

Seeing Through the Eyes of a History Teacher

I have come to my current position of beliefs and values [about history] through spending my entire life as a student. I have not had an extensive amount of time on the other side of the classroom. I still, for the most part, see through the eyes of a student rather than a teacher.

Mary, preservice history teacher

Laura M. Westhoff
University of Missouri, St. Louis

MARY'S HONEST SELF-ASSESSMENT at the outset of a required U.S. history methods course stood out as I read a set of student reflections. Her appraisal reminded me of the challenges teacher candidates face on their journey to cross that divide from history student to history teacher.¹ The history or social studies methods course is usually a key point on that path, but, as Mary reflected, the journey is far from complete when teacher candidates enter the class. At least one of the obstacles they encounter is the continued segregation of teacher education and content coursework. Despite evidence that neither history nor pedagogy courses alone necessarily help preservice teachers develop pedagogical content knowledge, teacher education programs still struggle to find ways to bring them together.² For over a decade, I have taught a methods course at the University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL), "U.S. History for the Secondary Classroom" (History 4013), that takes on this challenge directly. It brings together disciplinary teaching strategies and history content; in so doing, it encourages students like Mary to take several steps across the divide. In this essay, I offer my experiences teaching the course in order to foster discussion of how history educators might find ways to close the gap between history content and pedagogy. I focus particularly on the skills of historical synthesis required of high school history teachers, but often overlooked in teacher preparation programs. I also identify challenges

teacher candidates confront in the course as they work to develop epistemic and pedagogical foundations for the content choices they will make as history teachers. In making the case for methods courses in which students have opportunities to practice the skills of synthesis, I argue for our vital role in helping aspiring teachers, administrators, and the broader public better understand the intellectual richness and civic significance of history education.

Seeing as a Student/Seeing as a Teacher

I start with Mary's metaphor of "seeing" because it reminds us that novice students and expert teachers who grasp history's epistemic practices often look at historical content differently. Research on history education in elementary and high school classrooms suggest that Mary most likely learned to think of history primarily as a body of information—names, dates, events—that teachers and textbooks know and students do not.³ A decade or two ago, it would have been a rare K-12 classroom that taught Mary to think of history as an interpretive discipline or asked her to "do history"—that is, to make historical meaning out of primary source evidence. Standardized history tests at all levels, including those required for teacher licensure in many states, contribute to a view of historical knowledge as discrete factual tidbits rather than complex explanatory processes.⁴ By the time history teacher candidates prepare to enter the classroom, many still maintain an epistemological view of history as revealed facts, rather than as constructed narratives. An informal survey I take at the outset of each semester of History 4013 illustrates this point. I ask students to articulate their primary concern about teaching a U.S. history class. The most common are similar to Andy's: "how to teach everything completely without leaving anything out." Or Chris's: "do I have enough time to teach in full detail?" Such anxieties illustrate a naïve understanding of both the historical discipline and the role of the teacher. The notion that the teacher is responsible to cover *all* the details of the American past suggests that history is knowable and consists of a litany of dates, names, and facts whose meaning is transparent. It is also a goal destined to fail.⁵ Even so, breaking its grip has proven difficult. Peter Seixas identified the challenge two decades ago, noting that "to the extent that [teachers] receive history as inert, opaque information, it is not surprising that they reproduce those presentations when they turn to face the students in the classroom."⁶

History professors' growing attention to teaching historical thinking skills in college history courses might help candidates develop a more sophisticated view of disciplinary knowledge, particularly if instructors

intentionally “uncover” historical practices.⁷ But even if they do, history departments’ course offerings present their own problems. Once beyond the introductory survey, most courses tend to become narrower in focus, spending entire semesters on areas of an instructor’s historical specialization, such as the South and the Civil War or the 1960s.⁸ Such courses do offer teacher candidates more opportunities to deepen content knowledge and to develop history’s habits of mind, encouraging the rich analytical skills we hope teacher candidates will then encourage in their students. But as Robert B. Bain and Karen Birr Moje observe, students “often meander through a maze of history electives, using personal interests, classmates’ recommendations, professors’ reputations, and course availability to shape their courses of study,” thus complicating their path toward synthetic understanding. For future teachers who must develop an overview of American history, “the absence of defined pathways or roadblocks among subject-matter courses will make it difficult and less likely that preservice teachers will assemble a coherent and suitable body of knowledge and skills.”⁹

As Bain and Moje suggest, coherence is indeed a key difference between seeing U.S. history content as a student and seeing it as a teacher. The discipline is built around efforts to make coherent meaning out of seemingly disjointed or contradictory information; historical data only becomes meaningful as it is organized into coherent narrative accounts that are “constructed sequences of events that are both causally related and chronological,” as Keith C. Barton and Linda S. Levstik explain.¹⁰ Narratives usually include a setting (historical context), actors and agents, goals and actions, and an outcome or lessons—however complicated they might be.¹¹ Without opportunities to reflect on how historical materials in specialized courses might be synthesized into broader narrative accounts of U.S. history, preservice teachers’ fragmented and idiosyncratic college coursework can serve as an obstacle to building a coherent understanding of the much broader past they will be expected to teach.

Seeing U.S. history as an expert teacher requires, not that teachers know more information than their students (though we expect them to of course), but rather that they perceive and organize it differently. While novice students make their way at ground level through the dense forest of historical information, expert teachers strive for a bird’s eye view, looking at the whole forest to identify connections, patterns, themes, and disjunctions across large swatches of time and place.¹² As teachers *select* and *connect* content material to build classroom lessons, units, and yearly course plans, they synthesize vast amounts of historical knowledge with an eye toward helping adolescent students understand history’s themes, big ideas, and unresolved questions. Synthesis is no easy task; Bloom

placed it near the top of his taxonomy of cognitive skills, defining it as the ability to compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern “to form a new whole,” to develop a “unique communication,” or to derive a set of abstract relationships.¹³ For history teachers, building a coherent synthesis requires the ability to connect and prioritize events and themes, selecting historical moments and actors from the vast information available *and* identifying relationships among historical ideas, events, motives, themes, and actors. In this way, as Seixas has suggested, teachers’ thinking is analogous to the cognitive work of historians: teachers “construct the experience and knowledge of others into a form that is meaningful to an audience.”¹⁴ Though their task is not the production of new historical knowledge, teachers must select and connect evidence in ways that students can understand. They construct historical meaning, offering students interpretations of the past—in other words, they construct historical narratives in their classroom.

Most of my preservice teachers struggle to develop these skills. Some struggle at least partly because of their limited understanding of the historian’s craft and their real concerns about gaps in their historical knowledge. Others resist because they believe that they need to cover information so their students succeed on high-stakes tests. Others worry about “avoiding the appearance that history is one-sided,” as one of my students explained. For all preservice teachers, their preparation in history classrooms where coverage is the norm leaves them struggling to see themselves as making interpretative decisions. This is the case regardless of their background. At UMSL, the social studies certification program includes undergraduate and post-degree certification options, but both require the equivalent of a major in one of the social studies disciplines. In practice, undergraduate certification students take the same courses as a history major. Post-degree students usually have a bachelor’s degree in history, but a few hold degrees in other disciplines, such as political science. Those who do not must take thirty-nine hours in history. Still, neither this content preparation nor their teacher education coursework prepares them for the synthetic thinking required of history teachers.

Selecting and Connecting: Historical Narratives and Curriculum through the Eyes of the Teacher

Initially, I designed History 4013 to explore the interpretive nature of history teaching and to focus on what expert selecting, connecting, and synthesizing looks like in practice. While districts have curricula and states have standards that teachers must teach, teachers themselves provide the classroom examples and explanations. They choose which materials

to bring to the class and how to tie the stories of the past together into a framework understandable for students. Learning to select and connect historical material in historically and pedagogically appropriate ways is a key goal in most methods courses. History 4013 takes this a step further. By applying the tasks of selection and connection to the entirety of U.S. history subject matter, teacher candidates confront the necessity of making content choices and the realities that haphazard choices can contribute to incoherence, to representing history as disconnected bits of information. It also invites teacher candidates to see explicitly how synthesis of historical information implies an argument or a story about the past. Seeing like a teacher requires them to understand the multiple ways historical knowledge is constructed in their classrooms, schools, and larger societies and to be more explicit about their own role in that knowledge production. History 4013 helps candidates to develop thoughtful criteria for selection and connection and to see the intellectual authority and power these practices afford the history teacher.

Such an approach expands on the growing emphasis on historical thinking and reading in teacher preparation courses. It follows the efforts of numerous history teachers and scholars who argue the value of exposing hidden historical authority and historical narratives, be they embedded in classroom discourse, curriculum, textbooks, students' prior knowledge, or teachers' instructional decisions. In his popular *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, James Loewen identified underlying narratives in U.S. history textbooks, such as the theme of inevitable progress.¹⁵ Barton and Levstik similarly identify narratives of individual achievement and motivation as well as national freedom and progress popular in history classrooms.¹⁶ Terri Epstein's research on African American and Caucasian students' historical understandings demonstrates that they bring their own frameworks to the classroom learned from their families, their communities, and popular media sources.¹⁷ John Wills has explored how teachers' framing of discussions about the California Gold Rush or Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement can oversimplify and celebrate historically complex narratives. Wills illustrates that as students build historical understanding of new historical material, they sometimes adopt—or with the introduction of new materials, adapt—oversimplified explanations of human motivations in the past.¹⁸ Such studies illustrate that teachers' choices about historical materials and the ways they frame and talk about the past matter to student learning.¹⁹ While a generation of postmodernist critique has provided reason to question narrative as a form of knowledge, we know, too, that humans tell stories to make meaning of their experience and that history remains a discipline driven by storytelling.²⁰ The goal in my methods course, then, is to expose the essential *and* problematic

nature of historical narratives, particularly within U.S. history curricula and teachers' daily practices.²¹

Four major objectives shape History 4013:

1. to consider the constructed and contested nature of the high school history curriculum and the narrative(s) embedded within it;
2. to situate the teacher as one of the intellectual authorities contributing to the shape of historical accounts;
3. to promote the broad and synthetic thinking required for long-term course planning;
4. to promote aspiring teachers' self-conscious reflection on the criteria they use in their content and instructional choices.²²

In other words, the course seeks to help students make the intellectual transition from student of history to teacher of history and to see teachers as participants in the historical discipline, albeit in a different site from that of traditional historical research. The ultimate expectation is that candidates' future high school students will be more deeply engaged and academically successful in the history courses they teach.

I team-teach with Dr. Rob Good, a twenty-year veteran of the high school history classroom. We divide the content chronologically across U.S. history, as the high school curriculum does, but we explore a variety of historical themes and questions that connect across time and place, such as changing meanings of liberty, ideas about the role of government, or how social change happens. Each session blends discussion with historiographical lectures and examples of inquiry lessons. Frequently, I frame historiographical questions and intellectual problems that animate historians, while Rob models how he translates them into classroom lessons grounded in primary sources and historical inquiry. Together, we model ways to think synthetically about U.S. history, discussing how we each come to our understandings of U.S. history and how the intellectual questions that we are each passionate about work to frame our inquiries about U.S. history as a whole. As Rob and I talk with each other, we illustrate how teachers can think about themes and big questions in U.S. history. Having both of us together in conversation makes each of our thinking more transparent, and we explore the differences in the ways historians and teachers think about content.²³ More importantly, students see a history teacher intellectually engaged with ideas about the American past. We offer students a view of history teaching praxis as we talk about our different views of an article, or as Rob discusses how he teaches the complexities of ideology and foreign policy, how he understands the possibilities and limitations of incorporating the theme of historical agency into his teaching about slavery, or the ways he uses the theme of

“e pluribus unum” to frame his approach to U.S. history. This dialogue is a crucial dimension of the course. Team-teaching allows us a forum for ongoing discussion of the intersection of academic history and the realities of high school teaching. But even without that benefit, the proliferation of online materials that showcase historians’ and teachers’ thinking make it possible to meet these goals without live dialogue.²⁴

At the outset of the course, I first ask students to consider various schematic narratives of U.S. history that most learned years ago in their elementary and high school classrooms. While specific narratives include details about historical incidents or actors, schematic narratives describe broader themes that help explain national history—American exceptionalism or inevitable progress, for example.²⁵ As we begin to expose the schematic narratives that preservice teachers bring to the classroom, we consider their benefits and limitations, whether they are embedded in textbooks, political discourse, a district’s curriculum, or their own understanding of history. The goal is to encourage students to recognize the cognitive frameworks they bring to their teaching practice. We discuss the differences between what David Lowenthal has called “heritage” and collective memory and professional history.²⁶ Drawing from numerous examples to illustrate this point—comparisons of textbooks across time or of the same topic, discussions of narratives and the textbook industry, debates over the National Standards in the early 1990s, and more recent conflict over U.S. history curricula and textbooks in Florida and Texas—we consider the politics behind teaching U.S. history and begin to treat curriculum and its components as interpretive, synthetic historical texts in their own right.²⁷ As students explore the narratives (or seeming lack of narratives) within textbooks, standards, and curriculum, we begin to consider how they, as teachers, have the power to frame historical narratives through choosing the materials and topics, the learning activities they create for students, and the ways that they talk about those topics in their classrooms. The goal is not to encourage the idea that there is a single grand narrative.²⁸ Rather, I want them to consider that we cannot escape narratives or their explanatory power in the classroom.²⁹ By recognizing the role of the teacher in shaping narrative through their instructional process of selection and connection, I illustrate why teachers must be thoughtful about constructing narratives in their classroom, just as historians are thoughtful about the ways they construct narratives in their scholarly articles and books.³⁰ I encourage them to see their work as an intellectual endeavor that, as one history educator has put it, “revolves around making creative decisions about what gets taught and why.”³¹

Learning to Select and Connect

In the past decade, I have used two assignments to help students be more deliberate in their processes of building synthesis through selection and connection.³² The first is a historical inquiry project. For this assignment, students develop a historical question connected to a broad issue in U.S. history, write a historiographical paper that grounds their question, design lessons that use primary and secondary sources to scaffold historical reading and writing skills, and create an assessment that requires their students to develop a historical account. Over the years, I have used variations on this assignment, but have found the historiographical component to be the key to its success.³³ It illustrates the ways that historians themselves select and connect, how they form different questions and use different sources to make different arguments about the past. This component helps students grasp the tentative and open-ended nature of the discipline. But writing a historiographical paper is not enough to help them understand the implications for their teaching practice. In their papers, I have them further discuss the ways that the historiography helped them design their inquiry project. Ashley's project illustrates this point.

Ashley developed an inquiry around the question, "Did ideas about the role of women change during the Progressive Era?" Initially, she was interested in women's suffrage and selected primary sources from across the nineteenth century that argued for suffrage. But, as she wrote in her paper, "I began reading and discovered a term called municipal housekeeping to describe female reform in the Progressive Era and to justify women's suffrage. This led me to wonder whether ideas about women's nature and women's roles really changed." Her historiographical paper addressed historians' debates over women's essentialism. She reflected, "I hadn't really thought about this before or even considered how to teach about women in U.S. history except as their effort to get the right to vote." Linking historiography to her inquiry project led her to ponder a more complex topic—the social construction of gender in the Progressive Era. She then connected the historiographical reading directly to her lessons as she selected several documents and cartoons to ponder the unsettled question of early 20th-century ideas about women's nature and women's roles. The process of connecting historiography and teaching decisions helped her use a deeper understanding of historical context for selecting content and materials.

The other major assignment is the Year-Long Course Plan (see Appendix). The project includes multiple components: a pacing guide in which students lay out key questions, themes, and concepts for each unit; an actual calendar identifying daily teaching topics; an annotated

bibliography of scholarly historical works consulted; and a statement of rationale and reflection.³⁴ For the rationale, I ask students to discuss the narrative theme(s) or essential question(s) they employ, the scholarly foundation of the theme(s), and examples of where the theme(s) appear on the calendar. I further ask them to discuss what topics they did *not* have time to include on their calendar. In this project, students face the task of selecting and connecting in broad synthetic thinking about U.S. history. They choose when and where to begin—be it with the American Revolution, Europe in 1492, or pre-Columbian history—the units they will teach, and when the story ends. This process, more than any other, helps them think differently about teaching history. As Josh noted in his final paper, “as I set out to design a course in United States History,” he wrote, “I found myself for the first time actually considering History from the point of view of a teacher rather than as a student.”

By this point in the course, students generally understand that I do not expect them to adopt this calendar wholesale in their first teaching jobs and that these future teachers are not necessarily writing their own curriculum. Nor do they think that there is a particular grand narrative of U.S. history they should teach. For example, Amy noted, “history is composed of multiple interpretations of the past, some more valid than others. The use of one narrative limits the scope of understanding, even if the student can relate to it on a personal level...Another disadvantage to the narrative is that students may fall into the trap of regarding the narrative *as* history.” Still, the exercise encourages students to frame their historical understanding of the United States, usually for the first time in their academic careers. There are a number of valuable historical thinking skills and epistemological lessons that these future teachers wrestle with in the preparation of this project. The most obvious is the broad synthetic thinking about U.S. history required to identify narratives and themes and to connect them to daily instructional topics and the curriculum as a whole. Second, in identifying which topics to teach, how to organize those topics into units, and articulating which topics to leave out, future teachers can begin to understand how they exercise interpretive power. When they confront the choice of leaving out antebellum reform movements or the 1970s to teach a few more days of the Civil War, they start to understand this power. If they think that the Civil War is more important than these other topics, they must be able to articulate their historical and pedagogical reasoning. In the final segment of the project, they explain their choices of which events to include and which to leave out *vis-à-vis* the scholarly literature, state standards, and their specific approach to teaching U.S. history. While attention to their selections and connections invites them to deeper understanding of the interpretive nature of history teaching, an

annotated bibliography and rationale require that they think about the historical basis for those interpretations, the narrative approach they take, and the content they select. In this way, the course urges them to move beyond naïve relativism. It asks them to recognize that their teaching choices can and should be informed by a deepening interaction with historical scholarship, not idiosyncratic personal interests.

The Challenges of Seeing Like a History Teacher

The candidates' final course plans illustrate their broad range of disciplinary skills and epistemological and pedagogical understandings of history. Some get it. For example, one student discussed the impact of Eric Foner and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. on her thinking about U.S. history. Drawing heavily on Foner, she discussed how she planned to use a lens of social history to explore how and why meanings of freedom changed over time. Another student developed his course around the question, "How has the 'American Dream' evolved and changed throughout our national history?" He linked this overarching question to complex struggles over the tensions between equality of condition and equality of opportunity as seen in specific moments in U.S. history: the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, women's suffrage, the platforms of presidential candidates in 1912, the New Deal, and the Great Society. In his first unit, "A New Nation," he asked students what "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness means to them now" and then returned to the Revolutionary Era to consider what it meant to people then. Analyzing such similarities and differences "encourages historical thinking skills of context and change over time," he noted. Even if these students never use their calendars, they have begun to think explicitly about their narrative schema of U.S. history and link them to instructional decisions.

Other students struggle. First drafts of the calendar project often identify "change" as the primary theme. Of course, understanding change over time *is* the fundamental goal of history, and the examples above illustrate how it might be used with some sophistication. But some students do not connect causation or consequence to the theme of change and their first efforts lack a causally related chronology, thus exposing their difficulties in exercising one of history's key cognitive skills. I encourage them to transform a generic theme of change to more specific explorations of cause and effect—the affordances and constraints of U.S. institutions, cultures, and historical experiences and the role of individual and collective agency in specific moments and regions.

Course plans also show the extent to which some students deny any role for themselves as meaning makers in their own classrooms. Instead,

they award their future high school students all the authority. Take for example the student who explained that her role as teacher “is to present the information objectively and in an unbiased manner and let the students decide.” The problem with this line of thinking, as Seixas notes, is that “given too much interpretive leeway, students may construct and reinforce untenable views of the past and of their place in historical time.”³⁴ And it entirely avoids the matter of warrantability, which demands that good history be grounded in disciplinary standards of evidence; as I remind students, some historical interpretations are sounder than others. Her approach, which is reflective of so many students, conflates the goal of critical thinking with a naïve relativism. In addition to their epistemological understanding of history, this conflation may well be tied to deeper issues of professional identity, reflecting a larger struggle many teacher candidates have with claiming, or even recognizing, their authority. Attention to disciplinary practices in the classroom encourages teaching strategies that interrogate historical knowledge and authority, including that of the teacher. But this makes some teacher candidates uncomfortable. Consider Josh’s thoughts as he faced the development of a course plan: “Who am I, as a senior in college, to decide what parts of American History are worthy of making the final line up for a course?” Josh’s reluctance to claim the particular disciplinary authority available to the history teacher suggests a wise humility perhaps, but it is also echoed by numerous students who do not want to see themselves as creators of historical interpretations.

Perhaps some of novice teachers’ reluctance to see themselves as historical authorities is rooted in the ways in which school administration, public discourse about failing schools, and professional historians position them. High-stakes testing, scripted curricula, and few opportunities to participate in a broader community of inquiry that includes historians and other history professionals undoubtedly contributes to preservice teachers’ struggles to see themselves as engaging in intellectual and interpretive work. Indeed, Seixas pointed out that “enough distance from the academic community of historians may, in fact, make history teachers unable to construct a classroom community around historical problems.” Teachers may not be producing historical knowledge in the same way as professional historians, but that fact does not “preclude the teacher’s acting in other epistemologically authoritative ways in constructing a community of inquiry in the classroom: establishing criteria for historical evidence, methods of determining historical significance, and limits on interpretive license.”³⁵

My experience with History 4013 illustrates that methods courses can better help aspiring teachers see historical content and curriculum through the eyes of a teacher. Increasing numbers of history departments

and historians are working directly in teacher preparation and inservice development.³⁶ Such circumstances offer opportunities to devise methods courses that bridge the pedagogical and content divide. Yet the examples of my students' challenges suggest that, for some, the task requires more than a single methods course. It will take widespread changes in the way students learn history at all levels. It will also take broader efforts to build *active* communities of historical practice that include professional historians, history educators, and teachers. These communities must focus not only on bringing historical content to teachers, but also on understanding the complex components of history teachers' instructional practices. And they must foster public dialogue about the nature and civic purposes of history education in our schools and communities. In the long run, these efforts will hopefully support and help retain thoughtful, enthusiastic history teachers who may find themselves isolated in their classrooms and struggling to see their teaching as intellectually rich, collaborative, and serving a larger purpose.

Notes

For helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay, I would like to thank Flannery Burke, Deborah Cohen, Andrea Friedman, Daisy Martin, Linda Sargent Wood, and *The History Teacher* reviewers. Special thanks to Rob Good, whose expertise, exacting intellectual standards, and dedication to history students and teachers has enriched this class immeasurably and deepened my understanding of the numerous challenges of teaching U.S. history in the high school classroom. All names of students have been changed. All papers are in my possession.

1. Robert Bain and Jeffrey Mirel, "Setting Up Camp at the Great Instructional Divide: Educating Beginning History Teachers," *Journal of Teacher Education* 57, no. 3 (May/June, 2006): 212-219.

2. See, for example, Thomas D. Fallace, "Once More unto the Breach: Trying to Get Preservice Teachers to Link Historiographical Knowledge to Pedagogy," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 427-446; G. Williamson McDiarmid, "Understanding History for Teaching: A Study of the Historical Understanding of Prospective Teachers," in *Cognitive and Instructional Processes in History and the Social Studies*, ed. Mario Carretero and James F. Voss (Hillsdale, NJ: Lea, 1994). Calls for deeper content knowledge demands that teacher education students enroll in more history classes, not all of which make clear the professor's own narrative or approach. Without this transparency, despite having more information, students seldom develop coherent themes as they teach about the American past or learn to synthesize their knowledge in new and meaningful ways. See Bain and Mirel, "Setting Up Camp at the Great Instructional Divide," on this point.

3. M. Suzanne Donovan and John D. Bransford, eds., *How Students Learn: History in the Classroom* (Washington, D.C: National Academies Press, 2005); Linda S. Levstik and Keith C. Barton, *Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middle Schools* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997); Peter N. Stearns, "Getting Specific about Training in Historical Analysis: A Case Study in World History," in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 419-436; Peter N. Stearns, *Meaning over Memory: Recasting the Teaching of Culture and History* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Wilson J. Warren and D. Antonio Cantu, eds., *History Education 101: The Past, Present, and Future of Teacher Preparation* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008); and Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001). Richard J. Paxton discusses the widespread dependence on textbooks in history classrooms, noting that students tend to read them in an "uncritical and unrefined manner." See Richard J. Paxton, "A Deafening Silence: History Textbooks and the Students Who Read Them," *Review of Educational Research* 69, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 315-339, esp. 333.

4. The history portion of the PRAXIS II in the social studies, for example, consists entirely of multiple-choice identification questions.

5. Joel M. Sipress and David J. Voelker, "The End of the History Survey Course: The Rise and Fall of the Coverage Model," *Journal of American History* 97, no. 4 (March 2011): 1050-1066.

6. Peter Seixas, "The Community of Inquiry as a Basis for Knowledge and Learning: The Case of History," *American Educational Research Journal* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 305-324.

7. Lendol Calder, "Uncoverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for the History Survey," *Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (March 2006): 1358-1370; Laura M. Westhoff, "Historiographic Mapping: Toward a Signature Pedagogy in the History Methods Course," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 4 (March 2012): 1114-1126.

8. As recent president of the American Historical Association William Cronon has observed, synthesis often gets short shrift among historians whose "training has taught them to be wary of tackling" what he calls "Big Questions." See William Cronon, "Breaking Apart, Putting Together," *Perspectives on History* 50, no. 5 (May 2012), <<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1205/Breaking-Apart-Putting-Together.cfm>>.

9. Robert B. Bain and Karen Moje, "Mapping the Teacher Education Terrain for Novices," *Phi Delta Kappan* 93, no. 5 (February 2012): 62.

10. Keith C. Barton and Linda S. Levstik, *Teaching History for the Common Good* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 132.

11. This discussion of narrative follows from Barton and Levstik's extremely helpful discussion in *Teaching History for the Common Good*, 129-149.

12. Robert Bain describes the challenges history teachers face in developing "big pictures" of world history in "'I gotta learn all that stuff?' 'Well, I have to teach it all!': Managing the Laments of World History Teachers," *Social Studies Review* 49 (2011). See also Lauren McArthur Harris and Robert B. Bain, "Pedagogical Content Knowledge for World History Teachers: What Is It? How Might Prospective Teachers Develop It?" *The Social Studies* 102, no. 1 (December 2010): 9-17; Lauren McArthur Harris and Robert B. Bain, "Pedagogical Content Knowledge for World History Teachers: Bridging the Gap between Knowing and Teaching," *American Educator* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 13-16.

13. Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Levels, available at the Teaching Effectiveness Program website, <<http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/assessment/multiplechoicequestions/blooms.html#synthesis>>.
14. Seixas, 317.
15. James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, second ed. (New York: Touchstone, 2007).
16. Barton and Levstik, *Teaching History for the Common Good*.
17. Terrie Epstein, *Interpreting National History: Race, Identity and Pedagogy in Classrooms and Communities* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Diana Turk, Rachel Mattson, Terrie Epstein, Robert Cohen, eds., *Teaching U.S. History: Dialogues among Social Studies Teachers and Historians* (New York: Routledge, 2010). For further discussion on the ways that families and communities contribute to young people's historical knowledge, see David Thelen and Roy Rosenzweig, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) and Sam Wineburg, "Making (Historical Sense in the New Millennium)," in *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, 232-255.
18. John S. Wills, "Misremembering as Mediated Action: Schematic Narrative Templates and Elementary Students' Narration of the Past," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 39, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 115-144; "'Some People Even Died': Martin Luther King, Jr., the Civil Rights Movement and the Politics of Remembrance in Elementary Classrooms," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 18, no. 1 (January-February 2005): 109-131.
19. For further examples of research on narratives in the history classroom, see Bruce VanSledright and Jere Brophy, "Storytelling, Imagination, and Fanciful Elaboration in Children's Historical Reconstructions," *American Educational Research Journal* 27, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 837-859; Bruce VanSledright, "Narratives of Nation-State, Historical Knowledge, and School History Education," *Review of Research in Education* 32, no. 1 (February 2008): 109-146.
20. William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992): 1347-1376; Jerome Bruner, *Making Stories: Law, Literature, and Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).
21. Robert Bain, "Questioning Textbook Authority," available at the National History Education Clearinghouse at [teachinghistory.org](http://www.teachinghistory.org/best-practices/teaching-with-textbooks/20571), <<http://www.teachinghistory.org/best-practices/teaching-with-textbooks/20571>>; Daisy Martin, "Opening up the Textbook," *OAH Newsletter* 36, no. 4 (November 2008), <<http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2008nov/martin.html>>.
22. Bain and Mirel, 212-219; also Robert B. Bain, "Into the Breach: Using Research and Theory to Shape History Instruction" in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 331-353. Such scholarship argues that teachers must also integrate a rich knowledge of student understanding of history into their calculus. Though I heartily agree with this point, it is beyond the scope of this essay.
23. An excellent book that models these types of interaction between historians and teachers is Diana Turk, Rachel Mattson, Terrie Epstein, and Robert Cohen, eds., *Teaching U.S. History: Dialogues among Social Studies Teachers and Historians* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
24. Two excellent examples are historicalthinkingmatters.org and teachinghistory.org.
25. James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For an example of how schematic narratives operate in classrooms, see Wills "Misremembering as Mediated Action."

26. For very helpful discussion on these differences that has been influential in my approach, see Peter Seixas, “*Schwigen! die Kinder!*: or, Does Postmodern History have a Place in the Schools?” in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 19-37; also David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1997).

27. Over the years, I have used a number of readings, including James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*; Diane Ravitch, *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003); Gary B. Nash, Evelyn Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

28. Of course, whether or not U.S. History teachers *should* teach a single narrative continues to animate debates among multiculturalists and traditionalists. But it is well beyond the scope of this article to consider this question. Rather, I aim to expose for students what British history educator Chris Husbands writes of the difficulties of narrative modes in the history classroom, particularly the ways he locates the power to shape meaning in the hands of the teacher: “In narrative, the teacher chooses the characters to include, the language in which to describe them and imputes words to them. She chooses a starting point—the place at which this narrative begins—and brings the story to an end.” See Chris Husbands, *What is History Teaching: Language, Ideas and Meaning in Learning about the Past* (Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press, 1996), 48.

29. Barton and Levstik’s discussion of research on the affordances and constraints of narrative in history education is instructive here. See *Teaching History for the Common Good*, 129-149.

30. James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

31. James Wolfinger, “Historians and History Teachers,” in *History Education 101: The Past, Present, and Future of Teacher Preparation*, ed. Wilson J. Warren and D. Antonio Cantu (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishers, 2007), 139.

32. A number of helpful articles and teaching strategies include Robert B. Bain, “Rounding Up Unusual Suspects: Facing the Authority Hidden in the History Classroom,” *Teachers’ College Record* 108, no. 10 (October 2006): 2080-2114; and Daisy Martin, “From Lecture to Lesson through ‘Opening Up the Textbook,’” *OAH Newsletter* 46, no. 4 (November 2008): 9-11.

33. For a similar experience of success with historiography in methods courses, see Fallace, 433.

34. Seixas, “Community of Inquiry.”

35. *Ibid.*, 320.

36. Sarah Drake Brown, “State Standards for the Teaching of History: Do They Exist? Do They Matter? Does Anyone Care?” presented at the Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, WI, April 2012, in author’s possession. For a contrary perspective on the role of historians in preservice teacher preparation, see Tim Keirn and Eileen Luhr, “Subject Matter Counts: The Pre-Service Teaching and Learning of Historical Thinking,” *The History Teacher* 45, no. 4 (August 2012): 493-511.

Appendix

Year-Long Course Plan Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to synthesize your knowledge of U.S. history, your reading and research, and the materials and discussions in this course to create your own U.S. history course that makes wise use of both historical knowledge and teaching practice. This project will consist of five parts:

1. An Introduction that situates the course in relation to the broader social studies curriculum standards and the Missouri Course Level Expectations for U.S. History. How does this course address the standards and expectations, build on previous social studies courses, and prepare students for future courses?

2. A Pacing Guide that identifies unit titles, major themes, essential questions, and performance assessments.

3. A Calendar that identifies daily teaching topics. Base your calendar on any district calendar, including breaks and professional development days (e.g., the Academic Year Calendar for Ladue School District at <<http://www.ladue.k12.mo.us>>). The calendar may be based on either a block schedule or daily schedule.

4. A Statement of Rationale and Reflection that explains your larger purposes in teaching U.S. history. This statement should describe the conceptualization of American history that will drive your course. What are the narrative themes you will emphasize? What are your historical and pedagogical reasons for this conceptualization? What content do you leave out and why? What contemporary issues might you link to the material throughout the semester? What historians' interpretations that we read in class, or that you have read for the historical investigation or for other courses, shape your ideas about American history? Give three examples of how your themes would be manifested in units or lessons. **The statement should not simply rehash the calendar—it should focus on your goals and themes as well as your interpretation of American history, and it should identify where you build on them in your curriculum.** This statement should be 10-12 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, and an example of your best standard English.

5. An Annotated Bibliography on key works of scholarship and other relevant teaching resources **related to the theme of your course** that you have consulted in preparing to teach this course.