

Elementary Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes Toward Digitized Visual Primary Sources in the  
Social Studies

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## **Dedication**

Dedicated to my mentor, Dr. Thomas Noel Turner:

Over the past four years, you have taught me life lessons that extend far beyond this dissertation.

When times get hard, I will remain grateful.

Thank you for always being there for me and my family.

And to Nancy Turner:

Thank you for your encouragement and love throughout. I look forward to many more adventures with you.

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study examined the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers toward using digitized visual primary sources in the social studies. Specifically, the researcher attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes toward incorporating digitized visual primary sources in social studies instruction prior to a workshop?
2. To what extent if any, does exposure to strategies using digitized visual primary sources affect elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes?
3. How, if at all, do elementary pre-service teachers think that digitized visual primary sources should be used after a workshop.

Data for this qualitative study consisted of pre and post workshop questionnaires, reflection prompts, and the researcher's journal reflections. These data were collected before, during and after a workshop that trained elementary pre-service teachers in many aspects of teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources that included four research-based strategies.

The researcher drew four conclusions from this study. First, teacher-training workshops can help pre-service teachers transform their beliefs in relation to how best to use digitized visual primary sources. Second, the participants remained optimistic about their beliefs in the benefits in using digitized visual primary sources, while challenges of time to scaffold became apparent in the workshop. The third conclusion was that pre-service teachers were motivated by current, innovative, and technology based teaching strategies with digitized visual primary sources such as creating memes or document analysis strategies. Fourth, the participants perceived obstacles with perspective taking and detecting bias strategies that are sensitive in nature.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

For over a decade now, the nation's scholars have been advocating for the inclusion of primary sources in the classroom (Barton, 2005; Barton, & Levstik, 2003; Bell-Russel, 2011; Cleary & Neumann, 2009; Edinger, 2000; Fresch, 2004; Hicks, Doolittle & Lee, 2004; Kobrin, 1996; Levstik & Barton, 2011; Reisman, 2012; VanSledright, 2002, 2004; and Waring, & Torrez, 2010). Primary sources are materials that provide first-hand evidence of an event, a person's life or a historical period (Kobrin, 1996). The belief that using primary sources can promote higher order thinking skills and enjoyment of history is not a new development. A report by Hazen, Bourne, Dean, Farrand & Hart (1902) shared the perspectives of the American Historical Association's Committee of Seven in 1899 who claimed that primary sources could show "the nature of the historical process, and at the same time may make the people and events of bygone eras more real" (p. 104). These authors also shared the beliefs of the New England Teachers' Association who remarked about engagement with primary sources by stating that they were "not as plain as reading; inquisitiveness, patience, and imagination must all be invoked" (Hazen, Bourne, Dean, Farrand & Hart, p. 12).

In spite of arguments for the positive effects on using primary sources in the elementary classroom, many elementary teachers are reluctant to incorporate them (Fresch, 2004). According to Waring and Torrez (2010), "The minimal use of primary sources in elementary social studies has been due, in the past, primarily to the lack of availability of primary sources and lack of time available to educators for locating primary sources" (p. 294).

Today, repositories of online digitized primary sources are accessible via the Internet for educators' use and are often free of charge. Specifically, the Library of Congress and the National Archives include vast collections of digitized photographs, manuscripts, maps, sound

recordings, motion pictures, and books, as well as "born digital" materials such as Web sites that share teaching strategies to further encourage the position of primary sources in today's social studies classrooms (Library of Congress, 2015). Additionally, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the leading organization of social studies educators, places value on teaching with primary sources through their *Teaching with Documents* site, a virtual archive of primary sources with resources such as detailed lesson plans. These sites provide a wealth of sources for social studies instruction. Therefore, accessibility to primary source documents is no longer the hurdle that it once was.

While access to digitized visual primary sources has become more convenient, time to teach social studies in general has become a constraint. As teachers balance curriculum and testing demands, social studies instruction is often seen as an elective in lieu of teaching English language arts and math, which receive the most attention from high stakes testing (Henning & Shin, 2010). Arguably, social studies can serve as a venue for teaching critical thinking skills, which are at the heart of every academic domain. According to Tally & Goldberg, (2005), "the centrality of these skills is a key reason why digital archives of primary sources, such as those from the Library of Congress and elsewhere, have important roles to play in improving elementary, middle, and secondary teaching and learning across the curriculum" (p. 2).

Time to teach with visual documents is coupled with a lack of prior knowledge and experience on the part of educators. Specifically, in regard to teacher preparation, pre-service teachers begin a teacher preparation program with attitudes about teaching and learning that have evolved over entire academic careers (Doppen, 2007, Owens, 1997). More often than not, experiences in social science education have culminated in a lack luster view from years of rote memorization of facts and dates with little emphasis on higher order thinking skills (Owens,

1997). In order to overcome this challenge, instruction in social studies must change. Barton (2005), calls for an abandonment of “lecture, textbooks, and worksheets” in favor of primary sources that can be “inspiring and rigorous” (p. 746). Other social science scholars have issued this plea (Fresch, 2004; Hicks, Doolittle, & Lee, 2004; Kobrin, 1996; Reisman, 2012; VanSledright, 2002, 2004). However, teacher attitudes about the use and effectiveness of such materials remain little unchanged (Waring & Torres, 2010).

### **The Problem**

For the purposes of this study, the extensive body of visual primary sources will be limited mainly to digitized visual primary sources; specifically prints and photographs that are accessible in digitized form via the Internet. The researcher will use the term visual primary sources and digitized visual primary sources interchangeably. The rationale for the researcher’s decision to exclude other forms of visual primary sources was the convenience that online photographs and prints present to our future teachers and the likelihood of their use over other visual forms.

Teaching social studies with visuals has become an increasingly welcome shift to balance the dominance of text-based teaching practices in the social studies (Barton, 2005; Cleary & Neumann, 2009; Feighey, 2010 & Werner, 2012). In recent years, policy makers and educators have recognized the value of engaging students who live in a visually articulated world with digitized visual primary sources as a medium to foster historical inquiry through students’ interpretation, analysis and synthesis of abstract historical concepts (Barton, 2005; Fresch, 2004; Feighey, 2010; Levstik & Barton, 2011; VanSledright, 2002; Werner, 2012). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is at the forefront of the movement. Their journals, *Social Education* and *Social Studies and the Young Learner* highlight the value of utilizing digitized visual primary sources on student learning and provides beneficial pedagogical strategies for

their use. Additionally, numerous book publications have promoted the use of ‘reading historical images’ (Edinger, 2000; Kobrin, 1996; Levstik & Barton, 2011; Percoco, 1998; & VanSledright, 2002).

In spite of the existing literature supporting the use of digitized visual primary sources, elementary teachers are not comfortable with their integration into their social studies teaching strategies (Waring & Torrez, 2010). This is especially true among elementary level pre-service teachers. According to Fresch (2004), “until the past decade, the emphasis seemed to be on using primary sources with older students” (p. 1). Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere & Stewart (2008) further purport that the majority of the literature surrounding the importance and strategies with visual primary sources is focused on grades 7-12.

National and state social studies standards encourage pre-service elementary teachers to develop pedagogical knowledge that supports a context for learning where students construct historical understanding by their asking questions, conducting investigations and drawing conclusions from visual primary sources as historical evidence. Research suggests that once in the teaching field, however, teachers are not utilizing these pedagogical strategies that engage students with digitized visual primary sources (Holloway & Chiodo, 2009). Elementary in-service teachers reported lack of time to teach with primary sources (Waring & Torrez, 2010). Other reasons were lack of content and pedagogical knowledge necessary to teach with primary sources (Gillaspie & Davis, 1998). More pertinent to this study involving the attitudes of pre-service teachers is another theory called the “Apprenticeship of Observation” (Lortie, 2004). Basically, this theory means that a pre-service teacher brings to a teacher education program prior knowledge and experiences that have been cultivated over a decade as a learner and observer of teaching methods. Moloy and LaRoche (2010) supported this assumption by

xplaining, “New teachers tend to teach as they have been taught. Even when college or university teacher education courses present alternative instructional approaches the familiar outweighs the new” (p.46). The earlier indoctrination inevitably shapes pre-service teachers’ attitudes (Doppen, 2007). Because of this challenge, one need for this study is to understand and challenge pre-service teachers’ attitudes that may be reshaped through a “transformation of perspectives.” Through workshops, students receive exposure to research and practice supporting the incorporation of digitized visual primary sources and effective strategies for their use (Doppen, 2007, p. 54).

This problem was best addressed by using a qualitative methodology, which explored pre-service teachers’ attitudes about the use of digitized visual primary sources before and after a workshop. The goal was to gain insights into changes in attitudes resulting from exposure to strategies used with digitized visual primary sources. This study provided data that may help educators and policy-makers understand why teaching practices that utilize digitized visual primary sources are underrepresented in elementary social studies classrooms.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to describe the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers toward strategies utilizing digitized visual primary sources. The participants were enrolled in a social studies methods course at a major Southern university in the Fall 2015. A secondary purpose was to describe a particular set of strategies for teaching elementary students, which might alter attitudes towards using digitized visual primary sources. In order to meet the goals of the study, the researcher engaged the elementary pre-service teachers in four workshop sessions. Throughout these training sessions, the researcher facilitated as participant-observer. The researcher provided students with background knowledge about digitized visual primary sources

and engaged participants with four strategies that were appropriate to teach elementary age children using digitized visual primary sources. Pre- and post- qualitative data and reflection prompts were analyzed to describe any changes in the participants' attitudes.

### **Need for the Study**

This study was needed to assist educational stakeholders, especially those involved in Teacher Preparation Programs (TPP). Curriculum developers at the K-6 level could also benefit since pre-service teachers' attitudes can affect their chosen pedagogical practices as in-service teachers. Both TPP and K-6 curriculum developers are charged with the task of training teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of varied learners (Tomlinson, 1999). This study acknowledges the needs of today's learners and the awareness that educational stakeholders must provide learning opportunities that are meaningful to them.

The inclusion of digitized visual primary sources in education meets the needs of our modern visual learners. According to Werner (2012), "Our youth live in a visually saturated environment and visual texts are not just useful tools for learning about the world; increasingly they *are* the social world and need to be treated *as* subject matter in the classroom" (p. 3). In regard to the age appropriateness, research suggests that it is no longer necessary to wait until the secondary grades to begin teaching with visual primary sources. According to Barton (2001),

from a practical perspective, children enjoy working with pictures, particularly those that include people-they like looking at such images, talking about them, and trying to figure out what's going on in them. All of these factors make the use of pictures a highly enticing and productive method of instruction. (xi-xii)

Barton (2001) beliefs that visuals were an effective means to engage students in inquiry was also corroborated by researchers (Wineburg, 2001; VanSledright, 2002) corroborate Barton's (2001) claims. It can be reasoned from their past research that visual primary sources

offer far more engagement than purely text-based instruction.

This study, provides a description of elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the use of digitized visual primary sources. It was conceptualized by the researcher to add to the body of research that may help stakeholders make informed decisions about pre-service teacher training and social studies curriculum planning. According to Fresch (2004), "there are few articles on teaching elementary social studies methods courses" (p.2). In addition to the limited research among social studies pedagogy in general, the scope becomes more restricted when looking at pre-service teachers' attitudes about teaching with visual primary sources, due to its' specificity. This is problematic as the standards movement calls for elementary students to "read, analyze and synthesize using verbal, written, photographic, oral, and artifactual accounts" (NCSS, p. 67). The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) call for elementary students to be able to investigate multiple text forms such as visual forms, explicitly found in the following standards: [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.6](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2.a](#), and [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.2](#) In order to meet the teaching standards, pre-service teachers are challenged to gain an understanding of effective practices in teaching with digitized visual primary sources and research is needed to understand attitudes about adopting these strategies.

### **Research Questions**

The stated purpose of the study led to the formulation of the following research questions as the focus of the investigation:

1. What are elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes toward incorporating digitized visual primary sources in social studies instruction prior to a workshop?
2. To what extent if any, does exposure to strategies using digitized visual primary sources affect elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes?

3. How, if at all, do elementary pre-service teachers think that digitized visual primary sources should be used after a workshop?

### **Limitations**

1. This study was limited due to generalizability. The study was conducted with nine pre-service teachers who were (K-6) Multidisciplinary Studies majors seeking a K-6 teaching license. The data may not be generalizable in gaining understandings of other pre-service teachers outside this particular program. Also, the cohort of nine pre-service teachers may not be generalizable to larger institutions.
2. This study was limited by other coursework demands, which affected the duration of the study.
3. This study was limited in regard to an imbalance of gender among the participants.
4. This study was limited due to the lack of varied backgrounds and learning experiences of the participants.

### **Delimitations**

1. The study was delimited by the researcher acting as participant-observer who facilitated the workshop.
2. The study was delimited by the participants who were pre-service teachers seeking an elementary endorsement
3. The study was delimited to the content covered in the four-day workshop.
4. The study was delimited to a sample beyond the researcher's control in regard to size and participants' gender, ethnicity, background knowledge and experience with using visual primary sources in the classroom.

## **Assumptions**

This study was designed around four assumptions based on the investigative review of the existing literature surrounding the research questions and the researcher's seventeen years of experience in education. The assumptions were as follows:

1. The sample was representative of pre-service teachers enrolled in satellite campus setting of a major University. Therefore, it was assumed that the participants represented a small segment of the population.
2. It was assumed that the participants answered truthfully through the questionnaires and reflection prompts.
3. The researcher assumed that participants' attitudes were shaped by prior experiences and knowledge that are unique to the individual.
4. The assumption that understanding the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers' would be difficult to grasp. This assumption was due to the awareness of the researcher's own positionality as a former 7-12 social studies classroom teacher of eleven years and having worked as a university instructor of elementary social studies methods for the past five years.

## **Definition of Terms**

Where the researcher used references to formal definitions a citation has been provided. Where no citation was apparent, the definition was that of the researcher. The terms pertinent for this study are as follows:

Attitudes: "learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a favorable or unfavorable way" (Fishbein, 1967, p. 257).

Constructivism: a belief system that reality is socially constructed through experience, and that

truth is subject to change (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

Digitized Visual Primary Sources: refers to documents that are first-hand evidence of a time period in history that have been converted to digital form.

Elementary Students: refers to students in kindergarten through fifth-grade.

Epistemological: how one comes to know truth or reality.

*social constructivism*- a learning theory in education associated with the work of Lev Vygotsky.

Historical Inquiry: a process of active learning that is driven by observation, questioning and critical thinking about history.

Historical Thinking: a set of reasoning skills that students of history should learn as a result of studying history. Historical thinking may also be defined as contextualizing, corroborating, and sourcing which are three types of actions taken by historians when they interpret historical documents and evidence (Wineburg, 2001).

Meme: A piece of media that includes a catch phrase that is spread from person to person via the internet, but can also be communicated in any other form of media.

Perspective Taking: within the social sciences, perspective taking is the process of understanding peoples' actions and motivations within a historical context (Barton and Levstik, 2004).

Pre-service Teachers: pre-professionals who are enrolled in a teacher preparation program.

Primary Sources: first-hand accounts from manuscripts, first-person diaries, oral histories, letters, interviews, photographs, maps, films, sound recordings, music, song sheets or other fragments of history (Veccia, 2004, p.3).

Fresch (2004) provides examples of primary sources as follows:

Photographs, journals autobiographies, posters folk songs, maps, oral history diaries,

memoirs, interviews, games, poems, drama directories, artifacts, literature, catalogues, clothes, historical cartoons, sculpture, transcripts lists, ads, videos, slides, speeches, sketches, songs, historic places, informational records, ballads first-hand accounts, paintings, music, objects, toys, documents, census, reports, newspapers, films, letters, art, tickets, and monuments (p. 99)

Social Constructivism: refers to the social interaction that shapes learning that occurs between students with their peers, teachers, parents, and other community members that influences the ways and types of knowledge that is built through social interaction (Phillips, 2000, p.11).

Visual Primary Sources: a pictorial document, object, or media that is a first-hand evidence of a time period in history.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study looked at pre-service teachers' attitudes toward using digitized visual primary sources. It also examined their beliefs about how visual primary sources could be incorporated in social studies teaching and learning. These attitudes and beliefs related to perceptions about how children best learn. This in turn was connected to the paradigm of constructivism, specifically, that of social constructivism.

In conceptualizing a theoretical basis that is meaningful to how children learn from visual primary sources in social studies, the researcher drew upon three major theorists, Piaget, Vygotsky and Bandura. Their work is foundational to social constructivism and relates to children's visual experience as a cognitive and social process. The following section discusses how constructivism, as well as how the work of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bandura fit within the confines of this study. Subtopics include the importance of scaffolding, schema theory, discourse and modeling.

Constructivism is a complex theory that was articulated by Piaget (1967). In his research referred to as cognitive development theory he posited that new learning is built upon prior knowledge. Later, Vygotsky (1978) broadened the concept of constructivism to account for the effects of the social aspect on learning. The cognitive facet of students' constructing knowledge while being influenced by social norms became known as social constructivism (Daniels, 1996; Piaget, 1967; Vygotsky, 1978).

Cognitively, many elementary students may struggle to conceptualize history due to the unfamiliar context of the past. This can be explained by Piaget's (1967) Schema Theory, which according to Duffy & Israel (2009) is "a theory about the structure of human knowledge as it is represented in memory" (p. 193). Schema Theory supports the notion that new learning is built from existing mental structures. Therefore, a lack of historical knowledge can be problematic in students' incorporating new historical understandings. In spite of the challenges faced by students with limited historical knowledge, VanSledright (2002a), theorized that the benefits of students working with visual primary sources are that "learners develop deeper levels of historical understanding when they have opportunities to consciously use their prior knowledge and assumptions about the past, regardless of how limited or naive to investigate it in depth" (p. 1092). Bass (2003) referred to this beginner stage as "the novice in the archive" (p. 21). This reference to students building historical knowledge from a novice level is aligned with constructivism in that, cognitively, students' progress through stages of learning (Piaget, 1967). Students conceptualize historical content that allows them to move beyond abstract thought through analysis of authentic historical sources (Barton, 2001). These views have currency within teaching and learning social studies content that utilizes visual primary sources. According to Lovorn (2014), visual primary sources being real provide and authentic learning

and give a fuller appreciation of the historical context. This closeness to the realities of the past helps elementary students, who often do not have much contextual knowledge about history, establishing a context to build from is foundational (Pashler et al., 2007). The utilization of visual primary sources to foster the development of students' meaning making helps children construct narratives about history that are uniquely their own.

Vygotsky (1978) broadened constructivist theory to account for the social aspects that influences learning that occurs in a social context where interactions such as student to student or student to teacher take place (Gredler, 1997). These exchanges “seek to draw out the culture of the children and help them meaningfully clarify and connect who they are and what they know” (Gaudelli, 2002, p. 1999). Vygotsky's social cultural theory, commonly known as social constructivism posits that understandings are subjective and are co-constructed with others in the world (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

This study has a basis within the theory of social constructivism. Specifically, the workshop included a great deal of social interaction among the participants and the researcher. Throughout the workshop a great deal of discourse resulted from effective questioning. This process assisted the participants' in being able to conceptualize an environment appropriate for elementary age students to engage with digitized visual primary sources.

A basic tenant of social constructivism within a learning environment is discourse. It allows for a transaction of ideas both verbally and non-verbally that provide a mode to explain and justify reasoning (Kukla, 2000). This notion has merit as elementary students work with visual primary sources, where one is encouraged to share varied interpretations based on their own reality. This exchange of ideas offers alternate viewpoints about history that help shape individual understandings that would more narrowly be presented otherwise (Barton, 2001;

Cleary & Neumann, 2009; Scheurman, 1998; VanSledright, 2013).

Scaffolding is also a component of social constructivist Theory. Scaffolding can be described as the fundamental principle of teacher support throughout the learning process that diminishes as students become more proficient in the material. This learning process is within the Zone of Proximal Development can be described as the difference between what a learner can do without teacher assistance and what he or she can do with help (Vygotsky, 1978). The teacher's role is fundamental in bridging the gap between existing knowledge and new learning.

Just as Piaget (1967) and Vygotsky (1978) held beliefs that children construct knowledge in social settings, Bandura (1977), also a constructivist suggested in his social learning theory that children learn from others. Bandura (1977) wrote that “most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (p. 22). Bandura's (1977) theory that relates to teacher modeling has relevancy within the realm of students' learning from visual primary sources. Observation, analysis and drawing conclusions are skill-based and elementary students can benefit from teacher-modeled approaches in working with visual primary sources. More recently, Barton (2001) explained that for “students who have never analyzed historical photographs in school, the teacher will need to begin by modeling the process with a single picture that the entire class can examine together” (p. 280). As students become proficient in analyzing visual primary sources, teacher supports decrease. At the elementary level, where students have received less exposure working with visual primary sources, modeling is a significant component of positive learning outcomes for students.

The theories of Piaget, (1967), Vygotsky, (1978), and Bandura (1977) underpin the design

of the workshop activities. Piaget's (1967) cognitive development theory explains how children build upon prior knowledge in stages, which provided this study with a means to implement strategies using visual primary sources progressively with pre-service teachers. Piaget's (1967) schema theory also relates to this study in how pre-service teachers bring existing knowledge and attitudes about how social studies is taught and learned (Liben, 1983). Vygotsky's (1978) social cultural theory supports the researcher's platform for presentation of the visual primary sources in a cooperative setting where discourse among the participants and the researcher will potentially influence pre-service teachers' attitudes. Also, the researcher provided scaffolding for the participants in working with visual primary. Bandura's (1977) theory about modeling provided a basis for the researcher to demonstrate research-based strategies with visual primary sources may transcend into social studies classrooms. The researcher took these theories together to create a context to explore the elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes throughout the study.

The theory of constructivism guided the researcher's decisions in the study. As a constructivist, the researcher did not ascribe that there was one single reality that shaped the attitudes of the elementary pre-service teachers (Hatch, 2002). Prior to the workshop, the researcher anticipated that participants' attitudes about teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources would represent a culmination prior knowledge and experience that had been shaped over one's entire academic career. The Constructivist paradigm, explains that all new learning is based upon prior knowledge that is socially constructed and that attitudes are based upon individual experiences. Therefore, in an attempt to understand the potentially varied attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers, the researcher employed a qualitative approach that provided rich descriptions and insights about the participants' attitudes using their authentic

voices. The methodology is discussed further in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

### **Relationship of Methodology to Theoretical Framework**

Since this qualitative study is based on constructivist principles, the researcher sought to describe the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers about the use of visual primary sources in social studies. According to Creswell (1998) "A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (p. 15). These attitudes can be explained by the theory of constructivism and interpreted and explained using a qualitative methodology.

Qualitative research is phenomenological in that it seeks the "essence of the lived experience" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 72). In practice, according to Patton (1990), "...a phenomenological study is one that focused on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (p. 71). Rossman & Rallis (2003) further claim that phenomenological inquiry is appropriate to address research questions about attitudes of research participants. According to Schwandt (2000) investigating attitudes is to understand the perspectives of the subjectivities of the world among participants.

This study, steeped in constructivist principles required interpretation of data that represents attitudes by the participants. Angen (2000) posited that interpretative paradigm of qualitative research allows for varied understandings that have been developed experientially and socially over time. The interpretation of the participants' attitudes is conceptual to this study, while the researcher's attitude is also relevant since she is the instrument who makes meaning from the data. The researcher's positionality is explored on page 80.

According to Guba & Lincoln (1981), the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research, which means to interpret the data and accurately represent the voices of the participants. As a constructivist, the researcher was cognizant of the power that prior knowledge and experiences have in forming one's own perspectives. The researcher's beliefs about the effects of using visual primary sources to effect positive learning outcomes have formed over a long period of time. This positionality was addressed by the researcher with a goal of transparency throughout the process of gathering, interpreting and communicating understandings that meet the goals of the research questions.

### **Organization of the Study**

This remainder of this study is organized into four chapters. Chapter two presents a review of the literature; Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and data analysis procedures used to answer the research questions; Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and Chapter 5 describes the findings of the study with implications and recommendations for future research based on the results of this study.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

"Using primary sources in history classes is all the rage!" (Barton, 2005, p. 745). This declaration is supported throughout the growing body of literature, as proponents of the standards movement call for a development of students' critical literacy skills from using authentic sources (Morgan & Rasinski, 2012, p. 585). This has not always been the case, especially in reference to younger children. Fresch (2004) indicated in her study with elementary pre-service teachers "the emphasis seemed to be on using primary sources with older students" (p. 83). Over a decade has passed since Fresch's (2004) study. Morgan & Rasinski echoed Fresch's (2004) words, claiming, "primary source documents are often overlooked at the elementary grades" (p. 584). These statements suggest that the groundbreaking research of Barton (1997, 2001), Barton & Levstik, (1996), and VanSledright, (2002) that promotes using primary sources with elementary students has not been fully integrated in to elementary social studies classrooms.

There are numerous practitioner articles and books that give guidance in using primary sources with elementary students (Barton, 2005; Edinger, 2000; Fertig, 2005; Morgan & Rasinski, 2012; Ormond, 2011; VanSledright, 2002 & Veccia, 2004). However, few have addressed visual text within the realm of primary sources. According to Werner (2002), "For the most part... images are subservient to the written text, rarely taken seriously on their own terms. This is a mistake" (p. 424). The lack of representation of visual primary sources found within the literature in part guided this research study.

The scope of the body of existing research is further narrowed when limited to those studies that explore the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers about using visual primary sources. According to Fresch (2004), "not a single article was found that focused specifically on

preparing elementary pre-service teachers to use a variety of primary sources with children” (p. 84). Although research since Fresch’s (2004) study investigated pre-service teachers within the realm of teaching and learning social studies (Chauncey, 2011; Doppen, 2007; Henning & Shinn, 2010; Owens, 2010; Wunder, 2010), the literature dealing specifically with pedagogy using primary sources with elementary pre-service teachers remains limited.

This literature review seeks to examine both anecdotal arguments and empirical research to provide review of the literature needed to guide the purposes of this research study. The review begins by defining primary sources, then specifically visual primary sources in digitized form. Section two of the literature review examines the benefits of working with visual primary sources for elementary children with a focus on historical thinking, authentic learning, perspective taking and visual thinking. The third section of the literature review focuses on visual literacy and how it relates to students’ reading visual text. Section four of the literature review discusses teachers’ perceptions about using visual primary sources, the effect of the apprenticeship of observation and preparing pre-service teachers in pedagogy related to digitized visual primary sources.

### **The Search Process**

The search process began by using the key words “primary sources AND elementary,” “visual primary sources,” and “pre-service teachers’ attitudes AND primary sources” in the following databases: *Education Source*, *ERIC*, and *SAGE Research Methods Online*. This narrowed the results to two studies (Fresch, 2004; Waring & Torrez, 2010) that were most appropriate to the goals of this study. Although the research by Fresch (2004) and Waring & Torrez (2010) did not completely align with the goals of this study, they remained the closest in nature, as their studies described attitudes of pre-service teachers working in part with visual

primary sources. An examination of the references listed by Fresch (2004) and Waring & Torrez (2010) guided the investigator to many research and practitioner articles related to the engagement of primary sources among elementary age children. The research of Barton (1997, 2001 & 2005), Barton & Levstik, (1996, 2003) and VanSledright, (2002) provided research conceptual to this study in regard to the ability and benefit of elementary age children working with visual primary sources.

The references of Barton (1997, 2001 & 2005), Barton & Levstik, (2003), Fresch, (2004), Levstik & Barton (2011) VanSledright, (2002), and Waring & Torrez (2010) were reviewed and guided the author to literature that informed this study. The researcher classified the studies with the following categories: (1) how primary sources are defined with a specificity on visual primary sources, (2) benefits of students working with visual primary sources (3) visual literacy, and (4) teacher perceptions about using visual primary sources. Studies with relevant information relating to these topics were downloaded and examined.

The review of the literature enabled the author to formulate sub-categories for the remainder of the research process. The section entitled, “benefits of students working with visual primary sources” focused on historical thinking, authentic learning, perspective taking and visual thinking. The section entitled, “teacher perceptions about using visual primary sources” investigated teacher perceptions, apprenticeship of observation and preparing pre-teachers. These sub-sections were created from the prevailing themes throughout the literature.

Throughout the search, the researcher was able to access either electronically or in physical form the relevant literature to this study. All of the practitioner and research articles sought out by the researcher were available online. Relevant books dedicated to the topic of primary

sources with elementary learners were physically obtained from John C. Hodges Library on the campus of The University of Tennessee.

Gaps in the prevailing literature began to emerge. One of these was an absence of research related to the use of primary sources in the elementary grades. The central question remained: Why are currently practicing elementary teachers not utilizing these valuable resources in the field? This study sought to answer this question by exploring the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers toward visual primary sources in teaching elementary social studies. First, the focus was on current research on attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers. Second, a description of strategies used solely with visual primary sources was undertaken.

### **Digitized Visual Primary Sources Defined**

This section first defines primary sources, then visual primary sources. Next the definitions of digitized primary sources and digital history are discussed. Finally, the rationale for using digital visual primary sources is explained.

Visual primary source (VPS) documents are a subset of primary sources. Therefore, primary sources must first be defined. According to Morgan and Rasinski (2012), "Primary sources are original textual (e.g., letters, diaries, speeches) and non-textual sources (e.g., photographs, drawings) of information that are available to learn more about a time period, person, or particular event" (p. 584). VanSledright (2004) refers to primary sources as "residues of the past left behind by our ancestors" (VanSledright, 2004, p. 230). While descriptions of primary sources vary among the literature, they all share similar meaning of being authentic information that communicates events of the past.

Visual primary sources are part of this larger collection. Several terms are used synonymously, including "non-textual sources", "visual material," and "digital history". The

term visual primary sources will be used throughout this study and refer largely to digital photographs and paintings. A website found at Yale.com (n.d.), houses a web page titled, *Primary Sources at Yale* offers a thorough definition of visual material used to reference visual primary sources as follows:

Visual material refers to any primary source in which images, instead of or in conjunction with words and/or sounds, are used to convey meaning. Some common and useful types of visual materials are as follows: original art, including but not limited to paintings, drawings, sculpture, architectural drawings and plans, and mono prints; prints, which are works produced in multiple but limited numbers such as woodcuts, engravings, etchings, and lithographs, graphic arts, including materials such as posters, trade cards, and computer generated graphics, photographs, and film and video. (para. 1)

The term *digital history* has also been used to refer to digitized primary sources. In a practitioner article, Lee (2002) defined digital history as follows:

Digital history is the study of the past using a variety of electronically reproduced primary source texts, images, and artifacts as well as the constructed historical narratives, accounts, or presentations that result from digital historical inquiry.

Digital historical resources are typically stored as electronic collections in formats that facilitate their use on the World Wide Web. (pp. 504-505)

The choice by the researcher to utilize digitized versions of visual primary sources came from past research that suggested that convenience of use was a critical factor in determining if pre-service teachers would choose to use digitized primary sources with their elementary students once in the field (Fresch, 2004; Waring & Torrez, 2010). A study by Milman & Bondie (2012) suggested a positive outlook by in-service teachers on using digitized primary sources

due to their availability and ease of use. Milman & Bondie (2012) wrote, “Social studies teachers today have thousands of digital primary source materials available to them for free on the World Wide Web (WWW), as well as an immeasurable number of lesson plans to help them utilize these resources in their classrooms” (p. 391). It is important to note that any and all primary source can become digitized. According to the Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2016), ‘digitized’ means “to change information or pictures to digital form” (Def. 1).

By definition, visual primary sources, regardless of being physical or digitized in form, provide authentic snap shots of the past that can provide valuable information to conceptualize historical accounts. These are different from secondary historical sources that provide visual material of the past, but are not primary. The assembly of digitized visual primary sources has been growing and offer teachers a unique opportunity to provide historical evidence where “factual information can often be extracted from visual materials; however, the best information imparted by these materials is often of a subjective nature, providing insight into how people see themselves and the world in which they exist” (“visual materials,” Yale.edu., n.d., para. 2).

### **Visual Primary Sources and Elementary Students’ Critical Thinking**

The first challenge of using visual primary sources with elementary-level students resides in the historic nature of social studies pedagogy. Over three decades ago, research suggested that elementary level students were not capable of interpreting the past due to how they conceptualize historical accounts. It was once thought that young children could only relate to present-day experiences with family, school and community (Flavell, 1985). It was believed that elementary age children lacked sufficient background knowledge needed to make sense of historical accounts. (Flavell, 1985). Social studies pedagogy was, and still is, often limited to addressing lower cognitive domains. Fertig (2005) wrote, “Unfortunately, history is not always taught to

elementary students as a problem-solving activity; instead, it is presented as inventories of famous people, events, dates and meanings that children are expected to memorize” (p. 2).

While social studies classroom pedagogy often focuses on lower-level thinking, there is a growing body of evidence that strongly supports the use of multiple sources of historical evidence to engage elementary age children in critical thinking. VanSledright (2011) stated, “There is every reason to pursue teaching history as investigation [in elementary school]” (VanSledright, p.148-149). In particular, the use of visual primary sources with elementary students has been a part of the research of Barton, 1996, 1997, 2001; Barton & Levstik, 1996; Fallace, Biscoe, & Perry, 2007; Levstik & Barton, 2011; & VanSledright, 2002. These researchers promoted the benefits of children developing historical thinking, perspective taking, and visual literacy through authentic learning opportunities. A discussion of their work follows.

In 1996, the work of Barton & Levstik provided groundbreaking insights for researchers and practitioners for working with elementary age children in the social studies. Their study investigated elementary students’ understanding of historical time using visual primary sources. The participants were 58 children from kindergarten through sixth grade. These children were asked to place nine visual primary sources from various time periods of American history in chronological order and explain their reasoning in how they ordered the visuals. The researchers found that even the kindergarten students were able to critically think about their arrangement of the visuals with temporal associations. Children from all ages in the study were in agreement with the order of the visuals by and large. At the fifth grade level, children were able to make connections between numerical dates and historical people and events. This study generated thought that elementary age children were capable of thinking critically with historical evidence, which helped open the door for future research with elementary age populations in the social

studies.

Two years later, Barton (1996) continued his work with elementary children in the social studies. He explored fourth and fifth grade students' ability to engage in historical perspective taking. A variety of primary sources, with the majority visual in form, provided the content to engage children in perspective taking. Barton's (1996) research suggested that children in the fourth and fifth grades were able to engage in meaningful historical perspective taking. He reported that children, however, do need teacher guidance and ongoing practice.

Barton's (2001) research entitled *A Picture's Worth* focused solely on using visual primary sources with young children. Barton (2001) limited his study to historical photographs. "For children in the early grades, visual materials--both photographs and other kinds of pictures--tap into a wider range of historical information than do activities based solely on oral or written language" (p. 278). Barton (2001) found that "The use of historical photographs in the early elementary classroom is a practical way of engaging young children in authentic historical inquiry" (p. 283). Findings from this study correlated with those of other studies that show that children as early as 6 years old are able to compare the past and present through examining historical photographs (Barton, & Levstik, 1996; Barton, 1996). This research provided a basis for using document analysis questioning and scaffolding using graphic organizers for visual primary sources found in the workshop strategies one, two and three.

The visual dimension of primary sources with elementary children was explored again in VanSledright's (2002) study with fifth grade students. He demonstrated that by comparing visual primary sources, children could think critically and detect bias, perspective and synthesize higher order thinking questions. This study informed the researcher in creation of workshop strategy three in this study, which focused on teaching bias with visual primary sources.

The research of Fallace, Biscoe and Perry (2007) substantiated the previous research of Barton and Levstik (1994) that described the benefits of children who examined visual primary sources to gaining temporal understandings. Their results were similar Barton and Levstik (1994) in that both promoted the capabilities and benefits elementary age children of working with primary sources. Both studies commented on the intensive scaffolding necessary at this stage of development. Fallace, Biscoe and Perry's (2007) research added to the very limited body of research that investigated the benefits of using visual primary sources with children in second grade.

Lovorn (2014) stated "for more than two decades, social studies experts have called for students' increased exposure to and development in historical thinking and historiography skills" (p. 370). The research mentioned previously implies that the need for development of critical thinking skills could be met by student examination of primary sources. The remainder of this section will highlight literature that focuses specifically on the benefits of using visual primary sources among children.

### **Benefits of Visual Primary Sources**

The benefits of using visual primary sources with elementary-age students are supported by the work of Morgan and Rasinski (2012), Barton (2005), Tally and Goldberg (2005), Barton (2005). The research suggests these benefits are far reaching. Each will be discussed in turn beginning with critical thinking and authentic learning experiences.

***Critical Thinking and Authentic Learning.*** In *The Power and Potential of Primary Sources*, Morgan & Rasinski (2012) described the benefits of primary sources and how using authentic sources help develop critical thinking skills among elementary students. They explicitly referred to visual primary sources as an effective means to teach history to young

children. Morgan & Rasinski (2012) went on to argue that visual material offers an alternative format as a means to engage students in critical thinking. "It is important for students to know as people live their lives, they leave a trail of items they create or use as they go about their days that represents who they are and what they did. They leave evidence" (p. 584). Morgan and Raskinski (2012), further explained that primary sources give children a sense of what life was like during a certain time that naturally lends to their being able to compare and contrast the past with the present. Through the analysis of authentic artifacts, children's "knowledge can become anchored in something larger than names, dates, and facts. These sources offer students the opportunity to expand their sense of life experiences during that time or event" (p. 587).

Young students often have difficulty understanding that the experiences they enjoy today were not always that way so the past becomes an elusive concept for them (Morgan & Raskinski, 2012). Therefore, another benefit of using visual primary sources with elementary students is that teachers and students can gather primary sources to make these ideas more concrete and understandable. "Primary sources provide a vehicle for investigation that allows students to develop a more comprehensive understanding of their immediate world" (p. 590). Morgan & Rasinski (2012) continued with, "these primary sources offer a richness and depth of understanding that few, if any, textbooks can capture. Primary sources provide insights not offered by informational texts alone" (p. 592).

Tally and Goldberg (2005) studied the use of digitized visual primary sources. Although their research claimed the benefits by secondary level students in working with visual primary sources in digital form, the researcher believes this study is applicable to children in the upper elementary grades. Tally and Goldberg (2005) detail the benefits of using electronically reproduced primary sources to develop historical thinking. First, primary sources give children

sources that reveal an authentic and complex sense of the past that allow for problem solving. Second, authentic sources provide historical evidence that can allow for critical thinking about where the source and bias may be associated. Another benefit is that digital collections are more accessible via search engines that give children opportunities to act as true historical detectives.

***Authentic Instruction.*** Critical thinking is closely related to authentic learning experiences. Barton (2001) wrote an analytic article that focused on using visual primary sources with elementary children as a basis to teach history authentically. He stated “In recent years, educators have stressed the need to engage students in authentic tasks--those that resemble the challenges people face outside of school, whether as professionals, consumers, family members, or citizens” (p. 278). His article highlighted the basics of authentic instruction as “formulating historical questions or problems, gathering information from a variety of sources, evaluating the authenticity and reliability of sources, comparing conflicting accounts, taking the perspective of people in the past and connecting disparate pieces of information into coherent explanations” (p. 278).

Authentic instruction from visual primary sources fosters the development of children’s critical thinking skills (Barton, 2001). Barton indicated that it was important to develop in children the ability to analyze and interpret historical information that is crucial in helping to judge the reliability and meaning of stories from the past. Barton’s (2001) framework encouraged children to act as historians through their own investigations. This framework brought together his previous research findings (Barton, 1996, 1997; Barton & Levstik, 1996) supporting authentic instruction that used visual primary sources. Authentic learning tasks such as examining visual primary sources provide students with relevancy from content knowledge and literacy skills from real-world contexts (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999).

***Historical Thinking.*** Historical thinking is a type of critical thinking that is specific to the social studies. Scholars have collectively promoted the need for development of children's historical thinking skills for two decades (Barton & Levstik, 1996; Bickford, 2013; Fallace, Biscoe & Perry, 2007; Lovorn 2013; Wineburg, 2001; and VanSledright, 2002). James and McVay (2009) defined historical thinking as, "critical thought about the past, asking good questions about sources of knowledge, about context and meaning of historical accounts" (p. 347-348). For the purposes of this section of the literature review, the work of VanSledright (2002) and Fallace, Biscoe and Perry, (2007) will focus on historical thinking among elementary age children.

VanSledright (2002c) described four processes that are inherent in historical thinking among elementary age children. He described historical thinking as a shift that abandons lower cognitive functions such as memorization, instead emphasizing critical thinking skills. The first process is identification (VanSledright, 2004). During this step, students learn to determine what kind of source or artifact they are viewing. The teacher uses questions to scaffold their ability to make a decision as to the type of source, (i.e. a newspaper clipping, faded photograph, etc.).

The second process in historical thinking is attribution. "This helps students identify the author and consider the context in which the text was created" (VanSledright, 2004, p. 588). VanSledright claims that attribution is significant in the discovery of agency in what was left behind and the narrative it was intended to tell.

Judging perspective is the third act that helps students assess sources. VanSledright (2004) described it as "making sense of the author's perspective and positionality" (p. 231). Assessing historical perspective can be challenging as it tasks the historian to "read between the lines" due

to the absence of the author (p.231). Making inferences from historical evidence fosters students' critical thinking.

Reliability assessment is the fourth process. Reliability assessment helps students to think about "corroboration of evidence and information. Students learn to seek out additional sources to support tentative conclusions about what they think they know" (p. 589). They are encouraged to realize that multiple sources may "hold quite legitimate positions that differ from one another" (p. 232).

VanSledright's (2004) process for historical thinking is especially relevant to the use of visual primary source documents with elementary students, and while historical thinking may seem a complex process, it is a fundamental skill that has applications for all learning. VanSledright (2004) argues that the development of historical thinking skills transcends beyond the social studies. He claims that asking children to think historically cultivates "careful, critical readers and consumers of the mountains of evidentiary source data that exists in the archives and pours at us each day via the media" (p. 232). It is advisable to scaffold the development of historical thinking. Morgan and Rasinski (2012) assert that "although the end goal is to have students engage in these four acts of thinking, teachers of younger students may focus on a few of these acts at first, such as developing students' identification and reliability assessment (or corroboration) skills, as a first step." (p. 589).

Fallace, Biscoe & Perry (2007) also investigated historical thinking skills in a study of second grade children. In part of their study they used visual primary sources of historical figures. They grounded their research design in the work of Allman & Brophy (2004) who suggested that such figures are best comprehended in a visual timeline type sequence. The second grade students in this study listened to storybook accounts about the pictures of the

historical figures presented in the timeline. They were then asked to draw their own pictures that demonstrated what they learned. Fallace, Biscoe & Perry (2007) reported that second grade students were capable of historical thinking.

Fallace, Biscoe and Perry (2007) communicated the importance of two modes of historical thinking in their study. The first of these was children's engagement in historical empathy. This involves a temporal understanding in which children must conceptualize that things change over time to appreciate the context of the historical event or figures. The second of these modes was constructed accounts, in which historical narratives reflect the author's epistemological beliefs. They stress that children must understand that "multiple narratives" can "exist simultaneously" (p. 45). Fallace, Biscoe & Perry (2007) summed up the benefits of using visual primary sources with second graders by stating that "using visual images to conceptualize history enabled the young students to engage in historical thinking in a non-verbal/nonlinguistic manner" and allow for expression of "acquired knowledge and understanding" while being "critical readers of text" both in written and visual forms (p. 52).

There is a consensus among researchers that challenging children to think historically using visual primary sources has merit for increasing critical thinking (Barton, 2001; Bickford, 2013; Fallace, Biscoe & Perry, 2007; Levstik and Barton, 2011 & Wineburg, 2001). It has also been made clear by these researchers that historical thinking using visual primary sources is within the capabilities of children at the elementary level. VanSledright (2002c) asserted that the foundation for historical thinking can and should be laid in the elementary school setting. VanSledright (2002c) concluded, "Despite the formidable challenges, there is every reason to pursue teaching history as investigation in elementary school" (p. 148).

***Historical Perspective Taking and Empathy.*** Many researchers agree that historical empathy is an integral part of historical thinking (Ashby & Lee, P., 1987; Barton., 1996; Downey, 1995; Dulberg,, 2002; Levstik & Barton, 2011; VanSledright, 2002b). These scholars also agree that the development of historical empathy among elementary age children is important. Aside from this consensus, there remains much debate surrounding how historical empathy is defined, how students engage in it both cognitively and emotionally, best practices that foster the development of historical empathy and to what degree historical empathy is possible young children. Exploring these areas of contention in detail are beyond the scope of this section of the literature review. Since students' engagement in historical empathy is a potential benefit for using visual primary sources, this section will first define historical empathy and perspective taking, which are often used interchangeably in the literature.

Several researchers have defined historical empathy. Lee and Ashby (2001) called it 'rational understanding' and perspective taking (Lee & Ashby, 2001). Barton (2006) defined historical empathy as "the skill to recognize how people in the past viewed their circumstances, evaluated their opinions, made decisions, and how their perceptions were shaped by their values, beliefs, and attitudes" (p. 4). Downey (1995) preferred the term "perspective taking" to the term historical empathy, and defined it as "the ability to understand frames of reference by historical characters using evidence without regard to feelings or sympathy" (Yilmaz, 2007, p. 332). Barton and Levstik (2004) operationalize perspective taking within the social sciences as the process of understanding peoples' actions and motivations within a historical context. This description by Barton and Levstik (2004) will be used for this study and the term 'perspective taking' will be used from this point forward in place of historical empathy.

Overall, perspective taking is used more widely in the literature. Yilmaz (2007) reasoned that historical empathy has been referenced less than perspective taking in order to create a necessary distance between empathy and sympathy, which researchers suggest are often misunderstood as synonymous.

A groundbreaking study by Barton (1996) provided research on using multiple sources to engage children in perspective taking. He used a variety of primary sources, including both written and visual texts, to study elementary age children's engagement in perspective taking. Barton (1996) used Ashby and Lee's (1987) five levels of "empathetic understanding" to communicate students' achievement in perspective taking activities (p. 23). At the end of a year-long qualitative study, Barton claimed that children were not only capable of perspective taking at the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade levels, but thrived in moving to higher order cognitive demands. He stated that, "Although many began the school year at the lowest level-thinking that people in the past knew they were being old-fashioned... [students] quickly began to recognize that people had a different outlook than we do today" (p. 23). One limitation that Barton's (1996) investigation was that elementary age students were rarely able to go beyond the 4<sup>th</sup> level of perspective taking skill suggested by Ashby and Lee (1987). That level of perspective taking required students to position people of the past in a broad historical context full of beliefs, values, traditions and material living conditions (Ashby and Lee, 1987). He reported that "most (students) continued to be somewhat puzzled by people's ability to hold perspectives so different than their own" (p. 24). One student commented "Why would the Devil be in so many people back then, and nobody now? Did he just run out of juice?" Barton synthesized that this remark "aptly" characterized their thinking: they understood *that* beliefs were different but did not fully understand *why*" (p. 24).

Apart from this limitation, Barton's (1996) study found that visual primary sources provided a means for students to "develop more sophisticated ideas" about the style of the people of the past. He concluded that that children were able to take the perspectives of historical figures in regards to being "old fashioned." (Barton, 1996, p. 12). In the study, the students examined photographs of automobiles, clothing, and a photograph of a girl bathing in the sink. In reference to the pictures of cars, students were able to reason that even though they thought the cars of today were prettier, "they were into that style" (Barton, 1996, p. 12). The girl in the early 1900s, bathing in a sink, initially was reported to be "dirty", although a change of mind occurred as students pointed out that "they" might think our present-day bathing methods are "weird" (Barton, 1996, p. 12). One student wrote about the picture of the dress-like swimming suits representative of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She first style commented that wearing a swim suit of that style would have embarrassed her, but she later concluded that the swim dress would not be embarrassing "if everybody else was wearing them" (Barton, 1996, p. 12). This feedback by students in Barton's (1996) study was insightful in demonstrating students' progress in perspective taking.

In general, there is favorable consensus about students' ability for perspective taking. The main point made by Barton's (1996) study is that elementary students' are capable of and can benefit from engagement with perspective taking strategies. This is regardless of their level of attainment. Davis (2001) reported similar findings as he compared fifth and twelfth graders who participated in perspective taking activities. He claimed that although children function at different levels, most were able to progress in appreciation of past people's perspectives.

There are also challenges faced by students as they engage in perspective taking. VanSledright (2002b) focused on "positionality" as one of these major obstacles. He defines

positionality as “the current, socio-culturally permeated deportment or stance any historical thinker brings to the task of making sense of the past” (p. 57). Wineburg (2001) coined another term to explain struggles children face with perspective taking as “presentism,” which he described as “the act of viewing the past through the lens of the present” (Brooks, p. 232). In spite of the difficult tasks faced by students in development of perspective taking skills, the effort by students to think critically and make sense of the past perspectives of historical people is key. (VanSledright, 2002b).

***Visual Thinking.*** Visual thinking is another benefit of using digitized visual primary source documents. There is a long tradition of incorporating visuals in the teaching of social studies. Visuals in social studies textbooks have been used widely to offer the reader a representation of the narrative being read. Nichol (2003) believed that visuals were placed in textbooks to increase student understanding that provided an additional mode to remember information. On a more superficial level, he also claims that visuals were also intended to make textbooks more appealing to the eye.

There has been a shift in beliefs about how children work with visuals in the social studies over the last two decades from passive to active engagement. This change reflects research findings that elementary age children benefit from working with visuals (Barton, 1996 2001; VanSledright, 2002). These studies promote visual thinking as a necessary component of historical thinking and call for teachers to guide students to ask questions and make a range of historical inferences about people and events in the past through the examination of visuals.

The process of visual thinking is complex, but innate to the youngest child (Wineburg, 2001). Like historians, children can form mental images by exploring visual sources. In order for children to form imagery from visuals, interplay must occur between prior knowledge and the

visual to form an image in the mind. This constructed imagery is formed from one's unique perspective. Arnheim (1969), a leading researcher in the field of visual thinking, wrote, "all mental functions which occur when we take in, collect, store, and interpret information are cognitive and accordingly visual perception is linked with visual thinking" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 28). He further explains that seeing and listening are perfect ways in which to apply intelligence. "Vision is a basic way of thinking about the world. Visual sense is a necessary effective brain function" (2007, p. 33). Plotnick (2009) discussed the importance of prior knowledge on visual thinking. He stated that the "perceptions gained by our brains when we transform combinations of thousands of separate and meaningless senses into a meaningful pattern or image are shaped by subjective interpretation. In other words, personal experiences have an important role in shaping perceptions" (pp. 124-125).

There is very little research on visual thinking among elementary age children in the social studies. A study by Dilek (2010) explored visual and historical thinking of 12 to 13-year-old children, a slightly older group of participants, using a qualitative action research approach. The purpose of the study was to "explore the visual thinking skills of some sixth grade students who created visual interpretations during history courses" (p. 257). The teacher guided students in their study of history using a variety of visual primary sources. One week later, students constructed illustrations from memory. Findings from Dilek's (2010) suggested that drawings are an effective way to access visual and historical thinking.

Visual thinking and visual literacy are often used as one in the same. The next section explores visual literacy as a construct and the benefits derived from using visual primary sources.

## Visual Literacy

Visuals are one of the oldest forms of discourse. Pre-historic pictures and symbols discovered in such places as caves, cliffs, and overhangs have, through imagery, told stories of past civilizations. Although visuals have been used for thousands of years as a means of communication, the term “visual literacy” has only been around for a little over half a century. Velders (1999) specified the disconnect of how long images have been around and the coined term visual literacy by stating “The history of visual communication goes back to the cave paintings 30,000 years ago, the description of it only 2,500. Visual literacy is 2,500 years old (as a skill) and 30 years young (as a term)” (p. 10).

The construct of visual literacy has roots that date to the 1960s. According to Waters & Russell (2013), visual literacy “has been around for at least 60 years or so, but is gaining in popularity” (p. 210). During the 1960s, literacy scholars like Jack Debes and Clarence Williams pushed for the inclusion of visuals as part of the concept of literacy. As a result, a conference was held in 1968 where intellectuals from various disciplines met to focus on the goal of advocating the need for visual literacy amidst a text driven society. Attendees decided to call their new organization, The International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA) which has remained active today (Waters & Russell, 2013).

One of the early struggles faced by the IVLA was finding a consensus about the definition of visual literacy. Braden and Hortin (1982) suggested a definition for visual literacy as “the ability to understand and use images, including the ability to think, learn and explore oneself in terms of images” (p. 38). In 1994, Moore and Dwyer provided a more multidisciplinary description to broaden the scope of visual literacy. They suggested that visuals “transmit data, information, knowledge, and emotion that is inclusive of many domains” (Brill, Kim, Branch, 2007, p. 48).

For the purposes of this section of the literature review, Heinich, Molenda, and Russell's (1982) definition of visual literacy relates best in describing how visual primary sources can be used in teaching and learning. These academics explained, "Visual literacy is the learned ability to interpret visual messages accurately to create such messages. Thus interpretation and creation in visual literacy can be said to parallel reading and writing print literacy" (p. 62). Their definition will guide this study.

The (IVLA) ushered in a movement that encouraged the concept of visual literacy. More recently, Brumberger (2011) and Tillmann (2012) reemphasized the importance of literacy with visuals as a prerequisite for competence for life. The voices of these and other scholars (Arnheim, 1969; Edinger, 2000; Kobrin, 1996; Levstik & Barton, 2011; Percoco, 1998; VanSledright, 2002, & Wineburg, 2001) who have raised the issues of visual literacy are reflected in current educational reforms. This emphasis on visual literacy is reflected in the Common Core State Standards and NCSS C3 Framework.

***Visual Literacy within Common Core State Standards.*** The standards movement has responded to the need for visual literacy among our K-12 student population. This is evident in the English Language Arts section of the Common Core State Standards (2016). As early as first grade, a foundational year for literacy development, students are asked to read visual text. An examples of this task found in the CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.6, which asks students to distinguish between information found in visual and written forms. To conceptualize this standard, it is important to first define the word, 'distinguish.' According to Merriam Webster (2015), 'distinguish' means "to notice or recognize a difference between people or things." For example, in meeting one literacy standard, students must be able to understand that information from both visual sources and written forms are both sources of evidence. Students in first grade are

emerging in skill development in being able to engage in deeper understanding through analysis, interpretation and inference making from both visual and written forms. This standard, then, promotes visual literacy in the primary grades. The standard also helps counter the “privileged position” historically given to written text (Feighty, 2010, p. 78).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7 asks students to use both written and visual text forms to describe key ideas. Factors that affect the extent to which a one processes visual texts and written text are similar. Specifically, in regard to visual literacy, Brill, Kim & Branch (2007) wrote:

Meaning contained in a visual message can be interpreted at different levels, and interpreted a variety of ways depending on many factors, including individual experience, language development capacity, the medium of communication and the grammatical structure of the visual image. (p. 51)

It is widely accepted that reading of written and visual language are influenced by many of the same factors. One component of being literate is comprehension. The capability to understand both words and images is affected by prior knowledge and vocabulary (Fisher & Frey, 2009). It could be argued that fluency, which has been called the bridge between word recognition and comprehension, could transcend to image recognition and comprehension (Robinson, 1984).

As students progress through academic grade levels, the emphasis placed on visual literacy and historical inquiry increases. For example, in CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3, third grade students are asked to “use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur)” (“Core Standards,” 2016, para. 2). By the fifth grade, CCSS. ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7 progresses students to “draw on information from multiple print or digital

sources demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently” (Core Standards,” 2016, para. 3). Additionally, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.5 requires students to “compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g. chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) or events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts” (“core standards,” para. 3). While the CCSS mandate that teachers meet the needs of students for the development of visual literacy skills, pedagogical guidance for doing so is negligible.

***Visual Literacy within the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Framework.*** The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), a leading educational organization, has their own set of social studies standards and relates these standards to best practices for teaching and learning in the social studies. The NCSS standards are referred to as the *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework*. These standards ask students to read, analyze, and synthesize using “verbal, written, photographic, oral, artifactual accounts” (NCSS, p. 67). The C3 standards promote a productive struggle, support negotiated meaning making from various sources and embrace active rather than passive learning. All of these learning processes support higher order thinking. The multimodal ways mentioned previously are being integrated in our educational curriculum to encourage critical thinking and are geared to positively affect student learning outcomes. In terms of students working with informational texts (written or visual), social studies content provides opportunities for students to read and write in order to meet ELA State Standards.

NCSS also informs educational stakeholders on best practices for teaching and learning in the social studies. This has been evident with regular publications on the topic in their flagship journal, *Social Education* and the Teaching with Documents section on their website (<http://www.socialstudies.org/publications/twd>). The NCSS regularly highlights the value of

utilizing visual primary sources on student learning and provide beneficial pedagogical strategies for their use.

One such article by Lovorn (2014) applauded the four dimensions in the *C3 Framework*: (1) *Time, Continuity, and Change*, (2) *Perspectives*, (3) *Historical Sources & Evidence*, and (4) *Causation & Argumentation*. Lovorn gave four examples of strategies that support student learning within the *C3 Framework*. In “Example 4,” Lovorn described VanSledright’s (2002) strategy that used Paul Revere’s engraving *Bloody Massacre, 1770* to engage elementary students in document analysis. He cited VanSledright’s claim that this strategy supports “perspective and historical literacy” found in the *C3 Framework* (VanSledright, 2002 p. 372).

It should be clear that a relationship exists in the communication of information in written, spoken and visual texts. The standards of both the CCSS and NCSS value students using multiple sources to cite evidence, discover key details that support development of main ideas, engage in analysis through inquiry and draw conclusions. There has been a continued emphasis on visual literacy over the past fifty years and the CCSS and NCSS C3 Framework support the continuance of this emphasis. Today’s child stands a better chance of being equipped with visual literacy skills needed to communicate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this new era, being functionally literate means being able to comprehend images as well as words (Waters & Russell, 2013).

### **A Vehicle for Low or Beginning Readers**

Visual primary sources are also beneficial for beginning or low readers. Barton (2005) stated that visual artifacts provide accessibility to evidence for students who may not enjoy interpreting with written accounts (Barton, 2005). Morgan and Rasinski (2012) agreed, stating, “Primary sources, especially photographs, artwork, or advertisements, can be especially helpful for students who do not respond well to written texts” (Morgan & Rasinski, p. 587). In early

elementary grades, written text evidence can pose an inherent problem with interpretation as many children are developing literacy skills. This issue is minimized with visual primary sources according to Tally and Goldberg (2005), who write "historical images, in particular, are a useful point of entry for many students, for unlike historical texts--which often present archaic language that children must decode before they can begin to construct meaning---photos, lithographs, cartoons and maps present instantly recognizable features and information and easily evoke background knowledge that children can begin using in building an interpretation" (p. 3). They also stated that primary sources in electronic form offer an alternative format that can meet the needs of the diverse learner and allow for multiple ways of thinking about issues captured from the past (Tally & Goldberg, 2005). Finally, Barton (2001) stated that "from a practical perspective, children enjoy working with pictures, particularly those that include people—they like looking at such images, talking about them, and trying to figure out what is going on in them" (p. 289). Barton's work has continued to push for the inclusion of elementary age children to be exposed to primary sources. The next section describes teachers' perceptions in regard to their use in the elementary social studies classroom.

### **Teacher Perceptions about Using Visual Primary Sources**

The research presented previously supports the belief that visual primary sources offer an authentic and engaging platform needed to support student learning at all levels including the elementary level. The standards-based movement also supports the use of visual primary sources through the implementation of standards that call for elementary students to work with visual primary sources. In practice, however, the emphasis on using visual primary sources continues to be limited to older students, in spite of past research and mandated standards. An explanation of this dearth of primary sources in the elementary grades was sought through a review of the

literature. Three main areas were reviewed: teacher perceptions, the effect of *The Apprenticeship of Observation* and pre-service teacher training. Explanations emerged from studies about teacher perceptions. Obstacles for using primary sources are beliefs about age-appropriateness, time constraints, and the standards-based emphasis on English Language Arts/Math standards. The apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), and enactment and complexity (Darling-Hammond, 2006) also emerged in the literature as possible challenges to elementary teachers using visual primary sources.

***Teacher Perceptions.*** Teacher perceptions related to teaching and learning from primary sources are multifaceted. One perception is that elementary students do not have the cognitive ability to utilize primary sources. VanSledright (2004) wrote, “Because the work of historical thinking is complex and often difficult, some teachers, particularly at the elementary and middle school levels, make the presumption that their students are incapable of engaging in such thought” (p. 151). Although, past research (Barton, 1996, 1997, 2001; Barton & Levstik, 1996; Bickford, 2013; and VanSledright, 2002) has contradicted these opinions by suggesting that children in the elementary grades are capable of doing source work, the perception by teachers may remain.

There are several key studies that point to teacher attitudes towards using visual primary source documents in the elementary classroom. Koeppen (1999) conducted a qualitative research study in which she looked at elementary pre-service teachers’ reactions to pedagogy with issues-centered social studies. Complex aspects of the past (i.e. child labor, poverty, racism, etc.) were investigated using visual primary sources. At the end of Koeppen’s (1999) study, the pre-service teachers had “numerous reactions.” These [were] almost all “positive, albeit reserved” (p. 197). Many pre-service teacher participants predicted that issues-centered

social studies would be motivational and allow for critical thinking. Other teachers felt that students were unable to fathom issues beyond their own experiences.

There was also a strong consensus among the participants that they would be unwilling to engage children with issues that could be emotionally discomforting to primary children in their future classrooms. Koeppen (1999) wrote, “teachers are often uncomfortable broaching issues which can be controversial with their young students [and] many envision the primary grades as a time to be kids, protected from the troubles beyond the school walls” (p. 193) Koeppen (1999) contended that children’s lives are not immune to conflicts of the past and suggested that the way “children learn to address and cope with controversy is through the application of analysis and reason in the social world” (p.193). Overall, Koeppen (1999) observed that the pre-service teachers in her study shared more negative feedback rather than positive reactions in regard to issues-centered education with elementary children. These perceptions led her to generalize that this type of instruction would unlikely be utilized by many in-service teachers.

In a research study involving in-service teachers, Friedman (2006) found that there were several obstacles for implementing digital primary sources in elementary social studies classrooms. These included time constraints and the priority of teaching to language arts and math standards. Teachers reported, “using such materials required more time, the emphasis on teaching to the state standards, and limited instructional time to teach the content outlined in the standards (p. 392). Friedman’s (2006) study explained that the rigorous state standards affected instruction by causing teachers to resort to “rote learning that has resulted in limited use of digital primary sources and best historical practices” (p. 323). The impact of the standards based-movement described by Friedman (2006) was corroborated by Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson,

Serriere & Stewart (2007) who confirmed the impact of the perceived obstacles that have resulted from a focus on standards.

McGlinn (2007) conducted a qualitative study with in-service secondary teachers, which outlined other hindrances for using web-based primary sources in the social studies. Although the participants in McGlinn's (2007) study were secondary level social studies pre-service teachers, not elementary level, which this study examines, it was reviewed for transferability. This study looked at pre-service teachers' attitudes about digitized primary sources. The teachers who participated in her study reported that they would use digital primary sources if they were (1), easy to access, (2) the databases were useful in teaching the content standard, and (3) included lesson plans. McGlinn (2007) suggested that it is important to first understand the extent by which in-service teachers are willing to use digitized primary sources and then examine what is needed by teachers to increase and enhance the teaching and learning from source material.

The studies by Koeppen (1999), Friedman (2007), and McGlinn (2007) reveal that age-appropriateness, time constraints and emphasis on ELA/Math CCSS are obstacles to teachers' use of visual primary source documents. Yet, another issue with utilizing visual primary sources points to existing research that indicates that social studies is the least favorite subject of students, and that these attitudes tend to get worse as students progress through school. This may be because of teaching and learning that is not motivational (Ellis, Fouts & Glenn, 1992). This phenomenon can be inherently problematic as these students grow up to become teachers who may place less emphasis on its incorporation into the curriculum.

***Apprenticeship of Observation.*** The expression, *monkey see, monkey do* is a common phrase used to explain the process of mimicry of one person or group by another. In teaching

and learning, this phenomenon has been called ‘the apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie, 1975). Maloy and LaRoche (2010) described the *apprenticeship of observation* with, “New teachers tend to teach as they have been taught, basing classroom lessons and instructional methods on the styles and strategies they have experienced in their own schooling, or observed in the schools where they are teaching” (p. 46). Even when teacher education programs (TEP) give guidance for effective instructional approaches, pre-service teachers revert to familiar pedagogy that they have been apprenticed by throughout their years as a student (Britzman, 2003). Koeppen (1999) acknowledged that her promotion of issues-centered education among her pre-service teachers possibly failed as a result of their past familiarity with performing memorization tasks, answering multiple-choice questions and learning from teacher and textbook centered classrooms.

One challenge of education programs to overcome this *apprenticeship*. According to Lampert (2008), “Teacher education pedagogy that attempts to disrupt the *apprenticeship of observation* can help teacher educators improve their efficacy at enabling pre-service teachers to develop a more evidence-based nuanced understanding of the complexities of teaching and overcome the challenges of learning to teach” (p. 1167). Westrick and Morris (2015) conducted a study that sought to explain challenges for Teacher Preparation Programs (TEP) in educating pre-service teachers. These researchers pointed to Darling-Hammond’s (2006) description of three challenges for pre-service teachers, (1) ‘the apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie, 1975), described as pre-service teachers’ replication of instructional practices that utilizes methods like they were taught, (2) ‘enactment’ described as pre-service teachers’ beliefs that they already know how to teach from observing their own teachers for years, and (3) ‘complexity, described as pre-service teachers’ feelings that unfamiliar pedagogical practices are too difficult to learn

and adapt (Westrick & Morris, 2015, p. 156). “These factors represent “perennial challenge in learning to teach” (Westrick & Morris, 2015, p. 156). Darling-Hammond (2006) agreed “countering deeply held beliefs derived from the apprenticeship of observation may be one of the most powerful challenges in learning to teach” (p.36).

Barton and Levstik (2003) reflected claimed that “even when teachers have graduated from programs that stress active student learning, multiple viewpoints, and construction of knowledge, and even when they clearly understand and accept these principles, their instruction bears little relationship to such knowledge” (p. 359). They identified two primary tasks teachers focus on that conflict with the desired teaching paradigm: controlling students’ behavior and covering content.

Westrick and Morris (2015) sought to overcome these challenges to effect pedagogical practice positively. They designed a qualitative study in which seventy-four pre-service teachers were asked to react to prompts created by the instructor. The feedback, via blog format, about the instructor’s pedagogical presentations made up the data that was collected to help the researchers gain insights into phenomena surrounding ‘the apprenticeship of observation,” “enactment,” and “complexity” (Westrick & Morris, 2015, p.156). The presentations were designed purposefully to disrupt these three mindsets that pre-service teachers possessed. Findings by these researchers showed that the pre-service teacher/participants began to acknowledge, challenge, and replace years of ingrained pedagogical practice. Westrick and Morris’s (2015) study suggested that it is possible to overcome these three challenges facing teacher education programs.

The next section will focus specifically with existing research about preparing pre-service teachers. The focus will be on effective methods to incorporate in social studies methods courses

that will help counter the apprenticeship of observation, enactment and complexity. Elementary social studies methods courses have the opportunity to increase students' understanding of best practices of using primary sources and introduce pre-service teachers to ways of using these sources effectively in the classroom.

### **Preparing Pre-Service Teachers to Teach**

Teacher preparation programs have the opportunity to affect the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards the use of visual primary source documents. The literature suggests the efficacy of this belief. They include the studies by Fresch (2004) and Waring and Torrez (2010).

A qualitative study Fresch (2004) was closely related to the design and purpose of this study. The rationale for her study was intended to fill a gap within the literature surrounding how teacher preparation programs were training pre-service teachers to use primary sources within the elementary classrooms. Fresch (2004) reported that the extensive research of (Barton, 1996, 1997, 2001; Barton and Levstik, 1996, 2001 and 2003) led to a call to use primary sources to meet national standards and improve student learning. The concern raised by Fresch (2004) was finding literature surrounding how teacher preparation programs were handling the integration of primary sources within elementary methods courses. Fresch wrote, "There are few articles on teaching elementary social studies methods courses" (p.84).

In order to fill in the gap within the literature, Fresch (2004) conducted a study that explicitly detailed the steps for incorporating primary sources with her elementary pre-service teachers. Prior to the workshop, the researcher collected qualitative data that informed of pre-service teachers' depth of knowledge about primary sources. Guided by the initial data, the researcher sought to build an understanding in her workshop of the following: (1) what primary sources are, (2) how to use primary sources, (3) the value of using primary sources with children,

and (4) how to locate primary sources. After the workshop, the pre-service teachers entered a field experience where they two additional forms of data were collected. These data were researcher observations of pre-service teachers using primary sources with elementary students in the field and pre-service teachers' journal entries.

The participants provided data that reflected positively on their growth in pedagogical knowledge in using a variety of primary sources. The appreciation of visual primary sources was most apparent from the data analysis. Through the instructor-led workshop and application of strategies during field experience, their understandings were deepened. As a result, the likelihood that the pre-service teachers in this study would use primary sources in their future classrooms was favorable Fresch (2004). In conclusion, Fresch (2004) stated, "There is so much that needs to be included in the course to better prepare our pre-service teachers to teach social studies. "[The] in-depth exploration using primary sources with children is well worth the time" (p. 99).

This study brought to light a gap in the literature. The researcher advised that additional studies were needed that investigated how teacher preparation programs were including best pedagogical practices using primary sources. Levstik and Barton (2011) corroborated this need for research that enables elementary education students to engage children in inquiry using primary sources (Levstik & Barton, 2011).

In a more recent qualitative study by Waring and Torrez (2010) explored the use of digitized primary sources with pre-service teachers. These researchers described 90 elementary pre-service teachers' experiences after exposure to strategies using digitized primary sources during a social studies methods course. Primary sources in both written and visual form were utilized to teach elementary education majors. According to Waring and Torrez (2010), "We hoped to

introduce students to the ideas and processes of historical inquiry, primary sources, historical perspective, and what it means to think historically” (p. 295).

Waring and Torrez (2010) found that helping the pre-service teachers to understand what primary sources were, and helping them find them, were important first steps. Surprisingly, these researchers reported that many of the participants had limited experience in using Web browsers needed to locate and use primary sources. “Once these barriers were addressed, the students embraced digital resources. They indicated that their experiences were positive and that digital resources had great potential for elementary classroom use” (Waring & Torrez, 2010, p. 299).

Both Fresch (2004) and Waring and Torrez (2010) shared similar positive findings. Each research study found that pre-service teachers felt that working with primary sources made history “real” (Fresch, 2004, p. 90; Waring and Torrez, 2010, p. 300). Each study also reported that the pre-service teachers were amazed at large number of electronic resources available via the World Wide Web. An over-arching goal of Fresch (2004) and Waring and Torrez (2010) was to explore elementary pre-service teachers attitudes in using primary sources. Findings from each study can be summed up in part by the reaction of a participant in the Waring and Torrez (2010) study. He/she wrote, “The primary sources will do for children what they did for me. History will become alive for them” (p. 302).

There is some evidence that teacher education programs can move pre-service teachers from simple to more complex understandings of teaching and learning, which may involve using primary sources. However, there have been no follow-up studies to gauge the long-term attitudes once the teachers are in the field. Overall, the success of any teaching practice learned from a teacher education is dependent on the way teacher educators enact them in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007).

## **Summary**

The review of the literature has shown that using primary sources among elementary populations is beneficial; although once thought to be beyond the capabilities of young children. The literature on visual primary sources in K-12 education is limited, although the body of research is growing about their use in the social studies by teachers (Bolick, 2006; Friedman, 2006, Fry, 2010; Hicks, Doolittle & Lee, 2004; Lee, Doolittle, & Hicks, 2006; McGlinn, 2007; and Swann & Hicks, 2007). This research has suggested information on how students learn best and the values of engaging students with visual primary sources in spite of apparent obstacles. Pre-service teacher training, when carefully designed, has the potential to overcome challenges to using digitized visual primary sources.

The review of the literature has shown that teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources is multifaceted. While complex, the exploration of past research and research-based pedagogical articles was encouraging to the researcher in regard to the meaningful learning outcomes these authentic materials can provide. The literature also revealed potential obstacles for pre-service and in-service teachers for using these authentic sources to teach elementary social studies. Through the review of the literature, the researcher was able to conceptualize and create a workshop where elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes about using digitized visual primary sources were explored.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

Chapter 1 introduced the present study by presenting the problem, purpose, need for the study, research questions, significance, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, definition of terms and theoretical and methodological frameworks. Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature necessary to conceptualize the present study. The knowledge gleaned from the review of the literature provided guidance regarding needed research, which established the purpose of this study. The review of the literature also helped the researcher to create the workshop that trained participants in using digitized visual primary sources with elementary age children.

The organization of Chapter 3 is as follows: First, a rationale for the methodological choice for the study is explained. Next, an overview of the study is presented. The third section includes a description of the participants. The risk and benefits for the participants is described in the informed consent statement in (Appendix A). A detailed description of the data collection methods makes up the fourth section. The final section focuses on the data analysis procedures with a discussion about the positionality of the principle investigator as the research instrument followed by a discussion about the trustworthiness of the study.

### **Rationale for Methodological Choices**

A qualitative research design was chosen by the researcher as the most appropriate methodology to answer the research questions. This methodological choice was made through the examination of the characteristics of qualitative research that aligned with the goals of the present study. First, the context of the study was a classroom setting. Qualitative research encourages things to be studied in their natural settings (Creswell, 2013). Second, this study sought to describe participant attitudes. According to Creswell (2013), Qualitative research

allows researchers to “make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 15). Third, the study was bound by time and place. It was delimited to four workshop sessions in a university classroom where elementary pre-service teachers engaged with methods coursework. Fourth, the data sets that consisted of pre- and post-workshop questionnaires, reflection prompts, and the researcher’s journal entries offered opportunities for the researcher to gain understandings of the phenomenon of pre-service teachers’ attitudes. These attitudes are unique to each individual and were formed from prior knowledge and experiences. Therefore, attitudes align with the constructivist paradigm that is conceptual to qualitative research (van Manen, 2016). Lastly, a qualitative methodology was chosen because an interpretative and descriptive design was needed to answer the research questions.

Detractors of qualitative research methodology dispute its generalizability. However, generalizability is not the goal of qualitative research, but rather the pursuit of understandings (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 2003, van Manen, 1988). Stake (2003) further claimed that in fields such as education, qualitative methodology is often preferred especially since subjective data can have practical applications. This is in contrast to objective data that Stake (2003) views as less conceptual to educational research. By choosing qualitative methodology, the attitudes of the nine participants involved with the study could be described in detail. Other educational stakeholders in similar contexts may benefit from this research.

Within the broad field of qualitative research, this research design falls in the category of a naturalistic instrumental case study. *Naturalistic* in the context of qualitative research means that the phenomenon is studied in natural and social contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study was conducted in the classroom where the participants’ methods coursework had taken place throughout the semester and a workshop-style format was familiar to them in a pedagogical

sense. The context and social structure were unchanged throughout the study, which aligned with naturalistic classification of case study research.

Also, the researcher was the instructor of record. The researcher being the instructor for the participants in their elementary social studies methods coursework was a potential conflict of interest. The researcher asking for informed consent to use data collected from the workshop after the semester was concluded reduced the impact.

The term *instrumental* defines the nature of this particular case study. Stake (2003) claimed that a case study is instrumental “if a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue” (p. 137). The statement of the problem on page 3 of this study explained the issues about teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources, which led to the purpose of the study.

### **Overview of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers’ enrolled in a social studies methods course at a major Southern university in the fall 2015 toward strategies utilizing digitized visual primary sources. A secondary purpose was to describe a particular set of strategies for teaching elementary students using digitized visual primary sources. The three research questions guiding the study were:

1. What are elementary pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward incorporating digitized visual primary sources in social studies instruction prior to a workshop?
2. To what extent if any, does exposure to strategies using digitized visual primary sources affect elementary pre-service teachers’ attitudes?
3. How, if at all, do elementary pre-service teachers think that digitized visual primary sources should be used after a workshop?

The timeframe for the data collection stage of the qualitative study was approximately four weeks. The researcher chose to use a social studies methods course in Fall, 2015 to observe and engage the nine enrolled elementary pre-service teachers with relevant components for teaching and learning using digitized visual primary sources. The attitudes of the participants were explored before, during and after the workshop. Four out of thirteen class sessions that met two hours and fifty minutes each day were utilized for the study. The duration of the study gave ample time to be completed in a meaningful way while allowing time for other course content to be taught. The researcher's role was that of participant-observer where she was an active member of the workshop as the main facilitator. The data collection methods begin on page 57 and the workshop description begins on page 61. An overview of how the workshop proceeded is as follows:

- Week 1 (Class 1): A pre-questionnaire was given and part one of the workshop was completed that involved a PowerPoint presentation of the following: (1) visual primary sources defined, (2) supporting research and relevancy of visual primary sources, (3) related standards, and (4) locating primary sources.
- Week 2 (Class 2): The first two visual primary source strategies were introduced. The focus of the first two strategies that utilized digitized visual primary sources were (1) document analysis and (2) historical bias. The participants completed two reflection prompts at the end of class two.
- Week 3 (Class 3): The second two visual primary source strategies were introduced. The focus of the second two strategies that utilized digitized visual primary sources were (1) historical perspective taking and (2) meme creation utilizing a digitized visual primary

source as a culminating activity. The participants completed two reflection prompts at the end of class three.

- Week 4 (Class 4): This session provided a conclusion of the workshop where each participant discussed their meme creation. Lastly, a post-questionnaire was given.

The data collected from the participants consisted of pre-and post-workshop questionnaires, which included three open-ended questions each, and two sets of reflection prompts that consisted of two open-ended questions each. The questionnaires are described on page 58 and a description of the reflection prompts begin on page 59. Each strategy that provided a basis for the participants' reflections is described in the section entitled "The Workshop" that is found on page 61.

## **Participants**

The researcher was granted IRB approval by the University of Tennessee (UTK) on December 11, 2015 (Appendix B). The researcher abided by the protocols approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) throughout the duration of the study. The researcher obtained informed consent to use participants' responses from questionnaires and reflection prompts after the semester was concluded and grades were submitted. This was a procedural safeguard to decrease the conflict of interest from the researcher being the instructor of record for all coursework that involved the participants. The Informed Consent Statement is found in (Appendix A). Gatekeeper Approval is found in (Appendix C).

The participants of the study were pre-service teachers enrolled in a junior level elementary social science methods course that met from 9:00 AM to 11:50 AM each Wednesday. The participants were selected using non-probability, purposive sampling. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), non-probability purposive sampling utilizes the

researcher's judgment in choosing participants to meet the goals of the study. There were no explicit exclusionary criteria in participant selection. The participants were considered to be representative of other similar research contexts. All of the nine participants were present throughout the duration of the research study.

The nine participants who were included in the study were a homogeneous group. All members were seeking a B.S. in Multidisciplinary Studies with an endorsement to teach Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grades. There were seven females and two males, each between 21-23 years of age. The participants were Caucasian and shared similar backgrounds, declaring that they grew up in East Tennessee and had attended rural schools that were predominately Caucasian demographically. Their claim was corroborated by the researcher from an analysis of the Tennessee State Department website <http://edu.reportcard.state.tn.us>. The 2012 demographic data on the state's site indicates that the K-12 school systems that all of the candidates attended were between 91%-99% Caucasian, 1%-4% African American and 1% to 6% Hispanic. Each of the participants also attended school systems that were Title I schools, which means that they receive federal funding due to high poverty rates.

The lack of diversity in regard to demographics and the backgrounds among the participants limits generalizability. However, as mentioned previously, generalizability was not a goal of this study, nor is it a focus of qualitative research. This study is however applicable to a particular reader with a similar context. Through an analysis of the data, the researcher sought to glean insight into participants' attitudes about teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources that would hopefully extend understandings to other educational stakeholders of comparable situations as in this study.

## **Data Collection Methods**

Data were collected through using ethnographic data collection tools of questionnaires (Jansen, 2010), and reflection prompts (Rabiee, 2004). The researcher also kept a reflection journal for deeper understandings into the research questions (McClure, 2002). The triangulation of data among these three sources increased the trustworthiness of the findings reported in this study (Glesne, 2006). Descriptive detail of the questionnaires and reflection prompts are discussed next.

***Questionnaires.*** The principle investigator created pre- and a post- workshop questionnaires that were intended to provide an understanding into the attitudes that the participants had towards visual primary sources before and after a workshop. The pre-workshop questionnaire contained three questions that were written as follows:

Pre-Questionnaire:

1. How would you define digitized visual primary sources?
2. What opportunities have you had in the past to work with digitized visual primary sources as a university, high school, middle school or elementary school student? Please explain.
3. As a pre-service teacher, do you have current beliefs about how (if at all) digitized visual primary sources will be incorporated into your future elementary classroom? Please explain.

Questions one and two of the pre-workshop questionnaire provided a basis for the researcher in regard to the participants' background knowledge. Question three of the pre-workshop questionnaire inquired specifically about these pre-existing attitudes. All three questions in the pre-questionnaire were geared to answer Research Question 1. The post-workshop questionnaire

contained three questions that were written as follows:

Post-Questionnaire:

1. How would you define digitized visual primary sources?
2. How do you imagine digitized visual primary sources being useful (if at all) in your future elementary classroom? Please explain.
3. What (if at all) do you think are the challenges and/or limitations to using digitized visual primary source strategies with your future elementary students? Please explain.

The post-workshop questionnaire was created to track changes in knowledge and attitudes as a result of the workshop that focused on teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources. Question one provided a means to compare pre- and post workshop descriptions of digitized visual primary sources. Question two asked about the participants' perceptions regarding their future use of digitized visual primary sources and question three asked about the perceived challenges or limitations related to this use.

***Reflection Prompts.*** The researcher asked the participants to provide feedback using the reflection prompts after the first two and the final two strategies from workshop were presented. These prompts were designed by the researcher to gain data relevant to answering Research Questions 2 and 3. They were written as follows:

1. Are there any components of today's strategies using digitized visual primary sources that you think would be useful in your future teaching of elementary social studies? Please explain.
2. What concerns (if any) do you have about using the visual primary source strategies from today's workshop in your future teaching of elementary social studies? Please explain.

The reflection prompts were geared to gain insights about the participants' valuation of the four strategies presented by the researcher. Specifically, question one sought to understand any perceived benefits by the participants that may have resulted from exposure to the four strategies. Question two provided a means for participants to express concerns about using digitized visual primary sources in their future teaching. The reflection prompts were designed to answer Researcher Question 3 mainly, but were also examined to provide perceptions to answer Research Question 2 as well.

***Researcher's Journal Reflections.*** After each day of the research study, the researcher reflected by writing in a journal. The reasoning behind these recordings was to help the researcher remember and record observations such as certain behaviors of the participants. By recording this observational data, the researcher sought to accurately describe the participants' attitudes throughout the study.

The questionnaires, reflection prompts, and the researcher's journal reflections were utilized as data sources to answer the research questions. Table (1) illustrates the data sources utilized to answer the questions. These data were collected before, during and after the workshop that is described beginning on page 61.

**Table 1. *Research Questions with Data Sources***

| <b>Research Questions</b> | <b>Data Source-<br/>Pre-<br/>Questionnaire</b> | <b>Data<br/>Source-<br/>Reflection<br/>Prompts</b> | <b>Data Source-<br/>Post-<br/>Questionnaire</b> | <b>Data Source-<br/>Researcher's<br/>Journal<br/>Reflections</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research Question 1       | X                                              |                                                    |                                                 | X                                                                |
| Research Question 2       | X                                              | X                                                  | X                                               | X                                                                |
| Research Question 3       |                                                | X                                                  | X                                               | X                                                                |

## **The Workshop**

The data for this study resulted from a workshop that consisted of four sessions. These workshop days lasted two hours and fifty minutes each. The components of the workshop were as follows: (1) digitized visual primary defined, (2) where to find digitized visual primary sources, (3) related research, (4) standards, including Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Tennessee State Standards that relate to visual primary sources, (4) four strategies, and (5) student benefit. The researcher created a PowerPoint presentation and a training manual that correspond with each of the five major components so that they could use it for future guidance as in-service teachers. The researcher utilized the past research of Fresch (2004) as guidance for creating the workshop for this study.

The workshop was designed within the constructivist paradigm that emphasized the importance of prior knowledge, modeling and scaffolding (Bandura, 1977; Piaget, 1952 & Vygotsky, 1978). These components were of importance in helping the participants move from a knowledge level to a synthesis level (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, 1956). This cognitive progression means that the participants have knowledge of the strategies and are able to apply them in their future elementary classrooms. It was the hope of the researcher that the participants could progress in teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources as most of them were “novices in the archive” (Bass, 2003, p. 10). The research basis for the four strategies is presented next, followed by a description of the four-day workshop.

***Research Basis for Strategies.*** Document analysis was modeled as the first strategy in the workshop. It was also utilized in strategies two and three that focused on historical perspective taking and detecting historical bias. Specifically, effective questioning, a conceptual part of document analysis was integrated in the historical perspective taking and detecting historical

bias strategies because asking questions of any primary sources involves historical inquiry which promotes historical thinking. (James & McVay, 2009; VanSledright, 2004). Questioning was used as a form of scaffolding for elementary students who often need support to find visual evidence and draw conclusions (Vygotsky, 1975). The researcher drew upon Barton's (2001) research-based pedagogical article to determine appropriate questions and ways for elementary students to organize information visual evidence.

Graphic organizers were used in strategies two and three to help students to meaningfully organize visual information (Ausubel, 1963). Specifically, the researcher created a graphic organizer for strategy two, which focused on students being able to detect historical bias. In this strategy the graphic organizer provided a means to crop visual evidence of Paul Revere's (1770) engraving commonly known as *The Bloody Massacre* located in Figure (4) on page 71. Also, a T-chart Figure (6) was utilized in strategy three that focused on perspective taking that helped students to organize two opposing views of historical actors found within the photo of Elizabeth Eckford in Figure (5) on page

Strategy four was a culminating strategy where skills gained in document analysis, historical perspective taking and bias detection were the participants could be used in order to create a historical meme. This strategy employed the characteristics of authentic instruction by providing a visual primary source such as a painting or photograph of a person or group of people for children communicate their historical thinking. The mode that the historical visual text provided to engage the participants in historical thinking was similar to writing a response to a book, article or other text. The meme strategy also provided a way for students to approach the text from an efferent stance with a focus on facts and details that was later needed to create a caption for the meme and explanation of historical thinking (Rosenblatt, 1978).

The four research based strategies were implemented on day two and three of the workshop. Each strategy progressively built upon one another. A detailed description of how each of the strategies unfolded on day two and three of the workshop begins on page 67.

### **Workshop: Day 1**

***Building Background Knowledge.*** On the first day of the workshop, the participants were asked to respond to a pre-questionnaire, which was completed in about twenty minutes. After collecting the pre-questionnaire, the researcher turned to the first slide of the PowerPoint presentation which offered two definitions of how digitized visual primary sources could be described. The participants agreed that the description they thought was easiest to understand was the following: visuals such as photographs or paintings that are primary sources and have been digitized. Participants' faces revealed confidence as most all of them had described digitized visual primary sources somewhat accurately in the pre-workshop questionnaire. The construct that many of them had not included in how they described digitized visual primary sources was 'digitized.' They discussed the meaning of digitized and came to a consensus that it could be visual that has been changed into a digital version. With a deeper understanding of what constituted digitized visual primary sources, the workshop moved to locating them.

Next, the goal for participants was to learn how to locate digitized visual primary sources purposefully. They were organized into three cooperative learning groups, consisting of three participants each. First, the researcher read elementary content standards that focused on the American Revolution, Westward Expansion, and Civil Rights. Then, each historical period was explored within the Library of Congress site at <https://www.loc.gov>. The researcher modeled how to navigate the vast site. The participants expressed a sense of being overwhelmed but appreciated the abundance of resources for teachers within the Library of Congress. The

participants indicated that learning to use the Library of Congress site would take a great deal of time.

The participants did not view the Library of Congress as an efficient site to locate digitized visual primary sources, therefore, the researcher guided them to the Gilder Lehrman Institute, which was a less expansive site. The participants searched, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org> for the same historical time periods; the American Revolution, Westward Expansion, and Civil Rights for digitized visual primary sources. The researcher gave the participants time to find digitized visual primary sources on their own and they were asked to choose a noteworthy visual to share with the whole group. The participants commented about having less anxiety in searching for digitized visual primary sources within the Gilder Lehrman site because it was less intimidating in regard to its vastness and had user-friendly mechanisms. More narrowly, the participants reported their appreciation for being able to refine a search to only include primary sources, then by type and theme. Still, there was an overall response among the participants that they needed only the most pertinent digitized visual primary sources to examine with their future students.

Finally, the participants searched the same historical period as twice before; the American Revolution, Westward Expansion, and Civil Rights using the website Google at <https://www.google.com>. The researcher guided the participants to refine their search to only include images. At this point, the mood changed for the participants. They reported that this was the most efficient method to search for digitized visual primary sources. Google Images was definitely the site in which all the participants shared the most enthusiasm. The participants appreciated the broad search that would often result in a feature of the most prominent digitized

visual primary sources. They indicated their likelihood to use Google Images to access digitized visual primary sources as in-service teachers.

The researcher asked the participants to rate the sites used to search for digitized visual primary sources on a scale of one to five, where one represents least likely and five is most likely. In regard to the participants' likelihood to use, four out of five of the participants rated the Library of Congress site as a three and the other respondents rated it as a two. The participants shared a unanimous consensus by rating the Gilder Lehrman Institute site as a four and Google Images was rated a five by all the participants. A discussion among the respondents and researcher followed. Approximately one and a half hours was spent helping the participants to learn how to locate digitized visual primary sources and a closing discussion.

During the discussion, the participants commented that the amount of time familiarizing themselves with the websites was valuable and would help them as future teachers. The buzz among the participants noted in the researcher's field journal was their positive outlook about using Google Images because it offered a more focused search for visuals to support the standards. The participants believed that the Library of Congress site offered a great deal of resources that would be learned about over time. One participant commented specifically, *I didn't even know where to start, but I can see how the Library of Congress site could be great!* It was challenging to keep the workshop progressing, as the participants expressed overall enjoyment from browsing through the repositories of historical images. They indicated that they wished this activity could have lasted longer.

The final objective of day one of the workshop was to build on knowledge gained from the first two hours of the workshop. Specifically, the objective was for the participants to be able to find a digitized visual primary source and align it with a standard to use as a basis for teaching.

The participants were given an overview of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that include sections that focus on students' learning through visuals. The Tennessee State Standards (TSS) that explicitly reference particular historical visual primary sources was also reviewed. The participants chose a CCSS or TSS that they could use to support the teaching of a historical image. One group located a photo of Cesar Chavez holding a sign that read 'Huelga.' Chavez is mentioned in the third grade TSS. Another group showed a picture of Martin Luther King delivering his *I Have a Dream* speech. Martin Luther King is referenced in the TSS across multiple grade levels. The last group presented a photograph from the Lewis Hines (1908-1912) collection. The topic of child labor in the industrial revolution is highlighted in the fifth grade TSS.

Next, the participants were asked to generate ideas of how they might be able to use their chosen digitized visual primary source in their future elementary classrooms. The researcher wrote the responses on the board and engaged the participants in a rich discussion about how they were taught to using visual primary sources. The group of participants who shared the photograph of Cesar Chavez explained that they would discuss what he contributed to improving the rights of Hispanic farm laborers of the 1960s. They felt that the students needed to know how he and the time period looked back then. The next group of participants who showed the photograph of Martin Luther King Jr. They envisioned being able to allow their students to conceptualize the magnitude of the event by showing the visual while as they listened to a audio recording of his speech. The last group explained that a photograph by Lewis Hines of a young girl who worked in a textile mill could be compared to the lives of children in present-day.

The participants' discussion about how they envisioned elementary students engagement with digitized visual primary sources helped the researcher understand more about the prior knowledge of the participants. They were also able to make connections between elementary social studies content and literacy standards that helped establish relevancy. The first day of the workshop set the stage for the presentation of strategies on days two and three.

## **Workshop: Day 2**

***Document Analysis Strategy.*** The researcher opened the first day of the workshop by describing the nature of document analysis and asking the participants about what they thought document analysis is as a teaching strategy. One of the respondents eagerly described document analysis as a way to read visual text in a way similar to written text. The other participants offered no rebuttal to his description of document analysis. The researcher probed about how the participant thought it best to engage elementary students in document analysis. The respondents thought questioning would be an effective approach but couldn't move beyond inquiry. The researcher agreed with the participants that conceptual to document analysis is questioning by the teacher and identifying key details from visual text to be able to make inferences.

The researcher began modeling the first part of the document analysis activity by asking questions to guide the participants in document analysis of *American Progress*, Figure (1).

The researcher communicated to the participants the reasoning behind the choice of *American Progress* (1873) for use of analysis by explaining that it has strong visual detail that provides rich opportunities for document analysis that allows for historical inquiry and historical thinking. The researcher modeled verbal discourse among the participants with the line of questioning as follows:

1. Who are the people or things represented in the painting?

2. What do you think is happening in the photograph or painting?
3. What is the mood communicated in the painting?
4. What do you think the author's purpose was in creating the painting?
- 10 What time period do you think the visual represents?



**Figure 1: *American Progress***

After modeling document analysis questioning, the researcher again explained how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) relate to document analysis strategies. The researcher specifically reviewed a first grade standard, CCSS. ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7, which asks students to use describe key ideas from visual text. This standard was chosen by the researcher purposefully to explain that as early as first grade, students are asked to analyze visual detail. Cropping was discussed as a means to scaffold for students' exploration of key details found in visuals. Additionally, the main intent of document analysis was communicated by the researcher as a way to help students to progress in making inferences from text evidence.

The first cropping strategy utilized a photograph from 1869 taken by Andrew Russell commonly known as *The Golden Spike Ceremony*, Figure (2) on page 69. The researcher cut yellow transparency film into small squares to use as tools for the participants to “crop” visual

evidence that answered the questions posed by the teacher (Bondie, 2013). The participants used individual laptops and were given cropping tools by the researcher. Then they were asked to place the color overlay on the key visual evidence that they felt answered the researcher's prompts and discuss the identified text evidence. The protocol was as follows

1. Crop to show who or what is the focus of the visual.

Probing question: Why do you think the creator chose to focus on \_\_\_\_?

2. Crop to show a clue as to where the event took place.

Probing question: Why do you think that the setting is \_\_\_\_\_?

3. Crop to show when the event is happening.

Probing question: What time period do you think this visual represents?

4. Crop to show any different ethnicities represented in the photograph.

Probing question: Is there any diversity represented?

Probing question: Do you think the creator included all workers of the Transcontinental Railroad?



**Figure 2: *The Golden Spike Ceremony***

A second cropping strategy was modeled for the participants as another method to engage students in document analysis. In this strategy, the digitized visual primary sources were divided digitally into quadrants. This strategy provided a means to analyze the image in sections and answer the location of visual evidence. Andrew Russell's (1869) photograph titled *Golden Spike Ceremony*, Figure (2) and Thomas Hill's (1881) painting titled *The Last Spike*, Figure (3) were both sectioned digitally using the SMART board. An illustration of this cropping is illustrated below in Figure (3).



**Figure 3: *The Last Spike* with inserted quadrants**

Next, the researcher asked the participants to find any evidence from Figures (2) and (3) that included Chinese laborers. The researcher asked participants to respond with their evidence verbally using sentence frames. The sentence frame provided to the participants to cite evidence of Chinese labor was as follows: “There is evidence of Chinese workers in quadrant \_\_\_\_\_ because I see \_\_\_\_\_.” A discussion followed about how document analysis was an effective strategy that revealed the discrepancy of Chinese representation found by comparing *The Golden Spike Ceremony*, Figure (2) and *The Last Spike*, Figure (3). Sentence frames were further

discussed among the researcher and participants as a means to provide elementary students discourse that could be used in the participants' future classrooms

The participants and researcher discussed that document analysis offers a means for students to analyze an image that could be compared to a Close reading of written text. One student remarked how this was like doing detective work. One other participant commented that they would not have picked up on the bias from the first visual without analyzing both representations. Lastly, the participants felt that their future students would enjoy looking for clues from visuals to form a story.

The document analysis strategies described previously was concluded after fifty minutes. The use of effective questioning and cropping strategies for identification of text evidence were key components of document analysis and were used in the historical bias and perspective taking strategies. These next strategy presented was a strategy that focused on historical bias which the researcher thought was an appropriate progression since the idea of historical bias was touched on in strategy one.

***Historical Bias Strategy.*** On day two, the second strategy was presented which was the historical bias strategy. The researcher began by discussing with the participants why historical bias detection is relevant. The researcher emphasized how one must consider when analyzing digitized visual primary sources the role of the creator, message, and intended audience as evidence that offer a glimpse into the past. The researcher and participants reasoned through discussion that clues exist within digitized visual primary sources that allow students to act as true historians and communicate bias by the author. The historical bias strategy utilized the digitized visual primary source, *The Bloody Massacre* illustrated below in Figure (4).



you think Paul Revere's (1770) engraving is trustworthy or biased?" Why do you think so? Please refer to visual evidence in your response.

Ways to scaffold and/or differentiate instruction for students with the bias activity were discussed among the participants and the researcher. Some of the ideas discussed were, (1) provide students a paper copy of a visual primary source to cut key visual details, (2) Provide sentence frames and sentence starters as scaffolding for writing, and (3) read a reliable primary source of the same event and ask students to find corroborating and/or contradictory evidence from a visual primary source. This discussion provided closure to the bias strategy designed to help students recognize historical bias after one hour and fifteen minutes.

### **Workshop: Day 3**

***Historical Perspective Taking Strategy.*** On day three of the workshop, the researcher introduced the historical perspective taking strategy through a discussion about engaging students in historical perspective taking. The review of the literature revealed great deal of debate among the constructs of historical perspective taking, rational understanding and historical empathy. About fifteen minutes was used to create a deeper understanding among these three similar, but varied meanings. The participants agreed unanimously that perspective taking can be thought of as "the understanding peoples' actions and motivations within a historical context." The participants seemed to have a good grasp of what perspective taking means and this was important to the researcher as misconceptions often arise.

The researcher discussed the relevancy for teaching historical perspective taking by explaining that social and emotional learning topics are currently being discussed in different avenues of academia that specifically mention perspective taking (Tatter, 2015). The researcher thought that strategies that engage the participants in pedagogy that utilized historical perspective

taking strategies were therefore timely and established relevancy. The progression of the perspective taking strategy was as follows.

1. The teacher divided the participants in two cooperative learning groups that consisted of one group of five participants and one group of four participants. The purpose of the division was to create an environment for civil discourse.
2. To mentally set the scene, the researcher asked the participants to close their eyes and count back by the decades until the 1950s was reached. The students opened their eyes to a projected digitized visual primary source of a 1957 picture of Elizabeth Eckford and an angry mob as she integrates Little Rock Central High School Figure (5).



**Figure 5: *Elizabeth Eckford Sept. 23, 1957 with inserted quadrants***

3. The researcher modeled effective questioning techniques as a means of document analysis and asked the participants to cite visual evidence using the corresponding quadrant to support their responses. The questioning protocol was as follows:
  - A. Who is the focus of the photograph?
  - B. What do you think is happening?
  - C. What visual clues reveal the time period?

- D. What are clues that indicate mood?
  - E. Can you identify who are the protagonist(s) and antagonist(s) in this photograph?
  - F. Do you think they have different perspectives about what was going on that day?
4. The two groups were assigned roles. Group one represented the perspective of Elizabeth Eckford and group two that of the angry women. They were given a T-chart Figure (6) to graphically organize their positions.
  5. The researcher asked each group to share their perspectives that were organized in the T-chart. Discussion and debate were encouraged and contrasting viewpoints inferred from the visual were shared.

|    | Elizabeth Eckford's Perspective | The Bullying Females' Perspective |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. |                                 |                                   |
| 2. |                                 |                                   |
| 3. |                                 |                                   |

**Figure 6: T-chart**

**Historical Meme Strategy.** The fourth strategy was a culminating strategy that allowed the participants to apply document analysis, and/or historical bias and perspective taking through the

creation of a meme caption using a digitized visual primary source. The researcher designed the meme strategy in response to a lack of culminating activities found throughout the existing literature that allow for the students to synthesize meaning and communicate inferences using digitized visual primary sources. The meme strategy is described in detail in the next section.

First, the researcher discussed with the participants the nature of memes as a culminating strategy for working with digitized visual primary sources. The researcher asked the participants about their experience with memes and received several responses. Specifically, four of the participants had created memes and all had read them regularly. All of the participants agreed that memes are typically humorous and often focus on spreading social issues of present-day. The researcher probed to find if the participants could envision memes as a teaching strategy. Specifically, the researcher asked, “how could memes provide a creative way for elementary students to engage in document analysis, perspective taking and convey and/or biases found within the visual?” One participant thought that the creation of a meme would be an effective strategy to help students think historically because in order to create a meaningful caption, one must have an understanding of historical content and engage in perspective taking to create their caption. Another participant thought that the level of engagement would be high among their future students and that *buy in* would promote more meaningful learning outcomes. All of the participants agreed that their future students being of the millennial generation would enjoy learning history in a modern way.

The aforementioned discussion was intended to provide relevancy and rationale for using memes as a culminating activity. The researcher’s meme used for modeling is shown in Figure (7). The researcher then modeled a think aloud where the researcher described her historical thinking that was represented by the meme.

Next, the participants were asked to visit <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>, a site that was chosen by the researcher because it seemed kid friendly and user friendly by providing easy to follow instructions and free meme creation. The researcher then asked the participants to create a meme from a digitized visual primary source in which they had background knowledge. This instruction began their pursuit of a suitable digitized visual primary source and allowed practice using popular websites that contained many digitized visual primary sources from which to choose. The participants searched for their photograph or painting with great enthusiasm for about fifteen minutes.

At that time, each of the participants had signaled to the researcher that they had located suitable digitized visual primary source. The next step was for the participants to create a caption for their meme. This part of the strategy was equally as engaging as their search for their digitized visual primary source. The rubric that had been created by the researcher was shared with the participants as guidance. Many statements about possible captions were discussed with laughter among the participants. The researcher cautioned the participants that the caption had to represent historical thinking. Also, they were reminded that this level of excitement would likely occur in their future classrooms, where management issues would need to be addressed in their planning.

In closing, the participants shared their memes using their laptops and explained what they felt were the perspectives of their chosen historical figure(s). This rich discourse both through the meme and discussion was reported very favorably among the participants. The respondents self-assessed their memes and explanations of historical perspective taking using a rubric found in (Appendix E). All participants scored themselves a three on each component of the rubric. The researcher then asked the participants to give initial feedback about their learning experience

in creating a meme on a zero to five scale where five was the highest. All nine of the participants rated the strategy as a five, which was a bit astonishing to the researcher.



Figure 7: *Whitnel Cotton Mill Factory Girl* with caption

This study utilized teaching strategies that focused on document analysis, historical bias, historical perspective taking and a culminating meme activity. The next section provides an overview regarding the data that resulted from a four day workshop where the strategies were explored. The data analysis procedures of the pre- and post-workshop questionnaires, reflection prompts and the researcher's journal are explained in the next section.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data utilized in this study included pre and post questionnaires, reflection prompts, and the researcher's journal reflections. This data was intended to describe changes (if any) of the attitudes of participants toward digitized visual primary sources before and after a workshop. The researcher sought to triangulate the data, which basically means that the researcher utilized perspectives from multiple sources to answer the research questions (Flick, 2014).

The research questions were first condensed and separated into three categories where typologies of the research questions were created. The first typology was "should we or should

we not use digitized visual primary sources?” The second typology was “what strategies (if any) should be used to teach with digitized visual primary sources?” The third typology was “what impact did the strategies during the workshop have on the participants?” After creating these headings the data were categorized and analyzed for themes to answer the research questions.

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of collecting and organizing data for analysis, then reducing data into themes through the process of coding and condensing the codes that are finally represented categorically. For this study, as each data source was collected, the researcher sought to gain an initial sense of the data through repeated readings that helped guide the study. Once all data was obtained the researcher moved to the step of coding the data and creating themes.

The researcher used a constant comparative method of analysis, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The entire data set was read and re-read multiple times to look for patterns, consistencies, discrepancies and anomalies (Creswell, 2013). The next step the researcher took was to isolate the questionnaires, reflection prompts and the researcher’s journal reflections to code key phrases and ideas in separate notebooks. A code is a word or phrase that “symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based visual data” (Saldana, 2011, p. 3). These codes were organized categorically where noticeable words or phrases communicated by the participants were identified line-by-line, highlighted manually, cropped and organized in a column format, which provided a visual representation that helped the researcher to recognize and synthesize patterns necessary to answer the research questions. Initial themes were created from these codes (Saldana, 2011). After this level of coding, eight themes were created. The eight themes that were created to answer the research questions are found on page 84.

## **Positionality**

Throughout the research process, it was the goal of the researcher to maintain a high level of reflexivity, as it is an integral component of this study as a qualitative design. Additionally, the nature of qualitative research positions the researcher as the data collection and analysis instrument. Mindfulness of positionality during the research process helped contribute to the trustworthiness of the study. According to Bourke (2014), “The act of examining the research process in the context of positionality can be described, at least in part, as reflexivity” (p. 1). According to Callaway (1992), reflexivity is “a continuing mode of self-analysis” (p. 33). The researcher’s background, pertinent to this study and areas where the researcher was mindful and sought to be reflexive are described next.

Prior to conducting this research study, the researcher worked for eleven years teaching U.S. history, geography, and U.S. government at the secondary level. The researcher began a career in higher education in 2010 and is currently in her fifth year as a Lecturer, Clinical Supervisor and edTPA Clinician at Tennessee Tech University. Both personally and professionally, the positive learning experiences from teaching with visual primary sources have been woven throughout the researcher’s career. Meaningful learning outcomes were first realized while teaching middle school where some students struggled to comprehend informational text. This led to a decision to include visual primary sources at first as a scaffolding technique for understanding. Eventually, using documents such as historical photographs and paintings became a regular inclusion to help students to think critically and analyze text, even when the researcher taught eleventh grade U.S. history.

The researcher’s own three school age children struggle with literacy. One of the children has been diagnosed with dyslexia. As they each sought to make sense of historical content from

their social studies coursework, visual primary sources seemed to help them learn and retain information with better learning outcomes. The positive results on learning that visuals offered was a motivating factor that inspired this study.

Conceptual to the researcher using visual primary sources are beliefs that every student, regardless of their ability to read text deserves access to historical content knowledge and effective strategies to help them learn best. This opinion was shaped over a decade. Therefore, the researcher brings to this research study a bias that visual primary sources are valuable to student learning. It is the goal of the researcher to be transparent in all facets of this research study, which includes communicating the aforementioned researcher's positionality. The researcher was continually mindful of this bias throughout the data analysis procedures to ensure that the findings among the data were communicated with the utmost efficacy.

### **Trustworthiness**

This triangulation of data present in this qualitative study added trustworthiness to the study (Glesne, 2006). These data was analyzed until a saturation point is reached. Additionally, trustworthiness was enhanced through member checking, where the researcher's interpretations of the data was shared with the participants to ensure the researcher's understandings are representative of the participants' attitudes through rich descriptions and their own voices. (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Krefting, 1991).

### **Summary**

The research project utilized a qualitative research design to gain understandings into the attitudes of nine pre-service teachers as they engaged in a workshop that involved teaching and learning using digitized visual primary sources. Three methods were used to gather data: questionnaires, reflection prompts and the researcher's reflection journal. Pre- and post workshop questionnaires provided data to describe a change in attitude. Reflection prompts

provided a means to understand attitudes about four particular strategies that utilized digitized visual primary sources and the researcher's journal reflections gave additional insights into the phenomenon under study. Data analysis of the pre-service teachers' responses and an analysis of the journal reflections led to the creation of thematic descriptions that answered research questions. Chapter four presents the results of the data analysis described in this chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to describe the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers' enrolled in a social studies methods course at a major Southern university in fall 2015 toward strategies utilizing digitized visual primary sources. A secondary purpose was to describe a particular set of strategies for teaching elementary students using digitized visual primary sources. By describing the four strategies utilized during the study, the researcher hoped to add to the limited amount of social studies pedagogy specifically used to prepare elementary pre-service teachers (Fresch, 2004). Throughout the study, it was evident that the nine elementary pre-service teachers shared optimism about using digitized visual primary sources in their future teaching careers, although challenges were made apparent. They communicated through the data sources these positive intentions, shared what strategies they felt would benefit their future students most and revealed their perceived obstacles toward enacting digitized visual primary sources with elementary students. These findings explain the participants' contemplations and vision for using strategies with digitized visual primary sources. One could reason that the participants in this study answered Levstik and Barton's (2011) call to elementary social studies educators to "imagine a classroom where students regularly, and actively do history..." (xi). The three research questions guiding the study were:

1. What are elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes toward incorporating digitized visual primary sources in social studies instruction prior to a workshop?
2. To what extent if any, does exposure to strategies using digitized visual primary sources affect elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes?

3. How, if at all, do elementary pre-service teachers think that digitized visual primary sources should be used after a workshop?

Chapter 1 introduced the present study by presenting the problem, purpose, need for the study, research questions, significance, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, definition of terms and theoretical and methodological frameworks. Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature necessary to conceptualize the study. Chapter 3 provided the methods utilized throughout the study including a description of the rationale for the methodological choice, participants and site, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, positionality of the principle investigator and the trustworthiness of the study.

This chapter is an analysis of the data that resulted in the creation of themes from the data analysis stages explained in Chapter 3. The participants' responses to questionnaires, reflection prompts and the researcher's journal reflections led to the creation of eight themes. An overview of the eight themes is presented on page 85 and are described in the order of the research question, in narrative form beginning on page 86.. This chapter can be conceptualized in three major sections: Analysis of Research Question 1, Analysis of Research 2, and Analysis of Research Question 3. Lastly, the researcher summarizes in this chapter how knowledge gained from the workshop impacted the attitudes of the participants. Specifically, how the strategies presented during the workshop affected their attitudes and their likelihood for using digitized visual primary sources in their future teaching of elementary social studies.

The data analysis for each research question was qualitative in nature. These data consisted of pre-and post workshop questionnaires, which included three open-ended questions each. There were also data from two sets of reflection prompts that consisted of two open-ended questions. In addition, the researcher kept a reflection journal after each workshop session.

Through an inductive analysis of the questionnaires, reflection prompts and the researcher's reflection journal, the data was analyzed and interpreted (Hatch, 2002). In this method the researcher was able to generate themes that emerged to answer each of the three research questions. The discussion of the themes to answer each research question begins on page 85. Throughout the communication of the findings, these themes are discussed authentically using the participants' voices to provide more authentic understandings. These responses appear in italics print. An overview of the eight themes are presented first to provide an overview of the findings of this qualitative research study.

### **Overview of Themes**

- Theme 1: Pre-service teachers' share limited prior knowledge and past experiences about digitized visual primary sources.
- Theme 2: Pre-service teachers are positive about using digitized visual primary sources in their future elementary social studies classrooms.
- Theme 3: Pre-service teachers view digitized visual primary sources as best for illustrative purposes.
- Theme 4: Pre-service teachers' attitudes remained positive about using digitized visual sources in their future elementary social studies classrooms.
- Theme 5: Pre-service teachers' attitudes shifted from pre-workshop views that placed students as passive learners to post-workshop views that placed students as active learners.
- Theme 6: Pre-service teachers perceive insufficient background knowledge of elementary students and time necessary to scaffold for their understanding using digitized visual primary sources as challenges.

- Theme 7: Pre-service teachers value the meme strategy as a modern and engaging platform for elementary students' perspective taking.
- Theme 8: Pre-service teachers view document analysis strategies as beneficial historical inquiry and reasoning with text evidence.

The next section addresses the three major research questions related to this qualitative research study. The themes are discussed in the order of the research questions. Narrative descriptions by the researcher are provided to for each theme. Excerpts from the participants' responses appear in italics form.

**Research Question 1: What are elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes toward incorporating digitized visual primary sources in social studies prior to a workshop?** The analysis of the pre-questionnaire revealed that the participants of this study were able to loosely describe digitized visual primary sources, while their exposure to strategies using them in their past academic careers was limited. Yet, with little background knowledge prior to the workshop, they envisioned these authentic sources to be helpful for their future students. Specifically, they thought digitized visual primary sources would help support elementary students being able to conceptualize historical people and events through illustration. The following section will explore in greater detail participants' descriptions, background knowledge, optimism, and their feelings about how they felt digitized visual primary sources could best be utilized in their future classrooms prior to a workshop. This workshop was designed to increase the participants' pedagogical knowledge and skill for their future work as in-service teachers.

***Theme one: Pre-service teachers' share limited prior knowledge and past experiences about digitized visual primary sources.*** Attitudes are often shaped by knowledge and experiences. This study sought to explore attitudes, therefore insights about the participants'

knowledge about and experiences with digitized visual primary sources was thought to be important by the researcher. Specifically, the first two questions of the pre-workshop questionnaire were designed to get at participants' background knowledge that may have shaped their attitudes over their academic career. The two questions basically asked about how the participants describe digitized visual primary sources and past academic experiences in working with digitized visual primary sources. The responses provided by the participants helped the researcher be able to conceptualize their attitudes in a meaningful way and provided a basis for understanding.

When asked how digitized visual primary sources were defined in question one of the pre-questionnaire, this inquiry revealed that all participants shared some background knowledge about digitized visual primary sources. Most of them were able to provide descriptions of digitized visual primary sources that were somewhat accurate but limited. Over half of the participants described the 'digitized' construct by specifying words like *found on the internet*, *found on the computer*, *by way of technology*, or *access[ed] online*. Among the remaining participants, three participants indicated *photos or pictures* were digital (which they can be especially in today's society), leaving only one participant to fully reveal a misconception by responding that, *it is a source that you can see in person and feel*.

The term 'visual primary source' was described by each of the nine participants without any major misconceptions. The majority of the participants used *picture and photo* to account for the visual element in digitized visual primary sources. Descriptions for a 'primary source' referenced often by the participants were words such as *artifacts* and statements such as *comes directly from the source* were widely used by many of the participants. Examples from the

participants' responses that illustrate these descriptions of the constructs 'visual primary source' are shared as follows:

- *A picture of an artifact such as a picture of the Liberty Bell or Constitution.*
- *A validated source that comes directly from the person or event.*
- *They are things such as videos, photos, and anything from a time period being studied about. They are found on a computer.*
- *An example would be a picture taken during WWII that has been scanned into a computer.*
- *Digitized visual primary sources are artifacts accessible to the public eye.*
- *A source that is primary means that it came from an event or place first.*
- *Any primary source that you can access online; a picture or video etc.*
- *A document that is some sort of photo or visual source.*

The preliminary review of the data from question one of the pre-questionnaire gleaned insights for the researcher. With these data, it was decided that time would be spent during the workshop to clarify any misconceptions by the participants. The overall impression from question one of the pre-questionnaire for the researcher was that the participants had an adequate working knowledge of what constitutes a digitized visual primary source. The amount of academic experience held by the participants in question two of the pre-questionnaire was more narrowly represented through their responses.

In the pre-workshop questionnaire, question two was intended to help the researcher understand the participants' experiences using digitized visual primary sources prior to the planned workshop. The data revealed the following: four participants had no academic experience in working with digitized visual primary sources and among the remaining five participants, three participants had used them for illustrative purposes only. Only two reported having multiple experiences in working with digitized visual primary sources from the secondary level into college. It is important to note that none of the participants reported having had experience with digitized visual primary sources as elementary level students. The current literature corroborates the lack of elementary level experience among both pre-service and in-

service teachers in working with primary sources in general (Boyle, Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere & Stewart, 2008; Fresch, 2004). There were two categories of responses created to represent the participants' background experience in working with digitized visual primary sources. Explanations of these two categories are discussed next.

Participants with no academic experience:

- *I have had no experience with digitized visual primary sources.*
- *I must say we never used digitized visual primary sources.*
- *I have not had the opportunity to work with digitized visual primary sources.*
- *I have experienced primary sources through a vacation to Washington D.C.*

Participants with academic experience:

- *From middle school until now, primary sources have been brought into class multiple times, even if it's just to show the way it looks or to pull some information from the source itself.*
- *The opportunities that I have had in the past working with digitized visual primary sources was during a college course.*
- *I have worked with digitized primary sources through online access to social studies materials: internet based research, and documentary films in middle school.*
- *We have worked with primary visual sources, mainly just by using them as a visual reference.*
- *The teacher would pull-up different pictures or videos from different parts of history on the electronic whiteboard.*

With little to no academic exposure among the participants, they were knowledgeable about what digitized visual primary sources were prior to the workshop. Their narrow view of how to teach using digitized visual primary sources could be due to their novice level. Interestingly, they communicated their positive vision of using digitized visual primary sources in their future classrooms in the pre-questionnaire that led to the creation of theme two, which will be discussed in the next section.

***Theme two: Pre-service teachers are positive about using digitized visual primary sources in their future elementary social studies classrooms.*** A look into the participants' attitudes about using digitized visual primary sources prior to the workshop resulted from question three

of the pre-workshop questionnaire. The question basically asked about their likelihood in using digitized visual primary sources with the future elementary level students. The analysis revealed that each of the nine participants communicated their optimism about digitized visual primary sources. This phenomenon was significant to the researcher because as discussed previously, none of the nine participants had been ‘apprenticed’ in working with digitized visual primary sources in elementary school (Lortie, 1975). The participants’ responses were categorized by their positivity by (1) description, (2) benefits to students and (3) probability for future use. The following section will explore each sub-category in greater detail through excerpts of the participants’ voices. Where responses were very similar, they have been condensed. Examples of such responses are shown below as the following: Positive attitude (description) and Positive attitude: (benefits to students).

Positive attitude (description):

- *They can become a very good tool to use in the classroom.*
- *They are a valuable source.*
- *It will be good to use these sources.*

Positive attitude: (benefits to students):

- *Students will gain a better knowledge of the subject.*
- *They will gain more interest.*
- *It will be good to help my future students be exposed to even more history.*
- *Students would gain a better understanding of the era being covered.*
- *It would grasp their attention and they would have a better comprehension of what is being studied.*
- *Digitized primary sources enhance understanding and help students create connections.*
- *They can compare history from past to today.*
- *They are easy to use sources.*

Positive attitude (probability for future use):

- *I want to pull primary sources into my classroom as much as I can.*
- *I will definitely use digitized visual primary sources.*
- *I like the idea of digitized primary sources.*
- *I will use them in social studies.*

- *Digitized primary sources will be used in my classroom.*
- *I think that primary sources will be used as much as possible.*
- *They would be incorporated into my future classroom to expose students to this type of resource.*

The enthusiasm perceived from the participants' responses was a bit surprising to the researcher. All nine participants thought digitized visual primary sources would be beneficial to their students and envisioned using them as in-service teachers. An interesting point to note was that the three participants who explicitly responded that they had no prior experience in working with digitized visual primary sources remarked of their future intentions positively. While optimistic, one of the inexperienced participants revealed a potential misconception by rationalizing, *I actually like the idea of digitized primary sources. They allow students to take a look at the past. I will probably use them mainly in social studies.* The response, *mainly in social studies* indicated to the researcher that the participant might not have fully conceptualized the nature and use of digitized visual primary sources, although the participant shared a viable description of digitized visual primary sources in the pre-workshop questionnaire. Another participant who had shared non-academic experience with digitized visual primary sources from a trip to Washington DC also expressed optimism while communicating a perceived challenge by writing, *It is not easy to find these sources, but when found they can become a very good tool to use in the classroom to help students gain a better knowledge of the subject.* This comment was noted by the researcher and provided relevancy for the planned component of the workshop designed to help the participants locate digitized visual primary sources. The remaining participants who had at least secondary and post-secondary experience were optimistic as well.

In question three of the pre-workshop questionnaire, the participants described digitized visual primary sources positively, discussed the benefits, and gave assurance that they would use them in their future classrooms. No challenges were communicated. The last aspect of their

favorable disposition toward using digitized visual primary sources was their communication of how best to teach with them. This led to the creation of the third and final theme that delved into the pre-workshop attitudes of the participants needed to answer Research Question 1. A discussion of this theme is found in the next section.

***Theme three: Pre-service teachers view digitized visual primary sources as best for illustrative purposes.*** All nine of the participants emphasized in question three of the pre-workshop questionnaire the importance of showing their elementary students how history looks using digitized visual primary sources. Accordingly, it is important to note that while reviewing the responses from the pre-workshop questionnaire descriptive words such as *look, see, visualize, take a look, show pictures, see the document, after seeing it, and easy to view* were prevalent.

Among the five participants who wrote of having had past experiences in working with digitized visual primary sources, only one moved beyond illustrative purposes with a response that students could *create connections, especially when the source is a human being*. Another participant valued students being *exposed to even more history than they would if we just used a textbook*.

The narrative responses for the remaining seven participants in the next section give further clarification of how they felt that digitized visual primary sources could best be utilized as a visual for display purposes only:

- *I think it is good for students to see the document.*
- *Students will have a much greater detail of understanding of what an item was after seeing it rather than only imagining what it was.*
- *Instead of telling the students about certain things, they can actually look and see for themselves.*
- *They will see the source and that will gain more interest.*
- *It gives students the opportunity to visualize an important artifact.*
- *They allow students to take a look at the past.*

- *I will likely use them to show the students pictures of the people and events of the past.*

It was a challenge for the researcher to determine how to build pedagogical knowledge about using digitized visual primary sources. In the pre-workshop questionnaire the participants did not get beyond conceptions to use digitized visual primary sources for illustrative purposes. After all, the premise behind the creation of the four strategies was to help the participants understand ways to engage elementary students with digitized visual primary sources through authentic investigations similar to that of professional historians (Barton, 1997). At the time of the pre-workshop questionnaire, the conception of using digitized visual primary sources as a means to engage elementary students in critical thinking had not resonated among the participants. The researcher utilized these understandings to strengthen the presentation of a new vision during the workshop. This insight and pursuit by the researcher to introduce a new way of thinking for the participants led to the integration of digitized visual primary sources in a way that would hopefully help the participants view active learning with these authentic sources as a valuable part of teaching elementary social studies.

Having reviewed the literature regarding the power of the ‘Apprenticeship of Observation,’ (Lortie, 1975), the researcher realized the importance of the workshop to effect attitudes. The researcher also reasoned that the participants’ enthusiasm for using digitized visual primary sources was of great value and needed to be maintained. The focus for the researcher in planning the workshop was to encourage and help the participants envision how they could use digitized visual primary sources in a way that would hopefully maintain their optimism and funnel their interest in using digitized visual primary sources with students in a direction unknown to them.

**Research Question 2: To what extent, if any does exposure to strategies using digitized visual primary sources affect elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes?** The analysis of the data from comparing responses in the pre-workshop questionnaire to the post workshop questionnaire suggested minor shifts in regard to the participants' positive attitudes about using digitized visual primary sources. Two areas of optimism remained the same through the participants' descriptions of and beliefs about and their proclivity for using digitized visual primary sources in their future classrooms. The one significant shift in attitude was evident when the researcher analyzed how the participants thought digitized visual primary sources could be used prior to the workshop and after exposure to the four strategies. Specifically, there was a contrast between the participants' pre-workshop valuation of passive, illustrative learning and post-workshop their appreciation of active learning that promoted critical thinking. This shift was also seen in the participants' responses in the reflection data that revealed their views about particular strategies. Overwhelmingly, participants spoke of the benefits of document analysis and meme strategies that supported active learning for their future students. A discussion of which strategies the participants valued most and their rationales will be discussed further through the analysis of Research Question 3.

Obstacles perceived by the participants for using strategies with digitized visual primary sources with elementary level students became apparent to the researcher through analysis of the data to answer Research Question 2. The participants sensed that time to teach would be a hindrance due to the great deal of scaffolding that would be necessary to support elementary level students lack of content knowledge and skill. A second concern was also related to scaffolding needed by elementary level students. Participants reasoned that elementary students'

ability to engage with visuals that included sensitive topics such as Civil Rights or historical violence such as the Boston Massacre would need teacher guidance.

In the next section, the researcher will explore the attitudes toward strategies using digitized visual primary sources that were developed from the workshop as well as perceived challenges by the participants. In theme four the author explored how the attitudes of the participants remained positive. Theme five explains how their view changed in regard to their beliefs about pedagogy and theme six discusses their apparent challenges.

***Theme four: Pre-service teachers' attitudes remained positive about using digitized visual sources in their future elementary social studies classrooms.*** The post-workshop questionnaire again asked the participants to provide descriptions of digitized visual primary sources. This question was asked to show any change in knowledge resulting from the workshop that could have impacted the participants' attitudes. The participants' descriptions of digitized visual primary sources revealed only slight differences in their conceptualizations after the workshop. After all, the results of the pre-questionnaire revealed that the participants had a working knowledge of digitized visual primary sources.

The researcher found that the participants conceptualized the construct 'digitized' more widely in the post-questionnaire. Specifically, all but one participant included descriptions of digitized in their definitions by designating '*computer*' or '*online*' to convey meaning. The one student who did not indicate knowledge of digitized in the post-workshop questionnaire had written in the pre-questionnaire '*by way of technology*' so one can assume that the missing element was an oversight.

It was important for the researcher to ensure that the participants were able to understand the nature of digitized forms of visual primary sources for two reasons. First, the review of the

literature revealed in two particular studies a high level of enthusiasm for using digitized visual primary sources because of the abundance of visuals found on the web and ease of access in using them (Fresch, 2004; Waring and Torrez, 2010). Secondly, two of the participants wrote in the pre-workshop questionnaire that access to digitized visual primary sources was a challenge. One of the participants' concerns about digitized visual primary sources being '*not easy to find*' diminished through their exposure of how and where to find digitized versions from the workshop. A shift in attitude was suggested from his response, *They are on the computer and can be used to engage students to identify certain historical ideas through the source.*

Overall, the data related to question one of pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaires revealed only minor changes in how digitized visual primary sources were described by the participants. The inquiry from these two data sources gave assurance to the researcher that the participants' held a strong basis of understanding about what digitized visual primary sources are. These attitudes were explored through data from questions two and three of the post-workshop questionnaire and are discussed in the next section.

The participants maintained their positivity regarding their beliefs about using digitized visual primary sources after the workshop. Five out of the nine participants wrote *useful* as an indicator of their view. The other four participants responded with *wonderful resource*, *practical*, *perfect guide*, and *great tool*. These remarks were considered by the researcher as good indicators of their likelihood to use digitized visual primary sources with their future elementary students. Two participants explicitly stated they would use digitized visual primary sources. One participant wrote, *I want to use them to help students make connections* and the second participant wrote, *Yes, I think I would use some of the strategies using digitized visual primary sources in my classroom*. Generally, these responses were very similar to the feelings expressed

about digitized visual primary sources prior to the workshop. There was no difference in attitude between those who had prior experience in working with digitized visual primary sources in past academic experiences and those who did. They both expressed positive outlooks.

Finally, after no real change in the attitudes among the pre-service teachers, a shift was apparent. This change was revealed through the examination of post-workshop questionnaire data that looked at how the participants imagined using digitized visual primary sources with their future students. Specifically, the teaching strategies they felt would be beneficial to their students moved beyond their pre-workshop view of digitized visual primary sources for only illustrative purposes. Digital visual primary sources became valued by the participants as a means to engage students in critical thinking. Through their responses, the participants were perceived by the researcher to be very excited about the possibilities even though their vision for using these authentic sources changed considerably after exposure from the workshop to strategies. A discussion of the theme that acknowledges this shift is explored in the next section narratively and through the participants' authentic responses.

***Theme five: Pre-service teachers' attitudes shifted from pre-workshop views that placed students as passive learners to post-workshop views that placed students as active learners.***

Prior to the workshop the researcher reasoned through the responses found within the pre-questionnaire that the participants could only imagine using digitized visual primary sources to allow their students to see history. After exposure to the workshop, the participants shared many strategies for using digitized visual primary sources: *cooperative learning, whole group, discussion, context clues, citing evidence, questioning* were discussed in the participants' responses. All of the aforementioned strategies were extensively modeled and emphasized as important throughout the workshop, so one could suppose that the workshop impacted the

participants in a meaningful way. Throughout the analysis, the researcher considered many questions, one of which questioned to what extent had participants' who had been apprenticed in their past academic careers to passively gaze upon a historical picture or photograph that the teacher *pulled up* or *used* as *visual reference* value different pedagogy. The remarks by the participants indicated this change in attitude to a more broad view. The four participants who expressed having had no experience and the five who had prior academic experience having worked with digitized visual primary sources offered diverse views. The responses from the post-workshop questionnaire showed the participants' movement in how they viewed digitized visual primary sources from a narrow, illustrative only view to a more broad, critical thinking view. Interestingly, none of the participants wrote anything about using digitized visual primary sources for illustrative purposes in the post-workshop questionnaire, whereas seven out of nine viewed showing their students visuals as important in the pre-workshop questionnaire. The following sections subrogate the changes among the participants with no experience and those with prior experience in regard to working with digitized visual primary sources.

Participants with no experience:

- *It can be used as a great tool to get students involved in cooperative learning groups and can also start a discussion among peers.*
- *They [digitized visual primary sources] would have a more broad understanding to take into consideration if the information is reliable or biased. They will be able to take more detail and context clues from the photo in order to develop a better understanding.*
- *I think bringing up documents and asking several questions about it and making them more engaged.*
- *I think the students will enjoy working with them and make their own conclusions.*

Participants with prior academic experience:

- *I want to use them to help students make connections to history in an engaging way.*
- *They [digitized visual primary sources] would help students to understand and know what life was like during a certain area. They can make their own meaning.*

- *Primary sources create a connection for students because they are the basis for every inference and observation.*
- *[Digitized visual primary sources] may give students a way to get to see the document and be able to analyze the document to pick up clues from it.*
- *These would be useful in the classroom for whole group discussion or citing text evidence.*

Analysis of the post-workshop questionnaire also created another finding for the researcher in how the participants' views about digitized visual primary sources had expanded. This area of interest for the researcher was how the participants saw digitized visual primary sources optimistically as a means for students make meaning for themselves about historical topics. This stance was not shared prior to the workshop. Although, none of the participants mentioned constructivist theory by name, their responses indicated that they had a conceptual understanding of constructivism. This summation was derived from excerpts from the participants' responses in the post-workshop questionnaire. Where the responses are similar, they have been consolidated into one that typifies the pattern of responses and are illustrated below:

- *I really like how students can make their own history and find out for themselves.*
- *I want to use them to help students make connections to history in an engaging way.*
- *They can make their own meaning.*
- *Primary sources create a connection for students.*

Exposure to the strategies using digitized visual primary sources from the workshop impacted the participants' attitudes positively. They broadened their description, highlighted their beliefs about how digitized visual primary sources would be beneficial for their students, and specifically wrote about teaching practices that were being considered. All of these reasons led the researcher to summarize that that the workshop strengthened the likelihood that these pre-service teachers would use digitized visual primary sources as with their elementary students as in-service teachers. The optimism explained through the participants' responses were also ripe

with perceived challenges. The theme that communicates perceived obstacles by the participants make up the third and final theme for Research Question 2 and is discussed in the next section.

***Theme six: Pre-service teachers perceive insufficient background knowledge of elementary students and time necessary to scaffold for their understanding using digitized visual primary sources as challenges.***

Perceived challenges for the participants that culminated throughout the workshop were made apparent in question three of the post-workshop questionnaire. The inquiry asked the participants to write about any concerns that they envisioned about using the strategies for digitized visual primary sources with their future elementary students. The two areas communicated by the participants were (1) concerns about elementary students' ability to understand history from digitized visual primary sources due to insufficient background knowledge, and (2) lack of time to provide scaffolding necessary to support digitized visual primary sources. These two areas were in particular to the perspective taking and historical bias strategies. The researcher found responses from the participants were also corroborated by the existing literature. A discussion of the participants' obstacles will refer back to the review of the literature to provide further explanation.

When asked about potential challenges in the post-workshop questionnaire in regard to using digitized visual primary sources, two of the participants responded with unsubstantiated affirmation and praise and mentioned no challenges. These two students were among the few who reported having some, albeit college exposure in working with digitized visual primary sources. The broad consensus among the remainder of the group however was unease about their future elementary level students being able to understand cognitively about historical topics; especially ones that are sensitive in nature and time constraints necessary for scaffolding using

digitized visual primary sources. More specifically, the factors mentioned that related to this concerns were, (1) lack of understanding for elementary students' due to insufficient background knowledge, and (2) lack of time to develop prior knowledge for elementary students be able to understand. The participants' responses from the post-questionnaire that highlight the their challenges are presented first and then followed by a discussion of each of the two areas of concern communicated by the participants.

Lack of understanding due to insufficient background knowledge:

- *The issue with using digitized visual primary sources with elementary students is the possibility that students will not understand the time frame of the picture. They may think that because it is a picture, it is something that has happened recently.*
- *I feel as if the only struggle may be with them grasping the concepts through a picture that they know nothing about.*
- *Maybe some images would be hard for them to understand like the "massacre picture" we studied.*

The review of the literature corroborates the participants' perceptions about elementary students' ability to engage cognitively using primary sources as mentioned in the post-workshop questionnaire. VanSledright (2004) wrote about elementary and middle school teachers' beliefs about the complexities involved in historical thinking with younger populations. More narrowly, these teachers' beliefs were that many elementary students are not capable of engaging in historical thinking because they are not able to move beyond their realities of the present. This notion of elementary students not being able to think historically was found to be contrary from Barton's (2001) research that promoted not only the capabilities, but the benefits of children as young as six working with digitized visual primary sources.

In spite of the researcher's attempt to alter the participants' view about elementary level students' abilities to do source work, the concerns still resonated in this study. The participants predicted obstacles that relate to historical thinking such as elementary students' conceptions of

time, being able to determine historical bias or unfamiliar historical events such as massacres. The participants in this study realized that scaffolding for students' understandings of history would be time consuming and potentially problematic.

Lack of time necessary to scaffold for understanding:

- *I think the most challenging thing about primary sources is that now in school, some teachers don't take as much time to teach and go over social studies like they used to. Therefore, many students don't understand history.*
- *I believe that the only challenge is time to teach students to be able to determine key details depending on the student.*
- *Some students may not understand how history can be cruel and may need support.*

The participants' concern about the lack of time to scaffold for using visual primary sources is also supported in the literature. Boyle-Baise & Zevin, (2013) also indicated that elementary students would need structure and support when working with primary sources that would take time. The source of the time constraint could be found within Friedman's (2006) study that suggested that the standards movement limited that time. One could suppose that the participant's response mentioned previously that *...some teachers don't take as much time to teach and go over social studies like they used to...* could be an implicit connection to the influence of the standards movement. The perceptions shared by the participants of this study relating to the lack of time seemingly relate to the obstacles mentioned in the literature. Although they did not go into detail about why time was a challenge.

Interestingly, the participants provided solutions to their perceived obstacles in teaching with digitized visual primary sources. They all mentioned the need to scaffold for these elementary students to help them think critically and this was the point of emphasis for the participants. Examples of their feelings that scaffolding would be necessary and also a source of concern are as follows:

- *With correct instruction, though students can be guided in the correct way.*

- *This [understanding bias in historical pictures] is a misconception that can be easily corrected.*
- *I will have to find appropriate sources to use.*
- *It would take repetition for students to learn how to look at a primary source and determine key details. It would be a new concept them and they would just need practice in order to learn how to do complete document analysis on digitized visual primary sources.*

The above responses revealed perseverance in the thinking by the participants about ways overcome challenges in teaching elementary students with digitized visual primary sources. After expressed challenges, the sustained positive attitudes by the participants was an indication that the workshop may have empowered them to believe that they could use digitized visual primary sources as in-service teachers.

**Research Question 3: How, if at all, do elementary pre-service teachers think that digitized visual primary sources should be used after a workshop?** The third research question addressed the participants' attitudes regarding their beliefs about how digitized visual primary sources should be used in their future classrooms. Specifically, the data was analyzed to determine which strategies among the four presented during the workshop were favored by the participants and why. This process also led to findings where the participants viewed certain strategies as problematic. Through the participants' rationales from the reflection responses, the researcher was able to understand the participants' beliefs about the four strategies.

These detailed responses from the reflective data allowed the researcher to be able to gain an understanding about the participants' range of attitude that is listed from favorite to least favorite strategies. Specifically, the researcher tallied seventeen positive mentions from question one of the reflection prompt that asked about components of the four strategies using digitized visual primary sources that they thought would be useful in their future teaching of elementary social studies. A tally of positive references by the participants is represented in Table (2).

**Table 2. *Ranking of Strategies***

| <b>Strategies</b>  | <b>Number of Participants Who Positively Mentioned Specific Strategy</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Memes              | 8                                                                        |
| Document Analysis  | 6                                                                        |
| Bias               | 2                                                                        |
| Perspective Taking | 1                                                                        |

Additionally, the researcher created two themes that emerged in response to Research Question 3. The first theme explores the participants' positivity about the memes strategy as a favorite. The second theme examines the participants' perceived benefits of the document analysis strategy. Each theme is discussed by the researcher through understandings gained from an analysis of the data. Additionally, excerpts from the participants' responses will be provided to cultivate deeper insights. These words and phrases appear in italics form.

***Theme seven: Pre-service teachers value memes as a modern and engaging platform for elementary students' perspective taking.*** Meme creation was the most popular strategy among the participants. All nine participants specifically mentioned this strategy positively. The perceived strengths of memes as a teaching strategy by the participants were (1) student engagement as active learners, (2) the nature of memes being technological and current, and (3) a means for students to engage in perspective taking.

Students as active learners are an important part of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2010). Active learning is also a tenant of constructivist principles. The participants wrote in several different ways of worth in using memes to allow students opportunities to create and represent the views of historical actors. Specifically, they wrote

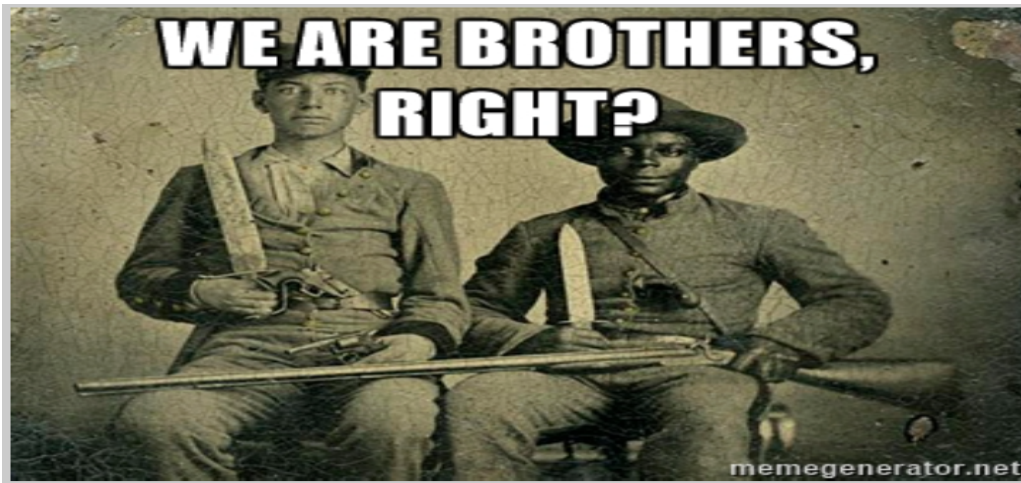
about perspective taking. The reflections by several of participants that support these beliefs that memes provide a platform for perspective taking are as follows:

- *I think the historical meme strategy is brilliant to bring it all together and make history fun for kids. They can take a moment from history and give it their creative view. A meme will make them really think about the perspectives of others in history.*
- *The meme strategy is current for their worlds, so bringing it in would help them see history from other's perspectives with a new age twist.*
- *I feel students would really like to create a meme from the historical person's perspective.*
- *You could allow for debate to take place or give perspective to a historical figure with a meme, which I think they would love!*
- *The students can do a meme last to see how they feel the historical actor may have felt.*

Memes being a modern form of technological communication also garnered positive attention from the participants. In their responses, they used descriptive words and phrases that expressed this view. Examples that are representative of the whole were *creative view*, *current for their worlds*, *new age twist*, and *current technology*. One participant agreed in the response with the other participants about the potential of memes, but cautioned with the following response, *The meme would be a very successful strategy as long as the use of it was appropriate*. This response reveals prior knowledge about the nature of memes sometimes being controversial in today's society.

Through memes, the participants saw a way for students to represent the views of historical actors through perspective taking. As referenced above, words and phrases such as *think about the perspectives of others*, *see history from other's perspectives*, *students feel like the person in history felt*, *create a meme from the historical perspective and feel as historical actors may have felt* were widely emphasized in the participants responses. All of these responses represent a valuation of students being able to engage in perspective taking. The following meme illustrated in Figure (8) was created by one of the participants' to illustrate the perspectives of

two Civil War soldiers who perhaps struggled with societal norms of racial equality of the day that was ironically changed through the peculiar unity of a war.



**Figure 8: *Sergeant A.M. Chandler and Silas Chandler Family Slave (Confederacy)***

All of the participants expressed their positivity about the potential memes have for teaching perspective among elementary students. Of interest to the researcher was the participants' rejection of teaching perspective taking through role-play that all but one of the participants felt had the potential to cause emotional discomfort. Specifically, the participants spoke of *heated debates*, *hurt feelings* and taking perspectives verbally being *too advanced* for elementary level students. However, memes seemed to offer to the participants a more civil means for discourse. One participant wrote, *students can give them [historical actors] a seemingly authentic voice from past to present.*

***Theme eight: Pre-service teachers view document analysis strategies as beneficial for historical inquiry and reasoning with text evidence.*** Document analysis strategies received a great deal of praise from the participants for reasons consistent with the call for children to

engage in historical inquiry through analysis of text detail (Barton, 2001; Fehn & Koeppen, 1998; Fresch, 2004). In particular, the participants perceived strengths of the document analysis strategy in the following ways, (1) students being able to make meaning for themselves, (2) discourse through questioning and discussion, and (3) digitized cropping for key details. Overall, the responses by the participants implicitly emphasized a belief that active learning is integral to the learning process. The value placed on the document analysis strategy marks a shift from using digitized visual primary sources for passive learning through illustration as mentioned by most of the participants in the pre-workshop questionnaire. The three components of document analysis favorable to the participants are highlighted through excerpts from reflection data and are as follows:

Participants value meaning making:

- *I thought it was a great way to investigate history and how the students can investigate on their own what happened in history.*
- *I think students will not only enjoy making their own opinions on the image, but I think it will stick with them.*

Participants value questioning from document analysis:

- *I think bringing up documents and asking several questions about it and making them truly think about it will make them be more engaged with the topics.*
- *I really like the idea of all the questioning and discourse that would be able to take place in the classroom as a whole.*

Participants value analysis of text detail through cropping:

- *Cropping gives students an active method of deciphering the visual sources.*
- *Cropping allows students to deeply look at the picture and reflect on the emotions and small details of it. Cropping also allows students to form their own opinion of the scene.*
- *Using the cropping tool to point out different things in a picture is a fantastic idea. Students will enjoy the hands-on activity and I think they will be more engaged.*
- *I also like the idea of the students being able to do the cropping activity in order to keep them engaged in the topics and ideas.*

Overall, document analysis was mentioned explicitly by six of the participants as beneficial. The remaining three identified document analysis as an important part of the detecting bias strategy. A common theme among the positive sentiment was that students were active and engaged learners. This attitude is noteworthy because prior to the workshop, the participants did not mention analyzing digitized visual primary sources at all. Appreciation for document analysis strategies marks a shift the participants' attitudes from passive to active learning shown by comparing pre-workshop questionnaires to the reflection data questionnaire.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 described the qualitative data related to the three research questions. The first question asked what are pre-service teachers' attitudes toward incorporating digitized visual primary sources in social studies instruction prior to a workshop? Three themes emerged from the data. First, pre-service teachers' share limited prior knowledge and past experiences about digitized visual primary sources. Second, pre-service teachers are positive about using digitized visual primary sources in their future elementary social studies classrooms. Third, pre-service teachers view digitized visual primary sources as best for illustrative purposes.

The second research question asked to what extent, if any does exposure to strategies using digitized visual primary sources affect elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes? Again, three themes emerged. The first theme revealed that pre-service teachers' attitudes remained positive about using digitized visual sources in their future elementary social studies classrooms. The second theme was that pre-service teachers' attitudes shifted from pre-workshop views about teaching with digitized visual primary sources that placed students as passive learners to active learners post workshop. The third theme was that pre-service teachers perceive insufficient

background knowledge of elementary students and time necessary to scaffold for their understanding using digitized visual primary sources as challenges.

The third research question asked how, if at all, do elementary pre-service teachers think that digitized visual primary sources should be used after a workshop? This inquiry led to the creation of two themes. The first theme was pre-service teachers value the meme strategy as a modern and engaging platform for elementary students' perspective taking. The second theme was that pre-service teachers view document analysis strategies as beneficial historical inquiry and reasoning with text evidence.

In this chapter the researcher presented the qualitative data collected from nine participants who participated in a four-day workshop involving teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources. The analysis of the data was organized and described according to the three research questions for this study. In chapter 5, the researcher will provide conclusions, recommendations for further research and implications for educators

## **Chapter 5: Final Thoughts**

The purpose of this study was to describe the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers' enrolled in a social studies methods course at a major Southern university in fall 2015 toward strategies utilizing digitized visual primary sources. The researcher examined the participants' attitudes using a qualitative design that utilized data from pre-and post workshop questionnaires, reflection prompts, and the researcher's reflection journal. The study is timely as the standards movement necessitates students being able to think critically using visual primary sources. Additionally, growing online repositories of primary sources offer access to these authentic sources. These factors among other numerous benefits on student learning using visual primary sources led the researcher to seek to understand the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers' in regard to using digitized visual primary sources. The data gleaned from the four-day workshop attempted to answer the following three research questions:

1. What are elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes toward incorporating digitized visual primary sources in social studies instruction prior to a workshop?
2. To what extent if any, does exposure to strategies using digitized visual primary sources affect elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes?
3. How, if at all, do elementary pre-service teachers think that digitized visual primary sources should be used after a workshop?

A secondary purpose was to describe a particular set of strategies for teaching elementary students using digitized visual primary sources. These strategies utilized during a four-day workshop focused on using digitized visual primary sources to teach document analysis, historical empathy, historical bias, and the use of memes as a culminating strategy. Through a description of the four strategies utilized during the study, the researcher hoped to add to the

limited amount of social studies pedagogy specifically used to prepare elementary pre-service teachers.

Chapter 1 introduced the present study by presenting the problem, purpose, need for the study, research questions, significance, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, definition of terms and theoretical and methodological frameworks. Background knowledge necessary to conceptualize and situate the present study through a review of the literature is found in Chapter 2. The methods utilized throughout the study including a description of the participants, description of the data collection methods, data collection timeline and data analysis procedures makes up Chapter 3. The results created from the data analysis stages described in Chapter 3 are found in Chapter 4 through descriptions that use themes and patterns. The author presents conclusions, recommendations for further research and implications for stakeholders in education, especially education preparation programs in this chapter.

## **Conclusions**

Conclusions represent the interpretations of what was learned from this study. The researcher drew four conclusions. The first of these was that teacher-training workshops can help pre-service teachers transform their beliefs in relation to how best they can use digitized visual primary sources. A second conclusion was that participants remained generally optimistic about using digitized visual primary sources even with perceived obstacles. The third conclusion was that pre-service teachers were positive about using current and innovative teaching strategies with digitized visual primary sources that utilized technology such as digital cropping for document analysis and meme creation for perspective taking. The fourth conclusion was that lack of time necessary to scaffold for elementary students was a perceived obstacle. Perspective taking and detecting bias strategies were viewed difficult for elementary kids to grasp; especially

if they were sensitive in nature.

The first conclusion has to do with the importance for teacher preparation programs. The findings from this study clearly indicate that pre-service teachers' perspectives can be transformed in regard to strategies using digitized visual primary sources. Such understanding does not come without training. The data from this study indicated that workshop participants had little or no prior knowledge about active strategies involving digitized visual primary sources. When the participants were asked in the pre-workshop questionnaire about their current beliefs in regard to teaching their future elementary students using digitized visual primary sources, a wide majority thought students could learn from just looking at the visual. One can only speculate that this common pedagogical practice of lecture using a visual as a point of reference had made up the prior knowledge of the participants. Owens (1997) explained that inquiry based methods that should be the true nature of the social studies is often confusing to pre-service teachers who have not been taught using this approach in past academic experiences. By the end of the four-day workshop, the data reflected that the participants had developed an understanding and a valuation of strategies using digitized visual primary sources that foster active student involvement in historical inquiry.

The workshop trained the participants to understand the nature of social studies as inquiry, which was a very different view that the participants held prior to the workshop. Interestingly, the excitement and positivity didn't change through the workshop, but extended as pre-service teachers were able to envision using visuals to engage and motivate their students to engage in critical thinking. The participants were also able to conceptualize using digitized visual primary sources to a degree where challenges became apparent. The next section discusses these challenges as the second conclusion drawn.

The second conclusion was that even with the anticipated challenges, participants agreed for the most part, that the benefits on student learning from working with digitized visual primary sources were worth the time it would take to model and provide other forms of scaffolding. Among the participants' responses in the post-workshop questionnaire, the obstacles mentioned were met with solutions. One participant wrote, *I believe that it would be worth the extra time to teach the students through because it would be a valuable skill to have to be able to read visual text.* Another participant responded, *with the correct instruction, students can be guided in the correct way. I believe there are more positives than negatives with digitized visual primary sources.* Responses like these were prevalent and led the researcher to speculate that the participants were able to engage in a conflict and resolution level of reasoning.

The challenges perceived by the participants were that students may not be able to *grasp* historical concepts from working with digitized visual primary sources due to lack of background knowledge and ability to understand. The participants reasoned that overcoming these obstacles would take time to scaffold understanding. Participants also confronted the realization that teaching social studies through historical inquiry by nature would be a time consuming endeavor.

The friction that was apparent between the participants' perceived obstacles for using digitized visual primary sources and their self-reported steadfast commitment to using them was intriguing and concerning for the researcher. The reason for these feelings by the researcher was that the literature informs that pre-service teachers tend to accept methods from university coursework, but issues often prevail to thwart the newly learned pedagogical practices (Owens, 1997). The question remained regarding if the workshop focused on the issues enough or would the pre-service teachers resort to teaching in a familiar manner. This phenomena could also be

relatable to ‘the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) which is well defined within the literature and also a worry by the researcher. These questions remained for the researcher about how these participants would carry the knowledge and skills gained from the workshop into the field. Unless these pre-service teachers were followed as in-service teachers, the question remains unanswered.

The third conclusion that the researcher derived from this study was that pre-service teachers’ developed definite attitudes about strategies they preferred. Technology was suggested by the participants as the attraction. The culminating meme strategy was favored. The document analysis strategies also received positive praise.

The meme strategy described on page 75 received wide praise among all of the participants as their favorite strategy. The reasons shared within the data were that memes were *current* in regard to technology, *fun* in how they allow children to be creative, and *powerful* by their unique opportunity to give voice to historical actors. Interestingly, the participants expressed the most enthusiasm for the culminating meme strategy as a way to communicate the historical figure(s) perspective, which would require document analysis. The researcher can only speculate that the attraction to a meme strategy is partially because of the technology driven, social media laden environment by which millennial participants are a part. Still, their future students are even more a part of the techno generation as they were well aware and would see creating historical memes as relevant and modern means by which to communicate with the past.

Document analysis was the second favored strategy by the participants. It is described on page 67. Overall, they viewed the strategies using cropping in order to make inferences using text evidence as comparable to close reading of a written text. There was transferability in the participants’ minds. The participants shared thoughts that students could really feel a part of

history by reading visual text and enjoy a break from written text that is traditionally used to develop students' comprehension skills. One student wrote, *using cropping for document analysis allows students to deeply look at the picture and reflect on the emotions and small details of it*. Another participant wrote, *all in all, pictures tell the story and students need to be able to read it*. It is the opinion of the principle investigator that the participants will use document analysis strategies on a regular basis once they become independent teachers. This thought by the researcher was because document analysis is a strategy can be utilized for multiple purposes.

The fourth conclusion was that the participants in this study quickly developed concerns about some of the strategies that would be prohibitive to later use. Specifically, they wrote about their concerns with the historical bias strategy described on page 71 and the perspective taking strategy found on page 73. The participants did not feel as strongly against the historical bias strategy, but it was second to least favored. The perceived areas of concern regarding the strategies will be explained throughout this final conclusion.

The bias strategy utilized in this study used similar procedures as in VanSledright's (2002) study where fifth grade students were able to detect bias by comparing Paul Revere's (1770) depiction of the Boston Massacre was compared with Alonzo Chappel's later work. Even though the researcher made the connection between the bias strategy and VanSledright's (2002) findings, the participants' attitudes remained unenthusiastic. One student did write positively, *students can see that history is painted in many different ways*. However, overall it was the next to the least favorite among the participants.

The attitudes shared by the participants about the perspective taking strategy revealed the most apprehension by the participants. More so, in a couple cases, the participants wrote of

refusal to use the strategy. The strategy focused on teaching elementary students historical perspective taking through civil discourse using digitized visual primary sources. Specifically, the use of photographs during the workshop of scenes from Civil Rights Movement and slavery struck a contentious cord among the participants. The respondents shared feeling in the data that teaching perspective taking using digitized visual primary sources of this nature was *too advanced* and could result in *hurt feelings, heated debates, and student would have to be reminded to be respectful*.

The participants in general, felt that perspective taking was an important part of social studies, but could best be taught through memes that offered low risk perspective taking. The researcher could only suppose that the participants being from prominently White schools in past academia could have contributed to their cautious attitudes. In spite of the perceived limitations by the participants they reasoned that teaching perspective taking through discussion was important, but that their future elementary students may not be ready. The researcher can only speculate that the attitudes shared by the participants about the perspective taking strategy were difficult to change as they may have been shaped over a lifetime.

## **Implications**

This study has implications for many stakeholders in education. Teacher education preparation programs, organizations involved with English language arts and social studies standards and local education agencies charged with training in-service teachers each could benefit from understandings gleaned from this study. The relevance of this study for these educational entities stems from the study's design, which was to explore attitudes among elementary pre-service teachers about teaching and learning using digitized visual primary sources.

The strategies that were utilized in this study were created to meet the call within the social studies standards for teaching historical content through inquiry and the comprehension of visual media in the English Language Arts standards within Common Core. Therefore, professors of social studies methods courses cannot ignore the need for training pre-service teachers. Strategies like the ones integrated in workshop of this study, could have the potential to affect knowledge in pedagogy and attitudes in regard to using digitized visual primary sources as the standards mandate.

The attitudes reflected in this workshop have implications for teacher preparation program especially in regard which strategies were viewed optimistically and which ones were concerning for the participants. All four strategies included social studies content and visual literacy skills necessary to teach social studies. Therefore, it is important for methods courses to collect and report about teacher attitudes in order to gain an understanding of the issues and meet them head on.

Among all of the implications, the researcher feels that this study reduces the paucity of research that looks at elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes about student centered pedagogical practices that this study utilized to train elementary pre-service teachers. Teacher Preparation Programs have a unique opportunity to impact pre-service teachers attitudes that often have evolved from years of textbook driven, rote memorization, and passive learning. Therefore, more research that looks at our future teachers' attitudes is needed to gain a better understanding among teacher preparation programs in how to better to prepare our pre-service teachers.

## Recommendations

The researcher has several recommendations related to the ways in which this study might be used in the future. One participant indicated that digitized visual primary sources are capable of *providing a crucial connection to history for elementary* children. Many researchers agree with this position. If visual primary sources are indeed as valuable in developing students' critical thinking skills, visual thinking skills, historical thinking skills, and give within historical inquiry as research suggests (Barton, 2005; Barton, & Levstik, 2003; Bell-Russel, 2011; Cleary, & Neumann, 2009; Edinger, 2000; Fresch, 2004; Hicks, Doolittle, & Lee, 2004; Kobrin, 1996; Reisman, 2012; VanSledright, 2004; Waring, S. M., & Torrez, 2010), then findings of this research study must not sit idly, but disseminated to teacher preparation programs and other educational stakeholders. Pre-service teachers' attitudes are not fixed, rather they are shaped predominately through their own experiences and teacher preparation programs. It is the researcher's belief that pre-service teachers want to adopt the best practices for teaching and learning. Therefore, they are seeking out what effective teaching looks like. In spite of the research supporting the use of visual primary sources, they remain for the most part absent in our schools (Barton, 2005). This study, which explored elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes will hopefully provide insights toward teaching and learning with digitized visual primary sources. It is the hopes of the researcher that this addition to the body of literature will lead to a better understanding for teacher preparation programs and other educational stakeholders in order to increase the use of digitized visual primary sources in the elementary grades to promote meaningful learning outcomes for our students. The following recommendations are provided that call for future research:

1. Researchers need to explore innovative ways to incorporate technology as a means for

elementary students to engage in critical thinking with digitized visual primary sources and communication of students' thoughts.

2. Further research will need to be done related to helping students learn to process and organize what they learned from visual primary sources.
3. Social studies educators need to equip pre-service and in-service teachers with more strategies to teach perspective taking with elementary age children. Potential issues that elementary level students and teachers may face should be explicitly addressed.
4. A longitudinal study that follows elementary pre-service teachers into the field after exposure to workshop strategies involving digitized visual primary sources is needed. This research would help determine the impact workshop style training has the potential to break the cycle of the apprenticeship of observation.
5. Research needs to be done related to the unique contributions from visual primary sources to total understandings of concepts and ideas in the social studies.
6. Research needs to be done that explores the efficacy of workshops where pre-service or in-service teachers brainstorm alternative strategies to use with digitized visual primary sources.
7. The effect of digitized visual primary sources on students who are facile readers should be studied.
8. This study could be replicated with a more diverse and/or larger number of participants.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent Statement

#### **Elementary pre-service teachers' attitudes about digitized visual primary sources**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

You are invited to participate in a research study with the purpose of exploring the attitudes of elementary pre-service teachers toward the use of digitized visual primary sources as a component of elementary level social studies instruction. Over the past two decades, digitized visual primary sources have increasingly become a part of teaching social studies as seen state and national standards. Current research is needed to understand more about how pre-service teachers' view them as part of their future teaching practices. This information may help teacher preparation programs and other educational stakeholders in preparation of our future elementary teachers of social studies.

##### **INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY**

Coursework involving the unit about digitized visual primary sources from your ELED 3140: Teaching of Social Studies course would make up the data for this study. Specifically, the coursework that would make up the data are as follows, (1) your pre- and post questionnaires completed before and after the unit on digitized visual primary sources, (2) your reflection journals that were created after four strategies for using digitized visual primary sources were studied and, (3) your lesson plan about digitized visual primary sources for elementary social studies.

##### **RISKS**

The risks related to this study are minimal, which means they are no greater than ordinarily encountered in daily life. A breach of confidentiality is a possible risk related to this research study. Safeguards to minimize this risk are described in the Confidentiality section.

##### **BENEFITS**

There are no anticipated direct benefits to participants. Possible benefits to you may include increased pedagogical knowledge in working with digitized visual primary sources in elementary social studies.

##### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your confidentiality is important and will be maintained through the use of a pseudonym in the research report. Data will be kept on a secure password protected file and will only be made available to persons conducting the study unless you give written permission to do otherwise. Data will be destroyed after a period of five years. This data may be used for future research purposes.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions at any time about the study, procedures, or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher, Alicia Laffoon at Roane State Community College, T-103B, Harriman, TN 37748. Additionally, you may contact the researcher at (865) 250-5686. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the University of Tennessee Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-7697.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation is voluntary. You can decline to participate with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision not to participate or withdraw your participation will not impact your grades, your relationship with your instructors or with Tennessee Technological University. If you choose to withdraw your participation, your data will be immediately returned to you or destroyed.

## **CONSENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read the letter of consent detailing the research study that explores how pre-service teachers view digitized visual primary sources as a component of elementary social studies instruction. I understand that if I choose to participate, my confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire study, as well as any subsequent publications and/or presentations. I will not receive any compensation for the study and understand that I may drop out of the study at any time without penalty.

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

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE   
KNOXVILLE  
Office of Research & Engagement  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

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

November 11, 2016

Alicia Lankford Laffoon,  
UTK - Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

**Re: UTK IRB-15-02610-XP**

**Study Title:** Elementary Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes Toward Digitized Visual Primary Sources in Social Studies

Dear Alicia Lankford Laffoon:

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application to **continue** your previously approved project, referenced above. It has determined that your application is eligible for **expedited** review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1). The IRB reviewed your renewal application and determined that it does comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes approval of your renewal application (Closed to Enrollment-Analysis Only). Approval of this study will be valid from November 11, 2016 to December 09, 2017.

Any revisions in the approved application must also be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subject or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, **re-approval** of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,



**Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.**  
Chair

## Appendix C

### Roane State Community College Gatekeeper Approval



276 Patton Lane Harriman, TN 37748-5011  
(865) 354-3000 ext. 4501 Fax (865) 882-4601  
**Office of the President**

October 5, 2015

University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Engagement  
1534 White Ave.  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529

UT Institutional Review Board:

Alicia Laffoon has been granted permission to conduct a research study that will take place on the Roane State Harriman campus in room T-101 during the fall 2015 semester.

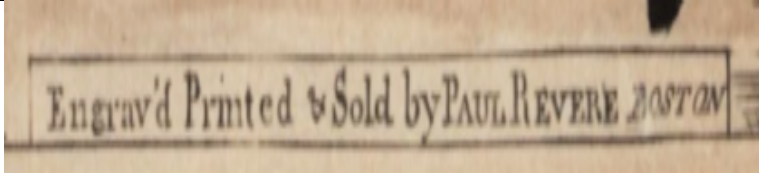
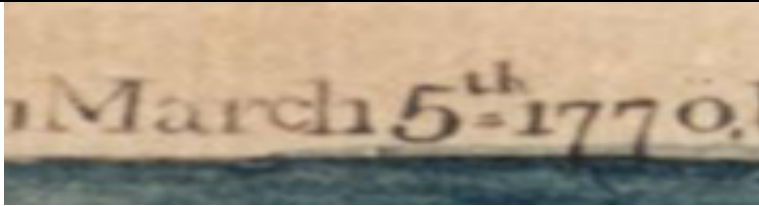
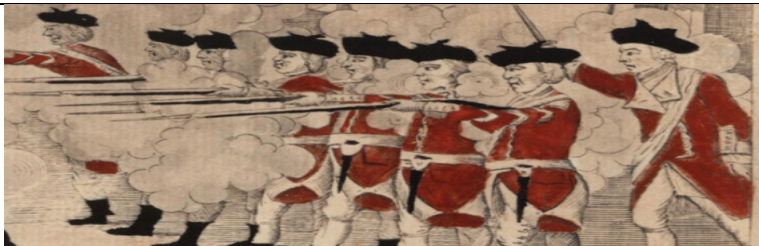
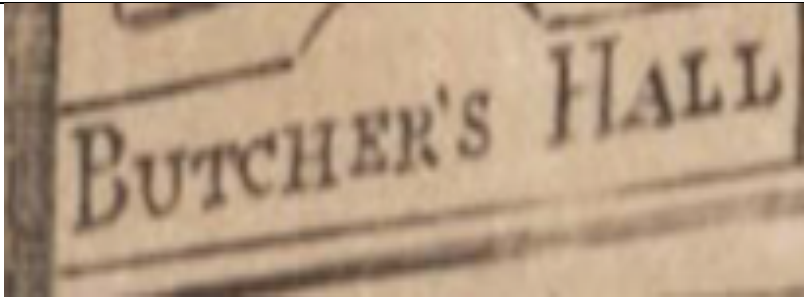
Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Whaley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "W".

Dr. Chris Whaley  
President

## Appendix D

### Graphic Organizer of Questions and Visual Evidence

| Questions                                                                   | Visual Evidence                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Who was the creator of engraving?                                           |    |
| What was the date of the engraving?                                         |    |
| Who do you think were the victims in the event?                             |   |
| Who do you think are the aggressors?                                        |  |
| What text do you think were intentionally written to persuade the audience? |  |

## Appendix E

### Historical Perspective Taking Rubric to Assess Memes

#### Document Analysis

| 1                                                                                                                | 2                                                                                                                                                                      | 3                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Student's explanations communicated no evidence of student's use of document analysis to create the meme caption | Student's explanations communicated one piece of visual evidence of student's use of document analysis to create the meme caption Ex. facial features, dress, setting) | Student's explanations communicated more than one piece of visual evidence of student's use of document analysis to create the meme caption Ex. facial features, dress, setting) |

#### Understanding of Historical Content

| 1                                                                                             | 2                                                  | 3                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meme caption shows confusion or imaginative elements that do not relate to historical content | Meme caption adequately relates historical content | Meme caption shows deep understanding of historical content |

#### Discourse in Perspective Taking

| 1                                                                                                                                    | 2                                                                                                                            | 3                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Student's verbal explanations of their meme caption communicate very limited or no perspective taking with the historical figure(s). | Student's verbal explanations of their meme caption adequately communicate perspective taking with the historical figure(s). | Student's verbal explanations of their meme caption explicitly communicate perspective taking with the historical figure(s). |

## **Vita**

Alicia Lankford Laffoon attended Meigs County Schools throughout and graduated in 1994. At Roane State Community College she earned an Associate of Science degree in General Studies. In 1998, she graduated from Middle Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science Education. She graduated from Tennessee Tech University with a Master of Arts degree in Instructional Leadership in 2001 and a Specialist in Education degree in Instructional Leadership in 2005. In 2017, she completed a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Theory & Practice in Teacher Education with a concentration in Social Science Education.

In 1998, Mrs. Laffoon student taught in Laguna Middle School on the Laguna-Acoma Reservation in Acoma, New Mexico and Chief Leschi School on the Puyallup Reservation in Puyallup, Washington State. She has eleven years of teaching experience in grades 7-12.

Mrs. Laffoon began a career in higher education at Roane State Community College in 2010. In 2013 she became an instructor for Tennessee Tech University where she currently teaches elementary methods coursework. She is currently in her fifth year at Tennessee Tech and is a Lecturer, Clinical Supervisor and edTPA Clinician. She is a Board Member of the Tennessee Council for the Social Studies and a member of the National Council for the Social Studies.