect student written responses to the scenarios at the end of the class/discussion.

VI. Teacher questions, concerns, additions, subtractions, and clarifications.

Appendix J

Examples of Scenarios Shared During Teacher-Training Sessions

Scenario #1: Four months ago, you, your wife, and your four children moved to America from Hungary. You were able to find a job in the local textile factory where you regularly work 12-hour shifts, 6 days a week. Your wages barely pay the rent at your tenement house, and you are running out of savings. One day, your supervisor tells you that he has jobs for all of your children, starting immediately. Your children range in age from 12 to 5. Over the past month, you have seen over 40 child laborers leave the factory with horrible injuries from the machinery, and you have personally seen three children die in factory accidents. What do you do and why?

Scenario #2: You are the owner of a medium-sized steel mill in New York City. Recently, the government sent you a notice saying that all steel mills were required to enact extensive safety measures in the plants to protect the workers. You know four things: 1) Enacting these safety measures will cost you half your profits for a year. 2) Andrew Carnegie is putting heavy pressure on you to sell your steel mill to him at a major loss for you 3) Andrew Carnegie's steel mills will NOT be enacting these safety measures 4) There are too many factories and not enough government agents, so the chances of you getting caught by the government are very small. What do you do, and why?

Scenario #3: You are a Romanian immigrant who has been in America for less than two weeks. After an exhausting shift at a local meat packing plant, you take a short cut through a wealthy neighborhood. As you pass a bar, a crowd of

drunken men comes bursting around you, screaming and pushing. In the confusion, you hear a scream and feel something shoved into your hand. As the crowd parts, you see a man lying dead from a stab wound to the back, and realize in horror that you are holding a bloody knife. You know you did not stab the man, but you have no idea who did. What do you do, and why?

Scenario #4: *You and your husband have been in America for over two years. You both have factory jobs, you have both learned fairly good English. You have managed to save some money. One day, your brother writes to you from Russia to say that your mother is dying. He says that she has only weeks to live, and if you want to see her one last time, you should start for Russia right away. You know that it will be easy to secure passage to Russia, but very difficult to be able to return. It will take all your savings just to get back, and jobs are very scarce in your homeland. What do you do, and why?*

Appendix K

Teacher Post-intervention Interview Protocol

1. What was your overall opinion of the discussion following the perspective taking exercise compared to the discussion with no perspective taking?

2. How did the discussion following the perspective taking exercise differ from the discussion with no perspective taking?

3. Would you consider using perspective taking as a classroom discussion prompt for your future lessons?

4. How did the discussion participation of the students in the perspective taking exercise differ from the participation of the students when they did not complete the perspective taking exercise?

Prompts: Did the perspective taking students participate more or less as a whole?

5. Consider individual students in the class. Were there any students in the perspective taking group that participated more or less in the discussion compared to their normal participation in classroom discussions? Were there examples of this phenomenon in the non-perspective taking group? Give examples of each, if any.

6. Consider the quality of the student responses during the discussion. How did the quality of the responses of the perspective taking group compare to the quality of the responses of the non-perspective taking group?

7. Compare the length of the classroom discussions between the two groups. Did one last longer than the other?

8. Was it easier to get responses from either of the groups?

9. What were the differences you noticed between the two discussions, if any?

Follow up: To what do you contribute these differences?

10. Do you feel confident enough to write your own scenarios as prompts for classroom discussions?

11. Do you believe that students could write their own scenarios as prompts for classroom discussions?

12. Looking back on the two classes, what do you wish you had done differently?

13. Tell me about the best response from each group.

14. Tell me about the worst response from each group.

15. Was there anything that surprised you in the course of the lesson?

16. Was there anything that disappointed you about the lesson?

Appendix L

Student Focus Group Interview Protocol

1. Think about your experiences in your history class before I began sitting in a few weeks ago. How often did you have classroom discussions before I started observing?

2. Do you feel like you learn anything by participating in classroom discussions?

> Prompts:
>
> > A. What kinds of things do you learn by discussing that you can't learn with other activities?

3. Before I started sitting in, if I had asked you whether you enjoyed classroom discussions, what you have said?

4. Have you enjoyed being in your history class all year?

Prompts:

> A. What do you like about your history class over all? Dislike?
>
> B. Before I started sitting in, if I had asked you about your favorite activity in this class, what would you have said? What would you least favorite activity have been?

You have participated in 6 discussions during this study. The first three were freestyle discussions and the final three were scenario-based. I'm going to ask you a few questions that compare these two types of discussions.

5. Compare the first three freestyle discussions to the last three scenario-based discussions. Which type of discussion did you enjoy more?

Prompts:

> A. What did you like about each type of discussion? Dislike?
>
> B. What do you remember most about the discussions over all?

6. Did you participate more in the first three discussions or in the last three?

Prompts:

      A. What about those discussions made you want to speak out?

      B. Do you think you will speak out more in your other discussions now?

7. With which type of discussion did you learn more?

      A. What was it about that type of discussion that made you learn more?

      B. What were some specific things you learned in that type of discussion?

8. Think about the last three scenario-based discussions. What specifically did you like/dislike about these discussions?

9. Would you like to have more scenario-based discussions?

      Prompts:

      A. In what other classes could your teachers use scenario-based discussions?

10. What could be done to make scenario-based discussions better?

      Prompts:

      A. What would make you enjoy them more?

      B. What would make you participate more?

      C. What would make you learn more?

11. Which specific scenarios stand out in your mind?

      Prompts:

      A. What is it about these scenarios that make you remember them?

12. Are there any other comments you would like to make, or thoughts you have about the classroom discussions you have participated in over the last few weeks?

Vita

William Gary Cole is the son of Paul and Helen Cole, of Tellico Plains, Tennessee. He graduated from Tellico Plains High School in 1994, and received an Associate's degree in Forestry from Hiwassee College. After working in the timber industry, he enrolled at Tennessee Wesleyan College and received a Bachelor's degree in History. In the midst of a successful career as a high school teacher, Gary finished a Master's degree in Educational Administration at Tennessee Technological University. He then entered the Theory and Practice in Teacher Education program at The University of Tennessee, and completed his Ph.D. in 2015. He began his career as a college professor with an appointment at the University of North Alabama that same year.