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Achieving Authentic Empathy Through Historical Immersion
in the 20th Century Studies Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to implement historical immersion activities to high school history students for the purpose of helping them to develop a deeper understanding of, and authentic empathy for, studying history. My findings have indicated that my students did in fact find deeper meaning in their historical studies, as well as a significant level of enjoyment in the research, reading, writing, role-playing, and simulation activities in which they participated.

Students often complain about how they find history to be boring, or too difficult. It was my intention to reverse any preconceived negative notions students may have about studying history. The activities facilitated in this study enabled students to express themselves about historical events in an informed way. Students developed empathy for people of the past, but eventually learned to do so authentically, by setting aside their present-day ways of thinking as best as they could and make sense of what people of the past were experiencing in the context of the mindsets, culture, and events of the time period in which those people lived.

My intention is to continue using and adapting historical immersion in my high school history classes and it is my hope that other educators will do the same.
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The person in my life who has been the driving force behind my love of education is my wife, Lynn. A successful veteran educator herself, her love for educating children inspired me to become a teacher. Lynn’s commitment to doing what is best for kids, serves as a daily example for me to follow as I continue my teaching career. My decision to continue my efforts in finding new effective ways of teaching that are meaningful to students, is in no small part due to Lynn’s influence. She keeps my course true, and I am eternally grateful. Thank you, Honey, for bringing me into your world.
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In 1982, after taking a required course of eighth grade American history at my local junior high school, I found myself attending summer school to retake the course, having solidly failed it. At the time, I blamed myself entirely for my failure. After all, I was simply a lazy student, and that was that. My mind full of whatever 13-year-olds think about, combined with acute apathy toward my junior high school studies, I still had the self-awareness to know my problem was caused by no one other than myself. As I got older and a bit wiser, I came to realize how much I actually love history. It was then that I began to question the circumstances surrounding my academic failure as an adolescent. I wondered how it could be possible that I had never realized the passion I had for history until I was already in my thirties. As I made my way through my undergraduate studies, (which eventually evolved into a secondary education program), I began to consider the possibility that perhaps what transpired in my 8th grade American history class was at least partly to blame for my failure in realizing my passion for history and succeeding academically.

My eighth grade history teacher, and a number of other teachers throughout the course of my journey through the public school secondary education system, regularly used round-robin reading of the textbook. This was followed by publisher manufactured worksheets and tests, consisting of multiple
choice and true/false questions. Unfortunately, I recall no real discussion of
deeper meaning behind the history we were studying. Students were placed in
seats situated in rows and were not to leave the seats for any reason, save for the
once-per-period visit to the lavatory.

My eventual undergraduate studies in education enabled me to reflect
more meaningfully on my own experiences as a student until I concluded that the
curriculum, as I experienced it as a junior high school student, was indeed part of
the cause of my troubles.

I completed most of my undergraduate studies well into my adulthood.
Having attended community college after high school, my interest in academics,
be it history or anything else, was minimal. I left community college after only a
year, with unimpressive grades, to join the family business. Ten years later, I
purchased my family business, an established bakery that my family had owned
for twenty years.

After three years of business ownership, and with business booming, I
had an epiphany. I realized that I did not want to spend the rest of my life in the
food business. I was financially successful, but unfulfilled. In 2000, I returned to
the community college from which I had dropped out thirteen years earlier. My
only goal was to finish college. I thought a good start would be to finish my
associate degree. I began the slow process of taking on only six credits at a time
while still operating my bakery business.
A 32-year-old non-traditional student, I became popular on campus for bringing pastry to class from my bakery. A number of my instructors were close to my age, some younger, and I began to forge friendships with them. One of those friendships was with an English professor who also worked as an advisor in the community college tutoring center. He mentioned to me that the center could use more qualified tutors. Shortly after, I signed on as a peer tutor for philosophy and history. I found that I loved tutoring college students. I began to realize that I was the happiest when I was helping students to understand their history studies. In 2003, the tutoring center supervisor nominated me for a National Tutor of the Year Award for the College Reading and Learning Association. Two weeks later, I was informed, to my surprise, that I had won the award. The college sent me to Albuquerque to receive the award. It was not only a proud moment for me, but also a defining moment that made me realize I wanted to teach for the rest of my life.

I continued my undergraduate studies and in 2005, earned my Bachelor of Science in Education, with a specialization in history.

For the past seven years, I have served as a high school social studies teacher. In that time I have aspired to make my classroom environment welcoming and to conduct lessons in ways that allow students to interact effectively with each other and with me while learning history. My interest in using a variety of techniques to engage my students was piqued when I had the
privilege of taking a graduate course entitled “Making History Live” facilitated by Professor of Education, Dr. Robert Mayer. Dr. Mayer introduced me to methods in teaching history that included primary source research, role-play, simulation, authenticity, and historical empathy. I found that engagement in my history classes increased among my students as I implemented the methodologies I was learning. The combination of my students’ work in researching primary sources and their participation in role play, simulation, and other activities, made them feel as if they were actually experiencing the history they were learning. It occurred to me that when the students were exposed to these teaching methodologies, they were experiencing immersion into the history itself. This idea of immersion has been the centerpiece of my action research efforts ever since.

As my studies into teaching and learning continued, it occurred to me that in foreign language, immersion is often found to be one of the most effective ways to for students of foreign languages to be successful in becoming fluent in those languages. This solidified my desire to pursue the benefits of historical immersion.

One of my obstacles in conducting this action research study is the fact of my bias in the situation. It is my hope and belief that historical immersion will prove to increase student performance and engagement, and ultimately help students to become better learners of history. I realize, however, that there are both apparent and unforeseen problems that could yield results to the contrary. As
the purpose of this research is to observe and report the effects of historical immersion when implemented in an eleventh grade 20th Century Studies course, I must focus on the fact that regardless of the results, the study itself should provide ideas on improving my teaching process in the classroom, both with regard to historical immersion and without.

While I am confident that being immersed in a story about the past should be a fun and engaging way for students to learn history, it will be important for me to prepare myself for the fact that there will be some students who may not take ownership of the process, or who might even find it wholly undesirable as a frequently used methodology in history class. It will also be important for me to prepare for the fact that there may be students who will not improve their performance with this methodology, or even not perform as well as they might under more traditional circumstances. If my study reveals such occurrences, it will be my responsibility to determine the reasons through analysis of the data I have collected. When I have used these methods for specific lessons in the past, they seemed to have triggered interest in the history among my students, which gives me the confidence to move forward with my study.

Based on this information, my research question is: What are the observed and reported experiences when implementing historical immersion methodology in a secondary level history class?
Literature Review

Introduction

Grant (2001), through evidence gathered during classroom observations and interviews with students, suggests that students do not generally acquire an understanding of the existence of multiple perspectives in history when taught exclusively through lecture. He goes on to explain that the opposite is also true. Students whose teachers facilitate a variety of activities, including simulations that enabled students to see the history from multiple perspectives, demonstrated “intellectually complex understandings of perspective” (p. 101).

Kohlmeier (2005) conducted a study in which she coached her ninth grade students to analyze historical sources from multiple perspectives, using a combination of prior knowledge and newly acquired information. Kohlmeier used a few of Grant’s (2001) ideas by narrowing her focus to three aspects of historical thinking: historical knowledge, historical significance, and historical empathy. Her findings revealed that students developed a better recognition of the fact that not all individuals in history are affected by historical events in the same way. By the end of the study, the students’ responses to their primary source analyses became more extensive and more elaborate, with the inclusion of subtopics. The students had developed a more profound sense of the three aspects of the history they were studying, knowledge, significance, and empathy, by analyzing their primary sources at more than just face value.
A conveyance of historical facts, combined with effective primary source research and analysis, can be complemented by role-play and simulation activities, which enable students to express the findings of their research efforts. Percoco (2001) believes in the reenactment or simulation of history as a means to spark student interest in the history, but also as means through which students have the opportunity to feel as though they are living the history in some way that provides a deep connection to the history. A secondary level history teacher, Percoco shares a process he used with his students in which he took them on a field trip to Boston, Massachusetts. He and his students would be attending an annual living history program that commemorates the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Percoco and his students traversed the battle grounds to the sounds of fife and drum played by members of a reenactment corps.

Percoco prepared for the field trip by introducing relevant information on the Battle of Lexington and Concord to his students in the weeks and days leading to the field trip. Students also analyzed primary sources from a variety of perspectives and were assigned the tasks of comparing various primary sources and drawing conclusions as to whose versions of history were the most accurate.

The students were able to thoroughly and meaningfully gather information from primary sources and then reenact, through a simulation, some of the experiences of the people who stood on the same battlefield, on the same day, 225 years earlier. Percoco explains,
Reenactments such as this one are historically transporting – a kind of time travel – because they provide us with a strong visual to see how events unfold in a way that a book cannot. We can hear the music, look at individuals in period costume, study the formation of soldiers, and learn why it was necessary for them to fight the way they did – in massed groups, to make their firepower more effective. At its best, reenactments provide a kind of historical immediacy. (Percoco, 2001, p. 17)

**Primary Source Research**

According to Potter (2011), primary sources are excellent ways for students to be introduced to the more difficult or provocative topics in history. As an example, Potter uses a photograph of the remains of the World Trade center taken only three days after the attacks of 9/11. She contends, “Primary sources allow us to discover important details about horrific events of the past, especially the often-overlooked human response” (p. 285). She believes that the passage of time between the occurrence of a tragic historical event and the study of the historical event in present-day, has the effect of minimizing student fears, especially of those students who are in the lower secondary grades. She believes that “primary sources allow us to confront ghastly topics that feed contemporary fears with the benefit of a buffer created by the passage of time” (p. 285).

In order for students to effectively immerse themselves in a historical event, it is necessary for them to have a historical frame of reference from which
they can develop historical empathy, and subsequently draw conclusions about
the history in an authentic way. Levstik (1997) proposes the idea of “apprenticing
children to a perspectival history” (p. 48). Levstik believes that children should be
apprenticed, starting in the elementary grades, on how to seek out multiple
perspectives on events in history. Rather than students simply looking up
information, accepting it as fact, and memorizing it for when they will be tested or
quizzed, students are coached to analyze their historical findings in a more
authentic and accurate way. Levstik explains, “In an apprenticeship, knowledge
and skills are acquired in order to be used, not simply accumulated and
regurgitated” (p. 48). Levstik explains that students often find the “perspectival”
approach to be counterintuitive to students’ conditioned belief that they must
always find the correct answer to a question. To direct students to consider
multiple perspectives in answering a question will sometimes cause them initial
discomfort. However, Levstik believes it is imperative in enabling our students to
become good citizens. She asserts,

Our task as social studies educators is to prepare all our students for active
citizenship in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. We
cannot afford a history curriculum that ignores or deemphasizes the impact
of racial, ethnic, gender, and class distinctions in the past or present. Nor
can we afford a history curriculum that renders some of our students
invisible and voiceless. (Levstik, 1997, p. 50)
Bain (2000) believes that a shift must occur in history classrooms that would have teachers releasing control and conveyance of primary source knowledge to the students. He refers to this concept with the term “active learning,” which he defines as “engaging students in the ‘authentic’ tasks of the historian” (p. 334). Bain believes one necessary step in facilitating the process of active learning is to begin with “an epistemological introduction to history itself” (p. 337). He explains, “We began with a minicourse on the nature of historical knowledge, designed to construct a different, more complex view of the structure of the discipline” (p. 337).

In a case study entitled, “Learning to Teach Young People How to Think Historically: A Case Study of One Student Teacher’s Experience,” Mayer (2006) discusses his study for which he observed Tamara, one of his student teachers, as the subject of the study. Mayer noted that in three different lessons he observed, Tamara used primary source documents as the centerpieces of each lesson. One of her sources was a diary entry from a World War I soldier. Tamara expressed her perception of the diary entry, commenting,

He talked about how he finally got to take a shower and finally . . . the bed he made, with the blankets, and how it was all wet all the time. It just gives a personal account of not only the fighting, but what the soldiers had to go through every day and how he can call people by their names. (Mayer, 2006, p. 73)
Tamara expressed that she hoped that by the use of this type of primary source, the history she was teaching would become more personal for students. But Mayer stated that he felt a new development in Tamara’s way of thinking was that she was trying to connect the idea of making history more personal with the idea of making the history more real for her students (Mayer, 2006). Tamara’s use of the diary as a primary source served as an immersive element through which her students could extract a more “personal” and “real,” (as Mayer would put it), experience from the history.

Among the obstacles Tamara experienced in using primary sources was the problem of students wanting to be given the answers rather than do the research. She indicated that a portion of teaching, based on the provided text, might better provide an overview of a historical event sufficient to provide enough background knowledge for the primary sources to be more meaningful for the students (Mayer, 2006). Since a cold dive into primary source material could be perceived as daunting and tedious to 11th grade students, Tamara’s proposed use of a secondary source, such as the course textbook, would probably prove to be a useful scaffolding device to ease students into the primary source material for each lesson.

Similarly, in an article by Lindquist, entitled “Instructional Approaches in Teaching The Holocaust,” Lindquist reminds readers that
teaching with primary sources is beneficial to a student’s study of history in that it enhances investigative skills, evaluative skills, information-sorting skills, and conflict resolution skills among sources (Lindquist, 2011). With regard to primary sources, as they relate to the immersive aspects of teaching history, he states, “Studying primary sources allows students to become historical detectives, an exercise that presents historical investigation as an engaging, ongoing process” (p. 119). Certainly, the idea of being a history detective would seem to have the potential of creating an atmosphere conducive to student engagement. Equally as important, however, is Lindquist’s assertion that skills like investigation, evaluation, sorting, and conflict resolution are enhanced when primary source research is made part of the teaching process. Vital products of these skills, particularly the ability for students to triangulate and corroborate multiple sources, are essential to the validity of the students’ primary source research.

Research conducted by Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish, and Bosquet, (1995) provides data that suggest the use of primary sources in the history classroom is of value only if students are trained to think historically. In this study, students were assigned to read a variety of sources, some primary and some secondary, on The Gulf of Tonkin Incident and its aftermath. The research revealed that students tended “to note the same ideas from short,
well-structured texts” (Stahl, et al., 1995, p. 27). The students tended to choose different ideas when extracting information from poorly structured, but more lengthy primary source texts. The authors contend that students need to learn how to extract information from less structured, lengthy documents if such documents are to be used in the teaching of history. Ultimately, it was concluded that students need more time to gain experience with analyzing multiple documents on specific issues. With time and teacher guidance, the authors believe that students will more easily be able to incorporate multiple documents into their historical research.

Wineburg (1991) provided eight written and three pictorial documents on the Battle of Lexington to a group of historians and a group of high school students for analysis. He found that while the number of descriptive statements made by the two groups was nearly equal, the quality of the statements, “particularly in the extent to which the groups described features that had a bearing on the historical accuracy of the paintings” (p. 76), revealed some differences. Wineburg stated that while students can know a lot of history, they do not understand how historical knowledge is constructed. He concluded,

It is doubtful that teaching these students more facts about the American Revolution would help them do better on this task when
they remain ignorant of the basic heuristics used to create historical interpretations, when they cannot distinguish among different types, and when they look to a textbook for the “answer” to historical questions--- even when that textbook contradicts primary sources from both sides. (Wineburg, 1991, p. 84)

Teachers who are serious about having their students conduct primary source research must be willing to incorporate lessons that train students in the art of historical thinking. Coaching students to become better researchers will enable them to use a wide variety of both primary and secondary sources in their historical studies.

Role-play and Simulation

Once students become comfortable with actively participating in regularly scheduled primary source research, there are a number of methodologies that can serve to further immerse students in the historical event they are studying. Simulation is one of those methodologies. When facilitated properly, simulation gives students a medium through which they can continue to study the fruits of their primary source research in an immersive way. Allowing students to recreate a piece of history, using their primary source research as a reference, lets students enjoy exercising their
creativity along with their peers. The result, more often than not, is students having an enjoyable experience while learning history.

Alvarez (2008) discusses the use of a “History Alive Program.” The program included a lesson in which students portrayed historical figures in the setting of a press conference. Each group of students included a reporter, a historian, a public relations agent, and a historical figure, who had to construct and wear a mask using images from the Internet. The data, procured through student surveys of the activity, revealed that the degree of enjoyment experienced by the students was nearly as high as their degree of learning. Alvarez makes clear her opinion that this type of simulation is beneficial to students and student learning. She comments,

Despite the possibility that the survey merely registers a negative assessment of the other activities, the correlation between the factors of enjoyment and learning reflects something we instinctively sense, that having a little fun in the classroom can transform the most dreary topic. (Alvarez, 2008, p. 189)

For most schools, it is cost prohibitive, in terms of both time and money, to initiate and facilitate a full-blown experiential immersion project once or twice per year. However, educators and their students can still benefit from Byerly’s (2001) reenactment ideas. Moreover, the idea of
simulation activities serving as a bridge between collaborative learning and the development of positive, affective elements among the students enables students to acquire authentic historical empathy as well as real-time personal bonds.

In his article, “Linking Classroom Teaching to the Real World Through Experiential Instruction,” Byerly (2001) explains the process of a simulation event in which students and teachers reenacted an 1840s wagon train for four days. The simulation required significant planning, including Saturday practice sessions so students could learn to cook, hunt, scout, and other necessary skills of 19th century camping.

Byerly (2001) believes that students can benefit greatly from the type of experiential learning derived from such a simulation. When observing the reactions of some of the students on the fourth and final day of the simulation, Byerly noted that despite the very uncomfortable conditions in the simulation, which included rain and hard and wet sleeping surfaces, the students expressed sadness, knowing the simulation would soon end. When students’ opinions of the simulation were video recorded for a local television station, the consensus of the students seemed to be that “the most pleasurable aspect of the trip had been learning to care for one another” (p. 699).
In an age where many schools are leading students toward using technology effectively as part of the learning process, it can be effective and appropriate to use technology to conduct simulation activities for students. Secondary students often find themselves using their spare time to play video games, which in themselves are simulations meant for entertainment. It seems that students could relate well to educational simulations that are similarly constructed. As Sperling (1993) points out, a computer simulation can be a helpful variation of simulation to be made part of an immersion teacher’s toolbox. Sperling (1993) used a computer software program to involve his students in the process of teaching applied economics. The Management and Economics Simulation Exercise (MESE), was used by students to make and execute decisions for their simulated corporations. MESE asked students to make decisions in the areas of pricing, production, advertising and marketing, investment, and research and development. The computer generated an analysis of the students’ decisions. This analysis served as a basis for class discussion and idea sharing. Sperling observed, “students became quickly involved in the application of theory” (par 25).

Engagement

Clearly, engagement is a necessary goal in facilitating historical immersion. The necessity for engagement requires that as educators, we
keep ourselves updated on those practices and methodologies that yield the
greatest and most effective engagement among our students. The idea that
project based learning, as opposed to more traditional, teacher-based
methods is preferable, is not a universally accepted one. Research by
Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz (2009) and Savich (2008) seem to indicate
that a more constructivist approach, which includes authentic empathy and
role play, are the most effective in students’ long term retention of historical
ideas along with increased performance on assessments.

Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz (2009) conducted a study in which
history classes from two different schools were compared to determine the
effectiveness of project-based learning (PBL) on middle school students. The
intervention group was found to acquire greater knowledge gains than its
counterpart, which “provided reasons for optimism regarding concerns
among teachers and administrators that technology-enhanced PBL is not as
‘effective’ as more traditional teaching methods” (p. 167).

The theoretical framework for the study was based on the
constructivist theory, particularly one of its derivations, project based
learning, as a valid alternative to more traditional forms of teaching, such as
lecture. (Hernandez-Ramos & De La Paz (2009) It was concluded that this
study revealed the potential to “enhance middle school students’ learning of
“history” as long as the comparison schools used the same organizational factors, such as curriculum and length of class periods (Hernandez-Ramos & De La Paz, 2009, p. 169). The students were found to comment on historical events in a deeper way, with attention being paid to the affective aspects of historical people of the time period.

Savich (2008) conducted a research study in response to the general disinterest and boredom students express about learning history. He also makes the claim that with a traditional lecture approach, “there is no ‘enduring understanding’, no analytical or critical reflection or evaluation and long-term synthesis” (Savich, 2008, par 3).

Savich (2008) compared a class taught with lecture with a class taught with interactive methods. His data revealed that the difference in test scores were significantly higher among those students who were exposed to the interactive methods. While Savich found that a lecture portion was necessary in providing background information on the subject matter, he concluded, based on his findings, that the course of action that would be most beneficial to the students would be to “retain the lecture format, but add interactive assignments and exercises” (Savich, 2008, par 24). He further concluded that overall, his study showed that including activities that involve role-play and simulations, “gave students a better understanding of historical events by
Allowing for greater empathy and sympathy and greater internalization that resulted in improved critical thinking skills” (Savich, 2008, par 24).

Another medium through which student engagement can be achieved is music. Moats and Poxin (2011) use period music to pique their students’ interest in history. Using free online resources like the Library of Congress and Sony Music Entertainment’s National Jukebox, they argue that multiple perspectives on historical events can be taught to students using songs from the past. They posit, “Historic sound recordings and sheet music capture the attitudes and beliefs shared through music, offering students unique opportunities to better understand the past” (p. 294).

**Empathy**

A group of fifth through eighth grade students was asked to choose from a set of historical pictures with captions for the purpose of constructing a timeline of the last five hundred years (Barton & Levstik, 1997). The students were found to concentrate primarily on the photos that represented the expansion of rights and opportunities. The authors noted that students seemed to interpret the photos in a manner consistent with the contemporary social structure, or “vernacular,” as they put it (Barton & Levstik, 1997, p. 2). They concluded that students must build a framework to make sense of both the vernacular and legitimate history. They explain,
We suggest that one way of helping students build such a framework is through letting them grapple with exactly those issues—race, gender, and class, for example—that have not been so thoroughly digested that their meaning is firmly established in the historical canon. (Barton & Levstik, 1997, p. 2)

The authors posit that perhaps it is best for students to concentrate on those issues of racism, equality, and the like, for the reason that they are unsolved, unresolved issues which directly affect children’s lives. The authors explain why this is important:

Avoiding history that is within the living memory of children and of the people with whom they come in contact does not meet students’ needs. Indeed, such avoidance means that neither public memory nor vernacular history, are likely to be critically examined, and that students will be left with inadequate intellectual tools with which to examine the constantly shifting uses of history in their lives. (Barton, Levstik, 1997, p. 37)

Yilmaz (2007) defines empathy as “the ability to see and judge the past in its own terms by trying to understand the mentality, frames of reference, beliefs, values, inventions, and actions of historical agents using a variety of historical evidence” (p. 331). Yilmaz argues that historical empathy
is not as simple as having students put themselves in the shoes of people of
the past, and feel what they felt. Rather, it is a more difficult process of
understanding historical perspectives. Determining these perspectives relies
on attention to the literature, culture, and artifacts of the time period being
studied. The key is “to avoid present-mindedness” (Yilmaz, 2007, p. 332), or,
in other words, making determinations about the past using a present-day
schema. The authenticity of the empathy relies on such an avoidance of
modern-day thinking habits.

Similarly, Foster (1999) posits that historical empathy requires
students to understand that the past and the present are two different things.
Students should not interpret the past using their present-day understanding
of the world as their template. He explains,

People in the past must not be judged by the values, mores, beliefs, and
knowledge of today. To empathize effectively, students must begin to
appreciate the sociopolitical and cultural forces of previous times.
Finally, historical empathy requires a respect for, an appreciation for,
and a sensitivity toward the complexity of human action and
achievement. (Foster, 1999, p. 19)

Barton and Levstik (1997) and Yilmaz (2007) concentrate on the idea
of grappling with the events of the past. They would probably argue that all
of that which we have discussed; the methodologies of empathy, engagement, simulation, role-play, and so on are simply not enough to get students to know history as truthfully as they can. As educators of history, we must guide our students, not only by providing historically immersive activities, but by coaching them how to determine the significance of each historical event they encounter by helping them learn how to think more historically; to learn how to adjust their schemata based on their corroboration of primary source data, rather than use a 21st Century schema as their filter. It is only by moving our students in this direction of thinking that immersive methodologies can truly be effective in the teaching and learning of history.

Wineburg (2001) sums up one of the fundamental obstacles in achieving authentic historical empathy through the term “presentism,” which he defines as “the act of viewing the past through the lens of the present” (p. 19). He goes on to explain, “—it is not some bad habit we have fallen into. It is, instead, our psychological condition at rest, a way of thinking that requires little effort and comes quite naturally.”

Summary

The research presented here validates the theory that historical immersion can be shown to help students to learn history in a pleasurable and profound way, when effective use of primary source research, role-play
and simulation activities, proven engagement techniques, promotion of authentic historical empathy, and coaching students in historical thinking are used in tandem to create an immersive historical experience. In addition, the research supports the premise that historical immersion can be more effective than implementing more traditional methods of teaching history.
Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

Given my own boredom with the prospect of going to history class in my early teenage years, I am ever sympathetic to those students who say to me, “I’m not really into history,” or “I’m never good at history, it’s my worst subject.” Many history teachers, myself included, often fall into the ineffectual pattern of professing facts in chronological order to their students. Most of the time the teachers mean well. They will add activities that will get students out of their seats for part of the class. They may even facilitate fun review games before major tests, but in the end, they are usually just working to cover the required material in the curriculum. The result, more often than not, is a general disinterest among students of history.

I wanted to conduct a research study that would incorporate successful immersion activities in a 20th Century Studies class, which I had facilitated in past history classes, but with far greater frequency. To implement my research question, “What are the observed and reported experiences when incorporating historical immersion to teach 20th Century Studies to 11th graders?”, I used various methods to collect my data, including a journal in which ten weeks of reflective inquiry entries were recorded. Feedback from my student participants was collected via two major surveys,
one conducted midway through the course and one conducted at the end of the course. In addition, three sets of personal interviews with individual students were recorded in a separate interview log. Finally, a collection of student work, consisting primarily of writing samples, was stored in an assessment folder.

**Setting**

The setting for this research study is a 45-year-old high school located in a rural section in eastern central Pennsylvania. In 2000, the middle school and the several elementary schools scattered throughout the district were consolidated into one newly built campus, which was built as an addition to the existing high school. The total number of students in the high school is 721. The demographics are 93% White, 3.2% Latino, 2.6% Black, and 1% Asian.

The location for this study was an eleventh-grade regular education 20th Century Studies classroom. 20th Century Studies is one of the core social studies courses required by my school district. Because of the positioning of my classroom within the high schools architecture, my classroom has about 30 square feet more space than the other classrooms in my wing of the building. I have made use of this space by providing a study nook with a small couch, some chairs, and a small coffee table. The nook is for student use
after school hours to study or catch up on missed work. I have also built a small library numbering approximately 600 titles, consisting of history books, reference books, and a primary source section containing original magazines and newspapers from various periods of the 20th Century.

The classroom has two large blackboards covering two adjacent walls with two small bulletin boards attached to each blackboard. One of the blackboards has been partially converted to a dry-erase white board, which serves as a screen on which to project images as well. The classroom contains two large windows, both ceiling height and both five feet wide, providing a view of the high school's outdoor courtyard.

My classroom was selected for use as a smart classroom. It has a ceiling-mounted projection system, which allows me to project computer images, DVDs, streaming video, and almost any other kind of audio-visual media imaginable. In addition, the classroom is equipped with a scanning device, which allows me to project images of fragile artifacts to my classes for analysis.

There are 28 student desks with attached seats, arranged in square clusters of four desks each. Every seat has an unobstructed view of both the front and back of the classroom. There is sufficient space between the
clusters, so both the students and the teacher are able to walk throughout the classroom with relative ease.

**Participants**

Of the 22 student participants in this study, there were 20 eleventh-grade students, one tenth-grade student, and one twelfth-grade student. The students were comprised of 13 males and 9 females, with 21 white students and one black student. The class meets for a single semester, five days per week for 86 minutes each day.

**Procedures**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for conducting my research study, I began by submitting a proposal to the Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) at Moravian College. Upon my receipt of approval from the HSIRB, I submitted a letter to my high school principal explaining the study on which I wished to embark, along with a request for his approval for the study. Finally, I sent consent letters home to be signed by each of my students’ parents. Out of the 24 students in my class, 22 returned the consent form signed by a parent or guardian (Appendix A).

**Interviews and Surveys**

By the end of the first week of the study, I held my first of four interviews with my students. For the interviews to truly be confidential, yet
remain open exchanges between each student and myself, the class was assigned independent activities during those days during which interviews were held. As the students completed their activities, I would call students, one at a time, to join me just outside my classroom door. This allowed me to keep the remaining students in the classroom in my view while keeping my conferences with each of students private. As the study progressed, the interviews revealed to me the ways in which students were perceiving the immersion process and allowed me to adapt the study as needed to accommodate the special needs of my students, both individually and collectively.

As part of my data collection process, I had my participants complete two surveys during the research process. The first was distributed midway through the research study, and the other at the end of the research study. The surveys allowed the students to express themselves anonymously and allowed me to corroborate their perceptions and opinions with those revealed in the individual interviews as well as the various student reactions to specific classroom events recorded in the field log. The triangulation of these three separate collections of data provided validity to my findings at the conclusion of the research study.
Field Log

At the start of my study, I explained to my students the research that I was about to conduct with the class. I also explained to them my definition of historical immersion; that it was a process we would work through, as a team, to help us experience events of the past in ways that would make us feel we were living those events ourselves through specialized activities. I then briefly described the methodologies and activities I would be using during the semester. Finally, explained the fact that they were not obligated to be participants, but that both participants and non-participants would be receiving the same learning opportunities. I recorded observations in my field log that I collected from several immersive activities facilitated during the research study.

1. Fall of the Russian Czars Research and Role-play Simulation.

The students took part in a guided discussion and note taking on the fundamental facts and occurrences associated with the Russian Czars falling out of power. Students were divided into groups of four and then given research rubrics to guide them in primary source research on the fall of the czars. Students were then directed to debrief their findings in journal format. The next step had the student groups paired to share their findings and
conclusions. After the students completed their writing, they were given Role Play/Simulation rubrics (Table 2) and were assigned to create scripts that would be used by each team to act out a segment of the history they had learned.

2. Civil Rights Quick Simulation.

At the beginning of the Civil Rights unit, I blocked the entrance to my classroom by sitting on the floor inside the entryway. My perplexed students did not really know how to react. They asked me what I was doing and paced in a somewhat awkward manner (suitable to the awkward moments that were passing by). After finally letting students in the room, I asked them how my sitting in the doorway made them feel. I also explained to them that I wanted them to experience, if ever so briefly, a piece of the history that was occurring during the Civil Rights Movement. This sparked some conversation about sit-ins among the students and me, and provided an introduction of what this unit would hold for us as we worked through it.

3. Civil Rights Pictorial Primary Source Discussion.

For this activity, I brought my students closer to the front of the room where I projected a photograph of the Jackson, Mississippi
Sit-in. The photo shows a large group of people taunting and physically abusing three sit-in protestors who are waiting to be served at a lunch counter. After the class and I took some time to discuss their observations, I provided the students with primary source documents for them to analyze, using a research rubric (Table 1). Finally, I had each student assume the role of one of the people in the photo and explain the events of their day in diary entry format.

4. The Kennedy Assassination Narrated Role-play/Simulation.

The activity was introduced to the students by conveying fundamental information on the John F. Kennedy Assassination through PowerPoint notes and interactive class discussion. The students proceeded with their usual primary source research lab, following a research rubric as had become their routine. After debriefing their findings, the students were assigned roles for a reenactment of the JFK Assassination, which would take place in my classroom. Serving as the narrator of the reenactment, I would occasionally interrupt the students’ performance to point out various bullet trajectories and anecdotes about the assassination. The students presented very detailed elements in their
reenactment, which they had procured from their primary source research.

5. Using Music to Reflect the Role of the American Woman in the Early 1970s

After some discussion and note taking on aspects of the early 1970s, I asked my students if they would mind listening to me sing a song to them. The students, who unanimously agreed that I should sing, were given the task of writing their thoughts on the lyrics of the song I had chosen. The song was written and performed by Barry Manilow, and is entitled, *Sandra*. I distributed lyric sheets (Figure 4) to each of the students to help them follow along with the story that the song would tell. The song was about a housewife who is torn between the obligations of tradition and the happiness she wishes she had. When I finished the song, the students were eager to share their inferences and conclusions.

**Student Work**

I collected all work completed by the students during the study. Among the included work were research questions and responses, journal entries, and diary entries. Additionally, written responses from unit
examinations were collected as data. A grade was provided for each assignment that was collected.
Trustworthiness

In conducting this study, I have executed all of its elements in the most ethical way possible. This was not an easy task, considering my hopefulness in yielding data results that would support the practice of historical immersion in the secondary history classroom, and, the accompanying bias that I was obligated to negate during the process. It was crucial to ensure that results of my study were accurately represented based on what actually occurred, rather than on my biases (Hendricks, 2009).

All of the student subjects who participated in the study did so willingly and with the consent of their parents and/or legal guardians. Confidentiality was securely maintained, and students had the option of removing themselves as subjects at any time while receiving the same instruction as those students who chose to remain subjects. In addition, all records of the study, including the field log and student information were stored in a locked file drawer when not in use by the researcher.

Permissions from students, parents, and my building principal were obtained in writing, and, immediately upon receipt, became a necessary part of this study. To ensure anonymity, all participants were assigned pseudonyms for use in the study (Holly, et al., 2009).

In order for the idea of historical immersion to be validated, it must possess a degree of credibility, which I believe I have reflected in this study
through my educational references, my data collection processes, and my objective interpretation of the data. The numerous sources I acquired for my research allowed me to effectively triangulate source material so that my findings could be corroborated (Hendricks, 2009).

I was mindful that the most important observable moments in my classroom took place for substantial periods of time. The larger observation period enabled me to procure as much detailed data as possible on each event, which in turn raised the level of accuracy of the data I collected during those observations (Hendricks, 2009).

I employed negative case analysis for situations that arose in which parts of the data collected were in disagreement with the majority of the data collected for this study. I was diligent in explaining the reasons and describing the conditions under which the negative cases arose (Hendricks, 2009).

Finally, I used respondent validation (Hendricks, 2009) throughout the study to ensure that my collection of student response data was valid. I did so by sharing my data with my students and getting their feedback on my interpretation of the data they supplied. My goal was to have my students verify that my data collection and interpretation was fair, accurate, and truthful.
My Story

Challenging the Perception That History is Boring

As disappointing as my eighth grade history class experience was, my ninth grade U.S. history class in 1983 was very pleasantly its opposite in every way. Mr. Arthur Antonioni had a reputation for being the most fun history teacher in my junior high school. At least one day a week, Art, (which is how he likes to be addressed these days), would dress as a historical figure we were studying in class. He would hold mock court cases for famous trials. I remember playing the role of Clarence Darrow in the Scopes Monkey Trial exactly thirty years ago in Art’s classroom.

The impact of Art’s teaching methods was not apparent to me as a 14-year-old. I only knew that his class was fun and that I looked forward to it. It was not until I was in the middle of my first year of teaching history to high school students that I was reminded of Art’s class. I realized that I had been using some of his techniques. I was not dressing in period clothing each week, but I was having my students reenact parts of the history I was teaching.

Gradually, I have been incorporating additional activities that are reminiscent of my days in 9th Grade history. However, I have found myself adding a number of other facets to my teaching style that are, like reenactments, immersive in their effect on my students. Having been involved in music in my younger years, I tend to use music to a fairly large degree in my teaching of
history. In addition to letting students listen to recorded music, I will often sing songs to them that are deeply intertwined with the history we are studying in a given lesson.

I do not own a multitude of period clothing, however, I keep my classroom stocked with props of every sort. This includes some masks, which I will wear on occasion, along with an assortment of gadgets, fabrics, toy swords, protest signs, make-believe handcuffs, military hats, and toy police badges, to name just a few. My students and I use the props to act out segments of history in some of our lessons.

We use photographs of historical events to help us relate more effectively to the primary source readings and artifacts we use in our lessons, and where possible, we use video of historical events as well.

Sometimes, however, all my students need to be immersed in a piece of history is to close their eyes and listen to me recite the words spoken by a figure in history. Perhaps it is Rosa Parks’ testimony about her experience on the bus, or maybe it is President Kennedy’s inaugural address.

**Rise of the Dictators: Immersion with Primary Source Research**

As a new semester of 20th Century Studies class begins, my 24 students seem to be a quiet group. On the first day of any class, I always let the students sit where they are most comfortable. As one might expect, the students tend to
gravitate toward the classmates with whom they are friends, or with whom they have at least some familiarity.

My first implementation of the immersive process occurs with the first unit of study for the course, “Rise of the Dictators.” After starting the class with a 20-minute lecture on the fall of the Czars in Russia, I assign each group of students a research activity for which they must conduct online research to find additional information on specific historical figures of Czarist Russia. I provide the students with a research rubric (Table 1), outlining my expectations for the research process, and have them work with their laptop computers to start the research.

_Martin:_ Mr. Marcozzi, do we just follow the rubric?

_Mr. Marcozzi:_ Yes, follow the rubric, keeping in mind what we discussed about the research process.

_Diane:_ What if I can’t find anything about Czar Alexander’s personal life?

_Mr. Marcozzi:_ Let’s cross that bridge if and when we get to it. First give it a try. If you get stuck, call me right over and we’ll work it out.

_Diane:_ I’m sorry. I’m just not good at research stuff.

_Mr. Marcozzi:_ No worries, Diane. That’s why we do this as a team. Together we’ll learn how to find the information we need about these people. We’re going to be finding things about them that our
textbooks don’t necessarily share. So treat this like a treasure hunt for missing facts.

Diane: OK, I get it.

Diane, who was one of my more apprehensive students at the start of the course, would end up becoming one of my most enthusiastic and successful students in my class. Like most of the students in my class, Diane was able to develop a level of comfort, and even satisfaction in the search for and interpretation of primary source materials. Since the study of primary sources is crucial to the historical immersion process, I am pleased that the majority of my students have fully embraced it as part of their history-learning process.

VanSledright, (2004, p. 232) states,

Students--even the young ones—need opportunities to engage these sources, to learn to assess their status, and to begin building and writing up their own interpretations of the past. That way, they engage in the activity because they come to own the end product, their own histories.

In order for my students to truly be immersed in the time periods we are studying, and in order for them to develop a sense of historical empathy for the people who lived that history, engaging students in the sources, as VanSledright suggests, should be the first step in facilitating my students’ journey toward immersion, and eventually, authentic historical empathy.
Table 1
Primary Source Research Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Acceptable (4)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (2)</th>
<th>Unacceptable (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Questions</strong></td>
<td>All 10 questions are meaningful and relevant to our research.</td>
<td>Nine questions are meaningful and relevant to our research.</td>
<td>Seven or eight questions are meaningful and relevant to our research.</td>
<td>Six or fewer questions are meaningful and relevant to our research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Findings</strong></td>
<td>All 10 questions are answered completely using primary source findings</td>
<td>Nine questions are answered completely using primary source findings</td>
<td>Seven or eight questions are answered completely using primary source findings</td>
<td>Six or fewer questions are answered completely using primary source findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worked Appropriately While Researching Online</strong></td>
<td>Worked Appropriately While Researching Sources the Entire Time</td>
<td>Worked Appropriately While Researching Sources Most of the Time</td>
<td>Sometimes Worked Appropriately While Researching Sources</td>
<td>Rarely or Never Worked Appropriately While Researching Sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Students’ First Dip in the History

My students need an adequate knowledge base of the history in order for them to be effectively immersed in it. Having supplied them with some background information through lecture and having had them conduct primary source research on the fall of the Czars and the Bolshevik Revolution, I direct my students to work in groups of four to create a script. Each of the groups is responsible for recreating one section of the chronology of historical events. The students are directed to assign roles within their group and to reflect the events of the history in a short acting performance. Directed by a role-play rubric distributed to the students (Table 2), the students are to include information from their primary source research and secondary source knowledge (text and class notes) into their short theatrical productions.

Melinda: Mr. Marcozzi, we’re having trouble getting started.

Mr. Marcozzi: OK, show me what you guys have to work with.

Gavin: Well, our part starts with the march on St. Petersburg and ends with Czar Nicolas creating the fake congress.

Mr. Marcozzi: You mean the representative government?

Gavin: Yeah.

Mr. Marcozzi: So then-
Robert: -But what about the extra stuff we found in the research? How are we supposed to use it?

Mr. Marcozzi: I would suggest that you put your basic story together based on the chronology, or the order in which things happened, which you’re already familiar with, because the story is right here in your notes. Once you have a rough script, review it to see where extra lines may fit in to reflect the additional information you found in your primary source research.

Sarah: So you think we should just use our class notes to write the script first, and then add the research stuff after?

Mr. Marcozzi: Yes. I think that’s one good way to approach it if you’re not sure what parts of your primary source research you want to include.

Melinda: OK, I think I get it.

Mr. Marcozzi: Are you guys OK with this, or should we talk it through a little more?

Melinda: No I think we’re good.

Rick: Yeah, I think we’re good.
Mr. Marcozzi: If you get stuck, just call me over and we’ll work it through together.

Table 2
Role Play/Simulation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Excellent-4</th>
<th>Good-3</th>
<th>Satisfactory-2</th>
<th>Needs Improvement-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Accuracy</td>
<td>90% or greater historical accuracy</td>
<td>80% or greater historical accuracy</td>
<td>70% or greater historical accuracy</td>
<td>Less than 70% historical accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Historical Terms and Concepts</td>
<td>Student includes 9 or more terms or concepts.</td>
<td>Student includes 8 or more terms and concepts.</td>
<td>Student includes 7 or more terms and concepts</td>
<td>Student includes fewer than 7 terms and concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Props/Pictures/Graphics</td>
<td>Student uses 6 or more props to accurately represent the history we are studying.</td>
<td>Student uses 4 or more props to accurately represent the history we are studying.</td>
<td>Student uses 3 or fewer props to accurately represent the history we are studying.</td>
<td>Student uses no props in the role-play/simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Gained</td>
<td>Can clearly explain 5 or more things about the historical event and its impact on the society of that time.</td>
<td>Can clearly explain 4 or more things about the historical event and its impact on the society of that time.</td>
<td>Can clearly explain fewer than 4 things about the historical event and its impact on the society of that time.</td>
<td>Cannot explain any significant details about the historical event and its impact on the society of that time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I was not surprised to encounter some confusion among my students as to how to proceed. While most of my students have been assigned research papers, they are not typically assigned primary source research as part of their daily social studies lessons. As was revealed in some of my personal interviews with students, it is rare for students to search for primary sources as a regular part of their history lessons. Rather, the practice of primary source research is more of a once-and-done process, reserved only for the one or two research papers assigned during each course.

As I make my way around the room, I find that most students are focused on the research. I make one to two-minute stops at each group. I notice that the group of Avery, Linda, Jack, and Robert are obviously distracted. Avery is usually the catalyst for student conversation that is unrelated to the assignment. I have been changing seating assignments regularly, but he seems to spearhead unrelated conversation regardless of the composition of the group to which he is assigned. I ask Avery to see me for a moment. We meet just outside the classroom door.

(I shake Avery’s hand as he enters the hallway.)

Mr. Marcozzi: How are you doing, Avery?

Avery: I’m good, thanks. And you?

Mr. Marcozzi: I’m doing pretty well, thanks. Do you know why I wanted to speak with you?
Avery: Um, yeah, I think. Is it because I was talking?

Mr. Marcozzi: It’s not really the fact that you’re talking. We need to talk with each other to communicate our ideas and share our findings. The problem is that you are choosing to converse about things that are not related to your research activity. Do you see where I’m coming from here?

Avery: Yeah. Sorry I know I talk too much.

Mr. Marcozzi: I like to talk too, buddy. So I understand how it can be tempting to socialize about things outside of school when I give you the opportunity to work in teams. But there’s a time and a place for everything. When we’re conducting research, any conversations should be related to the research.

Avery: Yeah, I know. I need to catch myself when I start to do that. I just like to talk, I know.

Mr. Marcozzi: Thanks Avery. I appreciate it. I just want you and your team to do well. Thanks for taking the necessary steps to maintain the right focus.

(I shake Avery’s hand.)

Mr. Marcozzi: Have a great day.
Avery: You too.

I suppose these occasional distractions could be considered part of the obstacles associated with the immersion process, but these are 16-year-old kids after all. It is common to encounter students who are prone to distraction, even when working in a non-collaborative setting. I find that students seem to respond favorably to the conversational approach reflected above. In addition, the approach yields the most positive change in students’ behavior. I have found it is infinitely more effective than using a tone of admonishment, especially in front of other students. I prefer an atmosphere of mutual respect, which I believe can best be attained through a conversational approach.

At the conclusion of the script writing, the students conduct informal dress rehearsals in the larger lobby areas of the high school. The students have a variety of props that I have permanently stored in my classroom along with art supplies to build their own props. As students return to the room, it is apparent that they have made good use of the props, having fashioned crowns, capes, peasant clothing, pretend weapons, shackles, etc. One by one, the groups present their theatrical representations of their assigned segments of the history.

As each group performs their historical skit, I feel good about what is happening. The students are having a good time. For the most part, they are holding to the rubric by reciting elements of the history they have researched along with the background knowledge they have procured through class
discussion and notes. After observing the group of Robert, Dave, Brittany, and Victoria perform their skit, a representation of “Bloody Sunday,” which occurred under the reign of Czar Alexander II, I am pleased with the messages they are conveying to the rest of the class about the history.

Dave: (posing as one the palace guards) I’m warning you all.

Great harm will come to you by staying here! Observe the signs posted all around you and disperse please!

Robert: We aren’t going anywhere until the Czar addresses our needs!

(On the other side of the room, Victoria, who is playing the role of a Cossack, is pretending to murder a protestor played by Brittany.)

Brittany: No, please!!! (as she falls to the floor, a victim of Victoria’s rifle, fashioned from cardboard)

This was not the first time I had facilitated a role-play simulation on Czarist Russia with students. This was, however, the first time I had the students conduct primary source research as a prerequisite to script writing the simulation. I found it particularly rewarding that the team of Robert, Dave, Brittany, and Victoria included the script line on how a palace guard is warning the protestors. There is nothing in the 20th Century Studies text that mentions any kind of warning whatsoever from Czar Nicholas’s palace guards to the protestors. Nor does it mention any specific shootings by Cossacks. That information was
obtained only through my students’ research of a primary source document (Figure 1).
FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Theater of war in the Manchurian provinces, both Russia and Japan have enlisted bandits; and if a destruction of railway bridges is the result, it is in a region to which China's military forces may not penetrate, and it is difficult for us to show any particular in our protestations. As a matter of course China can not be held responsible.

The regiments of the forces of the superintendent of trade for the North (Yian Shih-k'ui) are all stationed in Chihli and are strictly observing the (neutrality) regulations. Moreover, they are far from the theater of military operations, and how can it be said that they are giving any assistance? This is merely conjecture on the part of Russia. As to restricting the area of hostilities and thus lessening the injuries to be suffered by the inhabitants of the country, it is what China most desires. As to the matter of the belligerents not entering the region east of Mongolia west of the Liao River, my board as occasion has offered has uniformly forbidden it and from first to last has observed its obligations in this respect.

LABOR TROUBLES AND POLITICAL REFORMS IN RUSSIA.

Ambassador McCormick to the Secretary of State.

[Telegram.—Paraphrase.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
St. Petersburg, January 23, 1906.

(Mr. McCormick reports that crowds filled the streets leading to the Winter Palace yesterday with the expectation that the Emperor might appear and address the workmen, but they were stopped by mounted Cossacks. Only those driving were permitted to pass through the palace square. No evidence of evil intent on the part of the workmen was manifested nor was there any evidence hostile intent by the crowds beyond jeering at the officers and soldiers. Some effort was made to disband the crowd especially that part of it which was congregated in the Alexander Park facing the palace square. The ambassador does not know what warning was given, but an eyewitness told him that an order to fire upon the crowd in the park was given. This crowd was partly composed of women and children, and some 60 persons were killed and wounded. At other points in the streets leading to the palace many were cut down by the Cossacks. A large number is reported killed and wounded in the manufacturing district, but there is no reliable information as to the actual numbers. A reliable eyewitness reported to him that officers appealed to the crowd to disperse, calling attention to the posters displayed everywhere warning the public to keep off the streets and that their lives were in danger if they remained; no notice seems to have been paid to this warning. The crowd shoved the officers about and in some instances attacked them and tore their insignia from their uniforms and inflicted severe wounds with clubs. Quiet now prevails in the center of the city, which is cut off from the manufacturing districts by the troops. A large amount of socialististic literature was circulated among the workmen, and a petition which was sent to His Majesty by them was not written by a Russian workman, but by a German socialist, as a large employer of labor informed him. A deep-seated discontent exists among the working class throughout the large towns, and yesterday's happenings will probably increase the antigovernment feeling and discontent with the present unhappy conditions.)
Before the introduction of primary source research, the activity had proven useful as a tool in creating lasting understanding of the history. Students would remember the general story and ideas surrounding the major events of Russia’s conversion from a Czarist monarchy to a Soviet Socialist republic. However, by having students conduct their own primary source research (and therefore find additional first-hand facts), the students had developed a deeper sense of empathy for the protestors who were slaughtered on Bloody Sunday. One could make the argument that a sense of historical empathy can be achieved without the additional primary source research I required from the students, but the infusion of primary source references, being more accurate by their very nature, enables students to achieve not just a sense of empathy, but a more authentic empathy for the people of the past about whom they are studying.

The day after the students performed their role-play simulations, I held individual conferences with five students to acquire feedback on their perceptions about the activity. When I look for feedback from students, I get concerned that a face-to-face meeting will hinder the students’ willingness to be honest with me, and rather say the things they think I want to hear. However, sometimes students will open up under such circumstances and lay everything out on the line; the good, the bad, and the ugly, so to speak. Hence, my conference with Jake:
Mr. Marcozzi: Jake, what would you say was the most positive thing about this lesson?

Jake: I guess I would say it was the acting stuff out. That was pretty good.

Mr. Marcozzi: What exactly was it about the acting part that makes it the most popular thing.

Jake: Umm, well, I guess it was just that it was fun using the props and telling the story. I never really did anything like that in a history class, except for maybe in middle school, but not like this.

Mr. Marcozzi: What was different about the way you did this in middle school?

Jake: Well, because in middle school we would do role-playing, but it was like reading a speech or something. But up here it was more serious.

Mr. Marcozzi: What do you mean by that?

Jake: Because it was like we were acting out what really happened. You made us look up a lot of stuff before we acted it out.....so it’s like we knew almost what the people were really thinking.
Jake, along with a few other students, were able to articulate the ways in which the role-play simulation was helpful to their understanding of the historical events they were studying. A few other students were somewhat apprehensive.

*Alex:* Are we going to be doing mostly acting out in front of the class?

*Mr. Marcozzi:* No, not always, but on occasion. Why do you ask?

*Alex:* I guess I’m a little uncomfortable speaking to groups of people.

*Mr. Marcozzi:* I understand how you feel. Not everyone is comfortable being the center of attention, even when it’s just for a few moments. But you did really well yesterday. You seemed to be getting into your roles quite well.

*Alex:* Yeah I guess. The team wanted me to do the part of a dying protestor, so I just did it.

*Mr. Marcozzi:* Is that what you wanted?

*Alex:* I don’t know. I guess. I just don’t like being in front of people talking.

*Mr. Marcozzi:* I understand, Alex. As we make our way through this course, we’ll be doing a number of different activities to help us understand the history better. While role-play is
one of those activities, there are a number of others as well
with which you will probably feel a lot more comfortable.

Alex: Yeah. It’s no big deal. I’m just not as comfortable when I
have to speak out loud.

Mr. Marcozzi: It would be really helpful if you could share your thoughts
with me on our next activity. Maybe you could compare it
to this one and let me know which one helped you to learn
the history better.

Alex: Sure, I can do that.

Mr. Marcozzi: Thanks Alex. Again, Nice job yesterday.

Alex: Thanks Mr. Marcozzi

Alex has a number of personal difficulties with which he struggles. He is
very bright and has a deep interest in history, but he is not comfortable in many
social situations. I have found, however, that when called upon during class
discussion, he is extremely talkative. Also, to watch him carry out his roles in the
“Bloody Sunday” simulation, one would never know he is uncomfortable in front
of a crowd. This leads me to believe that maybe a boost or two in his confidence
could change his outlook on activities that require recitation in front of a group.
While I am aware that I am not teaching a public speaking class, I know that
proficiency in speaking to a crowd effectively can only help him as he progresses
to matriculation to college and eventually, the work force.
Dipping My Students in Civil Rights History

Every five or six years, I visit Italy, the country of my ethnic origin. Each time I visit, I have to relearn the Italian language, (what little of it I know), by dipping myself in the culture and language. There is no choice, really. Once you leave the airport in Rome, there are no signs written in English explaining where I need to go or what I need to do. I am immersed. I believe it is my responsibility to know how to speak the language of the people whose country I am visiting, at least to the extent that I am capable of conveying politeness and courtesy. I have memorized one Italian phrase of particular importance that translates to: “I’m so sorry, I don’t speak Italian very well.” I have memorized the French equivalent as well for those occasions when my wife and I decide to take a road trip to Quebec City.

Although I fumble with the language for the first day or two in Rome, a remarkable thing occurs by about the third or fourth day of my visit. I begin to speak Italian in full sentences. By the sixth or seventh day, I can struggle through a basic conversation with an Italian native with each of us fully understanding the other. By the last day of a ten-day visit, I have incorporated common colloquialisms into my basic conversational Italian. Then it’s time to go home. I know that once again, I will forget many of the Italian language skills I acquired and will have to go through the learning process the next time I visit.
Imagine the progress I could make if I was able to spend four or five months in Italy, (or roughly the equivalent of half a school year, the length of the semester during which I teach 20th Century Studies), instead of just ten days. I don’t think it is ridiculous to assume that I could become fluent in the language.

I know that I cannot schedule a flight to the past for my students. We cannot witness, first hand, the assassination of President Kennedy from the window of a traveling time machine. I need to bring the history to them and try my best to virtually immerse them. I do not require much in the way of technology to accomplish this, at least not always. Sometimes it’s just a matter of positioning myself strategically in or out of the classroom.

(Students are making their way to their next class. As the halls start to get busy with traveling students, Mr. Marcozzi sits on the floor in the doorway of his classroom. As students arrive, there is a mixed set of reactions.)

Ian: Hi Mr. Marcozzi

Mr. Marcozzi: Hi Ian.

Kendal: What’s he doing?

Linda: He was here when I got here.

Melinda: Hey Mr. Marcozzi, are you chillin’ out?

Patty: (laughing) Oh my God, Mr. Marcozzi why are you on the floor!
(Mr. Marcozzi expresses no emotion as he continues to block the students from entering his room)

Rick: What are we supposed to do, Mr. Marcozzi?

(Mr. Marcozzi does not respond)

Ellen: Can we put our books down?

(Again, no response from Mr. Marcozzi)

Jake: Mr. Marcozzi, are you a protestor?

(Mr. Marcozzi taps the tip of his nose with his index finger, indicating to Jake that he is correct. He then stands up and lets the crowd of waiting students to enter the classroom.

Avery: Mr. M., you’re crazy.

Martin: Are we talking about protests today?

Perhaps some would consider this anticipatory set to be too silly. Perhaps they would be correct, but I believe that my actions, and my students’ reactions, regarding this class opener were valuable to their long-term understanding of the history. Of course, I will be providing background knowledge about sit-in protests during the Civil Rights Movement, and of course, my students will be conducting their own research. However, in this small, perhaps silly way, the students actually became the customers who were inconvenienced, trying to make their way into their scheduled spot, and not being able to do so because I was intentionally in their way.
On a More Serious Note

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. In the past, I have shared a particular photograph with my 20th Century Studies students, but only as part of an accompanying lecture. It was a photo of a Jackson, Mississippi sit-in which occurred at a lunch counter. I used to simply include the photo as one of a number of PowerPoint slides for the lecture/discussion portion of one my lessons on civil rights. I would explain what was happening in the photo. I would even identify the few people in the photo of whom I had knowledge. There would be some interactive discussion and then we would move on to the next topic. I realized, during my preparation for this research study, that this photograph could serve as an invaluable immersion tool. I decided that rather than use the photograph within a lecture/discussion segment, I should instead use it as the centerpiece of an immersive activity.

Before I project the photo (Figure 2) onto the screen, I have my students bring all their seats forward in a semicircle formed by two rows of desks. I then find a seat for myself among them. I then project the image. I ask the students to silently concentrate on the image, paying attention to any details they find interesting. We sit in silence and concentration for about two minutes. I then break the silence with a question.

*Mr. Marcozzi: So can one of you tell me what you think is going on here?*
Melinda: Well, the picture is labeled Jackson, Mississippi Sit-in, so we definitely know it’s a sit-in, but it looks like two of the people sitting down are white. So I’m not sure why.

Diane: Are the White people trying to help the Black woman?

Mr. Marcozzi: You guys are doing great. What else?

Jack: That old dude looks mean.

Mr. Marcozzi: You mean this one? (pointing to an older man on the left side of the photograph)
Jack: Yeah. He has like this evil smile, like he likes what’s happening to the people sitting down.

Mr. Marcozzi: I agree, he does seem to have an evil grin.

Dave: What’s that thing the younger guy is holding?

Mr. Marcozzi: I believe it’s a granulated sugar container, like they have in diners.

(There is a pause in the questioning. Mr. Marcozzi waits for the students to process the information they are gathering)

Mr. Marcozzi: What else have you observed?

Victoria: What is that stuff all over the guy sitting down? I know the stuff on the two women is probably sugar.

Mr. Marcozzi: Yes. Any thoughts?

Mike: Could be ketchup or mustard.

Mr. Marcozzi: It could.

I want the students to sift through the images they are viewing. All the items they have mentioned have importance, but I would like to bring their focus back to the relationship among the three people at the lunch counter. Their identities and purpose should serve to reveal a deeper meaning of the event captured in the photograph. Primary source research will serve that purpose. For this activity, I will provide the online source, which is an account of the event by Hunter Grey, the White man sitting down on the left side of the photograph.
Mr. Marcozzi: Now that you have had some time to analyze the primary source I distributed, what new thoughts have you come up with?

Christina: The White guy sitting down is a professor at a college for blacks.

Mr. Marcozzi: Good, what else?

Ellen: The stuff on his shirt is blood!

Mr. Marcozzi: At least some of it is, yes.

Avery: The three guys in the back who have sunglasses are FBI.

Mr. Marcozzi: Yes they are. And what’s so interesting about that?

Avery: They’re just standing there not doing anything about it.

John: And it says the regular police are standing outside and aren’t coming in to stop it or anything.

Mr. Marcozzi: Take another look at the photo on the screen. How does it make you feel?

Ian: Crappy.

Mr. Marcozzi: And Ian, if we were to use appropriate language in the classroom, then how would you respond?

(The class laughs a little)

Ian: Sorry. I think sad.

Mr. Marcozzi: Yes, much better.
Robert: I would want to punch the guy pouring the sugar right in the face.

Mr. Marcozzi: I can understand your anger. Let’s get out our journals and write a little about how this event is making us feel.

Journaling is such an effective formative assessment. It serves to help me gauge the degree to which my students are grasping the major ideas behind the history that is presented to them, but it also helps me to determine the degree and quality of the empathy they have acquired during historically immersive activities. In this case, I asked my students to assume the identity of one of the individuals who appear in the sit-in photograph, and then had them write a personal diary entry reflecting the events of the sit-in from the perspective of that individual (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

In Figure 3, Ian assumes the identity of one of the bystanders. He proceeds on the assumption that peer pressure may have played a part in the behavior of some of the members in the crowd. In Figure 4, Linda assumes the identity of Anne Moody, the only African American in the photograph and one of the three individuals participating in the sit-in. Linda has held more to using her primary source research than Ian has. Ian had no primary source-based justification for making the assumption he did about the bystander’s feelings of peer pressure. In an individual conference with Ian, I asked him how he drew his conclusions about the bystander. I was intrigued by his response.
Ian: I guess that’s how I would feel…..maybe. Because like I
would never do that stuff to people, but if everyone I know
would do it, then I would maybe not say what I feel because
then I would lose all my friends.

Mr. Marcozzi: I see. But without having any source information on that
bystander, what made you go on the assumption that he
feels any regret or that he’s acting under peer pressure?

Ian: Well, even though the guy at the table is white, he’s fighting
for the rights of the black girl. So, the guy in the crowd is
also white, so maybe he feels the same way, and is just
afraid to admit it.

After my conversation with Ian, I was torn between my elation with
the fact that Ian was demonstrating wonderful insight into human nature, and my
concern that the empathy he developed for the unnamed bystander in the
photograph was inauthentic. In my opinion, Ian’s logic was sound. The primary
sources did yield facts that support the fact that not all white people were against
civil rights at the time the Jackson Sit-in occurred. Perhaps I have to examine the
possibility that authentic empathy can occur, even in the absence of any direct
primary source data.
Hi, I'm best friends with the salt paper guy. When me and my best friend that knew since I was little went to the dinner we saw a small crowd around two people. When we got closer they were black people. When my best friend saw the one black person, he smiled at me and ran over to the salt shaker and just poured it on her head. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to stop him because I don't wanna lose my good friendship, but I also didn't wanna live in regret from not helping the poor old black woman. So I just had to watch the abuse happen and be ok with it.
I'm the African American sitting at the table today. I stood up for myself. It didn't work out as well as I thought it would. I imagined there would be a crowd but I didn’t think they would become as violent as they did. My professor just wanted to help me with the sit-in, but he was the one that got punished the worse. What makes me so different? Why am I hated just because I'm not the same color as the crowd. It isn't fair to me, my friends who get punished just by sitting next to me. I pray for change, I pray that one day I will be able to sit next to a white person and order a soda. One day I believe change will come, but not today. Not tomorrow and maybe not for a while. But, one day, we will be equal.
In my experience, I have taught students who barely say a word in class out loud, but who when asked to write in this manner, will reveal their innermost feelings without reservation. In the social studies, particularly history, I have found that journal writing has proven to be one of the best ways to determine the degree of authenticity with which they have been able to empathize with people of the past.

I Participate in the Assassination Simulation

In our unit on the 1960s, the tumultuous nature of the decade provides a variety of opportunities for immersion. To start the decade, some landmark events studied in class include the election of John F. Kennedy, the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and of course, the assassination of President Kennedy.

With the multitude of controversy that surrounds President Kennedy’s assassination to this day, most students bring with them to class some mysterious notions on the subject. While we do take some time to discuss the many conspiracy theories that exist concerning the assassination, we focus primarily on the fact of the assassination and its immediate and future consequences.

As usual, we start with note taking combined with teacher-guided discussion and questions. After about 20 to 30 minutes, the students begin their primary source research on the events that occurred in Dallas, Texas on November 22nd, 1963. I ask the students to focus on the moments leading to the assassination through the moments following the assassination. I charge students
with finding any testimony of the people in the immediate area on that day, whether they were part of the motorcade or bystanders hoping to get a glimpse of the President. I let the students know that we will be recreating the events of the assassination as an entire class, and that I would like their research help them with their roles as they create short scripts for themselves. I tell them they will each be assigned a role, and that they must conduct the research necessary to try to understand the mindsets of the historical counterparts they will be representing.

*Jack:* I wanna be Oswald!!

*Mr. Marcozzi:* Hold on, Jack. One at a time, buddy.

*(The students start to discuss who should play each of the roles in the simulation. I redirect their attention and let them know I have already assigned the roles.)*

*Mr. Marcozzi:* OK, gang. Follow your research guides. Feel free to call me over for any questions or concerns as I make my way around the room.

It makes me feel good to see the level of confidence my class has developed in doing the research. They have become accustomed to primary source research as a normal routine in this class. We still have the occasional disruption, but the students are beginning to understand the importance of the research as it relates to their interpretation of the history. They are coming to realize that they are discovering a much deeper meaning of the study of history.
than chronologies of events and the names of the people involved. They are empathizing in an authentic way. I like what I see as the class presents their reenactment with me serving as their narrator.

_Mr. Marcozzi: OK, take your positions._

The students situate themselves, scripts in hand, to their assigned locations for the simulation. The classroom has been rearranged to represent the setting for Kennedy’s assassination. Most of the desks have been relocated to the back of the room, save for five, which have been used to construct a makeshift limousine for the students who are playing the parts of President and Mrs. Kennedy, Governor and Mrs. Connally, and their driver. Perched atop a built-in bookshelf that serves as the sixth floor window of the book depository and located at the right rear corner of the classroom is a student assuming the role of Lee Harvey Oswald. At the left rear corner of the room, standing on a chair that serves as a concrete elevation, is another student assuming the role of Abraham Zapruder, the man who filmed the famous home video clip of the assassination. In the space between the Limousine and the back of the room are clusters of students who are assuming the roles of families, passersby, and others who wish to get a glimpse of the President. Also present are four students filling the roles of United States Secret Service agents.

For this particular simulation, I narrate the sequence of events, taking my place among the students, moving from scene to scene as the simulation unfolds.
As Oswald fires the famous second shot, I use a long wooden pointer to trace the trajectory of the bullet. We slow the simulation to a snail’s pace as the students analyze the positioning of the subjects in the limousine, relative to the bullet’s trajectory, as it passes through the neck of President Kennedy, then through Governor Connally’s chest, then through Governor Connally’s wrist, and finally into Governor Connally’s left inner thigh. We do the same with the third and fatal shot that hits President Kennedy’s head.

I direct the students to resume the simulation at a regular pace. I get them restarted by queuing Alex and Kendal who are playing Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy respectively.

Mr. Marcozzi: OK, Alex, you’re going to slump your head toward the first lady. Kendal, you’re going to catch him and cradle his head in your arms.

(A few students start to giggle at the prospect of this very personal scene. I redirect with a comment)

Mr. Marcozzi: Yes, I know, but I can tell all of you, without hesitation, that not a single person in the vicinity on that day found any of this funny. Do you understand what I’m saying guys?

A Few Students: Yes. Yeah., Sorry. (The students seem to refocus.)

Mr. Marcozzi: OK Mrs. Kennedy, keep going.
Kendal: (Frantically reaching at the make-believe platform that serves as the limousine trunk door) Jack! Jack! They killed my husband! I have his brains in my hand!

Martin: (Playing a secret service agent, Martin hops onto the back of our make-believe limousine), Mrs. Kennedy, get down!

Driver, go!

Gavin: (Playing the limousine driver), Yes sir! (Overacting his part, Gavin starts making screeching car noises, which elicits a little laughter from the class. I let it go.)

(At the same time all of the main characters are acting out their roles, the students who are playing the bystanders are acting out various reactions to the shooting. Christina acts like she’s weeping, “No, this can’t be.” Brittany and Dave are playing the roles of a wife and husband who have taken positions on the ground shielding their baby, (a doll wrapped in fabric from my prop box). Brittany is crying loudly while Dave is yelling “Just stay down!”)

There was a short period of time after I facilitated the Kennedy Assassination simulation during which I had questioned the effectiveness of role-play and simulation as an effective means for students to be truly immersed. I asked myself, “How perfect must the immersion process be? If there is occasional student laughter during a simulation as serious as President Kennedy’s
assassination, does that distraction inhibit the effectiveness of the immersion, and consequently, the emergence of authentic empathy in my students as well?”

My worry was short-lived. I needed to remind myself that the process of immersion, when it is implemented in a classroom, can never be truly perfect. I have no time machine to literally transport my students back in time. In addition, there are a plethora of variables associated with any classroom dynamic. Students will allow themselves to be distracted on occasion. They may laugh at each other on occasion. Sixteen-year-olds do these things. It would be out of the ordinary if they did not. This classroom was no exception. Further, I needed to remind myself of the tremendously high degree of profundity and meaning with which my students were writing about the history we had studied to that point. I realized that immersion, to me, is simply finding ways to give students opportunities to think more historically.

**Using Music to Empathize With Women of the Early 1970s**

Starting when I was ten years old, and continuing into my early twenties, I sang professionally for an Italian folk group with my family. I soloed frequently at various festival and dinner theatres. As I got older, I would perform at larger venues in the Catskills area of New York State, giving me the opportunity to do opening performances, along with my folk group, for veteran performers such as Frankie Avalon, Al Alberts and the Four Aces, Bobby Rydell, and Fabian. I never
chose to make a career out of singing because I was never confident enough in my talents to trust it as a dependable means of making a living.

For the past seven years, I have been using music to help my students make meaningful connections to their historical studies. For instance, I will play Billy Joel’s *Russians* when discussing the Cold War during the 1980s. I will have students listen to The Monkees’ *Pleasant Valley Sunday* when discussing the emergence of Levittown-style suburb neighborhoods after World War II.

Having a background in vocal music, I will often sing songs that are relevant to my lessons. The students like it because it is unusual to hear their teacher sing, but also because music is something with which teenagers relate well. It is also one more way to maintain variety and provide differentiation in my classroom. From the standpoint of immersion and empathy, music can evoke emotional responses in students. These emotional responses trigger empathy for the plight of the person or persons in the song.

When conducting a lesson on social issues of the 1970s, we revisit the issues associated with the role of women in society. While many American women were beginning to forge careers in the 1970s that were traditionally reserved only for men, there were still a large percentage of women who were still stay-at-home mothers. After having a conversation with students about my childhood, and how I was raised in a household where my mother was a stay-at-home Mom, we started to discuss the idea that there are pros and cons to both
staying at home with children and having a career, but that the real issue is the fact that 40 years ago, society was far more judgmental about women who choose careers over homemaking than they are today.

I found a song that I like to sing to my students. It is about a housewife who is torn between feelings of traditional obligation and her own happiness.

Mr. Marcozzi: Thank you all for your input in this discussion. It’s apparent that each of us has somewhat of a unique situation in how we were raised and the ways in which our families balance their work schedules with their family schedules. I would like to sing a song for you from the early 1970s called “Sandra”. It’s about a housewife who is unhappy with her life and wonders what life could have been like for her had she chosen a different path.

Sarah: Is it about a real person?

Mr. Marcozzi: It could be, but I have not been able to find any information that says it is based on a real person. But since Barry Manilow wrote the song in the early 1970’s, it’s very possible that he either knew or heard of people like the housewife in this song during that time period.
I distributed lyrics for Sandra (Figure 4) to each student and asked them to underline or highlight any words or phrases that could explain the main character's feelings while I sing the song to them. Then I begin to sing.

The students applaud as I finish the song. I ask them to tell me some things they have concluded from listening to the song and reading the lyrics. A large number of hands go up and we begin to discuss the meaning behind the lyrics.

*Mr. Marcozzi:* Who’s first? How about you, Gavin?

*Gavin:* Umm, she wishes she didn’t have children.

*Mr. Marcozzi:* OK. What about the song made you draw that conclusion?

*Gavin:* Because she says that she would have time to be me for myself. Like she regrets it.

*Patty:* Yeah, but she keeps saying I swear I love my husband and kids, so...

*Gavin:* Yeah, I forgot that part.

*Mike:* She said she wanted to be like her mother.

*Mr. Marcozzi:* That’s very true, Mike. So if Sandra is a young mom in her 20s, how old might her mother be? Ian?

*Ian:* Maybe 50 or 55?

*Mr. Marcozzi:* So do the math. In about what time period was Sandra’s mother raising her children?
(A few students make some calculations)

Diane: Like late 1940s or early 1950s?

Mr. Marcozzi: Right. And with what kind of values do you think she is raising Sandra at that time?

Diane: Well, when we were doing the 1950s, it was pretty much that the man did the job and made the money and the wife stayed home with the kids and did the cooking and cleaning and food shopping and stuff.

Mr. Marcozzi: Yes, Diane. Those were common characteristics found in most middle class families of the 1950s. So Sandra is following in her mother’s footsteps. So what’s the problem?

Diane: She wants more out of life. She feels she’s missing out on something. She can’t even go to the movies with her husband because having kids costs a lot of money.

Kelsey: It’s like she wants it both ways. She loves her husband and her kids, but she wants other stuff too that she’s missing out on.

Mr. Marcozzi: I agree. But how is it, that today, women can have it both ways? There are plenty of women with children and careers. Why can’t Sandra just figure out how to have both?
(A long pause ensues, lasting about 45 seconds)

Victoria: Because it would go against the way her mom did things.

Mr. Marcozzi: Yes –

Brittany: Forty years ago, it wasn’t, like the right thing to do. A mom was still supposed to be in the house, but today, it’s like it seems almost not normal if a mom doesn’t work.

Mr. Marcozzi: Pretty much, Brittany. There’s nothing wrong with a mother choosing to stay at home with her children these days. Nor is it looked down upon for a mom to have a career. The difference is, today, women feel they have a choice, because today’s culture, as a whole, does not condemn mothers for pursuing a life outside the home.
Sandra

She's a great little housewife
Though sometimes she talks like a fool
But she helps at the store in the holiday rush
And she picks up the kids after school
And she puts down the phone when her husband comes home
And she changes from mother to wife
'Til she feels the words hanging between them
And she hangs by her words to her life

She says, I swear I love my husband, I love my kids
I wanted to be like my mother
But if I hadn't done it as soon as I did
Oh there might have been time to be me
For myself, for myself
There's so many things that she wishes
She don't even know what she's missin'
And that's how she knows that she missed

She's a sweetheart, except when she's moody
It's hard to get through to her then
Depressed for a while when the youngest was born
Oh but that happens now and again
She might take a drink with the housework
Or when Michael's kept late at the shop
A Martini or two before dinner
But she always knows when to stop

She says I swear I love my husband and I love my kids
You know I wanted to be like my mother
But if I hadn't done it as soon as I did
Oh there might have been time to be me
For myself, for myself
There's so many things that she wishes
She don't even know what she's missin'
And that's how she knows that she missed

Oh they used to hold hands at the movies
Now it's seldom if ever they go
Once you've paid for the sitter and parkin' the car
There's no money left for the show
She was doing the dishes
When a glass fell and broke on the tile
And she cut her wrist (quite by mistake)
It was real touch and go for a while

She says Oh God I love my husband and I love my kids
You know I wanted to be like my, my mother
But if I hadn't done it as soon as I did
Oh there might have been time to be me
For myself, for myself
There's so many things that she wishes
She don't even know what she's missin'
And that's how she knows that she missed

Figure 4. Sandra Lyrics
The use of period music as a primary source in historical studies is not a new concept, however, in my opinion, it is an underused methodology. If I have learned anything about the nature of teenagers in my tenure as an educator, it is that they are nearly inseparable from their music. As I make the walk from the parking lot to my classroom each morning, I pass by a number of students, nearly all of them with their ear buds attached. I will wave to some, say hello to others, but rarely do any of them return the gesture. It used to offend me during my first year or two of teaching, but I have come to realize that these students are not trying to be rude; they are simply not noticing me. They are immersed in the messages of the music to which they are listening so intently. It seems to me that using primary source music as a catalyst for immersion and historical empathy is a sensible addition to any immersive teaching methodology. Music is a medium through which most students already know how to immerse themselves.

**Looking Back**

In conducting my research study, I facilitated assignments and activities, which I hoped, would yield a deeper, more empathetic view of historical events in my students. At the start of my study, my main concern was the degree of cooperation and focus I could count upon from my class. I have worked with many college preparatory level classrooms for 20th Century Studies, but my previous experiences made me well aware of the fact that every new semester brings a new set of students and a new classroom dynamic. With the exception of
the occasional need to redirect a student’s focus, the participants of my study responded favorably to the assignments, activities, and assessments with which they were presented each day.

I was especially pleased with the degree to which students were willing to express themselves with the relation to the history they were assimilating. Students participated frequently, and most of the time, meaningfully. Individual conferences with students in combination with mid-semester and end-of-semester anonymous surveys revealed a progression of positive interest among students regarding immersive activities and assignments.
Data Analysis

Introduction

Wolcott (2009) urges researchers to ask themselves, “What is going on here? How do things happen as they do? What do people in this setting have to know (individually, collectively) in order to do what they are doing” (p. 37)?

In order to determine the answers to these questions, I needed to organize the data I had collected over the course of this study in a way that would enable me to indicate the observed and reported experiences relating to the teaching process, the methods in carrying out the process, the reactions of my students to my teaching methods, and the degree to which students (both individually and collectively) were able to assimilate both preparatory and primary assignments and activities effectively. The data I collected during this study were recorded in the form of field log entries, individual conferences with student subjects, surveys collected from student subjects, and writing samples from student subjects.

Field Log Analysis

I wanted to record as accurate an account of my observations of students as possible, in particular, those observations of students’ spoken reactions to the activities and assignments in which they were participating. McNiff and Whitehead (2010) recommend carrying a notebook while all aspects of observation are taking place and writing the contents in a more organized fashion later. I found this advice especially helpful in allowing me to record large
amounts of observational data while still carrying out my teaching duties without significant delay. Included in my field log were individual conference dialogues, student dialogue during assigned activities, (such as role-play, simulation, primary source analysis), and student behaviors.

**Participant Observation**

The immersive process that I used in many of the activities during this study provided many opportunities for me to observe my students’ reactions and responses to the immersive learning process. The role-play and simulation activities were particularly important data generators. The resultant data from these particular observations were able to provide insight into the way the students were thinking about and empathizing with the history. In addition, observations on the students’ ability to work collaboratively in conducting historical primary source research was also valuable.

**Student Work**

The work that I collected from students consisted of journal writing, unit tests, quizzes, research questions, and reflective response assignments. By analyzing and reflecting on the students’ writing, I was able to determine, through the students’ reflections, the depth with which they assimilated the history they were studying, and, the level of degree with which they were able to empathize with people of the past in an authentic way.
Interviews

Throughout the study, I conducted four individual interviews (Appendix F) with my students for the purpose of giving them the opportunity to speak to me personally, and with confidentiality, about their impressions and opinions of the immersion activities we were incorporating in our lessons. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) believe the questions posed by an interviewer should mainly serve as more of a “conversational agenda than a procedural directive” (p. 62). It is far better to let the student control the interview, thus allowing him to speak openly without being led to a response.

Additionally, I conducted two written surveys (Appendices D and E) containing open-ended questions about the 20th Century Studies class and the immersive process we were using to learn the history in that class. The first survey was conducted midway through the research study and the final survey was conducted a week before the end of the research study. The students were instructed to not write their names on the surveys. I wanted to give the students the opportunity to be forthright with their opinions without concern of embarrassment or hesitation due to concerns about my own feelings or opinions.
Bins and Themes

Organizing the data I collected during this research study was not as formidable a task as I had originally feared. Wolcott (2009) posits, “The critical task in qualitative research is not to accumulate all the data you can, but to ‘can’ (i.e., get rid of) much of the data you accumulate. That requires constant winnowing, including decisions about data not worth entering in the first place” (p. 39). Using bins and themes as my organization tool, I concentrated on those data I thought were most relevant to my study. The majority of the data was derived from my considerably large collection of field notes. Using coding, I devoted a large portion of time in reading through the entries chronologically and extracting for my use those entries I thought were most relevant. The remainder of my data, while no less important, was significantly less time consuming to code and sort.

While coding my data, I used a graphic organizer (Figure 5), which I constructed for use as a visual representation of the method I used to sort relevant information into bins and themes, highlighting the major categories of my research study.
Research Question
What are the observed and reported experiences when historical immersion is used in 11th grade 20th Century Studies class?

Primary Source Research
* Authentic Assessments
* Historical Empathy
* Historical Thinking
* Observation
* Relevance to Students

Engagement
* Group work
  * Occurs when creating and executing role-plays and simulations.
  * Period Music and Singing
  * Photo and video analysis
  * Research sessions

Writing
* Class notes and Discussion
  * In tests and quizzes, provides evidence of authentic historical understanding.
  * Provides a conduit through which students can express their empathy for historical figures.
* Reading

Authenticity
* Authentic interpretations of history through effective primary source research.
* Coaching students to think historically enables students to think more empathetically, and therefore, more authentically.

Simulation and Role-play
* Evidence of student empathy
* Generates authentic representations of the history
* Generates Student Engagement
* Speaking
* Student reenactment of historical events*Speaking and Recitation

Empathy
* Effective Primary Source Research enables students to relate to people in history.
* Empathy is represented in student simulations and role-plays
* Empathy is expressed through student writing.

Obstacles
* Assessment
* Administration
* Personal Relevance & Special Needs

Figure 5. Bins and Themes Graphic Organizer
Findings

Introduction

My primary motivation for conducting this research study was to use historically immersive teaching practices that would help my students develop a deeper understanding of historic people and events while keeping them truly interested, and if possible, fascinated by the history they would learn in my class.

All of the college preparatory level students who were assigned to me for my 20th Century Studies course, and, for whom I received parental consent to volunteer as participants for this research study, have developed an appreciation for history which they had not experienced prior to attending my class. Having said that, I would like to acknowledge the fact that I work in what I consider to be a very white, homogeneous school district with a very homogeneous student body. There are relatively few students whose families are economically impoverished, with the vast majority of our students’ families being of average to affluent in their economic status. While I believe the data in my study have revealed an increase in student engagement, historical empathy, and historical understanding, I also cannot dismiss Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and its relationship to this study. This study tells the story of relative success using historical immersion
methodology when conducted with subjects whose needs fall into the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy. Specifically, the majority of student needs in my school district are in the categories of self-actualization and esteem. Through my own experience as a student teacher, I am aware of the fact that in school districts with a demographic of urban lower-income households, the level of need among many students falls within the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy, in particular, the categories of physiological needs, safety needs, and love/caring needs.

Put plainly, the students in my research study were generally not preoccupied with worries about whether they would go to bed hungry or whether they would have a place to sleep. Their mental energy could be more easily focused on education and creative pursuits, such as the primary source research, role-play, simulation, and journal writing associated with the historical immersion process. However, it can be argued that students whose needs fall into the lower survival levels of Maslow's hierarchy, may have direct experience with the emotions associated with discrimination, violence, and other adverse situations that are represented in the immersive activities facilitated in this study. From that point of view, perhaps it is possible that students with more serious survival needs may actually benefit from historical immersion in a way that students with higher level needs cannot.
All things considered, I am confident that historical immersion can be adapted for use with multiple classroom dynamics and would encourage any teacher of history to facilitate its use with his or her students. If ever afforded the opportunity to teach history to a more heterogeneous demographic of students, I would wish to conduct this study again, using adaptations as necessary to engage students in the study of history through the use of historical immersion.

My students, including those whom I had previously taught in other courses and who had reputations for being academically apathetic, easily distracted, too talkative, and so on, had demonstrated an enthusiasm for the study of history to a degree which I had not previously experienced.

After some initial hesitation about the work associated with primary source research, students adapted well to the routine of researching and analyzing primary sources as a prerequisite to creative immersive activities in which they could demonstrate their understanding of the historical events they were studying as well as develop authentic empathy for the people who made that history.
Primary Source Research Activities

*Primary source research is a vital component of historical immersion in that it serves as a conduit between students and historical truth. By guiding students in thinking historically while conducting primary source research, the students are enabled to draw authentic conclusions and develop authentic historical empathy through their research efforts.*

Students equate research with research papers. Given the fact that not all 16-year-old students feel comfortable about their writing, the thought of research activities seemed somewhat unpopular to my students when we embarked on our first primary source research session. However, as students got into the routine of primary source research, they discovered that their research findings, and the way in which they interpreted those findings, would ultimately reveal facts about people of the past. The facts would include far more than dates of events and names of people. Rather, it would include factual accounts, often of a very personal nature. The facts would tell a story the students would be charged with revealing. I knew the first plateau of student engagement in primary source research had been reached when students started to call me over to their work sessions to show me what they had found, without being prompted to do so. “Mr. Marcozzi, check this out! Did you know…..?” Many times I did not know, which made it
a thrilling learning experience for me as well. The students also came to realize that their primary source findings, combined with lecture notes, would serve as the tools they needed to role-play and simulate historical events creatively and authentically. Brown (1994) made her position clear regarding the belief on how students can take a more active role in interpreting history for themselves, stating, “Only by responding to original material could students begin to expand their imagination about the past and develop their own beliefs about history” (p. 17).

**Role-play and Simulation**

*Role-play and simulation activities facilitated in a history classroom, provide a venue through which students can effectively express the fruits of their primary source research efforts. While this process is fun and engaging for students, it also serves as an invaluable formative assessment tool in determining the degree of accuracy with which students have assimilated their primary source research findings.*

In many ways, the role-play and simulation activities I facilitated with my class served as formative assessments, which provided an occasional peek inside the minds of my students. Through a combination of the students’ word choice, tonal inflection, facial expression, and choice of specific occurrences represented in their skits and presentations, I was able
to determine the degree of immersion, and, the subsequent degree of empathy they were experiencing. When observing their primary source research materials in conjunction with their role-play and simulation activities, I was able to draw conclusions as to the accuracy and authenticity of the historical events and people they were acting out.

It is one thing for the student to have an assignment that tells him to look for facts and write them down. It is another thing entirely for a student to conduct such research, knowing that he can apply it to a role-play or simulation of his own creation, using his own ideas. My experiences and observations throughout this research study have reinforced to me the basic idea that history students are more attracted to specific tasks, (in this case, primary source research followed by role-play or simulation), when those tasks allow them to express their perceptions and opinions. In other words, they find that they enjoy drawing their own conclusions about historical events, and having the opportunity to share those conclusions more than they do listening to a teacher conclude things for them.

**Authentic, Historical Empathy**

*Authenticity and empathy go hand-in-hand when interpreting historical sources. It is important for students to empathize with people of the past in order to understand the nature of historical events. Authenticity is acquired*
when students decipher sources from a perspective that filters out their present-day schema. When student empathy is derived from an authentic perspective, a truer, more authentic empathy for people of the past is achieved.

Foster (1999) cautions educators not to assume that historical empathy is as simple as “‘identifying’ with the people of the past” (p. 19). Neither does he believe that empathy should in any way be confused with imagination. He believes that such a view of empathy “leads to an irresponsible and erroneous understanding of our past. True history depends on cautious inquiry and close examination of available evidence” (p. 19).

I tried, through the course of this research study, to heed Foster’s warnings. The reality of the situation, however, is that many of my college preparatory history students have never been asked to conduct primary source research of any depth before attending my class. I made sure to follow Foster’s assertions about cautious inquiry and examination of evidence by facilitating primary source research sessions for historical events. My students did, on a number of occasions during the study, move beyond simply identifying with the plights of various people in history. A prime example is my student, Victoria’s work with a primary source document (Figure 1), in which she analyzed the source content in such an in-depth
manner, that it enabled her to present detailed events in a subsequent role play activity. Her thoughtful analysis brought greater meaning to the activity and the historical events it represented. My students achieved, at least to a small degree, what I refer to as authentic empathy, or an empathy that is derived from an analysis of collected facts and what they mean to the people living in the period we are studying. I was pleased that my students were able to achieve authentic empathy on a number of occasions in which primary source research was followed by an immersive activity. However, I also believe that achieving authentic empathy is a “crawl-before-you-walk” process.

If students are being exposed to historical immersion for the first time in the eleventh grade, which is the case for my participants in this study, I believe a teacher should be very pleased, as I am, to see students empathizing with the people of the past on a routine basis. The degree to which the empathy is truly authentic is important, and I have been thrilled when my students achieved authentic historical empathy. However, I believe getting students to that point requires more than half of a school year. I would be very interested to see what would be revealed from data collected over a three-year period, where all history teachers in the high school practice historical immersion starting in the ninth grade. I would be eager to
conduct such a study if ever granted to opportunity and required circumstances.

**Student Writing**

*Writing is an effective outlet through which students can express their opinions and conclusions about their historical research. It gives students opportunities to thoroughly present their conclusions about historical events and the way in which they are interpreting them.*

Analyzing my students’ writing has provided me an additional window into their historical thinking processes. While the majority of my students were very open with simulations and role-plays, there was a portion of my students who did well, but were not as extroverted and consequently, less revealing with regard to the understanding of, and empathy for, our historical studies. Student writing is an excellent diagnostic tool for educators. In my experience as a teacher of high school history, I have found that writing has been an invaluable assessment tool in my teaching.

During this research study, I found that I could rely on individual students’ writing in those situations when one or more students were not as extroverted with their role-plays and simulations. Of course, when using historical immersion, student writing stands alone as a wonderful formative
assessment. My students were able to convey to me, in their writing, whether or not they had a clear understanding of the history. In a more profound sense, many students seemed more comfortable expressing their deeper, personal, and empathetic perspectives on the history. This enabled me to detect necessary adaptations as we continued our journey through the course. In summative assessments, such as unit examinations, I included a segment that required my students to explain a historical event or action. Their written responses revealed the true extent to which they assimilated the history, far more effectively than objective questions could have.

Engagement

In order for students to truly benefit from the study of history, one must provide them with a learning process that is interesting and fun. When students can relate to the people of the past in a personal way, they can better understand the meanings behind their historical studies. Engagement is the cornerstone on which effective teaching is based.

I have done some considerable talking about the benefits derived from historical immersion. However one of the most basic, yet fundamental characteristics of historical immersion methodology is the fact that students find it engaging and fun. The students in my research study conveyed these sentiments to me, both formally and informally, throughout the research
process. I was amazed that I never received a single comment from a student that was truly negative in nature. Both in their individual conferences with me, and in the surveys they completed anonymously, students were eager to talk about the immersion methods they enjoyed best and how much they enjoyed coming to class. The informal feedback was the most rewarding, in particular, the random statements I heard, (and still hear), from students, like, “This class is awesome”, or “This is the coolest class.” It has made me extremely happy to experience a process in which students are learning history in a meaningful and effective way, and having a lot of fun at the same time.

Obstacles

As with any classroom setting, there are always obstacles that will arise on occasion. These obstacles are simply opportunities to adapt the immersion process to suit various classroom dynamics.

I feel fortunate in that my obstacles have been minimal during this research study. If there was one obstacle that I felt needed to be addressed, it was the concern from three different students who approached me individually to share the fact that they were not good actors, and that they were afraid they would not do well in role-plays and simulations. I explained to each of the students that I was not looking for talented actors, and that I
wanted them to have fun with the process. By the second role-play activity, all three students had adapted well to the process. One of them even excelled at expressing herself as we did our occasional role-plays and simulations. My concern lies with future classes with different classroom dynamics. In the case of this study, the majority of my students found the role-play and simulation portions of historical immersion to be both entertaining and effective. I will need to be prepared to make adaptations to the historical immersion process when I am presented with students who think and feel differently.
Next Steps

My findings for this research study have given me the confidence I need to continue working with and improving upon historical immersion techniques in my history classes. My students’ reactions to immersive class activities indicated a large degree of engagement, as did the interviews and surveys I conducted with them.

As I continue to conduct reflective inquiry with my continued implementation of historically immersive teaching methods, I hope to take advantage of the opportunities I will encounter with different classroom demographics and dynamics. While I was pleased with the relative infrequency of obstacles for this study, the prospect of testing the historical immersion process with a more challenging classroom dynamic is intriguing to me. I believe that historical immersion is adaptable to even the most challenging classroom dynamics and I would welcome the opportunity to use the immersion process under conditions in which effective adaptations could be developed as needed.

When I decided to use historical immersion as the topic for my research study, I did so with the hope it would bring an additional element of engagement to my students in addition to a heightened enjoyment and appreciation for the study of history. While those hopes were realized during this study, I gained a great deal more in the process. In constructing my literature review, I was
reminded of the many ways in which primary source research methodology, in conjunction with historical thinking, were necessary complements to the historical immersion process and the acquisition of authentic historical empathy among students of history.

This research study has inspired me to continue my research efforts and data collection in the implementation of historical immersion. I am hopeful that many other educators will experience the benefits of immersion methodology as I have, for the benefit of their students and their true understanding of history.
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Appendix A

On Thu, Oct 18, 2012 at 9:52 AM, Account, HSIRB <hsirb@moravian.edu> wrote:
Dear Mario,

The Moravian College HSIRB has approved your proposal, "Using Historical Immersion in the Secondary History Classroom." A copy of your complete proposal will remain with the HSIRB Co-Chair, Dr. Adams O’Connell, for the duration of the time of your study and for up to one year from the approval date indicated by the date of this email.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into topics other than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be. Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this email notification, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB before implementation, awaiting HSIRB approval of the changes.

We do still need to collect your electronic signature, so please respond to this email with your name and project title in the subject line. Your reply will serve as your signature. Your faculty adviser, Dr. Shosh, also needs to provide an electronic signature. He can reply to this email with his name in the subject line. These responses will serve as your electronic signatures.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Virginia Adams O’Connell
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board
Moravian College
Appendix B

September 8, 2012

Dear Mr. Kahler,

I am currently enrolled at Moravian College as a graduate student, working toward a Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. As part of my program at Moravian, I must conduct a study that focuses on the methods I use in teaching my classes. My purpose in writing you is to ask your permission to use any data I collect in my 2012-2013 first semester CP 20th Century Studies class.

My study concentrates on using historical immersion to teach history to high school students. In other words, I am using methods that I hope will allow my students to “live” the history they are studying through the incorporation of role-play, simulation, and primary source research. As you know, these concepts are not entirely new to my teaching style. I already implement some types of immersive methodologies in my lessons. As I collect data for my study, I will be implementing a system that incorporates these immersive activities to a much higher degree. It is my hope that overall student engagement will increase and that students will finish my class having permanently retained more of the most important historical ideas than they did before the new methods were applied to my teaching.

Please know that the students’ participation in this study is completely voluntary, meaning that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty whatsoever. Also know that the students will have no additional responsibilities beyond attending class and being the best students he or she can, as they would in any class. Whether each student chooses to participate or not, he or she will receive the same instruction in the classroom. For those students who do participate in the study, any data that I collect will be used only for the purposes of my research. I will never use any student’s name in any work that is produced by this study.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions about this study. If you have no questions, please sign and return this letter at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,

Mario M. Marcozzi
Saucon Valley High School

I am granting permission for Mario Marcozzi to use any data he collects from his 2012-2013 first semester CP 20th Century Studies class during his study. I know that the data will be used for the study only and that the students’ names will never be used in this process.

_______________________________________________________
Principal, Eric Kahler                                         Date
Appendix C

September 15, 2012

Dear Parents,

For those of you to whom I have not had the pleasure of being introduced, my name is Mario Marcozzi. I am your child’s College Preparatory 20th Century Studies teacher. Our class is held the second block of each day.

I am currently enrolled at Moravian College as a graduate student, working toward a Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. As part of my program at Moravian, I must conduct a study that focuses on the methods I use in teaching my classes. My purpose in writing you is to ask your permission to use any data I collect regarding your child’s response to these methods.

My study concentrates on using historical immersion to teach history to high school students. In other words, I am using methods that I hope will allow my students to “live” the history they are studying through the incorporation of role-play, simulation, and primary source research. These concepts are not entirely new to your child. Many of you have approached me with positive comments about your child’s reactions to some of these methods, which I already implement in some lessons. As I collect data for my study, I will be implementing a system that incorporates these immersive activities to a much higher degree. It is my hope that overall student engagement will increase and that students will finish my class having permanently retained more of the most important historical ideas than they did before the new methods were applied to my teaching.

Please know that your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary, meaning that you are free to withdraw your child from the study at any time without any penalty to your child whatsoever. Also know that if you do allow your child to be part of the study, your child will have no additional responsibilities beyond attending class and being the best student he or she can, as he or she would in any class.

Whether your child participates or not, he or she will receive the same instruction in the classroom. If your child does participate in the study, any data that I collect will be used only for the purposes of my research. I will never use your child’s name in any work that is produced by this study.

Your child’s guidance councilors have been informed about this study and the methodologies that will be employed through the course of its implementation. Should your child wish to discuss elements of the study with his or her guidance councilor, the councilor will have a frame of reference with which to assist with any questions or concerns. As is always the case, students will be encouraged to seek me out for any assistance they may require during this course.

My principal, Mr. Eric Kahler, who also has been informed about this study and the methodologies it employs, has approved this study.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions about this study. If you approve of your child’s participation, please sign this form and have your child return it to me.

E-mail: Mario.marcozzi@svpanthers.org
School Phone: 610-838-7001 ext. 4040

Respectfully,

Mario M. Marcozzi,
Teacher of Social Studies, Saucon Valley High School

I grant permission for Mr. Marcozzi to use any data he collects from my child in his study. I know that the data will be used for the study only and that my child’s name will never be used in this process.

__________________________________________________________
Signature
Date
Appendix D

Mid Term Survey
Please check the appropriate response after each survey comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20th Century Studies</th>
<th>QUALITY RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THIS CLASS</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have enjoyed learning history during this quarter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find the ways that I am learning history in this class to be very different from the way I have learned history in the past.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The research and analysis of primary sources in this class has helped me to understand 20th Century History.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The simulations in which I have participated in this class have helped me to understand 20th Century History.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role-play activities in this class have helped me to understand 20th Century History.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a better idea of how people of the past thought and felt because of this class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Survey Continued

Please answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible:

1. For the first unit of study, *Rise of The Dictators*, please state the activity that you feel helped you most in understanding the content, and, the activity you felt helped you the least. For each please explain your choice.
   Please repeat this process for numbers 2-4

2. *World War II –*

3. *1950s and The Cold War –*

4. *The Civil Rights Movement –*
Appendix E

Exit Survey *(Please check the appropriate response after each survey)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20th Century</th>
<th>QUALITY RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THIS CLASS**

- I have enjoyed learning history during this semester
- I find the ways that I have learned history in this class to be helpful in my understanding of how to do historical research.
- The research and analysis of primary sources in this class has helped me to understand 20th Century History.
- The simulations in which I have participated in this class have helped me to understand 20th Century History.
- The role-play activities in this class have helped me to understand 20th Century History.
- I have a greater interest in history because of my experiences in this class.
Appendix E

Survey Continued:

Please answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible:

1. For the fifth unit of study, *The 1960s*, please state the activity that you feel helped you most in understanding the content, and, the activity you felt helped you the least. For each please explain your choice. Please repeat this process for numbers 2-4

2. *The 1970s*

3. *The 1980s*

4. *The 1990s and The New Millennium*
Appendix F

Interview Questions

1. If you could name one thing that you feel is the most positive or most enjoyable thing about this class, what would you tell me?

2. Please explain to me why you feel it is the most positive or most enjoyable thing.

3. If you could name one thing that you feel is the most negative or least enjoyable thing about this class, what would you tell me?

4. Please explain to me why it is the most negative, least enjoyable thing.

5. Share with me one way you believe can improve your experience in this classroom.

6. Do you feel you are learning history more effectively or less effectively than you would without the activities we have been using in our lessons? Please explain.