Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Unit That Utilizes Effective History Teaching Practices

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Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Unit That Utilizes Effective History Teaching Practices

Haley Holland

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Unit That Utilizes Effective History Teaching Practices

Haley Holland
Department of Teacher Education, BYU
Master of Arts

Because elementary teachers are viewed as subject-matter generalists who are not specialized in teaching history, this qualitative action research project explored my practice as I designed, implemented, and evaluated a unit that utilized effective history teaching practices. The study took place in my fourth-grade classroom which resides in the Intermountain West. The data was analyzed with Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) three types of knowledge as a priori codes. Inductive processes were then used to find patterns and themes. The study found that designing this unit involved engaging in historical practices and using traditional lesson planning techniques. Further, implementing the study involved engaging in disciplinary literacies through questioning and responding to student needs during the unit. Finally, the evaluation of the unit involved reflecting on mistakes and making plans for future units. These findings added to the research that has been done on history teaching by showing how I used historical practices (such as visiting historical places, finding primary source documents, and engaging in collaboration) to gain more knowledge for practice. These findings also showed that I used my knowledge in practice to generate questions that helped my students to utilize the disciplinary literacies of history. Finally, this study showed that going through the action research cycle was a meaningful experience for me and helped me to generate more knowledge of practice. Thus, the recommendation is put forth that preservice teachers are taught how to engage in historical practices and how to utilize the action research cycle in their practice.

Keywords: historical literacy, history education in elementary schools, historical source material
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

History is an important subject for students to learn in school. There are many benefits to students who learn history. Studying history can help students to develop skills in critical thinking that will help them to become informed citizens (Foster & Padgett, 1999). Students who learn how to navigate historical texts will be better prepared for the information overload they face in the modern world (Wineburg, 2018). In addition, Moje (2007) argued that history provides students the opportunity to become advocates for social justice when they learn to critique and evaluate the accepted historical narrative. These and other benefits, show the importance of having history be a part of the curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

Because history is such an important subject, teachers need to be trained in the most effective practices for teaching it. However, elementary teachers are often seen as subject-matter generalists (McCall, 2006). This means that they might not have specialized in a given content area. So, if teachers want to become specialists in a certain area, they may have to seek out those opportunities on their own. But there are few teacher education programs that include social studies in the curriculum (Wineburg, 2010). It can also be difficult to find professional development courses or endorsement programs that focus on social studies (McCall, 2006).

When teachers are not educated on these topics, they are likely to fall back on less effective ways of teaching history. For example, some teachers continue to teach whole group social studies lessons with lectures (Lucey et al., 2014). There are also many teachers who use simple resources, such as textbooks for teaching history (Nokes, 2010). Some teachers let other areas (i.e., reading and math) take precedence in the classroom (Boyle-Baise et al., 2008). These
teachers might integrate social studies and literacy to save time and to prepare for tests, but they do not focus on the authentic disciplinary literacies of history (Boyle-Baise et al., 2008; Pace, 2011).

Because of these concerns, a lot of research has been conducted on teaching history. For example, there is research on using primary source documents in the classroom (Bickford et al., 2020; Nokes, 2014; Reisman, 2012). There are even resources like Reading Like a Historian that include primary source documents and artifacts with compelling questions to help teachers get started (Stanford History Education Group, n.d.; Wineburg et al., 2012). There is also research on strategies to use when teaching history (VanSledright, 2002) and many studies on the disciplinary literacies of history (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014; Wineburg, 1991). Overall, there is a large body of research on teaching history.

However, there is a gap in the research. A lot of the research on teaching history has been done at a secondary level (Monte-Sano, 2010; Monte-Sano et al., 2014; Reisman, 2012). Some researchers have studied history teaching in the fifth grade (Nokes, 2014; VanSledright, 2002), but there is little research that has been done at a fourth-grade level (Bickford et al., 2020). In addition, much of the research that has been done on teaching history has been done by researchers who have specialized degrees related to history (Bickford et al., 2020; Nokes, 2014; Reisman, 2012), rather than by elementary level subject-matter generalists examining their own practice. This type of research can provide examples of how teachers might guide their own inquiry to study their process of designing, implementing, and evaluating a unit.

**Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to study my practice as I designed, implemented, and evaluated a unit that utilized effective history teaching practices. This study is important because
it adds to the body of research that has been done on teaching history. However, it differs from existing research because it took place in a fourth-grade classroom and was conducted by a subject-matter generalist. This is significant because this study can be used as a model for other teachers who are subject-matter generalists and want to learn how to design, implement, and evaluate a historical unit. Above all, this study has personal significance because teaching history has become a very meaningful part of my teaching practice. So, this study was designed to help me to improve the experience of my students as I teach them history.

**Research Questions**

Throughout this study, I explored the following questions:

1. How do I draw on research on effective history teaching in designing, implementing, and evaluating a unit on history for fourth-grade students?

2. What types of knowledge do I, a subject-matter generalist, rely on throughout this process?
CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

The focus of my study was to understand the process I went through when designing, implementing, and evaluating a historical unit that utilized the disciplinary literacies of history. In this literature review, I will first address the less effective practices that have been used to teach history. This will provide a background for how history has commonly been taught. I will then address the more effective practices for teaching history. These practices include creating documents-based lessons, involving students in historical inquiries, and utilizing the disciplinary literacies of history. I will go in depth into these three categories. Following this literature review, I will conclude with the rationale for my study.

Less Effective Practices for Teaching History

There are many history teachers whose primary resource is the textbook. In 2010, Nokes studied eight high school teachers and found that their preferred resource was history textbooks. This has been seen in other classrooms as well (Barton & Levstik, 2003). One of the benefits of using history textbooks is that it can provide a large framework of the past (Barton, 2005). But there are also some problems with using only textbooks to teach history (Wineburg, 2010). Many textbooks have a Eurocentric bias (Araújo & Maeso, 2012; Pousa & López Facal, 2013). And because textbooks do not often disclose their biases and they speak in an omniscient tone, it can be easy for students to accept them as truth (Wineburg, 2010). If students only rely on textbooks, they will develop very simplistic epistemologies of history (Nokes, 2014).

Many teachers use traditional instructional strategies for teaching history. Lucey et al. (2014) found that out of 55 surveyed teachers, the majority of the elementary teachers taught
whole group lessons that were lecture style. This is not an isolated observation (Barton & Levstik, 2003). Nokes (2014) also found similar results when he interviewed a class of fifth graders. He found that 61% of them said that they usually listen during a history lesson, rather than actively engage in the learning. Other studies have found teachers that only taught social studies when it was dictated by their basal program (Boyle-Baise et al., 2008). In addition, there are many teachers who use history primarily as a means to teach literacy skills (Boyle-Baise et al., 2008; Pace, 2011).

There are a variety of reasons that teachers teach history in less effective ways. For example, the pressures from standardized testing and the structure of the Common Core have impacted many teachers. Overall, there has been a decrease in social studies education since policies have been put in place that focus on language arts and math (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). In many states, the curriculum expectations for history are minimal (Wineburg, 2010). Additionally, testing requirements for social studies in elementary schools have declined (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). Others feel a decreased sense of teacher autonomy has led to a decrease in social studies instruction (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). Even teachers who have an understanding of historical thinking may use less effective teaching methods if they prioritize controlling student behavior or getting through the curriculum (Barton & Levstik, 2003).

**More Effective Practices for Teaching History**

On the other hand, there is a lot of research that has been done on more effective practices for teaching history. In Levstik and Barton’s (2011) book, *Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middles Schools*, they quote a fifth-grade teacher who said, “It’s important that [the students are] actually *doing* history, not just memorizing information” (p. 13). Much research has been done to show how students do history and it happens when they
participate in document-based lessons, historical inquiries, and the practices of the disciplinary literacy of history. The following sections will go in depth into these three effective practices.

**Document-Based Lessons**

**Document-Based Lessons Defined.** Studying history involves studying texts, but it can go far beyond using textbooks. Those texts may be print, like speeches and diaries, or they may be nonprint, like artifacts, art, and music (Draper et al., 2012). These texts may be primary source documents which are firsthand or contemporary texts that were created at the time or near the time of the event (Furman University, 2021). They may also be secondary source documents which are texts that were created about an event but the information came from another source (Furman University, 2021). These texts can be used in the classroom when teachers create document-based history lessons.

Document-based lessons are lessons that include one or more historical texts (Barton, 2005). It is best when the documents represent a range of sources and perspectives (Levstik & Barton, 2011). An important part of these lessons is for students to have the chance to engage with these texts (VanSledright & Kelly, 1998). One way for students to engage with texts is through document-based lessons that include questions. These questions should lead to investigation, require text evidence, and involve open interpretation by the students (Levstik & Barton, 2011).

**Rationale for Document-Based Lessons.** It is important to use documents for history lessons. Using primary source documents can be helpful because they can motivate historical inquiry, provide evidence of historical accounts, and help students to have insight into the thoughts and experiences of people who lived before (Barton, 2005). It also helps students to move beyond basic epistemologies (Nokes, 2014). This means it helps students to move beyond
a basic understanding of the way historical knowledge is created. For example, Nokes (2014) found that document-based lessons helped some students, who initially believed that history textbooks told the one true story of history, to see that there are multiple perspectives and ways to interpret history.

**Document-Based Lessons in Practice.** Many teachers have used historical documents to teach history at the secondary level (Monte-Sano, 2010; Monte-Sano et al., 2014; Reisman, 2012). Reisman (2012) studied 236 eleventh graders from five different San Francisco high schools who were taught with the *Read Like a Historian* document-based curriculum. The curriculum encouraged students to use their background knowledge to interrogate texts from multiple points of view. Because of this program the students’ historical thinking and factual knowledge improved.

Further, there are teachers who have used document-based lessons at the elementary level (Bickford et al., 2020; Nokes, 2014; VanSledright, 2002; VanSledright & Kelly, 1998). Nokes (2014) demonstrated the use of historical documents with fifth-grade students. On a weekly basis he went through the process of building background knowledge, displaying a historical question or controversy, and then presenting historical texts for the students to engage with to figure out their answer.

Even though there is a wide base of research that has been done on document-based lessons, there is a gap in the research. Most of these studies focus on the student learning that occurs during these lessons, rather than the teacher’s experience during the lesson. Researching the teacher’s experience can show how teachers might adapt primary source documents to meet the needs of their students. It can also show how teachers might help students to engage with historical texts throughout the unit. Research that shows how a teacher might plan for a
documents-based unit, including how they find and choose the texts to use with their students, is also lacking.

**Historical Inquiry**

**Historical Inquiry Defined.** Historical inquiry is when students have the chance to ask questions, collect data, analyze historical sources, form conclusions, and share their results (Foster & Padgett, 1999). It is collaborative and lends itself to partner or small group work (Levstik & Barton, 2011). Because of the importance of historical inquiry, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards was created to encourage inquiry in social studies standards and curriculum (Herczog, 2013). Herczog (2013) explained that the four dimensions of the framework are:

- Develop questions and plan investigations.
- Apply disciplinary concepts and tools.
- Gather, evaluate, and use evidence.
- Communicate conclusions and take informed action.

**Rationale for Historical Inquiry.** Historical interpretation is a vital part of student learning (Barton & Levstik, 2003). Historical inquiries are important because they help students to develop critical thinking skills that will help them become educated citizens (Foster & Padgett, 1999). These skills are developed because historical inquiry gives students the chance to investigate history, rather than just consume it (VanSledright, 2008). This is a more democratic way of teaching history, instead of having students memorize and accept the existing historical narrative (VanSledright, 2008).

**Historical Inquiry in Practice.** There are teachers who have implemented historical inquiries in their classrooms. For example, VanSledright (2002) intentionally introduced his
fifth-grade class to a historical paradox to help students to become more flexible in their historical thinking. One challenge he found was that his students flipped from simply trusting all of the historical sources to lacking confidence in any of the sources. But he also found that it gave him and his students the opportunity to make community rules for interpretation and to create knowledge together. The skills that his students developed were applicable inside and outside of his classroom.

Bickford et al. (2020) also studied an elementary class involved in a historical inquiry. They found that elementary students need pre-reading, re-reading, and post-reading guidance when working with historical documents. But even with that support, the students relied more on secondary sources than primary sources in their writing assessments.

Although there has been research at the elementary level in regards to historical inquiries, there is still a gap in the research. Again, the research is focused on the experience of students rather than the teacher. There is a need for research that shows how teachers prepare for a historical inquiry and how they generate their questions. There is also a need for research that shows how a teacher uses the results of a historical inquiry to plan future units.

**Disciplinary Literacy of History**

**Disciplinary Literacy of History Defined.** Texts and inquiry are an important part of history, and so is literacy. But the literacy skills needed for history are different than the literacy skills needed for English, science or math (Fang & Coatoam, 2013; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014). The theory of disciplinary literacy states that there are different literacies that are used in different professions (Fang & Coatoam, 2013). Thus, literacy must be taught in specialized ways for each discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014). Disciplinary literacies are different than content area literacies (Siebert et al., 2016). Disciplinary literacies are unique because they
require skills that are authentic to different professions (Fang & Coatoam, 2013; Siebert et al., 2016).

The disciplinary literacy of history involves literacy skills that historians would use in their profession. Wineburg (1991) studied professional historians to identify the literacies that they use in their everyday practice. He found that these historians used sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration as they studied historical documents. He explained sourcing as identifying who wrote or created an artifact and what their purpose was in doing so. Contextualization, he wrote, is connecting historical documents to the time, place, and culture that they originated from. Finally, he described corroboration as studying multiple sources before making a claim based on the evidence. All of these skills are foundational for the disciplinary literacy of history (Monte-Sano, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014).

Rationale for the Disciplinary Literacy of History. There are many reasons why it is important to teach disciplinary literacies in the classroom. Teaching students through disciplinary literacies helps students to know how to approach an unknown text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014). In addition, it can help students to advocate for social justice by encouraging them to interrogate, critique, and transform the accepted knowledge base (Moje, 2007). Moje (2007) reviewed literature on disciplinary literacies and found that disciplinary literacies can be used to teach cognitive literacy processes, epistemological processes, and linguistic processes. She also asserted that disciplinary literacies can help students to navigate across cultural boundaries. Finally, if students are not educated in the disciplinary literacies of history, they will be less prepared for the information overload they will face in the real world (Wineburg, 2018). This can be seen with recent occurrences of students and teachers that have been influenced by fake history that they found online (Wineburg, 2018). But if students become critical consumers of
online information, they will be better prepared to be informed citizens (Wineburg & Reisman, 2015).

**Disciplinary Literacy of History in Practice.** There are many examples of disciplinary literacies being taught at a secondary level. For example, De La Paz et al. (2017) used a quasi-experimental design to study middle school students’ historical writing. Over 30 teachers participated with over 4,000 students. The teachers received professional development on how to use a cognitive apprenticeship to teach students how to write argumentative papers for history. The teachers had high fidelity to the curriculum and taught their students strategies for reading and annotating historical documents. Their study found that cognitive apprenticeships help middle school students develop disciplinary reading and writing skills.

Monte-Sano et al. (2014) also studied the process of teachers implementing a unit with the disciplinary literacy of history at the secondary level. They used mixed methods to study a group of teachers who received an assigned curriculum and professional development intervention on the topic. The curriculum included historical documents and taught the students how to annotate and respond to them. Two teachers were chosen for the analysis. Monte-Sano et al. (2014) found that the program was only effective when it was adapted as the teachers saw fit. In addition, they determined that it is important to direct teachers towards disciplinary literacies, to train them in the foundations of the discipline, and to provide them the tools to teach disciplinary literacies.

There is a gap in the research when it comes to the disciplinary literacies of history. There is little research that has been done at the elementary level and specifically at the fourth-grade level. And in most of the previous research, outside researchers or professional development classes structured the study. My study adds to the research because it takes place in
a fourth-grade classroom. It also provides insights on the potential of teacher-guided inquiry into their own practice of using the disciplinary literacies of history.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a lot of research on effective history teaching. Studies have found many benefits of using document-based lessons, historical inquiries, and the disciplinary literacies of history in lessons. But there are still gaps in the research. There is a need for more research at the fourth-grade level. There is also need for studying a teacher’s experience as they go through the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating a unit that incorporates these effective practices. Finally, because many elementary teachers will not have outside experts structuring inquiry about their practice, there is a need for examples of research done by a teacher who is not specialized in history or history teaching. My study is meant to fill these gaps.
CHAPTER 3

Methods

Research Design

In order to understand the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating a unit that utilizes effective history teaching practices, I engaged in a qualitative practical action research project. According to Norton (2008), action research, “involves using a reflective lens through which to look at some pedagogical issue or problem and methodically working out a series of steps to take action to deal with that issue” (p. 1). The purpose of action research is to make a better learning experience for students by changing one’s practice (Norton, 2008). Since there are a lot of obstacles that elementary teachers face as they try to use effective history teaching practices in their classroom, I chose this research approach. I wanted to examine my process of designing, implementing, and evaluating this unit so that I could see how a subject-matter specialist might be able to overcome these challenges. I also wanted to improve the learning experience of my students in the future. This study design was applicable because action research, “positions teachers and other educators as learners who seek to narrow the gap between practice and their vision of education” (Creswell & Guetterman, 2002, p. 588).

According to Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), “to study a practice is simultaneously to study self” (p. 14). This study was similar to a self-study because it focused on the experience of one teacher in one grade at one school. The sample size was not large or random, but the thoughts, discussions, and processes of one teacher can still be shared and applied by teachers in other contexts. In fact, Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) argue that self-study “is grounded in the trustworthiness and meaningfulness of the findings both for informing practice to improve teacher education and also for moving the research conversation in teacher education forward,”
Although my study was similar to self-study, it conforms to the boundaries of action research. This study was focused on knowledge, processes, and practices, not my own identity as a teacher.

**Context and Participants**

I chose to implement this project in my own fourth-grade classroom, so the participants were me, the fourth-grade teacher, and my fourth-grade students. I chose to implement the study in this context because more research is needed at a fourth-grade level. I chose to use myself as the main participant because I am not specialized in history teaching, so it would allow me to show what a subject-matter generalist might do as they go through the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating a history unit.

My study took place at an elementary school in the Intermountain West. At the time of the study, my class had 20 students. In my class, 55% of my students identified as Hispanic/Latino, 30% identified as White, 10% identified as Pacific Islander, and 5% identified as Black. The gender demographics of our class included 75% who identified as female and 25% who identified as male. I also had 50% of my students who qualified and chose to be identified as English Learners. These students had a wide range of English language abilities.

Before I began the project, I submitted a proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and my proposal was accepted (see Appendix A). I also sought approval through the school district I was working with and approval was granted. Part of my IRB proposal was to ask my students for assent and their parents for approval before I conducted this study in my classroom. The assent and permission forms were written English and in Spanish (see Appendix B for English versions). While I was out of the room, our school social worker and a Spanish translator came to my class to read the assent form to my students. In all, 17 of my students...
assented to be a part of the study and three did not. The students who assented to participate in
the study also took home permission forms for their parents to read through and sign. I notified
the parents and students that all students would be able to participate in the history unit, but I
would only collect data on the students who assented and received parent approval. I also
explained that I would use pseudonyms for my students when I referenced them in my study. All
of the parents of assenting students approved.

**Procedures**

For this study I followed the four stages of action research outlined by Torbert (2001). His stages include visioning, strategizing, performing, and assessing. The visioning stage is an
inward process of reflecting on the mission or purpose of a teacher. The next stage is strategizing
which is a time to bridge from wonderings and imaginations to concrete plans for lessons and
classroom implementation. The third stage is performing. This is where implementation of
visions and strategies occurs in the classroom. The last stage is assessing, which includes
reflection on the effectiveness of actions taken and pondering the impact of those actions. The
reason I chose these stages is because they fit well with my purpose of designing, implementing,
and evaluating my unit.

**Stage One: Visioning**

I began my process of designing this unit by starting with the visioning stage. I began by
reviewing the literature that has been published on these topics. I quickly learned about some of
the less effective methods for teaching history that have been used in the past. After that, I was
excited to study existing research about more effective methods for teaching history, such as
using primary source documents and engaging students in historical inquiry. Part of my visioning
stage included watching a professor model historical inquiry with primary source documents in
his university classroom. In addition, I took a literacy course that allowed me to study the disciplinary literacy of history in depth and see how it diverges from other disciplinary literacies. This process helped me to create my literature review, but it also helped me to envision what was possible for the unit I would design.

**Stage Two: Strategizing**

Next, I moved to the strategizing stage which is when I designed my unit of instruction. Originally, I envisioned that my unit would be about comparing and contrasting two Utah leaders: the Native American Chief, Chief Wakara, and the Mormon Governor, Brigham Young. But as I began my strategizing, I realized that I could not find enough primary source documents to sufficiently represent Chief Wakara’s point of view. Thus, part of my strategizing stage involved determining a new topic for my unit. After that, I was able to search out resources, including primary source documents, for my new unit topic. This was also the stage in which I found which Social Studies and English Language Arts (ELA) standards naturally aligned with my topic of study. This helped me determine which disciplinary literacy skills to focus on in my unit.

Once I determined my topic and standards, I began to create lesson plans for my unit. I was able to use some online resources and lesson plans as models (Stanford History Education Group, n.d.). I was also able to collect primary source documents that represented multiple points of view. In addition, I began to consider different discussion topics and questions that would encourage historical inquiry in my students. I had collaborative discussions with fellow researchers, which helped me to further strategize this unit. Finally, my lessons began to come together and I put them in formal lesson plans as well as Google Slide presentations for my students. In order to collect data for my research purpose, I took notes in my study journal (see
Appendix C). In addition, I kept copies of my lesson plans and the Google Slides that I created for those plans (see Appendix D).

**Stage Three: Performing**

My next stage was performing my unit. In the fall of 2021, I invited my fourth-grade class to participate in my study. The students were informed that they would receive the instruction from my unit, but only those who chose to participate (and received parent approval) would be included in the data collection. Originally, I hoped to begin my unit in October, but during the strategizing stage I realized that it would be best if I began in November.

I was able to implement my history unit starting on November 15, 2021. I anticipated that my unit would be implemented two days a week for three weeks. I also intended to have each lesson last for 30-45 minutes. But the length of the lessons and the unit evolved throughout my performing stage. Because I designed part of the unit in the summer time, I also needed to adjust my lessons based on the actual students that I had. This involved incorporating Individualized Educational Program (IEP) accommodations and support for students who are English Learners. Additionally, I needed to consider my students’ interests, evolving classroom procedures, and current events to better fit my students’ needs.

During the unit, I was involved in strategizing, performing and assessing as I received feedback from my students and used that feedback to adjust my instruction. My student feedback came in the form of student work, partner conversations, and whole group discussions. This feedback helped me to know how the unit was going and drove future decisions that I made. In order to collect data for my research purpose, I collected my students’ work. I also took notes on my lesson plans during each lesson and then I wrote a more thorough summary of the lesson in my study journal that afternoon or evening (see Appendix C).
**Stage Four: Assessing**

Ultimately, I finished with the assessing stage, which is when I reflected on the effects of my performance. As previously stated, part of the assessing process took place during my unit as I responded to the feedback of my students in each lesson. But part of the assessing process also took place months later as I looked over my students’ culminating assessments and determined if they met their learning objectives. Further, I was able to reflect on the resources that I used and their effectiveness. Based on these assessments, I made notes for future implementation of this unit and I added these notes to my study journal (see Appendix C). In addition, this stage involved reflecting on the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating this unit. One way I did that was by tracking the changes I made on my Google Slide presentations on a spreadsheet (see Appendix E). I was able to see how this process changed me as a teacher, which led to the findings of this paper.

**Data Collection**

During my study, I collected data through my research journal, lesson plans, Google Slides, and student work. As I looked through my data, I determined that my students’ work did not address my research purpose because my study was focused on my experience as a teacher. Additionally, I chose to focus on my Google Slides as data, rather than using my lesson plans, because the Google Slides program had a history of all of the changes I made to my presentations. Because of that, I was able to go through all of my Google Slides and create a spreadsheet to track the changes I made throughout the unit (see Appendix E). I marked changes in lesson topic, lesson order, and number of slides. In addition, I relied heavily on my study journal as my prime piece of data because it showed my thoughts, knowledge, and actions as a teacher (see Appendix C). I began my study journal on July 22, 2021. This part of my study
journal tracked my unit designs and included 17 entries. My study journal focused on the implementation of my unit starting on November 15, 2021. This part of my journal also included 17 entries. Finally, I used my study journal to evaluate my unit and that process started on May 30, 2022. This section of my study journal had three thorough entries.

**Data Analysis**

At the conclusion of my unit, I worked to analyze the data I had collected. I followed Creswell and Guetterman’s (2002) steps for analyzing qualitative data. Their steps are:

1. Prepare and organize the data.
2. Code the data.
3. Develop descriptions and themes of the data.
4. Use narratives and visuals to represent the findings.
5. Interpret the results and reflect on the personal significance as well as the connections with the literature.
6. Check the validity of the findings.

I followed these steps in my analysis, although instead of checking the validity at the end of the process, I checked the validity throughout the process.

The first step of Creswell and Guetterman’s (2002) process is to prepare and organize the data (see the previous section on data collection for a description of this process).

The second step of Creswell and Guetterman’s (2002) process is to code the data. Originally, I used an inductive process for coding. But as I looked to see what codes emerged, I felt like it was not addressing my research purpose. So, I decided to take a different approach. I chose to use the a priori codes of knowledge for practice, knowledge in practice, and knowledge of practice (see my theoretical framework below for a description of these codes). I made a table
with the three categories, definitions, and indicators (see Appendix F). I then began to code my data. Since my study journal was in a Google Doc, I read through my data there. When I found a complete idea that matched one of the codes, I would highlight it and label the code in a comment box. For example, when I read, “Dr. Nokes recommended that I use the Lunchroom Fight lesson that was designed by the Stanford History Education Group. He said that it would be a good way to introduce thinking historically,” I coded it as knowledge for practice. When my study journal mentioned that I had changed a lesson, I triangulated it with the Google Sheet of my Google Slides changes to see if the change happened before, during, or after the unit (see Appendix E). With this information, I was able to code all of my data.

After I coded the data, I asked a fellow researcher to verify my initial codes. He agreed with my codes, but he also said I should consider the negative aspects of each code and see if they show up in my data (i.e., lack of knowledge for practice, lack of knowledge in practice, lack of knowledge of practice). I took his feedback and added the new codes to my a priori codes. I then went back through my data with these new codes. I did see examples of lack of knowledge, but the ways in which lack of knowledge related to my practice (for, in, or of practice) were not obvious. So, I ended up combining the new codes to be simply lack of knowledge. I also wrote a definition of that code and included indicators and examples (see Appendix F). I then went through my study journal again and coded the data with this new code included. For example, I coded the following excerpt from my study journal as lack of knowledge: “I also told the class that I would learn more about James Martineau because I don’t know exactly why he created his account. I don’t even know if he participated in the massacre or not.”

The third step of Creswell and Guetterman’s (2002) process is to develop descriptions and themes of the data. So, after using the a priori codes, I was ready to use a more inductive
process to develop descriptions. I began to look for patterns in my codes and as I found patterns, I added them to the comment boxes of my study journal. In the end, I found 21 patterns in the data. I met with another researcher to analyze these patterns and we began to see connections between them. Through this process, themes began to emerge. In the end, six main themes came from my data. There were two patterns that did not fit with the main themes: college courses and missing resources. Instead of including these patterns in the findings section, I chose to address these outliers in the discussion.

The fourth step of Creswell and Guetterman’s (2002) process is to use visuals and narratives to represent the findings. I did this by using the themes that emerged to write the narrative of my study in the findings section. This goes along with the fifth step of Creswell and Guetterman’s (2002) process which is to interpret the results and reflect on the personal significance as well as the connections with the literature. I did this by reflecting on what this process meant for me and my practice as a teacher in the discussion section. Further, I reflected on how this study will add to the literature in the discussion section.

The last step that Creswell and Guetterman (2002) put forth was to check the validity of my findings. They explained that qualitative data should have credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I addressed credibility by using multiple data sources (i.e., study journals and my Google Slides) to determine my themes, including quotes in my findings, and being upfront with my assumptions and limitations. I addressed transferability by describing my context and procedures in detail. To help demonstrate dependability and confirmability, I explained my research methods in detail, had multiple researchers look over my codes, and responded to their feedback. These efforts help support the validity of my qualitative study.
Theoretical Framework

I used a theoretical framework of different relationships of teacher knowledge and practice from Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) as a priori codes for my data. I chose this framework because, as a subject-matter generalist, it helped me to see where my knowledge was coming from as I designed, implemented, and evaluated my unit. The three relationships of knowledge that framed my work were knowledge for practice, knowledge in practice, and knowledge of practice. It is important to differentiate between these types of knowledge because “the differences are enormously significant for how teachers understand and position themselves in various initiatives for school improvement” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 296). Using this framework helped me to address my research purpose because knowledge informs the decisions teachers make and the practices they implement.

Knowledge for practice has its roots in formal knowledge. This conception of knowledge, “hinges on the idea that knowing more (e.g., more subject matter, more educational theory, more pedagogy, more instructional strategies) leads more or less directly to more effective practice,” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 254). This type of knowledge is created by experts outside of the classroom through scientific designs but is used to improve classroom practices. In this category, teachers are considered knowledge users but they are not elevated to the status of knowledge creators. Therefore teaching, “is understood primarily as a process of applying received knowledge to a practical situation,” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 257). This type of knowledge was especially prevalent in the visioning and strategizing stages of my study because that was when I read existing research and took college courses. But I also made some decisions based on knowledge for practice during the performing stage of my unit.
Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) describe knowledge in practice as when expert teachers create knowledge through the actions and decisions that they make in the classroom setting. Experienced teachers are elevated to the highest status of knowers because they own the practical knowledge of the classroom. This type of knowledge can be revealed through teacher reflections and discussions with other teachers. This type of knowledge occasionally appeared in the visioning and strategizing stages when I made plans based on my experiences in the classroom with my specific students. But this type of knowledge was even more evident in the performing stage of my study because I was constantly making in-the-moment decisions based on student needs and feedback.

Knowledge of practice involves using the classroom as a research site. This type of knowledge positions teachers as researchers and knowledge generators (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). This can be done by creating inquiry spaces within the classroom. This knowledge is not meant to replace formal or practical knowledge, instead it adds to it. This knowledge was evidenced during the assessing stage, but required preparation throughout all stages. During the visioning and strategizing stages, I asked questions and made plans for exploring my questions, which was a process of inquiry. The performing stage was when I was able to put that inquiry into action in my classroom. Finally, the assessing stage was when I looked over the data I had collected throughout the unit and reflected on what the data showed. It is also when I evaluated the resources I used and lesson plans I made. This led me to make decisions for my future practice.
CHAPTER 4

Findings

This study was conducted to explore my practice as I designed, implemented, and evaluated a unit that utilized effective history teaching practices. The following is a narrative of my action research and the findings that emerged through the process. I organized my study based on Torbert’s (2001) four stages of action research: visioning, strategizing, performing, and assessing. I decided to combine the visioning/strategizing phases because so much of the data overlapped. In each of these sections, I focused on addressing my research questions. As I began to analyze my data using Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) categories of knowledge and practice, I discovered that these aligned fairly well with Torbert’s (2001) stages of action research. Thus, my findings are organized according to Torbert’s stages with the themes that emerged using Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s coding structure as subheadings (see Table 1).
Table 1

*Codes and Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Action Research</th>
<th>A Priori Codes</th>
<th>Patterns that Emerged</th>
<th>Themes Based on Patterns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visioning/Strategizing</td>
<td><em>Knowledge for Practice</em></td>
<td>Visiting Historical Places</td>
<td>Teacher Engaging in Historical Practices</td>
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<td>Finding Primary Source Documents</td>
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<td>Standards</td>
<td>Traditional Lesson Planning</td>
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<td>Brainstorming Lesson Ideas</td>
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<td>Performing Stage</td>
<td><em>Knowledge in Practice</em></td>
<td>Contextualization</td>
<td>Engaging in Disciplinary Literacies</td>
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<td>Sourcing</td>
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<td>Making a Historical Claim</td>
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<td>Time Changes</td>
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<td>Level of Challenge Changes</td>
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<td>Addressing Student Emotions</td>
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<td>Assessing Stage</td>
<td><em>Knowledge of Practice</em></td>
<td>Lesson Adjustments</td>
<td>Reflecting and Planning for Future Units</td>
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<td>Addressing Lack of Knowledge</td>
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<td>Planning Mistake</td>
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Knowledge for Practice During Visioning/Strategizing Stages of Research

My study began with Torbert’s (2001) initial stages of visioning, and strategizing. The visioning stage was where I learned about the most effective practices to use in this unit. It is also where I began to envision what was possible with this unit. After that, I engaged in the strategizing stage which was when I began to make plans for my unit.

As I read through the data that I took during those stages, I found many examples of knowledge for practice. It was clear to see that many of my decisions were informed by formal
knowledge. As I studied the patterns in those examples, the themes of engaging in historical practices and using traditional lesson planning techniques emerged. I will address both of these themes in this section.

**Teacher Engaging in Historical Practices**

During my study, I found that preparing to teach history, especially when wanting to use effective history teaching practices, required being engaged in historical practices. For me, this involved visiting places with historical significance, finding primary source documents, and engaging in collaboration. These experiences added to my knowledge for practice. Here are examples of each of those different types of work.

**Visiting Historical Places.** I was originally planning on teaching a unit on Chief Wakara and Brigham Young, but when I struggled to find enough documents to represent Chief Wakara, I quickly took my unit in another direction. I remembered a trip I had taken in the summer of 2021 that was led by Darren Parry, a historian and the former Chairman of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. Mr. Parry took a small group of people to visit the Bear River Massacre monument in Franklin, Idaho. He also took us to an overlook where we could view the land where the massacre took place. Throughout the trip, he told us the oral tradition of his people and shared stories of men, women, and children who were threatened or killed by the United States Army. Mr. Parry explained that the event used to be labeled as a battle, but because of the relentless advocacy of his grandmother, Mae Timbimboo Parry, the event was now known as a massacre. Mr. Parry also showed us two signs on the Bear River Massacre monument. One of the signs, erected in 1953, focused on the soldiers who died and the pioneers who took care of them, but had no mention of the Native Americans who died. The new sign, erected in 2021, focused on the hundreds of Shoshone Native Americans who were killed at the event.
This experience made a big impression on me for many reasons. It introduced me to a piece of history that I had never learned before. I also became emotionally involved after hearing the heart wrenching stories of some of the people who were killed. I was also moved by Mae Timbimboo Parry’s story and her courage in advocating for her people. In my study journal, I wrote, “I especially loved learning that Mae Timbimboo Parry was an important part of changing the way it was viewed from a battle to a massacre.” In addition to all of that, this experience also gave me the chance to engage in historical practices.

As I reflected on my experience at the Bear River Massacre, I processed my ideas in my study journal. I wrote, “When I learn about the history and I see the place, the history comes alive to me and becomes very important to me!” It also increased my motivation to share this knowledge with my students. This can be seen when I said, “And now that I have visited the Bear River Massacre site with Darren Parry, I really want to teach my students about this event.” I also immediately began to think of historical inquiries for my students. I said, “I feel like there is potential for a very interesting historical discussion there: Was the conflict at Bear River a battle or a massacre?” This shows that visiting historically significant places can be an important part of teacher preparation in designing a historical unit.

**Finding Primary Source Documents.** I continued to engage in historical practices by searching for primary source documents that were related to the Bear River Massacre. Early on, I remembered the two signs from the memorial that Mr. Parry had pointed out, so I wrote, “I think it would be interesting for my students to look at the two signs and compare and contrast the verbiage used and the stories they tell.”

I knew that two documents were not sufficient, so I began to search for primary source documents from the time of the massacre. I decided to visit the Special Collections section of the
library at the university I was attending. Searching for documents took a lot of time, but it was worth it when I found some texts related to the event! I was able to find the transcription of an interview with Victor Moroni Timbimboo, a Shoshone man whose father and grandfather were at the massacre. I was also able to find a government record of the event on microfilm. I wrote about the experience afterwards, “It was really exciting to scroll through the film in search of any information related to the Bear River Massacre. I found it in the section of January 1863!” I really enjoyed this aspect of designing my unit.

I did run into some challenges while finding primary source documents. Since I was involved in the historical practice of reading original documents, I sometimes had trouble reading the old handwriting and cursive. This challenge gave me the opportunity to further engage in historical practices by reaching out to specialists for help. When I contacted a family history specialist, I wrote, “He had some resources to help identify different cursive letters. He also had some military background that helped him to know the rankings of the different officers…” In the end, he helped me to identify the names and military ranks of the people in the document.

Finding primary source documents also involved looking at online resources. I was amazed by how many resources are available at our fingertips. There are websites that are full of resources and preplanned lessons which make it easier for teachers to plan document-based lessons. For example, my professor showed me a website created by the Stanford History Education Group (n.d.). This website was especially helpful because it has lessons to help students to read like a historian. I wrote about his advice in my study journal, “[My professor] recommended that I use the ‘Lunchroom Fight’ lesson that was designed by the Stanford History Education Group. He said that it would be a good way to introduce thinking historically.” I
decided to heed his counsel and I used the “Lunchroom Fight” lesson to help plan the start of my unit.

When websites did not provide me with the documents I needed, which happened frequently because I was searching for a specific event from state history, I looked at the source page of the website and found the books that they listed. I wrote about this experience in my study journal,

I have found it helpful to do general searches about the Bear River Massacre and Mae Timbimboo Parry and then to look at the sources on the website. For example, I looked at the sources of Mae’s Wikipedia page and I found some books that I will be checking out. This is the way I was able to find Mae Timbimboo Parry’s essay about the event called, “Massacre at Boa Ogoi” (Parry, n.d.). Overall, finding primary source documents is an important part of designing a historical unit.

**Engaging in Collaboration.** Another important part of designing this unit was having collaborative discussions. When I sat to collaborate with one of my professors, I found out that he had also taught lessons on the Bear River Massacre. After our discussion, I wrote, “Because he has done so much work on this topic, he said he would be willing to share the documents he has found with me.” This collaboration helped my design process because it gave me more resources to use with my students. Collaborating with my professor also gave me more courage to do the unit because I knew he had done lessons on the same topic with fifth-grade students.

Collaboration also helped me to design the instructional strategies that I would use in this unit. For example, I met with another one of my professors and she looked over my initial lesson plans. After looking them over, she asked me to reflect on the instructional strategies I was using and reminded me that I wanted to encourage my students to engage in historical practices on
their own. After talking with her, I wrote, “I feel like I was so focused on finding the documents and creating my lesson plans, that it was starting to turn into lecture type lessons.” Collaborating with my professor also gave me an outside perspective on the images I was choosing for my project. “[My professor] pointed out that the images that I was using to show historians were a lot of old men. The point is that I need to help my students to see that they themselves can be historians!” Because of her feedback, I changed the images to be children doing history.

**Traditional Lesson Planning**

When I was designing my historical unit, there were a lot of things I did that were consistent with other lesson plans I had made in the past. As I studied my examples of my knowledge for practice, I found that throughout the visioning and strategizing stages of my study, I referenced our state standards and I also brainstormed a lot of ideas for my unit. The following are examples of those categories.

**Standards.** An important part of designing any lesson or unit, is aligning it with your state standards. What made this unit unique is that I did not know what standard I wanted to teach from the beginning. Instead, I started by choosing a topic in our state history to talk about. Once I had determined that I would teach about the Bear River Massacre, then I looked to see what social studies and ELA standards naturally aligned with the topic. I wrote about the experience in my study journal, “I was able to find three Social Studies standards that connect with this unit. There are also a lot of connections to ELA standards about informational texts.” In each of my lesson plans I wrote the standards I wanted to address.

One of my professors told me that the ELA standards of our state core naturally align with the other disciplines that I teach. I realized this was true as I designed my unit. I wrote, “As I read through the list of ELA standards for teaching informational texts, I realized that using
first and second-hand accounts from history gives me the chance to teach or have my students practice nearly all of those standards.” Like designing other lessons and units, I needed to determine the standards I would teach. But unlike other lessons and units, I found that this unit naturally aligned with standards from multiple disciplines.

**Brainstorming Lesson Ideas.** While I was designing a historical unit that utilizes the disciplinary literacies of history, I brainstormed a lot of ideas. Initially I thought I would show the Bear River Massacre monument that I had visited early on in the unit. But then my brainstorming took me in another direction. In my study journal I wrote,

I decided to change the order of the lessons…now I think I want to get [my students] into the historical documents right off the bat. I feel like they will be ready to jump into those texts because of the lunchroom example.

There is evidence of this brainstorming process in my Google Slides as well, (see Appendix E). On October 16, 2021, I had planned that the lesson about the monument signs would be the third lesson in my unit. Then on November 6, 2021—the same day that I wrote the above study journal entry—I changed the lesson order to be a question mark. In other words, I no longer knew when I wanted to teach that lesson. Interestingly, on November 9, 2021, I changed it back to being the third lesson. Then, on November 20, 2021, I put the lesson order as question mark again. Finally, on December 8, 2021, I determined that I would teach the monument lesson for the fifth lesson of my unit and that is what I ended up doing.

Another example of brainstorming during my design process happened when I wrote down an idea in my study journal. On July 22, 2021, I wrote, “I am interested in possibly doing a unit on the food [the Shoshone Native Americans] ate (specifically the plants they used). Mae wrote down information about that and Darren published those pictures and notes in his book.”
But even though I had written down that idea, I forgot about it. There is not any mention of this lesson idea on my Google Slides until November 13, 2021 (see Appendix E). I then added Mae’s text that I referenced above to my Google Slides on November 16, 2021. I eventually wrote about the experience in my study journal.

I also changed the topic of lesson two completely. As I read through my study journal from before my unit, I remembered an appendix from Darren Parry’s book that had some notes from Mae Timbimboo Parry. The notes were about different Native plants and the ways that they were used by the Shoshone Native Americans. After that, I looked through my original lesson plan. I realized that I was mainly focusing on the Shoshone people and the Mormon settlers and how they used the land differently. I started to think, rather than using direct instruction for this background information, I might as well use some historical texts to teach this.

So, my brainstorming took place over months and it led to changes in my lessons and my unit. This was an important part of my design process.

**Conclusion**

Overall, there were many ways I gained and used knowledge for practice as I designed this unit. One way was by engaging in historical practices. I did this by visiting historical places, finding primary source documents, and engaging in collaboration. I also used traditional lesson planning techniques such as referring to state standards and brainstorming lesson ideas. It was through these practices, that I was able to design a unit that utilized effective historical practices.
Knowledge in Practice During Performing Stage of Research

As my study continued, I entered Torbert’s (2001) action research stage of performing. This was when I put my designs and plans into action. The primary focus of this stage was implementing my lesson plans with my students.

The data I took during this stage yielded many examples of knowledge in practice. That was because I used my practical knowledge and my classroom experiences to make decisions. After analyzing the patterns in those examples, I found that two themes emerged. I found that while I implemented my history unit, I engaged in disciplinary literacies through questioning and I responded to my students’ needs. Both of these themes will be addressed in this section.

Engaging in Disciplinary Literacies Through Questioning

Questions were an important part of this unit. For example, each lesson included a “History Mystery” question that I thought would encourage historical inquiry (see Appendix D). I also had graphic organizers with guided questions for the students to consider while exploring each primary source document (see Appendix D). In addition, I had a list of discussion questions at the end of each lesson that I used with the whole class (see Appendix D). All of these questions were prepared before I implemented my unit.

But I did not rely solely on preplanned questions. In fact, I had many unplanned questions that I asked during the unit to help my students to think more deeply about a topic. These questions were generated by my knowledge in practice. In addition, my students asked their own questions that guided my implementation of each lesson. As I read through these questions in my study journal, I found that many of the unplanned questions encouraged my students to engage in the disciplinary literacies of history. Below I describe how these questions
helped my students to think about contextualization, sourcing, corroboration, and making historical claims.

**Contextualization.** Contextualization is the disciplinary literacy that involves connecting historical documents to the time and culture in which they were written (Wineburg, 1991). Sometimes I needed to ask unplanned questions that pushed students to contextualize the documents they were reading. For example, early in the unit, I had my students read two documents to better understand the context leading up to the Bear River Massacre. One document talked about the ways that the Shoshone people used native grasses in Cache Valley and the other explained how the Mormon Pioneers used the land. After looking at the documents, the students explained their thinking and I wrote about it in my study journal. “Mia said that the Native Americans used the native grasses for healing and things that they needed. Another student added that the Mormon pioneers used the land for cows to eat grass.” The students had understood the texts well, but I wanted them to think about the context even more. I wanted them to understand that different land uses between the two groups could lead to tensions. So, during the lesson, I asked another question, “How do you think these differences between the way the Native Americans and Mormon Pioneers used the land affected them?” I wrote about the student responses in my study journal. “The kids thought that they may share the land or learn from each other on new ways to use the land. They did not initially recognize that this could lead to a conflict.” My unplanned question helped my students to contextualize the texts they were studying. Although they came to a different conclusion than I expected, it helped me to know how I could support them to better understand the context moving forward.

Another example of contextualization occurred the first time my class was learning about Mae Timbimboo Parry. When I brought up her name, my students laughed. I was a little
frustrated at their laughter, but instead of ignoring it, I decided to address it with a question. I
later wrote about what happened in my journal. “When I asked them why her name might sound
different to us, they said she was probably Native American.” Our discussion was short, but I
was able to use a question to help my students contextualize a name and understand why it might
sound unique to them.

**Sourcing.** Another important disciplinary literacy of history is sourcing which is the
process of identifying who created a document and why they did it (Wineburg, 1991). During my
unit, I found that I could generate questions during the lesson that helped my students to source
their documents. This happened during a lesson when my students were reading a government
document written by a colonel in the U.S. Army. The following is what I wrote after the lesson:

> It was also interesting to hear why the students thought this document was created. Many
> people said that it was to count all of the people who died or to teach about the battle. I
> had to question them to think about the actual time period and why someone would write
> this at that time period. They decided that since it was a government record, they were
> writing it for the government (which they said was the people who work with the
> president).

This example shows that my preplanned questions were not enough. I needed to ask some
specific questions in the moment to push my students to think more about the source of the
document and why they wrote this text.

Another example happened later in my unit, when my student, Hannah, read the accounts
of a Mormon surveyor and a colonel from the U.S. Army. She then asked the following question,
“What if they are writing for their own people?” I carefully considered her question and then I
asked her to explain what she meant by that. She told me more and I wrote the following after
our discussion: “she explained that she meant that James was probably writing the Mormon Pioneer perspective and George was probably writing the United States Army’s perspective.” Because I wanted Hannah to continue her evaluation of her sources, I asked, “Then whose story do you want to hear? Whose perspective are we missing?” She responded, “I want to know about the Shoshone Native Americans.” Hannah realized that before she could make a historical claim, she wanted to make sure that all perspectives were represented. This discussion would not have happened if Hannah had not asked her questions and if I had not listened to her questions. Our conversation helped me to know what unplanned questions I should ask her so that I could guide her to a deeper level of thinking.

**Corroboration.** Corroboration is another disciplinary literacy. It is the practice of studying multiple sources before making a claim (Wineburg, 1991). One example of this occurred when Mia was reading an account from a U.S. Army Colonel, Colonel Connor. She quickly accused Colonel Connor of lying in his account. In this moment, I had to ask her an unplanned question so that I could understand her thinking. I asked her why she thought he was lying and she said it was because Colonel Connor said that the Native Americans had guns. I again asked her why that would mean he was lying. Mia responded that, “Native Americans don’t have guns, they only have bows and arrows. So, he must be lying.” This helped me to see that Mia needed more information to know if Colonel Connor was lying or not. In my study journal I wrote, “I took some time to show her the casualty list from the military that describes specific wounds from the Native Americans to the soldiers, and bullet wounds are listed as some of the wounds.” After reading the second text, Mia was able to corroborate the evidence and she determined that the Shoshone Native Americans did have some guns during this event. This gave
her enough information to conclude that Colonel Connor might not be lying in his whole account after all.

Another example of this occurred towards the end of the unit. One of my preplanned discussion questions was, “Can history change over time?” My students responded that yes it could because you could read a document many times and get a new perspective every time you read it. That was not exactly what I was going for. I wanted them to understand that historians do not always have all of the primary sources or evidence at the same time. Sometimes it takes years to find enough evidence to corroborate and make a claim. Because I needed to take the discussion in another direction, I had to generate some questions in the moment. Here is what I wrote in my study journal, “I asked them, ‘What would happen if we only read Colonel Conner’s account? Would we think of it as a battle or a massacre?’ Most of them said we would think of it as a battle.” This question helped them to see that historians might come to different conclusions if they only have one piece of evidence versus multiple pieces of evidence that corroborate.

Making a Historical Claim. In addition to contextualization, sourcing, and corroborating, it is important for students to make historical claims based on the evidence they have collected. During this unit, I found myself asking questions so that students would make historical claims. Sometimes my questions led students to ask more questions of their own. For example, in the middle of the unit, I prepared a couple of lessons to explore the mystery, “How many people died?” The students had a government report and a surveyor’s record and they were to list the number of people who died. When it came to the end of the mystery, I realized that I did not just want the students to think about how many people died, I wanted them to reflect on the significance of the number of people that died. The following is a description of what happened:
When we had the numbers up, 224 Indians and 15-17 soldiers, I asked them, “What do you notice about these numbers? Does anything stand out to you?” Mia immediately raised her hand and said “Why are there so many more Indians that died?” That really got the kids thinking. Another kid pointed out that there were 300 Indians fighting and 224 died, that was most of the people.

The students had collected evidence on the number of people who died, but this unplanned question helped them to interpret the data in a meaningful way and to make a historical claim.

Another example of making a claim happened in a different lesson. The overall mystery was, “Was it a battle or a massacre?” One student, Alexa, made the historical claim that it was a massacre, but I wanted her to show evidence for her claim, so I asked her an unplanned question. I wrote about the conversation in my study journal. “I asked her what would be different if it was a battle and she said that if it was a battle, the U.S. Army would have stopped when the Indians tried to surrender.” Because I asked her a question, she had the chance to explain her thinking, which made her claim more credible.

Towards the end of the unit, I returned to the question, “Can history change over time?” After my students answered the question, I used unplanned questions to push the conversation further. The following was recorded in my study journal:

I asked them who makes that happen? One student said all of the different stories we read from different perspectives changes our perspective on history. I pushed for a specific person who helped make this change and Cleo said, “Mae.”

Cleo was referring to Mae Timbimboo Parry. As described earlier, Mae was a leader of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation and a historian who advocated for her people’s story to be heard. After Cleo spoke, “Matt said, ‘Mae is the notebook of the Shoshone.’”
Teacher Responding to Student Needs During the Unit

Another important finding emerged from implementing my historical unit. As I looked over my examples of knowledge in practice, I found that responding to student needs was a vital part of implementing this unit. I found that I responded to my student needs by making changes to the time, level of challenge, and content of different lessons. I also found that I addressed my students’ emotions throughout the unit. Below are some examples of how I did these things throughout my unit.

**Time Changes.** Responding to students’ needs can come in the form of time changes in a lesson. In my study, I found that this happened anytime I changed the length of a task, lesson, or the whole unit. I had many experiences with making choices about timing throughout the unit, but one of them occurred at the very beginning of the unit. After my first lesson, I wrote, “Right off the bat, it took a lot longer than I thought it would.” This challenge with implementing my lesson gave me the opportunity to make a change and address the needs of my students. The following is a record of what happened:

I asked the class if we could cancel duet reading and continue to work on our social studies and the students said, “YES!” We used 45 minutes, but that still was not enough, so I just had the students skip right to the conclusion. I have decided to use about a half hour tomorrow to have our discussion.

I had to take time from other subjects and I still had to cut out some sections of this lesson, but I was able to make all of my decisions based on my students and their needs.

**Level of Challenge Changes.** Early in my unit implementation, I had the opportunity to respond to my students needs by changing how challenging a lesson was. The students were assigned to read a passage about how the Mormon pioneers used the native grasses of Cache
valley for cattle grazing. As the students were talking with their partners, I realized that most of my students did not know what the words “cattle” or “grazing” meant. This required me to problem solve in the moment. I later wrote, “I found one group who knew what cattle grazing was and I had them share that with the class.” After that, all of the students were able to engage with the text. This may have been a small moment, but by allowing one group to explain the challenging vocabulary to the other groups, I was able to empower my students to finish the assignment.

Another example that required me to adapt the level of challenge for my students came when they were exploring the mystery, “How many people died?” I thought the question was straightforward and I gave my students a primary source account, but I did not make the text an appropriate level for fourth-grade students. Because of that,

...what I thought was a straightforward question…turned out to be complex when the students could not read or understand the words. For example, kids got confused with the words “enlisted men” and “wounded soldiers” and counted them among the dead.

I could have just left this situation as is, and continued on with my unit as planned. But instead, I reflected on how the language was affecting my students and how it kept them from meeting their learning objectives. I also looked at examples from my professor and saw that he changed some of the language of the primary sources to make the reading level easier, but he worked to keep the original feel and purpose of the text. Because of this, I decided to make changes to the language in other texts in the unit. For example, later in the unit I wrote:

...This time when I made my “simplified version” I changed up a lot. Before, I was only changing a few vocabulary words. This time I changed the order of words in a sentence
or cut parts out completely. I am using a really long passage, so I wanted to make it manageable for the kids to understand.

These examples show how I addressed my students’ needs by adjusting the level of challenge in the lesson.

**Content Changes.** Another way to respond to my students’ needs involved changing the content of a lesson. This happened early on in my unit when I did a review with my students and I realized that they did not know as much about the Mormon pioneers as I thought they did. I later wrote the following: “I was a little disheartened when one of my students said, ‘Who are the pioneers?’ and multiple kids sat with blank stares.” But, instead of discounting their question, I listened and adjusted my instruction. “I jogged their memories by reminding them of the activities and the readings that we did about the Mormon Pioneers and the Native Americans. That helped and they ended up writing down a lot of facts.” This moment was brief, but because I adjusted the content of the lesson, I was able to help my students to remember who the Mormon pioneers were.

An additional example of addressing my students’ needs by changing content happened when my students had finished reading two conflicting accounts of the Bear River Massacre. First, they had read Mae Timbimboo Parry’s account and most students thought the event was a massacre. Then, they read Colonel Connor’s account and many students thought it was a battle. We had a class discussion about it, and this is how I recorded the event in my study journal:

The kids seemed pretty confused at the end. Mia was the one who said that it was a mixture of both because some of the Native Americans were helpless and some were not because they had weapons. Hannah agreed and said that the Soldiers did a massacre and the Native Americans did a battle. Then she said, “I don’t know!” Alexa and others tried
to connect it to the lunchroom fight. Alexa said that we read Mae’s account and it blamed the soldiers. Then we read Connor’s account and it blamed the Shoshone. She said, “I think they are both trying to protect their own side.”

My students were stuck and I did not know how to help them in the moment.

But, after the lesson ended, I reflected on what had happened. I realized that my students did not have enough evidence to corroborate and so they were not sure which side to believe. So, I decided to change the content of an upcoming lesson. On December 7, 2021, I wrote,

My original plan was to move to showing the historical markers at the landmarks for the next lesson, but I am going to change my plans. I think that the students need to read one more account that can help them feel more conclusive about whether it was a battle or massacre.

I chose one more account from a U.S. Sergeant named William Beach and my class studied it the next day. This content change is also evidenced in my Google Slides presentations (see Appendix E). That night, on December 7, 2021, I added slides about William Beach’s account.

The next day, on December 8, 2021, I implemented the content change. After viewing the third document, and corroborating all of the sources, “most of the students switched to thinking of the event as a massacre.” This shows that content changes can be a powerful way to address students’ needs.

**Addressing Student Emotions.** While implementing this unit, there were times where I needed to address my students needs at an emotional level. This happened towards the end of my unit. One of my students asked if there was a museum about the Bear River Massacre. I explained that there was not yet, but there were informational signs at important sites in the area. This gave me the idea that I could have my students create their own mini museum about the
event. I was really excited about the idea but I did not know how and when to implement the project. This idea came up in December, right around the time when my school was busy with holiday activities and right before our Winter break. So, three weeks passed before I was able to write about it again in my study journal. On January 3, 2022 I said,

Today…I tried to feel the pulse of the room. It has been three weeks since I taught the unit, and I think that the students are feeling ready to move on to a new topic. That makes me unsure about whether or not I should have them do the museum project.

In the end, I collaborated with my professor, I reflected on my students’ emotions, and I decided that I would not do the museum project. I found that addressing students’ emotional needs is also an important part of implementing a historical unit.

**Conclusion**

All in all, these examples show how I used my knowledge in practice to implement a unit that utilized effective history teaching practices. In my fourth-grade classroom, this involved engaging in the disciplinary literacies through questioning. These questions helped my students to use contextualization, sourcing and corroboration. They also helped my students to make historical claims. In addition, I found that responding to student needs was an important part of implementing this unit. This happened when I made time changes, level of challenge changes, and content changes. It also happened when I addressed my students’ emotional needs.

**Knowledge of Practice During Assessing Stage of Research**

I completed my study with Torbert’s (2001) last stage of assessing. This was time set aside for reflecting on the effectiveness of my unit. I used this time to evaluate my primary source documents, inquiry questions, and lesson plans.
The data I collected during this stage were full of examples of knowledge of practice. I looked for patterns in the data and I found two major themes. While I evaluated my unit, I identified many moments where I had a lack of knowledge and made mistakes. I also noted that my process of evaluation allowed me to learn from my lack of knowledge by reflecting on my mistakes and planning for future units. Because these two themes were so integrated, I will show examples of both at the same time in the section that follows.

**Making Mistakes and Reflecting and Planning for Future Units**

When I evaluated my historical unit, I saw times when I had a lack of knowledge. As I analyzed that section of my data, I found three common patterns among my lack of knowledge: planning mistakes, teacher questions, and fear. But because I took time to evaluate this unit, I was able to use that lack of knowledge to generate knowledge of practice. I was able to do that by reflecting and planning for future units. As I made my future plans, three common patterns emerged: lesson adjustments, addressing lack of knowledge, and reflecting on success. In the paragraphs below, I will focus on the patterns related to reflecting and planning for future units. But I will also be integrating what I learned about lack of knowledge during the unit.

**Lesson Adjustments.** Part of my evaluation involved making adjustments to my lessons for future implementation of this unit. One of my disappointments during the unit was that I was not able to implement the museum project. This was a planning mistake because I did not have a clear assessment plan before I started the unit. Then, when the idea came to do a museum project, I waited three weeks before having time to put it into practice. Because of that planning mistake, I did not do the museum project. But, as I evaluated my unit, I wrote,

> I think that when I do this unit next year, I might start by introducing the museum idea to my students. That way we can work on creating the museum as we go along with the
unit. It will also give the students a real-life historical purpose for what they are learning and writing.

So, I was not able to implement the museum project this time, but I was able to reflect and make a plan for future implementation.

Another example of making lesson adjustments for future units happened when I was reflecting on whether my students met their learning objective about determining if an account is a first-hand or second-hand account. I reflected and wrote,

The students focused heavily on the date a document was written. That was their biggest indicator. Next time, I would like them to focus on other indicators like “Who is speaking?” “Where were they when the event happened?” “Did they write about the event the day it happened or after time had passed?”

After determining what I wanted the students to do in the future, I made a plan for how I could help my students to accomplish that goal. I wrote,

One way I could improve my lesson in the future would be to include more background information on the source in the document that I give to the students. [My professor] did that and I think that would better help students with sourcing the document.

So, my reflections helped me to adjust my lessons for future units.

**Addressing Lack of Knowledge.** Another aspect of reflecting and planning for future units involved addressing my lack of knowledge throughout the unit. Sometimes that lack of knowledge was based on fear. For example, as I evaluated my unit I found a complete absence of collaborating with my team of fourth-grade teachers. This was unusual for me because I often share ideas with my teammates and ask for their feedback. As I reflected on the why behind this
action, I wrote, “I was…afraid to collaborate with my fourth-grade team because I was afraid they would be opposed to the unit I was teaching.”

I was not only afraid to collaborate with my team, I was also afraid to seek the help of Mr. Parry, which is what my professor recommended that I should do. As discussed above, Mr. Parry is a historian and the former Chairman of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, so he could have given me some valuable feedback on my unit. But, I did not take advantage of that opportunity. Instead, I wrote the following in my study journal: “I was afraid to collaborate with Darren Parry because I was afraid he would not like my unit.”

But because I took time to address my lack of knowledge, I was able to reflect and make plans for moving forward. I wrote, “I really lost out because of that [lack of collaboration]. In the future, I want to be courageous and do more collaboration next time. I think that would have improved my unit.” This shows that addressing lack of knowledge can actually be a powerful tool to help us reflect and plan for future instruction.

**Reflecting on Success.** While evaluating my unit, I did not only learn from my mistakes. I also learned from my successes. Part of my evaluation included looking back through the standards I taught and seeing if my students met those standards through our class discussions and their assessments. For example, I started evaluating if my students met the ELA standard, “Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided” (Utah State Board of Education, n.d. -a). As I evaluated my students’ work, I was able to determine that they did meet the standard because they were able to compare firsthand and secondhand accounts of the Bear River Massacre. I went on to write that, “They were also able to describe the differences in focus and the information provided…” in each type of account. I was able to find student examples that
gave evidence of that. For example, towards the end of the unit I wrote, “The kids were good at figuring out that both the first and second plaques were second-hand accounts because they were created long after the event and the people who wrote them were not there when it happened.” Even though this was a success, I still evaluated my practice and wrote, “but it took more than one lesson to meet this standard.” This reflection allowed me to better prepare for future unit implementation.

Another standard that I evaluated was the social studies standard, “Explore points of view about life in Utah from a variety of cultural groups using primary source documents” (Utah State Board of Education, n.d.-b). As I evaluated my students’ work, I wrote that, “Yes, the students used primary source documents to explore points of views (from the U.S. Army, the Mormon pioneers, and the Shoshone Native Americans) about the Bear River Massacre.” One example that shows a student meeting this standard came from Mia’s assessment. In the assessment, I asked the class to identify which texts were helpful and why they were helpful. After reading Mia’s response to that question, I wrote the following in my study journal: “When asked which text was most helpful, Mia said, ‘all’ of the texts were ‘because it gave us everyone’s perspective.’” This shows that Mia recognized the need for reading and learning about different points of view.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, evaluating a unit that incorporated effective history practices involved generating knowledge of practice. This evaluation of my unit allowed me to reflect on the mistakes I had made. My mistakes were organized into three patterns: mistakes I made while planning the unit, teacher questions, and fear. But my process of evaluation also involved
reflecting and planning for future units. I did this by making lesson adjustments, addressing lack of knowledge, and reflecting on success.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to study my practice as I designed, implemented, and evaluated a unit that utilized effective history teaching practices. Throughout this study, I explored the following questions:

1. How do I draw on research on effective history teaching in designing, implementing, and evaluating a unit on history for fourth-grade students?

2. What types of knowledge do I, a subject-matter generalist, rely on throughout this process?

In the discussion that follows, I reflect on my findings in light of these questions.

Designing a Unit

My findings showed that while I designed my unit on the Bear River Massacre, I engaged in historical practices. This in turn influenced the ways in which I engaged in lesson planning. This theme emerged as I looked for examples of knowledge for practice.

The historical practices that I used as I designed my unit were visiting historical places, finding primary source documents, and engaging in collaboration. These efforts formed the foundation of my lesson planning for this unit. Visiting historical places was an important part of my design process because it helped me to determine what topic I wanted to teach about. Since I had visited historic sites and a monument related to the Bear River Massacre, I felt motivated to teach my students about that event. My design process also involved finding primary source documents. I was able to find documents related to the Bear River Massacre by visiting the historical sites, searching the special collections at my local university, and looking at the sources listed on related websites. I enjoyed this process, but it also helped me to collect primary
source documents that were important for the design of this unit. I also engaged in collaboration as part of my design process. Engaging with others helped me to find more documents to use, but it also helped me to improve the instructional strategies that I was planning.

Regarding knowledge for practice, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) wrote that “it is impossible for teachers at any level to teach students effectively and/or meet the standards of the various subject matter professions without fundamental knowledge of the disciplines they teach” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 258). This type of knowledge during my designing stage increased beyond what I could gain from college courses when I engaged in historical practices. Visiting historical places and searching for primary source documents added greatly to my subject matter knowledge about the Bear River Massacre.

Like McCall (2006) said, there are few professional development or endorsement opportunities that focus on social studies. But my study suggests that action research based on disciplinary practices and literacies can improve a teacher’s knowledge for practice without professional development classes or an endorsement program. Even though I was a subject-matter generalist, I was able to visit historical places, find primary source documents, and engage in collaboration. Thus, my study may encourage other teachers to engage in historical practices as they design their own units of history.

One implication that emerged as I studied my practice of designing a unit was that engaging in historical practices was central to this effort. This finding adds to the research done by Reisman (2012) who found that students who learned to read like a historian improved their historical thinking and factual knowledge. I would assert that teachers also need to be engaged in the practices of a historian. They can do this by visiting historical places, finding primary source documents, and engaging in collaboration.
Although teachers can engage in this process on their own, it is even better if they are supported by their schools and districts. Readily available professional development courses, endorsement programs, and teacher education methods that focus on effective practices for teaching social studies would be helpful resources for teachers looking to improve their knowledge for practice. And these courses could be strengthened by giving teachers the opportunity to participate in historical practices such as visiting historical places, finding historical documents, and engaging in collaboration.

**Implementing a Unit**

While I implemented a history unit in my fourth-grade classroom, I engaged in the disciplinary literacies of history through questioning. I also attended and responded to my students’ needs. These themes emerged as I looked for examples of knowledge in practice.

I found that questions were essential in helping my students to engage in disciplinary literacies. Although I had prepared a variety of questions in my original lesson plans, many important conversations were spurred by questions that my students and I came up with in the moment. I was able to generate these questions in the moment because I had studied the disciplinary literacies of history myself and I knew the learning objectives that I wanted my students to meet.

Monte-Sano et al. (2014) determined that teachers should be directed towards disciplinary literacies and trained in the foundations of the discipline. My findings are important because they show that as I gained knowledge of the disciplinary literacies of history I was better able to find meaningful questions to ask my students. And because my questions related to the disciplinary literacies of history, my students were able to think more deeply about the content.
I also found that implementing my unit involved responding to student needs. Throughout the unit, I addressed my students’ needs by changing the time, level of challenge, and content of my lessons. As I made these changes, my students were better able to successfully engage with the content. Another important way that I responded to my students’ needs was by addressing their emotions. I used their emotions as feedback and that helped me know when to end the unit. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) further explain that,

Teaching…is understood primarily as a process of acting and thinking wisely in the immediacy of classroom life: making split-second decisions, choosing among alternative ways to convey subject matter, interacting appropriately with an array of students, and selecting and focusing on particular dimensions of classroom problems. (p. 266)

Knowledge in practice emerged in the unplanned questions I asked that helped my students to develop their disciplinary literacy skills. It was also revealed in the ways I responded to my students’ needs and adjusted my instruction throughout the unit. In both of these situations, I needed an understanding of the effective practices of history teaching, but I also needed to have strong relationships with my students so that I could listen and respond to their needs. So, my study adds to the findings of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) by suggesting that having strong relationships with students is a vital part of knowledge in practice.

Implications of these findings suggest that one way for teachers to develop knowledge in practice may be to focus on developing relationships with their students. As teachers get to know their students and listen to their questions and concerns, it will help the teacher to know what their students need and that will help them to better implement their unit of history.
Evaluating a Unit

As I evaluated my unit, I found that I had made some mistakes during my unit, due in part to a lack of knowledge. My evaluation process also involved reflecting and planning for my future units. So, the following themes are integrated from the examples I found of knowledge of practice and lack of knowledge.

Some of the mistakes I made during my unit were planning mistakes. I did not adequately plan for my students’ needs. I also made mistakes when I discovered that I lacked knowledge about something. This sometimes led me to ask questions that I did not have answers to in the moment. There were also times when I let fear hold me back throughout the unit. One of my mistakes was that fear kept me from collaborating with my team. Fitchett and Heafner (2010) wrote that policies focused on math and ELA, a decrease in testing requirements for social studies, and a decrease in teacher autonomy are some of the things that hold teachers back from teaching history effectively. I would add that fear is another element that can hold teachers back from teaching history effectively.

As I evaluated my unit, I reflected and made plans for future units. One way I reflected was by addressing my lack of knowledge. I identified times when I did not know something and made plans to learn it. Another way I reflected was by recognizing my successes. This helped me to know what to continue to do in future units. After I reflected, I adjusted my lessons. For example, I made plans to give more background on the sources of my texts, so that my students would have more information to identify if it was a primary source or a secondary source. I also planned to have my students work on a museum project throughout the unit for their assessment.

This reflective process was a clear example of knowledge of practice. Knowledge of practice is when “teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional
investigation” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 250). “This means that teacher learning begins…with identifying and critiquing one’s own experiences, assumptions, and beliefs” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 279). In addition to these aspects of knowledge of practice, I found that another part of my knowledge of practice included identifying when I lacked knowledge and where I made mistakes during my unit. In this way a lack of knowledge, if recognized, can actually lead to more knowledge in the future.

These findings show that there is power when a teacher has time to reflect and evaluate their lessons and units. This also shows that lack of knowledge and mistakes do not need to be avoided. Instead, they can be used as spring boards for future learning. Schools might be able to help their teachers with this by giving their teachers and teams time for meaningful reflection and evaluation.

Additional Patterns

Two additional patterns emerged as I looked for examples of knowledge for, in, and of practice. These did not seem to fit well within the six broad themes that helped me organize the other patterns. The first, college courses and the opportunities they provided, relates to knowledge for practice. The second, missing resources, relates to lack of knowledge.

College Courses

As a graduate student, I had the chance to participate in a literacy class where I focused on studying the disciplinary literacies of history. I also attended lectures from a history methods course, and I was able to see document-based lessons modeled for me. These experiences were important for me because they helped me to study the established knowledge base of effective history teaching practices. They also prepared me to better design my history unit. Engaging in
coursework also afforded opportunities to collaborate with professors and invite additional feedback and suggestions on my study and practice.

These opportunities might not be available to some elementary teachers who are interested in conducting action research or engaging in the practices and literacies of history. However, sharing some of the insights I gained from coursework and collaboration with professors during this study might benefit teachers who do not currently have those opportunities.

**Missing Resources**

Another pattern that did not fit into my themes was missing resources. As I looked for primary source documents, I found that it was much easier to locate primary source documents from White people than it was from Native Americans. This may be a critique of document-based lessons because it favors groups of people who kept their records in writing rather than in an oral tradition. This was an element that made designing my unit challenging, so it is something I thought about as I reflected and planned for future units.

Teachers who are looking to engage in action research or improve their practice through engaging with historical practices and literacies would do well to attend not only to the resources that are available, but also to what appears to be missing. This can help teachers ask questions and adjust lessons in ways that help students understand some of the implications of missing resources when doing historical work.

**Personal Learning**

This study was unique because it was focused on my experience as a fourth-grade teacher. My findings did highlight how teaching a unit that utilized effective history teaching practices was unique for a fourth-grade setting. For example, I found that there were many
instances where the vocabulary of the primary source documents was too difficult for my students. It became imperative for me to adjust the texts to use simpler vocabulary so that my students could engage with them, rather than focusing on what individual words meant.

Although the vocabulary aspect of this unit was difficult, I also found that my fourth-graders had many strengths with this unit. For example, I found powerful evidence that my fourth-grade students were able to utilize disciplinary literacies of history. They were able to contextualize, source, and corroborate texts. And they were able to use evidence to make historical claims. Their curiosity and deep thinking were thrilling to me and truly motivated me to engage in historical inquiries with them more often.

On another note, one of the main goals of this study was to improve my practice as a teacher of history to fourth graders. I did learn ways to improve my practice. I also learned that going through the action research cycle and engaging with historical practices and literacies was a powerful experience. I learned a lot as I took notes while planning and implementing this unit. Because I was so focused on my student feedback each day, I also made a lot of changes throughout the unit to meet my students’ needs. And then after the unit was over, I evaluated the unit and found ways that I could improve in the future. This action research process truly made me a better teacher.

**Future Research**

Because this process of going through an action research cycle was so meaningful for me and my practice, I hope this study can benefit other teachers who might be interested in improving their teaching through engaging in action research or disciplinary practices and literacies. The methods used in this study might inform other studies either in improving history
teaching for subject-matter generalists in various grades, or in improving their teaching in other subject areas by learning about and engaging in those disciplinary practices and literacies.

This study might also highlight the importance of studying teacher experiences in understanding their own knowledge and practices rather than primarily focusing on student experiences. Studying student experiences without connecting them to teacher experiences runs the risk of obscuring some of the often subtle but essential ways that teachers influence student learning by not only implementing a ready-made curriculum, but engaging in knowledge production (for, in and of practice).

Finally, future research could explore the effects of creating a social studies methods course that incorporates some of the practices highlighted in this study. Elementary preservice teachers, as emerging subject-matter generalists, could engage in the practices and literacies of history or other disciplines. They could also learn in such a course how to examine and improve their emerging practices through an action research project. Connections between this sort of course and subsequent in-service teaching could then be explored.

Limitations

This study is limited to the experience of one teacher in one classroom context. My experiences will be different from the experiences of other teachers as they examine their own practice. As with similar types of research (e.g., self-study), the aim of this sort of work is “to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 20). This study provides an example of how an elementary teacher, as a subject-matter generalist, might use action research to “provoke, challenge, and illuminate” their own work, and hopefully improve their teaching practice through attending to the practices and literacies specific to a given discipline (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 20). This type of work has the
potential of provoking and challenging other teachers (or researchers) to illuminate and improve their own practice.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the purpose of this project was to study my practice as I designed, implemented, and evaluated a unit that utilized effective history teaching practices. My study was able to add to the body of research that has been done on teaching history because it was done by a subject-matter generalist and it took place in a fourth-grade classroom. I found that during the designing stage, I engaged in historical practices and traditional lesson planning techniques. When I implemented the unit, I engaged in disciplinary literacies through questioning and I responded to student needs. And as I evaluated the unit, I found that I had made mistakes, and lacked some types of knowledge, but I was able to reflect and plan for future units.

This study also had personal significance for me because it helped me to improve the experience of my students as they learn history in my classroom. I found that when I go through the action research cycle, I can use my thoughts and reflections to improve my lessons now and in the future.
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APPENDIX A

Institutional Board Review Letter

Memorandum

To: Roni Jo Draper
Department: BYU - EDUC - Teacher Education
From: Sandoe Ana, MPA, IRBSP Associate Director
Wayne Larsen, MAcc, IRB Administrator
Bob Ridge, Ph.D., IRB Chair
Date: September 30, 2021
IRB# IRB2021-254
Title: Teaching History in a Fourth Grade Classroom

Brigham Young University's IRB has approved the research study referenced in the subject heading as expedited level, Category 1. This study does not require an annual continuing review. Each year near the anniversary of the approval date, you will receive an email reminding you of your obligations as a researcher. The email will also request the status of the study. You will receive this email each year until you close the study.

The IRB may re-evaluate its continuing review decision for this decision depending on the type of change(s) proposed in an amendment (e.g., protocol change that increases subject risk), or as an outcome of the IRB's review of adverse events or problems.

The study is approved as of 09/30/2021. Please reference your assigned IRB identification number in any correspondence with the IRB.

Continued approval is conditional upon your compliance with the following requirements:

1. A copy of the approved informed consent statement and associated recruiting documents (if applicable) can be accessed in IRIS. No other consent statement should be used. Each research subject must be provided with a copy or a way to access the consent statement.
2. Any modifications to the approved protocol must be submitted, reviewed, and approved by the IRB before modifications are incorporated in the study.
3. All recruiting tools must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to use.
4. In addition, serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately, with a written report by the PI within 24 hours of the PI's becoming aware of the event. Serious adverse events are (1) death of a research participant, or (2) serious injury to a research participant.
5. All other non-serious unanticipated problems should be reported to the IRB within 2 weeks of the first awareness of the problem by the PI. Prompt reporting is important, as unanticipated problems often require some modification of study procedures, protocols, and/or informed consent processes. Such modifications require the review and approval of the IRB.

Instructions to access approved documents, submit modifications, report complaints, and adverse events can be found on the IRB website under IRIS guidelines: [https://orca.byu.edu/IRB/ActivitesStudy_Management/cisview.htm](https://orca.byu.edu/IRB/ActivitesStudy_Management/cisview.htm)
APPENDIX B

Child Assent and Parental Permission Forms

Child Assent (7-14 years old)

What is this research about?
My name is Haley Holland and I am a student at BYU. I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. A research study is a special way to find the answers to questions. We want to find out more about teaching history to 4th graders.

We are asking you to take part in this research study because we want to learn more about what 4th grade teachers can better do to help students learn history.

If you agree to join the study, you will not be doing anything different than you would normally do in class. You will be asked to participate in our history unit and turn in your assignments. We will use your assignments as part of the study.

What can happen to me?
Sometimes things happen in research studies. Something that you might not want to happen is that someone could figure out which assignment was yours. We will do our best to make that not happen by replacing your name with a fake name.

People also have good things happen to them when they are in research studies. We don't know if being in this study will help you more than any normal class would. Most likely it won't benefit you directly, but we hope to learn something that will help other 4th grade teachers and students someday.

Do I have other choices?
We will ask your parents for their permission for you to take part in this study. Even if your parents say "yes" you can still say "no". You do not have to join this study; it is up to you. If you do not want to participate in this study, you will still participate in the history unit, but we will not collect your student work for the study.

You can say "yes" now and change your mind later. All you have to do is tell us you want to stop. No one will be mad at you if you don't want to be in the study or if you join the study and change your mind later and stop.

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have. If you join the study, you can ask questions at any time, just tell the researcher that you have a question. You can contact the researcher at 801-215-9784 or haleyh@provo.edu.

If you want to be in this study, please sign and print your name.

Name (Printed): __________________________ Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________
Parental Permission for a Minor

Title of the Research Study: Teaching History in a 4th Grade Classroom
Principal Investigator: Roni Jo Draper
IRB ID#: 

Introduction
My name is Haley Holland. I am a graduate student from Brigham Young University (working under the direction of Dr. Roni Jo Draper). I am conducting a research study about teaching history in a 4th grade classroom. I am inviting your child to take part in the research because (he/she) is in my class this year.

Procedures
If you agree to let your child participate in this research study, they will not have to do anything more than they would normally do in class. They will participate in our history unit and turn in their student work during our regular classroom hours as part of my scheduled curriculum.

Risks
There is a risk of loss of privacy, which the researcher will reduce by not using any real names or other identifiers in the written report. During the study, the researcher will keep all data in a locked filing cabinet in her classroom. Only the researcher will have access to the data. At the end of the study, the researcher will keep a copy of the data indefinitely. She will remove the students’ names from their assignments and the data will be kept on her Google Drive. The original student work will be returned to the student to take home.

Confidentiality
Your child’s information will be confidential. The research data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s classroom and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all data will be copied onto the researcher’s Google Drive and the names of students will be removed. The original student work will be returned to the student to take home.

We will keep the information we collect about your child during this research study for analysis and for potential use in future research projects. If the study data contain information that directly identifies your child, their name and other information that can directly identify them will be stored securely and separately from the rest of the research information we collect from them.

The results of this study could be shared in articles and presentations, but will not include any information that identifies your child.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits for your child’s participation in this study. However, benefits to 4th grade teachers may include a better understanding of the process to create a history unit. Benefits to 4th grade students may include a better learning experience with history.
Compensation
There will be no compensation for your child.

Alternatives to Taking Part in the Study:
If you do not want your child to participate in this study, your child will still participate in the history unit, but the researcher will not collect their student work for the study.

Questions about the Research
Please direct any further questions about the study to Haley Holland at 801-215-9784 or haleyh@provo.edu. You may also contact Dr. Roni Jo Draper at roni_jo_draper@byu.edu.

Questions about your child’s rights as a study participant or to submit comment or complaints about the study should be directed to the Human Research Protection Manager, Brigham Young University, at (801) 422-1461 or send emails to irb@byu.edu.

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participation
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You are free to decline to have your child participate in this research study. You may withdraw your child’s participation at any point without affecting your child’s grade or standing in school.

Child’s Name: ____________________________

Parent Name: ____________________________ Signature: ________________________ Date: __________
APPENDIX C

Study Journal

July 22, 2021
Today I spent 2-3 hours searching for documents. I tried to search for documents on Chief Wakara. I was able to find a few documents, but not many. One interesting document was a letter from Brigham Young. It was about an incident between a Native American and a Mormon settler. Brigham Young tells about the incident, as it was relayed to him, and then urges Chief Wakara to not take revenge. He ends the letter by saying, "I love you all when you do well, and hearken to good counsel, but evil doers I always dislike."

I was searching in the Digital Collections at BYU and I was disheartened that I couldn’t find many more documents. When I called the librarian at Special Collections, she knew about Chief Wakara (she called him “Chief Walker”) but she didn’t think they had many resources on him.

So I started to look for documents on the Bear River Massacre instead. Ever since I went on a “field trip” with Darren Parry and I read his book about the Shoshone Bear River Massacre, I have been very interested in this piece of history. I especially loved learning that Mae Timbimboo Parry was an important part of changing the way it was viewed from a battle to a massacre. I feel like there is potential for a very interesting historical discussion there: Was the conflict at Bear River a battle or a massacre?

On the “field trip” Darren showed us a memorial for the Bear River Massacre. There are two signs on the memorial. One was erected in 1953 and one was erected in 2021. One portrays the conflict as a massacre and one portrays it as a battle. I think it would be interesting for my students to look at the two signs and compare and contrast the verbage used and the stories they tell. Then I think it would be interesting to add some historical documents (i.e. journals, oral traditions, etc.) and find out what the evidence corroborates.
I began looking for other pieces of evidence today. I have an appointment set up at the BYU special collections where I am hoping to be able to view the oral history interview with Moroni Timbimboo. I also hope to view documents from Fort Douglas, which may have a report from the soldiers.

Apparently there are other soldiers who recorded the event, so I have some more work to find information on them. I've also had a hard time finding the essay (or article?) that Mae Timbimboo Parry wrote about the event. The essay that was critical in changing the way the Bear River Massacre is viewed. The essay is titled, "Massacre at Boa Ogoi." It might be in a book that I will be checking out from the library.

I have found it helpful to do general searches about the Bear River Massacre and Mae Timbimboo Parry and then to look at the sources on the website. For example, I looked at the sources of Mae’s Wikipedia page and I found some books that I will be checking out.

If I decide to go this route, I will need much more documents on the Shoshone people (specifically the Northwestern Band). I found some photos of Chief Washakie, but I’m pretty sure he is from the other band. I am interested in possibly doing a unit on the food they ate (specifically the plants they used). Mae wrote down information about that and Darren published those pictures and notes in his book. It would also be interesting for the students to learn about their daily life. I’m thinking of going to the Utah Museum of Natural History to take pictures of the display they have there on the Native Americans.
July 23, 2021
Based on [lecture], he said that we shouldn’t be exploring settled questions. So, my previous question: “Was it a battle or a massacre?” probably isn’t a good one. Maybe I can change the question to be, “Why are there two signs on the memorial?” “Why do they tell different stories?”

July 26, 2021
Wow! I just had an awesome experience at BYU Special Collections. I got to read an oral history from (Victor?) Moroni Timbimboo. It was very interesting to see his perspective on the Bear River Massacre. His father? and his grandfather were there in the massacre. He tells stories about his father? or grandfather playing dead and how a soldier came up to him to shoot him. Multiple times he raised his rifle, but he put it down every time.

I took some quick notes during my reading, but I hope to get a copy of the history soon.

Notes from special collections:
- Victor Moroni Tambimboo Interviewed by Collin Sweeten on December 9, 1970 in Plymouth, Utah
- Victor was 82 years and five months at the time of the interview
- Child of Yeager Timbimbo and Yantatch Timbimbo
- Grandfather was Seg-witch

I also had the chance to look at microfilm of government communications from Fort Douglas. It was really exciting to scroll through the film in search of any information related to the Bear River Massacre. I found it in the section of January 1863! There was a section about Col. Connor (possibly written by him) taking a large group of men to Bear River. It states that 15 soldiers were killed, 43 soldiers were injured, and about 243 Indians were killed. It also says that the soldiers burned and destroyed most of the property of the Indians. I found myself getting a little emotional as I read the document and imagined the destruction of these Native American people. I requested a copy of the microfilm, so I hope to get copies of that soon.

July 29, 2021
In [class], he recommended using the Digital Public Library of America to search for historical documents. I decided to try searching for documents on Chief Wakara and the Walker War one more time. This search has been more effective than just searching the BYU special collections. But just like [said], said might happen, all of the letters and journals are from the perspective of White LDS men. I have yet to find a written document from Chief Wakara. Maybe this is a critique of document-based lessons. Not all peoples and cultures have a written record of their history. Some people keep their history in an oral tradition.

Aug. 11, 2021.
I met with [today]. He is so wise! I really appreciated his feedback and recommendations.
Nov. 15, 2021
I taught my first lesson today. Right off the bat, it took a lot longer than I thought it would. We talked about the vocabulary and then I split my students into groups. They had enough time to read all of the accounts and some of the groups finished the graphic organizer, but not all of the groups did. It makes me wonder if I included too many accounts? Anyway, I asked the class if we could cancel Duet Reading and continue to work on our Social Studies and the students said, “YES!” We used 45 minutes, but that still wasn’t enough, so I just had the students skip right to the conclusion. I’ve decided to use about a half hour tomorrow to have our discussion.

Like I said, different groups finished at different times and I didn’t think about that before. I totally forgot to plan fast finishers for my students.

On a positive note, the students got really excited about the lesson. They were very engaged in reading the accounts and very engaged in debating who started the lunchroom fight. I loved looking across the room and seeing X X waving her hands dramatically as she tried to make a point.

It was also interesting to see that many students thought that Annie was the most helpful because she gave lots of details, but they disagreed on who was least helpful. One group said that Doug was the least helpful because he was mad and he assumed that Emmett started the fight on purpose. Another group thought that Julia was the least helpful because she was mean when she said that Emmett should get in trouble. It makes me wonder if we need to have a lesson on personal bias?

One last thing, many students asked me questions about the graphic organizer. I felt like the instructions were pretty simple and they were written on the graphic organizer, but maybe there is something that I should do to make it even simpler?

Nov. 16, 2021
Today we continued lesson one of my Bear River Massacre (BRM) Unit. Believe it or not, I still didn’t finish! I’ve already taken 1 hr. and 15 min. on this lesson. Next time, I should probably plan two 1 hr. sessions for the intro.

We had a really good discussion about what makes a source helpful and what doesn’t make a source helpful. These are the things that my students said:
What made a source more helpful?

- Details of what they saw
- They told us who
- Someone who was there when it happened
- Saying what they saw

What made a source less helpful?

- They assuming things that weren’t true
- They weren’t there when it happened
- They were choosing sides
- Being a friend influences what they say
- Not helpful when you spread rumors
- Where you were in the cafeteria
- Trying to get out of trouble

Something that took a lot of time that I’d like to change is writing about what a first-hand account vs. a second-hand account is. I probably should have just had the class make posters, instead of spending all that time to write it in their notebooks. Maybe I should even premake the posters and just discuss them with the class.

On another note, I was going through my notes before my unit started and I got the idea that I wanted to add a lesson about how the Shoshone Native Americans used the land and how the Mormon Pioneers used the land. I thought I could use the notes that Mae Timbimboo Parry took on different Native Grasses and how her people used them for healing and nourishment. Then, I was hoping to find a source from the Mormon Pioneers about grazing. I thought that this would be helpful because it would give a little more perspective on the groups and how their perspectives were different. I also thought it would be a good introduction into the conflict that developed between the Mormon Pioneers and the Shoshone Native Americans. Although most of the conflict was actually because of people being killed in both groups.

The only problem is that I’m taking more time to teach the first lesson than I thought. So I’m not sure if I have time to include more documents and lessons or not.

Nov. 17, 2021
I finally finished the first lesson! Today I used another 25 minutes to teach it.
got us started off by talking about how some of the accounts weren’t as helpful because they didn’t want to get their friends in trouble. That was a helpful segway into talking about motivation and perspective for an account.

I decided to have the class make a poster about first-hand and second-hand accounts, motivation, and perspective—instead of writing in their notebooks. Writing it in their notebooks took too long! Maybe I can print it off next time so that they can also glue it in their notebook.

In the end, I told the students that we would be doing this kind of investigation with real historical documents. They seemed excited about it! I said, “Just like the principal, we will have to figure out what happened, even though we weren’t...” and said, “There!” Then, said, “We’re going to be detectives!”

Nov. 21, 2021
So, I was working on my lesson 2 today and I made some adjustments. I was going to put a vocabulary section at the beginning of each lesson, but I changed my mind for a few reasons. First of all, my students took a long time to write the vocabulary for lesson 1 and I’m not sure that that actually helped them in the end. Number 2, I’ve already made two copies of each document, one with the original language and one with the language changed and simplified. I feel like that was another way for me to address the challenging vocabulary.

I also changed the topic of lesson 2 completely. As I read through my study journal from before my unit, I remembered an appendix from Darren Parry’s book that had some notes from Mae Timbimboo Parry. The notes were about different Native plants and the ways that they were used by the Shoshone Native Americans. After that, I looked through my original lesson plan. I realized that I was mainly focusing on the Shoshone people and the Mormon settlers and how they used the land differently. I started to think, rather than using direct instruction for this background information, I might as well use some historical texts to teach this.

The next step was to find a text that represented the Mormon Pioneer point of view on cattle grazing. I took quite awhile to look for documents, and I found elements about cattle grazing in different letters, but I ended up choosing an excerpt from a History about Cache Valley that was written in the 1920s. I think that I could probably find a better first hand account, but I ran out of time.

Anyway, my hope is to use these texts to introduce the differences between the Shoshone Native Americans and how they viewed the land.

Nov. 22, 2021
I started today with a review activity. I asked my students to write down things that they remembered about the Mormon Pioneers and the Shoshone Native Americans. I was a little disheartened when one of my students said, “Who are the pioneers?” and multiple kids sat with blank stares. So, I jogged their memories by reminding them of the activities and the readings
May 30, 2022

Below, I’ve written the Utah State Core Standards that I addressed in my unit. I’ve also reflected on each standard and looked over student comments and assessments related to the standard. I used their work to determine whether or not the students met the learning objective of the standard. I also reflected on the effectiveness of the resources I used and made notes for future implementation.

Lesson 1:

- Reading Informational Text Standard 6: “Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.”

- Student comments and assessments related to the standard:
  - “We had a really good discussion about what makes a source helpful and what doesn’t make a source helpful. These are the things that my students said:

    **What made a source more helpful?**
    
    - Details of what they saw
    - They told us who
    - Someone who was there when it happened
    - Saying what they saw

    **What made a source less helpful?**
    
    - They assuming things that weren’t true
    - They weren’t there when it happened
    - They were choosing sides
    - Being a friend influences what they say
    - Not helpful when you spread rumors
    - Where you were in the cafeteria
    - Trying to get out of trouble

  - “I decided to have the class make a poster about first-hand and second-hand accounts, motivation, and perspective—instead of writing in their notebooks. Writing it in their notebooks took too long!”
  - “The students struggled to remember what a first and a second-hand account is.”
  - “When I introduced the second text, I explained that James Martineau was a surveyor and he made a map of the battle. Immediately [redacted] perked up and said,
“But was he actually there?” I loved seeing his desire to look at the perspective of the source and to see whether it was a first- or second-hand account.”

- “It was fun to hear [X] and [X] debate whether it was a first- or second-hand account. [X] thought it was a first-hand account because the date was January 29, 1863.”
- “After the students read through the texts, we only had time for a short discussion. I was interested in hearing the students’ opinions about whether it was a first-hand account or a second-hand account. They had good reasons for both opinions. I wanted to have that discussion because I wanted them to see the complexity of determining whether an oral tradition is a first- or second-hand account.”
- “When they first jumped into the text, it was interesting to see that [X] didn’t know if it was a first-hand account or a second-hand account. She noticed that it was written in February instead of January, so she thought that the Colonel probably wasn’t there but just heard about it afterwards.”
- “The kids were good at figuring out that both the first and second plaques were second-hand accounts because they were created long after the event and the people who wrote them weren’t there when it happened.”

- Did my students master this standard? Yes, the students were able to compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand accounts of the Bear River Massacre. They were also able to describe the differences in focus and the information provided, but it took more than 1 lesson to meet this standard.

- Changes for future implementation:
  - “Maybe I can print it off next time so that they can also glue it in their notebook.”
  - “I’m thinking that I should make a smaller, simpler poster about it so that they can have easier access to those definitions.”
  - When determining if an account is first-hand or second-hand, the students focused heavily on the date a document was written. That was their biggest indicator. Next time, I’d like them to focus on other indicators like “Who is speaking?” “Where were they when the event happened?” “Did they write about the event the day it happened or after time had passed?”
  - One way I could improve my lesson in the future would be to include more background information on the source in the document that I give to the students. [X] did that and I think that would better help students with sourcing the document.

Lesson 2:

- Social Studies Standard 1 Objective 3b “Explain viewpoints regarding environmental issues (e.g. species protection, land use, pollution controls, mass transit, water rights, trust lands).

- Student comments and assessments related to the standard:
  - “In the end, they came to realize that the Native Americans used Native Trees and Plants for many things.”
o "When the students got into the text, a few of the groups figured out that the pioneers used the land for cattle grazing, but they didn’t know what cattle grazing was."

o "In the end, we discussed the texts and the graphic organizers. XXXX said that the Native Americans used the native grasses for healing and things that they needed. Another student added that the Mormon pioneers used the land for cows to eat grass.

I decided to ask the question, “How do you think these differences between the way the Native Americans and Mormon Pioneers used the land affected them?” The kids thought that they may share the land or learn from each other on new ways to use the land. They didn’t initially recognize that this could lead to a conflict.”

• Did my students master this standard? Yes, they were able to explain the differing viewpoints that the Mormon Pioneers and the Shoshone Native Americans had about using the native grasses.

• Changes for future implementation:
  o “When I do this unit again, I might try to find a text that talks about some of the conflicts over land and other things that happened before the Bear River Massacre.”
  o The students were able to identify the different purposes that the Native Americans had about using native grasses, but they didn’t see how that would lead to conflict. I think it would be helpful if I found a text or at least gave more background on conflicts they had over the land and how it affected each group.

Lesson 3:

• Social Studies Standard 2 Objective 1b “Explore points of view about life in Utah from a variety of cultural groups using primary source documents.”

• Student comments and assessments related to the standard:
  o “When I went over to XXXX, she had some great questions. She said, “What if they are writing for their own people?” When I asked her more, she explained that she meant that James was probably writing the Mormon pioneer perspective and George was probably writing the United States Army’s perspective. I wanted to push her thinking, so I asked, “Then whose story do you want to hear? Whose perspective are we missing?” She said, “I want to know about the Shoshone Native Americans.””
  o “A big question that kept coming up was, “Who started the fight first?” Both accounts seem to paint a different picture of who started shooting first. When we came back to our whole group discussion, most kids were viewing the event as a battle. This was interesting to me because it felt like they were most influenced by the account that they read that day. I tried to challenge their thoughts by asking questions, such as, “How many Native Americans died? How many were women and children? How many soldiers died? Does that affect how you think about it being a battle or a massacre?”
APPENDIX D

Lesson Plan and Materials

| Grade Level & Content Area: 4th Grade Social Studies Unit |
| Lesson Title: Lesson 3: Casualties at Bear River |
| Materials: |
| - Lesson 3 Google Slides |
| - Graphic Organizer for Lesson 3 (1 copy per student) |
| - Text 3 and 4 – George Evans and J. Martineau (1 copy per student) |

| Standard: Social Studies Standard 2 Objective 1b “Explore points of view about life in Utah from a variety of cultural groups using primary source documents.” |
| Social Studies Standard 3 Objective 1c “Determine how and why the rights and responsibilities of various groups have varied over time.” |

| Learning Target (Objective): I am learning how to use primary source documents to solve history mysteries. |
| Success Criteria: 1) I will review how the Shoshone Native Americans and the Mormon Pioneers used the land. 2) I will read documents from different points of view and I will fill out the graphic organizer. |
| Performance of Understanding (Assessment): I will use the texts to determine how many casualties there were at Bear River. I will also determine which points of view we are missing. |

| Introduction: |
| Review Activity: |
| - Teacher: Direct instruction/review of how the Shoshone Native Americans and the Mormon pioneers used the land. |

| Instruction: |
| Direct Instruction: |
| - Teacher: Tell the class that because of the increasing conflict between the Mormon Pioneers (and other emigrants) with the Shoshone Native Americans, the United States Army decided to step in. A conflict occurred between these groups and it may be one of the saddest events in Utah’s history. We are going to be looking at different texts to try figure out what happened. But before we do, I’m going to give you some more background information. |
| - Teacher: Give direct instruction about Bear River and the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Douglas. Also teach the students about microfilm. |

| Document Activity: |
| - Teacher: Introduce the second history mystery, “How many people died?” Then, put up the slide with the original Text #3: Government Record. After that, pass out printed copies of text #3. |
| - Students: With a partner read text #3 and fill out the graphic organizer. |
| - Teacher: Put up the slide with the original Text #4: Map with Note. After that, pass out printed copies of text #4. |
| - Students: With a partner read text #4 and fill out the graphic organizer. |

| Closure: |
| Discussion: |
| - Teacher: Ask students the following questions: “How many people died at the event at Bear River,” “Which documents are most trustworthy, that we’ve read,” “Why do you think that,” and “Whose perspective are we missing?” |
| - Students: Share their answers with the class. |

| Accommodations: |
• English Language Learners: These students can use the Google Translate app to take pictures of the texts and translate them into Spanish.
• Students in Special Education: I transcribed each document so that it is easier to read. I also copied each document twice (once with the original language and once with the language changed and simplified). I also allow these students to take less notes, if they need to.

Notes during the lesson:

Reflection after the lesson:
Casualties at Bear River

Lesson 3

Shoshone Native Americans

- Hunted wild animals
- Used native grasses for food
- They were already living in the “Cache Valley” area when the Mormon Pioneers came

Mormon Pioneers

- They came to “settled” the area now known as Cache Valley.
- Used livestock for farming.
- Had cattle graze on native grasses

Relationship between Pioneers and Native Americans

- The cattle from the Mormon Pioneers grazed on the native grasses of the Shoshone people.
- The livestocks of the Mormon Pioneers replaced the wild animals that the Shoshone relied on for food.
- In response, the Shoshone Native Americans raided the cattle herds of the Mormon Pioneers and occasionally begged them for food.
- The Shoshone people and the Mormon Pioneers had times of cooperation and times of conflict.

Other Emigrants

- When gold was discovered in Montana, more people started to travel in the area.
- There was conflict and violence between the emigrants traveling the Oregon Trail and the Shoshone Native Americans.
- Some people wondered if the Mormon settlers wanted the Native Americans to attack the wagon trains.

Background

Where did the event take place?
The United States Army Stationed at Fort Douglas

- The United States Government leaders and the Mexican leaders didn’t really trust each other.
- The United States Government kept careful records and watched over the customs and laws in California and Texas.
- At the time, most other soldiers were sent to fight in the Civil War in the southern United States.
- Not every soldier had a stable relationship with the Native American people and others.
- Not everyone dealt with history in a similar way.

Tools of a Historian

Microfilm

I had a chance to go into the BYU library and look at their special collections. They have tons of letters, documents, and journals. Some of them are kept on microfilm. We got to look at a little bit of that microfilm today.

History Mystery #2: How many people died?

Text #3: Government Record

Text #4: Map with Note

Discussion

Questions

1. How many people died at the event at Bear River?
2. Which documents are most trustworthy that we’ve read? Why do you think that?
3. Whose perspective are we seeing here?
### Challenging Reading Level (Original Document)

**Text #3: Government Record of Events**  
**Source:** George S. Evans (Colonel in U.S. Army)  
**Date:** January 1863

Capt. Hoyt 2nd Lieut. Honeyman and 2nd Lieut Ingham with 78 Enlisted men of 3rd Infantry CV and 10 of 2nd Calvary C.V. left the Post on 22nd January 1863 for order of Colonel Connor on a scout against Indians. On the 24th January Colonel Connor Major McGarry, Gallagher, Surgeon Reid, Captains McLean, Price, and Lieutenants Chase, Berry, Quinn Clark and Conrad accompanied by four citizens and as guides and interpreters with 233 Enlisted Men of the 2nd Calvary C.V. left the Post to join the former detachment. On the morning of the 29th January armed on Bear River 12 miles from Franklin W.S. and gone battle to the Indians about Three hundred strong — the battle lasted four hours and was fought with desperate Courage on both sides — our loss was 15 killed and 4 officers and 38 men wounded Captains McLean and Lieutenant Chase 2nd Calvary C.V. supposed fatality. Captured 175 Horses, large quantity arms, destroyed large amount of provisions and burned their lodges and killed 224 Indians.

George S. Evans

### Easier Reading Level (Language Changed and Simplified)

**Text #3: Government Record of Events**  
**Source:** George S. Evans (Colonel in U.S. Army)  
**Date:** January 1863

Capt. Hoyt, 2nd Lieut. Honeyman and 2nd Lieutenant Ingham with 78 Enlisted men of 3rd Infantry CV and 10 of 2nd Calvary C.V. left the Post on 22nd January 1863 by order of Colonel Connor on a scout against Indians. On the 24th January Colonel Connor Major McGarry, Gallagher, Surgeon Reid, Captains McLean, Price, and Lieutenants Chase, Berry, Quinn, Clark, and Conrad joined by four citizens and as guides and interpreters with 233 Enlisted Men of the 2nd C.V. left the Post to join the others. On the morning of the 29th January armed on Bear River 12 miles from Franklin W.S. they went to battle against about 300 Indians. The battle lasted four hours and was fought with a lot of Courage on both sides — our loss was 15 killed and 4 officers and 38 men wounded. Captain McLean and Lieutenant Chase 2nd Calvary C.V. are probably dead. We captured 175 Horses and a lot of weapons. We destroyed a lot of their supplies and burned their lodges and killed 224 Indians.

George S. Evans
Challenging Reading Level (Original Document)

Text #4: Note and Map
Source: James Martineau (Surveyor for Cache County, also a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
Date: January 29, 1863

29 January 1863

Sketch of the Battle field on N. side of Bear river.

90
160

report { 90 squaws and children
{160 Indians killed
-- “-- 17 U.S. Soldiers killed
-- “-- 49 -- “-- wounded
about 70 -- “-- frozen

40 or 50 Indians escaped
14 Squaws wounded

Easier Reading Level (Language Changed and Simplified)

Text #4: Note and Map
Source: James Martineau (Surveyor for Cache County, also a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
Date: January 29, 1863

29 January 1863

Drawing of the battlefield on the North side of the Bear River.

90
160

report { 90 women and children
{160 Indians killed
-- “-- 17 U.S. Soldiers killed
-- “-- 49 -- “-- hurt
about 70 -- “-- with frostbite

40 or 50 Indians escaped
14 Indian women wounded
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Graphic Organizer for Lesson 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the title and number of the text?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who created the text?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When was the text created?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is it a first-hand or second-hand account?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Whose perspective does this represent (circle one)?** | Shoshone Native American  
Mormon Pioneer  
U.S. Army | Shoshone Native American  
Mormon Pioneer  
U.S. Army |
| **Why was this text created (think of motivation)?** | |
| **How many people does this text say died at the event at Bear River?** | |
## APPENDIX E

### Google Slides Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date the Lesson was Taught</th>
<th>Lesson Title When Taught</th>
<th>Lesson Title When Taught</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Content, images, topics, or questions</th>
<th>Order in Unit</th>
<th>Number of Slides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/16/21 - 10/17/21</td>
<td>Background Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Changed background information on the conflict between the United States and Mexico.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17/21</td>
<td>Lesson 2: Background Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Added a slide about the Mexican-American War.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17/21</td>
<td>Lesson 3: Background Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Changed the background information on the Trek of the Donner Party.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17/21</td>
<td>Lesson 4: Background Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Added a slide about the California Gold Rush.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lesson 5: Assessment

- Added a slide about the significance of the Mexican-American War, including its impact on U.S. history and modern-day relations with Mexico.

### Lesson 6: Assessment

- Added a slide about the significance of the Mexican-American War, including its impact on U.S. history and modern-day relations with Mexico.
## APPENDIX F

### A Priori Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Indicators (Real Life Examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge for Practice</td>
<td>Knowledge for practice has its roots in formal knowledge. This conception of knowledge, &quot;...hinges on the idea that knowledge is an object...&quot; (Cochran-Smith &amp; Lytle, 1999, p. 254). This type of knowledge is created by experts outside the classroom through scientific designs but is used to improve classroom practices. In this category, teachers are considered knowledge users but are not elevated to the status of knowledge creators. Therefore teaching, &quot;...is understood primarily as a process of applying received knowledge to a practical situation,&quot; (Cochran-Smith &amp; Lytle, 1999, p. 257).</td>
<td><em>Actions, thoughts, decisions, and plans based on knowledge from books, formal research, college classes, and professional training.</em></td>
<td>Now that I've done some initial searching for documents on the Bear River Massacre and found what resources are already available, I am going back to the standards to see what standards naturally connect to this topic and these documents. I was able to find 3 Social Studies standards that connect with this unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge in Practice</td>
<td>Knowledge in practice purports that expert teachers create knowledge through the actions and decisions that they make in the classroom setting (Cochran-Smith &amp; Lytle, 1999). Experienced teachers are elevated to the highest status of knowers because they own the practical knowledge of the classroom.</td>
<td><em>Actions, thoughts, decisions, and plans during the lesson based on knowledge from classroom experience and relationship with students.</em></td>
<td>When I went over to [class], she had some great questions. She said, &quot;What if they are writing for their own people?&quot; When I asked her more, she explained that she meant that James was probably writing the Mormon pioneer perspective and George was probably writing the United States Army's perspective. I wanted to push her thinking, so I asked, &quot;Then whose story do you want to hear? Whose perspective are we missing?&quot; She said, &quot;I want to know about the Shoshone Native Americans.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Practice</td>
<td>Knowledge of practice involves using the classroom as a research site. This type of knowledge positions teachers as researchers and knowledge generators (Cochran-Smith &amp; Lytle, 1999). This can be done by creating inquiry spaces within the classroom. This knowledge isn't meant to replace formal or practical knowledge, instead it adds to it.</td>
<td><em>Actions, thoughts, decisions, and plans after the lesson based on knowledge from reflecting on classroom experience, student work and assessments, and relationship with students.</em></td>
<td>My original plan was to move to showing the historical markers at the landmarks for the next lesson, but I am going to change my plans. I think that the students need to read one more account that can help them feel more conclusive about whether it was a battle or massacre. There are a few more soldiers accounts that [class] has, I think I will choose one of them for the next lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Knowledge</td>
<td>Lack of the above types of knowledge.</td>
<td><em>Inaction, mistakes, or questions based on lack of knowledge.</em></td>
<td>I also told the class that I would learn more about James Martineau because I don’t know exactly why he created his account. I don’t even know if he participated in the massacre or not.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>