

A Study of the Relationship Between Historical Analysis and
Student Achievement in Eighth Grade American History

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Abstract

The purpose of this action research project was to study the relationship between Historical Analysis and student performance on the California Standards Test (CSTs), both English Language Arts and History, as well as to study the relationship between Historical Analysis and Reading Comprehension. It was believed that Historical Analysis required critical thinking skills, and therefore would be related to student performance on the CST-English Language-Arts and History tests, as well as to Reading Comprehension. The subjects in this study were 452 male and female public school 8th graders of diverse ethnic backgrounds in Orange County, CA. This study used a correlational research design with descriptive statistics to examine secondary data on these 452 eighth grade students. The results of this study found a moderate but very significant relationship between Historical Analysis and student performance on the CST-English Language-Arts and History tests, as well as with Reading Comprehension. The conclusion of this study was that there is a moderate but significant relationship between these variables but that further research is needed to identify whether this is due to some students just being good test-takers, or if there really is an intrinsic relationship between these variables.

Further research using this data found a disparity between the top performing students, the middle performing students and the lowest performing students. The lowest and middle performing groups not having significance between the variables, suggesting that perhaps in this study the significance in the moderate relationships between the variables had more to do with achievement levels, test taking skills and language fluency than previously thought.

Chapter 1: Introduction

There is genuine concern these days about the status of American economic leadership in the world, and for good reason. For the first time since the Great Depression of the 1930's, the United States has been seriously challenged in its economy. Though the small recessions experienced during the Carter years and in the early 1990's were painful, these never came close to the sad state of economic affairs experienced by Americans and much of the world this last year. Truly, we are not sure yet what the outcome will be, but according to Shah (2009), we can be sure of two things; first, China has only become stronger, and second, we will never be able to return to business as usual, with the accompanying attitudes that led to the mess this country found itself in in the first place. No, this country must make changes. In truth, Ben Bernanke (Cited in, *Recession... 2009*), the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, has declared the recession to be over, but made it clear that its effects will be felt for some time to come. While opinions abound as to what may have caused this recession, what is largely missing today is creative and/or critical thinking, or the ability to intelligently think "outside-the-box" so as to find long term solutions to our problems. In addition to this, in our schools, critical thinking has in many ways been stymied.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 has increased the use of standardized tests in order to measure student achievement, and this is due to the efficiency and cost effectiveness of these tests. However, there is no doubt among educators that standardized tests assess only the lowest level of understanding. Teachers and the teacher's unions have complained bitterly about these tests and how the focus of teaching has become a colossal effort to cover each standard, to prepare students for the standardized tests, and this causes teachers to

feel as though they do not have time to ever teach a topic in depth. If a teacher does not have time to teach a topic in depth, then the teacher will also not have time to teach critical thinking skills; one critical thinking skill is historical analysis. Each school district must administer the standardized tests in order to measure its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as stated in the NCLB Act of 2001. AYP is the measuring mechanism used by the NCLB Act to understand whether or not schools are improving and why they may or may not be improving. AYP is the only measurement that NCLB provides to measure the progress of a school. Consequently, undue pressure is placed on schools and school districts to perform well on these standardized tests in order to achieve a high AYP score. All of this causes a de-emphasis on critical thinking and an over-emphasis on covering as many standards as possible in an effort to score higher on the standardized test. In this way, NCLB is not helping the problem, but making it worse. Thus, what we currently have is not the solution for what our country needs. What is needed is an increase in critical thinking.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES; 2006), when student test scores from 1970 and 2005 are compared it is evident that 17 year old students have made no gains in reading these past 35 years. This helps educators to understand that the achievement level has stayed flat for 35 years. Also, according to the NCES (2008), when comparing test scores from 2002 and 2007, one can see little change in the student achievement levels in literacy among eighth grade students these past five years. American education is not making the changes that are necessary in order to lead the world and set an example of educating all children for success, which in turn will cause this nation to reap the benefits of student success. In order for students to rise up and contribute fresh and creative solutions for this nation's problems, they

must be able to think critically. America has had a long history of investing in its youth; this investment has routinely paid big dividends, as no other country on the face of this earth has consistently withstood a massive influx of immigrants from all parts of the world and still managed to maintain its culture and optimism.

The students who are coming of age will soon begin to make contributions to this country, and must be able to discern propaganda from truth and pursue truth until they find it. One way to teach critical thinking is through historical analysis. Historical analysis provides students with many opportunities to analyze different pieces of literature and other artifacts, discern the meanings or influences behind them, and opine both what affects the different objects were meant to have, and what affects they ultimately did have. These kinds of experiences are very valuable, not just for the classroom but also in life, and it is believed that the teaching of historical analysis may also help to increase student grades, student test scores, and ultimately, student understanding, civic mindedness, and leadership ability. Levstik and Barton (2005) agree and argue that history education can contribute towards a democratic society, help students to “reason together, care for the common good and listen to each other” (p. 10). By studying the effect of the teaching of historical analysis, it is hoped that students will become more adept at understanding history; by so doing, it is believed that students will become better discerners of propaganda and reality, hence making them more discerning citizens and voters. This discernment will greatly aid them as they take on civic responsibilities and make contributions to this country.

Statement of the Problem

The United States must continue to give every student a chance to succeed in life through education, but the old methods of teaching our children no longer suffice. The old methods of teaching, inherently focused on the teacher, and the added problem of trying to cover all standards that will be on the standardized tests, appear to lead to insufficient levels of student thought, and less practice in critical thinking. Students must be given the opportunities to understand the past. As Howard Gardner (1993, 2006) has suggested, they must be able to synthesize with a disciplined mind the information that they see on a daily basis and do something meaningful with it. A thorough and genuine understanding of the past, with the ability to honestly analyze historical events, documents, and other artifacts, will help create the type of citizens and leaders this country needs in order to maintain and even advance American economic and moral leadership in our world. America must not fail in this. Therefore, historical analysis must be taught. To that end, the purpose of this study is to better understand the relationship between historical analysis and student achievement.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between historical analysis and student performance on the English Language Arts and History, California Standards Tests?
2. Is there a relationship between historical analysis and reading comprehension?
3. What is the relationship between historical analysis, student performance on the CST ELA and History exams and reading comprehension?

Hypotheses

1. Historical analysis is a critical thinking skill and critical thinking is important to performance on standardized tests; therefore, a student's ability to do historical analysis should be related to performance on standardized tests.
2. The teaching of historical analysis supports literacy and expands student vocabulary, therefore historical analysis should increase the reading comprehension levels of students.
3. As this question is intended to explore the nature of the relationship between all of the variables it is likely that there is a relationship between these different variables.

Significance

The significance of this study cannot be understated. It is imperative that all students receive an education of the highest intellectual rigor so that they may rise up to meet the challenges of our day and help to keep this country strong. It is important to provide rigor, relevance, and relationship through instruction in historical analysis, which is one component of critical thinking. It is hoped that instruction in historical analysis will provide the backdrop for lifelong habits of critical and creative thinking in each student. Martin and Wineburg (2008), state, "Historical thinking *matters* because it prepares today's students to face the challenges that confront them as citizens in the present. We do not advocate the teaching of historical thinking and reading merely because they are central to the discipline: we believe that critical reading is essential to an educated citizenry" (p. 317,8). These lifelong habits will then be useful to these students as they take on positions of leadership in our country.

On a local level, it is imperative for teachers to continue to find ways to help the diverse array of students taught in American schools to aspire to greatness in their lives and work. This

can only happen if students can analyze information on their own and put that information to good use. This study will be a significant contributor to the understanding of how best to improve American education, through improving student analytic abilities; the usefulness of the study will be shared by many teachers and administrators in the years to come, especially those teachers who teach history and literature.

Definitions

- *California Standards Tests*: A test administered yearly in grades 2-11 assessing the following areas: Word Analysis, Reading Comprehension, Literary Response and Analysis, Writing Strategies, Written Conventions (California Dept. of Ed., 2009).
- *Critical thinking*: 1) identifies, summarizes (and appropriately reformulates) the problem, question, or issue. 2) Identifies and considers the influence of context and assumptions. 3) Develops, presents, and communicates OWN perspective, hypothesis or position. 4) Presents, assesses, and analyzes appropriate supporting data/evidence. 5) Integrates issue using OTHER (disciplinary) perspectives and positions. 6) Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications, and consequences. 7) Communicates effectively (Washington State University, 2006).
- *Guided Mastery Modeling*: Coined by Albert Bandura, it refers to the modeling of a concept or skill by a teacher, expert, or master of the skill or concept. It involves the modeling of thinking as pertaining to the concept or skill.
- *Historical analysis*: explaining issues, identifying historical patterns, establishing cause-and-effect relationships, finding value statements, establishing significance, applying historical knowledge, weighing evidence to draw sound conclusions, making defensible generalizations, and rendering insightful accounts of the past (Selden, 2006).

- *More Knowledgeable Other*: Coined by Albert Bandura, it refers to anyone more knowledgeable than the targeted student or learner from which the targeted student or learner might turn to for help and guidance (Wood, 1989).
- *Proficiency in Historical Analysis*: Proficient—Eighth-grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to explain the significance of people, places, events, ideas, and documents, and to recognize the connection between people and events within historical contexts. They should understand and be able to explain the opportunities, perspectives, and challenges associated with a diverse cultural population. They should incorporate geographic, technological, and other considerations in their understanding of events and should have knowledge of significant political ideas and institutions. They should be able to communicate ideas about historical themes while citing evidence from primary and secondary sources to support their conclusions, (Selden, 2006).
- *Perceived Self-Efficacy*: Coined by Albert Bandura, it refers to how a person sees him/her self; how effective they believe they are (Wood, 1989).
- *Zone of Proximal Development*: Coined by Albert Bandura, this refers to the difference between a student's actual developmental level as achieved without assistance and that level which the student is able to achieve with assistance (Wood, 1989).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, consideration was given to the literature surrounding the different variables addressed in this study. These variables included critical thinking, historical analysis, proficiency in historical analysis, reading comprehension, historical interpretation, and the nature of the relationship between all of the variables. Exploring the nature of the relationships between the different variables is necessary to establish the validity of the other research questions. The literature review addresses the notion of thinking routines and mindfulness, as historical analysis requires attentive thinking.

The Development of the Mind and Reasoning Capacities

There has been much debate over how and when the mind and reasoning capacities develop. One early theorist who contemplated these notions was Lev S. Vygotsky (1973), a turn of the century Russian polymath. His Constructivist theory became known as the Social Development Theory and the ideas espoused in it can be clearly seen whenever teachers think out loud for the benefit of their students, modeling for them how teachers think in the discipline they are teaching. It can also be seen whenever a teacher asks his/her students to think out loud so that he/she can follow the thinking patterns of the students. Vygotsky's ideas are also seen when a teacher guides his/her students in learning, having progressed farther than they have.

A crucial component of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that learning happens first in a social context and is then internalized over time. Vygotsky (1973) believed so strongly in the idea that external thought preceded internal thought and development that he went on to claim, "The higher forms of human intercourse are possible only because man's thought reflects conceptualized activity" (p. 7). In other words, for Vygotsky, what was learned in community

and society was later internalized in the individual. Interestingly enough, Vygotsky cites Leo Tolstoy as agreeing with this line of thinking, stating, “What the child needs, says Tolstoy, is a chance to acquire new concepts and words from the general linguistic context” (p. 83). It is interesting to note that on this point Vygotsky agreed with his theoretical rival Jean Piaget in the belief that there were two forms of learning, which Piaget called spontaneous learning and non-spontaneous learning. In spontaneous learning, he was referring to the growth of a child that he/she accomplishes on his/her own. Consequently, non-spontaneous growth refers to a child’s learning through purposeful instruction. These are important distinctions, but he was careful to insist that they are both parts of a single process, namely, “concept formation” (p. 85). This, of course, reinforces Vygotsky’s idea that learning occurs in the context of one’s society and is then later internalized. He states, “Instruction is one of the principal sources of the schoolchild’s concepts and is also a powerful force in directing their evolution; it determines the fate of his total mental development” (p. 85). Vygotsky (1973) also cites Piaget, as stating, “To become conscious of a mental operation means to transfer it from the plane of action to that of language, i.e., to recreate it in the imagination so that it can be expressed in words” (p. 88). From what has been seen so far, it may be gathered that higher order thought processes and consciousness, or for the purposes of this study, critical thinking and historical analysis, a form of critical thinking, achieve their highest levels in a socialized formal learning context.

Two of Vygotsky’s most important ideas are regarding the zone that learning is most apt to happen in, and who should lead or guide in that process. These ideas are known as More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The idea of a MKO is basically explained this way, according to Learning Theories Knowledge-base (2009): “The

MKO refers to anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. The MKO is normally thought of as being a teacher, coach, or older adult, but the MKO could also be peers, a younger person, or even computers” (Para. 2,3).

Vygotsky’s (1978) idea of a Zone of Proximal Development, however, does require some examination to better ascertain its subtleties. In essence, Vygotsky says, a child’s ZPD is the difference between the child’s actual developmental level without assistance in any way, and the level that the child is able to achieve with assistance. That ZPD is the area wherein growth happens or is able to happen. Vygotsky, himself, chose to relate it this way,

The state of a child’s mental development can be determined only by clarifying its two levels: the actual level and the zone of proximal development. ...what is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual development tomorrow-- that is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow. (p. 87)

If instruction is to be given on how to think critically, it must take place in the child’s ZPD.

As Vygotsky (1978) addressed the zones in which learning takes place and under what conditions learning seems to excel, another researcher, Perkins (1998), has contemplated what understanding looks like, and wrote, “...understanding is being able to carry out a variety of actions or ‘performances’ that show one’s grasp of a topic and at the same time advance it. It is being able to take knowledge and use it in new ways. ...such performances are called ‘performances of understanding’” (p. 12).

Historical Analysis as a Level of Thinking

Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl (1984) developed a taxonomy organized into six major classes. These included, “1.00 Knowledge, 2.00 Comprehension, 3.00

Application, 4.00 Analysis, 5.00 Synthesis, and 6.00 Evaluation” (p. 18). Bloom et al (1984) go on to explain that this taxonomy was intended to “...arrange educational behaviors from simple to complex” and that it was “based on the idea that a particular simple behavior may become integrated with other equally simple behaviors to form a more complex behavior” (p. 18). Figure 2.1 below, shows the hierarchical ordering of cognitive behaviors as laid down by Bloom and his colleagues.

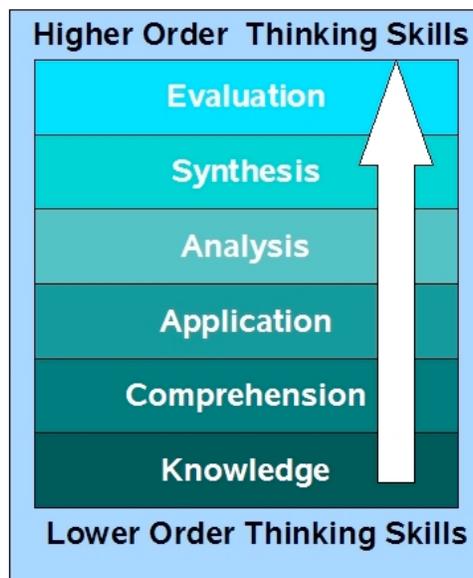


Figure 2.1, Bloom et al’s Cognitive Domain Taxonomy.

As this research project deals with historical analysis it is important to know that Bloom et al used the 4.00 number system to allow for variance within that number. For instance, he ranks an “analysis of elements” as 4.10, an “analysis of relationships,” 4.20, and an “analysis of organizational principles,” 4.30 (p. 205,6). The teaching of historical analysis would make use of all of the variance within analysis 4.00. The work of Bloom and his colleagues has now become a cornerstone in educational thought; so much so that the phrase “Bloom’s Taxonomy” has

become synonymous with the idea that there exists a certain hierarchical ranking of learning behaviors that adequately approximate the level of difficulty in thinking.

Triadic Reciprocal Causation and the Modeling of Critical Thinking

It is now necessary to consider the theory behind in what ways learning should be modeled. Albert Bandura has had a profound impact on how the modeling of a new skill or concept should be implemented and under what considerations it should be considered. Bandura (1977a) developed the Social Learning Theory, which deals with how, in what ways, and under what conditions learning happens, and conversely, how it should happen. Wood and Bandura (1989) put forth that all learning happens in a “triadic reciprocal causation” (p. 361-2). This triad is made up of a) the student’s behavior, b) personal factors, and c) the environment in which learning is to take place. All three elements are bi-directional though not equal in strength, meaning that all three components influence each other but not necessarily equally. Now, inside this triad one can observe learning happening in four ways. Wood and Bandura (1989) call them, a) attention processes, b) cognitive representational processes, c) behavioral production processes, and d) motivational processes. These four processes can best be explained in the following ways. Attention processes address what precisely students observe of the lesson that was modeled for them, and what they extract from the modeling. Cognitive representational processes are the observed retention students gain from transforming and restructuring the concepts modeled to them into usable rules and concepts that make sense to the students. Behavioral production processes are those processes students go through when they realize there is a difference between the new concept or skill and the skills they are currently have. According to Wood and Bandura (1989), upon realization of the difference, it is typical for a student’s

behavior to be modified. Motivational processes are understood in three ways: a) direct, b) vicarious, and c) self-produced. It may be said that the students will be motivated to produce the new learning or concept if they believe it will produce value they wish to see, or, if what has been modeled for them affects their self-image, or finally, if by embracing the new skill or concept they can see that it will help them at some later point.

Guided Mastery Modeling and Perceived Self-Efficacy

Wood and Bandura (1989) have also contributed two more concepts that are worth considering. The first is a concept known as Guided Mastery Modeling (p. 363) and the second is known as one's Perceived Self-Efficacy (p. 364). Guided mastery modeling is meant to develop intellectual, behavioral, and social competencies in students. This is done in three ways. First, Wood and Bandura state, skills, concepts, or general rules and strategies are modeled for dealing with different situations that the students might encounter. Second, the students engage in guided skill mastery wherein they are afforded the opportunity to participate in simulations and other guided practice without the fear of failure or negative feedback. Instead, they are encouraged and supported in these simulations and when they do make mistakes, according to Wood and Bandura, a MKO may offer corrective modeling and or instructive feedback. In some ways this stage can be seen as an incubation period in the learning process. This stage should be seen as safe and exploratory. This second stage is most effective if the student attempts to transfer it to a real world setting or a setting that has personal meaning to the student. Third, Wood and Bandura state, the students must engage in a transfer program wherein the new skills or concepts are used in real time and in a very personal and meaningful way, but in such a way as to garner good results that confirm the newly acquired learning or concept.

Wood and Bandura’s (1989) concept of a perceived self-efficacy in many ways adds to the affective domain taxonomy created by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1973). Their taxonomy acknowledged five levels of the affective domain. These levels were “receiving, 1.00, responding, 2.00, valuing, 3.00, organization, 4.00, and characterization by a value complex, 5.00” (p. 37). Figure 2.2 below shows the “range of meaning typical of commonly used affective terms measured against the taxonomy continuum” (p. 37). In their work, they noted that student interest generally lay between the receiving level 1.1, known as awareness, and valuing level 3.2, called preference for a value. Student attitudes could range between the responding level 2.2 which they called willingness to respond, and organization 4.1 known as conceptualization of a value.

5.0 CHARACTERIZATION BY A VALUE COMPLEX		4.0 ORGANIZATION		3.0 VALUING			2.0 RESPONDING			1.0 RECEIVING		
5.2 CHARACTERIZATION	5.1 GENERALIZED SET	4.2 ORGANIZATION OF A VALUE SYSTEM	4.1 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF A VALUE	3.3 COMMITMENT	3.2 PREFERENCE FOR A VALUE	3.1 ACCEPTANCE OF A VALUE	2.3 SATISFACTION IN RESPONSE	2.2 WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND	2.1 ACQUIESCENCE IN RESPONDING	1.3 CONTROLLED OR SELECTED ATTENTION	1.2 WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE	1.1 AWARENESS
←----- ADJUSTMENT -----→												
←----- VALUE -----→												
←----- ATTITUDES -----→												
←----- APPRECIATION -----→												
←----- INTEREST -----→												

FIGURE 1. The range of meaning typical of commonly used affective terms measured against the *Taxonomy* continuum.

(Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1973, p. 37)

Figure 2.2, Krathwohl et al’s Affective Domain Taxonomy.

Wood and Bandura's (1989) work concerns people's beliefs in their capacities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over events in their lives. Wood and Bandura suggest that possessing certain skills and having the ability to use them well are two different things. Success is actualized when a person has the required skills and is able to use them when needed. A crucial component in this is a person's perceived self-efficacy. Indeed, it is possible that without a positive perceived self-efficacy, student learning may effectually be as null-and-void. Howard Gardner (2006) states it this way,

...if [student] responses are essentially indistinguishable from those individuals who never studied the designated topics--if, indeed, the way that they approach the problem demonstrates little or no disciplinary method--we must then face the uncomfortable possibility that factual knowledge may have increased without a correlative increase in disciplinary sophistication. (p. 36)

In other words, not much was achieved in the education that they received. To understand this in the context of the teaching of historical analysis and as it pertains to this study, it must be acknowledged that for students to learn and truly understand what it means to do historical analysis, the students must be given an opportunity to learn in an environment that is free from ridicule; also the students must refrain from ridiculing historical figures from the past, as this may effect the environment or culture of the classroom and hinder the effectiveness of student opportunities to garner a new perspective. Also, every attempt must be made for students to feel competent at practicing historical analysis so that they might have a higher perceived self-efficacy and thus be more willing to exercise their newfound understanding in real time and real world settings. Without a positive perceived self-efficacy, it does not seem likely that students will become more knowledgeable citizens or potential perceptive leaders in our society and ever-changing culture.

Good Work and Good Thinking: Thinking Dispositions

Several researchers have put forth that thinking is not just something that happens. Instead, many are now rethinking what it means to do good work and participate in good thinking. Harvard researchers Perkins, Tishman, Ritchhart, Donis, and Andrade (2000) say, “The concept of intelligence is a normative concept of mind because it expresses a view of what counts as good, or effective, cognition. So it is not surprising that scholars interested in dispositions have also re-conceived related concepts of mind in terms of dispositions, such as the concepts of rationality and critical thinking” (p. 272). Tishman, Perkins and Jay (1995) suggest that, thinking has two parts, abilities and dispositions. They believe that good thinkers can be known by the thinking dispositions they demonstrate. Tishman et al’s work overtly suggests that students must have or be taught to have a disposition to explore, inquire, probe, seek clarity, think critically, and be organized. As Wood and Bandura (1989) said, this should happen in a nurturing and safe environment. Tishman et al (1995) go on to state, “Thinking dispositions are abiding tendencies toward distinct patterns of thinking behaviors. Just as we can talk about someone’s tendency to be curious or systematic or persistent in their thinking” (p. 39-40). She and her colleagues believe that there are five dispositions of good thinkers. First, they state, “Good thinkers have a tendency to be curious and questioning” (p. 41) which includes, “the urge to question, inquire, wonder, pose problems, probe further, [and] look beyond what’s given” (p. 41). Second, “they have a tendency to think broadly and adventurously, [which] includes: the impulse to explore alternative points of view, be open-minded, be flexible, try new things and ideas, [and] be playful” (p. 42). Third, good thinkers have a “disposition to think clearly and carefully [which] includes: the desire to seek clarity, gain understanding, be precise, be thorough,

[and] remain alert to possible error” (p. 42). Fourth, “the disposition to organize one’s thinking includes: the urge to be orderly and logical, be planful, think ahead, approach things in a calculated and methodical fashion. And, fifth, the disposition to give thinking time includes: the tendency to devote time and effort to thinking” (p. 42).

Tishman et al (1995) would likely agree that given the opportunities to observe historical analysis and then participate safely and constructively in it, the thinking dispositions they cultivate will become ongoing habits of good thinking. Thinking routines and thinking dispositions are necessary for the fostering of critical thinking, they are most effective with the help of a MKO, they happen in the ZPD so long as that ZPD is in a safe and nurturing environment, and they foster a positive perceived self-efficacy.

The Theories of Mindfulness and Ambiguity

It is interesting to note that it is possible to preplan ambiguity into a lesson for the purposes of heightened cognition. Langer (1989) describes the use of unsettledness as a way to spark thinking and learning in the classroom. She calls the theory behind this ambiguity theory. The overarching theory in which ambiguity theory resides is known as the Theory of Mindfulness. Langer and her fellow researchers have been particularly interested in how to create an environment that increases one’s propensity for a disposition of mindfulness. Inside the theory of Mindfulness, Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) identify three aspects that are especially important to it. The first is looking closely, second is exploring possibilities and perspectives, and third, introducing ambiguity. Ritchhart and Perkins point out that though many people consider themselves open to new information the truth is quite the opposite. For the sake of

efficiency, many people block out new information so that they might remain focused on the task at hand (p. 31).

The second category of Langer's Theory of Mindfulness is exploring possibilities and perspectives (Langer, 1989, 1997; Ritchhart and Perkins, 2000). Regarding this, Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) write, "Exploring the world may be rather natural to children, but this is certainly not the case for perspective taking. Adopting another's perspective and considering different perspectives is an ability that must be explicitly nurtured. The egocentrism of young children, and some grown ones, for that matter, often makes this a challenging undertaking" (p. 32). This affirmation of the need to intentionally cultivate the ability of students to acquire another's genuine perspective is helpful in helping us to understand just how important and deliberate the instruction of exploring perspectives must be. It is fortunate that the teaching of historical analysis is just that; namely, the teaching of perspectives understood in the time period of the artifacts or documents being considered in the historical analysis. However, in teaching historical analysis a problem may arise. If students have trouble seeing another contemporary's perspective, how much more difficult will it be for them to take on a perspective from the original historical context? Ritchhart and Perkins (2000) explain the third aspect of Langer's Theory of Mindfulness. In their stated third aspect, 'Introducing Ambiguity,' they suggest that there is more than one form of instruction. One form is known as "conditional" and the other, "absolute" (p. 33). The research conducted regarding these two aspects of instruction found that while students in both forms of instruction showed equal growth in the knowledge of information, those students in the conditional group showed "more flexibility and creativity in using that information to solve problems" (p. 33). The researcher found that through the use of

intentional ambiguity as a teaching tool, students were forced to make sense of the situation, thus taking ownership of their learning. Their learning was active and not passive. The teaching of historical analysis should allow the learner to do just this: make sense out of the information being provided and in doing so, develop the skills to transfer the newfound ability to other aspects of life.

General Summary of the Literature

In a study of how sixth graders interpreted Lincoln's views on Black-White relations, Wooden (2008) found that contextualized thinking with historical documents is unnatural and students must be taught to engage in it. Wooden writes,

Awareness and recognition of students' presentist ideas allow social studies educators to respond to students in ways that lead them away from anachronistic thinking and toward reflective thinking that sees the past as foreign, but accessible and relevant. Exposing students to original sources that offer opposing views on issues ... can help students reconstruct the worlds in which historical agents lived and better understand ... When students know how to do this, they are less likely to develop unsophisticated, unfair, or dangerous views of people and events in the past (p. 29).

Wooden's study involved two students, one White and one Black. Both students were good readers and good students, but neither one had had instruction on how make sense of various historical documents and set them in the context of their historical setting. Wooden chose these two students in part because he felt that both students were mature enough to handle to controversial nature of the language in several of the sources. This study was largely a descriptive study aimed at better understanding what attitudes and impressions students have when they are confronted with unadulterated historical documents and for the first time are asked to make sense of them for themselves without without meaning being made for them by a teacher or historian. Wooden's conclusion is that there needs to be much more research into different

ways contextualized thinking can be taught and nurtured in the study of history. He also concludes that students do not seem to understand that in many ways there may be more “discontinuity than continuity between the past and present” (p. 29).

Wooden’s findings confirmed what Martin and Wineburg (2008) concluded regarding students’ novice understanding of historical thinking; students with little or no experience in working with historical documents usually make quick decisions based on temporal proximity rather than the guarded and cautious judgements of experts. Expert readers, write Martin and Wineburg (2008), actively source all new information as a validity and scaffolding measure. Indeed, they write, “Acts of close reading and textual analysis, which come routinely to historians, remain a foreign and obscure language to many of our students” (p. 305). Indeed, Martin and Wineburg stated, “Teaching a way of thinking requires making thinking visible. We need to pull back the curtains from historical cognition to show students not only what historians think, but *how* they think” (p. 317).

A study by Bolick (2006) sought to better understand new ways to democratize history by finding out the possibilities and limitations of using digitized primary sources in the teaching of history by middle and high school history teachers. The study sought to challenge the transmission or lecture/textbook model of teaching by exploring a constructivist approach. Bolick (2006) hypothesized that the use of digitized primary sources would allow teachers to approach history in a completely new way which would allow them to change their teaching methodologies from transmission to constructivist approaches. The basic assumption was that if teachers learned how to find digitally archived primary sources and make sense of them, they might then be better able to help the students learn to do the same. The participants in this study

were 17 social studies teachers enrolled in a masters of education program at a large university. As Bolick states, “ Eight of the teachers were female and nine were male. One teacher was African American and sixteen of the teachers were Caucasian. All of the teachers had at least three years of teaching experience. The teachers were employed by four different school systems” (p. 126). The treatment used was outlined in the course syllabus, as this study was conducted on a cohort of students taking a class. There were three forms of data that informed this study. They were: digital history inquiry projects, reflective narratives, and online discussion postings. Bolick’s conclusion was that in fact making primary sources widely available to teachers and students does assist a constructivist approach to teaching. There were some limitations though. Some of the limitations were related to computer access in the classroom, the tension between depth and breadth in regard to the standards/curriculum, the amount of time needed to prepare for each digitally based primary source lesson, and concerns about students knowing more about technology than the teachers.

In a study that examined high school and middle school student performance in an online assessment task meant to gauge their level of historical thinking, Tally and Goldenberg (2005) sought to better understand how students describe their current history or social studies class; if students felt that they learned more from this particular social studies class where the teachers had received special training, and liked it more; and which historical thinking skills the students exhibited. The study included a total of 159 middle and high school students from six classrooms in four different schools. The student sample was 53% female and 47% male. Of the student sample, 47% of the students were in grades 6-8 and 53% were from grades 9-12. Of the student sample, 80% of the students were in regular level history classes and 20% were in AP or honors

classes. The data consisted of an activity and questionnaire. The data suggested that students who have not had instruction in historical analysis did not demonstrate the following behaviors: “observation, sourcing, inferring, evidence, question posing, and corroboration” (p. 6). The result of this study was that two thirds of the students reported that their history class (taught by a trained teacher) was different from their other history classes. From the student responses three themes emerged. First, students used technologies to learn. Second, students worked with primary sources to learn history, and third, the work load was tougher though the students liked their class more than their regular history classes. This study found that “a deeper, rigorous investigation into what helps students exhibit historical thinking behaviors is needed” (p. 16). Second, from student comments, it was apparent that, students were more invested in the outcome of their learning when they had the opportunity to construct meaning from primary sources. Tally and Goldenberg, said that “as artifacts in multiple media enter into the history classroom we may see shifts in learning and motivation associated with the rise of ‘hands-on’ learning in science and math” (p. 16).

In a study of 70 fifth and sixth grade students, Dutt-Doner, Cook-Cottone, and Allen (2007) attempted to find out three things: “What appear to be the essential skills involved in document analysis? What are the skills that best predict successful document-based question response outcomes? Are there significant differences between fifth and seventh grades students in these skills?” (p. 2). The students in this study were all private schools students who were highly motivated. There were 18 students from two fifth grade classrooms and 52 students from 3 seventh grade classrooms. All the students came from a single private school in New York State. The study was done over a two week period and used documents about the San Francisco

earthquake of 1906. Though a school library media specialist was used for all classroom interventions, no scaffolding was provided for the students. This study found that it is important for teachers to activate students' background knowledge or build that knowledge first, as the use of historical documents alone does not activate higher levels of thinking. It found importance in building "knowledge level comprehension skills by reinforcing language arts skills" (p. 14). It also found importance in the "modeling and scaffolding connection of prior knowledge to primary source documents through teacher led analysis" (p. 14). The study also found that students were constantly looking for the right answer, not realizing that history does not necessarily have a clear right or wrong answer. This study concluded that "teachers need to provide consistent, successful use of primary source documents as a part of learning so students can see their importance in understanding the 'real story'" (p. 15). Also, there appeared to be differences between the fifth and seventh graders. Fifth graders believed all the documents were true, whereas seventh graders questioned some of the documents.

Kohlmeier (2006) studied the relationship between consistently using class discussions and the development of historical empathy. Her study was a quasi-experimental, action research study involving her own students who were from a suburban high school with a population that was mostly White, and middle-class. She had 52 students, from which she drew 10 to focus on. The ten students were divided evenly by ability and gender. Of these ten students, one was African American and nine were White.

Kohlmeier (2006) used a three step approach involving a student created reading web, a portion of the Socratic Seminar, and a historical essay. She chose the second part of the Socratic Seminar in order to focus on the students voices and thoughts. Kohlmeier's (2006) conclusion

was that her “students recognized the differences between the historical period and the present, distinguished between different points of view, and defended their analysis of the author’s perspective with evidence from both the historical document and their prior knowledge” (p. 43). She also found evidence of genuine empathy from her students towards the historical figures they were reading about. One interesting conclusion she discovered is that high school students do not often understand how political, social and economic forces, which are larger than any one individual, can affect themselves or the historical person they are learning about. This deficiency seems to hinder a better understanding of the person they are studying. Kohlmeier (2006) did find that her students improved with each session. At first, students would just recognize differences between the past and present. Later, they showed signs of understanding different views within a single document. Finally, they were comfortable using evidence from the text and prior knowledge to defend their views.

Summary

It is apparent that much research has been conducted on the theory side of critical thinking, but that there is still plenty of room for more research studies related to historical analysis at the middle and high school levels, and various ways to teach contextualized thinking in history. Critical thinking skills and historical analysis are important parts of all that goes into securing and preserving a democracy. Developing empathy with, and understanding of, aspects of the past and in the context of the past, helps students to practice these aspects with others of their same era and time. The studies referenced in this chapter highlight the importance for an increased and structured use of primary sources in history curriculum. They point out the increased student engagement, and higher levels of critical thinking. What remains to be seen is

whether or not the use of primary sources will improve student scores on the CSTs and improve reading comprehension. These are aspects that will receive attention in this study with the hope of a significant discovery.

Chapter 3: Methods

Research Design

The literature suggests that there is a relationship between historical analysis and student achievement on the English Language-Arts and History, California State Tests. It further suggests that there is a relationship between historical analysis and reading comprehension. If this is true there may also be a relationship between all of the variables in this study. The literature was consistent in calling for further research in this area and the need for a better understanding of the effects of students being instructed in how to do historical analysis. This study will add to the still small but growing body of knowledge surrounding the use of source documents and or artifacts in the instruction of students and will highlight the importance of action research as a tool for teachers to better address the needs of their students and advance the education of children.

This research project drew upon previous research conducted and studied by Grove and Saucedo (2009). This study used a correlational research design and descriptive statistics to look at and analyze the data collected by Grove and Saucedo (2009). The data obtained in the study above fully supports the needs of the questions driving this research project. In this way, the questions used in this research project compliment the questions used in that research study and the data supports both that study and the purposes of this action research project.

Subjects

The data for this study was obtained by Grove and Saucedo (2009) in Orange County, California. Orange County is the second largest county in California with nearly a half million

culturally diverse students. The data collected by Grove and Saucedo (2009) represents one year of study on the subjects.

There were 452 students, of which 210 were female and 242 male. The students ages ranged from 13 to 15 with a mean age of 13.49. Of the total number of students, seven were African American, 47 were Asian, 146 were White, 152 were Hispanic, six were Pacific Islanders, 18 identified themselves as other and 76 students belonged to more than one ethnicity.

Instrument Selection

This study has only dependent variables, which are historical analysis, student performance on English Language-Arts and History, California Standardized Tests, and reading comprehension. In order to ensure validity, and reliability, multiple instruments were used and all of the variables were correlated together. Quantitative measures were used in this project. The instruments and variables were operationalized and stated in in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Instrument Selection

Instrument	Design	Operationalizes
8th Grade History Assessment - Part A 8th GHA-A	Quantitative Measured as a % of total points possible	Student understanding of founding of the U.S. through the industrialization era. - reading comprehension
8th Grade History Assessment - Part B 8th GHA-B	Quantitative Measured as a % of total points possible	Student understanding of historical analysis through primary source documents
California Standards Test - English Language Arts - CST - ELA	Quantitative Measured as a % of total points possible	Student performance on the CSTs & reading comprehension
California Standards Test - History - CST - H	Quantitative Measured as a % of total points possible	Student performance on the CSTs

Instrument	Design	Operationalizes
8th GHA-A, 8th GHA-B, CST - ELA, & CST - H	Quantitative Measured as a % of total points possible	The nature of the relationship between the variables.

In the study by Grove and Saucedo (2009), the students were given an 8th grade history assessment that had two parts. As seen in Appendix A, part A consisted of 44 multiple choice questions broken into seven sections. All of the questions were written at the knowledge level of Bloom' Taxonomy. Each section addresses a different era in American History. Section I had eight questions on the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Section II had seven questions on the Early Republic. Section III had seven questions on the Abolition and Women's movement. Section IV had six questions on Sectionalism and the Civil War. Section V had six questions about the Reconstruction. Section VI had five questions about the Westward Expansion and Indian Removal, and section VII had four questions about Immigration and Industrialization. In each section, each question was worth only one point with a possible score range of 0-44. As seen in Appendix B, part B of the 8th grade History Assessment (the primary source analysis) had three primary source documents and a two-part historical context question that was intended to link the three sources together. Part B, had eight questions with a possible score range of 0-4 for a total of 32 possible points.

Part A of the 8th grade history assessment operationalized the variable reading comprehension. Part B of the 8th grade history assessment operationalized the variable, historical analysis. The California Standardized Tests operationalized the variable: student performance on the CSTs. As this was a correlational study, it was not necessary to triangulate the findings in order to validate the findings. The findings are reliable and valid without the use of triangulation.

Instructional Materials

There were no instructional materials that were used in the classrooms. Instead, the major difference in the original study by Grove and Saucedo (2009) was in the professional development of the teachers in the experimental group. All of the students represented in the data were students of teachers who had received the professional development.

Data Collection Procedures

The student sample received the pre-test in the fall prior to intervention and received the same test again in June 2009. The assessments were sent to their history teacher along with a protocol to follow when administering the test. The teachers administered the test and were asked to allow two days of class for the completion of the assessment. The first day was for the multiple choice part of the assessment and the second day was for the primary source part of the assessment. Teachers were then given a two week window to administer the test and were then picked up by the project evaluator to be scored. The CSTs were administered at the regularly scheduled times and dates. Though the data for this study had already been collected, it was input and analyzed on the dates listed in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Data Collection Timeline

Date	Activity	Measurement
February 22, 2010	Data Input	8th GHA-A
March 1, 2010	Data Input and Analysis	8th GHA-A & 8th GHA-B
March 8, 2010	Data Input and Analysis	8th GHA-B
March 22, 2010	Data Input and Analysis and Review	8th GHA-B & CST - ELA
March 29, 2010	Data Input and Analysis and Review	CST - ELA & H
April 5, 2010	Data Input and Analysis	CST - H
April 12, 2010	Data Analysis	Analysis

Data Analysis

As stated above, the data for this study was collected in June of 2009. It was input into SPSS software in the dates listed above in Table 3.2. All three research questions were analyzed using a descriptive means analysis and a Pearson’s r analysis. The data used to answer the first question was the 8th GHA-B and both of the CSTs. The data used to answer the second research question was data from: the 8th GHA-A, 8th GHA-B and both of the CSTs. The data used to answer the third research question was data from: 8th GHA-A, 8th GHA-B, and CST - H. See Appendix C for SPSS Codebook.

Summary

This study was designed to produce valid and useful results for teachers, researchers, and policy makers. Two instruments were used in order to measure student achievement on the CSTs, student proficiency in historical analysis, student reading comprehension levels, and student understanding of cause and effect. Both instruments had two parts to them. The 8th GHA-A measured the dependent variables: cause and effect, and reading comprehension. The 8th GHA-

B measured historical analysis through primary sources. The CST - ELA measured the CST as a variable but also reading comprehension. The CST - H measured the CST, cause and effect, and historical analysis. It is believed that the outcome of this study has produced positive results and demonstrates a relationship between the different dependent variables.

Chapter 4: Findings

This action research project used a correlational research design and descriptive statistics to determine the relationship between historical analysis, student performance on the English Language Arts and History California Standards Tests, and reading comprehension. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between historical analysis and student performance on California Standards Tests as well as on student reading comprehension levels. The information gathered from this study will be used to give educators research based evidence on the use of historical analysis in middle school history classrooms.

The conclusions from this study were based on secondary data obtained from Grove and Saucedo (2009) and was used to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between historical analysis and student performance on the English Language Arts and History, California Standards Tests?
2. Is there a relationship between historical analysis and reading comprehension?
3. What is the relationship between historical analysis, student performance on the CST ELA and History exams and reading comprehension?

Subjects

Of the 452 students who made up the sample, there were both male and female students of varying ethnicities. Approximately half were female and all of these 8th grade students ranged in age from 13-15 years in age. Table 4.1 provides data on the gender make up of the students involved in this study.

Table 4.1 - Gender Data on the Student Sample

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	242	53.5
Female	210	46.5
Total	452	100.0

The ethnicity of the students varied. However, the overwhelming majority of the students were comprised of Asian, Hispanic, White and a sizable amount of mixed ethnic students. These four groups alone accounted for approximately 90% of the student sample. A complete summary of ethnicity data for students is provided below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 - Ethnicity of the Student Sample

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Asian	47	10.4
Black/African	7	1.5
Mexican/Hispanic/Latino	151	33.4
Pacific Islander	6	1.3
White-Non Hispanic	146	32.3
Other	18	4.0
More than 1 Ethnicity	76	16.8
Total	451	99.8
Missing	1	0.2
Total	452	100.0

Hypothesized Findings for Research Question One

The first research question for this study focused on the nature of the relationship between historical analysis and student performance on the California Standards Test for English/Language-Arts and History. The hypothesis stated: Historical analysis is a critical thinking skill and critical thinking is important to performance on standardized tests; therefore, a student's ability to do historical analysis should be related to performance on standardized tests. Part B of the 8th grade History Assessment was used as the instrument to measure the variable: Historical Analysis (Appendix B). This was a fair instrument for this purpose because it consisted of three primary source documents (primary source analysis), each written at the comprehension level of Bloom's Taxonomy, and a two-part historical context question that linked the three sources together. The first part of the historical context question was written at the comprehension level of Bloom's Taxonomy, while the second part was written at the evaluation level using the words "conclude" and "Explain." Part B had eight questions, each with a possible score range of 0-4, for a total of 32 possible points. Students who scored high in historical analysis also usually had high scores in the two California Standards Tests (ELA and Hist.). As seen in Table 4.3, the average score on the 8th grade History Assessment was 13.51. Some students scored as high as 19.64 out of 32 and others scored as low as 7.38 out of 32. Those who scored high on the 8th GHA - B also scored high on the CSTs, showing that there is a moderate but significant positive correlation between Historical Analysis and student performance on the CST's (ELA and Hist.). It also helped to validate the 8th GHA - B as a

reliable instrument.

Table 4.3 - Descriptive Statistics for RQ 1

Instruments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
8th GHA - B (Post-Test)	401	13.51	6.13
CST ELA Scaled Score	446	370.8	56.06
CST History Scaled Score	448	369.9	64.68

When correlating the 8th grade History Assessment part B (Historical Analysis variable) with the CST ELA and History scaled scores (CST variables) it is clear that there is a moderate but significant positive correlation between Historical Analysis and the California Standards, English-Language Arts and History tests. Though the correlation was moderate it remains significant due to the size of the student sample. Table 4.4 shows the relationship between the 8th GHA - B and the CSTs. Correlations ranging from .000 to .399 were deemed weak. Correlations ranging from .400 to .699 were deemed moderate and correlations ranging form .700 and up were deemed strong. As seen in Table 4.4 the correlations were moderate at .498 and .543.

Table 4.4 - Correlations for RQ 1

Instrument	Correlational Data	CST ELA Scaled Score	CST History Scaled Score
8th GHA - B (Post-Test)	Pearson Correlation	.498**	.543**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	396	398

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesized Findings for Research Question Two

The second research question for this study considered whether or not there is a relationship between historical analysis and reading comprehension. The hypothesis stated: The teaching of historical analysis supports literacy and expands student vocabulary, therefore historical analysis should increase the reading comprehension levels of students. The instrument used to operationalize the construct of the variable Historical Analysis was the 8th grade History Assessment part B. The instruments used to operationalize the construct of the variable Reading Comprehension were both the 8th grade History Assessment part A and the CST ELA. Using two instruments for the variable Reading Comprehension helped to validate the findings on the relationship between Historical Analysis and Reading Comprehension. Part A of the 8th grade History Assessment had 44 multiple choice questions with a possible score range of 0-44. As seen in Table 4.5, student scores on the 8th Grade History Assessment part A ranged in average from 15.63 to 9.07 out of 44. Student scores on the CST ELA ranged from 426.87 to 314.75. Students who had high scores in Historical Analysis also had high scores on the 8th GHA - A and the CST ELA.

Table 4.5 - Descriptive Statistics for RQ 2

Instruments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
8th GHA - B (Post-Test)	401	13.51	6.13
8th GHA - A (Post-Test)	452	23.26	7.03
CST ELA Scaled Score	446	370.8	56.06

As mentioned before, correlations ranging from .400 to .699 were deemed moderate.

When correlating the 8th grade History Assessment part B with the 8th grade GHA - A (multiple choice) post-test and the CST ELA (both used to measure Reading Comprehension), it is clear (as seen in Table 4.6), that there is a moderate but significant positive correlation between these three instruments of the two variables. Though the correlations were moderate they remain significant due to the large sample size.

Table 4.6 - Correlations for RQ 2

Instrument	Correlational Data	8th GHA - A (Post-Test)	CST ELA Scaled Score
8th GHA - B (Post-Test)	Pearson Correlation	.591**	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	401	396

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesized Findings for Research Question Three

The third research question for this study considered the relationship between all of the variables. The hypothesis stated: As this question is intended to explore the nature of the relationship between all of the variables, it is likely that there is a relationship between these different variables. The instruments used to measure the constructs of the variables for this study have all been described above. Students who scored well in the on the 8th GHA - B also usually scored well in the other instruments used here and given the number of students these findings were very significant. According to the California Department of Education (2010) the average statewide ELA score for 8th grade was 348.4 out of 600 total possible points. As seen in Table

4.7, students in this sample scored an average of 370.8 in the CST ELA. Therefore, the 8th grade CST ELA mean test scores for these students was 22.41 points higher than the state wide mean score.

Table 4.7 - Descriptive Statistics of all Variables by Instrument for RQ 3

Instruments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
8th GHA - B (Post-Test)	401	13.51	6.13
8th GHA - A (Post-Test)	452	23.26	7.03
CST ELA Scaled Score	446	370.8	56.06
CST History Scaled Score	448	369.9	64.68

As seen in Table 4.8, when correlating all of the variables together it became clear that the relationship between HA and the other three variables was moderate, positive and significant. When correlating the relationship between the two CSTs there was a strong, positive and significant relationship. The relationship between the CST ELA and the 8th GHA - A was also strong, positive and significant.

Table 4.8 - Correlations of All Variables for RQ 3

Instruments:	2	3	4
1. 8th GHA - B (Post-Test)	.591**	.498**	.453**
	0.000	0.000	0.000
	401	396	398
2. 8th GHA - A (Post Test)		.729**	.789**
		0.000	0.000
		456	448
3. CST ELA Scaled Score			.798**
			0.000
			444
4. CST History Scaled Score			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Unhypothesized Findings

One question that came to mind as this research process unfolded was how much of the significance between these variables was due to the intrinsic strength of the relationships between these variables and how much of it was do to some students just being good test takers while others are not. In attempting to find an answer to this the totals of each of the four instruments were added together for each student. Obviously in doing so the CSTs received a disproportional amount of weight as each of the CSTs had a total 600 possible points while the 8th GHA-A only had 44 possible points and part B only had 32 possible points. This approach though imperfect, is appropriate for the purposes of teasing out an unhypothesized finding.

Doing so created a total of 1,276 points possible. Against this total of 1,276 points each student was ranked from lowest to highest. As seen in Table 4.9, the lowest scoring third had a 131 students and were given a group number of 1. As seen in Table 4.10, the middle group of students had 132 students and were given a group number 2. The highest scoring students were grouped together as well. As seen in Table 4.11, there were 131 in the highest group and they were given the number 3 for their group. Finally, each group of students were correlated against the four instruments and tables 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11, show the correlations.

Table 4.9 Correlations of all Variables for Group 1 for Unhypothesized Finding

Group	Instrument	2	3	4
1	1. 8th GHA-B	0.088	.332**	0.152
		0.320	0.000	0.082
	131	131	131	
	2. CST ELA Scaled Score	.245**	.361**	
0.005		0.000		
		131	131	
	3. 8th GHA-A		.334**	
			0.000	
			131	
	4. CST History Scaled Score			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

Table 4.10 Correlations of all Variables for Group 2 for Unhypothesized Finding

Group	Instrument	2	3	4	
2	1. 8th GHA-B	-0.06	0.14	0.03	
		0.511	0.11	0.774	
		132	132	132	
	2. CST ELA Scaled Score	0.08	-0.14		
		0.342	0.108		
		132	132		
	3. 8th GHA-A	.220*			
		0.011			
		132			
	4. CST History Scaled Score				

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

Table 4.11 Correlations of all Variables for Group 3 for Unhypothesized Finding

Group	Instrument	2	3	4
3	1. 8th GHA-B	0.121	.355**	.203*
		0.168	0.000	0.020
		131	131	131
	2. CST ELA Scaled Score		.312**	.407**
		0.000	0.000	
			131	131
	3. 8th GHA-A			.505**
				0.000
				131
	4. CST History Scaled Score			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Summary

This study was important because it showed there is a moderate but positive and significant relationship between historical analysis and student achievement. It further solidifies the resolve educators should have to teach historical analysis as a way of bolstering student analytical abilities as they learn to reason and think critically. Strong reasoning abilities are important for a democratic society as voters must be able to discern truth from spin and vote for things that will benefit this country and its citizenry.

This study builds on general research on historical analysis by Tally and Goldenberg (2005) who found that “a deeper, rigorous investigation into what helps students exhibit historical thinking behaviors is needed” (p.16). In addition the researcher Bolick (2006) concluded that making primary sources widely available to teachers and students does assist a constructivist approach to teaching.

This study employed a correlational research design with descriptive statistics to further a study done by Grove and Saucedo (2009). There were 452 subjects in this study ages 13-15 from Orange County, California. All were public school students and approximately half were female of which the large majority were White, Hispanic or Asian. As this study was a correlational study all of the variables were dependent variables.

Hypothesized Conclusions for Research Question One

This first research question focused on the nature of the relationship between Historical Analysis and student performance on the California Standards Test for English/Language-Arts

and History. The hypothesis stated: Historical analysis is a critical thinking skill and critical thinking is important to performance on standardized tests; therefore, a student's ability to do historical analysis should be related to performance on standardized tests. Correlating the 8th grade History Assessment part B (Historical Analysis variable) with the CST ELA and History scaled scores (CST variables) produced a moderate, but significant positive correlation. The relationship was moderate, but still a significant positive relationship due to the large sample size.

Though none of the research identified in chapter two of this study had any findings related to the direct relationship between historical analysis and student achievement on the CST's, this finding is in alignment with Vygotsky's theories related to a "More Knowledgeable Other" (MKO) and a child's "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). In these two concepts, Vygotsky believed a child would grow intellectually in the presence of someone who is more knowledgeable than him/her self and further, that learning takes place in that zone between the extent of where a child can develop on his/her own and how far that child can develop with the help of a MKO. This finding is also in alignment with Bloom's thoughts on analysis as a level of thinking. In his original hierarchy of learning he established analysis as the fourth level of thinking with only two levels above it. Bloom believed that as a student progresses up the levels of thinking, that student would better understand the concept being learned. The findings of this study suggest that Bloom and his colleagues were correct. Langer's work on "Mindfulness" also supports the findings of this study. Her work on ambiguity and its effect on the mind and making the subjects more aware supports the findings of this study in that making sense of the past (historical analysis) feels very undefined and foreign, heightening student awareness and

consequently making learning more memorable thus having a greater potential impact on student performance on the CSTs. On the basis on this analysis it is appropriate to accept the hypothesis as valid.

Hypothesized Conclusions for Research Question Two

The second research question considered the relationship between historical analysis and reading comprehension. The hypothesis stated: The teaching of historical analysis supports literacy and expands student vocabulary, therefore historical analysis should increase the reading comprehension levels of students. Correlating the 8th grade History Assessment part B with the 8th grade GHA - A (multiple choice) post-test and the CST ELA (both used to measure Reading Comprehension), showed a moderate but significant positive correlation between these three variables. As with the first research question the relationship was moderate but due to the large size of the student sample it was also a positive significant relationship. Though none of the researchers identified in this study explicitly researched historical analysis in relation to reading comprehension Dutt-Doner, Cook-Cottone, and Allen (2007) did deal with the need to scaffold student prior knowledge and understanding to the primary source being analyzed. This process of scaffolding seems to help enrich student comprehension of what they are reading and learning. Based on the results of the correlation, the hypothesis is accepted as valid.

Hypothesized Conclusions for Research Question Three

The third research question looked at the relationship between all of the variables. The hypothesis stated: As this question is intended to explore the nature of the relationship between all of the variables, it is likely that there is a relationship between these different variables.

Correlating all of the variables together showed a moderate, positive and significant relationship between Historical Analysis and the other variables.

Some supporting research for this finding can be seen in the work of Kohlmeier (2006). Kohlmeier sought to see the effects of a heightened awareness of historical characters on students' performances, dispositions, and maturation. She found that her students improved in showing historical empathy with each session. While at first they would just recognize differences between the past and present. Later, they showed signs of understanding different views within a single document. Finally, they were comfortable using evidence from the text and prior knowledge to defend their views. Given these correlations the hypothesis is accepted as valid.

Unhypothesized Conclusions

One concern that surfaced during the duration of this study was the question of how much of the strength of the correlations was due to the intrinsic relationship between the two verses how much was due to some students being better test takers than others. Since all of the instruments used in this study were paper and pencil tests there was a concern that student ability to take tests may influence the strength of the relationships between the variables. As seen in Table 4.9, the students who scored highest on the CSTs and 8th GHAs also showed significance levels while those in group 1 and 2 did not demonstrate as much significance. Interestingly, in group 1 there was significance between the two parts of the 8th GHA. There was also significance between the two CSTs. There was not however, significance between the 8th GHA and the CSTs in group 1 or 2 while group 3 did show significance between the CSTs and the 8th GHA. This suggests that the 8th GHA might not be in alignment with the CSTs. It also suggests

that the results of the correlations between the variables may have less to do with the intrinsic relationships between the variables than previously thought and more to do with the ability of each student to test well than previously thought.

Limitations

When analyzing the level of questions on the 8th grade history assessment I realized that although this assessment was a good assessment of historical analysis due to its use of three historical document questions and one two-part question that asked the students to make connections it certainly could have been better. As stated previously, the level of questions used on this assessment were written mostly at the comprehension level of Bloom's taxonomy which is just below the analysis level. The first part of the two-part historical context question was likewise written at the comprehension level of Bloom's Taxonomy while the second part was written at the evaluation level using the words "conclude" and "explain." The 'Evaluation' level of Bloom's Taxonomy is two levels above the 'Analysis' level and helped to legitimize the two-part question and the results of the correlation. Even so, it may have limited the strength of the relationships in this study and an instrument aligned better with the analysis level of Bloom's Taxonomy might show a stronger relationship between the variables. Also, since all of the instruments were paper and pencil tests this too was a source of possible limitations. If students do not test well, or experience high levels of test anxiety or have low self-efficacy the results may be questioned.

Recommendations

Given the limitations discussed above it would be appropriate to do further research on the strength of the relationships between historical analysis and the other variables in this study.

Likewise, in further research on this topic one should consider using more than just paper and pencil tests and incorporate a sampling of narrative data. Also, given that this field of research is so new it would also be appropriate to continue to research how best to teach historical analysis. Certainly the work of Tally and Goldenberg (2005), Kohlmeier (2006), Dutt-Doner, Cook-Cottone, and Allen (2007), as well as Martin and Wineburg (2008), and Wooden (2008) all confirm the need for more research into how best to teach historical analysis and conversely, how students might best learn this topic.

Action Research Plan

This study will be presented to my peers in the Masters program. Upon obtaining my first teaching position I plan on researching the two areas in my recommendations above. I would very much like to find out if the strength of the relationship is indeed stronger than moderate, and how best to teach historical analysis. I would also like to see if there might be some way to incorporate historical analysis into a historical simulation of some sort.

Action Research Reflection

In the course of doing this study I have learned the value of action research as a personal approach to professional development. I have grown to appreciate the empowerment I feel through action research and the growth in professional understanding I am able to glean from it. Through the process of action research I have grown to understand what research entails and that it does have meaning to me in the classroom, that it is not just for those professional researchers “in the ivory tower” but for all teachers and for the progress of education. I have also really grown in appreciation for this field of historical analysis and the impact that it can have on those who learn how to do it.

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Appendix A:

8th Grade History Assessment - Part A

Section 1: Background Information

Student ID# _____

Last Name _____

First Name _____

A. What grade are you in? (Circle one)

7 8 9 10

B. Are you a boy or girl? (Circle one)

Boy Girl

C. How old are you? (Circle one)

11 12 13 14 15 16 17

1. Which ethnic group describes you best? (Check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Mexican/Hispanic/Latino
- Pacific Islander
- White-Not Hispanic
- Other (Specify _____)

2. How far will you go in school?

- I won't finish high school.
- I will finish high school and stop.
- I will go to trade or vocational school after high school.
- I will attend college for less than four years.
- I will graduate from a four year college.

3. What language do you speak at home?

- Only English
- Both English and other language
- Only my other language

8th Grade Assessment

Teacher Name _____

Class Period _____

4. What grades do you get usually in school?

- Mostly A's
- Mostly A's and B's
- Mostly B's
- Mostly B's and C's
- Mostly C's
- Mostly C's and D's
- Mostly D's
- Mostly D's and F's

5. What is the highest level your mother (or female guardian) completed in school?

- 8th grade or less
- Some high school
- Graduated from high school
- Some college
- Graduated from a four year college
- Don't know

For Evaluator Use Only

STOP: Please wait for directions before you continue

Student ID: _____

Directions: Read each question, choose the best answer below each question and circle your answer choice.

Constitution/Bill of Rights

1. What significant event occurred on July 4, 1776?
 - a. The American Revolution ended.
 - b. The Civil War began.
 - c. The Boston Massacre
 - d. The Declaration of Independence was signed.

2. All of the following were part of the Great Compromise EXCEPT
 - a. The legislature would have two houses.
 - b. Representation in the House of Representatives would be based on population.
 - c. Smaller states would only have one representative in the Congress.
 - d. Each state would have two members in the Senate.

3. Which branch of the federal government has the power to make laws?
 - a. legislative branch
 - b. executive branch
 - c. judicial branch
 - d. all of the above

4. Which of the following is NOT an example checks and balances?
 - a. Both houses of Congress must pass a bill before it becomes a law.
 - b. The president can veto a bill.
 - c. Members of the Senate can be on committees together.
 - d. Congress can override a presidential veto.

5. What is federalism?
 - a. Sharing powers between the national and state governments.
 - b. The government's right to tax its citizen.
 - c. Dividing the government into legislative, executive, and judicial branches
 - d. Presidential appointment of Supreme Court Justices.

6. Who were federalists?
 - a. People who supported ratification of the Constitution.
 - b. People who were against ratification of the Constitution.
 - c. Loyalists who moved back to England

- d. Slaves

(Continue on to next page)

Student ID: _____

7. How does the Bill of Rights help balance the power of government?
 - a. The Bill of Rights grants power to women.
 - b. The Bill of Rights guarantees people's freedom and protects them from abuse of government power.
 - c. The Bill of Rights bans the importation of sugar.
 - d. The Bill of Rights allows for one branch of government.

8. A bill becomes a law when
 - a. both houses of Congress approve it.
 - b. the president signs
 - c. the Senate refers committee.
 - d. the House refers committee.

Early Republic

“Observe good faith and justice towards all nations...Tis our policy to steer clear of permanent alliances.”

- George Washington's Farewell Address

9. In the first president's farewell address to the nation he gives advice on foreign policy. What was this advice?
 - a. Avoid making formal relationships with other countries
 - b. Keep other nations involved in the United States
 - c. Engaging in war is good for the economy.
 - d. France and the United States should become permanent allies.

10. Shays's Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion both arose as a result of
 - a. anti-British feelings.
 - b. Federalist protests.
 - c. Native American Attacks.
 - d. new taxes.

11. Political parties emerged by 1796 even though the
 - a. Constitution outlawed them.
 - b. President opposed them.
 - c. Congress had outlawed them.
 - d. All of the above.

(Continue on to next page)

Student ID: _____

12. The Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans disagreed on
 - a. slavery.
 - b. whether ordinary people could be trusted in government.
 - c. indentured servitude
 - d. whether the American people should be taxed.

13. Which leader favored a strong federal government and a national bank?
 - a. Alexander Hamilton
 - b. Thomas Jefferson
 - c. both leaders
 - d. neither leader

14. Who was the founder of the Democratic-Republican Party?
 - a. George Washington
 - b. Alexander Hamilton
 - c. John Adams
 - d. Thomas Jefferson

15. What was the Monroe Doctrine?
 - a. a U.S. policy against European colonization of the Americas
 - b. a peace treaty with Britain
 - c. a peace treaty with the Cherokee
 - d. a justification for westward expansion

Abolition/Women's Movement

16. What is suffrage?
 - a. The right to vote
 - b. The right to practice religion
 - c. The right to own property
 - d. The right to happiness

17. Why did women want equal rights?
 - a. Because they wanted to have power over men
 - b. Because they wanted to be able to go to work
 - c. Because they wanted to have power over their lives and property
 - d. Because they wanted to stop having children

(Continue on to next page)

Student ID: _____

18. What is the Seneca Falls Convention?
 - a. A convention of slaves and abolitionists
 - b. The first women's rights convention
 - c. A convention of Federalists
 - d. The first environmental convention

19. What do Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony all have in common?
 - a. They believed that women should not marry
 - b. They believed that everyone should own slaves
 - c. They believed in coeducation of men and women
 - d. They believed in states' rights

20. What is an abolitionist?
 - a. A Northerner who supported the South
 - b. A person who believed in ending slavery
 - c. A slave owner
 - d. A Southerner who used slaves on a plantation

21. What was the main function of the Underground Railroad?
 - a. To transport raw materials from the South to the North
 - b. To help settlers get to California for the Gold Rush
 - c. To provide a cheaper mode of transportation throughout the states
 - d. To help runaway slaves make their way to freedom

22. What impact did the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 have on the Underground Railroad?
 - a. The Railroad became weaker.
 - b. It strengthened people's resolve to help slaves.
 - c. The conductors were all arrested.
 - d. It forced Northerners to return escaped slaves

Sectionalism/Civil War

23. What did the Missouri Compromise do?
 - a. It let Missouri voters decide whether to allow slavery.
 - b. It accepted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state.
 - c. It prohibits slavery in any lands west of the Missouri River.
 - d. It abolished the slave trade in Washington, D.C.

(Continue on to next page)

Student ID: _____

24. What issue made it difficult for new states to be admitted to the Union during the early to mid-1800's?
- Manifest Destiny
 - trade restrictions
 - access to overland trails
 - disputes over the spread of slavery
25. What is popular sovereignty?
- Both men and women can vote.
 - Freedom of speech.
 - A government by consent of the people and equal justice under the law.
 - Congress could draft soldiers
26. What is the belief that settlers in a state should be allowed to decide whether or not they wanted slavery?
- Popular sovereignty
 - Abolition
 - Federalism
 - Manifest destiny
27. What were the four border states?
- the states that bordered Washington, D.C.
 - the states that refused to take sides in the Civil War
 - the states that allowed slavery but remained in the Union
 - the states that bordered the Mississippi River
28. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?
- it freed all enslaved African Americans in the South
 - it abolished slavery in the United States
 - it freed all African Americans in the United States
 - it allowed enslaved people to leave the South

Reconstruction

29. To reenter the Union, Southern states had to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which
- granted citizenship to African Americans.
 - abolished slavery.
 - guaranteed voting rights to African Americans.
 - guaranteed the right to trial by jury for African Americans.

(Continue on to next page)

Student ID: _____

30. African Americans received full citizenship with the passage of
 - a. the Fifteenth Amendment
 - b. the Sixteenth Amendment
 - c. the Fourteenth Amendment
 - d. the Thirteenth Amendment

31. Southern states promoted segregation through the passage of
 - a. Jim Crow laws
 - b. the Fifteenth Amendment
 - c. slave codes
 - d. black codes

32. Which amendment guaranteed African American men the right to vote?
 - a. Sixteenth Amendment
 - b. Fifteenth Amendment
 - c. Fourteenth Amendment
 - d. Thirteenth Amendment

33. What was a task of the Freedmen's Bureau?
 - a. to set up schools for African Americans
 - b. to help pro-Union Southerners
 - c. to provide medical services for African Americans
 - d. all of the above

34. The Ku Klux Klan used _____ to deny rights to freed men and women.
 - a. poll taxes
 - b. corrupt legal practices
 - c. fear and violence
 - d. unfair laws and decrees

Westward Expansion/Indian Removal

35. How did the purchase of the Louisiana Territory affect the size of the United States in 1803?
 - a. It extended it to the present-day size.
 - b. It did not affect the size at all.
 - c. It increased it slightly.
 - d. It doubled the size.

(Continue on to next page)

Student ID: _____

36. The idea that the United States should occupy the entire continent from coast-to-coast came to be known as
- the temperance movement
 - Manifest Destiny
 - Fifty-four Forty or Fight
 - the Adams-Onís Treaty
37. What led to the start of many boomtowns in the West?
- the growth of farming
 - the discovery of gold or silver
 - the growing fur trade
 - the development of ranching
38. Why did some Native Americans accept the U.S. government's reservation policy at first?
- They wanted to become individual landowners.
 - They wanted to give up their nomadic lifestyle.
 - Government officials made promises they did not intend to keep.
 - all of the above
39. Why did many Americans settle in Oregon?
- economic troubles in the East
 - the promise of fertile farmland
 - the belief in Manifest Destiny
 - all of the above

Immigration/Industrialization

40. The invention of the telegraph helped
- unify the country.
 - the military send secret messages.
 - develop time zones.
 - mail arrive faster.
41. Why did Irish immigrants move to the United States in the mid-1800's?
- They wanted to escape religious persecution.
 - A democratic revolution had failed in Ireland.
 - A new anti-Catholic political party forced them to flee Ireland.
 - The Great Irish Famine left many people without food.

(Continue on to next page)

Student ID: _____

43. Why was the Dawes Act passed in 1887?
- a. to give white settlers land on the Great Plains
 - b. to break up the Indian reservations
 - c. to bring a peaceful end to the Indian Wars
 - d. to close the Great Plains to all American settlement
44. Why did industries hire child workers?
- a. They would work for little money.
 - b. There was no public school system yet.
 - c. No one thought child labor was
 - d. Children enjoyed working.

Appendix B:

8th Grade History Assessment - Part B

STOP: Please wait for directions before you continue to the next section

Student ID: _____

Part I: Document Analysis

Directions: Please study the three sources below, one at a time, and answer the questions below each document. After you have studied all three sources you will be asked to answer some questions that apply to all three documents

There are three separate sources: Source A, Source B and Source C.

Source
A

“What is all this about?”

As we lay there watching the bright stars and listening to the twitter of the little birds in their nests, many a soldier asked himself the questions: What is this all about? Why is it that 200,000 men of one blood and one tongue, believing as one man in the fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man, should in the nineteenth century of the Christian era be thus armed with all the improved appliances of modern warfare and seeking one another’s lives? We could settle our differences by compromising and all be at home in ten days.

R.M. Collins, Confederate lieutenant, 1863

1. Describe the **content** of the source above.

2. Is this a primary source?

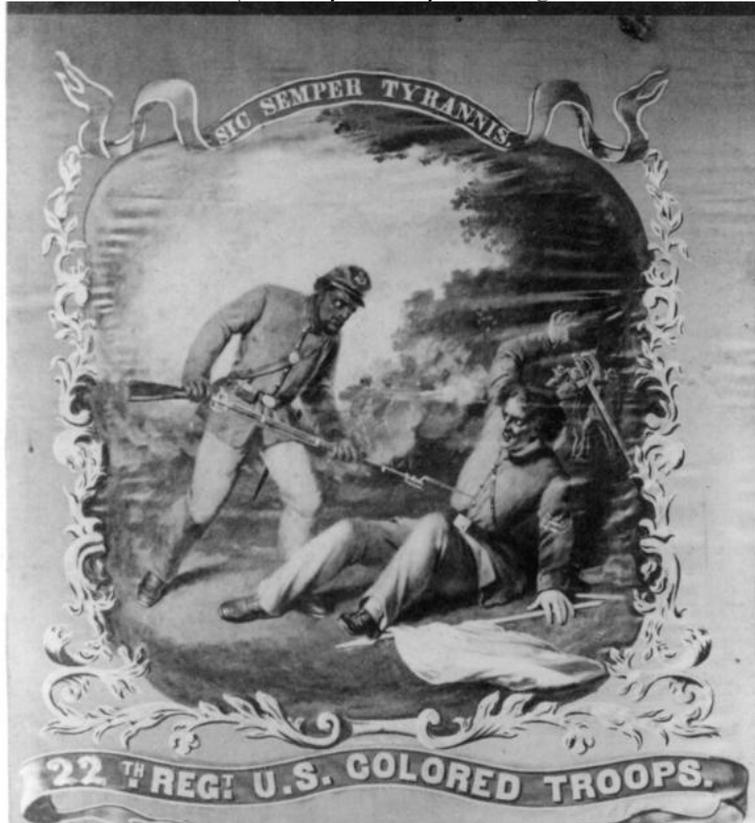
YES

NO

2a. Explain your answer.

Student ID: _____

Banner for the 22nd Regimental US Colored Troops, organized in Philadelphia, Jan. 1864
by David Bustill Bowser (courtesy Library of Congress, Prints and Posters)



Source

B

1. Describe the **content** of the source above.

2. Is this a primary source?

YES

NO

2a. Explain your answer.

Student ID: _____

Source
C

By mid-century, North and South had developed two different political agendas based on their very different economies. The Northern agenda called for the extension of free labor into new states. The Southern agenda demanded the maintenance of slavery. The two regions drifted toward sectionalism, or an extreme allegiance to their own limited interests.

This sectionalism developed because of Northern politicians' attempts to pass laws settling the slavery debate for the entire nation. White Southerners, angered over increasing federal intervention in their affairs, believed that they should be able to make more decisions—especially about slavery—at the state level of government. Meanwhile millions of African Americans wondered when their oppression would end.

1. Describe the **content** of the source above.

2. Is this a primary source? YES NO

2a. Explain your answer.

(End Test)

Appendix C

SPSS Code Book for 8th GHA Parts A + B

SPSS Code Book

Instrument: 8th Grade History Assessment Parts A + B

#	Variable Name	Type	Variable Label	Value Label	Measure
1	Gender	Numeric	1, Male; 2, Female		scale
2	Age	Numeric	None		scale
3	Ethnicity	Numeric	1 = "American Indian or Alaskan Native" 2 = "Asian" 3 = "Black/African American" 4 = "Mexican/Hispanic/Latino" 5 = "Pacific Islander" 6 = "White/Non-Hispanic" 7 = "Other" 8 = "More than 1 ethnicity"		scale
4	PreTotal	Numeric	None	Multiple Choice	scale
5	PostTotal	Numeric	None	Multiple Choice	scale
6	PreHATotal	Numeric	None	Historical Analysis	scale
7	PostHaTotal	Numeric	None	Historical Analysis	scale
8	LanguageLevel	Numeric	1 = "F" 2 = "L" 3 = "R" 4 = "E"	Language Level	Nominal
9	CSTELA	Numeric	None	CST ELA Scaled	Scale
10	ELAProficiencyLevel	Numeric	None	ELA Proficiency Level	Nominal
11	CSTHistory	Numeric	None	CST History Scaled Score	Scale
12	HistoryProficiencyLevel	Numeric	None	History Proficiency Level	Nominal
13	LiteraryResponseandAnalysis	Numeric	None	Literary Response and Analysis	Nominal
14	ReadingComprehension	Numeric	None	Reading Comprehension	Nominal
15	WordAnalysisandVocabulary	Numeric	None	Word Analysis and Vocabulary	Nominal
16	WritingStrategies	Numeric	None	Writing Strategies	Nominal
17	WrittenConventions	Numeric	None	Written Conventions	Nominal
18	totscore	Numeric	None		scale
19	VAR00002	Numeric	None		scale
20	ZPostHaTotal	Numeric	None	Zscore: Hist. Analysis Post-Test	scale