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## Juxtaposing Primary- and Intermediate-Elementary Trade Books' Historical Representation of Amelia Earhart

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### **Abstract**

Amelia Earhart can be used in the classroom not only to interest students but can also be used to cover Common Core State Standards (CCSS), National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) framework, and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). When teaching Amelia Earhart, textbooks, trade books, and primary sources can be used, however one must be careful with the misrepresentations each resource can portray. To look at what is misrepresented, omitted, and included within primary and intermediate grade level trade books, 32 books were scrutinized. The trade books being analyzed were found to have some historically representative and misrepresentative elements that can affect what students learn about Amelia Earhart. Findings inform both future research and the guidance that is offered to teachers.

**Key words:** Amelia Earhart, children's literature, literacy, history

### **Introduction**

It is important in education for educators to teach students accurate information. However, between the lack of time, small planning periods, and changing state and national educational initiatives, teachers do not have the time to study a topic like historians do. The little time teachers do have is used planning next week's lessons and not used to study a specific time or person in history in the depth necessary to reach the standards that students are required to meet (Lucey, Shifflet, & Weilbacher, 2014; McMurrer, 2008). Therefore, teachers are in dire need of curricular materials that are rich in historical representation.

It can be difficult to find material for all students to be able to read based on their reading levels. When finding books for students to read and learn about a specific person or event in history, educators can use children's books to illustrate that importance. However, trade books tend to meet students' interests rather than focusing on historical accuracy. Trade books do not always give true historical facts or sometimes twist the facts so that they interest readers. It is important for researchers to scrutinize the material used in the classroom to make sure that what educators are teaching is accurate and comprehensible for students.

One particular historical figure, Amelia Earhart, can be used in the classroom to teach about women and aviation. Her mysterious disappearance intrigues even the youngest of readers. Through this research, Amelia Earhart children's books will be analyzed to see if the material gives students an accurate perception of who she was and her impact on history.

### **Literature Review**

Elementary educators might teach Amelia Earhart as an interdisciplinary topic including the science of aviation and the history of the women's movement in social studies. Connecting science topics to history can make learning more meaningful for students. It also allows students

to make connections between content areas and incorporate content area literacy into science. This benefits students and connects the lesson to the Common Core State Standards Initiatives (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School [NGA & CCSS], 2010).

When teaching about Amelia Earhart, it is important for educators to teach Earhart in historically representative ways. For instance, when students do not realize restrictive, gender-based norms and their negative impact on Earhart, students will not fully understand Earhart. It is necessary to show all of the aspects of her, society, media, suffrage, and technology. It is necessary for students to also understand Earhart in the larger context of aviation, so that they realize she was an important part of aviation, but not the only important person in aviation.

### **State and National Initiatives**

Expectations for students' evaluation are prescribed within state and national education initiatives. State and national initiatives have shifted recently to the Common Core State Standards Initiative and the C3 Framework for social studies (NGA & CCSS, 2010). Much like the CCSSI, the National Council for the Social Studies framework enhances social studies instruction K-12 (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2013). These standards are known as the C3 Framework which stands for College, Career, and Civic Life (C3). Connecting Earhart with interdisciplinary units adheres to the Common Core State Standards Initiatives and the C3 Framework. A look at the standards can show the potential importance of an Amelia Earhart interdisciplinary unit in an elementary classroom.

**Common Core State Standards Initiatives.** Classroom instruction and curriculum has changed with the implementation of the CCSSI (NGA & CCSS, 2010). Elementary educators must incorporate informational texts to enhance content area literacy into the classroom. CCSSI

has increased the number of non-fiction texts to balance the genres beginning in the primary grades and extending through high school. This requires English/language arts teachers to include a more balanced reading of informational texts and fiction into the classroom (NGA & CCSS, 2010). Since the CCSSI shifted the focus to reading and literacy and less on Social Studies, it is crucial to implement historical content into the reading curriculum (Fallace, Biscoe, & Perry, 2007; Holloway & Chiodo, 2009). Starting in elementary school, students are required by CCSSI to read more nonfiction books in language arts, social studies, and science (NGA & CCSS, 2010). To align the standards with social studies the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) can also be used.

**C-3 Framework.** The C-3 Framework has four dimensions: developing questions and planning inquiries, applying disciplinary tools and concepts, evaluating sources and using evidence, and communicating conclusions and taking informed action. These four dimensions allow students to envision human interaction throughout the course of history. Also, the four dimensions give students the tools needed to organize knowledge for more coherent learning (NCSS, 2013).

The first dimension, developing questions and planning inquiries, creates a social studies experience that is centered on questions to increase inquiry. Two types of questions- compelling and supporting questions- assist in attaining the goal of inquiry. Both types of questions are Higher Order Thinking (HOTS) questions. They require students to support their claims with evidence. Compelling questions engage students through their curiosity and application of social studies content. Supporting questions emphasize definitions and explanations that show students' understating of the content (NCSS, 2013; NGA & CCSS, 2010).

Applying disciplinary concepts and tools is the second dimension which encompasses four core disciplines within it; civics, economics, geography, and history. Civics requires students to not only know history, but be able to apply that knowledge through discussions and contributions within the school, community, and society. Economics is centered around investigating and decision making to enhance resources and the economy at a local and global level. The third core discipline, geography, gives students the knowledge of not just where people and places are located, but also the knowledge of culture, decision making, and consequences that can influence one's daily life in a particular geographical area. Lastly, history, is centered not only around knowledge, but also inquiry and evaluation to determine the causes of historical events and the consequences to follow. These four core disciplines give students a well-rounded approach to learning and acquiring the skills necessary to live and thrive in our world today (NCSS, 2013; NGA & CCSS, 2010).

Evaluating sources and using evidence is the third dimension that allows students to learn the skills needed to analyze and conclude evidence through inquiry-based learning. By using a variety of different technologies, students are able to find and analyze sources through the use of compelling and supporting questions. Students are asked to use evidence to back up their claims and arguments in the social studies disciplines, which also aligns with the CCSS. The anchor speaking and listening standard for CCSS is rooted heavily in dimension three and four where students have to participate and collaborate to argue and persuade others to accept their claims based on the information gathered and evaluated from sources. Since the CCSS and the NCSS-C3 are aligned, the language used in both is interchangeable. For example, both the CCSS and NCSS use terms such as evidence, gather, argument, and counterclaim. NCSS also reflects the

same concerns regarding plagiarism and citing sources properly as the Anchor Writing Standard does in the CCSS (NCSS, 2013; NGA & CCSS, 2010).

The last dimension, communicating conclusions and taking informed action, relies on students collaborating to analyze and solve real-world problems and also engage and lead in organizations within the school or community. This dimension also requires students to embrace and utilize C3's feature of civic engagement. Within these four dimensions are standards for social studies to increase inquiry and application of history-specific reading and also historical argumentation. These standards are necessary in order to add rigor to the social studies curriculum and align with the CCSS (NCSS, 2013). To make sure all standards are aligned to the CCSS, the Next Generation Science Standards have also been made to cohere with CCSS.

**The Next Generation Science Standards.** The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are designed to encompass science in a way that aligns with the CCSS and the NCSS. To do so, the NGSS is made up of three dimensions that each work together to build upon students' knowledge on Science concepts. Within each dimension is a set of standards to ensure the learning of science as students progress. The three dimensions of NGSS are science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas.

In this three-dimensional system, the first dimension is science and engineering practices. This dimension encompasses what scientists and engineers do in the real world when investigating, designing, and building. The first dimension encourages deeper learning through designing and problem solving more so than scientific inquiry. By using the engineering practices students are building upon science concepts and incorporating the four components: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Crosscutting concepts is the second dimension, in which students connect all four domains of science: Life Science, Physical Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering. Through crosscutting concepts, the four domains are connected with various terms and relationships that are incorporated in all four domains such as patterns, cause and effect, proportions, system models, and energy and matter. Applying these concepts across all domains of science links the four domains and creates a cohesive set of standards for students to fully comprehend science concepts.

The third dimension, disciplinary core ideas (DCIs), targets the science curriculum to highlight essential ideas that K-12 students should know. To qualify as a core idea two at the very least, but all four of the following criteria would be preferred to be met. First, it must fit in all four of the domains of science: physical science; life science; earth and space science; and engineering, technology and applications of science. Second, it must be a tool that can be used frequently to solve problems. Third, it needs to connect with students' interest or experiences in some way. Lastly, could be taught across various grade levels.

All three dimensions of the NGSS align with CCSS and NCSS. The three-dimensional learning focuses on evidence based knowledge and requires application of concepts and skills rather than memorization. There are many different curricular resources educators can use to ensure that students are applying the concepts and adhere to the CCSS, NCSS, and NGSS (NCSS, 2013; NGA & CCSSO, 2010; NGSS, 2013).

### **Curricular Resources**

When choosing social studies content, teachers have a wide abundance of resources. Textbooks, primary documents, and trade books are the most common of the many resources



available for teachers to choose. There are both positives and negatives to any of the materials chosen (Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015).

**Textbooks.** Commonly used in the classroom, textbooks provide limited benefits. Although textbooks may cover a wide range of historical topics, they lack in the amount of coverage per topic (Fitzgerald, 2009; Loewen, 2000). Another drawback is that they are often above students' reading levels and do not keep student interest (Lindquist, 2009; Wineburg, 2001). Textbooks have been evaluated and researchers found that many have historical fallacies or misrepresentations (Chick, 2006; Fitzgerald, 2009). Other research has found that some textbooks are written poorly (Chick, 2006; Chick 2016; Roberts, 2015; Wineburg, 1991). It has been argued that textbooks only supply readers with expository text rather than giving them a perspective from a story that would keep the students' interest (Matusevich, 2006). If students are to think like historians, educators must make sure that the resources used are historically accurate and representative and do not show any misrepresentations (Wineburg, 2001). For historically authentic information, educators can rely on primary documents.

**Primary Sources.** Through the CCSSI, elementary educators are prompted to allow students to discover history like a historian (CCSS, 2010). To discover history, educators must provide students with many informational texts. Using informational texts allows students to look at the evidence and evaluate the biases (Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015). Primary sources are a way for students to examine evidence and discover history (Wineburg, 1991).

Primary sources have many positive aspects. One advantage is that they are often free resources that are available digitally for teachers to use. Directly from history, primary sources have not been altered and can be adapted for elementary students to utilize for a historically contextualized source (Wineburg, 2001; Wineburg & Martin, 2009). Primary sources are rich

with first-hand historical content that engage students in specific events and times in history. The opportunities that exist to use these primary documents are endless. Primary sources can also provide students with the rigorous reading required by CCSS.

Primary documents also have disadvantages. Each primary source has the bias or perspective of author of the source. History can be misinterpreted depending on that bias. Another disadvantage can arise when students cannot read cursive or handwritten documents. Some of the documents are so old that they are hard to read, especially for younger students (Wineburg & Martin, 2009). The rigor of these documents can make primary documents difficult to read for elementary students. This is where the use of trade books can play an important role in the classroom. Primary sources can also be paired with literature to give another perspective and point out important events in history (Bickford & Rich, 2015).

**Trade Books.** There are many advantages to trade books. Implementing a comprehensible substitute to primary sources, trade books are similar because they are narrowed on a topic with a plethora of information provided (Bickford & Rich, 2014b). An advantage of trade books is that they can offer a great resource for teachers to use to enhance instruction in the classroom that aligns to CCSS (Bickford, Dilley, Metz, 2015; Clark, Allard, & Mahoney, 2004; Lindquist, 2009). Trade books offer content that can be differentiated among students according to reading levels, making it more meaningful and beneficial to the students (Bickford & Rich, 2015b). They are also easier for students to comprehend while keeping them engaged with the detail of a historical event or person (Bickford & Rich, 2014b).

Trade books, like any resource, have flaws and imperfections. Although trade books may keep students engaged, they are often not the most effective in teaching about a specific person or event in isolation, especially if they misrepresent history or give false information (Bickford,

2013). Trade books sometimes leave out important aspects or they misrepresent the content being addressed (Chick, 2006; Clark, Allard, & Mahoney, 2004; Bickford, Dilley, Metz, 2015). Another potential negative aspect of trade books is the history and how it is portrayed within the trade book can be misrepresented. For example, a few of the books in the Dear America series give readers a perspective of African American slaves around the time of the Civil War (Williams, 2009). However, these books minimize the violence that slaves encountered. Also, the books presented slaves in a family dynamic, whereas in reality families were often separated. Another issue with these books is that slaves that could read and write were rare. The slaves in these fiction books that are written like diaries imply that they can read and write quite well (Williams, 2009). Research has shown that many trade books misrepresent historical content through empirical studies (Bickford, 2013; Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b, Bickford, 2015; Sakowicz, 2016). Educators must be aware that trade books are published to make money, which means that they may not be accurate, as long as they can sell (Bickford & Hunt, 2014; Schwebel, 2011). Educators are prompted to provide historical trade books as supplemental materials to increase students' reading scores (Bickford, 2013). It is encouraged, through research, that trade books be the center of a unit, although educators must be careful of the misconceptions that can be within the material (Bickford, 2013; Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015; Field & Singer, 2006).

Trade books have various misrepresentations, but few of those misrepresentations are predictable (Bickford, 2013; Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b; Bickford & Rich, 2015). Since the lack of research on a specific person exists, more empirical research is needed (Bickford & Rich, 2015; Schwebel, 2011; Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Evaluations of trade books and historical fallacies in research are limited. Topics concerning specific people and events have been evaluated; however they consisted of a small data pool (Bickford, 2015). Looking at the

historiography of Amelia Earhart will help misrepresentation come to light in trade books on this topic.

### **Amelia Earhart in History**

Amelia Earhart is remembered in history for being the first woman to fly as a passenger and later by herself over the Atlantic Ocean. Earhart received the Distinguished Flying Cross which made her the first woman of this achievement (Butler, 1997). This accomplishment makes Earhart worth celebrating in schools. It is important to learn not only about her aviation years, but also the years leading up to that, which shaped who Earhart became.

Amelia Earhart was born in Atchison, Kansas in 1897. Growing up Amelia Earhart was physically abused by her alcoholic father (Brink, 1994; Ware, 1994). Earhart loved exploration even when growing up. She would sneak off to go ride horses, even though her grandmother disapproved. She had always been a tomboy and wanted to be adventurous (Butler, 1997). Earhart loved heights even as a young girl. When Earhart went to the St. Louis World's Fair at the age of seven with her family, she loved riding the Ferris wheel. Her grandmother would not let her ride the roller coaster, which upset Earhart. When she got home, she decided she was going to make her own roller coaster to ride by using wooden boards and roller skates. Although Earhart felt limited with what she could do, being a girl, she was not the only girl who felt this way. Other girls during this time also felt that being ladylike all the time was unfair. Earhart would watch birds flying and wished that she could fly like them in the sky (Butler, 1997).

During the time of Earhart's start of aviation, flying planes was a man's job while the women stayed home to cook, clean, and stay home with children. It was not common for a woman to do a man's job and it was not easy to defy these traditions (Evans, 1989). However, a few women, Earhart included, tried to break down these norms and do what they wanted rather

than what they were told. With the help of women coming together to assert their power and push towards reform and women's suffrage; feminism changed the way women lived. This movement allowed women to be college educated, hold careers, and not marry which was a much different approach than before (Evans, 1989).

The early twentieth century opened opportunities that did not exist before then for women. Marriage and motherhood were the only options before the early twentieth century for middle class women. Amelia Earhart intended to go to college for medical research, but she never signed up for the classes, because aviation interested her more (Butler, 1997). Earhart asked Neta Snook, a 24 year old woman flight instructor who owned a plane to give her flying lessons (Butler, 1997; Ware, 1994). Although, Earhart did not have the money to pay her right away, Snook agreed to accept the money when Earhart had the money. The planes had no doors, but access to the top of the plane. This required the pilot to climb over the side, swing a leg up to enter into the cockpit. Since this was an awkward task to accomplish in a dress, Earhart wore pants when she flew (Butler, 1997).

In the 1920s fads were a way for young people to conform both in a personal and social way (Fass, 1977). To conform, one must be willing and also be able to afford the costs associated with staying up with societal norms. For instance, clothes played a major role in identifying a person with their peers both locally as well as nationally. Short skirts, bobbed hair, and silk stockings were all characteristics of flappers that played a major role in conformity and societal norms. This style of dress was looked down upon by elders but was liberating for young women. Going against a societal norm was asking for someone's social life to be destroyed. Women who had been fighting for women's suffrage and feminism thought these young women were becoming a disgrace to feminism because of their conforming behaviors (Fass, 1977). In the

years to come after women's suffrage, many women continued to create new lifestyles that leaned more towards public health related fields (Fass, 1977).

At the time that Earhart wore pants when she flew, wearing pants was not common for women. During this time, working women dressed in feminine clothes which included a dress, high heels, and large hats (Enstad, 1999). Earhart cut her hair slowly so her mother would not notice, but eventually ended up into her signature bobbed hair. Her hair marked her as a 1920s "Modern woman" (Ware, 1994, p.36). Earhart proved that women were capable of flying or other modern world advancements through her personal achievements. Earhart's flight in 1932 was a peak for feminism and positive steps in the right direction for women's rights (Ware, 1994).

At the time that Earhart was flying and the time of the 1920s, feminism was a movement with a century of history. Modern feminism dates back to 1792 and still continues today (Stansell, 2010). Between 1880 and 1920 women strongly fought to break through social norms (Stansell, 2010). Being a woman in the aviation field, Earhart worked to make a name for herself in the media. She did not necessarily care for being a celebrity, but she did use the media to increase awareness of women's rights. Earhart used the media to advocate women's rights by achieving world records and dressing the way she did. She wanted to pave the way for equal rights for women. Earhart always saw her individual achievements as small victories for all women (Ware, 1994). Amelia Earhart's accomplishments and the publicity she received helped to maintain the feminist movement during the 1920s and 1930s after women earned the right to vote in 1919 (Ware, 1994). It was up to individuals to continue to support and represent feminism. Although Earhart flew because she loved the freedom, and by implication she flew for women and their rights. She chose to be popular in the media for feminism (Ware, 1994).

The Ninety-Nines, named after the number of charter members, was a group of women aviators; Amelia Earhart became the first president of the group (Ware, 1994). Founded in 1929, the Ninety Nines promoted aviation to women. With women's suffrage, women were not excluded from male groups but were not fully included in them either, the Ninety-Nines provided women with an organization that would finally fully accept them. The famous saying was "Ninety-Nines have a friend in every airport" (Ware, 1994, p. 84).

**Achievements.** During this time aviation was a new found experience that not many had encountered quite yet since planes had just been invented thirty years prior. Charles Lindbergh, also known as Lucky Lindy, became the first pilot to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean without stopping. In order to fly from New York to Paris, nine St. Louis businessmen helped fund the *Spirit of St. Louis*. This famous flight was just the beginning of aviation achievements by other pilots who later became well known (Berg, 1998).

Lindbergh's flight across the North Atlantic was just the start of global interest in aviation. He was successful in his flight, but there were many other challenges that could be achieved. Being the first woman to fly across the Atlantic was one of these challenges; however the risk was very high. Many women attempted flying after Lindbergh's flight. Out of 55, fourteen died and eight succeeded in the challenge (Butler, 1997). Earhart was given the opportunity to fly across the Atlantic as a passenger; only the male pilot and co-pilot would receive money for their commitment. She also had to sign a contract that made her liable for any damages. To make this flight, Earhart and the other crew members would take the plane *Friendship* across the Atlantic Ocean (Butler, 1997). After this flight across the Atlantic, Earhart was given the nickname Lady Lindy. This nickname was given to her because of her similarity in appearance and aviation to Charles Lindbergh. However, at the time, Earhart had not done

anything in comparison to Lindbergh, and felt the nickname was not justified (Ware, 1994).

After the experience Earhart gained from the Atlantic flight, a few years later and many flights later, she decided she wanted to cross the Atlantic again, only this time solo (Earhart & Putnam, 1937).

Earhart was the first person to fly from Hawaii to the mainland in 1935. Aviation was a new career during this time. Men could be pilots, whereas women could only be stewardesses and not pilots. “Earhart was very much involved in the industry side of commercial aviation.” In exchange for promotion of airlines, Earhart would receive free flights on that particular airline. Between the years of 1928 and 1937 Earhart’s job with the department of Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT) was to endorse flying to women. In efforts to show that women were capable, Earhart traveled around the country promoting aviation. However, Earhart always discouraged those who were interested in aviation for the money or fame. Earhart thought aviation should be pursued only if only women had a real interest and craved the adventure aviation offered (Ware, 1994).

In 1937, Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan took off for their flight across the Pacific Ocean (Ware, 1994). In early July, Noonan and Earhart left New Guinea with Howland Island being their next scheduled destination (Swami & Furnham, 2012). Earhart had radioed in one last time before they were never heard from again (Ware, 1994). It is not exactly clear what happened to Earhart and Noonan, but there are many different theories. Some people think they simply ran out of fuel and crashed near Howland Island. Others believe they were captured by Japanese or crashed elsewhere (Swami & Furnham, 2012). Although details of Earhart’s fate may never be known, it is certain that Earhart’s disappearance is a mystery that intrigues even



the youngest readers. Because of this mystery, it is important to make sure that what they are reading is accurate and free of misconceptions.

### **Methods**

The methodological steps align with best practice methods (Krippendorff, 2013; Maxwell, 2010; Roberts, 2015). During the analysis of the trade books I used quantitative research methods to explore specific questions (Krippendorff, 2013). These specific questions included the following: Is the latest historical research about Amelia Earhart included? How is it included? What is omitted? How does this differ in primary and intermediate children's trade books? These questions helped me analyze the trade books for misconceptions and how they are portrayed.

A random-selection of 32 Amelia Earhart children's trade books were made using Booksource, Amazon, Scholastic, and Barnes and Noble. This is not all the possible books published on Amelia Earhart, but rather a sample. Because of financial limitations, the data sample of 32 books (Appendix A) were randomly selected from a data pool of 46 trade books published on Amelia Earhart. Using Lexile measures, the trade books were divided into two categories: Primary elementary (grades K-2) and intermediate elementary (grades 3-5). The two categories were based on the Common Core grade level bands and were distributed such that grades K-2 had sixteen books and grades 3-5 had sixteen books. With Lexile numbers I then determined to cut off the K-2 at Beginning Reader (BR) - 620 and begin grades 3-5 with 630-1000. Two of the 32 trade books were not analyzed by Lexile, so I manually analyzed the books using the Lexile Analyzer.

Open and axial coding were used to analyze the trade books. The content analysis protocol, presented in Appendix B, indicates axial coding questions. I first used the open coding

questions as a guide to analyze each trade book. Open coding, which is always the first reading of all the books, is when the researcher reviews the texts and records basic observations and clear patterns. Then, I reviewed the open coding results to make necessary adjustments by revising the questions to state whether the information was included and detailed, included but minimized or vague, or if information was omitted completely from the book. Axial coding enabled reevaluation of the trade books to solidify the findings and show patterns and relationships within the trade books. There are no human subjects involved in this research, so it was not necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review this research.

From my questions, I intended to obtain a better understanding of what is included and what is omitted in trade books concerning Amelia Earhart. Knowing what is included and omitted, I want to be able to choose trade books carefully when in the classroom or be able to make students aware of the biases and information that may be lacking or portrayed in any of the books students may read. I also want to find a common theme, if any, of what authors want children to learn about Earhart. The questions being asked are important elements to Earhart, history, and women's history, therefore it is important that these elements are analyzed within the children's book to see how authentic trade books are when teaching children historical information.

### **Findings**

The trade books all centered on Amelia Earhart, but they were unique in various ways. The data sample included books from the primary grades ( $n = 13$ ; 41%) and intermediate grades ( $n = 19$ ; 59%). The sample was almost entirely nonfiction ( $n = 29$ ; 91%). The high percentage of nonfiction books was expected since most of the books were biographies of Amelia Earhart. Analyzing the books on Earhart, some misrepresentations were revealed. Most of the books

about Earhart left out crucial parts of Earhart's life, societal roles for women, and other aviators during the time of Earhart.

Women's roles in society were changing during Amelia Earhart's life. Content analysis question Number Five ( $n = 17$ ; 53%) of the books explicitly detailed the tension between change and continuity for women and women's roles in society. Whereas, ( $n = 7$ ; 7%) of the trade books mentioned but minimized women's roles, ( $n = 4$ ; 12.5%) were vague when mentioning it, and another ( $n = 4$ ; 12.5%) completely omitted women and their roles in society. Although a majority of the books explicitly detailed women's roles in society, minimizing or omitting completely does not give the reader a complete look at Amelia Earhart, and the societal roles during the time of Earhart.

The origin of Amelia Earhart's aviation career was foundational for her later success. The beginnings of Earhart's aviation were explicitly detailed in ( $n = 17$ ; 53%) of the books, ( $n = 12$ ; 38%) of the books included but minimized her beginnings in aviation, and ( $n = 3$ ; 9%), completely omitted it. Those books that omitted the beginnings of her aviation career were all primary grade books. Although it was omitted in the primary books, it still is a crucial part of Earhart's legacy. As stated in Doak (2013), "as soon as we left the ground, I knew I myself had to fly" (p.10). Earhart did not always want to fly. It is important for readers to realize there is more to Earhart than just flying, although that is what she is known for. As shown in Table 1, only a few books completely omitted Earhart's beginnings in Aviation.

Table 1

*The Historical Representation of Earhart's Beginnings in Aviation*

Grade Level	ED	IM	OM
Primary Grades	Anderson (2007) Burleigh (2011) Doak (2013)	Canizares (2013) Golightly (2013) Parlin (1962)	Abraham (2002) Gilpin (2013) Hollingsworth (2011)

	Meltzer (2014)	
	Ryan (1999)	
	Saddleback (2008)	
	Valentin (2013)	
Intermediate Grades	Adler (1998)	Howe (1999)
	Dunn (2009)	Schaefer (2003)
	Fleming (2011)	Gormley (2000)
	Jerome (2002)	Hood (2014)
	Kerby (1990)	Lauber (1988)
	Lakin (2003)	Mortensen (2008)
	Mara (2014)	Sabin (2006)
	Orr (2015)	Yomtov (2016)
	Stone (2007)	
	Sutcliffe (2014)	
	Tanka (2008)	

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*Note.* ED signifies explicitly detailed; IM represents included but minimized and OM signifies omitted.

Patterns within Table One suggest the intended age of the reader shaped the author's inclusion of historical content. During the time of Earhart and her aviation careers, was a time that rights for women in society were changing. In the books analyzed ( $n = 12$ ; 38%) explicitly detailed Earhart's roles in representing these changing times, ( $n = 10$ ; 31%) included but minimized her representing changing times, ( $n = 5$ ; 15%) vaguely mentioned it, and ( $n = 5$ ; 15%) completely omitted it. In a graphic biography about Earhart, Anderson (2007) states, "Times are changing. Women can succeed in flight and other careers (p.17)." While another character in the book who is a woman also says, "I never thought aviators would be taken seriously. You proved me wrong (p. 17)." This explicitly shows young reader the times were changing in regard to what women could achieve and do. Parlin (1962) was published more than half-a-century ago, which suggests that the content regarding women's rights changing in society may differ slightly than newer published books. Historical content, even complex or nuanced history, can be communicated in age-appropriate ways to young learners.

Primary sources are an important tool to showcase actual pictures and documents throughout history and especially during Earhart's time. Primary sources explicitly utilized within the book was almost half and half in terms of which books utilized primary sources and those that did not. The books that included primary sources ( $n = 17$ ; 53%), and the books that did not utilize primary sources at all in the book were ( $n = 15$ ; 47%). In the books that provided primary sources, Earhart and the time period were contextualized better for the reader to fully grasp the era.

There were many aviators, men and women, including Earhart who loved to fly and break records. Content analysis question nine focuses how many competitors and or aviators besides Earhart were mentioned. In order to be explicitly detailed the book had to include and more than five aviators and discuss in some detail. Only ( $n = 4$ ; 13%) of the books included more than 5 aviators. The majority of the books ( $n = 15$ ; 47%) included or minimized aviators. In order to fit into the included but minimized category, the book had to mention five or fewer competitors or aviators. The other sample of books ( $n = 13$ ; 41%) omitted competitors and other aviators completely. By including other competitors and aviators, could help the reader fully contextualize Earhart and her legacy within the time frame of other aviators. By omitting this information from the books completely makes the reader assume Earhart was the only woman to complete such record-breaking aviation moments in history. Although Earhart's legacies were record-breaking and did benefit to the women's roles changing in society, Earhart was not the only women to break records in aviation history.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the American media began to rise. Of the data sample, ( $n = 11$ ; 34%) explicitly detailed this rise in media, whereas ( $n = 7$ ; 22%) included this but minimized the importance, ( $n = 4$ ; 13%) kept this topic vague, and ( $n = 10$ ; 31%) omitted it from their books

altogether. It is important for the reader to understand the rise in media during this time and how it played a role in Earhart's fame. Golightly (2013), states "Her records made her very popular in America" (p.11). This statement hints at the rise in media, but it does not come right out and say it. For primary aged children, vague statements that only hint at a topic will be overlooked.

However, for this age group of children, they will understand that she became famous, especially when Golightly (2013), says "Amelia's trip made her famous...a lot of women wanted to be like Amelia" (p. 16). This quote explicitly shows, and in language a young learner can easily grasp, both Earhart's fame and how the media chronicled her accomplishments, which catapulted her fame in the eyes of the readers.

Earhart's beauty was an important factor that contributed to her fame. Recognizing that beauty is subjective and fluidly changes in different contexts, content analysis question Eleven focuses on how Earhart's beauty was portrayed. In ( $n = 2$ ; 6%) of the books Earhart's beauty was explicitly detailed, ( $n = 1$ ; 3% included but minimized it, ( $n = 2$ ; 6%) of the books vaguely mentioned her beauty. Most of the books ( $n = 27$ ; 75%) did not mention Earhart's beauty at all. As can be seen in Table 2, all of the primary grade books and most of intermediate grade books omitted Earhart's beauty.

Table 2

*The Historical Representation of the Portrayal of Earhart's Beauty*

Grade Level	ED	IM	VA	OM
Primary Grades				Abraham (2002) Anderson (2007) Canizares (2013) Gilpen (2013) Golightly (2013) Hollingsworth (2011) Howe (1999) Meltzer (2014) Parlin (1962)

				Schaefer (2003)
				Ryan (1999)
				Saddleback (2008)
				Valentin (2013)
Intermediate	Fleming (2011)	Gormley (2000)	Doak (2013)	Adler (1998)
Grades	Jerome (2002)	Stone (2007)		Burleigh (2011)
				Dunn (2009)
				Hood (2014)
				Kerby (1990)
				Lakin (2003)
				Lauber (1988)
				Mara (2014)
				Mortensen (2008)
				Orr (2015)
				Sabin (2006)
				Sutcliffe (2014)
				Tanka (2008)
				Yomtov (2016)

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*Note.* ED represents explicitly detailed; IM signifies included but minimized; VA represents vague; and OM signifies omitted.

With the rise of media during Earhart's time, beauty played a vital role for the media. Question twelve in the content analysis tool, analyzed how the book portrayed the media's interest in Earhart's beauty. Of the books, ( $n = 2$ ; 6%) explicitly detailed the media's interest in Earhart's beauty, ( $n = 3$ ; 9%) included but minimized it, ( $n = 3$ ; 9%) vaguely mentioned it and ( $n = 24$ ; 84%) omitted it. Jerome (2002) explicitly details Earhart's beauty. For example, Jerome states "She was brave...and she was a great-looking woman. The public loved her" (p.86). Jerome goes on later stating, "Amelia's photograph was in many magazines. She was always in high demand" (p. 89). Stone (2007) vaguely alludes to Earhart's beauty and hints more at Earhart's fame by saying "she was the main attraction" (p. 75).

Readers, both teachers and students, need to be aware that not everything is accurate information. Content analysis question Fourteen analyzed the books to see if there were any parts of the books that just seemed historically inaccurate or implausible. Most of the books ( $n = 31$ ;

97%) were historically accurate. However, ( $n = 1$ ; 3%) Hood (2014) is a fictional book that has characters that go back in time and meet Amelia Earhart. Although in the book Hood (2014) does a good job of bringing in facts of Earhart's life, there could be some miscommunication to the reader of what happened and what did not since it is a fictional book with some facts integrated into the story line.

### **Discussion**

With implementation of Common Core, classroom teachers must integrate topics from other subject areas. For teachers, a great way to integrate other subject areas is to incorporate the use of trade books on various topics. Trade books give students information on people, places, and historical topics in an easy format that they will understand. While trade books give information on a topic, most trade books do not give the reader all the historical facts needed for students to fully process the time period and events. Teachers need to be aware of implications that can arise when incorporating trade books in the classroom.

According to the findings, most of the trade books explicitly detailed women's societal roles. Teachers could use these trade books on Earhart to showcase a period in history where women were working diligently to change society's views, even though many opposed of this push. By explicitly detailing women's roles in society, readers can get a better understanding of Earhart and societal roles for women.

Amelia Earhart's beginning in aviation was only the foundation to her success in later years. Most of the books included her beginning in aviation while only a few omitted it. Earhart's beginning in education helps to set a tone especially for young readers and creates the theme of persistence and not giving up on your dreams. These could easily be incorporated into the classroom to show students that having a dream is important and so is achieving it even when



others think it's impossible. When books only highlight Earhart's successes and later years of her career, it is doing a disservice to readers and researchers.

During Earhart's time, societal roles were changing. Throughout the books, most of the books showed Earhart representing societal roles changing. However, there were a few books that omitted it completely. To talk about Earhart and her career in aviation, one has to include how she represented women during a changing time in American society. Teachers can incorporate these books into a history lesson on how societal roles were changing.

Primary sources are a tool for students and teachers to see real documents from history. It is a way to show what things were like back then with pictures and even documents of important historical events. Primary documents are a way to bring history alive and it is a resource to be included in trade books. The use of primary documents in books, are a way for teachers to show students bits of history and what it was like during that time. Actual photographs of Earhart and actual documents showcasing her achievements are resources for students to see and for teachers to utilize.

When focusing on aviation, one cannot focus only on Earhart. Although one can argue that she was the most popular female aviator, one also must consider other aviators during that time, both women and men. They all played a pivotal role in history and it is important for teachers to teach their students about other aviators during Earhart's time. Readers need to realize that Earhart was among many women who flew. She did break records and represented a changing movement, but she is not the only one. A comparable example of omitting other historical figures would be the same percentage as the books as Helen Keller (Bickford & Rich, 2014). It is important for teachers to showcase this, and when using trade books, that they use a

variety of books that showcase other aviators and some that only talk about Earhart. It is important to contextualize history so that students can really get a full perspective of history.

During Earhart's aviation career media began to rise. This is an important factor to consider when talking about Earhart's career. Without the rise in media, students need to realize that Earhart would not have become as popular and famous as she did. Teachers should emphasize to students how media played an important role in Earhart's career. Researchers also need to consider this a crucial part of Earhart's career and popularity. Most of the books included it, even if it was only implied and was not stated clearly for readers, especially young readers to grasp. This is comparable to a study on Helen Keller that revealed trade books did not fully contextualize the media (Bickford & Rich, 2014). This is where teachers need to be proactive, and make sure students understand that Earhart's fame was contributed to the rise of media during that time.

The rise of media also played a crucial role in portraying Earhart's beauty. Although not many of the books included how Earhart's beauty was portrayed, it did have an impact on how the media portrayed her. The media took her beauty and marketed Earhart with a fashion, to attract women to buy from Earhart's clothing line.

When using trade books in the classroom, teachers need to be aware of what is real and what is not. A comparable example of historical accuracy would be the same percentage of authors who depicted Eleanor Roosevelt in a detailed and historically accurate way as the authors did Amelia Earhart (Bickford & Rich, 2013). Teachers can utilize trade books in such a way, where the reader becomes the researcher and looks for information in books that could be implausible or not likely. By doing this, educators are teaching students to be responsible and careful about what they read and to consider if it could be true or not.

This study has a few limitations. One limitation is the small sample size. There were only 32 trade books analyzed. A larger data pool would give a more accurate result. Secondly, only primary and intermediate trade books were analyzed. Middle level books were not included in this study, which is not a full perspective of trade books. Especially when considering the intended audiences for the data pool analyzed, more omissions are expected than if analyzing middle level trade books. Third, when grouping the books, Lexile levels were used. When doing this, Lexile ranges for grade levels overlapped. When grouping the trade books into primary or intermediate, some books were grouped based on the Accelerated Reader level while others were not Accelerated Readers, so a judgment call was made. Fourth, when including one older piece of literature, Parlin (1962), this could have skewed the data. Fifth, including one nonfiction book, Hood (2014) also skewed the data. However, these two books were included because these are pieces of literature a child might read and it was important to analyze how these pieces of literature fit with the rest of the newer nonfiction trade books. Lastly, using the terms such as women's social roles and beauty are subjective. While women's roles were changing, there was a resistance. Radical changes in women's voting rights and changing social roles resulted in reactionary resistance to these changes along with some retrenchment. It is perhaps limiting to suggest women's roles in society were changing because there was resistance.

Primary resources are available on multiple websites for no cost. *The Library of Congress* has a variety of resources to enhance learning, including videos, audio recording, newspaper articles, and images of Earhart. *Primary Source Nexus* is another resource for teachers, it includes primary sources, learning sources, and teaching strategies. This website is a great resource that shows teachers how to analyze and select primary sources, as well as how to connect it to Common Core. *Docs Teach* is another resource teachers can utilize, that also has

teaching strategies and tools to assist with using primary documents in the classroom. Adding primary documents in the classroom, can help enhance learning. Utilizing these resources is not necessary but can be a helpful tool for both students and educators.

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**Appendix A**  
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### **Appendix B – Content Analysis Protocol**

1. Author's Name, Publication Date, Title, Company
2. Intended grade level of the book:
  - a) Primary (K-2)
  - b) Intermediate (3-5)
3. What is the book's genre?
  - a) Fiction: Historical fiction
  - b) Non-fiction: Narrative nonfiction, expository, biography
4. Who was the main character(s)? Was there anyone besides Earhart? Was this person real or imagined?
  - a) Yes- Real
  - b) Yes- Imagined
  - c) No
5. How does the book detail the tension between change and continuity for women and women's roles in society?
  - a) Yes- Explicit and detailed (Two or more sentences specifically mentioning societal roles)
  - b) Yes- Included but minimized (One sentence specifically mentioning societal roles)
  - c) Yes- Vague
  - d) No- Omitted
6. How does the book describe Earhart's beginnings in aviation?
  - a) Yes- Explicit and detailed
  - b) Yes- Included but minimized
  - c) No- Omitted
7. How does the book portray Earhart as a representation of a changing movement?
  - a) Yes- Explicit and detailed
  - b) Yes- Included but minimized
  - c) Yes- Vague

- d) No- Omitted
8. Were any primary sources explicitly utilized within the book (introduction, foreword, narrative, afterward)? If so, how many?
9. Does the book include any competitors and/or aviators? Describe demography of competitors. If so, how many?
- a) Yes- Explicit and detailed (More than five competitors/aviators were mentioned)
  - b) Yes- Included but minimized (Five or fewer than five competitors/aviators were mentioned)
  - c) No- Omitted
10. How does the book describe the rise of American media in early 20<sup>th</sup> century?
- a) Yes- Explicit and detailed
  - b) Yes- Included but minimized
  - c) Yes- Vague
  - d) No- Omitted
11. How does it portray Amelia's beauty?
- a) Explicit and detailed
  - b) Included but minimized
  - c) Vague
  - d) Omitted
12. How does the book portray the media's interest in Amelia's beauty?
- a) Explicit and detailed
  - b) Included but minimized
  - c) Vague
  - d) Omitted
13. Did any common historical misrepresentations emerge?
14. Were there any parts of the book that just seemed historically inaccurate or implausible?
15. Is there anything else that stands out?
16. Were other historical figures included? If so, how many?