

## “These ‘Hero’ Figures Were Not Alone”: Dismantling Heroification with Primary Sources

Abigail Stebbins and Kate Van Haren  
*The Pennsylvania State University*

THE APPREHENSION, skepticism, fear, and, in some cases, hostility was very palatable on the first day of our elementary social studies methods class during the Fall 2022 semester. The reasons started to become evident when the pre-service teachers (PSTs) were asked to share a memory from their elementary social studies experience. PSTs recalled long hours of memorizing state capitals that they soon forgot, coloring in maps of places they did not know anything about, and learning about historical figures only on days of the year when their teacher felt obligated to mention them. However, most PSTs could barely recall any social studies-specific memories from their elementary experiences.

Although unfortunate, this reality was not surprising. The marginalization of social studies in elementary education has been well documented for decades.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as former elementary teachers ourselves, we experienced apathy for the subject in our own classrooms. We both remember the days of advocating for social studies time, fighting to obtain funding for high-quality picture books and materials, and squeezing in social studies content wherever we could. Although we considered our state standards when planning our lessons, we wanted our elementary students to understand that

social studies was much more important and interesting than “just” civics, political science, history, geography and economics. Rather, we sought to teach social studies for social justice. This goal for transformative, justice-oriented social studies is echoed by Noreen Naseem Rodríguez and Katy Swalwell:

It strives for equity and justice. Period. It is grounded in anti-oppression, with the hope that, someday, people might have the freedom to determine their own fates in consideration of their impact on others. It directly engages the question of how people work collectively, drawing from the experiences and knowledges of those who came before, to build better futures for all life in every place.<sup>2</sup>

When we focused on this more holistic approach to social studies, we witnessed our elementary students take on multiple perspectives, use sources to discuss issues of equity in historical and modern contexts, engage with their communities to solve problems, and begin to see themselves as important citizens of the community. Unfortunately, we know that teaching elementary social studies with this mindset is not always the norm.

As former elementary classroom teachers and current teacher educators, we teach, research, and advocate for anti-oppressive elementary social studies education. In our current role as teacher educators, we consider it our responsibility and mission to facilitate a social studies methods course that prepares PSTs to teach transformative social studies. When designing and facilitating our methods course, we strive to help PSTs better understand what it means to teach anti-oppressive elementary social studies and demonstrate how teaching with a social justice lens can lead to engaging and relevant elementary curriculum and instruction. More specifically, one of our main goals in the methods course is to help PSTs challenge dominant, hero-focused narratives and, instead, teach history for social justice. As such, the purpose of this paper is to share the findings of a qualitative content analysis of PSTs’ efforts to dismantle heroification using primary sources.

### **Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

Teaching history for social justice often requires bravery and a willingness to subvert administrative policies. Education scholars S. G. Grant and Jill Gradwell refer to this as “ambitious teaching.”<sup>3</sup>

Ambitious teachers connect the lived experiences of their students with the subject matter they are teaching. They believe that young learners have the skills and capabilities to grapple with difficult topics. Moreover, ambitious teachers find ways to incorporate relevant and complex learning activities despite different expectations imposed on them by state testing and mandated curriculums. Indeed, in a study of several elementary classrooms, education professor Tina Heafner found that ambitious social studies educators implemented dynamic, inquiry-based instructional practices, engaged students with source material, and privileged student-directed learning.<sup>4</sup> One specific pedagogical strategy ambitious teachers use is teaching with primary sources.

Primary sources are first-hand artifacts and accounts created at the time of an event, such as diary entries, newspaper articles, and photographs. Engaging with primary sources is a valuable historical tool that can help students grapple with multiple perspectives, reach their own conclusions, and take informed action.<sup>5</sup> With careful selection of sources and the use of scaffolded questioning, young learners can engage with and comprehend the rich information in primary sources.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, practitioner research has demonstrated that primary sources can support and enhance elementary students' learning about social studies topics.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, teaching with primary sources can support a justice-focused curriculum.

Education professor Bree Picower offers a six-element framework of social justice curriculum design that draws from the literature of theories and concepts about social justice education; however, her framework is explicitly written with a practitioner audience in mind.<sup>8</sup> According to Picower, teaching the six elements supports elementary educators by offering a roadmap of how to “do” social justice education, not just understand it in theory. The six elements “lead students to value themselves, respect the diversity of the world around them, understand how diverse people have been treated differently and often unjustly, recognize that ordinary people have worked to address such injustice, and take action themselves.”<sup>9</sup> Between the sequential design of the framework to the practical examples she provided in the article, Picower offered an accessible roadmap for infusing social justice into the elementary curriculum. While we walk through all six elements in our semester-long methods course, for the purpose of this paper, we focus on Picower's fourth element: social movements and social change.

Picower's fourth element—social movements and social change—focuses on curriculum and pedagogy that highlights the power of communities working together to address social injustice. According to Picower, with this element of curriculum design, “Teachers help students understand that working together, ordinary people have united to create change.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, this element encourages teachers to push against dominant narratives of heroification and, instead, shine light on community organizing and resistance. Heroification occurs when individuals are turned into “pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest.”<sup>11</sup> When teaching about social movements, heroification is a specific type of dominant narrative that portrays “one exceptional individual as the progenitor of a movement.”<sup>12</sup> For example, in elementary social studies, the Civil Rights Movement curriculum is often limited to teaching about two heroes, Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks.<sup>13</sup> This is problematic because it teaches students that “effective civic action is the task of ‘brave,’ ‘special,’ ‘perfect’ Black people,” which prevents students from learning about the power and resistance of community organization.<sup>14</sup>

Rodríguez and Swalwell offered practical steps to avoid the “pitfall” of heroification in elementary social studies education:

[W]e encourage educators to lean into the complexity of a diversified range of individuals' lives by humanizing rather than heroifying them. In addition, we recommend shifting away from focusing exclusively on individuals to recognize the power of grassroots organizations—not only on famous figures' relationships to people-powered organizations, but an acknowledgment of how generations of “ordinary people” and mass movements are critical for social change.<sup>15</sup>

Drawing from this call to action, we sought to teach PSTs in our methods course about the historical significance of community movements and how social movements from the past can guide and inspire future justice-oriented action.

Taken together, this review of the literature on ambitious teaching, primary sources, social justice curriculum, and heroification informs and frames our study. The purpose of this study is to better understand how PSTs use primary sources to challenge heroification in elementary social studies lesson plans. This study is important because research has shown that PSTs are more confident using primary sources in their teaching when they have the opportunity

to engage in primary source inquiries during their methods course.<sup>16</sup> This study sought to build off of these findings by exploring how and why PSTs use primary sources in their lesson plans about social movements.

### **Authors' Positionality**

Like the majority of public-school teachers in the United States,<sup>17</sup> we are both white women. We recognize that our racial identity, as well as our experiences growing up in middle-class families in the Midwest, offer us various privileges. As we have grown in our critical consciousness of these privileges, we have developed a deep mission as educators to teach with a justice-focused orientation. As former elementary teachers and current teacher educators, we aim to enact this mission in our classrooms by developing justice-oriented citizens. We believe that transformative teaching sits at the intersection of high-quality content that is rooted in counter narratives and relevant, engaging pedagogy that is responsive to students' cultures, needs, and interests. Currently, as teacher educators, we teach an undergraduate elementary social studies methods course with an explicitly anti-oppressive<sup>18</sup> and culturally relevant lens.<sup>19</sup> For the purpose of this paper, we highlight the portion of our course that focuses on teaching the African American Civil Rights Movement, specifically focusing on one particular assignment.

### **Context**

The methods course we teach is the lone social studies course within the elementary and early childhood teacher education program at a large, public university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The PSTs enrolled in the course are in their final semester of coursework prior to student teaching. During this final semester of coursework, PSTs take a set of disciplinary inquiry courses, which includes math, science, and social studies methods. In addition to these courses, PSTs are placed in a local elementary classroom for a pre-student teaching field experience two days per week. During the Fall 2022 semester, we each taught two sections of the course, with a total of approximately 120 PSTs across the four sections. Each section met for 75 minutes twice per week.

For four consecutive class sessions during the Fall 2022 semester, we focused our attention on curriculum and instruction related to teaching Black History and the African American Civil Rights Movement. The first three of these class sessions were designed to boost PSTs' content knowledge and offer pedagogical strategies that could be adapted and used in their future elementary classrooms. PSTs read and discussed chapters from Jeanne Theoharis's *A More Beautiful and Terrible History* (2018)<sup>20</sup> and listened to a podcast interview with LaGarrett King about his framework for black historical consciousness.<sup>21</sup> We also modeled and facilitated a mini-inquiry centered on the compelling question, "Was Rosa Parks the hero of the Montgomery Bus Boycott?" This mini-inquiry included a mixer activity that explored the community efforts of the Montgomery Bus Boycott<sup>22</sup> and an analysis of primary sources from the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

With these experiences and background knowledge in mind, we designed a "lesson sketch" assignment for students to complete on the fourth and final session of this unit. The assignment was the third lesson sketch of the semester, so students were familiar with the purpose and format. In short, the lesson sketches were designed for PSTs to apply their learning into a practice lesson plan and, more importantly, reflect on the "why" behind these lessons. In other words, these lesson sketches were designed to support PSTs in learning how and why to teach social studies for social justice.

This particular lesson sketch assignment asked PSTs to design a primary source analysis lesson focused on social movements using the compelling question, "How do communities make change together?" Requirements for the assignment included finding at least four primary sources and writing at least three inquiry-based questions for each primary source. Up to three of the primary sources could be about the African American Civil Rights Movement; however, at least one source needed to be from a different social movement. In addition to planning the lesson itself, the assignment required PSTs to reflect on their rationale for their lesson planning decisions. An example of a first-grade lesson sketch is included in **Appendix A**, and a fourth-grade example is included in **Appendix B**.

PSTs were permitted to complete this assignment individually or in groups no larger than three people. The assignments were completed in one 75-minute class session and were submitted to

course instructors at the end of class. Although the lesson plans were collected from two different instructors, the syllabi and assignment directions for all sections of the course were nearly identical. The data was not analyzed for research purposes until after consent was obtained at the conclusion of the semester. This yielded a data set of forty-eight lesson sketches.

### **Research Questions**

In an effort to better understand how PSTs teach history for social justice, this study asked the following research questions: (1) How do PSTs use primary sources to disrupt heroification? (2) What factors inform their selection of primary sources? To investigate these questions, this study used qualitative content analysis<sup>23</sup> to analyze forty-eight lesson sketches written by PSTs. The data collection was a result of convenience sampling,<sup>24</sup> given both authors were the instructors of the methods course. After coding the data, we created themes within the data, which we share here.

### **Findings**

Analysis of the forty-eight lesson sketches resulted in four themes that helped answer our research questions. These themes include: (1) centering community, (2) a spectrum of social action, (3) embracing visual images, and (4) historical and contemporary connections. The subsequent sections will explicate these four themes.

#### *Centering Community*

Across the forty-eight lesson sketches, primary sources were used to dismantle heroification by (re)centering community organizing. Analysis of the lesson sketches revealed that PSTs purposefully selected primary sources that featured community efforts. In other words, “heroes,” such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, played minor roles in the lesson sketches PSTs designed. This suggests that PSTs crafted their lessons to actively challenge hero-focused narratives and, instead, center community efforts. As one PST noted, “these ‘hero’ figures were not alone, and it was in fact a community all coming together to support and increase the reach of the movement.”

By choosing community-focused primary sources, PSTs challenged dominant narratives of heroification and shed light on parts of history that often go untold. As one group of PSTs reflected:

In different ways, sometimes not heard through the dominant narrative, regular members of the community stepped up to make their voices heard, attended meetings, peacefully protested, and ultimately worked together to send a greater message. Social movements do not occur with just one person or one event, it is a culmination of events and people who decided that something was worth standing up for.

Elaborating on this idea, another pair of PSTs noted in their lesson sketch that primary sources can “capture the unseen side of the history and lead students to think about other important roles that were not mentioned in the [textbook]. It shows students that social changes were done by a community, not just one person.” In addition to centering community, PSTs also used primary sources to showcase different examples of social action.

### *A Spectrum of Social Action*

Another theme that emerged from analysis of the lesson sketches is that primary sources can dismantle heroification by illustrating different forms of social action. Often, heroes of social movements are the leaders making speeches and walking at the front of a protest. However, there are other ways to meaningfully contribute to a social movement. Across the forty-eight lesson sketches, the primary sources that PSTs selected illustrated a spectrum of social action. Reflecting on why they selected their primary sources, one pair of PSTs said:

We selected these four sources because we wanted to see different ways that people were protesting (like walking to work, writing letters, making signs, and more). Each example demonstrates a strategy that can be used to raise awareness of an issue or civil rights concern.

Other PSTs echoed this idea by selecting primary sources that reflect “multiple ways social movement and change can be enacted.” By doing this, PSTs humanized social movements.

Several PSTs noted in their reflections that their purpose in illustrating different forms of social action was to inspire children that there is no hierarchy of social action. Rather, efforts big and



small are all worthwhile. As one group of PSTs suggested, “we wanted our young learners to be empowered and see themselves as able to take action.” To support this goal, several PSTs chose to include primary sources in their lesson sketches that featured smaller-scale—yet no less important—social actions, such as citizens painting a justice-oriented mural in a local community. PSTs also embraced other elementary-specific considerations when selecting primary sources for their lessons.

### *Embracing Visual Images*

Many PSTs embraced a student-centered mindset when justifying the rationale behind their chosen primary sources. The knowledge that they were using these sources with young learners was very evident in their thought processes. The need to address different types of learning styles was clear in the comments. Some PSTs made a conscious effort to pick both text- and visual-based sources in their primary source set. For example, one group stated, “we selected a mix of written sources so that students have different types of sources for different types of learners.” However, the majority of PSTs created primary source sets focused on the use of visual images.

Across the data set, PSTs offered several rationales for exclusively using visual images in their primary source lessons. Some PSTs acknowledged that a lack of reading skills might prevent their young students from engaging with and fully comprehending text-based primary sources. For example, one group of PSTs justified their reliance on images by stating, “we wanted first graders to be involved in the process without having to worry about decoding words and then having to understand what they mean.” Other PSTs extended this notion by embracing an asset-based mindset toward the unique talents that young learners possess. For example, one PST noted that “kindergarteners learn well through visuals. They can depict details such as facial expressions, clothing, and setting easily, as well as provide new insight that adults wouldn’t have seen before.” Another PST opted to use visual images in their lesson because they believed photographs would be accessible and familiar to young children. More specifically, this PST commented, “I like the progression of images and that they tell a story, just like a read-aloud.”

Taken together, these various rationales illustrate the intentionality PSTs brought to their lesson planning. PSTs embraced an asset-based, student-centered mindset in order to select sources that would simultaneously meet the needs of students and engage them in historical analysis. In addition to the format of each primary source (i.e., text- or visual-based), PSTs were also purposeful in the selection of primary sources based on the content.

### *Historical and Contemporary Connections*

As discussed previously, one of the requirements in the assignment was including at least one primary source that was not from the African American Civil Rights Movement. PSTs' ability to make thoughtful connections between social movements past and present was evident throughout the forty-eight lesson sketches. Examples of connections PSTs made with social movements of the past included, but are not limited to, the suffrage movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, United Farm Workers Strike, founding of the Red Cross, and 504 sit-ins. PSTs also drew parallels with contemporary movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the worldwide protests after the murder of George Floyd, LGBTQ+ protests, the Women's March on Washington, and the March For Our Lives movement. For all of these examples, PSTs' lesson plans featured inquiry-based questions focused on the actions of groups of people and how they were working together to make change and raise awareness.

Prior to the assignment, we never explicitly engaged PSTs in conversations about the parallels between social movements past and present; they were making these connections on their own. The reflective portions of their assignments provided a glimpse into how PSTs were making these connections. For example, one group explained why they paired images of a Black Lives Matter protest with images from the Montgomery Bus Boycott. They said, "the [Black Lives Matter] pictures help students inference how oppression and segregation still lingered after the bus event" [sic]. Similarly, another group of PSTs suggested they chose primary sources from the Black Lives Matter movement because it "is also a huge movement that is still going on today, and change is actively being made, but there are still things to be done." These examples

demonstrate that PSTs were thinking about how primary sources could help teach students that the fight for justice continues. One student articulated this notion, explaining:

Just because Rosa Parks refused to stand up it didn't end there. Everyone continued to fight for what was right and achieved big steps. Today the same things are still happening. George Floyd's death sparked a huge wave of activism and social change that is still continuing today. Using older and primary sources as well as present-day primary sources show students that even though on paper, people are equal and racism is no more, it still does happen, and we can still act in power to create change.

Notably, this PST not only drew connections between past and present activists, but also pointed toward the future. This suggests that PSTs may use primary sources to inspire their students to take action.

### **Discussion and Implications**

During a recent webinar on teaching histories, Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries stated that “we need primary sources so we can see how the Black Freedom movement has persisted over time.” Jeffries explained further, “we can tell students, ‘here are the pieces of the puzzle; now you tell me what the bigger picture is.’”<sup>25</sup> The findings of our study echo the sentiments expressed by Jeffries and suggest that primary sources offer an avenue for PSTs to teach history for social justice. This is notable because previous research has stated that elementary PSTs often lack the content knowledge to be able to teach a comprehensive, complicated view of history.<sup>26</sup> As such, this study has implications for classroom teachers and teacher educators alike.

Teaching and learning history for social justice is not easy. According to Jeffries, it is not uncommon for people to go through a range of emotions after learning the hard realities of history for the first time and deciding what to do with that knowledge. As teacher educators, we observed the PSTs in this study move through similar stages of reflection. For example, one PST commented:

I don't think race was ever explicitly talked about in my primary school education. Yes, we learned about the Civil Rights Movement, but beyond that, we didn't talk about prejudice, racism, or discrimination, or learn about perspectives outside of the default, predominantly white

perspective of history. I never learned about power imbalances of white and non-white people or how the history of racism was a factor in most events and phenomena in US history.

Another PST commented on their frustration with one-sided, inaccurate history by saying, “not only are teachers giving false information, but the children’s books they read, the resources they use, and the videos they share back up this false narrative and it can be upsetting and insensitive.” Other PSTs’ emotions were more optimistic. For example, one PST noted:

I have learned more about American history in the last 13 weeks that I have in the last 13 years. It is powerful to realize how much can be learned and taught in such a short period of time. It shows how effective social studies can be in elementary school classrooms if taught differently than when I was in school.

While the PSTs’ reflections spanned a spectrum of emotions, the findings of this study suggest that primary sources opened the door for PSTs to identify and embrace their role as anti-oppressive educators and agents of change.

This realization came to life with PSTs forward-thinking reflections about the possibilities that exist in classrooms when educators teach history for social justice. In one PST’s words:

These practices require that we, as educators, take a deeper and more analytical look into the topics that we are presenting to students. This includes reviewing the various content areas, supplies, holiday celebrations and media sources that we utilize. Educational racial-based injustices are not sprinkled throughout the system, but are longstanding and built-in issues that plague all areas of academia, even ones that we may not realize.

Despite their growing understanding of history and confidence to think and teach from a social justice lens, several PSTs also noted the challenges of teaching this way in the classroom. More specifically, PSTs commented on the lack of dedicated social studies time in elementary classrooms, expressed concern about potential pushback from administrators and community members, and noted the disconnect between university and elementary classrooms. These sentiments are echoed in previous literature about PSTs’ resistance to teaching for justice in the classroom.<sup>27</sup>

We acknowledge that we are sending PSTs into environments that may not always welcome teaching that is focused on social justice. However, the results of this study suggest that primary sources are an avenue to dismantle heroification and teach history for social justice. In their lesson plans and corresponding reflections, it appears that primary sources may support PSTs' confidence to find ways to tackle these topics in their elementary classrooms, which mirrors findings from prior research.<sup>28</sup> The findings of our study are best summarized by one PST's culminating reflection on the promising potential of teaching social justice with primary sources:

We need to trust children to be able to handle this, and understand that they can make ideas based on what we provide them, especially through primary sources. Trust your students to think critically and they will be able to.

## Notes

We extend our sincere appreciation to Dr. Stephanie Schroeder for designing the civil rights unit taught in the methods course, as well as her invaluable leadership and support in designing the lesson sketch assignment featured in this paper.

1. Paul G. Fichett, Tina L. Heafner, and Richard G. Lambert, "Examining Elementary Social Studies Marginalization: A Multilevel Model," *Educational Policy* 28, no. 1 (January 2014): 40-68; Tina L. Heafner, "Elementary ELA/Social Studies Integration: Challenges and Limitations," *The Social Studies* 109, no. 1 (January 2018): 1-12.

2. Noreen Naseem Rodríguez and Katy Swalwell, *Social Studies for a Better World: An Anti-Oppressive Approach for Elementary Educators* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2022), 42.

3. S. G. Grant and Jill M. Gradwell, "The Road to Ambitious Teaching: Creating Big Idea Units in History Classes," *Journal of Inquiry & Action in Education* 2, no. 1 (2009): 1-26.

4. Heafner, "Elementary ELA/Social Studies Integration," 10.

5. S. G. Grant, "From Inquiry Arc to Instructional Practice: The Potential of the C3 Framework," *Social Education* 77, no. 6 (2013): 322-326.

6. Cheryl Franklin Torrez and Scott M. Waring, "Elementary School Students, Artifacts and Primary Sources: Learning to Engage in Historical Inquiry," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 4, no. 2 (July 2009): 79-86.

7. Michelle Bauml and Lisa May, "Veterans Day Then and Now: First Graders Learn from Primary Sources and Take Action," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 32, no. 2 (November-December 2019): 26-31; Noreen Naseem Rodriguez, Anna Falkner, and Elizabeth Tetu Bohl, "Reading Beyond the Book with Primary Sources," *The Reading Teacher* 75, no. 6 (May-June 2022): 749-754.
8. Bree Picower, "Using Their Words: Six Elements of Social Justice Curriculum Design for the Elementary Classroom," *International Journal of Multicultural Education* 14, no. 1 (April 2012).
9. Picower, "Using Their Words," 2.
10. Picower, "Using Their Words," 5.
11. James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York: The New Press, 2008), 11.
12. Derrick P. Alridge, "The Limits of Master Narratives in History Textbooks: An Analysis of Representations of Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Teachers College Record* 108, no. 4 (April 2006): 665.
13. Christopher L. Busey and Irene Walker, "A Dream and a Bus: Black Critical Patriotism in Elementary Social Studies Standards," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 45, no. 4 (2017): 456-488.
14. Ashley N. Woodson, "We're Just Ordinary People: Messianic Master Narratives and Black Youths' Civic Agency," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 44, no. 2 (2016): 204.
15. Rodriguez and Swalwell, *Social Studies for a Better World*, 89.
16. Eula Fresch, "Motivating for Inquiry and Civic Participation through Primary Sources about Historical Peers," in *Social Studies and Diversity Education: What We Do and Why We Do It*, ed. Elizabeth E. Heilman, Ramona Fruja Amthor, and Matthew T. Missias (New York: Routledge, 2010): 267-269.
17. Maura Spiegelman, "Race and Ethnicity of Public School Teachers and Their Students, Data Point NCES 2020-103," National Center for Education Statistics (September 2020), <<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/>>.
18. Rodriguez and Swalwell, *Social Studies for a Better World*.
19. Gloria Ladson-Billings, *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Asking a Different Question* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2021).
20. Jeanne Theoharis, *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2018).
21. LaGarrett J. King, "Black History Is Not American History: Toward a Framework of Black Historical Consciousness," *Social Education* 84, no. 6 (November-December 2020): 335-341.
22. Adapted from Bill Bigelow, "The Rebellious Lives of Mrs. Rosa Parks," Zinn Education Project, 2020, <[https://www.zinnedproject.org/wp-content/uploads/\\_pda/2020/04/rosa\\_parks\\_mixer.pdf](https://www.zinnedproject.org/wp-content/uploads/_pda/2020/04/rosa_parks_mixer.pdf)>.
23. Marilyn Domas White and Emily E. Marsh, "Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology," *Library Trends* 55, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 22-45.
24. Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, fourth ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2021).
25. Courtney Suci, "How Do We Talk to Students About Racism? Teaching Students the Hard History of Slave and Race Relations in the US to Better

Understand the Present and Prepare for the Future,” *ProQuest Blog*, September 9, 2022, <<https://about.proquest.com/en/blog/2020/how-do-we-talk-to-students-about-racism/>>.

26. Andrea M. Hawkman, “Swimming in and through Whiteness: Antiracism in Social Studies Teacher Education,” *Theory & Research in Social Education* 48, no. 3 (2020): 403-430; Jennifer H. James, “Teachers as Protectors: Making Sense of Preservice Teachers’ Resistance to Interpretation in Elementary History Teaching,” *Theory & Research in Social Education* 36, no. 3 (2008): 172-205.

27. Cheryl Mason Bolick, Reid Adams, and Lara Willox, “The Marginalization of Elementary Social Studies in Teacher Education,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 5, no. 2 (July 2010): 1-22; Brian K. Lanahan and Elizabeth Anne Yeager, “Practicing Teachers as Elementary Social Studies Methods Instructors: Issues in Preparing Preservice Elementary Teachers,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 3, no. 2 (July 2008): 10-28; Jeff Passe, “New Challenges in Elementary Social Studies,” *The Social Studies* 97, no. 5 (September-October 2006): 189-192.

28. Fresch, “Motivating for Inquiry and Civic Participation.”

## Appendix A: Sample Lesson Plan (First Grade)

<b>Lesson Overview</b>	
<b>Grade Level</b>	1st Grade
<b>Compelling Question</b>	How do communities make change together?
<b><u>Social Justice Standards</u></b> (Choose at least one)	<p>Action Standard #20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will join with classmates to make our classroom fair for everyone.</li> </ul> <p>Justice Standard #15:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I know about people who helped stop unfairness and worked to make life better for many people.</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Source Analysis</b>	
<b>Source Name/ Description &amp; Link</b>	<b>Questions/Prompts (and expected answers)</b>
<p><b>Source 1:</b> <i>Letter from Jo Ann Gibson Robinson to the Mayor of Montgomery</i></p> <p><a href="https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/693">https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/693</a></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What stood out to you in the letter?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She said what she wanted, and she wanted the Mayor to listen to her.</li> </ol> </li> <li>Why did the woman (Jo Ann Gibson) write this letter to the Mayor of Montgomery?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She wanted the Mayor to listen to her and they wanted someone in power to act upon their requests.</li> </ol> </li> <li>Why do we write letters to people?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ask for something.</li> <li>To share ideas.</li> <li>To make sure our thoughts are recorded.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Source 2:</b> <i>A series of images of the Montgomery Bus Boycott</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you see in these images?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People are standing around not boarding the bus.</li> <li>People are boarding a bus together.</li> </ol> </li> <li>What do you think is going on in these images?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They are refusing to board the bus because they are not being treated fairly.</li> <li>They are boarding together because people in groups have more power.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>



3. What do these images make you wonder?
  - a. How do the people feel not riding the bus?
  - b. Why are they boarding the bus?
  - c. Were they successful?
  - d. What happened at the end of the boycott?
  - e. Who are the people in the picture?

<https://www.insider.com/montgomery-bus-boycott-photos-anniversary-civil-rights-movement-2019-12#integration-was-slow-though-because-of-montgomerys-white-communitys-hostility-toward-the-change-and-while-the-buses-were-integrated-bus-stops-remained-segregated-due-to-violence-and-resistance-within-the-white-community-11>

**Source 3:**

*Image of Rosa Parks  
boarding a bus  
AFTER the boycott*

1. Who do you see in this picture?
  - a. An African American woman.
  - b. Rosa Parks.
  - c. Smiling and happy people.
2. What do you know about Rosa Parks?
  - a. She refused to get off the bus.
  - b. She wasn't the only one who refused to get off the bus.
  - c. She was part of a movement.
3. The title mentions desegregated. What does that tell you about the Montgomery Boycotts?
  - a. People like Rosa Parks could board the bus.
  - b. The movement was successful.

<https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/media/rosa-parks-boards-a-desegregated-bus/>

**Source 4:**

*Picture of protestors  
marching along  
Saginaw Street*

1. What do you see in this picture? Who do you see?
  - a. People walking with signs, adults and kids, who look unhappy.
2. What do you think is going on?
  - a. People marching for something.
  - b. The signs.
3. What does this make you wonder?
  - a. What do the signs mean?
  - b. What happened?
  - c. Why are they marching?
  - d. They are trying to share information with a lot of people.
  - e. They want to work together as a group.

<https://www.mlive.com/news/flint/2020/08/12-critical-moments-in-the-history-of-the-flint-water-crisis.html>

**Source 5:**

Article about  
“Little Miss Flint”  
and background

1. What is the connection between the two sources?
  - a. They are both different ways the people of Flint were telling people outside of the community about the polluted water crisis and asking other to help them.
2. Why do you think Mari (“Little Miss Flint”) wrote her letter to President Obama?
  - a. Because he is the president, he has the power to encourage others to help solve the problem.
3. How can we connect this to what we learned about the Montgomery Bus Boycott?
  - a. Each different movement involved individual and group actions.
  - b. Both movements involved protesting and letter writing.

<https://www.today.com/style/what-mari-copeny-aka-little-miss-flint-now-t159829>

### Lesson Assessment & Extension

**Assessment:**

How will students answer the compelling question?

For assessment, we will make a poster together of things that we could do as a classroom community to make our classroom a fair and safe space for everyone. We will get ideas from students about things that would be possible for first graders to accomplish. We will then discuss different ways to raise awareness about the problems, and possible solutions. Students can also discuss who can help solve the problem.

**Possible suggestions:**

- School recycling programs
- Mentoring programs
- Playground toys and equipment
- More books for classroom library
- Asking sure everyone feels safe at school and is able learn

**Taking Informed Action:**

What will students do now that they have this new information? How will they share it with others?

Students will organize their own “movement” to raise awareness about their chosen problem. They will be able to base their actions on things they learned from the previous movements, and possibly come up with ideas of their own. For example, how can they use modern technology and media, a tool the people in the Montgomery Bus Boycott didn’t have.

Appendix B: Sample Lesson Plan (Fourth Grade)

Lesson Overview	
<b>Grade Level</b>	4th Grade
<b>Compelling Question</b>	How do communities make change together?
<b><u>Social Justice Standards</u></b> (Choose at least one)	Justice Standard #12: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).</li> </ul> Action Standard #17: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice, and injustice.</li> </ul>
Primary Source Analysis	
Source Name/Description & Link	Questions/Prompts (and expected answers)
<b>Source 1:</b> <i>Interview – An African-American Woman Describes Segregated Buses in Montgomery</i>  <a href="https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1831">https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1831</a>	1. How does this interview make you feel? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upset, frustrated - They paid for the bus, so why can't they sit where they want?</li> </ol> 2. What role do you think this woman played in the boycott? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I read that she was at a carpool station. I bet she was helping to boycott.</li> <li>A volunteer.</li> <li>A leader - maybe she organized a carpool.</li> </ol> 3. How else do you think people participated in the boycott and make a change? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donated money.</li> <li>Offered their car for a carpool.</li> <li>Attended meetings and events.</li> </ol>
<b>Source 2:</b> <i>Promotion Flyer – Woman's Suffrage</i>	1. When thinking of the costs of war, what are your first reactions? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soldiers losing their lives.</li> <li>The financial cost of war.</li> </ol>

2. Did any of the costs of war on this source surprise you?
  - a. I didn't think about what would happen at home when all the men go away to fight.
  - b. I didn't think about how women ran society when men went to war.
  - c. Women were never seen or heard when discussing the costs of war.
3. Why do you think women wanted the right to vote?
  - a. Because women's voices weren't being heard.
  - b. Women's stories and perspectives were unseen and unheard.
4. What did women do to make a change?
  - a. They had meetings.
  - b. They made posters.
  - c. They told people about their beliefs.

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/womens-suffrage-wwi.htm>

**Source 3:**  
*Photograph –  
 Dakota Access  
 Pipeline Protests*

1. What stands out to you from this photograph?
  - a. It's a photo of young people.
  - b. The sign says "Water is Sacred."
  - c. They're walking together and holding signs.
2. What do you know about the movement at Standing Rock?
  - a. It was a movement to protect the land and water.
  - b. It was led by indigenous peoples.
  - c. No, I've never heard of it before.
3. How did the young people make a change?
  - a. They led marches.
  - b. They organized meetings.
  - c. They created signs and wore shirts to promote their beliefs.

<https://www.kqed.org/lowdown/27023/the-youth-of-standing-rock>

**Source 4:**  
*Map – LGBTQ+ Rights Movement*

1. Is there anything that surprises you about this map?
  - a. Florida, Iowa, South Dakota have signed anti-LGBTQ+ bills into law.
  - b. There are a lot of states introducing anti-LGBTQ+ bills.
2. How do you feel about this?
  - a. Angry
  - b. Disappointed
  - c. Confused
3. How could communities make change against these unjust bills?
  - a. Spread the word by making maps and visuals like this.
  - b. Call and write letters to lawmakers.
  - c. Talk to people about why these laws are unkind.

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/state-maps/anti-lgbtq-bills-in-2021>

**Lesson Assessment & Extension**

**Assessment:**  
How will students answer the compelling question?

1. While analyzing the four primary sources, student responses to the guiding questions provide opportunities for formative assessment.
2. After analyzing the four primary sources, students will answer the compelling question “How do communities make change together?” by filling out a graphic organizer with the following questions:
  - How did a community make change together in...
    - Source 1?
    - Source 2?
    - Source 3?
    - Source 4?
  - Overall, I learned that communities make change by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Taking Informed Action:**

What will students do now that they have this new information? How will they share it with others?

1. Now that students will have the awareness and understanding that social movements have more people involved to make the change possible than meets the eye, this will spark them to be hopeful about making change within their community. They can raise awareness and make action for issues that affect them personally within their community.
2. Following this activity, students can look for social action opportunities they can take in their own communities. As a class, students can identify issues that are present in their community and create a list and explain why they think each issue is present and what they can do to make a change.

**Possible suggestions:**

- Organize a food/coat/mitten/etc. drive.
- Make posters to put up at school and in the community to raise awareness of an issue.
- Ask the principal to add a new “activism” segment to the school’s morning announcements with tips for and examples of activism.

*U.S. Library of Congress: “Free to Use and Reuse: Teachers and Students”*  
<https://www.loc.gov/free-to-use/teachers-and-students/>

