

MOVING BEYOND BLACK HISTORY MONTH: HOW THREE TEACHERS INTERPRETED
AND IMPLEMENTED THE NEW JERSEY AMISTAD LEGISLATION

BY

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Moving Beyond Black History Month:

How Three Teachers Interpreted and Implemented the New Jersey Amistad Legislation

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PROBLEM:

Since abolition of slavery, the United States has struggled to recognize people of color, specifically African-Americans, as equal citizens worthy of equal education. For several generations, within the curriculum of American schools, students have been taught the narrative of American History with a Eurocentric perspective. However, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s motivated various leaders, researchers, and scholars to question the validity of this narrative. Through debates, reforms, and legislations, there has been a demand for the contributions, achievements, and perspectives of people of the African Diaspora to become parallel to the European narrative. Although research and academic literature examines the need for the inclusion of multiple perspectives within the history curriculum, few studies go in depth about the perspective of history teachers on mandated curriculum related to the inclusion of race and race relations within the history curriculum. There remains a need to explore the perceptions teachers have about these legislations and the methods used within the classroom to successfully implement these reforms. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how three New Jersey history teachers interpreted the New Jersey Amistad Bill and how they considered their context when implementing this mandated curriculum within their class lessons.

PURPOSE:

Based on the guidance of a pilot study that focused on one teacher's perception of the New Jersey Amistad Bill and the consideration of the educational approaches of Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Multicultural Education, this research sought to understand how New Jersey secondary teachers perceived the Amistad legislation and the purpose and recommendations of the Amistad Commission. This project allowed teachers to challenge their present pedagogy by providing a format for them to examine how their educational and racial past might influence their teaching experiences. Based on the literature review, the research will consider the role of Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Multicultural Education, the three theoretical and educational approaches to the incorporation of race within the history curriculum, to better understand how to implement the Amistad Law.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

In an effort to understand how this legislative change of the New Jersey Amistad Bill impacts schools and classrooms, this research study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do three New Jersey public school teachers interpret the Amistad Bill?
2. According to the teachers, how has the New Jersey Amistad Commission and the professional development provided by the commission supported them?
3. What approaches are these three teachers using as they attempt to implement the Amistad legislation?
4. What are the similarities and/or differences in the interpretation and implementation of the Amistad Bill between these three teachers?

METHODOLOGY:

In this qualitative study, I used a case study methodology to explore three schools selected based on their demographics: predominately Black, predominately White, and diverse settings. One teacher per school, who attended the New Jersey Amistad Summer Institute – a professional development opportunity provided by the state during the summer of 2006 – participated in a total of two interviews, completed a five journal entries, and was observed for ten class sessions. Interview, observation, journal transcripts, field notes, and documents were coded based on the research questions and across the cases based on patterns. Through the application of theoretical analysis procedures, assertions were noted and themes were identified within the study. The use of triangulation within the data collection and data analysis processes was used to establish reliability and validity for this study through the use of multiple data collection methods, the inclusion of direct teacher and student quotation, and the use of member check by the teacher participants.

FINDINGS:

This research revealed how three New Jersey history teachers were able to implement the mandated curriculum of the New Jersey Amistad Bill within their respective classrooms: by being self-aware of the need to include the perspective of Africans and African Americans within the history curriculum, by being willing to increase their knowledge base of African and African American history, and by being responsive to the needs of their students. Each teacher was aware of the role of race and race relations not only within their past experience but also within the community in which they taught and their own classrooms. Because of this awareness, each teacher developed a level of comfort with the expectations of the Amistad Bill,

a willingness to continue to educate themselves, and a dedication to adjust the curriculum to respond to the needs of their specific students.

SIGNIFICANCE:

This study examined how legislated change impacted how three teachers implemented the New Jersey Amistad Bill within their classrooms. Acknowledging the lack of research about how to incorporate discussions of race and race relations within predominately white, predominately black, and diverse classrooms, this study has direct implications to teacher education, practicing teachers, and policymakers. Pre-service teachers must become aware of the law and its requirements and be exposed to the supporting resources. With administrative support, practicing teachers should be required to attend workshops that address the complexity of race, help them examine their own perceptions, become more aware of the legislative requirements, and learn how to understand the needs of their students. Finally, policymakers should provide administrators and teachers with concrete and virtual resources as well as mandated workshops. Therefore, this study addressed the multiple gaps in the literature as well as provided significant information about effective implementation designs relevant to the New Jersey Amistad legislation.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In a nation of historical racial oppression and present-day diversity, the educational system of the United States still struggles to keep up with the changing times. The effects of oppression still permeate the institutions of America from the political to the educational arena. Messages of superiority and inferiority continue to be passed down from generation to generation within hundreds of public classrooms around the country through history curricula that magnifies the mainstream story of European dominance and downplays the roles of so many other key contributors. To be specific, since the abolition of slavery the United States has struggled to recognize African Americans as equal citizens worthy of equal education. Consequently, the American narrative, as presented within the history curriculum, has generally failed to position the African American perspective as central to understanding the American past. This dissertation considers the impact of legislation designed to counter this problem, as instantiated within three public school social studies classrooms in New Jersey.

The European Dominant Perspective

According to Epstein (2009), Moreau (2003), and Zimmerman (2002), European dominance is evident within the history curriculum and textbooks for they “have structured national history around the contributions, experiences and interpretations of elite white men, marginalized the contributions and experiences of people of color and women” (Epstein, 2009, p. 7). Since racism has permeated the fabric of the American society, racism has manifested in the history curriculum in the form of European

superiority and minority inferiority. The history of the American history textbooks serves as the best example of how the European perspective dominates the way history has been told in American classrooms.

Over the past twenty years, historians, such as James W. Loewen (1995), have become increasingly aware of the racism inherent in school policies and the materials used, such as textbooks. “Even though the books bulge with detail...our teachers and our textbooks still leave out most of what we need to know about American past. Some of the factoids they present are flatly wrong or unverifiable” (Loewen, 1995, p. 15). Most history books about United States history tell the American story through stereotypes, distortions and omissions.

According to Sleeter and Grant (1991), textbooks and curriculum always represent “somebody’s version of what constitutes important knowledge and a legitimate world view” (Apple & Christian-Smith, p. 80). Within the curriculum, the textbook, as explained by Sleeter and Grant, becomes the hard copy of how the curriculum legitimizes the dominant status of particular social groups by positioning their interpretations as valued judgments and social realities and providing selective access to ideas and information.

Legitimacy through a Valued Interpretation

Through the presentation of distorted images and simplified explanations of America’s racial history, students come to understand history through the dominant European perspective. Wolf (1992) provided a comprehensive summary of the research conducted from 1945 to 1985 on the role of minorities in the United States history

textbooks. The dominant discourse within the American history narrative has been proven to be that of a European point of view and through multiple studies, textbooks confirm this point of view as a legitimate way to interpret American history.

Loewen (1995) explained, “most [textbooks] inadvertently still take a white supremacist viewpoint. Their rhetoric makes African Americans rather than whites the ‘problem’” (p. 157). For example, some textbooks attribute the success of the Underground Railroad to the Quakers; however, as Mrs. Yeager, one of the teachers within this study, discovered black ministers, enslaved black people, and free black people were a major part of the Underground Railroad’s success.

Within Krug’s 1970 analysis of five major history textbooks of the late 1960s, he found that the books gave “the impression that the advances that blacks have made in their struggle to gain full citizenship were the consequences of white people’s efforts” (Wolf, 1992, p. 5). The efforts from the Civil War and during the Reconstruction period were solely attributed to white Americans – discounting the efforts of black Americans and the resistance of white Americans to the progress of and equality for black Americans.

The textbook portrayal of the dependency of black Americans on the white Americans was also revealed in a textbook study conducted by Loewen (1995). In this study, Loewen discovered that textbooks were structured to explain the Reconstruction period as a moment in history when African Americans were dependent on mainstream Americans to help bring them into American society socially, economically, and politically. With this angle of helplessness and weakness, African Americans are positioned in a way that eliminates their efforts within the American narrative. As

Loewen stated, “as long as history textbooks make white racism invisible in the nineteenth century, neither they nor the students who use them will be able to analyze racism intelligently in the present” (p. 170).

In a 1976 analysis of how Native Americans were portrayed in the history textbooks, the Council on Interracial Books concluded that the textbooks positioned Europeans as the Native American saviors. As Wolf (1992) explained, “History textbooks of the 1960s portray native Americans as a people with simple culture...who were backward, warlike...and waiting for the advanced Europeans to civilize them” (p. 6). These textbooks omitted the ideas of racism, violence, and power from the historical narrative and introduced ideas of superiority and inferiority to the historical discussion.

Legitimacy through Selective Access to Information

In an analysis of the treatment of minorities in secondary school textbooks, Marcus (1961) revealed a consistent portrayal of black Americans after the Civil War as complacent within an inferior and simple life. “Blacks freed after the Civil War were portrayed as frightened, confused, and helpless, perpetuating the stereotypes that blacks are inferior and simple” (Wolf, 1992, p. 4). To explain how black people reacted to their newfound freedom, these textbooks perpetuated the stereotypes that black people were inferior and simple by only providing an areal view of the black American culture from the European perspective rather than an account of the prominent and successful contributions of black people during that time in society.

McLaurin conducted a study in 1971 on the effects of interest groups on the textbook market. He discovered that textbooks that remained uncontroversial and neutral tended to be more marketable in some states. As Wolf (1992) summarized, “books giving comprehensive and truthful accounts about the history of black Americans would not be bought in some states” (p. 3). Therefore, textbook writers and publishers omitted details about the racist and oppressive past of our country to please the buyers.

The Council on Interracial Books for Children also discovered the omission of information in the 1977 study of early 1970s textbooks. Although the textbooks mentioned European and African interactions prior to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the black enslaved Africans brought to Virginia in 1619, slavery as a major economic factor in the South, and the Civil Rights Movement as beneficial to black Americans, they failed to include facts about the free, successful black people in the colonies before 1619, the northerners who participated in the slave trade, the “separate but equal” policy which actually fostered a second-class treatment of black people, and the economic, political, and social power which remained firmly entrenched within white institutions despite the Civil Rights Movement (Wolf, 1992, p. 7). The council concluded that not only did the textbooks fail to provide the facts about how black people were exploited for economically and socially, but they also removed the exclusion and violence that existed throughout history.

The Demand for Inclusion

Through policies and curricula, the European narrative has become the primary story, leaving various racial “minorities” feeling excluded from the historical narrative of

America. As Nash et al. (2000) explained, “academic scholars continued to define world history as the story of Western progress, one that largely excluded the experiences of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans” (p. 49). The fight for equality within education has existed since the abolishment of slavery and was greatly heightened during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The demands of activists, educators, historians, and citizens for inclusion have led to debates, reforms, and legislation that have become the response to the demands for the contributions, achievements, and perspectives of people of the African Diaspora to become parallel to the European narrative.

School curricula have become a mechanism through which African Americans, such as G. W. Williams (1882), Booker T. Washington (1909), and W. E. B. Du Bois (1915), have fought to address racial oppression by transforming the misconception that racial “minorities” had limited impacts on American history. In recent years school districts and textbook publishers have adhered to the pressure by different interest groups and have made efforts to reform the curriculum to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of current America. These efforts are also the result of the realization of many scholars and educators that in general today’s curriculum actually “serves as a primary means of social control. Students learn that what is meaningful at home is often negated at school” (Nieto, 2000, p. 96).

School curricula have been directly and indirectly used as instruments of oppression by setting aside the history of the oppressed and encouraging the dominance of European culture. Yet, in recent years, not only have textbook writers and publishers been challenged to respond to the growing demand for the inclusion of “all” American people, but also politicians and legislators. Although these agents have made efforts

to primarily incorporate the histories of Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans into the American narrative, researchers, such as Wolf (1992), warn textbook writers and publishers and legislators to be careful not to provide a dominant space for the European discourse. Therefore, policies and mandates without effective implementation and pedagogy would likely undermine even the most well intentioned educational reform efforts.

Legislative Change and the New Jersey Amistad Bill

Ethnic groups historically have challenged state legislatures to require the inclusion of their stories within the history curriculum. In the 1960s and 1970s citizens and interest groups impacted curriculum through legislative change by presenting “a quest for a more inclusive, more diverse, more functional learning program which respects the presence of the major profiles of the American citizenry” (Boyer & Baptiste, Jr., 1996, p. 33). As a result of such efforts, schools in Arizona, Alaska and New Mexico, for example, must teach the perspective and experience of American Indians. In Florida and many other states, curricula have been established to recognize the histories of Latinos, Haitians, and women as well as the history of the Holocaust. Legislation was introduced in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Oregon, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Nebraska, Illinois, California and Pennsylvania for Irish Famine education to become a part of the curriculum; however, according to the Journal of Irish Studies, the Irish Famine Curriculum has so far only been implemented in New Jersey and New York (Mullin, 2002).

New Jersey's Legislative Response to the Inclusion of Black History

More recently, there have been attempts to reform these curricular deficits through state mandates such as the New Jersey Amistad Law. On the political forefront and in light of the Civil Rights Movement, New Jersey politicians made efforts to recognize the need for the inclusion of multiple perspectives and narratives within the history curriculum. Recognizing the cultural shift in the population of the state of New Jersey, civil rights activists fought for equality through legislative change. Although, the New Jersey state bill (NJSA 18A:35-1, 2) mandated two years of U.S. history in the high schools, including the teaching of African American History, it was the 1994 mandate of teaching of the Holocaust Genocide curriculum for primary and secondary schools that received the most attention, followed by the creation of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education.

Consequently, New Jersey Assemblymen William D. Payne and Craig A. Stanley began to push for an equivalent mandate for African and African American education in the state of New Jersey. They proposed the Amistad Law (A1301) to recognize African Americans as an integral part of American history and to foster and create a greater level of academic awareness for New Jersey students. In 2002 the New Jersey State Assembly passed the New Jersey Amistad Bill (A1301) mandating that New Jersey public schools incorporate African American history into their social studies and history curriculum.

The New Jersey Amistad Bill (A1301)

The New Jersey Amistad legislation (see Appendix A) is a statewide mandate to

promote the incorporation of the study of the African slave trade, slavery in America, and the many contributions that African Americans have made throughout United States history into the curriculum. The mandate aims to include the voices of the oppressed, especially African Americans, and to transform the way American history is taught. The bill was named in honor of the African slaves, led by Joseph Cinque, aboard the Spanish merchant ship, *La Amistad*, who gained their freedom by overthrowing the crew of the cargo ship in 1839. New Jersey was the first state to legislate the inclusion of the perspective and experiences of African Americans within the United States history curriculum.

The first section of the Amistad Bill has four parts: 1) slavery and its legacy, 2) the need to teach about the human carnage and dehumanizing atrocities committed during the African slave trade, 3) clarification of the policy, and 4) the creation of a State-level commission. The legislation acknowledges the enslavement of millions of people of African origin within the Western Hemisphere, the physical and psychological terrorism that removed groups of people of African descent from the basic American opportunities, and the legacy of slavery within the fabric of the American society. Second, the bill states that students must learn about the sad history of racism in America. Third, the bill explains the need to teach about the history of the African slave trade, slavery in America, the impact and triumphs of Africans in America. Finally, the bill justifies the need for a commission to survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of education and awareness programs related to the content mentioned within the bill.

In response to European dominance within the curriculum, the Amistad legislation, in conjunction with the New Jersey Core Curricula Standards, responds to

Loewen's critique of how time periods in history, such as the Reconstruction period, should be addressed within the classroom. For example, students will learn that the Reconstruction Period arose due to the civil wars over the ideals of the nation and that slavery contradicted the ideals and reality of the nation. According to the Amistad Bill, students are challenged to recognize that the history of slavery was a reflection of white supremacy, for as the nation was going through presidential and congressional reconstruction, ex-slaves (newly freed Africans) were going through various forms of reconstruction: identity, career, education, and family. Therefore, the Amistad legislation was formulated to not have these narratives left out of the history lessons.

The New Jersey Amistad Commission and the Amistad Survey

The New Jersey Amistad Commission is a state-level commission established within the Amistad legislation, consisting of educators, scholars, and community members charged with ensuring that African American history is infused within the American history curriculum, particularly in the study of United States history. The Amistad Bill established the New Jersey Amistad Commission with the purpose of working closely with the New Jersey Department of Education and the public schools of New Jersey to implement materials and text, which integrate the history and contributions of African Americans and the descendants of the African Diaspora.

According to the legislation, the commission consists of 19 members, including the New Jersey Secretary of State, the New Jersey Commissioner of Education, the Chair of the Executive Board of the President's Council and 16 public members. As noted by the Senate Education Committee within the Statement to Assembly, No. 1301:

The Department of Education will assist the Amistad Commission in distributing to school districts information on the African slave trade and the contributions of African Americans to our society; conduct at least one teacher workshop annually on those subjects; assist the commission in monitoring the inclusion of those subjects in school curricula; and consult with the commission on ways to expand those subjects in the Core Curriculum Content Standards (Amistad Bill, 1301, 2002).

Hence, the commission will also designate appropriate textbooks that accurately chronicle the African American experience in the United States. For example, not only will slavery be taught on a factual basis, but students also will be presented with an opportunity to critically think about it as a lesson of survival and making something out of nothing.

As stated in the legislation, the goals of the commission are to accurately infuse the history of Africans and African Americans into the social studies and history curriculum, to conduct events promoting the contributions of people of the African Diaspora, and to provide training, seminars, workshops, institutes, and professional development to raise awareness and ensure the accurate, complete portrayal of American history. As indicated in the legislation, the Commission was formed and the required constituencies must be appointed to represent the state. When the legislation was passed, the Governor's office sent invitations to several university African American Studies and History Department directors and chairs across the state.

During the beginning of the 2005 – 2006 academic year, the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Amistad Commission sent monitoring compliance surveys to the 593 operating school districts in New Jersey. According to the legislation, the Commission was expected to survey the districts to gain an understanding as to the extent and breadth of education concerning the African slave trade, slavery in

America, and, as a result of the survey, catalog the extent and breadth of education concerning the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African Americans to our society presently being incorporated into the curricula and textbooks and taught in the school systems of the State (Amistad Bill, 1301, 2002). Therefore, the goal of the survey was to determine the New Jersey school districts' compliance with the New Jersey state law of teaching two years of United States History including African American history, the Amistad legislation, and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (N.J.A.C. 6A:8) of teaching United States History with the infusion of African American history.

In addition, the Amistad Commission analyzed the data from the survey to determine if the recommendations of the New Jersey Amistad Commission were being implemented in the New Jersey public school classrooms. Although the Amistad survey revealed that New Jersey public schools were applying the recommendations of the New Jersey Amistad Commission to the social studies and history curricula, it failed to explain how the teachers responsible for implementation were specifically incorporating this mandate within their history curricula.

Teacher's Response to School Reform and Professional Development

The New Jersey Amistad Commission was formed to offer professional development and a set of Internet-based lesson plans for teachers statewide. Although New Jersey made an effort to mandate the inclusion of the African and African American perspective in the history curriculum, the legislation only mandated content, not instruction. The legislation explained exactly what topics should be included and

justified how it connected to the core curriculum standards, but it did not include recommendations for how teachers were to teach this material. Teachers are left to figure out the best way to implement this mandated curriculum based on their district, classroom, and personal needs.

Few studies have analyzed how teachers perceive mandated curricular changes. In 2009 Stein and Prewett conducted a study on teacher perceptions of media literacy education and curricular challenges within in the social studies curriculum. When surveyed as to how important they found media literacy to be within the social studies curriculum, the teachers admitted that it was an important aspect of the social studies curriculum, but many were “uncertain about how to integrate it into their teaching” and lacked the confidence to analyze the media (Stein & Prewett, 2009, p. 141). Although these teachers understood the need and importance for media literacy to exist in the social studies curriculum they felt inadequate to immediately apply it to their own classrooms.

The Stein and Prewett study also revealed “different reasons for media literacy education than those frequently stressed in theory and policy” (2009, p. 143). According to the teacher surveys, “the social studies teachers were less interested in using media literacy education to protect children from harmful media, to promote health and development, or to enhance students’ appreciation of the media art” (Stein & Prewett, 2009, 143). Although theory and policy indicated those reasons, the teachers actually found themselves implementing media literacy based on the need to prepare their students for citizenship and as a tool for learning and self-expression. Therefore, the mandated goal for media literacy within the social studies curriculum actually translated

into what these teachers believed to be the essential goal for citizenship in a democratic society.

Although, this research examined how teachers perceived the mandate of media literacy within the social studies curriculum and considered the implications of teacher training and materials and how readily teachers can incorporate them into the curriculum, there is an absence of empirical research on teachers' implementation of these mandates, the methods used within the classroom to successfully implement mandated reforms, and the professional development needed to efficiently implement such programs.

The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

To better understand the Amistad legislation as a means of combating the dominant European perspective of the American history curriculum, this study examined how New Jersey history teachers have interpreted and implemented the New Jersey Amistad Bill in public schools in different classroom contexts. In an effort to understand how the New Jersey Amistad Bill impacts schools and classrooms, this research study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do three New Jersey public school teachers interpret the Amistad Bill?
2. According to the teachers, how has the New Jersey Amistad Commission and the professional development provided by the commission supported them?
3. What approaches are these three teachers using as they attempt to implement the Amistad legislation?
4. What are the similarities and/or differences in the interpretation and implementation of the Amistad Bill between these three teachers?

Based on the legislation, the validity of the data, the correlations between the Amistad legislation, the literature focusing on the educational reforms of Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Multicultural Education, and a pilot study that focused on one teacher's perception of the New Jersey Amistad Bill, this research sought to understand how three New Jersey secondary school teachers interpreted and implemented the Amistad legislation amid particular teaching contexts. This study investigated how these three teachers structured their present pedagogy based on how their educational and racial past and the context of their classroom, influencing the implementation of the Amistad Bill.

In this study the findings of each teacher are presented in three case studies – one case study per teacher. The first case study analyzed how a white teacher within a predominately white school district wrestled with the misconceptions and notions of race within her own life and within her current teaching environment. In this case, I examined how Mrs. Yeager, a veteran teacher, understood and implemented the New Jersey Amistad legislation based on the need of her students to understand a culture with which they had limited contact. In the second case study, I explored the pedagogy of a black teacher and how he structured his lessons for his predominately black setting. This fourth-year teacher, Mr. Hotep, rooted his strategies and concepts in the need to empower his students through a connection to Africa. The third case study demonstrated how a black teacher analyzed and implemented the Amistad Bill based on his experience with the history curriculum and with an understanding of the needs of the diverse population of students in his school. This veteran teacher allowed his personal experience with the racial past of American history to help him make decisions on the concepts and materials essential for reaching a multicultural audience.

The teachers in this study all participated in the New Jersey Amistad Summer Institute and the Amistad Commission acknowledged their districts for the teachers' compliance and efforts. These teachers worked in three diverse settings – a predominately European-American school district, a predominately African American school district, and a multiracial school district.

Through interviews and observations, this research sought to uncover the ways in which these three teachers planned to transform the traditional curriculum. Mica Pollock argued that, “researchers must investigate and bring to light how school and district people themselves are already arguing about and struggling over race in their daily lives” (2004, p. 26). Acknowledging the difficulties associated with implementing this fairly new educational initiative on a large scale, it is important to identify the success of reform efforts and offer examples on how to effectively implement a state-mandated curriculum.

As Fullan stated, “Implementation is where the action is” (2001, p. 67). This study was one of the few studies, which examined how legislated change impacts schools and classrooms, specifically how the vision of the New Jersey Amistad Commission relates to the reality of implementation in New Jersey public schools. Although there are numerous studies analyzing the effective and improving schools in urban areas. There is a lack of research about the culturally improving and effective schools within suburban and rural areas as well as the improvement of monocultural schools to become effective in empowering school culture and social structure. Therefore, this study addressed the multiple gaps in the literature and sought to provide significant information about effective implementation designs relevant to the New Jersey Amistad legislation.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As scholars continue to debate the accuracy of American history, the dominance of the European perspective has limited the narratives of people of the African Diaspora from the governing discourse. This literature review explored two key responses to the need for a shift in the American history curriculum: academic response and legislative response. Within the academic response, I focused on the differences in three key fields of study that have surfaced as theoretical and educational responses to address the exclusion of perspectives within the historical narrative: Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Multicultural Education.

In general, Ethnic Studies is the overall study of ethnicities within separate units yet with the goal of providing an equal level of information per unit. Africana Studies is an area that has emerged from Ethnic Studies that specifically studies the African Diaspora with the intent of bringing this perspective to the forefront to counteract the dominant European perspective. Multicultural Education is the collective study of multiple cultures within a shared space, with the intent of demonstrating how multiple cultures co-exist. Finally, this chapter will conclude within Fullan's (2001) five standards of practice for the professional development of teachers.

Epstein (2009) conducted a study examining how six teachers from Oakdale, California taught about racial groups, race relations, and individual rights in the United States. According to Epstein:

white and black children and adolescents in Oakdale entered and exited U.S. history classrooms with conflicting concepts of race and rights. Developed from their experiences and interactions with family members and other trusted adults, as well as from peers, mainstream and popular media and their experiences as

members of privileged and marginalized racial groups, the differences shaped their overall interpretations of U.S. history, school knowledge, national identity and civic responsibility (Epstein, 2009, p. 115).

Students bring to the racial discussion a wide range of opinions, assumptions, and experiences that affect how the racial past and present of America should be taught.

This chapter considers the role of Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Multicultural Education, the three theoretical and educational approaches to the incorporation of race within the history curriculum, to better understand how to create a pedagogy that explains the past and meets the students where they are.

In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss how mandated curricula attempt to address the issue by legislating what should be in the curriculum. Such measures usually fail to explain how the curriculum should be implemented. The New Jersey Amistad Bill is an example of a state-mandated curriculum that remains non-prescriptive – unclear about what approaches, methods, and strategies teachers should use in the classroom. This study will explain how three New Jersey social studies teachers implemented the Amistad Bill despite its non-prescriptive nature and, based on their teaching contexts, incorporated elements from the three academic responses into their approaches.

Academic Response #1: Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies surfaced in the late 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement as a response to the misrepresentation of the history of various ethnic groups. Activists fought through literature, politics, and protests to divide the American history dialogue into separate opportunities to include the voices of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans. However, it was the 1968-1969 mass protests

at San Francisco State University (SFSU) that established Ethnic Studies as a university-level discipline.

Due to the evidence of systematic discrimination, issues of access and neglect, and the misrepresentation of histories and cultures of the people of the African Diaspora, the black Student Union and Third World Liberation Front united with the staff and faculty of SFSU and the Bay Area community in several protests against campus courses and activities at San Francisco State University. Because of the noted inequalities, these protestors demanded the establishment of an Ethnic Studies department that would focus on Asian American Studies, black Studies, La Raza Studies (Mexican/Hispanic), and Native American Studies. After countless campus sit-ins and protests, the College of Ethnic Studies was established in the fall of 1969, hosting four departments: Asian American Studies, Africana Studies, La Raza Studies, and American Indian Studies (www.library.sfsu.edu).

Over the past thirty years, the field of Ethnic Studies has manifested into a discipline set up to adhere to the fact that non-European groups have been ignored in the historical narrative. There are hundreds of Ethnic Studies departments in United States colleges that focus on the separate studies of Asian Americans, Africana Studies, Latino Studies, and American Indian Studies, and which have developed their own curricula and agendas based on the needs of their communities. Due to recent comparative studies and transnational research, Ethnic Studies has stretched into the global arena and opened doors to several racial groups, ethnicities, and cultures beyond the American borders.

Ethnic Studies has led to a reinterpretation of the entire American past and a transmutation of knowledge and the meaning of America itself. In general, the Ethnic

Studies approach to the issue of the misrepresentation of the people of the African Diaspora in the American history narrative is to bring the history of disenfranchised groups to the forefront alongside the traditional European perspective. All ethnic groups should be presented equally within the curriculum yet kept separate for a thorough examination of how identities are formed and how each group has struggled and survived.

From an Ethnic Studies perspective, the curriculum, based on the New Jersey Amistad Bill, would be considered a portion of the overall goal of educating students on the identities, histories, and cultures of all non-European groups. The standards of the Amistad legislation would not be implemented as the main content within the history curriculum, but it would be positioned in parallel to the perspectives of Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latino Americans, and European Americans. In this study I will consider how Ethnic Studies relates to the implementation of the Amistad legislation.

Academic Response #2: Africana Studies

Within the realm of Ethnic Studies, the field of Africana Studies took on a separate approach. Triggered by the early twentieth century writings of W. E. B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson, scholars researched the misrepresented history of Africans and African Americans in the United States to the Civil Rights Movement and advocated for the history of African Americans to be acknowledged on a national level within all American classrooms. Historically, Africana Studies surfaced from the 1960s “black Studies” university programs and departments in an effort to include the experiences of those from the continent of Africa as well as those of the African Diaspora into the

academic dialogue. In general, this field of study encompasses the history of all those tracing their roots back to the continent of Africa. Scholars supporting Africana Studies viewed it as a necessary discipline to properly study the history, culture, and politics of the people of the African Diaspora.

The goal of Africana Studies is to position the people of the African Diaspora back into the historical narrative parallel to the traditional European perspective. Asante (1990) defines this type of approach as:

A human science, that is, it is committed to discovering in human experiences, historical and contemporary, all the ways African people have tried to make their physical, social, and cultural environments serve the end of harmony (p. 7).

Africana Studies focuses not only on the history, culture, sociology, economy, politics, and religion of the people of the African Diaspora but also studies the global interactions that have affected this history. Therefore, the Africana Studies perspective positions the role of the New Jersey Amistad legislation as a way to address the European dominant perspective in the American narrative, the inequalities of the educational system of the United States, and the identities of African Americans.

The field of Africana Studies has been rooted in the work of G. W. Williams, Carter G. Woodson, Charles H. Wesley, Rayford W. Logan, and W. E. B. Du Bois and has continued in the present-day research of Janice E. Hale and Molefi Kete Asante. The focus of this research has been on what information should be included in the history curriculum, how should it be integrated, and where it should be taught – separately or as a part of traditional schooling. Proponents such as Woodson and Wesley promoted African American history as a way to prove the worthiness of Africans and African Americans

within the nation's story. However, due to the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and the black Power Movement, Africana Studies evolved primarily within the academic realms of colleges and universities. Scholars interested in the need for Africana Studies within the educational system began to see a direct association between the lack of minority representation in the curriculum and the identity and disengagement of black students in American classrooms.

Identity Struggles within the African Community

Institutional racism has plagued our educational system since the days of Jim Crow. One symptom of this national disease has been an identity struggle within the community of African American students. As noted earlier, traditional American middle school and high school history curricula continues to reflect the history, culture, and values of the European dominant population. As Du Bois writes,

Whole sections of human history have been slurred over or misinterpreted; science has been systematically distorted to prove a prejudice; and above all most of these teachers have refused to visualize the possibility of a Negro becoming a full self-respecting American citizen (1973, p. 175).

In this view, each day African American children become more alienated and more disconnected from the traditional curriculum of European dominance. Delpit noted that struggles between the home and school cultures leave many African American students confused about their identities. At home or within the community, African American students are taught to understand where they come from, understand where they are, and hope for a better tomorrow.

Janice E. Hale (2001) described how African American students could benefit from being taught with an Africana approach. She described a Los Angeles program called “Saturday ethnic school” where children were taught black history and culture within organized classes (Hale, 2001, p. 164). As Hale explained, “The school provides experiences for building a strong self-image, self-respect, and self-understanding. It teaches black love without teaching white hate.”

Families and communities teach children how to cope with the injustices of the world through example. Hale (2001) explained that throughout history, most African American families have promoted a sense of community. The child is a representative of the family. What they strive to do and how they act reflects on the entire family. Young people they are raised to value their culture and have pride in what their people are about.

However, as these students enter the American public school system, the message changes. As Delpit stated, “To provide schooling for everyone’s children that reflects liberal, middle-class aspirations is to ensure the maintenance of the status quo, to ensure that power, the culture of power, remains in the hands of those who already have it” (1995, p. 28). As explained in the first chapter, most history books present a story that eliminates the contributions of African Americans.

Throughout the curriculum, the African American culture seems to be ignored or downgraded. Individualism is a common theme. Capitalism becomes the heart of the American Dream – fostering an “every man for themselves” mentality. Based on her research, Hale (2000) recommended the need to incorporate the African principle, “It takes a whole village to raise a child” (p. 112). This concept contradicts the individualism of the American society. However, within Hale’s current reform proposal,

she explained the need for the school to conceptualize the family and for the community to operate as the village. Without this principle incorporated within the school culture, African American children grow up with a double consciousness – being of the African American culture verses being American. Students will remain confused and disconnected regarding the importance and influence of the historical contributions of African Americans.

Student Disengagement and Disconnect within the American Classroom

W.E.B. Du Bois noted that in order to maintain a common school for all students within the American school system, the black student is forced to attend a school that uses a language and provides concepts that do not relate to who he or she is. Materials are presented to highlight the achievements and philosophies of all those except that of the *Negro* race:

Negro children educated in integrated schools and northern colleges often know nothing of Negro history. Know nothing of Negro leadership and doubt if there ever have been leaders in Africa, the West Indies and the United States who equal white folk. Some are ashamed of themselves and their folk. They regard the study of the Negro biography and the writing of Negro literature as a vain attempt to pretend that Negroes are really the equal of whites (Du Bois, 1973, p. 196).

Through the conquering stories and evident persecution, the African American child is left to believe that he or she comes from a race that is not strong and is consistently oppressed. As a consequence, the student may perceive his or her own future as hopeless.

African American students are taught the history of the world through the dominance of the European race and not about the influence of their own. As James

Banks (1997) noted, “The current school curriculum is not preparing most students to function successfully within the ethnically and culturally diverse world of the future” (p. 28). African American students assume that the European culture is more preferred and if valued will make schooling better. However, such recognition does not parallel the home values:

Without the connections to African American students forged from an authentic understanding of experiences, abilities, and cultural norms, classrooms are not supportive environments but become intellectually, spiritually, and socially destructive environments (Murrell, 1993, p. 244).

As they struggle to understand and connect with the knowledge of what contradicts their own culture, the identity of the African American student becomes muddled, leaving the student to struggle to survive and cope with the confusion that is the American education system.

Murrell argued that the achievement levels of African American students are dependent on how they view themselves within the context of the curriculum; therefore, public schooling “is *congenitally incapable* of providing developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive education for children of color” (1993, p. 255). Implementation or inclusion of Africana Studies, through mandates such as the Amistad Bill, not only connect African American students to their historical backgrounds, but also has the potential to improve the level of educational achievement and raise self-esteem.

As Du Bois (1973) advocated, it is up to the African American community to instill certain fundamental facts upon our children. It is also necessary that a sense of a freedom spirit, self-knowledge, and a recognition of the truth drive our educational

efforts (Du Bois, 1973, p. 65). Yet, in regards to the truth, students are left learning only a part of someone else's version of the story. Du Bois argued that educators must not allow that fallacy to exist. They should not teach just certain parts of the truth but all the other parts that educators in the past has hesitated to do. As expressed by Du Bois, education for freedom means that the African American student not only receives exposure to the necessary trades and skills related to the vocational part of his or her life but also the knowledge to think beyond the present condition in hopes for a better tomorrow.

Within Africana Studies, there is a challenge to cleanse the system of depreciating self-images and a struggle for change within the dominated and against the dominator. As Charles Taylor (1994) stated, "a greater place ought to be made for women, and for people of non-European races and cultures" (Taylor, 1994, p. 65). The reality is that African American students are given, "either directly or by omission, a demeaning picture of themselves, as though all creativity and worth inhered in males of European provenance" (Taylor, 1994, p. 65). Hence, all cultures must participate in the dialogue of truth to better understand the human story, for as Carter G. Woodson explained, "If you teach the Negro that he has accomplished as much good as any other race he will aspire to equality and justice without regard to race" (1990, p. 192).

Scholars, such as Joyce E. King (2004), believed that the curriculum must be used to examine racial hierarchy, racial exclusion, and racial vulnerability. According to the tenants of participatory Afrocentric research, culturally relevant educational reforms must engage participants in thinking critically about changing themselves and society and allow researchers and participants to collectively decipher and recuperate cultural

knowledge usable in families, schools, and communities. King (2004) notes that Du Bois believed in the education of his people towards liberation as well as the breakdown of racial barriers through education. It is true that African history and culture are valuable contributions to modern civilization. Hence, it is possible, within the cultural recuperation agenda, that the works of Williams, Woodson, and Du Bois can be perceived as transformative research and praxis in African American education, for it challenges existing knowledge paradigms of history, identity, culture, and cultural resistance (King, 2004, p. 353).

Unlike Ethnic Studies, an Amistad curriculum framed by the discipline of Africana Studies would primarily focus on the identities, histories, and cultures of the people of the African Diaspora. Considering how teachers interpret the bill, its content would either become the parallel to the European perspective of the current American history curriculum or the dominant perspective within the history curriculum. In this study I will consider how an Africana Studies approach relates to teachers' implementation of the Amistad legislation.

Academic Response #3: Multicultural Education

The multicultural approach focuses on the inclusion of all ethnic groups as a part of the American culture and how history is able to present the role of multiple cultures in American history through the mainstream perspective as well as through the perspective of each ethnic group. Fuller (2000) advises, "multiculturalism should be seen as a paradigm for a global educational reform where bounded notions of culture, including the notion of 'white', are constantly contested and challenged" (Fuller, 2000, p. 5 – 6). As

the European influence on Western civilization is glorified, the other cultures must remain in the waiting room of historical acknowledgement. However, “multiculturalism is used as a pedagogical device to essentialize culture” and became the political goal to challenge Eurocentric influences politically and culturally (Mahalingam, 2000, p. 4).

Multicultural Education

Along with Ethnic Studies and Africana Studies, Multicultural Education emerged primarily from the Civil Rights Movement as an alternative approach to including the stories of those traditionally marginalized in the United States. As historically oppressed groups fought for equality and a voice within the American narrative, scholars such as James Banks (1988) introduced the idea of multicultural education to the academic arena. However, multicultural activists went beyond the Ethnic Studies approach of proposed inclusion of multiple perspectives within the history curriculum and pushed for a parallel implementation of these perspectives within the curriculum.

Banks envisioned multicultural education as a transformation of the entire school system whereby practices, procedures, and policies would become beneficial to all. According to Nieto (2000), multicultural education is defined as a form of anti-racist education, for it not only emphasizes the teaching of multiple worldviews and perspectives but also fights racism and discrimination and addresses diversity and equality in school. Nieto stated that “multicultural education should be an integral part of the school experience of all students” (2000, p. 325). In theory, multicultural education improves teacher-to-student relations and cross-cultural understanding, improves the school climate, and increases students' educational opportunities. To transform theory

into practice, the curriculum must be structured in a way that fosters these ideas both within the materials used and how the perspectives are presented.

Multicultural Curriculum

James A. Banks (1996) identified four common approaches to teaching multicultural content: the contributions approach, the additive approach, the transformation approach, and the social action approach. On the first level, the contributions approach, the curriculum is sprinkled with brief and surface-level celebrations or acknowledgements of heroes, holidays, and isolated cultural elements. This level is most common in American schools in the form of celebrations, such as black History Month, and fosters a materialistic and disconnected demonstration of a subordinate culture.

The next level, the additive approach, allows these ethnic concepts, themes, and perspectives to enter the curriculum, but remain as an addition to what is already there. Concepts, such as the American Revolution, are taught as it was before; however, a fact or two will be added to the lesson to demonstrate to students how ethnic groups fit into the American puzzle. This approach introduces ethnicity through the perspective of the point of view of the mainstream.

On the third level, the transformation approach, the curriculum is restructured to include the perspectives of various ethnic groups. Banks (1996) best describes this level as “the infusion of various perspectives, frames of reference, and content from different groups that will extend students’ understandings of the nature, development, and complexity of the United States and the world” (p. 24). This level presents various

perspectives for the goal of understanding the commonalities as well as the differences. It allows students to look at a particular event in history and understand it in various ways through various perspectives.

Within the social action approach, the decisions and actions of the educators and the learners are essential for relating to a concept, issue, or problem studied. Through an understanding of how other groups perceive a particular situation, students must learn how to critically analyze the problem and create an action plan for the solution. “Critical reflection requires one to seek deeper levels of self-knowledge” (Howard, 2003, p. 198). Within a culturally relevant pedagogy, both the teacher and the student must allow their critical analyses to effectively reflect their social actions.

Banks (1996) provided ten goals of the multicultural curriculum in order to understand how to implement of the Amistad legislation. First, this transformation of the curriculum must develop decision-making and social action skills. Second, the curriculum must promote the ability of reflection on ethnic issues, such as African American issues, and encourage the necessary personal, social, and civic action that will solve these racial and ethnic problems locally, nationally, and globally. Third, the curriculum must help students understand various issues through multiple ethnic perspectives, understand their own ethnic identity, and exist civically within their own community.

The fourth and fifth goals parallel, for the curriculum must help students function within a range of cultures, teach them how to interact within members from other cultural groups, and provide them with the skills to solve conflicts with others. Sixth, it is important for the curriculum to provide students with alternate cultural and ethnic

connections. There are subcultures within cultures; therefore, it is important for students to understand that there are alternate perspectives and ways within groups. The seventh, eighth, and ninth goals focus on the individual's understanding of himself or herself. Overall, Banks recommended that the curriculum help students understand how to view themselves through various perspectives, how to be a human, and what his or her cultural identity means within a particular cultural context.

Wills, Lintz, and Mehan (2004) conducted a literature review of ethnographic studies of multicultural education in American classrooms and schools. Some studies translate multiculturalism to achieving equality in classroom interactions, some studies attempt to define multicultural education as the implementation of contributions, experiences, and perspectives of women and racial and ethnic groups, and other studies focus on building an ethnoracial identity. However, Wills, Lintz, and Mehan believed that developing a multicultural curriculum that exposes students to the multiplicity of narratives that make up U.S. society, teaches them about the contested nature of our history, and encourages them to challenge inequality and to rethink American identity becomes difficult to achieve in practice (2004, p. 178).

Wills, Lintz, and Mehan (2004) believed that “there has still been virtually no ethnographic research on multicultural curriculum practice in actual classrooms” (p. 168). There is a need for research to explore the social, cultural, and institutional practices that transform official curriculum into classroom knowledge of U.S. history and society. In addition, there is a need to understand how multicultural curricula, as constructed in classroom lessons and activities, can transform teachers’ representations of historical figures and events and their narrations of U.S. history, explore counts as multicultural

curriculum practice in actual classrooms, and what are the consequences of these practices for students and society (Wills, 2004, p. 169).

The Legislative Response to the Inclusion of Marginalized Groups

Terrie Epstein (2009) described the importance of national, state, and school district curricular frameworks in determining how American history is interpreted in public schools. In recent years these frameworks have highlighted the contributions and experiences of oppressed groups but emphasized democracy rather than the inequalities that still exist in society. Epstein conducted an ethnographic study on black and white students' interpretation of U.S. history. Within this study, Epstein revealed that:

The teachers positioned elite white men as the nation's founders who created and extended democracy and white immigrants as those who rose above discrimination to build an infrastructure and contribute to cultural diversity (Epstein, 2009, p. 34).

Epstein (2009) explained that these frameworks present nationalist views of American history and government, and position the contributions of people of color as an occasional phenomenon.

Within a nationalist view, the contributions of each racial and ethnic group are presented as part of the national development. As Epstein analyzed the curricular frameworks of California and Michigan, the contributions tend to favor that of the European culture, for based on examples provided within the curriculum the European culture was the dominant contributor towards the development of the nation. However, Epstein (2009) noted, "the framework did not acknowledge that the nation systematically

violated people's rights, enslaved or expropriated people of color, or legally considered women to be second class citizens" (p. 8). The nationalist approach fails to acknowledge the exclusion and persecution of American history and removes racism and other forms of inequalities from the historical dialogue.

In the next section, I will analyze research that addresses governmental guidelines necessary for a successful implementation of legislative change. The Amistad Bill is a unique legislative response to the exclusion of the African and African American perspectives within the curriculum. As one of the few attempts to legislate curricular change on behalf of African Americans, it is important to understand how this state-mandated curriculum is interpreted and implemented within New Jersey classrooms. New Jersey has created a bill that could fundamentally transform the American history curriculum within New Jersey classrooms, for as Michael Fullan (2001) explained, "governments have the potential to be a major force for transformation" (p. 220).

Governmental Guidelines for Effective Implementation

Often legislative change presents required content but does not advise on how content should be implemented within the classroom. Potentially transformative reforms can fall by the wayside due to the lack of long-term planning and effective classroom strategies. Michael Fullan (2001) provided a general guideline for the implementation of government reform and/or state-mandated curriculum.

First, governments must seek the public willingness to endorse the mandated curriculum. It is important for the national, state, or local government to position the curriculum in a way that the community understands the need and supports efforts to

incorporate the vision into the schools. It is the public that must implement and maintain the reform on a long-term basis. The public will be there long after the government officials that supported the idea have left office; therefore, the success of mandated curriculum depends upon public support.

Second, the proposed mandated curriculum must foster a sense of direction by creating a framework for accountability. The government must formulate a framework that clearly explains what is to be implemented, how it should be done, and what should be the outcome. To guarantee effective implementation of the mandated curriculum, this sense of direction and expectations for accountability must be clear to all involved.

Third, governments must strive to create the capacity necessary for deep and lasting change. The capacity required takes shape in the confidence each district needs in the implementation of this legislative change and competence in the way the framework is being implemented. Successful implementations exist in districts, schools, and classrooms when educators understand the expectations, support the overarching vision, and are capable of presenting the required content. Mandated curriculum should not become a quick fix for a problem but a permanent solution to an important issue.

Finally, it is important for governments to provide educators with sufficient and steady resources to effectively implement the mandated curriculum. Not only must these resources be accessible and user-friendly to all educators but also readily available at any time. By providing access to a vast amount of resources, teachers will better understand what to implement and the possible approaches to take within their classrooms.

Professional Development

Fullan (2001) and Little (1993) noted that professional development still fails to support teachers' visions, needs, and requirements. In a qualitative study conducted by Güven (2004) many of the teachers in his study expressed a belief that professional development programs are designed to initiate change in teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. However, the study showed that teachers' experiences and memories have a greater influence on their perceptions of education.

Professional development is, therefore, an important resource for the success of this type of legislative change; however, it has become a complex journey centered on an understanding of teacher commitment, knowledge, responsibility, experiences, and learning communities. Influenced by a study of the National Board of Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS), Fullan referred to these five areas as the standards necessary for effective teacher professional development.

The first domain addressed by the NBPTS was "Teachers are committed to students and their learning" (NBPTS, 1993). According to Fullan's (2001) report, the NBPTS proclaimed that National Board-certified teachers "adjust their practice based on observations and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances, and peer relations" (Fullan, 2001, p. 255). More and more states have allowed this standard to influence how they prepare and train teachers to implement mandated curriculum. Because of this standard, states have been encouraged to alter their professional development approach to help teachers learn how to discover the interests, knowledge, and backgrounds of their students. This study will consider this

approach as the three teachers interpret the role of the Amistad professional development on how they implement the Amistad Law.

The second domain addressed by the NBPTS was “Teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to students” (NBPTS, 1993). The NBPTS explained that the National Board-certified teachers “command specialized knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students” (Fullan, 2001, p. 256). These teachers have striven to acknowledge the students’ assumptions, biases, and knowledge to better assess how to present the material and create real-life connections. Other states have captured this emphasis and restructured their professional development to master ways to teach the knowledge with careful consideration of their audience, the students. This study will consider what knowledge the three teachers obtained on their own or gained from the Amistad workshops and if the students were considered when the curriculum and lessons were created.

The third domain addressed by the NBPTS was “Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring students learning” (NBPTS, 1993). Fullan (2001) used the work of the NBPTS to note that National Board-certified teachers “command a range of instructional techniques, know when each is appropriate, and can implement them as needed” (Fullan, 2001, p. 256). The first step is to have the knowledge ready and available to students. However, to consider the range of instructional techniques relies on how the knowledge is positioned in a way that is appropriate for the students and connected to their needs. This study will consider how each teacher positions the knowledge that he or she brings to the lessons and if the levels of their students are factored in as a consideration.

The fourth domain addressed by the NBPTS was “Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience” (NBPTS, 1993). Based on Fullan’s (2001) research, the NBPTS concluded that the National Board-certified teachers:

critically examine their practice, seek the advice of others, and draw on educational research and scholarship to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories (Fullan, 2001, p. 256).

According to this study, teachers should be able to analyze how they teach, how they can improve, and what materials will enhance their lessons. Many states have adopted this standard; therefore, this study will take into account whether the three teachers critically examined their practice on their own or if the Amistad Commission provided them with the format to do so.

The final domain addressed by the NBPTS was “Teachers are members of learning communities” (NBPTS, 1993). The National Board-certified teachers, according to Fullan (2001) and the NBPTS, “find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school” (Fullan, 2001, p. 257). Epstein (2009) explained a curricular approach of teachers utilizing community-based organizations, neighborhood- or community-oriented museums, and community members and events (p. 127). The community should become part of the school culture, thus connecting teachers and students with parents, community leaders, and community programs. Therefore, this study will reflect upon the possibility of these three teachers working in learning communities both within their schools and within Amistad-driven opportunities.

As advised by Fullan and Epstein, professional development programs must provide an opportunity for teachers to deal with these experiences and understand how it has developed their teacher identity to better understand his or her role as not only a teacher but also as a human agent of change. This study will consider how professional development provided by the Amistad Commission assisted the three teachers in shaping their curricula and developing environments to wrestle with their attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions.

Conclusion

In summary, there is a wealth of research on the three academic responses to the demand for ethnic inclusion within the historical narrative: Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Multiculturalism. The Ethnic Studies approach fought to bring forth the voices of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans separately within the American history dialogue. The Africana Studies approach focused on shifting from a European-dominant approach to an Afro-centric approach to American history. Finally, the approach of multiculturalism positioned all the perspectives in a collective study with the intent to demonstrate how multiple cultures co-existed. However, the research presented these approaches as separate methods towards the inclusion of marginalized groups. In addition, little research has been done on the legislative response to the inclusion of marginalized groups within the history curricula.

Overall, this study was framed by this analysis by considering the role of these three academic responses within the implementation of the Amistad Bill. I considered if

these three teachers were operating within these realms or beyond what past research has indicated. I further analyzed how Banks (1996) multicultural curriculum levels correlated with the way these three teachers integrated black history in their American history curricula. Finally, this study sought to fill existing gaps in the literature on how teachers interpret the legislative responses to the demand for inclusion. Understanding how these three particular teachers implemented the Amistad legislation within their classrooms will provide information that will allow teachers, administrators, and policymakers to enhance how the law is implemented in all New Jersey public schools.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach to examine how three New Jersey history teachers perceived and implemented the New Jersey Amistad Bill within their teaching contexts. Each teacher's experience with the Amistad legislation was captured within a descriptive qualitative case study to better situate the teacher in his or her setting. Merriam (1988), Yin (1994), Creswell (1998), and Hatch (2002) define a case study as an exploration or investigation of a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.

In this study, three case studies are presented based on the investigation of three teachers over a period of a month each, through the use of interviews, observations, field notes, journaling, and document collection. "Case studies are a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualized contemporary (as opposed to historical) phenomenon within specified boundaries" (Hatch, 2002, p. 30). Therefore, the use of case studies as a form of qualitative research served as the best strategy to descriptively portray how three teachers implemented the Amistad legislation within their classrooms.

Motivated by the Pilot Study

This study was informed by a pilot study I conducted in Spring 2006. The purpose of the study was to see how a social studies teacher within my school district incorporated the New Jersey Amistad Bill into the social studies curriculum. The methods used within that study included two teacher interviews, three classroom

observations, artifact collection, and one student focus group interview. The purpose of the first teacher interview was to see how she interpreted the New Jersey Amistad Bill, how she perceived the role of the Amistad Commission, and how she believed the Amistad Bill should be implemented within her own classroom. Then she invited me to visit one of her social studies classes to see how she implemented the legislation. I used the qualitative method of audio recording and field note taking during the three observed lessons. The teacher also provided me with worksheets, copies of handouts, assessments, project outlines, and textbooks associated with her Amistad-influenced curriculum.

The purpose of the second teacher interview was to discuss the approaches taken and the materials used during her lessons, and the advantages and disadvantages of implementing this bill in her classroom. Finally, the teacher selected four students (two boys and two girls) to participate in a student focus group interview about the implementation of black history within the U.S. History curriculum. The purpose of the student focus group interview was to see how they viewed the implementation of the Amistad Bill within the history curriculum. From the pilot study, three major findings surfaced that shaped the design of the proposed study: how professional development shapes how teachers perceive mandated curriculum, how instruction was shaped by the context of the classroom, and the role and vision of the Amistad Commission.

First, through the dialogue established between the teacher and me, the pilot study helped me realize the importance of capturing the perceptions of teachers exposed to the professional development already offered by the Amistad Commission. This proved to be a unique yet limited perspective since at the point of the pilot study the Commission had only provided a year's worth of professional development opportunities.

Second, through both teacher interviews, this particular teacher explained her rationale behind the approaches she used within her classroom. She mentioned the racial make-up of her classes and noted how she used different material based on the population she was serving.

Finally, through the first teacher interview, I realized the need for an in-depth understanding of the perception of the history teachers charged to implement the Amistad Bill. I became interested in how teachers interpret the vision of the Amistad Commission without that vision being officially documented. Thus this pilot study led me to want to further understand the perceptions and approaches of several teachers exposed to the professional development provided by the New Jersey Amistad Commission. Therefore, the three teacher participants were chosen for this study because they were exposed to the 2006 and 2007 professional development opportunities offered by the Amistad Commission. This study investigated the impact these opportunities had on how these teachers understood how best to incorporate this mandate within the history curriculum.

Through the pilot study, I gained a glimpse of how a social studies teacher may consider the contextual make-up of his or her classroom when implementing the Amistad legislation. Based on findings of how the pilot study teacher approached Amistad, I became interested in seeing how Amistad took shape in different settings. Therefore, I was triggered to further investigate the specific approaches teachers decided to take based on the racial and ethnic make-up of their students, and particularly to discover if there were similarities and differences across color lines.

Therefore, based on the methods used within the pilot study, I decided to

eliminate the student focus group interview and focus on the perceptions and approaches of the teachers themselves. The purpose of this method was to shed light on how teachers perceived the Amistad Bill and what each teacher considered while implementing the legislation within the history curriculum. Although student perceptions are worthy of investigation, this particular study was structured to be the first step towards a potentially larger study that is primarily interested in the philosophies behind the implementation of the Amistad legislation.

Participating Schools and Teachers

Setting

This study of the New Jersey Amistad Bill took place in three educational settings representing a range of racial and socioeconomic configurations. There was one theoretical reason for this purposeful sampling: to understand how three New Jersey teachers interpreted and implemented the Amistad Bill within three of the most common classroom contexts based on their own backgrounds as well as the population of the school. Many scholars have considered New Jersey as one of the most segregated states in the United States. According to New Jersey's general demographic characteristics for the 2000 U.S. Census, 72.6% of the population was white, 13.6% was black, 0.2% were American Indian and Alaska Native, 5.7% were Asian, 5.4% reported to be of another race, and 2.5% have reported to be of two or more races. This breakdown is less obvious within the school systems for most schools in New Jersey are either predominately white or predominately black, leaving only a handful of schools to be truly multi-racial.

Therefore, it was my goal to present three classrooms that currently reflect this racial segregation within the state of New Jersey.

The first observed classroom was in Western Public School, a rural, predominately white public elementary school (Kindergarten to eighth grade) located in western New Jersey. Surrounded by two farms and half a dozen simple suburban homes, this elementary school was the only school in this small, country town. Due to the generation of families that have passed through these grades, the building was very familiar and traditional for all the members of this town.

Upon entering the three-story brick school building, historical artifacts dating back to the early 1900s graced the showcases leading up to the main office. The hallways were consistently decorated with students' works and educational posters. The hallways were filled with the sounds of students discussing topics, laughing during activities, or conversing with friends. Around every corner was a teacher, aide, or staff member sincerely greeting each student, colleague, and visitor. It was this welcoming atmosphere that willingly opened the door to this study.

The second observed classroom took place in Du Bois Middle School, an urban, predominately black middle school (sixth to eighth grades) in eastern New Jersey. This modern three-story school building was connected to two similar middle school buildings on either side. All three linked schools were positioned in a residential part of the city and stood as the new option for middle school education within this city.

Although the school had a similar entrance to Western Public School, Du Bois Middle School's walkway was lined with colorful flowers leading up to the front door. Upon entering the building, historical facts about notable black leaders of the past and

present immediately greeted every student, staff member, and visitor before reaching the front office. The office was filled with friendly secretaries willing to provide assistance and not afraid to allow humor to welcome each new face. The hallways were informative as they consistently provided each on-looker with various African and black history facts through the use of posters containing quotations or images, and trophy displays of books and educational resources. It was this sense of educational pride that opened the door to this study within Du Bois Middle School.

The third observed classroom was in Diversity High School, an urban, multiracial high school in northern New Jersey. This four-story building was positioned in the center of the downtown area one block from the local community college. Due to its convenient location, the building was also used for several community college classes in exchange for the opportunity for some of the senior students to take classes at the college. Therefore, the doors of Diversity High School were constantly swinging open and closed to accommodate the steady pace of this exchange.

Upon entering this basic secondary building, each student, staff, and visitor was required to walk through metal detectors and have their carried items checked by security. Although I found this process initially intimidating, it became a comforting reality to know that the building was secure. Complying with the daily operations of the building, the main office functioned as a strict business as the secretaries signed in the visitors and cleared the visit with the hosting staff member. A security guard outside of the office guided each visitor to his or her destination with descriptive verbal directions and a welcoming smile. It was this business-like atmosphere that secured this study within this setting.

Participants

Convenience sampling led me to conduct the research based on the experiences of the teachers that participated in the New Jersey Amistad Summer Institute. “Gaining entry into a site begins with gaining the confidence and permission of those who can approve the activity” (Merriam, 1998, p. 98). During the summer, I was able to participate in the first annual New Jersey Amistad Summer Institute held at a private university in northern New Jersey. This one-week conference provided intense professional development on various topics within African American history in relation to an understanding of the construction of race in the United States. Through this experience, I built strong and trusting connections with several New Jersey teachers.

Teachers

Two out of three of the teachers observed in this study have been recognized with the *Amistad Exemplary Practice Award*. In 2005, under the direction of Dr. Karen Jackson-Weaver, the executive director of the New Jersey Amistad Commission, and the New Jersey State Department of Education, the *Amistad Exemplary Practice Award Competition* was initiated to recognize up to ten exemplary practices in New Jersey public schools. These teachers were acknowledged for implementing systematic approaches toward the inclusion of the contributions of African Americans into the curriculum, received a monetary award of \$5,000 each, and became *Amistad Fellows*.

Merriam encourages researchers to “establish rapport by fitting into participants' routines, finding some common ground with them, helping out on occasion, being friendly, and showing interest in the activity” (1998, p. 99). As a fellow Amistad scholar

attending of the summer institute, I was able to establish an instant with several teachers. Therefore, several teachers within my particular summer institute session were selected based on previous interactions and discussions about the Amistad Bill.

Mrs. Yeager, a veteran language arts and social studies teacher at Western Public School, was the first participant within this study. Because she taught in a small, rural school of no more than thirty students per grade, Mrs. Yeager was responsible for the language arts and social studies curriculum for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. I was introduced to Mrs. Yeager at an Amistad workshop where she was invited to explain how she had implemented the legislation into her classroom. The second encounter with Mrs. Yeager occurred in the summer of 2006 at the New Jersey Amistad Summer Institute. It was in this environment where I was able to sit with Mrs. Yeager to discuss her participation in this study.

Mr. Hotep, a newly tenured social studies teacher at Du Bois Middle School, was the second participant in the study. In this predominately black middle school, Mr. Hotep had transitioned from a math teacher to a social studies teacher with the intent to bring African and African American history to his students. After working with Mr. Hotep in a Amistad Summer Institute workshop, I was interested in how and why he chose to implement African history.

Finally, Mr. Phillips, a veteran history teacher at Diversity High School, was the third participant in the study. In over twenty years of his history teachings, he apparently had created a focus endearing to a diverse population of high school students. Within an Amistad Summer Institute peer discussion group, I was able to talk to Mr. Phillips about his views on how the Amistad Bill should be implemented. His perceptions about how to

reach students from various backgrounds piqued my interest, and I immediately invited him to participate in this dissertation study.

Data Collection Methods

This study examined the approaches of three New Jersey history teachers towards the implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Bill. As researcher, I used a series of qualitative research methods, including teacher interviews, classroom observations, field notes, teacher journaling, and document collection. Teacher interviews and teacher journaling were used to gain insight into the second and third research questions, how New Jersey public school teachers interpret the Amistad Bill and how the Amistad Commission and professional development has provided support to teachers. Finally, classroom observations, field notes, and collected documents were used to critically analyze the fourth and fifth research questions.

Table 1 depicts the connection between research questions and data sources:

Research question	Data collection methods
1. How do New Jersey public school teachers interpret the Amistad Bill?	Teacher Interview A Teacher Interview B Teacher Journal Classroom Observations
2. According to teachers, how has the New Jersey Amistad Commission and the professional development provided by the commission supported them?	Teacher Interview A Teacher Interview B Teacher Journal

Table 1 continued...

The Relationship Between the Research Questions and Data Collection Methods

Research question	Data collection methods
3. What approaches are New Jersey public school teachers using as they attempt to implement the Amistad legislation?	Teacher Interview A Teacher Interview B Teacher Journal Classroom Observations Artifacts / Document Analysis
4. What are the similarities and/or differences in the interpretation and implementation of the Amistad Bill across school contexts?	Teacher Interview A Teacher Interview B Teacher Journal Classroom Observations

(Baptiste, 2007)

Classroom observations

Acting as a participant observer, I conducted ten audio-taped classroom observations in each classroom to examine how black history and the black perspective were infused into the discourse of the history of the United States. In each observed setting, I was able to focus on the primary and secondary materials used, specific content addressed, and class discussions directly related to the New Jersey Amistad legislation. In addition to the audio device, I used open jottings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) throughout the observation as a way to record my immediate impressions, reactions, and questions pertaining to the class lesson. Immediately following each observed lesson, I transferred the open jottings into typed field notes in a secure computer file and the class observations were transcribed using digital recording software. Both the field notes and the transcriptions were informally coded weekly based on possible observed connections and themes.

Journals

“As a reflective record kept by a teacher, a journal can inform the researcher about changing thoughts and new ideas and the progression of learning” (Anderson, 1994, p. 153). Upon the submission of permission slips, I provided the participating teachers with journals during the first interview session. On the inside cover of each journal, the teachers were asked to identify themselves based on gender, teaching position, and race as well as to respond to a list of questions provided to prompt the teachers’ reactions to each observed lesson (see Appendix B for the journal questions). These questions triggered each teacher to write about reactions to each lesson observed. By the end of the study, each teacher wrote from three to five pages of his or her thoughts, observations, and opinions about the observed lessons.

Each journal was handed in during the second teacher interview. Upon receipt, the journals were transcribed into a typed document, filed by each teacher, and examined for a better understanding of how teachers perceived the purpose and implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Bill as well as the professional development and recommendations provided by the Amistad Commission. These perceptions serves as a comparison to how the observed teachers perceived the implementation and impact of the Amistad Bill within the classrooms.

Interviews

“The purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective” (Patton, 1990, p. 278). This study focused on interviewing three social studies and history teachers within middle and high school settings to understand their

perception of the Amistad legislation and how it should be implemented in their classrooms. As I sought to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the bill and the commission, I conducted two 60-minute audio-taped interviews with each of the three participating teachers.

Using a semi-structured interview guide, topics and issues, related to the New Jersey Amistad Bill and the Commission, were specified in advance, yet the interviews remained conversational and situational. Using Patton's (1990) suggestion that an interview should focus on the participants' perceptions, feelings, experiences, thoughts, expectations, and changes of the program, the contents of the interviews pertained to experience and behavior questions, opinion and value questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, and background and demographic questions considering the past, present, and future tense of the participant's responses (p. 278 - 279).

The first interview was about the teacher's educational and professional background and his or her perceptions, interpretations, and attitudes towards the New Jersey Amistad Bill and Commission (see Appendix C for Interview A questions). The purpose of the first teacher interview was to dialogue with the teacher about his or her educational and professional background and to understand how New Jersey public school teachers interpret and implement the Amistad Bill. We discussed how the Amistad Bill and the professional development provided by the Amistad Commission have affected the social studies and/or history curriculum and teaching materials. Within the guidelines of the core curriculum content standards and the revision of the standards by the Amistad Commissioners, teachers were able to address the specifics of the Amistad mandate.

Following the set of observations, I conducted the second teacher interview to review the previous interview, the observational data, and discuss the impact of professional development and the success and challenges of implementing the Amistad legislation (see Appendix D for Interview B questions). I interviewed the teachers a second time to get a clear understanding about the successes and challenges of teaching history in light of the legislation. Also, I focused our discussions on the range of techniques and strategies used to challenge students to analyze historical events through the African American perspective and experience as well as through multiple perspectives.

Within the original research plan, it was my goal to incorporate the vision and perception of the members of the New Jersey Amistad Commission of how the New Jersey Amistad Bill should be implemented in New Jersey classrooms. After presenting my intent to the commissioners at an Amistad Commissioner meeting, three commissioners agreed to participate in a 90-minute focus group interview at a local university (see Appendix E for the focus group interview questions). Although this focus group interview shed light on my initial interest, the data collected from this focus group interview was ultimately omitted from the analysis because the data fell outside the scope of my findings.

Collection of Documents

Throughout the study, documents were collected that relate to the New Jersey Amistad Bill and its implementation in the classroom. These documents included lesson plans, textbooks, worksheets, and maps, and provided supplementary evidence to how the

mandate is being implemented. Using the document summary form of Miles and Huberman (1994), the name and a brief description of the document, how the document related to methodology and its importance to the study were recorded on a separate form for each document collected (see Appendix F for document summary form). These documents served as a reference and catalyst for discussion during the teacher interviews and observations.

“Starting early allows researchers to shape the direction of future data collection based on what they are actually finding or not finding” (Hatch, 2002, p. 149). Table 2 presents the data collection process within a structured timeline, outlining the method, source, format used, and time frame for research:

Method	Source	Format	Timeline
Teacher Interview A	Participants	Recorded interviews	1 interview x 3 = 3
Classroom Observations	Participants' Settings	Recorded observation	10 lessons x 3 = 30
Teacher Journaling	Participants	Documentation	5 entries x 3 = 15
Teacher Interview B	Participants	Recorded interviews	1 interview x 3 = 3
Document Collection	Participants	Documentation Form	12 days x 3 = 3

Note: The data collection period consisted of 2 days per teacher for interviews (6 days total), 10 days per teacher for classroom observations (30 days total), and 5 journal entries per teacher (15 entries total). Although the data collection did not occur consecutively due to unplanned assemblies and district holidays, in total the data collection for this study took place over a period of 36 days.

(Baptiste, 2009)

While in the field, I jotted in my research journal my impressions, reactions, reflections, and preliminary interpretations of the interviews and the observations. In addition, the sessions were recorded both in a research notebook and on a digital audio device to

ensure the quality and accuracy of the information collected. The initial analysis began when each data source was immediately transcribed electronically and stored on a CD-R as well as the hard drive of my computer. In addition, using the guidance of Miles and Huberman (1994) as part of the initial analysis, a document summary form was completed for each document collected and the form was filed in a cabinet attached to the specific document. Therefore, upon completion of data collection, all transcribed data and pertinent documents were printed and stored by date and data source as well as saved in several computer files.

Data Analysis

As I uploaded the digital recordings of the interviews and observations to a computer file, preliminary data analysis took place while transcribing the documents into a word processing document. I listened to the interviews and observations thoroughly and initial notations were made in a research notebook based on ideas, connections, and themes in the data. Upon completion of the transcription process, I printed and filed the documents in binders based on the data source (i.e. interviews, observations, journal responses, and artifacts).

As the formal data analysis phase began, I generated categories based on the primary research question: how this legislated change of the New Jersey Amistad Bill has impacted schools and classrooms. I examined each data source by reading the transcriptions and field notes and highlighting terms or phrases that seemed to directly answer the research questions.

I began analyzing the interviews by reading through each teacher interview based on each interview question. I grouped the answers under headings based on the interview question. Then I compared the answers of each participant to see if there were any commonalities or differences within the responses. This step was repeated for each interview question to get a better understanding of the connections and outliers that may exist within the interview data.

Upon completing the depth and cross-participant comparisons, I referenced back to the summaries of the teacher interviews to see how their responses aligned with the research questions. I made notations based on this cross-data comparison to further understand if the visions and perceptions of the commissioners coincided with those of the teacher participants of this study.

Finally, I critically entered the classrooms by shifting the data analysis phase to the observational data. I read and highlighted each transcription of the observations and the journal entries thoroughly, based on the journal question prompts, the research questions, and the categories that arose within the pilot study. The documentation summaries were used as supplementary references as the observations were analyzed. Subsequently, I was able to summarize the codes, create categories of codes, and decipher assertions from these data sources both within each observation, entry, and artifact summary as well as across all three data sources. Then I critically analyzed the assertions based on the interview notations of the teachers and the commissioners.

After working with the data from each setting, creating case studies proved to be a more organized way to handle and present the data. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) noted,

Case studies rely on historical and document analysis, interviewing, and typically, some forms of observation as data collection. Case studies take the reader into the setting with a vividness and detail not typically present in more analytic reporting formats (p. 159).

Each teacher became the focus of his or her own case study chapter; however, the case studies were aligned with one another to further highlight themes across the data. After coding the data for Mrs. Yeager and finding several assertions, I used these codes and assertions as a guide into analyzing Mr. Hotep's data. After determining the similarities and differences between Mrs. Yeager and Mr. Hotep, I applied similar methods as I coded and created assertions for Mr. Phillips. Throughout the analytical process, I used theory, and literary and historical references to determine the assertions and make connections to the themes within this study.

Establishing Validity and Reliability

To establish validity and reliability in qualitative research means to position the research in the realm of being sound and dependable. The use of triangulation within a study is essential for the use of multiple sources, methods, and theories helped to establish credible evidence of how the Amistad legislation was being implemented in the three classrooms. I built validity within this research by using various sources of data and methods, including extensive quotations within the findings chapters, accessing the opportunity to rely on the member check technique, and recognizing my initial assumptions.

To better understand how three teachers perceived the Amistad Bill, I used three methods, interviews, journals, and observations, to justify their voices. By using multiple methods within the data collection stage, I was able to double-check the codes, assertions, and themes across the data. With this wealth of data, I was then able to support these assertions and themes with thick, rich descriptions of what was experienced and with direct quotes to validate how I analyzed the data. Finally, I made sure to clarify my data, assertions, and themes with the participants to assure that I was portraying their perceptions accurately. With the use of member checking, I was able to position the voice of each teacher within a reliable story about how the three teachers perceived the Amistad Bill and implemented the legislation within their history classes based on their teaching contexts.

Role of the Researcher

Understanding the role of the researcher within a qualitative study allows issues of power, equity, and biases to arise. As a black female scholar, I must be aware of how this research may be tainted by the assumptions of my approach, from a black female standpoint rather than from that of a social scientist or an educational researcher. Recognition of how my race, ethnicity, class, and sex as a means of defining and/or hindering my perspective, worldview, and theoretical position must exist within this study.

With the New Jersey Amistad Bill being centered on the teaching of racial relations in America, I must recognize that in our society, “with its history of racism, researchers and participants of different racial and ethnic backgrounds face difficulties in

establishing an effective interviewing relationship” (Seidman, 1998, p. 83). Therefore, spending time informally conversing with each teacher, providing the interview questions in advance, and scheduling the interviews and observations based on the best time and schedule for each teacher did help to break the barriers that could have surfaced during this study.

Yet, my role as a researcher within each classroom setting took on three different forms. For Mrs. Yeager’s classroom, I had to acknowledge my role as a black researcher. Mrs. Yeager warned me about how my presence in her classroom would serve as a distraction for the first few days. Within this predominately white setting, the students watched my every move from the moment I stepped out of my car to the minute I walked out the front door to return home. As Mrs. Yeager explained to me during my first few visits, the children had limited exposure to black people; therefore, they were simply curious to know who I was and why I was visiting their school. I had to spend several informal days with Mrs. Yeager in her school and classroom interacting with the students so that her students could adjust to my presence in the classroom and as a researcher.

As the students entered the classroom each observed day from recess, I was already in the back of the classroom in position to begin my research. I greeted each child as they entered the room to remind them of the study and develop a consistent sense of familiarity, comfort, and rapport. As Mrs. Yeager discussed racial topics with the students, I greeted their uncertain glances towards me with a smile to confirm that it was all right to converse about race with me in the room. The students seemed to understand my nonverbal approval and continued to discuss the racial topics as a class.

This was not the case in Mr. Hotep's classroom. There I had to acknowledge my role as an educated black researcher. To these students within this predominately black setting, I was just a new face. It was not about my racial background but simply why I was observing their classroom. I only spent one informal day meeting the students and explaining my role in the classroom as a researcher. Mr. Hotep introduced me to his students based on the purpose of my research and the degree, which I sought to earn upon completion of this study. Therefore, the students quickly accepted my role in the classroom and my formal observations began the next day.

Each observed day I entered the classroom with Mr. Hotep as the students completed their science lesson (held in the same classroom as the social studies class). Because the classroom was smaller than Mrs. Yeager, I sat in close proximity to the students, which seemed to encourage them to interact with me more as they passed my desk to throw out a piece of paper or sharpen their pencil. Again I made sure to speak to each student as they transitioned from science to social studies with the goal of building rapport, a sense of trust, and comfort. In time this seemed to be the reason why they did not mind me observing their class.

Within Mr. Phillips' setting, the students were both open to my presence and curious of my background. For Mr. Phillips' classroom, I had to acknowledge my role as a black American researcher born abroad with a multi-national heritage. The students within this diverse setting were open to the idea of a person of color researching in their classroom yet curious to know my racial and ethnic background. During one of my informal days at the school, Mr. Phillips introduced me to the students and explained the purpose of my visit. After understanding my study and the degree I was working

towards, the students began to ask questions about my racial and ethnic background. Prior to the visit, Mr. Phillips explained to me that many of his students were immigrants from various Latino, African, and Caribbean countries. Therefore, I thought it was important to let his students know that I was born in Canada and that my mother was a black American and my father was a black West Indian. This instantly triggered several discussions about their backgrounds. After two informal days at this particular school, Mr. Phillips explained to me that his students were open to my presence as a researcher in their classroom due to my multi-national background.

Since the observations took place at the beginning of the day, I was already in position to record the lesson when the students entered the classroom. Each day as the students entered the classroom, they politely greeted Mr. Phillips and me before sitting down. Due to the morning routine of attendance, announcements, the Pledge, and casual conversation, I was able to interact with the students prior to each recorded lesson. My intentions were to find connections with each student, so they would understand my research, their role within the study, why they were chosen for the study, and how appreciative I was for their cooperation. Because of this daily interaction, the students quickly adjusted to my presence and were willing to present their ideas openly during the classroom discussions.

Nevertheless, the interviews and observations served as a validity check for the assumptions and interpretations that I had prior to conducting the research. As a black educator teaching in a predominately white, suburban school district in New Jersey, I tend to wonder how white educators truly feel about infusing black history into the traditional social studies or history curriculum. Since the New Jersey Amistad Bill is a

mandate, I wonder how and why some teachers have a passion for the incorporation of black history within the history curriculum.

Ultimately, this study sought to understand the impact of the New Jersey Amistad Bill on teaching. Through interviews, observations, and the collection of documents, there is a hope to understand how teachers interpret the Amistad legislation and incorporate its requirements within the history curriculum. Therefore, the following three chapters, the teacher case studies, were set up to give the reader the chance to witness the implementations first-hand by presenting details and accurate dialogue that captured the richness of each setting.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTING AMISTAD WITH MRS. YEAGER

In this chapter, I will describe how Mrs. Yeager, a history teacher at Western Public School, strategically infused black history into the American history curriculum with the intent to humanize the historical narrative for her predominately white students. Her methodology was shaped by her position as a white teacher within a predominately white school district. Mrs. Yeager used this methodology to teach about inequalities and struggles of another group and encouraged her students to consider the feelings of these individuals. This environment, along with Mrs. Yeager's personal educational background in relation to black history, is critical to understand how the Amistad legislation transformed her pedagogy from one that was content-based to one centered on changing her students' consciousness. Finally, I will describe the four key techniques used by Mrs. Yeager as she implemented this legislation in her classroom: 1) dispelling myths, 2) creating a sense of ownership towards history, 3) building empathy towards multiple perspectives, and 4) developing comfort with the complexity of race in American history. These techniques were the result of her changed perception of history and how it should be taught.

Mrs. Yeager's Self-awareness of How Her Past Shaped Her Perception

Mrs. Yeager realized that her past experience as a white teacher living in Ohio and personal background with racism in America greatly contributed to her perception of the need for the Amistad Bill and the inclusion of black history within the history curriculum. She was aware of her teaching environment and the path that brought her to

her current position. The data will reveal that all three teachers shared this awareness; however, they structured their lessons differently due to the diverse backgrounds they brought to the Amistad dialogue.

Vignette 1: Understanding Mrs. Yeager's Teaching Environment

It was a cool winter day in Ruralville as the cows roamed the nearby field and the crisp air whistled through the trees. As the noon bell rang at Western Public School, I pulled into the parking lot adjacent to the school. The students were laughing and playing with one another despite the winter breeze and grey clouds. I gathered my research materials, closed my car door, and began walking around the playground to the front entrance. Several familiar eighth-grade students approached the fence smiling and greeted me with kind words and excited waves. It seemed like the students were finally comfortable seeing a black woman at their school due to our daily interactions.

After buzzing into the three-story building and signing in at the office, I met Mrs. Yeager in the cafeteria, while she was on lunch duty. I had to adjust to the stares of the students from the lower grades, for I was a new face in the building and the only black adult in the school. I greeted the children in general and waved to the two African American children who consistently greeted me with a smile. As the children returned to their classrooms, Mrs. Yeager walked me to her classroom on the third floor, and we entered the room to set up for eighth grade social studies.

I maneuvered through the rows of desks to the back of the classroom. My research station was in the back corner of the room opposite the windows, amid the bookshelves, and next to the supply closet. I was able to place some of my materials on Mrs. Yeager's desk, which was behind my research station. On each wall in the classroom hung at least five posters highlighting various black and white historical leaders: John Brown, Frederick Douglass, and William Lloyd Garrison, historical poems, and key events in history. The posters and projects of her history students lined the shelves around the entire classroom and the bookshelves were filled with historical literature, which Mrs. Yeager noted was commonly used within her history and language arts curriculum.

This vignette is a snapshot of the environment in which Mrs. Yeager taught, Ruralville, New Jersey. Western Public School was surrounded by farmland and maintained a traditional "small town" atmosphere. The families in the area reflected generations of blue-collar workers passing on the legacy of staying home to work within the community. As Mrs. Yeager said, "this county has the highest per capita income but

there is poor in this pocket. There are old families that go back generations, but they have no money.” The racial demographics of these families, according to Sperling’s Best Places, were 87.8% white, 7.36% black, 4.07% Hispanic, 2.87% other, 1.25% Asian, and 0.37% American Indian.

As she explained, Mrs. Yeager is a white history and language arts teacher at Western, a pre-school to eighth grade elementary school containing about 182 students. Western Public School was comprised of a predominantly white student population: 95% were white and approximately 5% of the population were Latino, black, and interracial; hence, her eighth grade history class, the class observed in this study, reflected the school population. Of the twenty students, nineteen were white and one was of Hispanic descent. Mrs. Yeager explained, “This class is predominately white, and I heard a couple kids say things that make my hair stand on end. It’s just ignorant!” In such a setting as described, students do not commonly interact with diversity and remain comfortable within their homogeneous setting.

Mrs. Yeager’s Limited Exposure to Racial Issues on the Path to Teaching

Growing up in northeast Ohio in a diverse population and raised in a political family where both her father and brother worked for the federal government, Mrs. Yeager, who identified herself as a teacher in her late fifties, was not exposed to black history and grew up with little understanding of the African and African American historical narrative. Her parents interacted with various people; however, she felt that her grandfather was clearly a racist because “he would make these ungodly racist comments.” He used terms like “little black sambo,” although he did have black friends

visited and “hung out” with him. However, she did not notice race until she was about age five when a school friend pointed it out that the boy she often played with was a black boy. Later, she then remembered the 1968 race riots because some of her friends left the area because of them.

To Mrs. Yeager, her early childhood experience with black history was defined by the traditional February lesson highlighting Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and the “I Have a Dream” speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She explains, “It was always February is black History Month.” These concepts did not exist in her high school, only in her elementary school setting, for she notes, “black history education did not exist on the secondary level.”

As Mrs. Yeager progressed to college, she was encouraged to be a nurse; she came to social studies teaching by way of a number of other education-related positions. Although she focused on earning a degree in nursing, she decided to take a few extra history classes. Mrs. Yeager attributed her interest in history to her very political family. She explains:

We were always kept up to date when we were children about the state of affairs. We met future presidents, candidates for presidents. And my parents were often very active in that field. My father worked for the federal government and my brother does.

When she reached college, she took one or two liberal arts courses related to black history, which she did not think was nearly enough; however, it triggered her interest in the story of those traditionally excluded from the history books – people of the African Diaspora and women. She took courses that broadened her perspective on culture: a

civilization course that challenged her to think about if a civilization builds “itself because of its own merit or does it build itself on the backs of other people” and a literature course that mostly highlighted what she would call the “dead white men.” She explained, “Taking college courses in woman’s studies and history helped me lay aside familial prejudices and reach an understanding of the true history of our country.” In a women’s studies course, she was able to read the writings of two African authors.

When she was two years into college, Mrs. Yeager decided to take a break from school and got married. Free from her parents’ control, she returned to college to explore her love for children and decided to take psychology courses, while running a private babysitting program. As time progressed and her interest in working with children grew, she became a substitute in various schools and later worked for the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). She then realized that she wanted to teach little children, so she enrolled at Raritan Valley Community College to take the coursework she needed to complete her bachelor’s degree in psychology. After several attempts at a bachelor’s degree and a few professional hurdles, she received her degree and became a preschool-handicap teaching assistant, a job she loved. In her words:

I had an opportunity to go with one of the teachers that was working there. She was like the Annie Sullivan of preschool handicap. I mean I just absorbed everything this woman was doing in terms of teaching techniques and things. I had an opportunity to move over to middle school when the pilot to revise special ed came in. As the teaching assistant, I would follow the kids around that were being brought back into the district from out of district. I learned a lot of techniques there. It was a lot of trial and error. I had no formal training at that point, and that’s when I decided, this is really cool. And I always liked kids.

After her assistant position, Mrs. Yeager changed districts and taught language arts and reading. According to Mrs. Yeager, “I went from 225 kids on a roster to 60 kids on my

roster, but it spans the three grade levels.” Within a few years, one of her fellow teachers retired, and she was offered the chance to take his history position.

In summary, Mrs. Yeager managed to shift careers towards her love of teaching history, yet her academic training did little to prepare her to teach a multicultural curriculum. Although she had been teaching for twenty-one years, she has been teaching language arts, reading, and history for ten years. These opportunities were only the beginning of Mrs. Yeager’s transformation, for she acknowledged that her views were still limited – an awareness she did not realize until she began to research black history on her own and attend the Amistad Summer Institute.

Mrs. Yeager’s Willingness to Gain Knowledge

Mrs. Yeager had an innate yearning for knowledge. This willingness to educate herself on the past, present, and current information within her field was shared by the other two teacher participants of this study. Gaining knowledge and a better understanding of what should be taught helped guide Mrs. Yeager towards preparing her to create more in-depth lessons for her students.

Mrs. Yeager’s and Her Students’ Changes in Consciousness from Facts to Empathy

Mrs. Yeager established three goals for her students: a change in consciousness, a deeper understanding of the human story, and an empathy for African American struggles and desires for survival. Although she hated to admit it, Mrs. Yeager felt guilty of teaching history from a Eurocentric perspective. She explained, “I had a narrow, limited understanding even with all my reading, taking courses, and making connections between history and literature.” However, she believed that she arrived at integrating African and

African American history throughout the curriculum as a result of teaching both history and language arts while being exposed to the Amistad workshops and summer institute.

Mrs. Yeager gave several examples of how she transformed from a focus on content to fostering consciousness in her students. She admitted to teaching about the Middle Passage using maps, charts, and graphs to show the places and the numbers of Africans who were sold into bondage. Her focus was to show the students the dispersal of slaves into South America, Caribbean, and North America. However, what she learned from the Institute was to connect the emotional aspect with the overwhelming numbers. She expressed, “I was able to humanize the information, and therefore connect the experience of what it was to be a slave better with the cold sterile facts.”

Another example of how Mrs. Yeager changed her approach to foster empathy was by noting that during a previous unit about the Revolutionary War, she would have included her own growing knowledge of the opportunities slaves had to leave their masters and join the British. She admitted that it was not until she attended the Summer Institute that she realized what a slave could do, such as build the bridges, and could not do, such as carry a gun. She also noted that she did not emphasize to her students how the British were racist and had their own agenda for offering freedom in exchange for disrupting the colonists’ bid for freedom.

Yet, Mrs. Yeager’s most embarrassing admission was how she taught about the Constitution. She explained that she would simply explain how the government arrived at the 3/5th Compromise without understanding the numbers of slaves in the South and the North. However, due to the Summer Institute, Mrs. Yeager learned the vital role slaves played in determining numbers and how dehumanizing the Founding Fathers were

in the treatment of the slavery issue. After this transformation, she discussed the hypocrisy of the great freedom fighters and opened discussions by asking, “So, how do you think our great Founding Fathers reconciled the fact that they were fighting for freedom and yet they had slaves?” She admitted that she would have never been comfortable to ask that question in the past.

Although Mrs. Yeager credited the Amistad Commission for providing her with opportunities to acquire more content knowledge, ultimately she attributed her shift in thinking, as well as the shift in how her students’ thought about history, to a concept she learned at the Summer Institute: to encourage the students to bring their own prejudices to the table. This shift was from a more factual approach to one that tried to foster an emotional connection between the students and the material. As she explained, “If you don’t acknowledge your prejudices, then you won’t be able to learn and let go of some very narrow-minded, ugly thinking.”

Based on how her past experiences transformed her perspective, Mrs. Yeager believed that her views on how she understood the role of African Americans in our history were primarily enhanced by few of her college courses. She expressed that the infusion of black history in the traditional historical narrative is important and that teachers should not start with the founding of Jamestown. She believed that teachers should start with the interacting and exploration that occurred about one thousand years ago through the business of trade. She noted that unfortunately history is about European dominance because it was written from a European point of view:

If you’re going to pick it up from the explorers, the explorers need to be broadened out of just the European explorers. Who was here first doesn’t really matter. It’s who brought something to the country. Well, the winner gets to tell the story. So that’s why the kids hear the stories that they hear. But they need to

know that Africans were interacting with European for centuries. For thousands of years they were back and forth with each other and knew things. Then in American history, if you're founding a country, how did they come to the decision to bring Africans here as their forced labor? And then kids need to know that it was because Europeans, number one, either wouldn't do it or couldn't do it, and then they started the slave trade, and it was very profitable. And then who pulled out? Who started pulling out, and who was left? And then who ended up having slavery and the paradox of your first independent country to declare its independence from a royal subject, and then you turn around and have slavery. Even Jefferson said it. When he wrote the Declaration of Independence they made him pull out the cruel humanity in war. I didn't quote it exactly.

According to Mrs. Yeager the European perspective has been the winner of the history narrative. Mrs. Yeager believed that teachers must explain how Africans were interacting with Europeans for centuries, allow their students to wrestle with the idea of why Africans, as opposed to other groups, were forced into slavery in America, and discuss the paradox of the colonial independence from royalty versus slavery in America. She believed that the Native American and African stories need to be included and students need to see the racism within those stories. Hence, students should be able to understand what people, like the Ethiopian Regiment with Lord Dunmore as well as women, were doing throughout history.

It was Mrs. Yeager's goal to have her students understand that Africans were prosperous and successful prior to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. She wanted her students to know the contributions of the past and understand how valuable Africans were on a global level. It was the human story of achievement, oppression, and survival that Mrs. Yeager strived to expose to her students. She wanted her students to understand how racism has played a role in the history of the people of the African Diaspora and how that same racism has affected what and how they learn about American history.

Mrs. Yeager and Amistad: Growing Awareness and Knowledge of Race

As a social studies teacher in New Jersey, Mrs. Yeager first became aware of the New Jersey Amistad Legislation when the proclamation was announced in 2002 at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey by Assemblyman William Payne. She recalled, “I read it as an announcement that my principal had printed out. When I read the information...I said to myself, ‘You have to be there for this historic moment.’” Being new to teaching history, she felt it was important to be aware of the new initiatives. She continued, “I was there that day. And I was just sitting there going uh well this is such a natural thing why does it have to be a law? But I guess it’s not happening ‘round the state’.”

Two years after the proclamation was announced, Mrs. Yeager was introduced to the Amistad Exemplary Practice Award at an Amistad workshop. During the 2004 – 2005 academic year, the New Jersey Amistad Commission created an award program to identify and help financially support exemplary practices in schools across the state that incorporate and infuse African American history into the curriculum and instruction. The purpose of this grant program is:

to recognize and celebrate those exemplary strategies that (1) infuse African American history into the school’s curriculum; (2) promote high student achievement; (3) address specific educational needs of students and the Core Curriculum Content Standards; (4) yield documented results meeting set objectives, and (5) can be replicated.

Recognizing that she already made efforts to include African American history into her language arts and history curriculum, Mrs. Yeager decided to create a proposal and apply

for the Amistad grant. While writing the proposal, she included evidence of how her curriculum naturally connected to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, for “It’s just naturally dovetailed in there. You can see it. They’re already in the standards at some points.”

Within the grant proposal, Mrs. Yeager not only explained how she infused African American Studies into American history but also described how the Amistad grant to could help her enhance her pre-existing curriculum. Based on her newly gained understanding of the African perspective due to the Amistad workshops, her proposal described a three-year course of study, which she was already in the process of implementing, from the sixth to the eighth grades, beginning with the cultures in ancient Africa and extending to the contributions of African Americans in our society. According to Mrs. Yeager, “The history of Africa is woven into the fibers of American culture, taught as part of our history, not separate from it.”

Mrs. Yeager explained in the proposal that on the sixth-grade level, the students would be exposed to the diversity of the African continent, the development of ancient cultures with specific traditions, and the music, foods, and festivals reflecting the cultures of regions in Africa. Within the classroom, she explained that these areas would be addressed through videos, use of and drawing maps, music, teacher-made PowerPoint presentations, research projects, recreations, poster projects, and reading about information.

The seventh grade would learn about the African and European trade systems, the Middle Passage, early slavery in America, and the dignity and courage of slaves who persevered by preserving family life. In the proposal, Mrs. Yeager described how these

concepts will be infused through graphs, maps, the presentation of statistical facts, teacher-made PowerPoint presentations, and provided readings.

In the eighth grade, the students would have a chance to understand the impact of slavery on the economy, the Abolitionist Movement, the Underground Railroad, the impact of legal cases such as Dred Scott, legislative acts related to slavery, the life of freed blacks, violence due to slavery and racism, the “40 Acres and a Mule” movement, westward expansion, and the role of blacks in government and technology. She addressed the Civil War Era, the Reconstruction Era, and the Post-Reconstruction Era in her proposal and noted that her curriculum would entail the use of plays, readings, videos, research papers, visual depictions, and teacher-made videos of Ohio in reference to the Underground Railroad due to her familiarity of the area.

Finally, Mrs. Yeager explained in the proposal that the awarded money would be immediately used to finance all the programs and activities associated with this curriculum. She described the desire not only to bring musical and theatrical programs to her school, but also to purchase materials for major projects related to African and African American traditions. After a week’s worth of writing to complete the required proposal and budget plan, she was deservedly recognized in 2005 as one of the New Jersey Amistad Exemplary Teachers and was awarded \$5000 towards the development of her history curriculum.

Upon receiving her award, Mrs. Yeager was asked to attend several New Jersey Amistad Commission meetings in Trenton, New Jersey, as a teacher representative. Her participation in those meetings served to make her more aware of the New Jersey Amistad Commission. At first she was confused about the purpose of the Amistad

Commission because she thought they were looking at curriculum development, as she explains:

I was a little confused when I initially went there. There were four or five teachers that were all award winners, and we were asked to come to the commission meetings. We were asked to meet with Karen Jackson-Weaver, the director, and there were certain commissioners there, and we were asked to come in and, you know, share what we had done and what we were doing in the classroom. But I realized that they were actually looking at curriculum development. And they were looking at other things beyond what we were personally doing in our classrooms. I don't know how to explain it.

It seemed to Mrs. Yeager that the commissioners seemed to have a range of different jobs from curriculum writers to research developers. At the same time, she noted that while the teachers were in the trenches, it seemed like the commission was in the ethereal levels and not grounded in the reality of the task before them. She thought, "They were looking at other things beyond what we were personally doing in our classrooms. It wasn't so much down to the level of what you're doing in school, but more like what are we personally doing in each compartment of the commission – the bureaucratic piece of it."

Shortly after Mrs. Yeager won the grant, she decided to attend the Amistad workshops at Raritan Valley Community College in October 2005 and Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey in the spring of 2006 because she thought it was what she needed to make her teaching better. She proudly stated, "I love, love, love history and have a burning desire to know more."

According to Mrs. Yeager, these professional development opportunities helped her to understand the purpose of the New Jersey Amistad legislation and to plan how to transform her curriculum more effectively. Due to this exposure, she believed that the purpose of this legislation is simply to mandate the teaching of African and African

American history, which in Mrs. Yeager's opinion was not being taught in most classrooms. According to Mrs. Yeager, teachers still focus on:

black History Month and putting people in compartments...they do Native American units of study and then they do immigrants, and then they do African Americans or they do black history, but they don't put them all together and let the kids see that these people are all here at that same time doing different things.

In Mrs. Yeager's opinion, New Jersey teachers are not incorporating black history into the American history curriculum. She believed that this legislation mandates that "students must be taught about African American history;" and she noted that the legislation should challenge teachers to present history naturally and through a lens of infusion.

Instead of teaching history in a way that European and black history has equal perspectives, Mrs. Yeager believed that many teachers present history from a European point of view. She explained:

All you ever hear about is how the white man walked across all of these people to make it to the top. At least that's the way I was taught, and I think a lot of history books are still doing that. So I think it needs to be legislated.

Mrs. Yeager believed that teachers must begin to explain how Americans were interacting with Europeans for centuries, then allow their students to wrestle with the idea of why Africans were in America as forced labor. They must discuss the paradox of the colonial independence from royalty versus slavery in America. She believed that the Native American and African stories need to be included and students need to see the racism within those stories. In general, Mrs. Yeager felt that infusion was important, and

that teachers should start with the interacting and exploration that occurred about one thousand years ago through the business of trade. She firmly stated, “I don’t think there’s enough connections being made.”

In October 2006, Mrs. Yeager was asked to present at an Amistad workshop to a group of New Jersey teachers. During her presentation, several people became absolutely furious. Mrs. Yeager recalled the situation:

I had a couple people say to me, ‘Well, how can you ever understand, you’re a white person?’ Well, I’m also a human being, and I can empathize. Yes, could I ever live and say, ‘Oh, I’ve been mistreated’? No, not necessarily. But I can teach my children to be empathetic to other people. Not sympathetic. Not pity. Empathetic. Understand. I guess the best example I can give is that we may never again live through a holocaust (we hope we never do) where six million people or many people were killed, but we can feel bad about that.”

Mrs. Yeager allowed this situation to help her critically think about her role as a white teacher infusing black history into the history curriculum. The exchange helped her see other perspectives on implementing the Amistad legislation. She was able to break down many of her own barriers because she was able to get comfortable enough to open up and share her feelings and hear what people had to say. According to Mrs. Yeager, “You just have to talk to people and be unafraid to address things, even if it offends somebody in the room.” Therefore, the purpose is to make a point and bring things out for discussion.

Mrs. Yeager grew in her awareness and understanding of the purpose of the Amistad Bill and the Amistad Commission because of her involvement with the initial legislation and professional development opportunities. She initially invested herself into Amistad to acquire more knowledge about the history of Africans and African Americans; however, she gained much more than the basic facts, dates, and biographies. For Mrs. Yeager she learned about the role of race in American history and potentially in

the presentation of this particular material. As a white woman, she was challenged to consider her position as a white woman teaching black history as well as her opportunity to teach the story of Africans and African Americans to her white students. Because of this level of exposure and interaction, Mrs. Yeager was able to craft her instruction to specifically cater to the needs of her students within her predominately white classroom.

How Mrs. Yeager Adjusted Amistad to Her Context

For Mrs. Yeager the implementation of the Amistad legislation continued to be a transformative journey. Led by her limited childhood experiences with racism, her recent interactions with experts, scholars, and educators within the Amistad professional development setting, and the realization of the need for her students to acknowledge diverse perspectives, she understood that she had to structure her lessons to correlate to the needs of her students. Therefore, she adjusted her curriculum towards a humanistic approach to best connect her students to the material.

Mrs. Yeager and the Use of a Humanistic Approach to the Implementation of Amistad

Mrs. Yeager approached the implementation of the bill with a humanizing objective, the passion to correct the misconceptions, and to have her students become equally comfortable with the material. Hence, she taught with the purpose of dispelling the historical myths, creating a sense of ownership through opportunities of expertise, building empathy by highlighting the human story, and developing comfort by making race and racism become a natural conversation.

Dispelling Myths

At the beginning of each lesson, it was Mrs. Yeager's goal to dispel the historical myths that the students carried within to class each day. She acknowledged that her students carried around prejudices due to their isolation in a homogeneous environment. Because of this limited exposure, Mrs. Yeager felt it was important for her to give her students the opportunity to discuss their ideas and theories about a particular topic, which not only engaged them but also give her insight on what they knew and at what depth.

During one classroom observation, Mrs. Yeager asked the class to define the Underground Railroad and explain its role in history. She allowed the students the freedom to comment on the topic and even wrote their ideas on the board. In following vignette, she remained silent during the discussion and allowed the students to respond to one-another's ideas:

Vignette 2: How the Students Came to Understand the Underground Railroad

Lily explained, "It's a slave path."

"It's a place for slaves to get away to freedom," described Bianca.

"It's the routes to the north," stated Luigi.

Annabel noted, "I thought it was a place in Maryland."

Samantha explained, "And it was associated with the Drinking Gourd, the Big Dipper, the North Star, and the old man in a boat." Then Lily began to sing the "Drinking Gourd" song, while the other students laughed.

Carlos stated, "Didn't the Underground Railroad use signals like songs, blankets, and lanterns?"

"Yeah," added Lily. "And Levi Coffin was president of the Underground Railroad because he helped a lot of slaves and he was most known, and he advertised that his house was a safe house."

Immediately Rebecca questioned, "But if he did that, wouldn't he get caught?"

"Wasn't it before it was illegal?" asked Kizzy from the back of the room.

It was not until the comments transformed into questions that Mrs. Yeager would clarify the information or go into depth about what was said. She continued to build upon what

the students seemed to know and questioned their perceptions of history with the intent of keeping them engaged.

As mentioned in the vignette, the Underground Railroad discussion was enhanced by the distribution of a photocopied map of the routes commonly taken by runaway enslaved Africans. Mrs. Yeager did not offer her interpretation of the document but allowed the students the opportunity to analyze the routes on their own. The students were able to freely discuss the direction of the routes, the path choices, and the status of slave and free states without her interruption. It was through this discussion that the students began to realize that what they thought was a path to freedom in the north was actually a set of paths to the north, south, east, and west – a concept that caused many students to question the routes laid out before them. The following vignette describes students wrestling with a provided visual and past notions of the Underground Railroads:

Vignette 3: The Students Wrestled with the Routes of the Underground Railroad

One student questioned Mrs. Yeager by saying, “Mrs. Yeager, if these are the routes, then why are people going south?” The students debated about the direction of the routes.

Samantha asked, “Why do some routes seem to go south to Mexico and further?”

“Great question,” complimented Mrs. Yeager.

“There are even routes along the Mississippi River,” stated Lily.

“Did you see the routes along the east coast? They’re the biggest routes,” explained Halo.

Samantha questioned, “Wasn’t there consequences for white people to go into Canada to find their slaves?”

“Wait!” interrupted Mario. “Wasn’t there the abolishing of slavery in Canada?”

Once again Mrs. Yeager allowed the students to openly discuss their ideas about the routes not heading to the north, and she only interjected when a question seemed to be directed at her for clarification. It was through these discussions that Mrs. Yeager was

able to get a sense of the preconceived ideas her students were bringing to the discussion, the information needed to help her students better understand the concept, and the depth she would need to take to have her students dispel these historical myths and accept the reality of the transformed story of America.

From lesson to lesson, Mrs. Yeager continued this method of allowing her students to discuss their ideas about a concept before presenting the human story behind the facts and realities. During one lesson, the students were discussing the legislative acts and decisions that surfaced to perpetuate slavery in America. Although Mrs. Yeager did not purposely plan to discuss how slavery began in America, the students seemed to question the history of black people in America to better understand how Africans were mistreated and abused as a whole. After a discussion of the Dred Scott Decision, Samantha challenged the notion of slavery:

Samantha: How did the whole slave thing start because all of a sudden people in the North realized that it was so bad? When did it start? Because I know a lot of people were raised to not be human. They were property. That's how they were raised? But who started the whole thing?

Yeager: Well, remember last year when we did the whole slave trade and how they had the triangle trade route going? And the Portuguese went into Africa, western Africa, and were trading back and forth. And then they started interacting with the Spanish. And the Spanish were coming over into the new world, as they called it, and they killed off the Indians. Millions died from diseases. So, they had no forced labor. They needed somebody to replace them. The white people weren't going to go. They got very few people and very few takers. Remember when we did indentured servants last year?

Samantha: Yeah.

Yeager: We talked about you signing on and they paid for your trip, and you had to agree to how many years?

Carl: Oh, I remember that.

Luigi: Seven years. Oh!

Yeager: Yes, seven years, and they gave you clothes and gave you tools. Well, you had that option at the end of that seven years to be free. Right, Samantha? Remember that?

Samantha: Yeah.

Yeager: But then nobody was taking him up on the offer because it just weren't enough people, and that's when they started importing slaves. They started bringing them in from the West Indies, and then they started directly trading across and bring them right into Charleston. Don't mistake it. New England colonies had slavery. Slavery was here, and New Jersey was one of the last ones to actually abolish slavery. Don't ever mistake that. Then they started importing slaves with specialties. But they would particularly bring in slaves who were very good at raising rice. Remember talking about that?

Samantha: Yeah.

Yeager: It's been a while. But that's where it all started.

Since Mrs. Yeager was the only social studies teacher for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, she was able to refer to lessons from previous years to remind the students of how all these historical events connected. She welcomed the unplanned discussion about how slavery started, for it allowed the students the chance to review information from the past and connect it to the present concepts. In her teacher journal, Mrs. Yeager commented, "I loved Samantha's question about 'how did slavery start'. At least she's thinking and it gave me an excellent opportunity to review the points of slavery. Referencing back to last year hopefully refreshed her and others' memories."

It was Mrs. Yeager's goal to create lessons that allowed her to dispel the historical myths that her students brought to the classroom discussions. She created a classroom where she was able to present historical facts to her students and ask them to critically analyze the data. She allowed their biases to surface and let them challenge one another's ideas and opinions. Mrs. Yeager was aware that her students had limited views on the

role of Africans and African Americans in history due to the European perspective that dominated the history curriculum. Therefore, it was important for her to get her students to admit these biases so she could challenge their views and encourage them to look at history through various perspectives. It was Mrs. Yeager's belief that her students had to break down the misconceptions before truly understanding the human story.

Creating a Sense of Ownership of Black History as a Part of American History

According to Mrs. Yeager, "To teach is to know. I make them work with a piece in depth to own the knowledge. Ownership is important, so they can internalize the knowledge." For Mrs. Yeager it was important to help her students gather information about a particular topic, internalize the facts and images, and produce a project demonstrating their expertise about a particular event, concept, or person within history. Prior to the observations, Mrs. Yeager assigned each student an abolitionist from the Abolitionist Movement and asked them to research and prepare a visual presentation about that particular person. The purpose of this project was not only to allow the students the chance to do in-depth research about the efforts of abolitionists but also to provide an opportunity for the students to own a bit of history for themselves. This project allowed them to become experts in particular areas – knowledge that they continually contributed in the class discussions.

However, as the out-of-class project continued to parallel the in-class lessons, Mrs. Yeager made daily references to the knowledge each student must obtain and ultimately own as experts for this project. The following vignette demonstrates how she

allowed the conversation about the Underground Railroad to be the format necessary to make connections about the project to the current discussion:

Vignette 4: Understanding the Race of the Abolitionists

Mrs. Yeager asked the class, “How many of you researched about abolitionists actively working with the Underground Railroad?” Several students raised their hands. Then Mrs. Yeager asked, “How many of you researched black abolitionists for your project?” As five students immediately raised their hands, a few of the students tentatively raised their hands, pulled them back down, and then raised their hands again.

“I’m not sure,” admitted Danielle.

“How many of you are not sure if your abolitionist is black or white?” questioned Mrs. Yeager. Several students slowly raised their hands. “Please make sure you know what your abolitionist is by Monday.”

One concept that Mrs. Yeager attributed to the Amistad professional development is the idea that the efforts of the Underground Railroad were not only based on the contributions of Quakers and white abolitionists but primarily due to the free black ministers and free, enslaved, and runaway Africans in America. She has made an effort to implement the historical truths learned from these workshops immediately into her classroom history lessons. She challenged her students to look past the textbook information about their abolitionist and make an effort to understand the position of their abolitionist racially, politically, and socially. Mrs. Yeager wanted her students to own this particular information to better understand the history of this time and to accurately contribute to the classroom discussions.

The students were asked to research information about a particular abolitionist, write a research paper about that particular person and how he or she contributed to the Abolitionist Movement, and make an oral and visual presentation about the researched information. Mrs. Yeager developed this project to allow her students to become experts about a particular person and his or her contributions. She provided an opportunity for

her students to become personally engaged with history and built off of that knowledge towards a deeper understanding of that particular time period.

For three lessons, the students presented their abolitionist projects. Eight students presented their three-dimensional projects and sixteen students gave PowerPoint presentations about the biographies of their abolitionists. After each presentation, Mrs. Yeager prompted a discussion about each abolitionist and his or her contribution to the Underground Railroad and/or the abolition of slavery. Although Mrs. Yeager felt that the discussions led to some enlightenment, she did not think the students felt the people's ire of slavery, for they seemed blasé about the material. She said, "I believe some students perceived my intentions and felt the importance of someone taking a stand to do what was right, but most seemed very blasé about it." She felt that their presentations were robotic – simply a regurgitation of the textbook rather than a true understanding of who their person was and why they were so passionate about the abolition of slavery.

Due to her disappointment in their lack of ownership with the abolition material, in another observed lesson, Mrs. Yeager attempted to create a sense of ownership by instructing her students to form cooperative learning groups and create posters about assigned legislations or judicial decisions that perpetuated the notion of slavery. As described in my field notes:

Mrs. Yeager divided the class into cooperative groups and provided each group with a poster template and packets of information about particular legislation related to slavery. She explained that each group had to read the provided information, highlight the key facts, and create a detailed yet creative poster about their particular legislation. The students read their information in their groups, while Mrs. Yeager and the special education teacher, Ms. Nathan, checked with each group for comprehension.

The groups were divided based on five topics: the Dred Scott Decision, Popular Sovereignty, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Fugitive Slave Act, and Bleeding Kansas. With the provided articles and documents, the students were charged to read the material, ask questions, and become experts about their particular topic and then create poster presentations. Each group was asked to present their topic to the class, while the other students were instructed to take notes about the information presented. Mrs. Yeager decided to sit back during the presentations and allow the groups to become the sole experts of the topic. As the peers questioned the information or asked for clarification, Mrs. Yeager allowed the students to discuss and demonstrate their knowledge about the topics.

Although it was Mrs. Yeager's goal to have her students own the material and history, she realized that it was not an easy process. She had to break down the barriers of rote learning – simply memorizing the textbook and spitting back the information. For Mrs. Yeager, ownership was a deeper connection to the material. She wanted her students to invest their time into truly understanding a specific part of history with the intent of becoming experts capable of contributing intellectually and insightfully to the classroom discussions. She understood that having ownership of a bit of history would allow the students the format to understand other aspects of history. To Mrs. Yeager this was a work in progress.

Building Empathy by Putting Oneself in Another's Shoes

To understand the human story of Africans in America, Mrs. Yeager felt that it was important to create opportunities where her students could understand history

through the perspective of Africans and African Americans. Knowing that her students lived in a homogenous white setting with limited exposure to the African American culture, she felt that it was her responsibility to bring the people of the past to life within her classroom. Therefore, she structured her lessons to build empathy towards the struggle and mistreatment of African and African American people as well as create an environment that celebrated the survival and strength of African and African American people.

On another level, she brought their misconceptions to light and allowed empathy to be the method of challenging her students' "watered down" understanding of history.

She explained:

The students need to understand that the foundation of American history is not just dead white European men running the show. We need to recognize it, and we need to celebrate the people that survived. I want [my students], when they leave here, to never have the sense that people are inferior to them because of the color of their skin. I think they need to know the triumphs of people. Who survives are the people that are the strongest.

With an understanding that her students had both limited knowledge and experience with various cultures outside of the Western European traditions, Mrs. Yeager was conscious of the needs of her students and allowed that awareness to shape her history lessons. As she explained:

Students don't always see what life is like from someone else's point of view.

Most people don't get it that someone has a different perspective because of their life experiences. So, my kids, because of their demographics, don't understand what it means to be black in America.

Using different modalities, such as stories, plays, videos, and first-person narratives, she was able to evoke the emotions necessary to connect her students to the human story behind the American narrative.

With the intention of building empathy, Mrs. Yeager evoked the emotional response of her students by utilizing audio materials and dramatization. During one observed lesson, she played a CD of spirituals sung by “Seven Quilts for Seven Sisters.” Through a thorough analysis of the tone and lyrics of the presented spirituals, Mrs. Yeager aimed to have her students understand that African people remained hopeful and clung to their faith during those horrible times.

Vignette 5: Using Different Modalities to Evoke Empathy

As Mrs. Yeager placed a small CD player on a desk in the center of the classroom, she explained, “What I am about to play for you are spirituals that were used as a form of encouragement as well as information for people that wanted to escape.” She slowly walked up and down the aisles of desks passing out packets of lyrics and instructed the students to analyze the words used within each spiritual.

“There are dual messages in spirituals. Sometimes they offer hope. Sometimes they were to give secret messages to people,” she explained.

“Mrs. Yeager?” asked Rebecca. “Down by the Riverside. Are they talking about washing the burden away or meeting down by the Ohio River?”

With a smile of satisfaction, Mrs. Yeager responded, “Great question. These spirituals were representations of various ideas. So, yes, it could mean meeting at the Ohio River or a cleansing like a baptism since it does refer to putting on a long, white robe.”

Samantha interjected, “I just figured it out. There’s a baptismal gown in my house, and it’s white. All the pictures I’ve seen of a baptism, everyone’s wearing white – the baby and the priest.”

“Great connections,” encouraged Mrs. Yeager.

Mrs. Yeager continued to play various spirituals as the students quietly reflected on the dual messages within each tune. Annabel expressed, “I liked ‘Nobody Knows the Trouble I See’. I’ve never heard that one before.”

“Yeah,” added Danielle. “I liked that one, too. It seems like they are trying to say that white people don’t know what it feels like to have to go through all the stuff they go through.”

“Right,” confirmed Mrs. Yeager.

“But, Mrs. Yeager,” interrupted Lily. “I thought that ‘Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child’ was a sad song.”

“Why is that? What do you think they were talking about in this song?” asked Mrs. Yeager.

“It just seemed like they were saying that they don’t have relatives because they were slaves and they all got sold away, so they don’t feel loved,” explained Lily.

“Now you’re getting it,” Mrs. Yeager proudly reinforced.

Mrs. Yeager was able to craft a lesson where the spirituals triggered the emotional response necessary for her students to understand the hope and pain African and African American people felt during slavery. She created an environment where the students were able to sit back and just listen to music. This relaxed atmosphere, where they were not forced to write their ideas and reflections, seemed to encourage a lively discussion about the dual messages and emotions associated with each spiritual.

As Mrs. Yeager reflected on the lesson in her journal, she explained, “I believe that the students could sense the emotions much better by hearing and reading the lyrics. By analyzing each song, they could recall and tie the words to the ‘hidden messages.’” She understood the power of music and how it can evoke emotions; therefore, it came as no surprise that the students did not hesitate to share their feelings about the pain, struggles, hopes, and messages perceived within each song. Thus, Mrs. Yeager allowed the music to demonstrate the importance of spirituals: to express the pain and hardships African people had to endure while in slavery, to provide inspiration and hope for the oppressed, and to give instructions on how to successfully escape the brutalities of slavery.

During the cooperative group poster presentations, Mrs. Yeager brought humanity to the classroom when she asked the students to put themselves in the shoes of Dred Scott

and try to understand how they would feel if they were told that they were property and unable to have the rights of the common man.

Yeager: As a result of being property, he could not be a citizen and he was not entitled to any rights of an American citizen. Think about being a young man who wishes he were free. He lived up in the free territories and had seen other free blacks and other people having their freedom. He asked for his freedom. He goes all the way to the Supreme Court. How'd you like that slap? You are not a human being as far as we're concerned. You're property and you have no rights as an American citizen. Do you think that's about as dehumanizing as you can get?

Students: Yeah.

Yeager: So, when people talk about the Dred Scott Decision, it even comes up during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s because people were saying, "What? We have no rights? Why are you trying to take us back to the Dred Scott Era?" Think about that. Put yourself into somebody else's shoes and think about what Dred Scott would have been feeling. He was deprived his own freedom. He was told, "You're just property."

Kizzy: I can't believe how ignorant people were back then.

Yeager: Exactly. The attitudes that people that are Africans are not even humans. They're property.

When the students were able to hear the facts and asked to relate the facts to their own lives, many of them began to feel the injustice and understand the pain and struggle Africans and African Americans felt during the slavery era. Mrs. Yeager made a daily effort to ask her students to personally connect to history and see beyond the facts into the deeper human story.

In an effort to continue to make history real for her students, Mrs. Yeager used the technique of role-playing to connect her students to the realities of slavery and to build empathy for the struggles and triumphs of Africans in America. During an observed lesson, the class read the play, *The Rescue*, which was about the abolitionist movement and the legislations set up to capture enslaved Africans that had run away. To assess her

ability to trigger the emotional connection from her students towards the reality of the legal consequences within the realms of slavery, Mrs. Yeager assigned them specific roles and consistently asked them how assuming these roles helped them to personally relate to the struggles, mistreatment, and sense of hope that enslaved Africans endured:

Vignette 6: Allowing the Text to Trigger a Sense of Urgency

“I want to ask you a question. Would it have made a difference if you read this first and then learned everything? What do you think? Do you think it would have made sense?” asked Mrs. Yeager.

“No,” replied Bianca. “It would make more sense now.”

“Yeah, continued Samantha, “you won’t get the urgency.”

“That’s like reading a book in Spanish before you know Spanish,” added Carl.

“Very good,” validated Mrs. Yeager. “You want to get the sense of urgency. That’s what I was looking for.”

Allowing students the chance to become characters in the past placed them in situations where the descriptions and dialogue made history vivid in their minds and hearts. As Mrs. Yeager reflected in her journal about the success of this particular lesson:

The Rescue tells of a young runaway slave who is rescued from a federal marshal by abolitionists in Oberlin, Ohio. I stopped after each scene to discuss very critical points such as from where did the slaves escape? Why were they free in Ohio? Why were federal marshals called in to help capture the runaways? By discussion and answering questions, the students were able to review the issues surrounding the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act. Hopefully, it reinforced and applied the legislation to real-life situations. It kept the laws’ consequences real. Some students, when queried, said the play helped make it real.

Role-playing was a technique used by Mrs. Yeager to build empathy through the portrayal of the escaping, hunting, and capturing of African and African Americans striving for a better life. She also created an opportunity for her students to see the human story within the historical facts. As the students noted, the urgency of these legislations and this part of history would be remiss if the students did not have a chance

to empathize with the experiences of African and African American people during these times.

Developing Students' Sense of Comfort with Race

To implement the Amistad legislation means to bring race and racism to the historical discussions within the classroom. Within a predominately white setting, race can be placed on the back burner; however, Mrs. Yeager did not hesitate to point out issues of race to her students and emphasized the need to make race a part of the natural classroom conversation to humanize the story. She created a safe classroom environment by allowing her students the chance to wrestle with the notions of race and challenge its relevance in their classroom. As illustrated in the following vignette:

Vignette 7: Students Question the Relevance of black and white

“Why do we keep emphasizing if they are black or white?” asked Carlos. Mrs. Yeager explained, “Because it is important to know that black people played a big role in shaping American history.”

Due to the misconceptions of Africans and African Americans playing minor roles in the building of America, Mrs. Yeager found it important to highlight the contributions and efforts made by various Americans and to note the races of the individuals. Her purpose was to bring these untold stories to the surface and have her students see how Africans and African Americans greatly contributed to the foundation of this country.

As evidenced by her students' reactions, acknowledging the race of key historical figures forced them to step out of their comfort zones. Due to her students' ignorance of the racial identities of their abolitionists, Mrs. Yeager recognized that that needed to be

encouraged to see the importance of race. This journey was parallel to the path she had to undertake through her previous experiences at the Amistad workshops.

As Mrs. Yeager continued to become comfortable with the material through professional development opportunities and personal research, she recreated what she has learned within her own classroom. First, her experiences as a child allowed her to question the injustices of society and strive to understand the story of other cultures. Second, her educational background triggered her desire to take on the responsibility of exposing her students to the realities of history and the various perspectives involved within the making of America. Third, the Amistad workshops provided a venue for her to not only deal with her comfort level with the material but also to give her the opportunity to transform the way she has taught history. Through the use of different modalities, she continued to create opportunities for her students to dispel the historical myths, have a sense of ownership through experiences of expertise, build empathy by understanding the human story, and develop a comfort with the realities of race and the true human story often forgotten within the American historical narrative.

Conclusion

Unlike the other two teachers, Mrs. Yeager's approach to the understanding and implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Bill was a process. As a white teacher who was accustomed to teaching from a European perspective, she had to acknowledge the biases and misconceptions she had about the history of America before challenging her students to do the same. The Amistad workshops allowed her the environment to put her ideas on the table and have them challenged. This situation allowed her to better

understand her role as a white teacher, the needs of her predominately white students, and the vast amount of information and multiple perspectives missing from the way she taught history.

Keeping in mind that her audience consisted of predominately white students with limited exposure to the African and African American culture, Mrs. Yeager's approach towards the implementation of the legislation manifested into four stages. In stage one she had to help her students dispel the historical myths that they brought to the table. Stage two consisted of Mrs. Yeager creating a sense of ownership towards the history of Africans and African Americans. In stage three, she structured her lessons so that her students could build empathy towards the human story. Finally, in the fourth stage, she challenged her students to develop comfort with discussions of the complexity of race in American history.

Because of this setting, Mrs. Yeager had to bring forth her students' biases and misconceptions to challenge their ideas and have them question the facts learned in the past. By creating an environment where the truth could be questioned, she encouraged her students to own a bit of history by conducting their own personal investigations and becoming experts of certain information. Through these connections, she allowed role-playing, music, and other emotionally driven techniques to allow her students to feel the pains of the past and empathize with the struggles and hope of Africans and African Americans. With a better understanding of these perspectives, she challenged her students to become comfortable with discussions of race and racism within American history. Mrs. Yeager brought race to the forefront of the classroom discussion on a daily basis not only to get her students comfortable with its complexity but also so that her

students could understand how race had affected all they had learned about American history.

CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTING AMISTAD WITH MR. HOTEPE

In this chapter, I will describe how Mr. Hotep, a history teacher at Urban Middle School, critically infused African and African American history into the American history curriculum with the intent of instilling a sense of critical consciousness in his predominately African and African American students. Mr. Hotep preferred to help his students perceive the social, political, and economic oppression of “Africans” in America and become social agents for change, consciously linking his approach to his position as a self-proclaimed “African” teaching within a predominately “African” school district. This school environment, along with Mr. Hotep’s personal and educational journey in relation to black history, shaped his understanding of the purpose of the Amistad legislation and his goals for how it should be implemented. Finally, I will describe Mr. Hotep’s classroom practices and interactive approach aimed at developing critical consciousness in his students through a high level of engagement among his students as he encouraged a sense of ownership of black history through the use of provocative texts and constant references to Africa and the African community.

Mr. Hotep’s Self-awareness of How His Past Shaped His Perception

Mr. Hotep was very aware of how his race and past experiences affected how he perceived the need for the incorporation of black history within the American narrative. With these past experiences in mind, he was able to understand his current teaching position. He centered his teachings on his teaching environment and allowed his background to shape how he presented the Amistad material.

Vignette 8: Understanding Mr. Hotep's Teaching Environment

It was a breezy spring morning in East City as the dogs barked at several squirrels in the trees and the faint sounds of sirens echoed between the close-knit buildings. As the students rotated to their second-period classes at Du Bois Middle School, I pulled into the small parking lot across the street from the school. I gathered my research materials, closed my car door, and began walking across the street to the front entrance.

After buzzing into the building and signing into the office, I walked down the decorated hallways, which were lined with posters, poems, quotations, and images of black history, to Mr. Hotep's classroom. Due to the structure of the classroom, the entrance placed me in the back of the classroom; therefore, I did not have to interrupt the science teacher as she finished her lesson. Mr. Hotep stood in the front right corner of the room by the teacher's desk setting up his materials for the day's lesson.

Because so many teachers used the room during the day, there were few historical posters and images around the classroom. The room was primarily decorated with science images and terminology. I placed my personal items on the large side table located by the retractable wall in the middle of the room. As I walked back towards the back of the classroom pass the door, I greeted several students sitting near my research station.

Mr. Hotep taught in Du Bois Middle School in East City, New Jersey, a small city located on the east coast of New Jersey. Although sirens and traffic could be heard along the main streets of this city, the streets surrounding Du Bois Middle School had a suburban-feel due to the one-family and two-family houses and the large park across the street. The racial demographics of East City, according to Sperling's Best Places, were 3.69% white, 88.33% black, 0.53% Asian, 0.25% American Indian, 6.25% other, and 5.44% Hispanic.

Du Bois Middle School was one of three new middle schools located on the same city block in East City. A common corridor connected the middle schools, yet they continued to operate as separate buildings. Much like the corridor, there was a common thread of African and African American pride within each building – evident by the posters, quotations, and images strategically located throughout the hallways of all three

buildings. These buildings were new structures built in similar fashion, and each building was named after a famous African American leader.

With a school population of what Mr. Hotep, a fourth-year history teacher, considered 99% “African” due to his belief that most black Americans are actually “Africans in America” and understanding that about 1% of the school population make-up consisted of Latino and biracial students, he felt that within his school the purpose of the New Jersey Amistad legislation was to empower his African American students to acknowledge the impact Africans had on American history. However, he felt that it was important to also recognize the socioeconomic diversity of his students, for both he and his students were affected by this reality on a daily basis. As he considered his own role, he described:

We have a mix. You can have some kids who pull up in a Benz truck, and then others who are pretty much homeless. They’re coming out of a shelter. Look at the psychological trauma that many of them are dealing with, which is really more of the demographic that we really need to look at, study, and understand because that will help us to start healing these children.

In the first interview, Mr. Hotep continued to describe the environment in which his students came from: seventy-five percent were without fathers in the home, parents had been on drugs, some had been abused, fathers were in jail or gangs or had been shot or killed. As he explained, “These children are angry.”

Due to teaching in an environment that is not only predominately black but also economically diverse, Mr. Hotep structured his classroom concepts and activities to empower his students beyond their racial, social, and economic struggles. It was his goal to expose his students to the empowering stories of those that made it out of poverty, of

those who were successful despite the poverty around them, and the opportunities of success that exist around his students today.

Mr. Hotep's Racial Journey and Limited Black History on the Path to Teaching

Teaching for Mr. Hotep, a third-year social studies teacher, was not his decision. Ashe reported, both parents were teachers. Mr. Hotep's early education was sparse in terms of black history references. Growing up Mr. Hotep remembered having large comic books around his house that explained the biographies of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. For two weeks during the eleventh grade, Mr. Hotep recalled, his American history teacher taught about black history and asked him, "Is that right?" He tried to take an African American history course at his high school, but realized that the teacher was talking "down" and slowly to all the students. He assumed that this teacher thought that a room filled with black students was equivalent to a low-level class.

Outside of the classroom, Mr. Hotep had to confront racism on a daily basis. He explained that he was called "nigger" when he was seven years old while at summer camp. He also remembered being called "nigger" while playing soccer on various leagues with many children from racist families. Mr. Hotep expressed that playing soccer was fun but he felt he was in the middle of a "psychological and physical war" – defending himself to all that challenged his race.

Even on the college level, Mr. Hotep was not exposed to black history. He went to school to major in business management with a concentration in finance; however, his business major did not allow him room in his schedule for a history elective. Ultimately, it was his Dean Whitter internship that made him realize that he did not love being a part

of the business world. Consequently, he followed his passion for history and during his senior year of college, took an American literature course, which inspired him to continue reading literature about black history.

Unsure of his future, he left school and decided to move to Washington, D.C., to start his own business. Although that opportunity allowed him to meet his wife and have a child, he decided to return to New Jersey and enroll in school to finish his bachelor's degree. He taught for one year as a high school math teacher, but soon left the profession to own and operate a bookstore in Washington, D.C., that focused on the history of Africans and Africans in America. His bookstore was successful for three years.

By owning a bookstore centered on African and African American history, Mr. Hotep read intensively and formulated his theories and goals around the ideas of such scholars as Molefi Asante, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey. He felt that his students must connect themselves to their African roots and be aware that Africans are spiritual people. "The tools our ancestors used were prayer and faith," he said. He acknowledged that such conversation would be in disagreement with the separation of church and state. He felt that our current educational system had "disconnected God from us" when they "disconnected church and state."

Mr. Hotep believed that our educational system was functioning at a "low level," for it promoted "white supremacy." He did not believe that the present system was working for his students. Within this system, he believed that children "have no foundation in our history." He explained that our curriculum highlighted the painful past of Africans in America rather than emphasizing what happened "in Kemet, in Nubia, in Mali, and in Songhai" and what "made these empires great."

Because of the bookstore, Mr. Hotep developed a love for history, but because both of his parents were math teachers, he decided to return to the teaching profession with the desire to open his own school. He began working in Du Bois Middle School as a math teacher. During his first year of teaching, a social studies teacher suddenly left on an early maternity leave, and the district sought to divide her schedule among the teachers in the building. Mr. Hotep informed his principal of his interest to teach social studies and was immediately given the opportunity to teach one social studies class. This was a dream come true for Mr. Hotep, so he placed a request to primarily teach social studies. During his second year of teaching, he taught both social studies and language arts. In his third year of teaching he finally received a schedule of all social studies classes.

Mr. Hotep's Willingness to Gain Knowledge

Mr. Hotep's desire to learn all that he could learn about the history of Africans and African Americans transferred to his willingness to obtain all the knowledge required by the Amistad legislation. Although Mr. Hotep's Afro-centric mindset questioned the intent of the Amistad legislation, he still viewed the implementation of this knowledge as way to empower his students.

Mr. Hotep and Amistad: Questioning the Realities of Implementation

As a social studies teacher in New Jersey, Mr. Hotep was aware that in 2002 a bill was passed instructing New Jersey public schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to incorporate African American history into the history curriculum. However, he believed

that the infusion “hasn’t really happened because a lot of people don’t even know that it exists.” Mr. Hotep also noted that the legislation could not be implemented as a short-term plan. Then he compared the infusion to the banning of the N word in New York City. “It sounds good, but nothing different is really happening.”

Mr. Hotep acknowledged that his awareness of the New Jersey Amistad Commission was limited because there had not been “an in-service on the Amistad Commission.” He explained that the commission seemed to have provided workshops related to the integration of black history into the curriculum but had not conducted a workshop about the purpose and vision of the Amistad Commission.

Without having direct contact with the Amistad Commission, Mr. Hotep believed that its purpose was to “make people more aware of the Amistad Bill to help people implement Amistad a little bit better.” He also expressed that the Commission needed to reach out to “teachers who have been doing this and have them give some input to help other teachers.”

Mr. Hotep believed that the advantage of the Amistad legislation was the opportunity for teachers and students to deal with the truth.

You’re not leaving out a major part of history. There’s more African history in the world than there’s any other type of history. We’ve been here so long, and it’s so powerful. And it’s a major part of United States history. It’s a major part of European history. Europe would not be as rich. There would be no such thing as Europe without Africa.

Mr. Hotep believed that this legislation allowed people to study cultural dynamics and understand that civilization, according to him, was actually exported from Africa to other nations – meaning that Africa contained the original civilizations. He continued to explain, “It’s critical that we move back to understand and honor that history.”

Mr. Hotep commented that white children need this curriculum but it is not a “life or death situation.” African children in America, however, need this curriculum for it gives them a chance to survive within the educational system. Due to its critical nature, Mr. Hotep believed that the integration of African and African American history should not have needed to be legislated.

Unlike Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep’s passion behind the teaching of African and African American history was not enhanced by the creation of the Amistad Bill rather compatible with the legislation. Mr. Hotep developed his passion for the perspective of Africans and African Americans long before the creation of the bill. By owning the bookstore, he was able to dig into the past and understand the truth behind the contributions, successes, and triumphs of Africans – information that contradicted and challenged the facts he learned in school. It was because of this experience that Mr. Hotep made it his mission to expose this knowledge to children like him – exposing African and African American history to black children.

Mr. Hotep had limited exposure to the Amistad Commission and all they had to offer. He only attended one of the Summer Institutes and did not facilitate a workshop, as did Mrs. Yeager. His passion was simply from within and encouraged by the Amistad Bill. He found that this legislation justified what he already believed and leaned on it as a resource to obtain even more information for his classroom and lessons.

Mr. Hotep, Amistad, and the Enactment of Empowerment

Mr. Hotep believed that the Amistad legislation would work well with white children; however, he believed that his students needed to “look at what our ancestors

did.” He explained that his students needed to study the “history of Kemet” and understand that everything came out of Africa – writing, religion, math, and the study of nature. Then they must study the oppression of Africans in America and take action against the oppression that remains in their world.

On the surface it was the goal of Mr. Hotep to infuse black history into the curriculum for the empowerment of his students. However, unlike Mrs. Yeager’s attempt to enlighten her students about others, Mr. Hotep took a personal approach towards the implementation of the Amistad Bill. It was his mission to return his students “own” history to them. He believed that the state of the history curriculum in New Jersey might work well for white children, but “this educational system is not going to work for us. It never will. We have no foundation in our history. It’s painful.” Mr. Hotep believed that it did not allow black children to look at what their ancestors have done and how they created such a great culture.

In addition, Mr. Hotep believed that students should understand that nature is our greatest teacher, and with this understanding, they would better understand the nation of Kemet and its contribution to writing, religion, math, and medicine. However, he explained that students must wrestle with the notion that all systems promote white supremacy.

Mr. Hotep’s goal was to use the implementation of the Amistad Bill to help his students reach a critical consciousness. First, he believed that there must be a sense of identification based on self-reflection. “We don’t know who we are,” he said, explaining that traditional society separated Africans from God; therefore, Africans have struggled to know their identity. Second, we must acknowledge that racism is about physical,

mental, and spiritual separation. Mr. Hotep explained that it is important to understand our physical connections to Africa, study how our mentality has been greatly influenced by African philosophies, and analyze how there are spiritual roots based in African traditions to better understand the African perspective. Through this union, the students would become empowered to make a change and confront the oppression within their world.

How Mr. Hotep Adjusted Amistad to His Context

For Mr. Hotep the implementation of an African-centered curriculum within his classroom was a reflection of the entire school culture by predominately emphasizing African and African American history and connections to all other cultures. In addition, Mr. Hotep's style of teaching was in response to his personal belief that his students, who he referred to as his children, were in need of an African-centered curriculum because of their African roots and the need to be exposed to history through this perspective.

Mr. Hotep and the Use of an Empowerment Approach to the Implementation of Amistad

Mr. Hotep created an environment of empowerment through the implementation of high-interest dialogue where student engagement dominated the classroom culture. He presented various techniques that triggered a high level of student engagement. Based on the data, he managed to develop a critical consciousness in his students through the implementation of five methods in conjunction with the required content of the Amistad legislation: 1) using provocative texts and images, 2) using current connections, 3)

encouraging critical thought and analysis, 4) using African and village principles to include students in a larger community, and 5) using teachers' personal experiences.

Developing a Critical Consciousness in Students

It was Mr. Hotep's goal to help his students develop what Paulo Freire (1970) called a critical consciousness by providing interactive lessons that allowed them to perceive social, political, and economic oppression generally in America and personally within their own lives and empower them to find solutions to the societal problems laid out before them. Through his seven approaches, Mr. Hotep was able to help his students develop an in-depth understanding of the world, and he provided opportunities to question preconceived notions, challenge assumptions, and wrestle with contradictions of stereotypes, race, racism, and power structures, such as white supremacy. Mr. Hotep understood that the development of critical consciousness would have a powerful emotional impact on the lives of his students.

Use of Provocative Texts and Images

To stir up the interest of his students and help them become aware of how history connected to them, Mr. Hotep used sensitive images and texts within his daily lessons. The images and texts were used as an anticipatory set to provoke discussion or simply to allow the students chances to visualize the concepts. Throughout the ten observed lessons, he used provocative images and texts in six of the lessons.

During the first observation, Mr. Hotep introduced the stereotyping unit to his students by displaying a slide presentation of provocative images and texts. One

particular image presented was of a black "lawn jockey", which once was an important signal on the Underground Railroad but later was viewed as a racist lawn decoration and a stereotypical collectible item.

Hotep: Now these are collectible items.

Shawn: What?

Mimi: Wow!

Hotep: People still have these. Lots of these were produced. I can remember maybe five or six years ago I was on vacation with my wife somewhere, and we went to this place, and we walked in, and I saw a bunch of those things there.

Student: And what did you do?

Hotep: And it was a white owner, and I said, "Baby, I think it's time for us to go because I'm not staying around." Some black people collect these.

Laquita: Oh, wow!

Hotep: The reason why they collect them, sometimes it's just to have the history. I don't think I would want to have the negativity, but...

Lucky: When I look at that I want to throw up.

Hotep: I mean you can see, again, they're saying that all we want to do is play. Okay? Nothing serious. We want to just play. Indulge ourselves with watermelon.

Mimi: Wow!

Shawn: Watermelon's nasty.

When presenting this image, Mr. Hotep simply displayed the image and allowed the students to react. After a few minutes, he began to explain why people would collect these types of items and even provided his own personal experience with the item. This piqued the interest of the students as they looked to him for guidance on how to handle racial encounters. Then he provided the students with another perspective by informing

them that even black people collect these items. They were surprised and disgusted by the idea of black people having the items to have a bit of history. Mr. Hotep ended the segment of the lesson by describing the collectible item in relation to stereotypes, which the students did not seem to like.

Within the same lesson, Mr. Hotep showed the students a picture of a famous rapper that the students easily recognized. The image was of the rapper pointing a gun toward the viewers. Mr. Hotep asked the students, “Can you see the gun?” After they affirmed, he asked who was the intended target of the rapper. Although a few students responded with other rappers’ names, other students began to converse about the gun being pointed at themselves.

To continue the unit on analyzing how negative stereotypes affect Africans in America, in the second observation Mr. Hotep provided the students with worksheets about minstrel shows. He asked the students to read the handouts and explain about minstrel shows. Uloma said, “A minstrel show is when people of color or white people dress up in blackface and put on shows showing black people acting as lazy, buffoons, or doing musical acts.” Mr. Hotep used this article to make a distinction between blackface and minstrel shows and to explain how minstrel shows were the most popular American form of entertainment during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

In the presentation, Mr. Hotep showed the students a comedy show advertisement of a white man in blackface. Immediately, the students became engaged with the stereotypes presented in this image:

Mimi: That looks crazy.

Hotep: And if you notice, he puts the blackface on and he puts on his lips, he makes his lips red. He makes them look bigger, and he fluffs out his hair.

Jamila: All our lips ain't big.

Mimi: You could tell he...

Hotep: And again he made a lot of money going from city to city...town to town making fun of black people and putting this stereotype into the minds of those who watched it. All right? 'Cause everyone who watches says, "Uh, huh. That's what black people are like. Okay?"

Shawn: We don't have big lips...not all.

Hotep: And we know that that's not the truth, but this is what was happening.

While Mr. Hotep provided the history, the students continued to share their personal feelings about the images presented. Even with a later image of Al Jolson, another white man in blackface, the students continued to express their disgust with the concept:

Uloma: Oh, my God!

Hotep: You can see on the right. There he is without blackface. On the left he's in blackface.

Mimi: Eew!

Shawn: Why'd he make his face like that?

Hotep: Okay. Again, he made a lot of money doing this.

Jamila: You can tell he's not black.

Lucky: He looks like a clown doing that.

By presenting this provocative text, the students were able to discuss how media can enhance the effects of negative stereotypes.

During the third observation, Mr. Hotep showed the class a video entitled "Ethnic Notions." This video exposed the students to both provocative images and texts. One particular image from the video was a clip from the historical movie, "Birth of a Nation." In this clip, a white woman was running from a white man in blackface. As she

approached the cliff, she decided to jump instead of being captured by the black man.

Immediately, the students were bothered by this scene and responded, “That’s what she gets” and “She’s stupid.” The conversation continued as one student asked,

Well, if you were a black man and you wanted to rape a white woman, how did it start that men were accused of raping white women? Was it during slavery?

After Reconstruction? During Reconstruction?

The students were offended that the white woman was willing to die rather than be captured by the black man. Mr. Hotep allowed this clip to provide a reality of how black men were perceived as brute savages and beasts and how the media perpetuated the stereotypes.

Mr. Hotep used provocative images, texts, and audio in the fourth observation to a much further degree than Mrs. Yeager in pursuing current issues of race and racism.

During the beginning of the lesson, he provided the students with a worksheet about the historical movie, “Birth of a Nation.” This excerpt from my field notes demonstrates how the students wrestled with the idea of how race and racism were justified and accepted:

Mr. Hotep called on Katrina, who began her explanation as describing “Birth of a Nation” as a movie about two white families. When she was done explaining the film, Mr. Hotep stated that he thought her response was good and pointed out that the movie was filled with black stereotypes and glorified the KKK. Mimi pointed out that in the movie, black people were portrayed as thieves and could not do anything else. She even noted that the President of the United States seemed to agree with these stereotypes and the need for the KKK. Uloma noted that the movie highlighted the KKK as a protecting organization. Mr. Hotep felt that his response was good as well. Then he told the students that D. W. Griffin, the director of “Birth of a Nation”, received awards for having the biggest award film at that time – even though it was filled with negative stereotypes and was produced during the height of the lynching era, 1913 – 1921. Then he reminded the students about the “Birth of a Nation” image in “Ethnic Notions” – the image of the white woman is being chased by a white man in blackface (posing as black

man) and the white woman decides to jump off the cliff rather than be with a black man.

As the students critically analyzed the summary of the movie, “Birth of a Nation”, they began to realize not only that the movie promoted the black stereotypes but that it was also supported nationally. The students were surprised by this reality that even the President of the United States would find these stereotypes and the existence of the KKK acceptable. Mr. Hotep used this portion of the lesson to help his students understand that racism was not always seen as a negative concept; rather, it was the norm within the American society for many years.

Mr. Hotep continued to demonstrate how racism was accepted in America by using the video, “Ethnic Notions,” to provide his students with the chance to hear the recitation of a popular children's story called, "The Ten Little Niggers." It was Mr. Hotep's goal to have his students critically analyze why this particular poem would be a popular children's story. He explained to his students that racist ideas, such as the violent undertones of this particular poem, were deemed acceptable during the early 1900s. As the poem was being read, the students responded, “Wow!” and “Ooo!” When several students laughed at the graphic words, one student responded, “I didn't find that funny.”

Near the end of the lesson, the students were introduced to Bert Williams, a black man in blackface, through a monologue presentation. As the students watched the monologue on “Ethnic Notions”, the concept seemed to confuse them:

“What is he doing?” asked Nieces.

“What?” questioned Laquita. “I don't get it.”

Mr. Hotep carefully used this footage to trigger a discussion on why Bert Williams would participate in something that seemed to be so negative. As described in my field notes, the students were challenged to critically analyze why Bert Williams, a black man, would disrespect himself by dressing up in blackface:

Mr. Hotep explained that Bert Williams made about \$6,500 a week (as stated in the film) and asked the students if they would dress up in blackface for that amount of money. One student replies, "Yes, just to be on stage." However, Shawn immediately responded, "black people negatively stereotyping black people are worse." Mr. Hotep stated that the students would earn about \$26,000 a month. Mr. Hotep noted that Bert Williams made about \$300,000 a year during the 1930s and 1940s, which is a lot of money during that time (even during this time).

Mr. Hotep crafted his lessons to expose his students to images, texts, and audio that were not only provocative but also educational. Through a direct exposure to racial documents, he was able to engage his students to reflect on themselves and challenge them to understand the present through the lessons of the past.

However, the students themselves were also responsible for presenting provocative text that maintained student engagement. During the eighth observation a group of students made a group presentation about their assigned stereotypes. During the presentation, Jamila stated,

The dictionary definition of black is evil, dark, and the opposite of white. The dictionary definition of white is pure, angel, innocent, and the opposite of black. whites are the evil people. Don't forget that whites controlled slavery. They were the people who made up all these laws to torture blacks. So blacks aren't the evil people. Whites are because they tortured blacks.

Although Katrina, one of her presentation partners, tried to stop her from reading that particular section, the students immediately raised their hands and began a spontaneous discussion.

Shawn: I think it was a good presentation. But at the end, they put themselves out there when they said that whites are the evil people.

Hotep: Okay.

Jamila: (*mumbles*) I hate white people.

Hotep: So, the whites are evil?

Shawn: Yeah.

Hotep: Okay. Anybody else? Was that a stereotype?

Shawn: Yes, it is.

Hotep: Huh?

Shawn: Yeah. They was kind of like contradicting themselves. They was using stereotypes, too, at the end when they said whites are evil.

Hotep: Okay.

Uloma: It's not really stereotype.

Hotep: Why?

Shawn: How isn't it?

Uloma: Because stereotype is, um, naturally for a group of people. The world doesn't view white people as evil. The world doesn't view white people as evil people.

Hotep: Some people do.

Shawn: How can you speak for the world?

Hotep: Yeah?

Shawn: I can't speak for the world.

Hotep: It's a lot of people that have that view.

Kisha: That what?

Shawn: That was stupid, man.

Kisha: That white people are evil?

Hotep: Yes.

Kisha: Not all of us.

Hotep: Understand, class, when we talk about a stereotype, the words that you want to listen to, are when you take a group of people and you say, “All or most of that group”. Right? Okay. So, did she fit that when she said...

Shawn: I said that it was a stereotype. She said “white people”. She didn’t say, “the white people back in 1800’s” or something like that, she said “white people.”

Hotep: Right.

Shawn: So that was like a stereotype. And what she said was a stereotype.

Hotep: Okay. So, Shawn makes a good point. Is that true?

Jamila: I ain’t write that.

Shawn: Wow!

Hotep: You said it.

Katrina: I read what was on there.

Shawn: And who wrote it?

Katrina: I didn’t write it either.

Uloma: (*stood quietly next to Katrina and Jamila*)

Hotep: Listen, class. Be careful. Okay? Be careful because you guys have to realize the purpose of this is so that we don’t start stereotyping cause that can be dangerous cause we don’t know enough of a whole group of people to make statements like that. Okay? So, be careful.

This form of engagement was a combination of a discussion, an argument, confusion, questioning, and emotions. Shawn was truly disturbed by this presentation and took the initiative to bring up his feelings before the entire class. He challenged the presenters to grapple with their own personal stereotypes and held them accountable for their words.

Mr. Hotep allowed this situation to teach a lesson about being careful of how they stereotyped people themselves.

Mr. Hotep managed to create an environment where the students were able to be honest about how the information made them feel. Provocative images and texts seemed to trigger intense feelings within the students. These methods were all a part of Mr. Hotep's intention to allow his students to express their emotions and then critically analyze the material.

Use of Current Connections

According to Mr. Hotep, it is important to help students "make connections between the past and the present." Another approach he used was the incorporation of current references to help the students critically analyze how stereotypes of the past still exist today and encourage his students to be agents of change. He orchestrated the inclusion of current events into all ten observed lessons. The most common references were made to the Sean Bell murder in New York City, the Don Imus and the Rutgers Women's Basketball Team incident over the radio, television shows and movies, and rappers and music.

In one slide presentation, Mr. Hotep began with historical images to provide a visual background to stereotypes; however, at the end of the presentation he showed the students two pictures of a male and female rapper, Little Kim and 50 Cent, with whom they were familiar. That excerpt showed his attempt to get his students engaged with notions of race and gender through current references.

Hotep: You know her.

Uloma: Little Kim.

Hotep: Here's another one. Is she a queen or is she a bee? Which one? Which one are you? A queen?

Mimi: I'm a queen.

In a later lesson, Little Kim's name was mentioned during a group presentation:

Laquita: (*holding up a Little Kim picture*) She provokes lust and a negative stereotype of black women because she degrades herself in her videos and talks about things that degrade black people and black women.

Uloma: How's little Kim lustful?

Laquita: She's lustful because if you listen to her songs and you see the way she dress. She calls herself, ah, the Queen Bee. And she promotes the stereotypes about black people.

Mimi: And she's half naked.

(students laugh)

Laquita: And she degrades herself. Uh, huh. She talks about some stuff though.

Uloma: No need to go into details.

The students were aware of the terms associated with the rapper and denied being associated with those characteristics. Mr. Hotep wanted to see what his students thought about rappers and the stereotypes they portrayed. He challenged them to connect the images to themselves by analyzing if they are portraying the same concepts or find these images acceptable.

To connect the lesson of stereotypes to their personal lives, at the end of the second observation Mr. Hotep assigned the students homework. The assignment was to go home, watch three of their favorite shows, and record stereotypes that seem to exist within each show. During the third observation, the students presented their findings:

Nieces: I watched BET, black Entertainment Television, channel 56. They were showing “Next Friday.” They portrayed the African Americans by saying that black people cannot swim. Negative stereotypes associated with African people is that all we do is drown.

Hotep: All we do is...

Nieces: Drown.

Shawn: It portrayed all we do is smoke weed.

Kisha: And that we don’t pay bills. And that we get people pregnant.

Larissa: Channel 9 “Girlfriends” shows negative things to a black woman. On a TV episode shows that blacks are loud, obnoxious, and one-night stands.

Hotep: Okay. And have one-night stands. What’s that song that ya’ll didn’t even know about?

Mimi: What song?

Hotep: “Promiscuous Girl.”

Uloma: That’s what it means, Mr. Hotep?

Mimi: Oh, I didn’t know that.

Hotep: Yeah, ya’ll singing that song didn’t even know what it meant. Okay. Somebody else? Go ahead, Lynaisha.

Lynaisha: I picked “The Parkers” because it seemed like all women are loud, stupid, and fat.

Hotep: Okay. Go ahead, Lucky.

Lucky: I picked the “Wayans Brothers,” and it shows a lot of negative things because the black people don’t take anything seriously and they act stupid.

Laquita: And in “My Wife and Kids.”

Hotep: Okay. Somebody else?

Laquita: Me.

Hotep: Laquita.

Laquita: “My Wife and Kids.”

Mimi: That boy...

Laquita: Their son...

Mimi: Claire’s husband...I mean.

Hotep: Shh! Let her speak. Go ahead.

Laquita: Their son. He be acting mad slow and they be hitting him in the head and stuff.

Hotep: So, what’s the stereotype?

Laquita: That he’s stupid.

Shawn: black people are stupid.

Mimi: That we’re not serious.

Laquita: That young black men are dumb.

Mimi: The husbands.

Hotep: Young black males are dumb and not serious. Okay?

Mimi: (while Mr. Hotep speaks) The husbands. The husband acts dumb as hell.

The students were able to analyze their own worlds to see if they have been exposed to these historical stereotypes. Through this activity the students were able to analyze the overt and hidden messages of race portrayed in what they perceive as “black” movies and television shows. The hidden racial messages became clear even through the song that Mr. Hotep played and had to explain the term “promiscuous” to the class only to discover that most of them did not understand the lyrics of one of their favorite songs.

The students immediately began to realize that many of their most popular

movies and shows actually portrayed black people negatively – as smokers, promiscuous, and stupid. Mr. Hotep was able to make connections to their findings by referring to current-day references. He used this assignment as an anticipatory setting for the viewing of the documentary, “Ethnic Notions.” Much like the society in the early 1900s, it was Mr. Hotep’s goal to have his students realize how they have accepted negative stereotypes about the black community as the norm as well.

Mr. Hotep also allowed the news to play a part of the critical consciousness in the classroom discussion. Due to the timeframe of the observations, comments on both the Sean Bell murder and the Don Imus incident with the Rutgers University Women’s Basketball team surfaced during the stereotype dialogue.

During the group presentations on stereotypes, Mimi referred to the Sean Bell murder case during her portion of the presentation. She stated:

The Sean Bell situation where the cops shot Sean Bell because they thought that he had a weapon while leaving the club. If there was a group of three or more standing on the corner, then the cop can come and disperse them. And if the group gets back together on another corner, then the cop can come and arrest them.

During the final observed lesson, Mr. Hotep continued the discussion about the Sean Bell murder case:

Hotep: What stereotype was involved in the Sean Bell murder?

Students: Criminals.

Mimi: Criminal slash thug.

Hotep: Okay. Criminal/thug. Right? So, you have to understand that this mindset affects you. When people have a mindset where they stereotype you, it affects how they view you and it affects what you do.

The principal of Mr. Hotep's school entered the classroom during the group presentations on stereotypes. After one group completed their presentation, the principal asked:

Principal: Tell us something new that you learned by doing this project.

Mimi: I learned that it's stereotyping in most of the movies that we watch, even though it's in our faces but sometimes...

Nieces: We don't notice it.

Mimi: Yeah, we don't notice it. It's in most of the movies that we watch. We stereotype our own selves. So it's like it's in our faces but we're so concerned about the movie, it don't even matter.

Principal: That's a powerful statement. Absolutely. Nieces?

Nieces: Well, nowadays they're still talking about the Don Imus problem. They were like we should stop using ho's and b-word against each other because that's just not what we're all about and we came this far for, umm, people to be talking about us and stuff like that.

Principal: Okay. So this project helped you make a connection with the Don Imus and the Rutgers girls' basketball team?

Nieces: Yes.

Mr. Hotep's students immediately provided powerful insights about the effects of race in general and in their own lives. They made connections between several stereotypes and the incident between Don Imus and the Rutgers University Women's Basketball team. They understood the history behind the terminology used by Don Imus and why the disrespect was so offensive.

During the presentations on the history and effects of stereotypes, the students were challenged to formulate solutions to the problem of the existing negative stereotypes. Several students offered suggestions:

Nieces: The three solutions that we came up with are: African people and other people can help to destroy negative stereotypes by understanding why people don't like being categorized as a negative image, by showing each other that we

are all different, and by convincing each other that there is nothing positive about stereotypes.

Edward: I have three intelligent solutions for this modern-day problem. One intelligent way that we could possibly stop stereotyping is by taking the problem to the government. During this process, a law could be created stating that it shouldn't be any pre-judgment from any type of race. I consider this an intelligent solution because by making a new law to stop all stereotypes, could concur the problems you see everyday, which is stereotyping. Another way African Americans could stop stereotyping is by ourselves learning how to stop stereotyping ourselves. Everyday you hear African Americans saying the N word. The comedian, Whoopi Goldberg, once said the N word on stage 100 times. The N word is used by a lot of African Americans, and it is a disappointment to see ourselves trying to stop this problem but we are the same ones stereotyping each other. My final solution for stopping stereotyping is that we should host a live broadcast on television talking about the stereotyping, saying that it should be banned worldwide. I think that this is an intelligent solution because we could talk to people all around the world, and by doing this, we can inspire to stop stereotyping different people from different races or even from your own race.

Through the use of current events, Mr. Hotep helped his students critically analyze how these historical stereotypes have manifested into our society today, whether they have noticed them or not. Then he empowered his students to take it to the next level – being aware of how it is being promoted around them and creating solutions to the problem.

Overall, the students made references to the news, such as the Sean Bell murder and the Don Imus and Rutgers University Women's Basketball incident, they referred to hip hop music and various artists, such as Little Kim and 50 Cent, and they made connections between the mammy image and Aunt Jemima. Such references were made on a daily basis due to the nature of the topic – how negative stereotypes affect Africans in America.

Mr. Hotep encouraged his students to analyze current television as well. As the result of a homework assignment given by Mr. Hotep, several students came to class during the third observation ready to share the television and movie examples of how

stereotypes still exist today. As described in a previous section, the students referred to several movies and shows on BET, black Entertainment Television, which presented black people using negative stereotypes. Throughout the discussion, the students were able to explain how the stereotypes were being portrayed in each show and what messages were being sent about black people.

The incorporation of current events was key for Mr. Hotep. As he stated in his journal, "Students made the recognition that stereotypes are used to sell products like Aunt Jemima pancake mix and syrup. I felt proud of these young people and satisfied as a teacher." It was essential for Mr. Hotep to allow his students the opportunities to make connections between history and their current environment.

Encouragement of Critical Thought and Analysis

Incorporated in the way Mr. Hotep represented history was a culture of critical thought and analysis. Critical thought analysis is best described as "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generalized by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to belief or action [or argument]" (Scriven & Paul, 2001, p.1). In this case, Mr. Hotep encouraged his students to dig deeper to see the connections from the past to the present to themselves. He believed that his students could handle such intense material. As he explained to his class in the final observed lesson:

I believe you did a good job. But as always, when you guys put your minds to it, you always shine. That's part of the reason why I chose this class. Because I thought you would be able to handle some of this information. This is not necessarily the most easy information to digest because there are a lot of nuances

here. There are a lot of different things you need to look at. And what you have expressed in these projects is that you're really going to be more vigilant. I know by the end of the year when you leave, you all will make excellent leaders in our community. I know that you have a good foundation. Some of you I've had a couple of years. It's important that you have a solid foundation in our history and in dealing with a lot of the racism that's out there, because it's very subtle. I'm sure some of you watch Dragonball Z and you never would think that they're throwing out a stereotype. Right? But that's what I'm trying to show you is that this stuff is everywhere. white supremacy has gotten into the very fabric of American culture so deeply that sometimes we just think it's normal. And what I want you to be able to do is to be able to make it known to yourself that it's not normal and make it known to others that this is not normal.

Mr. Hotep acknowledged to this students that the study of race is a journey of understanding the complexity of the history of America. Within this study, the students had to wrestle with the subtlety of racism and the underlying power of white supremacy, which, as both Mr. Hotep and Mrs. Yeager have explained to their students exists within the essences of what we call American history. Yet, Mr. Hotep managed to help his students, critically think about the racial past, critically analyze how the past has influenced the problems of today, and empowered his students to use this solid foundation to make the future better.

Mr. Hotep encouraged critical thought and analysis in the classroom. "I became the facilitator. Students led the discussions," stated Mr. Hotep in one of his journal entries. The critical classroom discussions ranged from examples of stereotypes about black people to the difference between telling jokes and insulting people on the radio. Although many of the discussions were triggered by questions proposed by Mr. Hotep, a few discussions surfaced due to students' comments and questions.

During the first observation, Mr. Hotep set the stage by making his students aware of how he wanted them to approach the material he was going to present. As he said to the students, "What we're going to do is take a serious look at how they affect

us internally and externally” and “You have to think about that.” It was important for Mr. Hotep to not only inform students of this goal but also teach them how to analyze the facts. During his slide presentation on stereotypes, he showed the students several images of people in blackface on a university campus. Because of the students’ confusion, he took the time to help them analyze the picture:

Hotep: Now, if you look at this. All I’m trying to do here is take it to today. blackface at the University of Wisconsin. You look at these guys. These are white guys in blackface, and basically all their saying is this is how black people are. We wear du rags. We’re into hip-hop.

Laquita: But we look better.

Mimi: So, what’s wrong with that?

Hotep: That’s what they know. I’ll show you. (*showing slide #15*)

Shawn: Ooo!

Hotep: Blackface at Auburn University. This is in Alabama. Now, this is Halloween...

Lucky: Oh!

Hotep: ...for fun you have somebody dressed up...

Shawn: Like the KKK.

Hotep: Like the KKK.

Mimi: Of course.

Hotep: On the left hand, I don’t know if you can see, but you have somebody kind of dressed up as if they have a cowboy hat on.

Shawn: Slave master.

Hotep: And right in between you have somebody...

Uloma: With blackface.

Hotep: ...with blackface who’s supposed to represent a...a black slave. They

both have guns pointing. They have the rebel flag in the back. What's the flag for?

Shawn: Confederate.

Hotep: Confederate flag. What does the confederate flag stand for?

All: Slavery.

Hotep: Okay. Confederates wanted slavery. Right? So, this is now. This is, you know, this is recent. Okay, maybe two or three years ago. So for them this history is joke for them.

Mr. Hotep described the image and began to make connections that the students quickly recognized and continued to converse about the symbolism. The data demonstrated how the students were able to discuss and come to understand the hidden messages within the pictures related to key historical symbols and images. Therefore, Mr. Hotep allowed these images to be the format for teaching his students how to critically analyze information.

In the second observation Mr. Hotep challenged his students to think about stereotypes and how they have become part of our society. He questioned "Why stereotyping seemed to be so popular in America? Why was this an acceptable behavior for so many years?" These questions allowed the students opportunities to reflect on the impact of stereotypes in America.

Mimi: Because it was a new form of slavery.

Hotep: Say it again.

Mimi: Because it was a new form of slavery.

Hotep: New form of slavery. Explain that. Anybody want to try that?

Kisha: Because slave masters wanted to explain slavery, and it's better to explain anything in the form of entertain.

Hotep: Okay. Excellent. Very good. Lynaisha?

Lynaisha: Like what she said, I think it's a slavery of the mind. It gives you images of how black people are, and then you have it in your mind, and you can't think of anything else.

Hotep: Okay. So it's like a slavery in the mind. And what did you say, Kisha?

Kisha: That Willie Lynch.

Hotep: Okay. Willie Lynch. Right? We learned about Willie Lynch. What is Willie Lynch talking about?

Kisha: He said...

Uloma: Lynching.

Shawn: How to keep them in check.

Kisha: How to take the mind and free the body and...

Shawn: (*interrupts Kisha*) How to keep them in check.

Hotep: Okay. How to keep control. Right? So, rather than having to whip the slave, you control their mind. Right? So that was what Willie Lynch did. Controlled the mind. Put one against the other. Separate and...

Shawn: (*interrupts Mr. Hotep*) Separate and conquer.

Hotep: ...feed these negative stereotypes. Right?

Students: Yeah.

Mimi: But there's still stereotyping today.

Hotep: There's still stereotypes today.

The students analyzed one another's comments, put their ideas on the table, and weaved their knowledge and perceptions of the power structures of white supremacy into the conversation. They began to compare stereotyping to a new form of slavery

and recognized that this type of mistreatment exists today. Just from a simple question, Mr. Hotep empowered his students to think about the deeper meaning of stereotypes and draw connections between the physical slavery of the past and a mental slavery of today.

Mr. Hotep was able to help his students understand how the historical stereotypes relate to the discrimination of today. During the eighth observed lesson, he continued the conversation about Don Imus' comments over the radio about the Rutgers University

Women's Basketball team:

Hotep: Don Imus? Right? He's the guy that had the derogatory words for the Rutgers women's basketball team.

Shawn: They showed that stereotypes still are real.

Hotep: Right? So, was his statement based on stereotype?

Students: Yes....yeah.

Hotep: Okay. (to Uloma) Yes?

Uloma: But why did he do that?

Hotep: Why did he do that, Uloma asked? Why did he do that? I ask you guys.

Shawn: He was making jokes. He was making jokes.

Hotep: What? Kisha, go ahead.

Kisha: It's like what happened to Kramer. He was trying to make a joke just like to make everyone laugh. It's like a poorest joke came out really fast to make people laugh.

Jamila: That's not funny.

Kisha: That's what type of dude he is.

Hotep: Okay. So, you say he was trying to be funny. Anybody else want to answer why you think he did it?

Lynaisha: To be insulting cause he probably saw it on TV and black people representing themselves as that, so then he went back and said that.

Hotep: Okay.

Uloma: I have a question.

Shawn: Maybe that's how he was raised.

Hotep: How he was raised. Okay. Go ahead, Mimi.

Mimi: I think he did it cause he's not in our situation, then we have the history of slavery and stuff. He probably don't know like from our perspective how it felt to be called that.

Hotep: Okay. That's a good point.

Uloma: It was on a radio show.

Hotep: Yes, it was on a radio show.

Uloma: How come when a black person on a radio show says it, it doesn't matter but when a white person says it, it's like a problem?

Hotep: Okay. Uloma's question, a good question. Why is it that when a white person says a derogatory term about black people, it's a big uproar, but when a black person says something negative about a black person, maybe it's not such a big problem? Who wants to answer that? If let's say, for instance, we have Don Imus. He uses a derogatory term, a stereotype about black women, there's a serious problem that the black community has with him to the point that they want to fight. Now let's say that somebody like, who's the one on Hot 97 in the morning?

Students: Miss Jones.

Hotep: Miss Jones.

Kisha: I don't like her.

Hotep: Let's say Miss Jones says something.

Laquita: She say it.

Hotep: Yes, she does. Right?

Kisha: She stay saying it.

Hotep: So, why is there not an issue with her the same way? That's what Uloma is asking? Who wants to answer that?

Mimi: Because the people who listen to her show...it's like, ok, she's black. All right, well, I think she's black. And most of the people that listen to her show is black. So, it's like she knows that she's in that position where she could say some but they know that she's playing. Don Imus, I don't know.

Shawn: Nah. They both wrong.

Mimi: Yeah, she's a cool person. But, see, it's different when you know somebody and you know like that's what they do for a living. Like they crack jokes but they know that it's only a joke. But then again where somebody cracks jokes but maybe you think that they're serious to really insult you. Like that. She wouldn't go that far though.

Hotep: So, how about...what was the guy? Star?

Students: Star and Buck Wild.

Hotep: Star and Buck Wild that had a show for a long time. He used the n word on a regular basis.

Shawn: He got kicked off.

Hotep: He also used the b word on a regular basis. But it took a long time for him to actually...I mean, pretty much every day he was using those words. Right?

Few Students: Yep...yeah.

Hotep: On the radio. In the morning. So we have an issue with him or people like him.

Few Students: We should.

Shawn: We should but we don't.

Hotep: Okay. We should. You say we should. Why?

Shawn: Cause we're proving that it's okay for black people to say this but not the white people to say it.

Lucky: What's the difference?

Uloma: The white person gets all the blame. Like when the black does it, he doesn't get blamed.

Lucky: Either way, it's wrong.

Shawn: Exactly.

Kisha: That's like if I walked up to a white person and said, "You're a crackhead."

Mimi: Either way it's wrong. That's right, but still, it's like you can't say that about people. Most of the people that black people talk about when they talk about, like when they're stereotyping, most of the time they know that person. And if you don't know that person, you walk up to a white person say, "You a crackhead." Okay, that's like if I walk up to one of my homeys and she's white, I say, "Oh, you're a crackhead." We'll laugh. Okay. It's funny.

Students: Wow!

Hotep: But it's a little different if you're on the radio. Right?

Shawn: Ignorant. Ignorant.

Hotep: Laquita, go 'head.

Laquita: What if a black person calls you the n word, would you be like you're one, too? But if a white person...

Mimi: I know, but I'm saying...

Shawn: It's a big difference. Why?

Uloma: It's wrong though.

Hotep: Okay, my class. Listen. It's a big issue there because some people say it's not ok. I think most people agree it's not ok for white people to use derogatory terms toward blacks. Right?

Students: Yeah.

Hotep: Or anybody. But then some people believe it's ok and some people believe it's not ok for black people to use these same derogatory terms with ourselves. The question that you have to look at is what is the effect of using these terms. Because, you guys know Michael Richards?

Students: No.

Hotep: He's the guy that was on stage. The comedian. Saying n, n, n. Okay? You guys know Don Imus of course. They're using an excuse to say, "Well, you guys say this stuff also. Why can't we say it?" It's an excuse that's being used.

Mimi: Well, if you're your own person, it wouldn't matter what we say.

A large portion of this particular class time was dedicated to this debate. The students were encouraged to express their opinions about radio personalities and what they felt was appropriate and inappropriate to say on the air. As the students continued to wrestle with the realities of stereotyping, they did not hesitate to make the issues personal to prove their sides of the debate.

During the ninth observed lesson, the stereotypes project groups were making their presentations about stereotypes. Because of the sensitivity of the material, a debate was ignited by Lucky's portion of the presentation:

Another image is of "The Parkers" (*shows a picture*). "The Parkers" portrays a cast of a familiar TV show. The show stars a mother and her daughter. They are both overweight. The daughter is a failing junior at the county college. The mother goes to the same college but is infatuated with her professor. She is chasing after him all the time looking like the lustful black woman.

As the presentation concluded, Mimi raised her hand to ask a question.

Mimi: What were ya'll saying about the "Parkers"?

Lucky: Oh. You know how one of the negative stereotypes portrays black women as fat and dumb and...

Kisha: Always chasing men.

Lucky: And lustful, always chasing men. That's what "The Parkers" do. The women are overweight.

Mimi: But that's how they naturally is!

Lucky: It's sort of proving the negative stereotype though. We're not trying to get on her natural self. We're just saying the way they act in the show.

Laquita: That's not the way they act in real life. They're not dumb and stupid, and they don't act like that in real life.

Mimi: Do you know them?

Uloma: Maybe they're showing people things that happen in real life.

Lucky: So, you're saying that all overweight, black women fail college?

Uloma: But still, it's how she look.

Mimi: But she's in college cause she went back to get a better life.

Uloma: Miss Parker?

Lucky: Okay, she went back to get an education, but she's not taking it seriously. If she's chasing after her college professor, she's obviously not taking it seriously. We're not trying to say the TV show is a stereotype.

Kisha: Yeah, we're just using it as an example.

Jamila: That's a good example.

Mimi: I don't think so.

Without the opinions of Mr. Hotep, the students were able to debate the perceived stereotypes in the television show. The presenters were challenged to explain their information more critically due to the questioning and disagreements from several students.

The critical thought and analysis technique was put to the test when Mr. Hotep introduced to the students the stereotyping group presentation project. As he explained the directions during the sixth observation, the students were asked to analyze stereotypes on various levels.

The directions – we’re going to work in groups of two to four students. Each group is going to focus on two to three of the stereotypes, maybe more depending. Stereotypes to choose from: we have A through L. You guys can read those. We’re going to look to spread the stereotypes around from group to group. I don’t want everyone doing the same thing. If you look at number four [*He reads*] “Individual responsibilities. Each group member must be responsible for a particular task below. Create a list of the group members with each assigned task. Give the assignment list to your teacher.” So, that’s going to be the first order of business. We need to figure that out. Now, here’s what we have to work on. Five, past examples. Define the stereotype.” By that, we mean just say what it is. We understand what lazy is. Just explain how that’s a stereotype used against African people. [*He reads*] “Give examples of how a stereotype was promoted in the past. You can use images, symbols, caricatures, etc. to display examples. You may draw or get examples from the web.” So, number five, I want you to include some visuals because a lot of this stereotype is coming in a visual form. That’s important. Number six, the same thing. Present examples. Give examples of how stereotype was promoted in the present. You can use images, song lyrics, television shows, films, U.S. pop culture, whatever to express that. Number seven, white supremacy. You need to define what that is. How did white supremacy affect Africans in America. How has the stereotype been used to promote white supremacy in the past. How is the stereotype being used to promote white supremacy in the present. Number eight, historical truth. Give historical examples of how the negative stereotype is not true. It is necessary to employ research and/or past knowledge here. Images can be powerful. Make sure we do a little research here to express historical examples of how this stereotype is not true. Number nine, black inferiority. How has negative stereotype been internalized by some African or black people to create a feeling or belief of inferiority. Give examples of how these black people are affected by the negative stereotype. Give examples of how some black people promote the negative stereotype. Number ten, solutions. We’re dealing with a lot of problems here. Let’s deal with some solutions. How can African people and other people help to destroy negative stereotypes? Give at least three intelligent solutions. And finally, eleven, you have to make a presentation as a group.

After Mr. Hotep spent five lessons challenging his students to think about and analyze how negative stereotypes affect Africans in America, he introduced the students to a group project that would allow them to critically analyze three stereotypes of the past and how it exists today. Mr. Hotep thought it was not only important to have the students use images, song lyrics, shows, and movies to show how these stereotypes are being promoted in the present but also have them generate solutions to the problem of

promoting stereotypes. Therefore, with selected stereotypes, the groups had to come together, analyze the stereotypes, and present the information as a group. He gave the students three days to look up the history of their stereotypes, find images that portrayed the message, and foster a critical thought analysis about the effects of the stereotypes in the past and present. He stated, "I'm asking you to express your critical thinking ability here."

Mr. Hotep managed to facilitate powerful classroom experiences through the encouragement of critical thought and analysis. He allowed a combination of techniques to bring the contradictions to the surface and have the students question if their own ideas and assumptions were in line with the content and messages he was presenting. The students questioned the connections being made, the content itself, and their own understanding of how stereotypes have and do exist. This method kept them engaged with the material, and more importantly, empowered about the effects of these complex topics in their own lives.

Use of African and Village Principles to Include Students in a Larger Community

Mr. Hotep used African and village principles to teach his students how to have critical consciousness with a sense of affiliation to a larger community. Although he introduced the unit in the beginning of the first observed lesson as "how stereotypes affect or have affected African Americans," at the end of the lesson he was able to allow the slide presentation to transition the students to understanding that the unit is about "how stereotypes have affected us." For the students to truly engage with the history

presented, Mr. Hotep found it important to have them relate to the material and recognize how they were part of a larger community, which stereotypes have greatly affected.

In relation to this specific research project, Mr. Hotep made it clear to his students how he felt about the research project and what their voices represented.

This a very important study. I think many of you know this doesn't happen in all classrooms around New Jersey. They're not exposed to this type of stuff. So it's really a good thing. You all are intelligent enough to know that this is important. If you look through some of the other textbooks, the American Nation textbook, you'll notice that African people are not included that much. You don't get into depth about African people or black people that much. So this is an important study. It's very important that your voice is heard because what you represent is a level of critical thinking that maybe is not expected for African Americans who are thirteen and fourteen years old – eighth graders. Not thinking that you guys are dealing with this level. Cause some of this stuff, I keep telling you over and over, some of this stuff when presented to adults they can't handle it. So you all are doing something very powerful right here. And it needs to be expressed. The rest of New Jersey needs to know what's happening. So it's important.

Even within the context of this research, Mr. Hotep wanted his students to understand the larger picture and have them see what they represented in this study. He wanted them to know how important they were in this study and how their voices represented the voices of African American youths capable of thinking critically. It was Mr. Hotep's goal to build his students up and position them as independent.

Throughout his interviews and journal entries, Mr. Hotep referred to his students as “my children” – identifying them as being a part of his family. He even made the community more global in the second observation when he explained to the students about the financial power of Africans: “If African people put all your money together, just Africans in America, we would be the ninth or tenth richest nation in the world.” He included the students as well as himself within the community, so that the students would be empowered and aware of their potential financial power.

Mr. Hotep continued with the African connections when he presented the stereotyping group project. As he was explaining the directions, he included African terminology to explain how the students should work in groups.

“Number three, ‘Kuumba – Creativity.’ You have to be creative. That’s what takes things to the next level with whatever you do. You have to be creative.

Five – ‘Ujima – Collective Work and Responsibility.’ Was the responsibility met by each individual? This is basically talking about if there’s somebody in the group that’s not doing what they’re supposed to be doing, then they’re going to lose. You have to be responsible. You have to help each other in order to get a good grade.”

Mr. Hotep established an environment that was similar to a community set-up. He fostered the mentality that he and his students were a part of the greater “we”. They were in it together and affected by it all together. He made sure that they understood how important it was to not only do well but also to help one another do the same.

The sense of community and affiliation to Africa was at the forefront of Mr. Hotep’s teachings. He knew that it was important for his particular population of students to not only develop a critical consciousness by learning about the history of Africa but also connect themselves to the teachings of Africa. Therefore, he did not hesitate to take every opportunity to implement the techniques, culture, and wisdom of Africa into the very fabric of his classroom.

Use of Personal Experiences

Due to his personal and educational background, Mr. Hotep was able to develop his own critical consciousness. To help his students connect to the history, he made

several attempts to explain this awareness by including his personal experiences within the historical dialogue. Although this approach was only occasionally implemented, it did keep the students interested in the topic at hand.

During the first observation, Mr. Hotep showed his students a picture of a stereotypical collectible item. The students were amazed by its existence. As previously mentioned, he explained to his students how he handled a situation where he was in a store with his wife that sold stereotypical collectible items, like the “black” lawn jockey. Mr. Hotep allowed his students to understand how to react to racial situations through his own personal experiences. He validated the images presented by providing a personal interaction. It allowed the students to not only question his reactions but also analyze how they would respond if confronted with the same situations.

During the third observation conversation about negative stereotypes that exist about black people, Mr. Hotep allowed his personal experience in high school to open a discussion about “acting white.”

Hotep: When I was in high school there was a stereotype, and we might see it's still around today that you cannot be intelligent and black. So there were some people that would come and try to knock the books out of my hands because I was an A, B student.

Kisha: You wasn't fighting.

Shawn: And you ain't hit him.

Hotep: I didn't have to get into fights. They knew. All right.

Shawn: Yes you did.

Mimi: So, you were a geek?

Hotep: No. They knew I dealt with martial arts.

Shawn: Oh, really? So, you would win?

Hotep: All right. But the point is that there was that stereotype and it's still a stereotype that goes today that says that maybe you're acting white if you're doing something intelligent. That's what they said, "How could you be acting white like that?" Right? Have you all ever heard that?

Students: Yes.

Hotep: Have you all heard talking white?

Students: Yeah...Yes.

Uloma: What is that?

Hotep: When you use proper English as if...

Kisha: I say that to my mama.

Hotep: ...African people can't use proper English. Right?

Kisha: I be like, "Mom, why you talking so white?"

Jamila: When people talk white, they be like, "Totally and like" and they keep on saying like.

Kisha: No, when my mother talks to her boss, she talks white. I be like, "Ma, why you talking so white?"

Hotep: So you guys believe that there's a such thing as talking white?

Kisha: No, but I just say that anyway.

Hotep: Okay. Let's get into the history. We're gonna pick that one up.

Mr. Hotep was able to take his own personal experience with the stereotype of "acting white" and have the students relate it to their own experiences. He directly asked the students if they were familiar with his experience in their own lives and allowed them to share their own personal experiences. He capitalized on these opportunities by challenging them to examine their own stereotypes. These discussions created a strong foundation for him to begin to explain the history behind the stereotype of "acting white".

Mr. Hotep's efforts to incorporate his own personal experiences within the lesson helped his students to become comfortable with sharing some of their own personal experiences. During the second observation, the students watched "Ethnic Notions", a documentary about the history of stereotyping in America. During the film, the students were introduced to a racial character, the Mammy. Desirah immediately recognized the character as an image she had seen in her own life:

"Ain't that the lady on the pancake box?" questioned Desirah.

"Now you're starting to make connections," encouraged Mr. Hotep.

Shawn replied, "Yeah, that's Aunt Jemima."

The students started to compare the characters and understand the similarities and messages being sent. The conversation continued as the students began to take the stern master image and connect it to the Kentucky Fried Chicken man. As Mr. Hotep pointed out how people feed into these negative stereotypes, Mimi stated, "But there's still stereotyping today." Therefore, personal realities came into play as the students began to realize how stereotypes were not a thing of the past.

During the fourth observation, the students continued to watch "Ethnic Notions." After a section where Al Jolson presented a song called, "Mammy", Mr. Hotep asked the class who was considered a "mammy". Mimi began the conversation by stating that a "mammy" was a mother figure; however, Lucky took the conversation to a personal level and explained, "A 'mammy' is suppose to represent me."

Contributions of the students' personal experiences, although not often used, contributed a deeper level of understanding to the classroom conversation. The students were able to internalize the material in order to better understand and analyze how the

history connects to their present lives. Some clarity was achieved through these connections and the class as a whole was more enlightened by these contributions.

The implementation of Mr. Hotep's personal experiences allowed the students to not only connect with their teacher but also to connect critically with history. It served as an open door into the analysis of how stereotypes affected their lives. The students were able to take Mr. Hotep's experiences and use them as a springboard into the self-analysis of their own experiences. This method, although sparsely used, allowed Mr. Hotep the chance to have his students personally connect to history and made him able to teach history on a level that allowed his children to connect to history beyond the traditional textbook.

As Mr. Hotep continued to structure his lessons based on the history of both Africans and African Americans, he allowed the Amistad workshops to give him the format to enhance his previous work to further develop his Afrocentric curriculum. As he sought guidance from such scholars as Dr. Molefi Asante and Carter G. Woodson, Mr. Hotep used the philosophy behind Ethnic Studies and designed a curriculum that emerged these ideas with the modern-day connections. Furthermore, his past racial experiences and his personal interest in the history of Africa helped shaped his lessons and motivated him to help his students realize the role of Africans in the past, present, and future.

Conclusion

Unlike Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep entered the Amistad discussion with years of racial encounters and a personal dedication to understanding the history of Africans and African Americans. To Mr. Hotep, Amistad was only a part of his journey towards a full

connection to his own history – the history of the people of the African Diaspora. Despite his limited encounters with the Amistad Commission, he has allowed these professional development opportunities to enhance his quest to know more about the African story through peer dialogue and from direct exposure to current notable scholars, such as Dr. Molefi Asante and Dr. Colin Palmer. Therefore, for Mr. Hotep the legislation was simply documented support of his beliefs and the Commission served as an additional resource.

Although both Mr. Hotep and Mrs. Yeager taught in monocultural settings, they approached the implementation of the New Jersey Amistad legislation in two different ways. For Mrs. Yeager it was a process that began with dispelling the myths and ended with becoming comfortable with the complex notions of race. However, for Mr. Hotep, the implementation of the Amistad Bill was about justifying the reclaiming of a history of empowerment. As a black teacher within a predominately black classroom, Mr. Hotep knew it was important for him to expose his students to the racism of the past and allow them to see how it still exists in the present. However, he allowed the idea of empowerment to create lessons and activities that would challenge his students to take this knowledge and find solutions to the racial issues of the future. It was Mr. Hotep's goal to return this important history to his students so they could realize how their culture were once perceived prior to American racism, how racism shifted their role in the world, and how they could reclaim their positions as powerful black children and adults through their own journeys of discovery and advocacy.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLEMENTING AMISTAD WITH MR. PHILLIPS

In the chapter, I will describe how Mr. Phillips, a history teacher at Diversity Vocational High School, infused multiple perspectives with the intent of engaging all students to relate to the history of oppression. Mr. Phillips' perceptions of the purpose of the Amistad legislation and his goals for implementation became evident as the data revealed the impact of his role as a black teacher within a diverse school district, the diversity of his teaching environment and his students, and his personal philosophies and educational background in relation to American history. Unfortunately, I was only able to complete seven classroom observations with Mr. Phillips due to an unexpected death in his family. However, I felt that I had collected enough data from these observed class lessons to present how he approached the implementation of the Amistad Bill.

To understand Mr. Phillips' implementation of the Amistad legislation, I will describe how he used five components to build classroom structure aimed at uncovering the common story of oppression through multiple perspectives: 1) developing in students a familiarity with the basic historical facts of different cultures, 2) helping students to understand the separate narratives of American history to better understand the larger themes, 3) helping students to identify with the subjugation of others, 4) encouraging students to connect with the curriculum to better understand American history, and 5) using of nontraditional materials and methods to accomplish the above aims.

Mr. Phillips' Self-awareness of How His Past Shaped His Perception

Raised in the segregated South, Mr. Phillips was very aware of how his past

shaped how he taught history. In addition, he understood how his background and present-day teaching context influenced how he incorporated the history of Africans and African Americans in America. Mr. Phillips revealed his racial past and explained his present teaching environment to justify how he approached the implementation of the Amistad Bill into his history curriculum.

Vignette 9: Understanding Mr. Phillips' Teaching Environment

It was a warm spring morning in Urban City as the public buses breezed up and down the main streets and the commuters hustled through the streets to work. I parked my car on the top floor of the city parking deck, which was located across the street from Diversity High School. After buying their usual breakfast from the street vendor on the corner, the students flowed passed the principal, who greeted them outside the school, and walked into the large complex to begin their day.

Once I made it through the metal detectors and signed in with security, I met Mr. Phillips by the main office. He greeted me with a warm smile while signing in, checking his mailbox, and grabbing his daily stack of newspapers for his period one class. He escorted me to the elevator and up to his classroom on the second floor.

The hallways were decorated with visual reminders of the upcoming HSPA examination and the desired score to be achieved. In Mr. Phillips' classroom, the walls were covered with posters, images, and information about the U.S. government, black history, Jewish history, Native American history, and Latino history. These images corresponded with the curriculum that he taught – a Diaspora course for seniors.

Mr. Phillips taught in Diversity High School in Urban City, a large city located in northern New Jersey. The city has a history as one of the most industrial cities in New Jersey, yet time has allowed it to decay economically. Amongst the fast paced life style and congested feel stood Diversity High School, neighbor to a community college. The school was built in the heart of the city, surrounded by bus and train stations, hospitals, and colleges. Racially, according to the US Census 2000, the approximate demographic make-up of Urban City was 51% black or African American, 25% Hispanic or Latino (of any race), 23% white, 1% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native.

Within the realms of the observed classroom, Mr. Phillips described his students as mostly black and Latino. According to him, “My students are fifty percent black and fifty percent Latino.” Mr. Phillips continued to explain that there was a large African population, mostly from Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia. Mr. Phillips felt it was important to understand that these particular students did not know much about American history, let alone black American history.

Mr. Phillips’ Legacy of Interacting with Racial Issues on the Path to Teaching

Mr. Phillips, a veteran high school history teacher since 1973, never thought that he would be a teacher until he actually became one. Born and raised in the segregated south, he went to an all-black school until the third grade. His family decided to move to the North and enroll him into an integrated school in New Jersey. Due to this shift, he was exposed to the inequalities within public schools by transferring from an education in a segregated school to a participant in how the integrated process affected education.

During the Vietnam War, Mr. Phillips realized that he did not want to be drafted; therefore, he decided to enroll at a local community college. Even though the early years had exposed him to an all-black academic setting, he did not receive black history until college. In college he took course entitled, “The History of the black Woman,” which was the only course offered in his history program pertaining to the history of black people. According to Mr. Phillips, “Most educational institutions that were white did not teach black history.”

Other than that course, Mr. Phillips only recalled a course entitled, “Industrialization of the South” that did not include black history. Yet, one professor

stood out, for he seemed to be a hippie. He constantly talked about race and about black people having equal rights. Mr. Phillips admitted that this professor was considered to be very liberal during those days.

From there Mr. Phillips transferred to a teacher education program within a New Jersey state university. Upon graduating with a teaching degree, he wanted to enter the public service field. However, with the threat of the draft lurking, he knew he would only be safe if he taught in an urban area.

Mr. Phillips had been in the teaching profession for over thirty years. In addition to his secondary school position, he taught history and psychology at the community college where he had first enrolled as well as at a community adult school. He was also a vice principal in three school districts, but decided to return to the classroom where he felt he was more effective.

In the years that Mr. Phillips had been teaching at Diversity High School, he was involved with the writing of the black history curriculum for the city since the 1970s when black history was first implemented within the curriculum. As a part of the high school curriculum, Diversity High School offered a course about the Diasporas to the seniors. This course allowed students to understand the stories of various oppressed groups: Africa people, African American people, Latin American people, Asian American people, Native American people, and Jewish people. Through this course, the students were challenged to make connections across ethnicities to understand the larger story of struggle, perseverance, and power.

Mr. Phillips' Willingness to Gain Knowledge

With a major in history, Mr. Phillips entered the teaching profession prepared to transfer his historical knowledge onto his students. Since history was his original passion he was willing to learn more about the various perspectives within history. This knowledge helped him to better position the Amistad Law within his curriculum and developed goals for his students that helped them to understand why black history should be incorporated in the history curriculum.

Mr. Phillips and Amistad: Making a Connection Between History and the Law

As a social studies teacher in New Jersey, Mr. Phillips was aware that the legislation was “orchestrated by William Payne and aimed at incorporating African American history into United States history within the state.” However, he believed that the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards should have included more black history because he felt that the “mandate was vague.”

Although Mr. Phillips was aware of the New Jersey Amistad Commission and that Dr. Karen Jackson-Weaver was the director, he believed that “most schools don’t even know what Amistad Commission is...if I ask most of the teachers around this school.” He explained that he was able to have contact with her because he “attended the Amistad workshops each year and attended the summer institute for two weeks” at a university in New Jersey during the summer of 2006.

Mr. Phillips believed that the legislation was enacted to incorporate African American history into United States history. However, he also believed that it was not “for the purpose of black students but for white students because it seemed that black

students are getting it.” In his opinion, black history was more likely taught in black districts than in white districts.

Mr. Phillips believed that the purpose of the Amistad Commission was to provide workshops where they could give teachers resources and methods on how to incorporate African American history into the curricula. As he explained,

I guess the Amistad Commission believes that if they give teachers the resources, that they would be more effective in including African American history in the United States history curriculum...and that if they can give them the information that they could do a better job at teaching.

However, he did not feel that the Commission should just provide the resources. He noted that the Commission should allow teachers the chance to be “exposed to teachers who teach this.” Thus, he believed that the purpose of the Amistad Commission should not only be to provide resources and methods but also to provide the opportunity for teachers to shadow teachers that have the experience in teaching the infusion of black history.

Mr. Phillips’ Goals for the Enactment of Amistad

Mr. Phillips’ goals for the implementation of the Amistad legislation moved beyond the limitation of the history of the people of the African Diaspora. His first goal was to help his students understand that they are as much a part of American history as anyone else. Teaching in a classroom with students from various countries around the world, Mr. Phillips realized the importance of presenting history in a way that his students would understand and identify with the stories and perspectives of American

history. It was his goal to incorporate common themes of oppression and survival to make each lesson relative and real to each one of his students.

His second goal was to have his students become familiar with not only the background of black history but also the background of all those who were once and/or still were oppressed in the world. Mr. Phillips believed that black history, along with the history of all people of color, could not fit *into* the current structure of the American history curriculum, for the entire history curriculum must be transformed to tell a new story. Due to his experience with separate but equal and integrated classrooms, Mr. Phillips believed that the black perspective should have been included within the history narrative starting in Kindergarten, since most students were exposed to the European history that early. However, he explained that until people become acclimated with the black perspective within the history narrative, it should be taught separately.

How Mr. Phillips Adjusted Amistad to His Context

For Mr. Phillips the implementation of the Amistad Bill within his classroom was based on the notion that it has to connect to the various cultures within the classroom context. He knew the importance of considering the teaching context within the planning and implementation of black history in the history curriculum. To him, the students had to relate to common themes and allow their own backgrounds to help them understand the role of black people in American history.

Mr. Phillips Use of a Multi-Perspective Approach to the Implementation of Amistad

Mr. Phillips had been involved with the writing of the black history curriculum

for the city during the 1970s when black history was first implemented within the curriculum. As a part of the high school curriculum, Diversity Vocational and Technology High School offered a course taught by Mr. Phillips about the Diasporas to the senior class. This course allowed students to understand the stories of various oppressed groups: Africans, African Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Jews. Through this course, the students were provided with five strategies that challenged them to make connections across ethnicities and to understand the larger story of struggle, perseverance, and power: 1) developing a familiarity with the basic historical facts of different cultures, 2) understanding the separate narratives of American history to better understand the larger themes, 3) identifying with the subjugation of others, 4) encouraging students to connect with the curriculum, and 5) using of nontraditional materials and methods to teach the curriculum.

Developing a Familiarity with the Basic Historical Facts of Each Culture

During the first ten minutes of each class period, Mr. Phillips wrote a “Do Now” assignment on the board, which was to be completed by the students prior to the lesson and which served as a link between the previous and upcoming lessons. The “Do Now” assignments ranged from defining a key event in history to summarizing the reading from the day before. Mr. Phillips held the students accountable for this knowledge by requiring them to share the answers aloud with the class.

During the first observation, Mr. Phillips asked the students to read from their textbooks to determine what was W.E.B. Dubois’ philosophy about the role of black people in America post-slavery. He explained to the students that Dubois was a slave

that managed to succeed through educational opportunities. In the fifth observed lesson, Mr. Phillips asked the students to define the philosophies of W.E.B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington, and Marcus Garvey and to compare and contrast their views. As the students read their summaries of these positions, Mr. Phillips clarified the information and provided a justification for each stance.

Mr. Phillips often assigned a paragraph summaries from the novel, Day of Tears by Julius Lester as the “Do Now” assignments. This requirement occurred during six of the observed lessons. Regardless of the resistance to the daily routine, the students used the “Do Now” summaries as ways to explain the story to those who had been absent, to clarify information that was confusing, and to discuss the issues that arose in the story. Therefore, the “Do Now” assignment was a common venue for Mr. Phillips to have his students become familiar with the basic facts of history, especially black history.

Understanding the Larger Themes within the Separate Narratives of American History

Within the Diaspora course, the students were able to thoroughly examine the narratives of five oppressed cultures and make connections between the cultures to discover the larger, unifying links. Although this study only had a chance to take a glimpse at how Mr. Phillips incorporated the narratives of African and African American people into the American history curriculum, the larger themes of struggle, perseverance, and power were still drawn into the observed lessons.

The struggle of black people in America came alive in Mr. Phillips’ classroom when he read Day of Tears with his students. The students were able to read accounts of one of the largest slave auctions in America and reflect upon the struggles each character

endured due to this oppression. The novel is structured in a play-format, so the students were able to become the characters within the story and identify with the hardships of slavery. I frequently observed the students emotionally connecting to the struggles as they read aloud from the novel. It was common to hear comments, such as, “That’s not fair,” “I would have done the same thing,” or “That’s messed up.”

As the students continued to read about the characters in Day of Tears, they became aware of how Mattie, Sara, and several other characters were able to persevere despite the lack of opportunities afforded to them. Mr. Phillips explained that these characters were able to continue living and fighting for their freedom even after the auction separated them from their loved ones. The hope of reconnecting and being free gave them the perseverance necessary to live as black people in America at that time. The students identified with this fight, for their reactions ranged from sympathizing with Jeffrey’s passion to find Sara to agreeing with Mattie’s dedication to make sure the enslaved black people that ran away were safe and fed.

Finally, Mr. Phillips made sure that power surfaced within the black history discussions. Not only did he emphasize how Mattie had the power to influence the master’s daughter and endure the sudden separation from her family, he also allowed the discussions about Dubois, Washington, and Garvey to prove the existence of power in the black culture. Through the summaries provided by the students and the explanations given by Mr. Phillips, the students were able to see how Dubois wanted black people to gain power in America through education, Washington wanted black people to gain power in America economically, and Garvey wanted black people to gain power in America by simply reconnecting to their African roots.

The students were able to see the three themes within the observed lesson as it pertained to the black culture. However, these themes were integrated into each unit to help the students make connections to the larger story of struggle, perseverance, and power of oppressed groups. According to Mr. Phillips, the culminating project for this particular course required the students to draw links between all five presented cultures and make universal connections rooted in oppression.

Identifying with the Subjugation of Others

Mr. Phillips stated that the implementation of *Amistad* is not simply based on the sharing of facts but also creating an environment where the students are able to identify with the stories of subjugation. In the Diaspora course, Mr. Phillips created lessons where the students were able to understand oppression and make personal connections with feelings of being defeated or conquered.

Using Day of Tears as the primary source of history allowed the students to become the enslaved Africans within the story and make the events personal. As the dialogue was reenacted in the classroom, the students not only gave voices to these characters but they reacted to the words they read and what was being done to their personal characters. On several occasions while the students were reading, they would comment, “That’s a shame” and “That’s sad. He waited for her.”

During the seventh observed lesson, the students were able to read a particular quote highlighted by Mr. Phillips, “It breaks my heart to see the Southern way of life destroyed. Slavery has been the best thing that’s happened to niggers because it has helped civilized them, as much as that is possible given their limited intelligence.”

(Lester, p. 47). This quote allowed the students to discuss slavery as “the Southern way of life” and how America would be today if slavery still existed. Immediately, the students turned the discussion into personal issues:

Monique quickly stated, “We would still be slaves.”

“We wouldn’t live here. Won’t go to school,” responded Anthony.

The students transferred the conversation about slavery and oppression to a modern-day equivalent of how they could be forced to do something they would not want to do – drafted into the military forces. Anthony and Bobby stated that they would flee to their native lands of Jamaica and Haiti. The students began to understand the desire enslaved Africans had to fight against the oppression and the decisions to run away despite the dangers.

Through the reading of Day of Tears and the personal connections to relevant topics, Mr. Phillips was able to discuss subjugation with his students and provide opportunities for them to identify with the oppression endured by enslaved Africans. He was able to make history become personal to the students and allowed them the chance to connect to the narrative of black people in America.

Encouraging Students to Connect with the Curriculum

Given the classroom environment of diverse students, Mr. Phillips strived to have his students see themselves within history. Despite the five separate narratives within the Diaspora curriculum, Mr. Phillips allowed the larger story to be the connection between the students and the curriculum. Whether through an emotional connection or simple humor, he was able to keep his students engaged in the materials beyond his presence in

the classroom. Even while analyzing the future post-graduation plans, Mr. Phillips and his students were able to connect their personal lives to the curriculum.

In an effort to connect the curriculum to the students personally, during the second observed lesson Mr. Phillips asked the students, “Would you ever buy a slave?” Creating an environment where the students were challenged to make history personal forced the students to verbalize how they felt about owning slaves. Instantly Anthony expressed, “I’d buy a white one.” Monique stated that she would not have a choice at that time. She would have to own slaves to live and make money during those times; however, she also stated that she would not have treated them poorly. Bobby admitted that he, too, would own slaves, Rajohn asked, “How would we own slaves, Mr. Phillips? We would have been a slave.” Mr. Phillips allowed this personal connection to exist, so that the students could understand that owning slaves was a business decision and part of the economic system at that time.

During the third observed lesson, Mr. Phillips decided to spend the period working with each student on his or her post-graduation plans. This was a common routine for the students to take one day a week to discuss with Mr. Phillips their ideas, questions, and concerns about working or going to school. Initially, I did not see a connection between this lesson and the implementation of the Amistad legislation.

However, during the fifth observed lesson, Mr. Phillips asked the students to discuss the differences between the philosophies of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois, and Marcus Garvey. As they were debating the reasons for Washington’s vocational plan, Dubois, educational ideas, and Garvey’s Africa initiative, Mr. Phillips shifted the conversation towards their own personal opinions about the philosophies. He

stated, “If you guys were living during that time, who would you have followed?” As the students stated their preferences, Mr. Phillips began to draw the connections for the students based on their post-graduation plans, “You know it seems like all you guys that are going into the electrical trades look at the same plans Booker T. would.”

On several occasions Mr. Phillips encouraged his students to connect with the topics discussed in class through humor. Mr. Phillips made jokes with them, and the jokes went from the students back to Mr. Phillips, and from one student to another; yet, it was all still related to the material. Mr. Phillips was able to develop a friendly atmosphere with his students and his sense of humor enhanced the discussion and engaged the students.

During the fifth observation, Mr. Phillips discussed the importance of the upcoming presidential election. Faze and Rajohn stated that they planned to vote, but Anthony disagreed and stated, “Your one vote ain’t gonna do no good.” Immediately Mr. Phillips and Anthony began to discuss the power of voting and what people went through for us to have the right to vote. However, Anthony still insisted that he did not want to vote, so Mr. Phillips replied, “Go back to Jamaica.” All the students instantly became engaged in the discussion by responding to Mr. Phillips with “Ooo!” and “You’re disrespectful, Mr. Phillips.” Anthony laughed at the comment and stated, “I don’t have a problem living there.” Mr. Phillips asked him, “Why are your parents here?” Anthony explained that they chose to come to America because there were more opportunities here. “Absolutely,” stated Mr. Phillips to end the conversation. Through a means of sarcasm and humor, he was able to help Anthony see the benefits and power of being a

citizen of the United States in comparison to other countries. That day he allowed his sense of humor to engage Anthony and connect him to the curriculum of politics.

Using Nontraditional Materials and Methods to Teach the Curriculum

During two observed lessons, Mr. Phillips brought a pamphlet to class to share with his students. The document was a voting party pamphlet for State Senate and State Assembly. He read the descriptions of each candidate to the class and facilitated a discussion about voting, state government positions, the political parties, their support, and debated issues, such as vouchers. He used this particular piece of material to engage the students in discussing the politics of their local areas and to review basic political terms.

Mr. Phillips also allowed documentaries and movies to help his students connect to the curriculum. During the fourth observation, he showed the students a video on the conspiracies surrounding the September 11, 2001 attacks. As the video vividly questioned the details of each incident, Anthony reacted throughout the entire film, “It’s a plan,” “The terrorist was a good pilot,” and “That’s some bull crap”. Due to the visual nature of this presentation, some students (Anthony especially) were able to connect to history in an active way. He clearly was fascinated with these ideas and allowed some of the information to confirm his preconceived notions about September 11th and the government.

In general, Mr. Phillips believed that in order to properly implement the New Jersey Amistad legislation within a diverse setting, one must: 1) develop a familiarity with the basic historical facts of each culture, 2) understand the separate narratives of

American history to better understand the larger themes, 3) identify with the subjugation of others, 4) encourage students to connect with the curriculum, and 5) use nontraditional materials and methods to teach the curriculum. According to Mr. Phillips, the advantage of the Amistad legislation “is that it’s not chronological.” Because he felt that the legislation prompts teachers to not be locked into the use of only the textbook, he expressed that because of his diverse setting this legislation allowed his students to see that they have the “some foundation...one of a people that have been subjugated.” Since he felt that the curriculum involved and included all of his students through a first-person connection, he was able to be more creative with the historical data of his curriculum by coming up with his own materials.

Conclusion

Unlike Mrs. Yeager and Mr. Hotep, Mr. Phillips was interested in history from his early schooling experiences and had been involved with the teaching of history and the curriculum of black history since the 1970s. During the years that he taught in Urban City, he was able to structure the history curriculum to the needs of his community. Urban City had become a center for migrated black families from the south; therefore, the incorporation of black history in the 1970s became essential. Over time, however, Urban City became extremely diverse, and Mr. Phillips found himself teaching students from Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe. With so many perspectives in one classroom, he began to restructure how he believed history should be taught.

Mr. Phillips entered the Amistad discussion with a unique perspective since he was raised in the segregated south. Because he was taught in a black school and learned

black history separate from the traditional American history curriculum, he approached the implementation of the Amistad legislation differently than the other two teachers. He felt that the history curriculum should be broken down into separate racial and cultural units united with the common themes of struggle, perseverance, and power. He believed that this approach offered a full understanding of each perspective yet connected each culture and race by universal themes.

Although this approach may appear to enhance the separate but equal notion of education, it is actually a combination of Mrs. Yeager and Mr. Hotep's approaches. Much like the role of Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Phillips had to figure out what knowledge and misconceptions his international students brought to the table to help them discover the truth and help them understand basic facts about each culture through a separate presentation of each narrative. Like Mrs. Yeager's students, Mr. Phillips' students had limited exposure to the black American culture; therefore, the implementation processes were similar.

In other ways, Mr. Phillip's approach resembled that of Mr. Hotep, particularly his goal of having the students identify with African American subjugation and connect to the curriculum through the use of non-traditional materials. Much like Mr. Hotep's approach of returning the history to his students, Mr. Phillips crafted his lessons to make the American story part of their own stories. It was his goal to have his students see themselves in the story and understand that the journeys of struggle, perseverance, and power are the same. Mr. Phillips structured his curriculum, through the use of current events and non-traditional materials, to engage his students in discussions of how these themes existed in the past and were still evident today.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand how three New Jersey public school history teachers interpreted and implemented the New Jersey Amistad Bill within their classrooms. Drawing upon the frameworks of Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and multiculturalism. The study explored how the racial context of the participating classrooms affected the implementation of the legislation, concluding that mandated curriculum should not be prescriptive.

This study set out to add to our limited knowledge of the impact of legislative change on the classroom, focusing on questions investigate of how the Amistad Bill was interpreted and implemented by teachers. Such approaches as Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and Multicultural Education serve as only content justification as to the inclusion of multiple perspectives not as prescribed strategies towards the mandatory implementation of the African and African American perspective into the history curricula. In this study all three teachers shared the common characteristics of being self-awareness of how their pasts shaped their personal investments, a willingness to increase their knowledge base, and being responsive to the context in which they taught.

This chapter will discuss the three themes that emerged from the data: self-awareness, knowledge, and adjustment to context. The first portion of the discussion will be about how each teacher was personally invested to the role of the Amistad legislation within the history curriculum. Each teacher demonstrated an understanding of their passions, consciousness, and commitments based on their pasts. The second part of the discussion will explain how and why the teachers desired to learn about the role of

Africans and African Americans in American history prior to the creation of the Amistad Bill. Finally, the discussion section will conclude with an interpretation as to why these three teachers were willing to adjust their curriculum based on the needs of their students.

The next section considers the implications for teachers, policymakers, and researchers with an analysis of the available materials, drawbacks of a non-prescriptive approach, the efficacy of mandating curriculum, and paths for future research. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of the African and African American perspective in the history curriculum, the importance of the New Jersey Amistad Bill, and the possible methods of implementation based on the classroom context.

Discussion

This study has provided a glimpse into three New Jersey public school classrooms to witness the implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Bill in the history curriculum. By interviewing three New Jersey social studies teachers, observing their classrooms, and collecting documentation within the field, three essential themes surfaced from the data: 1) they were aware of their past and the need for Amistad, 2) they were willing to gain knowledge, and 3) they were responsive to the context.

Successful Amistad Implementers are Aware of How their Past Shaped their Perceptions

Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep, and Mr. Phillips attributed their beliefs and mindsets concerning the implementation of African and African American history into the history curriculum to their awareness of how their pasts had influenced them. Each teacher grew

up with different experiences and in different regions of the United States, yet collectively, they believed in the need for the Amistad Bill within the history curriculum.

Mrs. Yeager grew up in Oberlin, Ohio, and was greatly exposed to liberal ideas about freedom, equality, and justice. Her parents were very involved in various human rights movements; therefore, notions of race, gender, discrimination, and activism were instilled in her at an early age. These notions continued to be at the root of how she approached the implementation of the Amistad Bill and her general willingness to expose her students to the often hidden realities of the American past.

As for Mr. Hotep, he grew up on the East Coast with years of exposure to the elite, privately educated portion of New Jersey. Because of his direct experiences with racism, he developed an interest in learning about the racial truth of America. He felt that his own peers could have benefited from the New Jersey Amistad legislation. His experiences shaped him to believe that it is critical that everyone, especially African children in America, takes the time to understand and honor the great history of Africa and how it influenced the world. Mr. Hotep felt that students must be allowed to study Africa as the root of civilization – a concept that Mrs. Yeager also expressed as she encouraged an understanding of the contributions of Africa within European history.

Mr. Phillips grew up in the segregated South during the early 1950s. He began his education in a black school, but due to his family's decision to move north, he was immediately exposed to an integrated school in New Jersey. Unfortunately, during his high school years he was exposed to the race riots of the north but, as a result, developed an interest in the history behind these riots.

Because of his past, teaching primarily in black communities, Mr. Phillips stated, "I think Amistad is more for white students because black students are more exposed to black history." Even in a diverse setting, he believed that his students understood that black history was at the root of their own history through the common narrative of subjugation, whether European, Native American, or black. It was because of their past experiences that the three teachers were passionate about gaining Amistad-related knowledge.

Successful Amistad Implementers have a Passion to Gain Knowledge

The data from this study revealed that the teachers took the time to consider his or her knowledge base with the concepts addressed within the Amistad legislation. The necessary knowledge needed to carry out this mandate was based on the educational experiences of the teachers with the history of African and African American history. Although each teacher gained this knowledge through different paths, they were still able to use the knowledge in their curricula and continued to desire to learn more.

Mrs. Yeager's interest in the history of minority groups in America was guided by her exposure to various history and Women's Studies courses. She was very aware of her love of history and attributed this connection to her family's political involvement. While attending college, she used her elective opportunities as chances to take several history courses. It was through these courses that she developed an additional interest for a multicultural approach towards education.

When Mrs. Yeager finally became a history teacher, she actively attended various workshops and in-service to develop her knowledge base. She recognized that she did

not have enough information; therefore, her lessons would have had more of a European dominant perspective. She explained, “I used a white perspective because I was not aware of the existence of other perspectives.” Therefore, she believed that as she learned more, her students benefited. Consequently, before enrolling in the Amistad Summer Institute in 2006, she had already attended several workshops offered by the Commission, which were related to black history. She developed a passion for the incorporation of black history into the curriculum and began to expose her students to the knowledge she had gained.

Mr. Hotep’s passion for the history of African and African American people began after taking several courses in college. Like Mrs. Yeager, he did not major in history but used his electives as opportunities to learn more about history. After college, Mr. Hotep decided to open an African bookstore to help others gain the knowledge that he craved. He allowed this atmosphere to feed his appetite for knowledge, and used it as a platform to educate himself on the history of Africans and African Americans.

When given the opportunity to teach history in his middle school, Mr. Hotep made sure to incorporate the knowledge he had gained from his previous employment. Rather than attending various workshops offered in the area, he took on his own professional development. He has filled his school and home libraries with hundreds of books related to the history of black people and visited bookstores and libraries in the area to continue to read up on the history and current literature. He has allowed this passion for history to transcend into the classroom and within his daily lessons.

Mr. Phillips’ passion was rooted in his traditional training in and early love for history. Mr. Phillips, unlike the other two teachers, had sought opportunities to gain

more knowledge about the injustices, persecutions, and oppression within the American narrative beyond his first years in college. When his professors continued to angle the history curriculum toward a European perspective, Mr. Phillips read about the black perspective and quietly questioned the history curriculum.

After college he was hired as a history teacher, and he immediately became involved with the district's effort to include black history within the history curriculum. Due to his past experience with segregation and the racism that emerged from integration, Mr. Phillips did not hesitate to share his knowledge with others to justify why he was dedicated to this implementation. Throughout the many years of being dedicated to the incorporation of black history into he made sure that his passion for the common story of oppression and survival was conveyed within each history unit he taught.

This study revealed the need for the teachers to come to grips with their comfort levels with the materials and the integration of African and African American history into the American history narrative. Comfort-levels differed amongst the three teachers due to their experiences, education, and professional development opportunities. However, the Amistad Summer Institute provided each teacher with access to more information and materials to ease the difficulties of implementing the legislation. Overall, both Mr. Hotep and Mr. Phillips were comfortable with the material due to their self-education on black history and personal experiences with racism. However, Mrs. Yeager admitted that she "did not know enough to talk about it comfortably" until the Amistad lectures prompted her to find out more information on her own. She attributed her sense of comfort to the training provided by the New Jersey Amistad Commission.

The Amistad Summer Institute was important because it addressed issues of comfort and created a safe space for honesty and for the chance for teachers to admit their discomfort with the concepts and materials. Teachers faced issues of judgment and learned how to respect one another for their levels of introspection and for caring enough to work on their discomfort. The Institute challenged the teachers to deal with racism as a team. It became a transformative experience – providing teachers with the opportunities to face their own fears. The Summer Institute was not just for “that one teacher who’s from an all-white rural part of New Jersey”, for “black teachers in urban New Jersey were also working” on their comfort levels.

It was because these three teachers were aware of how their pasts helped to develop their passion for the implementation of the Amistad Bill that they took the time to consider the backgrounds and experiences that their students brought to the historical discussion. All three teachers understood that because of their students’ contexts, the lens in which they viewed American history was to be considered, explored, and challenged within the history lessons.

Successful Amistad Implementers are Responsive to the Context of the Classroom

Epstein’s (2001) study on racial identity and young people’s perspectives on social education, concluded that teachers should be aware that their students do not come to school as blank slates. She explained:

They are meaning makers who come to school with historical or social scientific understandings constructed from the interactions with parents, the media, peers, and the racial/ethnic cultures in which they live (Epstein, 2001, p. 45).

With an understanding of the classroom context and the students' prior knowledge and experiences, the teachers were able to collect the necessary information and materials to effectively implement the African and African American perspectives within their history curricula.

Upon entering the classroom, each teacher within this study made a conscious effort to be aware of the context in which he or she was teaching. For some students the history of Africans and African American people in America was a new concept in the classroom, while other students had been exposed to this historical perspective from personal experiences or prior academic exposure. Considering what the students knew and why they needed to understand this perspective was crucial for all three teachers: Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep, and Mr. Phillips.

Responding to Context in a Predominately White Setting

Mrs. Yeager taught in a predominately white setting and thought it was very important to concentrate on three areas: dispelling myths, incorporating the facts, and humanizing the lessons. These three areas drew on the multicultural education dimensions of content integration, knowledge construction process, and prejudice reduction explored by Banks (1995). However, the nature of the Amistad legislation allowed Mrs. Yeager to use a combination of Ethnic Studies and Multicultural Education towards the integration of content – bringing the perspective of African and African American people to the forefront.

Because African and African American history generally exists at a minimum level within most history curricula, many students across the country simple had not been

exposed to the perspectives of Africans and African Americans. As Mrs. Yeager explained, her students were only exposed to this perspective through the media rather than day-to-day interactions. Therefore, it is important for teachers in this setting to analyze what the students seem to know about various historical facts and to dispel the myths when necessary.

These students need to be exposed daily to the facts about how Africans and African Americans influenced and contributed to the American narrative. As Mrs. Yeager discovered, teachers should analyze how they teach a lesson or unit and transform a lesson to a collaborative narrative about the European and African perspectives in America. Mrs. Yeager admitted that she had taught about the Quakers dominating the transfers on the Underground Railroad but soon realized that she was missing a large amount of information about how enslaved Africans and African American ministers primarily assisted enslaved Africans to freedom. By shifting her approach to a harmony between the value of multiculturalism and the need for emphasizing the African and African American perspective alongside the traditional European story and providing this new information, Mrs. Yeager was able to help her students see the influence of African Americans within that particular unit.

Finally, it is important to provide lessons and materials that allow the students the chance to identify, empathize, and connect to history. Within this setting, the students struggled to identify with other cultures due to lack of exposure. This approach leans towards an infusion of Ethnic Studies and Multicultural Education as it captures the need to communicate story of oppression and survival to a generation of students that have become disconnected from the realities of the American past – the truth about slavery and

racism within the historical narrative. As Mrs. Yeager realized, students need to connect to history to truly empathize with the narrative of others, especially Africans and African Americans.

Responding to Context in a Predominately Black Setting

Mr. Hotep was responsible for implementing the Amistad legislation within a social studies classroom made up predominately of black students. He did not approach this by assuming that these students because of their backgrounds were already aware of the black history within America. Instead, with the guidelines of both Ethnic Studies and Africana Studies, he made it his mission to instill the basic facts of African and African American history by way of three methods: presenting the past, analyzing the present for connections, and encouraging the students to be agents of change by allowing them the opportunities to formulate solutions.

By presenting facts about the past, Mr. Hotep realized that his students were in need of the basic historical facts of how Africans and African Americans contributed to and influenced the history of America. Because of his setting, he found it important to present facts about Africans, African Americans, and the historical interactions of Africans with European Americans, so that his students could gain a better understanding of how they would have been viewed, treated, and valued during those times. Rooted in Africana Studies, this approach allowed him to use the study of the black culture to help his students identify with their pasts and connect to their history.

Mr. Hotep also presented the material that challenged how his students looked at their own worlds. He carefully explained the historical patterns of racism and related the

concepts to current events for the sake of empowerment. By allowing his students to see the history of racism, simply understand it in those contexts, and then make direct connections to current situations, he was able to make history come alive by allowing his students to become personally invested in the history due to its present-day connections.

Mr. Hotep believed that African and African American students were in need of empowerment when it came to exposure to the African perspective within American history. He believed that his approach created a situation where the students would desire to make a change due to the personal realities of how history connected to the present. Mr. Hotep's students created projects showing how the past had effected the stereotypes of today, offering better ways to correct those mistakes. Although he was strongly influenced by Africana Studies and the teachings of such scholars as Dr. Molefi Asante, his ultimate drive to empower his students to rethink about their role in America and to challenge stereotypes and inequalities showed a multicultural perspective as well.

Responding to Context in a Diverse Setting

Mr. Phillips had the opportunity to teach students from diverse backgrounds (from various east European, West Indian, African, and Latin countries), which automatically brought different cultural perspectives to the classroom discussions. He understood that his students had limited knowledge about the history of America; therefore, through his Diaspora course he used Ethnic Studies and multiculturalism to guide how he taught the history of Native Americans, Africans, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Jews – separate cultural units brought together at the end through the common theme of oppression, survival, and strength.

Each unit was not only factual but also personalized through first- and second-person narratives. Mr. Phillips allowed his students to read the facts from traditional history books; however, he included a multitude of venues for his students to personally connect to the history. Through role-playing or the reading of first-person accounts of a particular time in history, the students were able to draw connections from the history of one group to the history of another and most importantly from the history of one group to their own personal background.

Using the overall themes of oppression, survival, and strength, Mr. Phillips was able to find connections between all the students – despite their cultural differences. He created an environment of unity and commonality rather than a world of separate stories and historical isolation. He managed to take the approach of ethnic studies and blend it with the intent of multicultural education to create a new way of teaching the perspectives of various groups. Yet he did this not with the intent of challenging the already existing dichotomy of ethnic studies versus multicultural education, but with the best interests of the students at heart.

Mr. Phillips' goal was to find ways to teach his students about each culture and yet maintain a sense of the American dream – equality. He allowed equality to be defined by the unifying struggles of each group rather than the assumption that each culture within the American narrative reflects equal journeys. With both an Ethnic Studies and multicultural approach to Amistad, Mr. Phillips took the time to highlight the invasion of Europeans on the Native American culture, the mistreatment of the Jews and Asians during World War II, the forced African migration to America through racial slavery, the racial inequalities experienced by African Americans in America, and the

discrimination and exclusion of Latin Americans within the American culture. Through these stories, he was able to connect his students to the common themes of oppression, survival, and strength and allowed their diversity (what some may see as a cultural crutch) to serve as the template to better understand the journey of others.

Based on the previous discussion about the impact of context on the implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Bill, it is my argument that the interpretation and implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Bill should be based on the classroom context. In response to the exclusion of ethnic groups from the history curriculum, Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and multiculturalism were considered as three different approaches to the inclusion of the missing narratives. However, through the approaches observed within this study, Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, and multicultural education have emerged into a new approach to the inclusion of the African and African American perspective. Not only have the teachers understood the importance of focusing on the African and African American perspective within the historical narrative, whether in isolation, along with the European perspective, or within the realms of a universal theme of oppression and survival, but they also have captured the importance of prejudice reduction, social responsibility, and social activism.

Limitations of the Amistad Bill

Although the Amistad Bill clearly explains the concepts that must be addressed by New Jersey public school teachers, there are still several drawbacks to this particular legislative mandate. Unfortunately, even with the creation of the Amistad Commission, the legislation did not formulate a curriculum guide to help teachers model the various

ways this bill should translate in the classroom. Therefore, teachers are instructed by the state of New Jersey to mandate a curriculum without the prescription to how it should be implemented.

Unlike the New Jersey Holocaust Curriculum, the New Jersey Amistad Bill is a mandated curriculum that takes a non-prescriptive approach towards implementation. Therefore, the legislation should be implemented in different ways in different classrooms with the common goal of developing an understanding of the narrative of African people. However, based on the teacher interviews, each teacher brought a different concern to the discussion.

Both Mr. Hotep and Mrs. Yeager expressed that they had the freedom to teach what they wanted in the classrooms, for Mr. Hotep felt his curriculum was open and Mrs. Yeager explained, “I haven’t had a curriculum guide since 1994.” Mrs. Yeager was concerned about what her students walked away with, if others would continue to teach this at the high school, and would her replacement continue to teach this or move in another direction. Yet, her biggest concern was whether she was giving enough information. She explained, “I am concerned not to sanitize history into happily ever after stories. I strive to balance what happened with how people triumphed and made a life for themselves.” Mrs. Yeager’s concern was rooted in her fear that she did not have enough knowledge of her own, so she decided it was important to keep reading.

Mr. Hotep felt that his challenge was the adults that were around him. He felt that many teachers, specifically White teachers, did not understand what Black students needed. “Most of them,” he explained, “questioned his teaching by saying that he cannot

just teach about Black history.” Therefore, Mr. Hotep felt like he had to challenge their way of thinking. His predicament demonstrates another one of the drawbacks of a non-prescriptive approach to the legislation. Because teachers are left to figure out how to best implement the history of Africans into the curriculum, teachers may disagree with the information presented and materials used.

On the other hand, Mr. Phillips noted that the lack of materials, budget constraints, and the grant application process tended to be a challenge. He explained, “Just to find a book that shows how to infuse Black history and gives a fair presentation is impossible.” Because the textbooks were limited, he was forced to use a lot of supplements; therefore, having access to information and the budget to purchase materials creates a challenge within the implementation of the Amistad legislation. He acknowledged the \$5000 grant made available by the Amistad Commission to help teachers overcome the financial challenges of implementing the legislation; however, he explained that the time frame to complete the grant seemed to be too short. Therefore, he felt that the reality of lack of money could hinder a teacher’s ability to gain knowledge and materials necessary to effectively implement this non-prescriptive curriculum.

The lack of resources undoubtedly is the most important crutch to the implementation of the Amistad mandate. Mrs. Yeager and Mr. Hotep both believed that access or the lack thereof to certain information really affects what one is able to teach. Mrs. Yeager noted, “The Black History Month websites are too simplistic and do not go into depth. The Internet tends to create a hit-or-miss situation because of the contradictions and uncertainty of accuracy.” For example, Mrs. Yeager struggled to find John Greenleaf Whittier’s poem online, which she believed should be included on a

website. She also would love to see more “kid-friendly” resources. To eliminate the accuracy guesswork, Mrs. Yeager believed that the Amistad Commission should create a book or website listing all websites available and approved by the Amistad Commission as being historically accurate and user-friendly for middle and high school students.

Mr. Hotep also had a hard time finding information on the Internet; therefore he went to the library to gain better knowledge about the topics he planned to teach. He also borrowed books and videos from the library, made copies of excerpts, and bought books and textbooks so that his students could read about the information as well. Mr. Hotep concluded, “It is critical that the Commission has a video, audio, and book library available for teachers and students.”

Mr. Phillips felt that despite his classroom limitations of not having an overhead or the means to show a PowerPoint presentation, information is all around us, yet the difficulty of implementation lies within the technology division. He stated, “My students are unable to continue the classroom lessons at home due to the lack of computers, working printers, and/or online access.” Therefore, Mr. Phillips admitted that he has to slow down his lessons because his students are not technologically equipped at home. According to Mr. Phillips, “that’s what’s keeping my students from learning as much and as fast as the other students from other districts that may have more access to computers.”

Unfortunately there are drawbacks to a non-prescriptive approach towards the implementation of African and African American history into the history curriculum. With the need for more information, teachers must have access to various curriculum guides and relevant material. Without the opportunities or finances necessary to obtain the knowledge and tools, teachers are limited to teach what they know using what they

have – which may or may not be enough since the legislation does not make it clear as to what is exactly needed. This study challenged policymakers to take the legislation beyond its legal realms and into the reality of curriculum guides, so teachers are not left to figure it out all on their own. Therefore, this study attempted to make the various approaches manageable considering the different teaching contexts by providing models of how three teachers effectively implemented the legislation given this non-prescriptive approach.

Implications

I have positioned the three teachers within this study as exemplary models to understand how they interpreted and implemented the New Jersey Amistad Law based on the context of the classroom. These teachers came to appreciate the legislation because of their personal journeys with race and racism, their beliefs about the need to include the voices of all involved in the narrative, and their understanding as to why their own students needed this type of curriculum. Beyond the experiences of the three subjects, however, the study has important implications for pre-service teacher education, current teachers, and policymakers.

The Implications of Amistad for Pre-service Teacher Education

Pre-service teachers, at the very beginning of their teaching careers, will benefit greatly from training related to the Amistad legislation. The pre-service teacher should not only be made aware of the New Jersey Amistad Law because it is the law but also encouraged to participate in discussions about race and inequity for their own personal

and professional growth. Exposing pre-service teachers to the legislation presents opportunities to learn how and why it was created, what the law requires, and the resources available to help teachers implement the legislation. Pre-service teachers also should address the notions and effects of race, racism, and stereotypes within the American society.

Making Pre-service Teachers Aware of Amistad

First, teacher education should present intern and student teachers with the actual legislation and challenge them to read the law in its entirety. The law should be analyzed along with the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards so that the teachers can better understand how the legislation fits within the state standards. Pre-service teachers should also discuss their beliefs about why the law was created. Since these potential educators will bring to the discussions different backgrounds and experiences, each should come to understand how others might view the legislation differently. By understanding the range of perceptions pre-service teachers will begin to recognize the different reasons why this law came to be in the state of New Jersey.

Second, pre-service teachers must obtain the necessary knowledge in order to accurately implement the Amistad Bill within the history curriculum; therefore, they should be exposed to the exact content required of them to teach. Although the legislation presented key moments in history that should be rewritten to include the voices of the African Diaspora, teachers should be able to take specific courses tailored to educate them about important facts and perspectives within black history. When advising the new teacher, Mrs. Yeager stated, “They need a manual or website where they can

view lessons that show how to infuse black history into the curriculum.” Along with the courses, pre-service teachers should be given a non-prescriptive curriculum guide, sample lessons, hard copy and virtual resources, and a web-based curriculum as tools necessary to implement the Amistad curriculum.

Third, teacher education should provide pre-service teachers with the opportunities to discuss how to implement the legislation. By analyzing this study and future case studies, they should try to make sense of the methods and strategies used and understand why those approaches were selected. Then they should discuss how they believe the legislation should be implemented in their future classes.

Teacher education programs must expose pre-service teachers to the actual legislation, allow them to understand its position within the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards, and help them understand the need for the law in New Jersey. To build upon this awareness, these potential teachers must be given the facts and narratives that the Amistad Commission deems as the necessary knowledge to implement the law. Finally, these pre-service teachers should be given a vast amount of resources to effectively implement the requirements of the Amistad Bill. These three areas serve as the necessary beginning steps towards successfully implementing the legislation.

Discussions Around Race and Inequity

Race is at the center of the American historical narrative; therefore, to help teachers understand how to implement black history within the history curriculum race must be positioned as an essential concept to be understood. Teacher education programs must expose pre-service teachers to opportunities where they are able to deal with notions

of race and come to understand what roles race, racism, and stereotypes have played in their lives. After their personal journeys through the complexity of race, they should also be exposed to various perspectives and experiences both from their peers and by reading various narratives, research studies, and articles.

First, pre-service teachers should be encouraged to become comfortable with the racial implications within their own lives. These teachers should be challenged to analyze the roles of race and stereotypes in their past experiences as well as within the lives of their peers. They should be encouraged to recognize both positive and negative memories of race and work to understand how those experiences have affected how they view American history, race, and racism today. These teachers must understand the need for these inquiries as a necessary step for them to become comfortable with the racial history of America.

Upon understanding their personal journeys through the complexity of race in America, pre-service teachers should then be directly exposed to the first-person narratives and thought-provoking material to help their own students go through the same journeys. These teachers should be taught how to interpret, present, and analyze the materials to help them implement the Amistad Bill within the history curriculum. Along with these curriculum resources, pre-service teachers should be exposed to various case studies and research articles addressing the incorporation of black history into the American history curriculum. They should be encouraged to consider the models presented and the reasons behind the methods and strategies used to help inform them how to implement the legislation.

The teacher education for pre-service teachers is crucial for the future of the implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Law. These teachers are fortunate to be in the beginning process of teacher training and within an environment that exposes them on a consistent basis to essential concepts and materials. Not only should pre-service teachers learn the Amistad content and how to implement it but they must also be put in a position where they have to confront their racial past to understand their present perceptions. With this in depth preparation for the implementation of the Amistad Bill, pre-service teachers can use this understanding to help others with Amistad and will be better prepared to incorporate the requirements of this legislation within the history curriculum.

The Implications of Amistad for Practicing Teachers

For practicing teachers the reality is that the New Jersey Amistad Law is a mandated requirement for all social studies or history teachers in public schools. Despite the results of the Amistad compliance survey, there are still teachers, like Mr. Phillips, who know that they are the only history teachers in their schools acknowledging the legislation. This reality is based on the fact that there is no accountability from the top down. Therefore, the Amistad Bill will only become a reality for practicing teachers when administrators prioritize it and encourage their staff to not only understand the need for the Amistad Bill but also to become truly compliant with it.

Exposing practicing teachers to the legislation and encouraging them to become well informed about it entails providing opportunities to understand why even an elementary school teacher should bring these concepts into the classroom despite the

general assumption that racism does not exist at the primary level. Administrators should recognize that the structure of the Amistad Bill allows teachers to custom-tailor the curriculum based on the personal experiences and backgrounds of both the teacher and the students. Therefore, administrators must challenge their staff to understand the history of the bill and its necessity based on the complexities of race, racism, and stereotypes not only within American society but also within their own lives, examine their own perceptions of black history and acquire the knowledge necessary to teach the requirements of the bill, and learn how to relate the material to the needs of their students.

Training with Amistad and the Complexity of Race

Administrators must encourage teachers to attend workshops to help increase their awareness of the Amistad Law as well as to become comfortable with how race has affected their own lives as well as the history of America. Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep, and Mr. Phillips were exposed to various workshops at the Amistad Summer Institute that allowed them discuss the racial tensions and address their racial past. All teachers should be exposed to these types of workshops to learn about the racial past of America, its present-day affects, and the need for the bill.

Within these environments, teachers should have the opportunities to relearn American history with the concept of race being at the forefront. Much like the training Mrs. Yeager received, teachers should be able to recognize how they perceived various moment of history and were challenged to understand the role of race within that period of time. These workshops should help teachers recognize where they are and why they perceive history that way. An elementary school teacher can also benefit from this type

of training for they will soon realize that, whether or not they want to recognize it, race and racism will exist their classrooms.

From that point teachers should be able to explore their personal journeys with race, racism, and stereotypes. This exploration should begin with an overview of what these areas mean, and then the teachers should be encouraged to analyze their own past and present situations to see how race, racism, and stereotypes have influenced their lives. In reality these discussions are emotional and sensitive but necessary for the growth of each teacher challenged to teach the Amistad requirements.

Finally, teachers should also be willing to have these types of discussions within their own schools with one another. Administrators should allow time during staff meetings or district workshops for teachers to wrestle with the notion of race, come to understand how race has played a role in their pasts, and discuss how race has surfaced within their own schools. This will help teachers become comfortable with the idea of having these types of conversations with their students. Trained professionals, however, due to the sensitive nature of the conversation, should facilitate the in-school discussions.

Perceptions of Black History and Acquiring Knowledge

This study showed that the range of knowledge of black history varies based on the educational background and exposure of each teacher. Some teachers learned the basics of American history through a neutral perspective, while other teachers have invested in self-education to learn about the missing dialogues, which are missing from the American narrative. Therefore, administrators must encourage all teachers to come to

grips with what they know and do not know about black history and, with this awareness, expose them to opportunities to gain more knowledge.

Mrs. Yeager recommended that, “teachers should attend the Summer Institute and the workshops for they will open their minds to what’s going on and encourage them to read and obtain the new research and information that’s coming out.” Teachers should attend extensive workshops, like the Amistad Summer Institute, to increase their knowledge, if any, about black history. Many teachers need opportunities to discuss our American past in a ways that allow them to examine which perceptions dominate their approaches. These inquiries will serve as the necessary steps for teachers to become open to new ideas, concepts, and perspectives.

Then administrators should provide teachers with access to high-quality professional development to address their knowledge base. Unlike Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep, and Mr. Phillips, many teachers have limited knowledge of the history of Africans and American Americans. It is the primary job for teachers to relay information to their students; therefore, they must have opportunities to be exposed to the history and perspective of Africans and African Americans. Access may be presented in many ways: through workshops, in-services, online tutorials, or high quality library resources.

Administrators should also expose teachers to a plethora of professional development opportunities and in-district workshops to help them gain the knowledge necessary to implement this mandated curriculum. These opportunities should be available to all teachers whether through flyers and emails or as school or district requirements. Administrators should provide teachers with preparation time and access to library materials both as hardcopies or online in order to continue to grow personally.

Library materials should not only be accessed through the teacher's self-education process but also through opportunities within school, district, and statewide professional development programs.

The knowledge needed to effectively implement the Amistad Bill within the history curriculum is based on the teacher's previous experience and willingness to work with other teachers to provide the best approach. Practicing teachers, whether elementary or secondary, come to the classroom with various perspectives on how history should be taught and various levels of knowledge. However, all teachers must be open to recognizing their knowledge gaps and be willing to maintain ongoing self-education, professional development, and collaboration with their colleagues.

Learning How to Make Amistad Relate to Students

Finally, the implementation of the Amistad legislation must go beyond the need for the law and the content required. Teachers must have access to the tools necessary for understanding students and the context in which they are taught. Understanding students and their needs goes beyond the basic awareness of their specific learning styles. Much like understanding their own backgrounds and experiences, teachers must be equipped to replicate what they have learned within their own classrooms.

Administrators should encourage teachers to recreate their personal training in their classrooms. Teachers must allow students to bring forth their ideas, conceptions, misconceptions, and assumptions about the history of America, the role of various groups within this narrative, and how race, racism, and stereotypes have affected the lives of each group. With this knowledge, teachers will be able to understand what backgrounds

the students bring to the historical discussion and what needs must be address to help the students become critical scholars of American history.

In addition to helping students become aware of their perceptions and comfortable with issues of race, the teacher must utilize age-sensitive and student-friendly material to help students explore what they know and do not know about the racial past of American history. This is a major area where administrative support will be evident.

Administrators should help teachers gain access to these resources, not only virtual, visual, and text-based documents but also techniques proven to help teachers deal with the emotions that will emerge with this sensitive topic.

Since it is important for teachers to know the backgrounds and experiences their students bring to the racial discussion, they must have the tools necessary to facilitate these inquiries. The schools or districts in terms of basic demographics as well as student-interest and background inventories can provide these tools. However, teachers should also have access to high quality and more effective tools administered by the district, state, or professionals trained within this area.

Overall, the implications for practicing teachers are based on the comfort one brings to the teaching of black history and the racism within the American narrative, the access and collection of the necessary knowledge and materials, and an understanding of one's teaching context. Teachers are able to become comfortable with this type of mandated curriculum when they are able to have access to a comprehensive amount of information about the African and African American perspective throughout history. The more knowledgeable one becomes with the concepts and materials, the more comfortable they will be implementing and teaching the curriculum. The New Jersey Amistad

Commission has provided a supportive environment within the Summer Institute, and all three teachers recommended it as a beneficial professional development opportunity to gain information and overcome issues of discomfort.

The Implications of Amistad for Policymakers

For policymakers the awareness of the black perspective within the historical narrative does not end by simply passing the New Jersey Amistad Law. Policymakers must accept the constant demand to provide effective opportunities and support to maintain the in depth and long-lasting changes that this legislation should require of schools. Although this research study demonstrated how self-motivated and supported teachers are able to implement this mandated curriculum, it did not address how the non-prescriptive nature of this curriculum may leave the teaching of American history solely to the individual teacher's discretion due to the lack of accountability. Therefore, it is up to the policymakers to hold administrators accountable for the implementation of Amistad within the history curriculum.

All three teachers, Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep, and Mr. Phillips, acknowledged the purpose of curriculum development to make people aware of the legislation and complexity of race, to provide resources and tools for the implementation of the legislation within the history curriculum, to help with methods on how to implement the legislation effectively based on context, and to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. Therefore, policymakers should focus on the availability of high-quality resources in within libraries and online,

providing mandatory workshops for both teachers and administrators, and implementing mentoring programs and shadowing opportunities for both administrators and teachers.

Access to Online and Concrete Resources

Policymakers must provide administrators and teachers with access to high-quality materials – both online and concrete documents. Unlike curriculum guidelines, like the New Jersey Holocaust Curriculum Guide, policymakers, along with the Amistad Commission, should go beyond and develop a step-by-step guide of what to teach and provide resources demonstrating the content as well as the necessary methods to effectively implement Amistad in the classroom.

Teachers should have access to books, first-person narratives, historical artifacts, and hard-copy curriculum materials that will help them to implement the Amistad Bill effectively. Policymakers should create regional libraries where teachers will be able to gain more information and materials to enhance their lessons. Whether through using a library's borrowing system or creating regional stores, policymakers should make this material available for purchase or through a loaner system.

In addition to the concrete access, policymakers should continue to develop the online access to materials. At the completion of this study the Amistad Commission and the American Institute for History Education created a website entitled *New Jersey Amistad Commission Web-Based Curriculum* (<http://www.njamistadcurriculum.com/>). Teachers are able to use this website as an interactive textbook and gain “a more detailed understanding of the American people and their shared history” (Amistad, 2009). As stated on the website:

The Amistad interactive textbook accomplishes this mission by guiding students and teachers on ‘an inclusive journey through American history’ while infusing the vast contributions and experiences of African Americans along the way. In doing so, Amistad delivers a broader awareness of African American history, and it provides the key to truly understanding the American experience (Amistad, 2009).

Although a work in progress, the website charts the K-12 Social Studies curriculum for the state of New Jersey and includes the history, influences, and contributions of African American people. With direct connections to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies, the Amistad web-based curriculum provides teachers with historical overviews, biographies, primary source documents, interactive maps, timelines, suggested lesson plans and activities, and PowerPoint presentations.

However, this research study was meant to be a meaningful tool for policymakers to understand how else to support teachers mandated to carry out the requirements of the Amistad Bill. As Mr. Phillips recognized, “teachers need more than just good resources, good information, and good accessible technology.” Resources are essential for educators to take a mandate beyond its legal text and into the classroom; however, it does not serve as the magic key towards effective and long-lasting implementation. Concrete materials, websites, and other online material do not help teachers deal with the emotions and sensitivity that parallel the content. Therefore, in conjunction with these resources, workshops should be mandated to help both administrators and teachers learn how to handle the material required.

Mandated Amistad Workshops that Go Beyond the Text

Not only should policymakers urge that the curriculum mandated but they should also provide the professional development to help implement this mandated curriculum.

The New Jersey Amistad Law has been in existence since 2002 and yet there are many districts that are either unaware of this legislation and or that have simply not made it a top priority. However, the law should not be ignored or taken lightly. What it is asking teachers to do is to transform the history narrative and expose students to the various perspectives of our American past. Beyond this reality, students are then asked to relate this history to the realities of today and create solutions for the future. This powerful mandate should be require workshops for both administrators and teachers.

Concrete resources and online materials are not enough to effectively implement the Amistad Bill, for teachers need to know how to handle emotionally engaging materials, such as videos, plays, visuals, and first-person narratives. Therefore, policymakers should recognize that emotions will surface with this material, and administrators and teachers must be equipped to deal with the sensitivity of Amistad.

To address these issues, policymakers must create the environments and resources necessary for administrators and teachers to become comfortable with the content and legislative charge to implement of the Amistad Law within the history curriculum. Policymakers cannot rely on prescriptive curricula to guide teachers with this specific curriculum; rather, they first must provide resources and tools for the implementation of Amistad within various contexts. In addition to these resources and tools, the policymakers must make professional development ready and available for teachers.

Policymakers must mandate administrators and teachers to attend workshops that allow them to address their racial knowledge and misconceptions in small groups, to have their ideas and concepts challenged by fellow educators, and to be able to work collaboratively towards creating a transformed history curriculum that embodies the

ideals of the Amistad Bill. Policymakers should create workshops led by scholars and researchers that have dealt with issues of race in the classroom and present various activities and discussions for these educators to truly come to understand how to best teach this mandated curriculum.

This mandated professional development should not be a one-time requirement for each district. Just like the need to keep people up-to-date on the changes within first-aid, CPR, bullying, and emergency responses, administrators and teachers should be required to update their awareness and knowledge base each year. Many departments attend yearly conferences to gain more insight of the current materials, techniques, and resources available. The Amistad workshop requirement should be positioned in this light as a yearly opportunity for educators to grow in a particular field. Therefore, the online resources will no longer be the main way for educators to understand what to teach. Policymakers must place these mandated workshops as the essential step towards understanding the additional resources offered concretely or online.

Teacher Mentoring Programs and Shadowing Opportunities

Utilizing the African principle, “each one teach one,” policymakers should create opportunities whereby administrators and teachers are able to work with one another to help implement Amistad in other classrooms, schools, and districts. Both Mr. Hotep and Mr. Phillips recommended a mentoring program where teachers would work together for a better understanding of the curriculum. Mr. Hotep recognized that, “although teachers will enter the door with a positive attitude and high energy, they will struggle a bit as the students will challenge and test them.” Policymakers must recognize that learning

communities should be created for administrators and teachers to feel supported and encouraged.

On the basic level, this research study can be viewed as a written source for teachers to shadow exemplary teachers and understand the strategies they use to make Amistad work within their classrooms. Although I encourage more documented examples of what is being taught and how those methods were chosen, policymakers must allow administrators and teachers real-life opportunities to see Amistad in action. Within the mandated workshops, administrators and teachers should have a chance to witness how teachers are implementing the Amistad Bill with considering their classroom context.

Professional development opportunities should not be limited to conference rooms and lecture halls. Policymakers should make arrangements to have administrators and teachers visit schools that are doing exemplary things with the legislation. These educators should shadow these teachers for at least a day to witness what is being done, and they should have opportunities to talk to the teachers to learn about the ways in which they are implementing the legislation. This exposure should not be limited to a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; for administrators and teachers will truly benefit from this level of training if they are able to witness various teaching environments, methods, strategies, and approaches.

After shadowing exemplary educators, the administrators and teachers should return to a discussion format where they should be challenged to analyze what they saw and state their ideas as to the best ways to bring Amistad to their own settings. Policymakers should make sure that both curriculum consultants as well as Amistad

exemplary educators lead these workshops. They should not only acknowledge people doing great things in the field but also recognize them as Amistad mentors and allow them to help others create similar curricula within their own schools.

In addition to hands-on and direct work with exemplary educators, policymakers should provide a plethora of video resources where teachers can witness lessons in action. In reality administrators and teachers may want to bring the experiences of shadowing back to their schools and districts; therefore, policymakers should document how teachers have successfully implemented the Amistad Law and make them available within local and online libraries across the state. Policymakers must train administrators and teachers to become mentors to their own staff and help them know how to use these videos as shadowing simulations necessary to be analyzed and discussed.

Overall, policymakers must create areas where administrators and teachers can go for the resources and tools necessary to implement the history of Africans and African Americans in a way that engages students of various backgrounds. These venues can be both physical and virtual – online tutorials and resources and frequent professional development opportunities. Policymakers must not only provide libraries, stores, and workshop opportunities for administrators and teachers to stay abreast of current research and materials related to Amistad but also go beyond the online access to countless lessons, unit plans, videos, audio recordings, literature, and visuals. Amistad is mandated and must become real for all administrators and teachers. Policymakers must show Amistad in action, help educators understand the necessary methods and strategies, and train others to further expose educators to the complexity of Amistad. With an “each one

teach one” approach to this mandate, policymakers have the power to truly help all districts in New Jersey implement the Amistad Bill effectively.

Limitations

This particular study was not created with the intent of selecting teachers and students based on specific racial combinations, such as a white teacher with white students, a black teacher with black students, and a black teacher in a diverse classroom. It was my intent to observe monocultural classrooms (both white and black) as well as a diverse classroom to understand how best to teach the content of the Amistad legislation considering the specific audience. Understanding that this study was limited to this perspective and did not fully explore the impact of the race of the teacher within the context of the classroom, I encourage future studies to take this research a step further and examine the role of teacher’s race in regards to implementing the Amistad legislation.

Paths to Future Research

It is possible that additional research on the implementation strategies of these particular racial matches could reveal other implications of how Amistad could be approached within these types of the classroom set-ups. It is possible that Mrs. Yeager might not have used the strategies of dispelling myths, incorporating the facts, and humanizing the lessons if she were teaching in a predominately black classroom. It might not have been Mr. Hotep’s intent to present the past, analyze the present for connections, and encourage the students to be agents of change by allowing them the

chance to formulate solutions if he were teaching predominately white students. With his experience teaching various cultures, I would be curious to know if Mr. Phillips would still maintain his approach of teaching each perspective separately and making connections through the common themes of oppression, survival, and strength if he had been placed in a predominately white American classroom setting.

Understanding how legislation is perceived speaks volumes to the efficacy of such mandates. This study can be the catapult towards new research exploring race relations and the role of race in the classroom when implementing a mandated curriculum. Future research should not only continue to look at how teachers perceive legislative change but also analyze how it may be impacting the students as well. Presentation of such material as race relations in America may be related to who is specifically teaching the content. Hence, additional research on how the race of the teacher may impact how students perceive the racial content presented is of great interest and value in this discussion as well. Through the many research possibilities that may manifest from this study, an ever-growing world of knowledge will only be beneficial for the effectiveness of implementing such bills as the Amistad legislation.

Conclusion

This study on the implementation of the Amistad Bill within the classrooms of Mrs. Yeager, Mr. Hotep, and Mr. Phillips sheds light on the efficacy of mandating curriculum, for it speaks to the overall idea of legislative curricular reform. Legislated curricula must allow teachers the latitude necessary to craft lessons based on their classroom setting. The New Jersey Amistad legislation was created as a guideline to

what should be incorporated within the history curriculum but allows teachers the freedom to structure the way it is implemented based on their particular classroom setting. All three teachers came to the classroom with prior knowledge, whether through college courses, professional development opportunities, or self-education, and allowed this knowledge to better prepare the way they taught the history of Africans and African Americans to their students.

For all three teachers three factors were relevant when implementing the legislation within their classrooms: understanding how their past shaped their awareness, being willing to learn more, and allowing the needs of their students to shape the curriculum. First, they could attribute their successes to their understandings of how their own pasts shaped how they came to understand the role of black history within the history curriculum. For Mrs. Yeager, when she recognized that she was originally teaching history through a Eurocentric perspective, she realized that black history had been ignored through the traditional American history curriculum and should have been acknowledged as an essential element of the American story. For Mr. Hotep his desire and quest to learn all he could about the history of Africans and African Americans triggered his desire to teach black children about this misplaced history. He saw the role of black history as an essential piece towards the survival of black people. For Mr. Phillips, he was a product of the racial past of America and always found the history of the United States to be an interesting story. It was because of his segregated past that he developed an understanding that black history should be taught as a separate unit within a history curriculum, along with all other cultures, with the goal of creating the American story through universal themes.

Second, their successes were based on their willingness to continue to gain materials, resources, and training on the history of Africans and African Americans as well as how to best present particular topics addressed within the Amistad legislation. All three teachers participated in the 2006 New Jersey Amistad Summer Institute. They were open to discussions with nationally recognized scholars and fellow New Jersey educators about various topics in black history, the role of race and racism within American history, and the best strategies for implementing black history into the history curriculum. In addition to their professional development, Mr. Phillips continued to work with the Urban City Board of Education on creating a condensed black history curriculum for the district, and the Amistad Commission recognized both Mrs. Yeager and Mr. Hotep as New Jersey Amistad Exemplary Teachers.

Third, they were successful in the implementation of the Amistad Bill due to their willingness to adjust their current curricula based on the specific understandings and needs of their students. All three teachers allowed their teaching contexts to shape how to best implement the Amistad legislation. Both Mrs. Yeager and Mr. Phillips understood that their students entered the discussion with limited exposure to black culture and needed to be connected with the material. It was the role of both teachers to provide thought-provoking and relatable material so that the students would begin to connect to the stories and perspectives. However, Mr. Hotep understood that his students needed to understand this history for it was their own. He knew that he was in a position to expose them to new information as well as allow them to see how the past connects to the present. The needs of the students became the driving force behind the way all three teachers approached the implementation of Amistad.

For years the history of the people of the African Diaspora has been set-aside in the history curriculum. As James Banks (2002) explains, schools and classrooms traditionally use the contribution or additive approach to curriculum reform. The “contribution approach” is the simple focus on holidays (black History Month), heroes (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.), and discrete cultural elements (slavery). The “additive approach” does not make an effort to change the structure of the curriculum but simply adds the content, concepts, themes, and perspectives to the already existing arrangement. Both approaches fail to provide students with opportunities to view history from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups and do not allow students to take action and formulate solutions to important social concerns.

Therefore, the Amistad Bill is very much needed in New Jersey public classrooms. It provides teachers with the format to bring the perspectives of the people of the African Diaspora into the classroom and challenges students to wrestle with the notion of race and the history of race relations in American history. Whether through an approach of separation to better understand the unifying themes of oppression, survival, and strength or an effort to dispel myths and empower the students, the Amistad legislation is the tool necessary to expose our students to American history as seen through the eyes of all involved.

The potential effectiveness of legislative curricular reform is contingent upon the professional development available for teachers to consider the background of their students, understand what knowledge or misconceptions they bring to the classrooms, and recognize their exposure to other cultures. Such information will better inform how a mandated curriculum, like the Amistad Law, should be implemented with the intent of

exposing the students to multiple perspectives and inviting them to actively find solutions to the deep-rooted problems in America.

Implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Bill is not about mandating Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, or Multicultural Education, but rather it allows teachers to bring various approaches together to better teach the various perspectives within the American narrative. There is a need for this type of curricular reform in all American classrooms. The perspective of the people of the African Diaspora should not be left out of the history curriculum – whether on purpose or by traditional default. This study showcases how mandated curriculum can be implemented in a way that allows teachers to respond to the needs of the students. In this way this study of the New Jersey Amistad Bill presents a model of how to better integrate the history of the people of the African Diaspora into the fabric of American history.

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APPENDIX A

THE NEW JERSEY AMISTAD LAW (A1301)

CHAPTER 75

AN ACT establishing the Amistad Commission and supplementing chapter 16A of Title 52 of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.52:16A-86 Findings, declarations relative to Amistad Commission.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
 - a. During the period beginning late in the 15th century through the 19th century, millions of persons of African origin were enslaved and brought to the Western Hemisphere, including the United States of America; anywhere from between 20 to 50 percent of enslaved Africans died during their journey to the Western Hemisphere; the enslavement of Africans and their descendants was part of a concerted effort of physical and psychological terrorism that deprived groups of people of African descent the opportunity to preserve many of their social, religious, political and other customs; the vestiges of slavery in this country continued with the legalization of second class citizenship status for African Americans through Jim Crow laws, segregation and other similar practices; the legacy of slavery has pervaded the fabric of our society; and in spite of these events there are endless examples of the triumphs of African Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this country;
 - b. All people should know of and remember the human carnage and dehumanizing atrocities committed during the period of the African slave trade and slavery in America and of the vestiges of slavery in this country; and it is in fact vital to educate our citizens on these events, the legacy of slavery, the sad history of racism in this country, and on the principles of human rights and dignity in a civilized society;
 - c. It is the policy of the State of New Jersey that the history of the African slave trade, slavery in America, the depth of their impact in our society, and the triumphs of African Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this country is the proper concern of all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools of the State of New Jersey; and
 - d. It is therefore desirable to create a State-level commission, which as an organized body, on a continuous basis, will survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of education and awareness programs in New Jersey concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African Americans in building our country; to develop workshops, institutes, seminars, and other teacher training activities designed to educate teachers on this subject matter; and which will be responsible for the coordination of events on a regular basis,

throughout the State, that provide appropriate memorialization of the events concerning the enslavement of Africans and their descendants in America as well as their struggle for freedom and liberty.

C.52:16A-87 Amistad Commission established.

2. The Amistad Commission, so named in honor of the group of enslaved Africans
 - a. led by Joseph Cinque who, while being transported in 1839 on a vessel named the Amistad, gained their freedom after overthrowing the crew and eventually having their case successfully argued before the United States Supreme Court, is created and established in the Executive Branch of the State Government. For the purposes of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the commission is allocated within the Department of State.

The commission shall consist of 19 members, including the Secretary of State or a designee, the Commissioner of Education or a designee and the chair of the executive board of the Presidents' Council or a designee, serving ex officio, and 16 public members.

Public members shall be appointed as follows: four public members, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political party, shall be appointed by the President of the Senate; four public members, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political party, shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; and eight public members, no more than four of whom shall be of the same political party, shall be appointed by the Governor. The public members shall be residents of this State, chosen with due regard to broad geographic representation and ethnic diversity, who have an interest in the history of the African slave trade and slavery in America and the contributions of African Americans to our society.

- b. Each public member of the commission shall serve for a term of three years, except that of the initial members so appointed: one member appointed by the President of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and two members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of one year; one member appointed by the President of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and three members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of two years; and two members appointed by the President of the Senate, two members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and three members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of three years. Public members shall be eligible for reappointment. They shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified, and the term of the successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from the expiration of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment but for the unexpired term only.
 - c. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.
 - d. The Secretary of State, or a designee, shall serve as the chair and the

Commissioner of Education, or a designee, shall serve as the vice-chair of the commission. The presence of a majority of the authorized membership of the commission shall be required for the conduct of official business.

- e. The New Jersey Historical Commission shall serve as staff for the Amistad Commission. The New Jersey Historical Commission may, subject to the availability of appropriations, hire additional staff and consultants to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Amistad Commission.
- f. The Department of Education shall:
 - (1) assist the Amistad Commission in marketing and distributing to educators, administrators and school districts in the State educational information and other materials on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African Americans to our society;
 - (2) **conduct at least one teacher workshop annually on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African Americans to our society;**
 - (3) assist the Amistad Commission in monitoring the inclusion of such materials and curricula in the State's educational system; and
 - (4) consult with the Amistad Commission to determine ways it may survey, catalog, and extend slave trade and American slavery education presently being incorporated into the Core Curriculum Content Standards and taught in the State's educational system.

C.52:16A-88 Responsibilities, duties of Amistad Commission.

- 3. The Amistad Commission shall have the following responsibilities and duties:
 - a. **to provide, based upon the collective interest of the members and the knowledge and experience of its staff and consultants, assistance and advice to public and nonpublic schools within the State with respect to the implementation of education, awareness programs, textbooks, and educational materials concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African Americans to our society;**
 - b. to survey and catalog the extent and breadth of education concerning the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African Americans to our society presently being incorporated into the curricula and textbooks and taught in the school systems of the State; to inventory those African slave trade, American slavery, or relevant African American history memorials, exhibits and resources which should be incorporated into courses of study at educational institutions and schools throughout the State; and to assist the Department of State, the Department of Education and other State and educational agencies in the development and implementation of African slave trade, American slavery and African American history education programs;
 - c. to act as a liaison with textbook publishers, public and nonpublic schools, public and private nonprofit resource organizations, and members of the United

States Senate and House of Representatives and the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly in order to facilitate the inclusion of the history of African slavery and of African Americans in this country in the curricula of public and nonpublic schools;

- d. **to compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms, seminars and workshops with students and teachers on the subject of the African slave trade, American slavery and the impact of slavery on our society today, and the contributions of African Americans to our country;**
- e. **to coordinate events memorializing the African slave trade, American slavery and the history of African Americans in this country that reflect the contributions of African Americans in overcoming the burdens of slavery and its vestiges, and to seek volunteers who are willing and able to participate in commemorative events that will enhance student awareness of the significance of the African slave trade, American slavery, its historical impact, and the struggle for freedom;**
- f. to prepare reports for the Governor and the Legislature regarding its findings and recommendations on facilitating the inclusion of the African slave trade, American slavery studies, African American history and special programs in the educational system of the State;
- g. to develop, in consultation with the Department of Education, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of information on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African Americans to our country. Every board of education shall incorporate the information in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students; and
- h. to solicit, receive, and accept appropriations, gifts and donations.

C.52:16A-89 Assistance to Amistad Commission.

4. The commission is authorized to call upon any department, office, division or
 - a. agency of the State, or of any county, municipality or school district of the State, to supply such data, program reports and other information, personnel and assistance as it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities under this act.
 - b. These departments, offices, divisions and agencies shall, to the extent possible and not inconsistent with any other law of this State, cooperate with the commission and shall furnish it with such information, personnel and assistance as may be necessary or helpful to accomplish the purposes of this act.
5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 28, 2002.

APPENDIX B

TEACHER JOURNAL PROTOCOL

PURPOSE: How do New Jersey public school teachers interpret the Amistad Bill? According to teachers, how has the New Jersey Amistad Commission and the professional development provided by the commission supported them? What approaches are New Jersey public school teachers using as they attempt to implement the Amistad legislation?

Opening Statement:

For this research project, the purpose of this teacher journal project is to ask you to reflect about your perception, interpretations, and attitudes about the New Jersey Amistad legislation and how it plays out in your classroom. This should reflect personal reactions to the observed ten classroom lessons as well as previous experiences with the Amistad Bill. Please do not identify specific individuals by name within your entries.

Introduction of the Journal - Background Information:

Gender: M or F Position Title: _____
 Grade Level: _____ Race/Ethnicity: _____

Please provide copies of your lesson plans to help answer the following questions:

- Give a chronological description of today's lesson – the activities, assignments, projects, etc.
 - a. Describe what happened in class today.
 - b. What materials did you use during the lesson?
 - c. How was African American history infused within this lesson?
 - d. Did you address race and racism within this lesson? If so, how?

Journal Entry Protocol – Each entry must include:

Date of lesson: _____ Time of lesson: _____
 Location of lesson (*check one*): ___ Classroom ___ Lab ___ Outside ___ Other: _____

1. What went well about the lesson? Be specific and descriptive.
2. How did this lesson make you feel?
 - a. How did you react to this lesson – both in class and out of class?
 - b. How do you think your students felt and reacted to this lesson?
3. Without changing the main topic of the lesson, what would you do differently about today's lesson (if anything)? Be specific.
4. Based on this specific lesson, what information do you feel you must learn more about? Why?
 - How do you feel the Amistad training has helped your understanding of this lesson?
5. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX C

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL A

PURPOSE: How do New Jersey public school teachers interpret the Amistad Bill? According to teachers, how has the New Jersey Amistad Commission and the professional development provided by the commission supported them? What approaches are New Jersey public school teachers using as they attempt to implement the Amistad legislation? What are the similarities and/or differences with the interpretations and implementations of the Amistad Bill across school contexts?

Opening Statement:

Thank you for finding the time to meet with me. As you know, this interview is for my dissertation research project for Rutgers University. During this interview, I will ask you some questions about your educational background as well as your experience as an exemplary teacher in compliance with the Amistad legislation. This should take about 90 minutes. Is that okay?

Background Information (acquired prior to interview):

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Gender: M or F Position Title: _____

Grade Level: _____ Race/Ethnicity: _____

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. Tell me what you know about the New Jersey Amistad Law in general.
 - a. When and how were you first involved or informed about the law?
 - b. How do you understand the Amistad Bill and Core Curriculum Standards?
 - c. What do you perceive to be the purpose of the Amistad Law?
 - d. What do you perceive to be the purpose of the Amistad Commission?
2. How did you decide to enter the teaching profession?
 - Why did you decide to teach history or social studies?
3. What knowledge did you have about black history prior to teaching?
 - a. Did your K-12 or college courses discuss African-America history?
 - b. Did your K-12 or college courses discuss race and racism in America?
4. Where should black history fit into this curriculum?
 - Why is this important for an American History curriculum?
5. How do your views on teaching social studies and/or history align with the Amistad Bill?

6. Describe the demographics of your school.
7. How are you implementing Amistad Law in your social studies or history curriculum?
 - a. What types of materials do you use?
 - b. What types of resources are available?
 - c. Based on the law, what are your goals for your students?
8. What do you think this should look like “in action” in the classroom?
 - a. Describe the lessons and activities.
 - b. Describe the class work and homework.
 - c. How do you decide what to teach? Why?
9. If any, how has the New Jersey Amistad training and professional development influenced, affected, or enhanced the way you teach your course?
 - What specific information were you unaware of before the professional development?
10. Describe a lesson you feel impacted your students.
 - a. What do you think the students are learning?
 - b. How do you feel the information impacts students?
 - c. Did you challenge the students to think about race, racism, and social justice both historically and within the present? If so, how?
11. Describe a challenge that you worked through based on the Amistad legislation.
12. In general, how do you think the race of the teacher and the students affect how African American history, the concept of race, and racism are taught and perceived in the classroom?
 - How do you specifically think it is taught and perceived in your classroom?
13. Do you have anything else you want to share?

APPENDIX D

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL B

PURPOSE: How do New Jersey public school teachers interpret the Amistad Bill? According to teachers, how has the New Jersey Amistad Commission and the professional development provided by the commission supported them? What approaches are New Jersey public school teachers using as they attempt to implement the Amistad legislation? What are the similarities and/or differences with the interpretations and implementations of the Amistad Bill across school contexts?

Opening Statement:

Thank you for meetings with me. As you know, during the first interview we talked about your educational and professional background and how you felt about the Amistad legislation, the Commission, how you felt about how it is implemented, and the resources available to you. In this interview, we will discuss the information from the first interview and the classroom observations. Then, we will discuss your perception, interpretations, and attitudes about how the New Jersey Amistad legislation played out in the classroom. This should take about 60 minutes. Is that okay?

General Information:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. Review the previous data to understand how things have been working.
 - a. from the first interview
 - b. from the classroom observations and artifacts collection
2. Based on the implementation of the Amistad Law, what challenges or difficulties do you experience with this curriculum?
 - How does your access to the necessary resources affect your teaching?
3. What do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages with this curriculum?
4. Do you have anything else you want to share?

APPENDIX E
THE NEW JERSEY AMISTAD COMMISSION
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PURPOSE: What are the purposes, goals, recommendations, and vision of the New Jersey Amistad Commission and how do the commissioners believe these recommendations are being implemented in the schools? What are the similarities and/or differences with the interpretations and implementations of the Amistad Bill across school contexts?

Background Information (acquired prior to interview):

Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Location:** _____

of Females: _____ **# of Males:** _____ **Positions:** Amistad Commissioners

Race Sampling: ___ black ___ white ___ Indian ___ Asian
 ___ Latino ___ Other: _____

Opening Statement:

Good afternoon, my name is Steffany Baptiste and I thank you for finding the time to meet with me and allowing this interview to take place at this university. This focus group interview is for my dissertation research project for Rutgers University and will be recorded with a digital recorder. During this interview, I will ask you some questions about your perception and interpretations of the New Jersey Amistad legislation, the Amistad Commission, and the professional development provided. This should take about 60 to 90 minutes. Is that okay?

Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules.

- First, feel free to call each other by your real names; however, your real names will be replaced by pseudo names in the final report. Those names will be chosen at the end of the interview. Therefore, your identity will be kept confidential.
- Second, please speak up with only one person speaking at a time. I am tape-recording the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. If several are talking at the same time, the recording will become unclear, and I will miss your comments. Please keep in mind, all comments are welcomed – whether positive or negative.
- And third, please remain focused during the interview. Each participant should have the chance to respond to a question; however, each response should not go over two minutes.

Our session will last about 60 to 90 minutes. I will not be taking a formal break; however, I have placed water and refreshments in the middle of the table for all of you to share. I have placed letter cards on the table in front of you to help me remember the order of the conversation. I am going to ask the first question differently from the remainder of the questions. I will ask the first question, then pause to allow you to form your thoughts. Then I will ask each of you to respond to the first question. After this, anyone may respond to any question or discussion at any time. Let's begin.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. In general, tell me what you know about the New Jersey Amistad Legislation.
 - a. How do you understand the bill?
 - b. What do you perceive to be the purpose of the bill?
 - c. How do you perceive the bill aligning with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards?

2. What do you perceive to be the purpose of the Amistad Commission?

3. How did you become involved with the Amistad Commission?
 - a. Why did you decide or agree to be part of this commission?
Why are you involved?
 - b. What is your interest in this topic?
 - c. What expertise do you bring to the commission?
 - d. What is your vision of the goals and purposes of the Amistad Commission?

4. How do you believe the Amistad Law should be implemented in the social studies or history curriculum?
 - a. What types of materials should be use?
 - b. What types of resources are available?
 - c. What is your goal for students to learn?

5. What do you think this should look like “in action” in the classroom?
 - a. What kinds of lessons and activities?
 - b. What kinds of class work and homework?

6. How should teachers decide what to teach?

7. In terms of implementation, what advice do you have for a veteran teacher – one who has been teaching for over 20 years?
 - a. For a brand new teacher – one who has not received tenure?
 - b. For an exposed teacher – one who has been teaching for about 10 years?

8. If any, how has the New Jersey Amistad training and professional development influenced, affected, or enhanced the way teachers teach?

9. In general, how do you think the race of the teacher and the students affect how African American history, the concept of race, and racism are taught and perceived in the classroom?
10. Do you have anything else you want to share?

APPENDIX F

DOCUMENT SUMMARY FORM

DOCUMENT FORM

Site: _____

Document: _____ Date received/picked up: _____

Name or description of document:

Event or contact, if any, with which document is associated:

Date: _____

Significance or importance of document:

Brief summary of contents:

Is a copy included?

Is the file saved?

REFERENCE:

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.