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TEACHING U.S. HISTORY TO ALASKA NATIVE STUDENTS: KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS
OF PROSPECTIVE SECONDARY TEACHERS

Volume I

By

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING U.S. HISTORY TO ALASKA NATIVE STUDENTS: KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS OF PROSPECTIVE SECONDARY TEACHERS

By

Karen Joyce Noordhoff

This study concerns prospective secondary teachers' knowledge and pedagogical reasoning in their deliberations about teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native students. Cultural differences between the prospective teachers and their students marked this study. Four white, middle-class teacher candidates from the University of Alaska were interviewed after student teaching, at the end of their teacher education program, about their understandings of history, ideas about Alaska Native students, and ways they imagined bringing the two knowledge domains together in planning for teaching and learning. Using a semi-structured protocol, this interview consisted, in part, of simulated teaching tasks and scenarios designed to elicit the intending teachers' thinking that integrated several domains of knowledge.

The teacher candidates were limited in both the ways they thought about the nature of history and their knowledge of Alaska Native students as learners of history. However, the knowledge of Alaska Native culture they held was positively respectful and relatively nonstereotypical, but fairly broad and overgeneralized. Thus, these novice teachers' instructional representations and the ways they thought about making U.S. history relevant to Alaska Native learners were basically superficial, although well-intended. Further, the novices' understandings of history and ideas about learning and teaching in history interacted to shape their teaching plans. These plans

represented limited learning opportunities for Alaska Native students, raising concerns in regard to the novice teachers thinking about the moral imperative of teaching--that teachers help students learn worthwhile subject matter.

This study contributes to the emerging dialogue on teacher education for cultural diversity. The question of teaching and teacher education involving cultural differences between teachers and students calls for acknowledging both the general nature of the problem and also the particulars of specific subjects and students.

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To David Alan Hagstrom

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I am amazed. I am amazed to be at this point of letting go-- releasing this chapter of my life and work, becoming ready for its transformation.

I am amazed to look around me, once again, to see in imagination the many faces of those who have been with me on this journey--the people who have been my constant companions and part of the inner circle of support; those who were especially important at significant moments, but who may not know the special part they had to play; those who offered unparalleled professional opportunities that became sustaining learning environments for me. Let me name a few.

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I also want to thank colleagues and supporters at the University of Alaska Fairbanks who have upheld me and this research in both intellectual and practical ways: Pat Cloud, Perry Gilmore, Allan Glatthorn, Gorden Hedahl, Judy Kleinfeld, Jerry Mohatt and the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies in support of the transcription of my interview tapes, Paul Ongtooguk, and Greg Smith.

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mind" (II Timothy 1:7) and "Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is dark" (Tagore).

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CHAPTER 1

THINKING ABOUT TEACHING SUBJECT MATTER TO CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Teaching requires making concrete choices among competing values for vulnerable others who lack the teacher's knowledge and skill, who are dependent upon the teacher for access to both, and who will be changed by what the teacher teaches and who that teacher is.

-- Cuban (1992, p.9)

Speaking as the outgoing president of the American Educational Research Association, Larry Cuban (1992) described the uncertain, action-driven, dilemma-ridden, and essentially moral character of educational practice. As a teacher educator, I am intimately concerned with how to prepare prospective secondary teachers for this scene, especially when these teacher candidates will be faced with a diversity of students.

For the last eight years, I have worked with teacher candidates preparing to teach in Alaska's diverse school settings.¹ Many of these prospective teachers intend to teach Alaska Native students in small,

¹ Alaska's secondary (7-12) schools range in pupil population per school from 1 to about 1800. Like other urban centers across the nation, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau maintain large, multicultural middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools (approximately 750-2000 students). Secondary schools in regional population centers and transportation hubs (with populations of about 5,000-8,000) serve smaller numbers of students (e.g., 250), and are usually structured like large comprehensive high schools. Small village schools in geographically isolated Native communities typically serve 10-40 secondary students.

rural village sites.² Others plan to remain in Alaska's urban centers, in which school district populations can represent as many as 30 language groups. Alaska Natives also live in urban communities or move back and forth between rural and urban settings. Although the numbers of teachers who are Alaska Native is increasing, overwhelmingly teachers are non-Native. Within this context, I have been exploring how to facilitate prospective teachers' development as they learn to teach subject matter to students who are culturally different from themselves.³

Below, I discuss two conditions that frame my concerns and the

² About 325 schools serve approximately 8,500 mostly Alaska Native (Eskimo, Indian, Aleut) students in rural Alaska. The Alaska Native communities in which these schools are located generally range in population from 100 to 600 persons, with 250 to 350 persons being an average size. Traveling to these villages usually requires transportation via small plane from the state's regional population centers. Yup'ik Eskimo villagers tend to speak their native language in the home, with English serving as a second language in the school. Many other Alaska Natives speak English--often in the form of a nonstandard dialect referred to as "village English."

Teachers who work in these small schools often hold responsibilities that extend across subject matter areas and beyond the boundaries of the classroom into the community. More than half of all rural teachers teach outside their subject matter specialization (Kleinfeld, McDiarmid, & Hagstrom, 1985). While class size is often small and allows for considerable tutoring, most classes are not only multi-grade, but also multi-subject. For example a math teacher may have students in three or four courses within one period. Although seeing only about 20 students a day, teachers may have as many as 12 different preparations each night both in and out of their areas of expertise. In addition, the two to three teachers per school are responsible for all extracurricular functions, including out-of-class coaching, advising, and chaperoning. They are also frequently expected to provide a variety of community services, such as recreation supervision of the school gym for community use in the evenings (Noordhoff & Kleinfeld, 1990).

³ My conception of culture includes, for purposes of this study, appropriate social behavior (Erickson, 1986; Goodenough, 1981; Singer, 1988); values and beliefs (Goodenough, 1981), as well as attitudes and world-view (Singer, 1988); and differences in everyday practices and traditions (Florio-Ruane, 1989). In this view, teachers' and students' cultures interact with and are shaped by social class and ethnicity.

inquiry of this dissertation. They are: 1) intercultural dilemmas raised by differences between teachers' and students' backgrounds and 2) the moral character of teaching. This characterization of teaching intersects with conditions related to the diversity of the public school population to raise serious questions about opportunities to learn provided diverse students.

Intercultural Dilemmas

By the year 2000, at least one-third of all public school pupils will be students of color, according to the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life (see Banks, 1989). Indeed, the recent school enrollment picture reveals that in 23 of the nation's 25 largest cities, youngsters of color constitute the majority of students. As well, students from racial and ethnic minority groups make up more than 50 percent of the K-12 enrollment in at least seven states. However, the number of minority teachers has been projected to diminish to less than 5 percent. This means that more "majority" teachers will be teaching groups of "minority" students.

As a state, Alaska already faces this problem. In Alaska, the numbers of Eskimo and Indian teachers are few. So, while the state and its universities are attempting to increase the number of certified teachers who are Native, the current situation still requires that many teaching positions be filled with Caucasian teachers, only some of whom are from Alaska. Even teachers from Alaska may not be familiar with Eskimo and Indian cultures and lifestyles or with issues and concerns that teaching in cross-cultural or multicultural classrooms raises.

Given these demographics, classrooms in which teachers and students differ culturally pose an "intercultural dilemma" for teachers (Stiegelbauer, 1986). Teachers cannot make a "presumption of shared

identity" (Jackson, 1986) with their students as a basis for determining what should be taught, interpreting classroom situations and students' behavior, or making pedagogical decisions. These difficulties and dilemmas follow from the tasks inherent in teaching, when teaching is viewed as the mediating of subject matter by teachers in interaction with students. Cross-cultural or multicultural teaching situations can raise these often taken-for-granted teaching tasks to greater consciousness for teachers when they cannot reliably draw upon assumptions about their students to guide their professional judgments (Paley, 1979).

Jackson (1986) points out that teachers in such a position find the uncertainties of teaching increasing when they cannot rely on assumptions of a common cultural heritage or similar ways of thinking to guide their teaching. When teachers share a culture with students, small clues--such as student comments and questions--convey a set of features about a student or a situation that teachers recognize because they understand the nuances of context in students' behavior (Paley, 1979). So, the teachers most in need of knowledge about the uniqueness of their students are those teachers who are faced with differences between themselves and youngsters in their classrooms. A knowledge of students, then, is a special kind of knowledge about teaching, not a knowledge that derives merely from common sense or from knowledge of subject matter (Jackson, 1986).

The question of differences between teachers and their students is a relative one, however. Teachers are more and less like their students. Whether the presumption of a shared identity with students is a valid or invalid assumption is not as important as the extent to which the presumption is a valid one (Jackson, 1986). For example, Alaska

Native teachers living a partially-subsistence lifestyle would seem to be more like their Eskimo or Indian students in village Alaska than would be white, middle-class teachers. But, Eskimo teachers would be less like their Indian students than Indian teachers would be. Even Yup'ik Eskimo teachers would be faced with some cultural differences in teaching Inupiaq Eskimo students.

That cultural knowledge is shared and tacit in nature makes it seem absolute (Florio-Ruane, 1989). This circumstance lies at the heart of teachers' challenges in working with students who are culturally different from themselves. In Florio-Ruane's words,

it is difficult for members of a culture to contemplate shared principles of social action or to consider how the norms which serve to organize their lives might be constituted differently (1989, p. 164).

Not being able to "see" their own cultural assumptions and principles at work, teachers who do not share a cultural identity with their students may have difficulties conceiving of the norms that their students use to organize their lives. They may find inconceivable the beliefs, values, and world-views that their students live by. They may find students' everyday practices incomprehensible at a fundamental level. This is to say, then, that teachers' views of their students and teachers' definitions of instructional situations are profoundly shaped by their own cultures.

Moral Dimensions of Teaching

I argue that the conditions I have described above are especially significant when viewed through the lens of the moral purposes and dimensions associated with teaching. Doing so raises serious questions about minority students' general educational opportunities and specific opportunities to learn academic content. What is it about education as

an enterprise and teaching as an activity that is moral in nature? How might the moral character and features of teaching interact with the diversity of public school populations described above?

Central to the moral nature of education and teaching is the concept of responsibility, the obligation to use one's knowledge, values, skills for the welfare of others (Strom, 1989; Tom, 1984). Indeed, teachers are responsible for students' access to knowledge, which they can help assure by teaching them explicit and implicit rules of power (Delpit, 1988), along with concepts and skills. This means that "to educate is to lead responsibly--to influence students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions in ways that will serve them and their society well..." (Clark, 1990, pp. 251-2). Put another way, being responsible means orienting oneself as a teacher to criteria beyond one's own personal frame of reference, for example, orienting one's judgments and actions towards curriculum and subject matter, or towards students' needs and learning (Buchmann, 1985). It means thinking about "ends, means, and their consequences" in terms of that learning (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986, p. 239).

More specifically, from the perspective of teaching as a "moral craft" (Tom, 1984), teachers engage in consideration of desirable ends and means; they choose competing valued ends to address by selecting one content over another (Strom, 1989; Tom, 1984, 1987).⁴ For example,

⁴ Given the focus of this research on issues of subject matter teaching and learning, I concentrate on issues of curriculum and instruction in teaching's moral dimensions. This is not to say, however, that other aspects of the moral character of teaching are not also important in and of themselves, as well as significant to subject matter learning. For example, Noddings (cited in Elbaz, 1992) offers a conceptualization of caring as a "moral orientation to teaching." In addition, Elbaz (1992) nominates hopefulness, attentiveness to children's lives, and caring for their differences as moral aspects of teachers knowledge.

teachers determine--consciously or by action--whether to emphasize mathematical computation or problem-solving, whether to omit the chapter on geometry in trade for time to nail down long division. History teachers may stress a chronology of dates, events, and people over an understanding of causation or an understanding of how historians use evidence to develop arguments. Teachers even use differing approaches to push similar priorities. For instance, teachers concerned with math computation may choose an approach based solely on the memorization of steps. Others with the same basic goals may emphasize patterns within procedures and underlying reasoning in computing algorithms. Some history teachers may communicate that the subject is an "endless string of events, often discrete and bearing little on contemporary society," while others also concerned with chronology may build in continuity as "trends and themes, patterns and perspectives" (Wilson & Wineburg, 1988, p. 530). In the latter vein, social studies teachers may use historical themes or "stories" to select and connect important historical ideas and events (Gudmundsdottir, 1987).

Everyday practical decisions concerned with ends and means embody answers to larger questions, such as, "What is school for?" and, "How do teachers maximize the education of all youngsters?" These questions, along with questions of who has access to particular kinds of knowledge (Anyon, 1981), are questions of social justice (Sirotnik, 1990).

How, then, might the interaction of intercultural dilemmas and the moral nature of teaching generate significant concerns for minority students' possible educational opportunities and actual school learning of subject matter? First, teachers who have little sense of who their students are--their backgrounds and experiences, schemata, perspectives and values--face especially difficult challenges mediating

subject matter for students. For example, a white, middle-class teacher may have to think hard about ways to help her Alaska Native students comprehend the historical concept "manifest destiny."

Second, teachers may not recognize their students' capabilities to learn certain skills or aspects of content. They may hedge when it comes to teaching particular skills or subject matter because they lack faith in students' abilities to succeed or because they want to shelter certain students from failure. Paley (1979) remarks,

...when you lack faith in a child's ability, you show it in subtle ways. You don't introduce them to certain activities, or if you do you stop at the first sign of trouble. You avoid giving them time and attention in certain kinds of discussion (p. 72).

Students are not exposed to challenging content and skills; their opportunities to learn are constrained.

Finally, when teachers are culturally different from their students, those students potentially lack powerful role models for learning. The desire to learn something that a more knowledgeable or experienced other has to teach often begins with a felt-connection with that teacher. Thus, when teachers are not of the same culture as students, those students may not identify with teachers' intellectual values or enthusiasm for particular subject matter since they do not see themselves as "like the teacher."

The Research Question and Its Significance

From the perspective of educational significance, the teacher knowledge and thinking that is the focus of this dissertation carries moral implications. In particular, the opportunities of students who are culturally different from their teachers to learn appropriate and worthwhile academic subject matter are at issue. In Sirotnik's (1990) vision, this is a matter of social justice. However, from the

practitioner's point of view, teaching decisions and conflicts do not so much hold choices between competing and abstract social goals such as excellence/equality or freedom/standardization as they contain moment-to-moment struggles and dilemmas that are to be argued and managed (Lampert, 1985).

With a teacher's perspective in mind, then, I have focused this study on concrete matters of practical importance to them--figuring out what and how to teach particular subject matter to particular students--which also have broad educational and social significance. Given my concerns as a teacher educator, the increasing diversity of public school populations, and the moral implications of teaching, the overarching question guiding my research is as follows:

What ideas do prospective secondary teachers have about teaching U.S. history to students who are culturally different from themselves?

This inquiry centers on the intersection of two key dimensions of teaching--subject matter and students--which is made more complex by the added feature of cultural differences between teachers and students. In order to investigate this question, I focus on the teacher candidates' ideas about teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native learners.

Questions for Teacher Education

Broadly, this research inquiry is meant to raise questions about teacher education for cross-cultural and multicultural teaching settings. Although research cannot prescribe appropriate or wise action for teacher educators (Clark, 1988), it can help raise fruitful questions for deliberation (see, for example, Kleinfeld & Noordhoff, 1988). In the case of this study, its empirical findings will be localized to Alaska; yet, they will contribute to the emerging debate over how to prepare teachers for teaching academic subjects to

culturally diverse learners. This is an issue of intense interest for cities like Los Angeles or states such as Texas, both having significant minority student populations.

Underlying most teacher education efforts is the view that teaching is a generic enterprise; hence, programs tend to prepare teachers in similar ways no matter the kinds of students, situations, or settings they may encounter.⁵ However, recent suggestions about the preparation of teachers to work with culturally diverse students call for teacher education that (among other things) emphasizes a knowledge base about students' home culture and the concept of culture more broadly, along with "studying what schools have done historically to reproduce dominance by whites, males and the wealthy" (Grant & Sleeter, 1986, p. 259). For example, Cazden and Mehan (1989) point out that

[a] major question for teacher education is how to help teachers develop strategies to achieve [language and cultural] accommodation in a wide range of communities, including those with students from many different cultures. How, in short, should teacher education include...parents, school district, and other sociocultural institutions...in the curriculum (p. 54)?

What is teacher education to do in preparing prospective teachers of culturally diverse students? For one thing, we need to consider approaches that prepare teacher candidates for the complex uncertainties of teaching, especially in multicultural settings.⁶ Moreover, is helping prospective teachers come to know about diverse students' home

⁵ However, some programs aimed specifically at preparing teachers for cross-cultural and multicultural school and community settings are attempting to orient their purposes and curricula toward particular students and settings. For an example in Alaska, see Kleinfeld and Noordhoff (1988, 1989, 1990) and Noordhoff and Kleinfeld (1990, 1993).

⁶ For discussions on the complex uncertainties of teaching, see, for example, Cuban (1992) and Floden and Clark (1988). Also, Noordhoff and Kleinfeld (1993) are concerned with preparing teachers for the uncertainties of teaching students who are culturally different from themselves.

culture, as suggested above, the key to this preparation? This study contributes to this discussion in the issues it raises regarding how prospective teachers think about connecting culturally diverse students to school subject matter.

The "Integrity" of Teachers' Knowledge and the Moral Dimensions of Teaching

The moral dimensions of teaching have often been thought of as separate from concerns with teachers' knowledge and belief. For example, in a critique of Shulman's (1987) perspective on teachers' knowledge and reasoning, Sockett (1987) centered his questions, in part, on "the need to conceive of the practice of teaching as not merely governed but defined by a sense of moral virtue" (p. 213). Such virtues as courage, justice, and honesty are included in his view.

However, a small but growing cadre of researchers interested in teachers' knowledge and beliefs have been describing incidents and aspects of practice that embody the integration of knowledge and moral dimensions in teaching. These scholars look to teachers' thinking about subject matter and its teaching as contexts for exploring how teachers grapple with dilemmas that are simultaneously epistemological and thical (Lyons, 1990).⁷ Earlier, Buchmann (1984) argued that "epistemology,

⁷ Lyons (1990) quotes an experienced history teacher who wrestles with "the intricate interactions between a teacher's knowledge and values, assumptions about knowing, a craft, and relationships" (p. 161). He considers what students have opportunities to learn in history when confronted by a student:

When I first started as a teacher, I was quite a showman [sic]. I was a performer. I could hold ten balls in the air at once. The kids loved it. The parents loved it. I was considered a great teacher. The kids would look up at me and say, "God, I love this course." But they weren't doing history, they were watching the show. It was only after I had been teaching six or seven years that I began to realize that I wanted to [change]. If memory serves me it was a student...he shared that ball metaphor with me and he said to me, "You know, you're really wonderful and it's

ethics, and pedagogy converge in content" (p. 45). These researchers also see in classroom practice opportunities for teachers to express personal moral values (e.g., Grossman, 1990a; Gudmundsdottir, 1990a). Most recently, Ball and Wilson (1993) have argued cogently and persuasively that knowledge and moral issues are inseparable in practice. They look at specific instances from their own practice as elementary teachers-university researchers in mathematics and social studies from both the perspectives of how they bring together knowledge about students and subject matter (knowledge issues) and concerns for students' access to knowledge (moral issues). In the process, they keep our feet firmly planted in the world of teaching practice, while keeping our sights on what they call "integrity" in teaching.

This dissertation contributes to the exploration of such "integrity" using a strategy similar to Ball and Wilson's (1993). In it, I investigate the interplay of teacher candidates' beliefs about subject matter, students, learning and teaching. At the same time, I also examine and assess the products of this interaction--that is, the content and approaches these novices envision for teaching U.S. history and the learning opportunities that their curricular visions represent for culturally diverse students.

In addition, separate analyses of teacher candidates' understandings of history, their ideas about Alaska Native students, and their views of learning and teaching in history add to a growing body of

exciting but you have to show people how to do it. When are you going to teach us how to do it?" And that really forced me, it led me to try to do that. [But] I had to make a decision. I could say, "Go away, you bother me. Everybody likes me as I am." The kids had already dedicated the yearbook to me, teaching the old way. I had gotten all this publicity, fame, whatever, from doing it as a showman...I had to make a decision (p. 160).

research on teachers' knowledge and beliefs and on the influence of these domains on their thinking about teaching. In particular, this study highlights the role of novices' ideas about culturally diverse students in reasoning about teaching history.

Methodological Approaches

A final contribution of this research is contained in its methodological strategies. The interview protocol for this study is added to the growing body of strategies for studying prospective teachers' knowledge and beliefs and how they bring these together in figuring out what and how to teach in particular subject matters--in this case, U.S. history. Of special note is the power of simulated tasks situated in teaching practice--such as the text evaluation/unit planning activity and teaching vignettes to be described in the next chapter--to elicit teacher candidates' thinking in an integrated fashion.

With the emphasis in this research inquiry on understanding prospective teachers' knowledge and beliefs as they relate to teaching, I first explore the understanding of teaching that informs this study. Then, I lay out several research questions that comprise the overall investigation.

Creating Relationships as an Enduring Dilemma

Essentially teaching is about creating relationships between teachers, learners, and subject matter, where "subject matter" refers to an object of mutual inquiry and interest for teachers and learners (Hawkins, 1974).⁸ Seen from this perspective, the teacher's central task is to connect academic subject matter to diverse learners (Kennedy,

⁸ In this study, I use the term "subject matter" to refer to academic disciplines and subjects studied in schools, such as history.

1991a, 1991b), with the goal of what McDiarmid, Ball, and Anderson (1989) call "flexible subject matter understanding." In their view, students possessing a flexible understanding would be able to draw relations within the subject matter and between it and the world beyond the classroom. They would also have knowledge about a particular subject matter, for example, standards of evidence and how knowledge is admitted to the field. Finally, students with flexible subject matter understanding would be able to increase their understanding and power in their own environments. Hence, teaching is about making connections in the service of deep and powerful subject matter learning for students.⁹

What, then, is the nature of the relationship between teachers, learners, and subject matter? Hawkins (1974) distinguishes the teacher-student relationship from the intimacy of parent-child relations by its engagement with something outside of itself. The essence of the teacher-student relationship is its connection with, and focus upon, an aspect of the world as a source of interested study. Kohl (1984) makes a similar distinction when he calls for "loving students as learners" (p. 64, emphasis added).

Hawkins (1974) represents this relationship using a triangle in which I (the teacher), Thou (the student), and It (the subject matter)

⁹ Here, I also want to dispel some negative connotations that come to the minds of some persons--especially those critical of schooling--upon hearing references to "teaching." I use the term to mean the facilitation of learning. To some persons, references to teaching, or instruction, conjure up images of inculcating students with ideas deemed important to the teacher. For them, the idea of teaching dredges up a model of direct instruction in which teachers-as-technicians manage curriculum and students. Actually, this view of teaching is also similar to the views brought by teacher candidates to teacher education (see, for example, Kleinfeld & Noordhoff, 1989; Noordhoff & Kleinfeld, 1990). However, I consider teaching to be an enterprise in which teachers consider the value of educational goals and design task environments which invite engagement and learning for both students and teachers.

make up the three corners. Thus, the whole of this triangle comprises a context for teaching and learning. Imagine, too, that each side of the triangle constitutes particular relations in this context:

- 1) between the teacher and subject matter,
- 2) between students and subject matter,
- 3) between teachers and students.

In my way of thinking, the first relation alludes to the assumption that teachers have their own understandings of subject matter. The second relation refers to ways learners think about particular subject matter. It also brings to mind the ways they may connect with academic content--for its intellectual or practical interest or for the way it touches their humanity, sense of group membership, or personal identity. Finally, the relation between teachers and students concerns both the kind of caring for subject learning that teachers display as well as the caring for individual students they convey.

This triangular set of relations in teaching implicitly guides tools recently designed to assess beginning teachers (Dwyer & Villegas, 1993; Educational Testing Service, 1993; see also Hollins, 1993). For instance, one of the four assessment domains that constitute The Praxis Series published by ETS is entitled, "Organizing Content Knowledge for Student Learning." It

focuses on how teachers use their understanding of students and subject matter to decide on learning goals; to design or select appropriate activities and instructional materials; to sequence instruction in ways that will help students to meet short- and long-term curriculum goals; and to design or select informative evaluation strategies (Educational Testing Service, 1993, p. 1).

In this domain, assessors look for novices' thinking about the content to be taught, along with what they know about students and how they learn about their students. They look at how novices understand

connections between learners and content, as well as connections within the content.

Novice Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Reasoning for First-Year Teaching

The conceptualization of teaching I've described above points toward the kinds of knowledge and beliefs that teachers--and teacher candidates--draw upon in thinking about teaching: subject matter, students, and approaches to teaching and learning. They also consider contextual features of teaching-learning situations (Ball, 1988).

Therefore, in the present study, I examine novice teachers':

- 1) understandings of history, in particular U.S. history;
- 2) ideas about culturally diverse students, especially Alaska Natives; and
- 3) views on learning and visions of teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native students.

In addition, I seek to understand how these domains weave together in the novices' goals and approaches to teaching the topic of westward expansion and development for Alaska Native learners.¹⁰

Put in such terms, this is a study concerned with pedagogical content knowledge and reasoning. Pedagogical content knowledge is "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8), which is both "built with and built upon" teachers' knowledge and beliefs about

¹⁰ In the original conceptualization of this study, I was also interested in tracing possible changes in the prospective teachers' thinking over the course of their final year of teacher education in the areas of 1) knowledge and beliefs; 2) how they tentatively resolved perennial questions about content, purposes and methods of teaching U.S. history, along with their rationales for these ideas; and 3) the relationship of different domains of knowledge in the approaches they would take to teaching subject matter to students who are culturally different from themselves. For purposes of the present dissertation, I have focused on the teacher candidates' ideas in these three areas at the end of their formal teacher preparation program. The description of my research methodology contained in Chapter 2 also speaks to this modification.

subject matter and students, as well as their ideas about learning and teaching (Gudmundsdottir and Shulman, 1988, p. 60). It takes one form in representations of particular subject matter for teaching--that is, the activities and "most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations" that are comprehensible to learners (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). These representations are products of a process of reasoning in which teachers transform their own understandings of subject matter and consider what they know about learners and learning (Shulman, 1987; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987).

The present study examines novices' ideas about teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native learners at the point where prospective teachers are eligible to enter the teaching force. Thus, this study sheds light on the pedagogical content knowledge and ways of reasoning that beginning teachers take into their first year of full-time teaching experience.

I examine these areas of knowledge and belief in the context of increased scholarly interest in teachers' thought processes, their knowledge and beliefs, and the roles these processes and ideas play in prospective and practicing teachers' planning and practice (e.g., Carter, 1990; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shulman, 1986). How, then, have questions of teachers' knowledge and belief in the areas of interest to the present study been treated in the recent past? How does the present study differ from and add to previous efforts to understand teacher candidates' ideas about subject matter, culturally diverse learners and learning, as well as their ideas about teaching? I consider these questions in the next three sections. In the process, we shall see that teachers' thinking about what and how to teach subject matter to diverse learners remains a newly developing field of inquiry.

The Problem of Subject Matter Knowledge in Teaching

As recently as the mid-1980's Shulman and his colleagues at Stanford University (e.g., Grossman, 1990a, 1990b; Gudmundsdottir, 1987; Shulman, 1986, 1987; Wilson, 1988; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987) began to restore the role of content knowledge to the study of teaching and teacher thinking. Shulman's (1986) early perspective on teachers' content knowledge distinguishes three categories--subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge.¹¹ Here I consider the first of these categories.

Beyond the logical precondition that knowledge of one's subject is necessary for teaching it as content, why should we be concerned about how teachers' understand their subject matter? I offer three main reasons: First, as a resource for teaching, teachers' knowledge of and beliefs about academic subjects shape their instructional goals, planning of student activities, and interactive classroom practices (Ball, 1991; Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; Brickhouse, 1990; Doyle, 1986; Grossman, 1987, 1991; Grossman & Gudmundsdottir, 1987, 1991; Grossman & Richert, 1988; Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989; Gudmundsdottir, 1987, 1990a, 1990b; Kilbourn, 1990; Leinhardt, Putnam, Stein & Baxter, 1991; Leinhardt & Smith, 1985; McDiarmid, Ball, & Anderson, 1989; Reynolds, Haymore, Ringstaff, & Grossman, 1986; Ringstaff, 1987; Ringstaff & Haymore, 1987; Shulman, 1986, 1987; Steinberg, Marks, & Haymore, 1985; Wilson, 1988; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988).

For example, how English teachers understand their subject is

¹¹ Other formulations of content knowledge have included knowledge of curriculum as a component of pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990).

important for making sense of their instructional goals, curricular choices, student assignments, and classroom questions (Grossman, 1991). Grossman studied two teacher candidates in English who differed in their conceptions about what it means to interpret literature. One was oriented toward the text as central in interpretation, while the other stressed the readers' personal response. These teacher candidates' differing subject matter orientations played out in differences in their curriculum planning.

What teachers know about U.S. history has also been shown to influence their pedagogy (Wilson, 1988; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991a, 1991b). For instance, it is not surprising to find that teachers with a weak understanding of history are more likely to make epistemological and informational errors in their teaching (Wilson, 1988). As well, teachers' subject matter understandings shape both what they teach and how they choose to teach it (Evans, 1988, 1989; Wineburg and Wilson, 1991a, 1991b). Wineburg and Wilson's (1991a, 1991b) analysis of two excellent history teachers, referred to as Jensen and Price, illustrates how those teachers' common orientation toward history plays out in their different teaching approaches. Jensen and Price both see history as a human construction built around discernable patterns and trends rather than as sets of names and dates to be recollected. Their commitment to seeing history as an act of interpretation or judgment leads them, for example, to select contradictory reports of a battle for students to consider or to arrange a debate on the legitimacy of taxation prior to the American Revolution.

Finally, teachers' disciplinary perspectives in social sciences other than history have also been shown to influence the ways they think about and teach history (Wilson & Wineburg, 1988). This dynamic has

also been noted in the teaching of more general social studies courses and courses in anthropology and geography (Gudmundsdottir, 1987).

Related to the first reason is a second. The quality of prospective and practicing teachers' understanding of their subject matter is likely to influence their abilities to teach it for students' deep and flexible understanding (Hollon, Roth, & Anderson, 1991; McDiarmid, 1992). In science, for example, teachers who lacked strong subject backgrounds developed patterns of practice quite different from other teachers who possessed strong backgrounds and understood the nature of--and were concerned with--conceptual change (Hollon, Roth, & Anderson, 1991). Students of these different science teachers would apparently have available to them varying opportunities to learn concepts in science with complexity and flexibility.

In addition, Buchmann (1984) offers a third explanation for examining teachers' and teacher candidates' subject matter knowledge. She contends that prospective teachers need to know their content so that they may also be able to learn about learners. The quality of teachers' and teacher candidates' subject matter knowledge allows them to access students' perspectives and to trace their thinking. Being able to do so helps teachers to learn about students' subject understandings.

Dimensions of Subject Matter Knowledge

Several dimensions are central to teachers' understanding of subject matter for purposes of teaching it. Recent reviews of teachers' subject matter knowledge (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989; Kennedy, 1990) center on similar dimensions but construe them somewhat differently. Commonly they see teachers' subject matter

knowledge to consist of

- 1) the "stuff" of a discipline, that is, its facts, concepts, and theories;
- 2) the competing frameworks or perspectives that organize that "stuff;"
- 3) the ways knowledge evolves in the discipline and what it means "to do," say, historical or scientific inquiry; and
- 4) beliefs or dispositions about the subject that include, variously, beliefs about what is important to know in the subject (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989) and conceptions of oneself as a learner of the subject (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990).

These dimensions are rooted in Schwab's (1978) distinction between substantive and syntactic knowledge structures in the disciplines. Substantive structures are the paradigms that guide inquiry in the field; syntactic structures are the means by which new knowledge is introduced and admitted to the disciplinary community (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989).

The most straightforward, yet elegant, conceptualization of subject matter knowledge for teaching distinguishes between teachers' knowledge of a subject and their knowledge about it (Ball, 1991; Ball & McDiarmid, 1990). In this formulation, knowledge of refers to knowledge of the content, or the "stuff," of the subject. Knowledge about the subject relies on Schwab's (1978) substantive and syntactic structures and includes the second and third points above. I use Ball and McDiarmid's formulation to organize the analysis and report of the findings of teacher candidates' understandings of subject matter in Chapter 3.

Especially relevant to my research inquiry are two additional dimensions of teachers' knowledge about subject matter for teaching that are suggested by Kennedy (1990). They concern the subject matter's relationship to cultural, social, and pragmatic aspects of our lives.

The first dimension concerns the relationship of the subject to social issues, such as the interaction of different racial or ethnic groups. The second dimension refers to the value of the subject for everyday life, which includes its broad influence on our thinking, as well as its specific utilitarian applications. I consider both of these dimensions to be matters of a subject's relevance.¹²

Overall, teachers' understandings of subject matter along these dimensions also interact with their ideas about learners, learning, teaching, and educational contexts (Ball, 1988, 1991; Elbaz, 1983; Grossman, 1987, 1990; Grossman & Gudmundsdottir, 1987; Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989; Hollon, Roth, & Anderson, 1991; Kennedy, 1990; Marks, 1990; McDiarmid, Ball, & Anderson, 1989; Shulman, 1986, 1987; Wilson, 1988; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987; Wilson & Wineburg, in press).

Teacher Candidates' Knowledge and Beliefs about History

Except for a handful of scholars--for example, R. Evans, S. Wilson, and S. Wineburg--teachers' understanding of history has not been an object of recent study. Wilson's (1988, 1989) investigation of what it means to know history contributes an important and useful framework for assessing subject matter knowledge in history. Basing the categories on historians' perspectives, she defines substantive knowledge along four overlapping dimensions:

1) differentiation, or the ability to identify parts of a topic; 2) elaboration, or knowledge of details; 3) qualification, or the extent to which historical claims are limited; and 4) integration, or connections through cause or category. Using these dimensions, Wilson assessed the

¹² Kennedy (1990) and I would apparently disagree on this point. She contrasts a subject's "relationship" to social issues with its being "merely relevant." However, she does not elaborate this opposition.

historical understanding of teachers with varying levels of teaching experience and subject matter knowledge. She also explored their understandings of structures in history, such as the role of interpretation. Differences in the study participants' content knowledge in both substantive and syntactic aspects foreshadowed patterns in their pedagogical reasoning.

Following on this study, Wilson (1991) also argues that novice teachers in history need to be knowledgeable about the nature of each of the disciplines that make up the social studies, while they should also know well one subject matter, in this case, history. She contends that knowledge of more dates, names, and events of history is not helpful to the development of a deep, rich, or flexible understanding of the subject. Rather, novices need a skeletal knowledge of key concepts and the ability to distinguish what is important to teach about the subject matter. Second, they also need to realize that historical knowledge is contextualized and underdetermined. Third, teachers must possess sufficient knowledge of detail to make historical problems appropriately complex. Finally, they need to be able to look for relationships between historical ideas or events, such as by theme or cause.¹³

The Issue of Culturally Diverse Learners

Teachers possess working theories about students that inform their planning and practice in teaching (Bussis, Chittenden, & Amarel, 1984; Clark & Peterson, 1986; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1992). Specifically, for

¹³ While some university history courses may help teacher candidates develop such knowledge and ways of thinking about history, evidence suggests that taking more liberal arts courses does not necessarily support such development (McDiarmid 1992). One suggestion has been to invite the participation of liberal arts faculty in subject-specific pedagogy courses within teacher education programs. Hopes shouldn't be pinned on such arrangements, however, given the culture of universities and their reward systems (McDiarmid, 1989, 1992).

example, linkages exist between teachers' views of students, their expectations of them, their goals for students, and their ideas about how to teach them (Grant & Sleeter, 1986).

That the question of what teachers need to know about students is raised suggests a certain view of learners and learning. It suggests that learners bring backgrounds which need to be taken into account as teachers think about what and how to teach. What teachers need to know about students is both general to learners and specific to particular students. For example, teachers who are most successful with students who are marginally invested in school, from the perspective of those students, are ones who know about those students' individual lives and backgrounds, those who are willing to "get personal" (Schlosser, 1992).

Perspectives on Teachers' Knowledge about Learners

The literature on teachers' knowledge about students is scant and fragmented. Two perspectives on the question of what counts as knowledge about students useful for teaching compete for attention, when what appears to be needed is an integration. One perspective--represented by psychologists interested in constructivist learning and researchers concerned with pedagogical content knowledge--focuses on learner's cognition. They look to learn about students' subject matter understandings, including conceptions and misconceptions about the subject itself. For example, in a study of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge of fifth-grade mathematics, Marks (1990) notes the knowledge of students' understanding held by fifth-grade teachers' knowledge. Their ideas about their students included notions about their learning processes, typical understandings and common errors, topics or aspects of study that are easy or difficult for students, and particular students' understandings of the topic under study.

Another perspective--illustrated by scholars interested in finding a place for students' sociocultural backgrounds in teachers' knowledge--has grown out of concerns with social and class structures, institutional and societal racism, and so forth. In this view, teachers need to understand school structures influence educational achievement. They also need to understanding the history of institutional racism and marginalization of students of color that is part of their experience as learners (Grant, 1991; Grant and Secada, 1990; Zeichner, 1993). I also note that scholars who see learning as externally--rather than internally--situated in relation to the learner are also concerned with this perspective (e.g., A. Anderson, 1991). Thus, the theme in this perspective concerns the social nature of learning and learners' backgrounds.

Grossman's (1990b) thinking on the place of teachers' knowledge about students in pedagogical content knowledge illustrates the fragmentation in the way the field currently views teachers' knowledge about students. It also suggests the marginalization of teachers' understanding of students outside of the classroom. In this formulation, teachers' ideas about students "in" school--learners' subject matter understandings--are seen to be a part of pedagogical content knowledge. This makes reasonable sense in terms of current definitions of pedagogical content knowledge. Yet, other aspects of students--their individual backgrounds, families, and communities, for instance--are thought to be separate from their subject matter backgrounds. Grossman (1990b) sees these aspects of teachers' knowledge as instances of knowledge about context. Students bring ideas about what is worth being learned and how learning occurs, as well as specific subject-related concepts, to classrooms from their experiences outside

of school. This is, as well, how students come to us, as whole persons, whose cognitive and cultural backgrounds are intertwined.

Kennedy's (1991a) thinking about knowledge of students to be considered for teaching illustrates the possibilities of taking a more integrated stance toward diverse students and their background knowledge and experiences. She suggests three aspects of learners teachers should know and deliberate about in teaching:

- 1) knowledge students bring with them and how this knowledge might influence what they learn;
- 2) students' interests and inclinations, as well as their motivations; and
- 3) students' cultural backgrounds.

This formulation makes room for consideration of diverse learners' understandings of subject matter, along with the cultural and community backgrounds they bring to school.

For instance, teachers need to learn how school knowledge is perceived within students' cultures, including their peers, families and communities; they need to pay attention to what kinds of knowledge, skills, and values are seen to be of worth in these cultures (McDiarmid, 1991).

Views of Diverse Learners

A handful of studies focus on practicing teachers' and teacher candidates' views of diverse learners. Three are of special interest to the present study. In the first, Grant and Sleeter (1986) raised concerns about the views of middle-class teachers who were culturally different from their junior high students in a multicultural, city school setting. These authors assert that teachers formulated expectations for their students on the basis of their perceptions of students' academic abilities and home backgrounds. Most core subject

matter teachers saw their students as academically deficient, especially in ability to read, which these teachers tended to equate with thinking ability. Although few teachers talked about their students in terms of students' value orientations, those who did mostly blamed poor academic performance on the value orientations they thought that students brought from home. Teachers noted negative differences between their own middle-class orientations and the perceived values of their students. In a more positive vein, a few teachers believed that the values students carried gave them a strong sense of identity. Teachers "knew" youngsters as students in school, but few of them had much sense of their students' social behavior outside of school.

In the Grant and Sleeter (1986) study, then, we see many teachers who do not seem to know much about or try to attend to their students' diversity in ethnic, social, economic--that is, cultural-- or racial terms. They are left frustrated in trying to help students connect with subject matter. This study supports the notion that teachers' views of students interlace both ethnic and socio-economic aspects. It also supports the existence of linkages between teachers' views of students, their expectations of them, their goals for students, and ideas about how to teach them.

In contrast, McDiarmid and his colleagues (McDiarmid, Kleinfeld, & Parrett, 1988) provide a more hopeful picture of effective teachers who know well their students who are culturally different from themselves. These teachers draw on that knowledge in helping students connect with subject matter and carry appropriately high expectations for their pupils. By becoming learners themselves, these rural Alaskan teachers came to know about social norms, expectations and priorities, and the political contours of the community in which they worked. By

participation in community activities and observation of their students beyond the classroom, they developed some well-honed ideas about their students' needs and experiential backgrounds, ideas that form the basis for their goals and lessons. These successful teachers were all "students of their context" who "purposefully put themselves in situations where they learn about happenings likely to affect learning" (McDiarmid, Kleinfeld & Parrett, 1988, p. 7).

The third study (Paine, 1990) focuses on teacher candidates' views of diversity. Their views reflect the beliefs they brought with them to teacher education, the beliefs that teacher education could work to reinforce or change. Their ideas represent the differences in students these teacher candidates thought were important for teachers to consider, as well as specific aspects of learners' diversity and their significance for teaching and learning. Paine (1990) noted a strong psychological orientation in the prospective teachers' beliefs, a stance that emphasized attention to the individual, especially in terms of motivation, personality, and attitude. These intending teachers were dramatically less inclined to consider diversity in terms of the social construction of categories, the social contexts in which diversity is embedded, or the pedagogical implications of their views.

Concerns about Teaching Culturally Diverse Students

In response to this question, one school of thought examines and suggests pedagogical approaches that create or capitalize on cultural compatibility between schools and students' backgrounds based in the home and community. Concerns with cultural congruence, cultural sensitivity, and most recently, culturally responsiveness have shaped the discussion and proposed solutions. The issue of subject matter has been largely absent in the discussion of this question, although content

knowledge has recently been brought into the discourse. In contrast to this impulse toward continuity between home and school stands an argument which values discontinuity.

Continuity Vs. Breaks

Singer (1988) sees cultural congruence as an "inherently moderate pedagogical strategy" based on "the idea that learning is best accomplished in classrooms compatible with the cultural context of the communities they are supposed to serve" (p. 1). The use of the term "pedagogical strategy" implies that the discussion of cultural congruence focuses on instructional processes.

However, critics of approaches that value continuity between everyday experience and school learning extend the realm of discourse to include disciplinary content (e.g., Floden, Buchmann & Schwille, 1987; Zeuli & Floden, 1987). They also caution that making instruction culturally congruent may not be the innocent approach it purports to be in terms of its costs to students' learning. These contrasting views on the worth of continuity between everyday culture and school learning raise serious questions about what teachers do, or do not do, in teaching students who are culturally different from themselves. Following from these contrasting views are important implications for how teachers teach, as well as what they teach.

Cultural congruence, cultural responsiveness. First, I examine cultural congruence as an approach endeavoring to create comfortable learning environments that correspond to those learning environments from which students come. In this approach, cultural differences in interaction patterns are the base from which to change classroom instruction and management so that minority students may learn the skills needed to succeed in mainstream society (Singer, 1988).

Efforts to examine differences between school and community environments and to create instruction that is more culturally compatible for students have centered on cultural patterns of social interaction and communication (e.g., Au & Jordon, 1981; Au & Mason, 1981; Barnhardt, 1982; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Guilfoyle, 1989; Philips, 1983; Van Ness, 1982). A model of participant structures (Philips, 1983) has proven itself to be useful in identifying the organization of persons' reciprocal rights and obligations in social interaction. Investigating the contrasting learning environments of the Warm Springs Indian community and its school, Philips identified a number of features in the learning environment of the school which were in cultural conflict with the ways that students expected interaction to take place. In particular, the role of the adult differed in the two environments. Philips suggests, then, that schools more frequently employ the participant structures that Indian students prefer, such as group-project formats and one-to-one work with the teacher. In such participant structures, students have opportunities to exercise some control over their social interactions in ways that are more consonant with the kinds of community interaction to which they were socialized.

In related studies, differing authority relationships between teachers and students formed the centerpiece for investigations by Van Ness (1982) and Erickson and Mohatt (1982). Erickson and Mohatt examined two classrooms in an Odawa Indian reserve school, one with an Indian teacher, the other with a non-Indian. Using Philips' construction of participant structures, Erickson and Mohatt found that the Indian teacher demonstrated a slow, smooth, and less overtly directive style of classroom management, exerting control over the classroom group as a whole. She communicated praise or correction

implicitly. Students' and teachers' actions were coordinated in rhythm. In contrast, at the beginning of the year the non-Indian teacher controlled the class through rapid movement and more public directives, overt praise and correction, while spotlighting individuals across space. However, over the course of the year the non-Indian teacher adapted his style toward what might be called a more "mixed" form, somewhere between the Indian teacher's style and more mainstream ways of organizing the classroom's social interaction. Both teachers arrived at a way of teaching that evidenced a measure of cultural congruence between home and school participation structures.

Perhaps one of the most well-known illustrations of an attempt to understand differences between participation structures in the home and school, and to change the social relations inside the school to more closely align with those of the home, is the Kamehameha Early Education Project (KEEP) in Honolulu. This project has successfully attempted to improve Native Hawaiian students' academic performance in reading. The success of the program has been attributed to adaptations based, in part, on their cultural compatibility for Hawaiian children in the realms of instructional practice, classroom organization and motivation management (Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1988). First, a form of talk-story--a manner of telling and discussing anecdotes using overlapping speech common in working class, Native Hawaiian speech communities--organizes small group reading instruction in a pattern similar to students' own familiar participation formats. Second, a system of learning centers replaces individual, independent seatwork. This system allows students to express their natural inclinations toward interaction and assistance. Third, praise has become less frequent and more indirect, being given to the group as a whole when it is used.

Such pedagogical adaptations and recommendations as those reported by Philips, Erickson and Mohatt, and educators and researchers associated with KEEP convey an impression of culturally congruent instruction as a "modest means to help teachers from the dominant culture adapt to working with minority students, and most importantly, in minority communities" (Singer, 1988, p. 2). However, while taking at face value the school as an educational institution, such culturally congruent instruction ignores other cultural differences--such as beliefs about the value of learning, grounds and sources for knowing, and ways to knowledge--which may have broader implications for school instruction (Singer, 1988).

Cultural discontinuity. Not everyone believes that instruction should be made meaningful in relation to students' everyday lives and cultures (Floden & Buchmann, 1984). Some scholars (Floden, Buchmann & Schwille, 1987; Zeuli & Floden, 1987) argue that emphasizing continuity conflicts with the two central goals of schooling--promoting equality of opportunity and developing disciplinary understanding. According to Floden, Buchmann & Schwille (1987), school should foster "breaks" with experience, instead of working toward continuity between everyday perspectives and school learning. In creating such breaks, school retains its traditional role as a special place set apart from everyday life. School experience then provides for the development of alternative perspectives on the world and alternative views on life possibilities. Developing alternative perspectives and becoming more objective occurs through the study of the various disciplines. Disciplinary learning helps to open patterns of thought and action.

In addition to these positive reasons for creating breaks from everyday experiences, Floden and his colleagues (Floden, Buchmann &

Schwille, 1987; Zeuli & Floden, 1987) claim that not creating such breaks by maintaining continuity of school learning with everyday conceptions works against equal opportunity and disciplinary learning. Students' views of their present and future lives are limited by relying on firsthand experience. Further, tying school learning to everyday concepts and experiences may actual hinder new conceptual learning. Indeed, the naive conceptions that youngsters develop from everyday experience get in the way of learning disciplinary concepts. Zeuli & Floden (1987) assert that

while not denying the value of students' personal experiences, teachers should be careful about introducing new ideas to students by showing how they relate to everyday life. Content should not rely on materials drawn from the local context, but from materials set in a broader context (p. 16).

Thus, instead of relying on concepts and connections students have developed outside of school, teachers should help students build logical connections between the abstract conceptual systems learned in school, as well as between those systems and students' particular lives. Emphasizing discontinuities, then, does not imply that continuity is never of value. However, continuity constrains disciplinary learning when it implies a curriculum based solely on western thought (Floden, Buchmann & Schwille, 1987). In sum, the works of Floden, Buchmann, Schwille and Zeuli suggest considerable caution when it comes to making curriculum content and instructional processes continuous with students' everyday cultures. These scholars conclude

although discontinuity is not an educational goal or guarantee of worthwhile learning in itself, schools are unlikely to further equal opportunity and disciplinary understanding if their curricula simply remain within a continuum of everyday experience (p. 501).

Singer (1988) contends that curriculum content has not been a major concern of the advocates of cultural congruence. Indeed, he

maintains that the concept of cultural congruence does not argue for limiting curriculum for minority students to localized materials. However, there can be problems with culturally congruent instruction. In Singer's view, problems with cultural congruence and its effect on disciplinary learning and equal opportunities come when 1) academic concepts and culturally based knowledge contradict, and 2) efforts to make classroom interaction culturally comfortable hinder students' learning of interactive skills that will help them succeed in mainstream society.

Merits of culturally responsive pedagogy. The costs of continuity in curriculum and instruction have been argued. The argument against continuity is a powerful and cogent one, but it does not take into account possible values of changing interactional styles and manners of general classroom organization or relationships between teachers and students. What, then, are the possible merits of a culturally sensitive pedagogy? Some proponents have suggested that such pedagogy is associated with students' school success (Au & Mason, 1981; Barnhardt, 1982; Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1987), perhaps because it may simplify the task environment (Erickson, 1984). That is, students can focus their attention exclusively on the content being taught, because they are dealing with familiar social interaction patterns.

A culturally sensitive pedagogy may also contribute to more positive relations between teachers and students. Erickson (1987) sees cultural differences most often making a negative difference because they contribute to miscommunication in the early grades and because these initial problems usually escalate into distrust and resistance by older students. Indeed, students fail at school work because they work to achieve that failure in concert with others in their environment,

within the conditions of that environment (Erickson, 1984; McDermott & Gospodinoff, 1981). They are unwilling, not unable, to adapt to mainstream classroom culture. Culturally compatible instruction may play an important role, then, in depoliticizing cultural differences in the classroom (Erickson, 1984). Using a culturally sensitive pedagogy may reduce miscommunication by teachers and students, and demonstrate teachers' valuing of their students' identity, thereby increasing students' trust in the school as an institution and intensifying their willingness to assent to learning what it deliberately teaches (Erickson, 1987).

Culturally sensitive pedagogy may be a partial solution to students' resistance to school. It may be a means to decrease youngsters' alienation from school and increase their engagement in its content and activities. Presumably, such engagement increases school success and the likelihood of subject matter learning.

Cautions and limitations. Two related cautions are in order in regard to culturally responsive pedagogy. Mainstream teachers run the risk of broadly assuming that minority cultural patterns of participation and culturally sensitive instruction cut across cultural groups. In other words, just because an instructional approach is compatible with some Native students does not mean that it is culturally congruous with other groups of Native youngsters. For example, KEEP anthropologists and researchers discovered that some approaches they had developed for Native Hawaiians did not work at all with the Navajo students at Rough Rock Demonstration School in New Mexico, while other approaches were effective with both groups (Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1987). A number of successful KEEP strategies were culturally at odds with Navajo students' learning preferences, including behavior management and

motivation routines using praise and desists, an instructional pattern of dividing the reading story into small segments for discussion, and the learning center system. However, questions thrown out to the whole reading group and relating personal experiences to stories both brought good response from Rough Rock students.

Second, mainstream teachers also run the risk of unintentionally stereotyping individuals within groups and lowering their expectations for those individuals (Cazden & Mehan, 1989). Delpit (1986) reminds us that teachers who do not share a cultural identity with their students may misrepresent the learning needs of students who are culturally different from themselves.

To conclude, we should note that the discussions of cultural congruence and culturally responsive pedagogy have occurred primarily in the context of literacy development and within the language arts subject matters (e.g., KEEP research such as that of Au & Mason, 1981; Au & Jordan, 1982; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987). Even as early as 1963, Sylvia Ashton-Warner promoted an approach she termed "organic reading" as a method of developing language arts skills in her Maori students in New Zealand. Most recently, Guilfoyle (1989) has documented the power of the whole language approach for Yaqui Indian youngsters in Arizona. Both Ashton-Warner's approach and the approach of the teacher Guilfoyle studied helped students to develop new knowledge

through experiences that were built upon knowledge [the students] brought from their home/community, in participant structures that were congruent with familiar structures, and through trusting relations with other participants (Guilfoyle, 1989, p. 37).

The exploration of culturally responsive pedagogy in terms of literacy development has skewed most investigations and discussions toward the early years of schooling and away from other subject matter

areas. Indeed, some current thinking about the value of culturally sensitive instruction directly focuses on young children. For instance, Erickson (1987) declares that "in the cultural politics of pedagogy in the early grades one route to maintaining trust and earning the learner's assent to learn is to adapt instruction in the direction of the students' home cultural communication style" (p. 354). While the literature about student alienation centers on older students (Erickson, 1984), there appears to be little inquiry into culturally responsive pedagogy aimed at secondary students. In addition, subject matters beyond the language arts appear to be relatively absent as contexts for studying such culturally responsive pedagogy.

Seeking Balance

Within their particular perspectives on continuity, both arguments--for and against--acknowledge the place for some kind of middle ground. Balance provides the theme. Floden, Buchmann and Schwille (1987) argue for a "proper balance" which would "help students...gain objectivity, but without denying that their everyday experiences have meaning" (p. 492). And, Singer (1988) asserts that it's plausible to create a "modicum" of cultural congruence in classrooms while institutionalizing "breaks" in school. He recommends wise choices based on knowledge of cultural differences:

What knowledge of cultural differences does, is provide the possibility of choice. It enables educators to choose between or combine culturally congruent and consciously incongruent strategies. The problem, then, becomes one of balance and timing; when to take advantage of cultural congruence, when to teach mainstream communications skills (p. 18).

A vision of balance--one that begins to integrate concerns for both curriculum and instruction--revolves around the term "culturally responsive pedagogy" (e.g., Erickson, 1987; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982;

Guilfoyle, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Villegas, 1991). Recently, this terminology has begun to replace talk of "culturally congruent instruction." This shift suggests a de-emphasis on congruency, which literally would recommend an exact correspondence between patterns and methods of the community with those of the school. It commends instead the idea of selective adaptation of content and instruction to culture (Jordan, 1985; Weisner, Gallimore, & Jordan 1988, Villegas, 1991). This shift also recognizes as legitimate the culturally mixed forms of instruction that have been successful in the Kamehameha Early Education Project (Au & Jordan, 1981; Au & Mason, 1981) and in the classrooms studied by Erickson and Mohatt (1982). Several rural Alaskan teachers portrayed by McDiarmid and others (1988) also expressed mixed forms. For instance, a Caucasian teacher by the name of Austin who worked with Alaska Natives students declared,

You have to be aware of learning styles and the cultural and psychological factors at work. You're going to be much more effective being aware of those things. But this doesn't mean you have to totally transform your teaching...(p. 26).

For another example, Guilfoyle's (1989) study of a whole language approach to the teaching of reading in a first grade classroom composed of Yaqui Indian students suggests a picture of curriculum and instruction that balances concern for students' backgrounds with learning new skills and content. In this classroom, several culturally responsive approaches shaped students' opportunities to learn. For one, the learner-centered whole language approach used participation structures familiar to Indian students to help them learn to read content that they were able to relate to, were interested in, and possessed background knowledge about that aided them in gaining meaning. But students also participated in less comfortable participant

structures, interacted with regular visitors to the classroom, and learned about cultures and content hitherto unknown to them. This latter set of activities was designed by the classroom teacher to stretch her students' beyond their everyday experiences.

Inclusion of Different Types and Forms of Knowledge

Banks (1993) has constructed a typology of knowledge he believes will help teachers and curriculum specialists identify perspectives and content that will make school curriculum multicultural. Banks's purpose is not to tell teachers how to teach culturally diverse students; rather, he is interested, in part, in clarifying the values and perspectives represented by different positions in the debate about the knowledge canon. However, his typology suggests the possibility of including different kinds and forms of knowledge in the school curriculum as a bridge in the "continuity-breaks" question. This approach would provide another sort of middle ground in its consideration of content that could be culturally responsive. This middle ground is concerned more with knowledge and content than it is with interactional processes.

Banks's (1993) typology includes personal/cultural knowledge, popular knowledge, mainstream academic knowledge, transformative academic knowledge, and school knowledge. Including this variety of knowledge for all learners would help them understand how knowledge is constructed, how it reflects the social context in which it is created, and enable students to become builders of knowledge themselves (Banks, 1993). Recommending that school curriculum provide room for personal/cultural knowledge, which derives from their experiences in home, family, and community cultures, Banks (1993) also cautions that

the challenge that teachers face is how to make effective instructional use of the personal and cultural knowledge of students while at the same time helping them to reach beyond their own cultural boundaries. Although the school should recognize, validate, and make effective use of student personal and cultural knowledge in instruction, an important goal of education is to free students from their cultural and ethnic boundaries and enable them to cross cultural borders freely (p. 8).

Banks's reminder takes us back to the argument for breaks from everyday experience and the search for teaching approaches that might acknowledge students' cultural backgrounds while also stretching their disciplinary knowledge and perspectives.

Two approaches are worthy of consideration. Each builds understanding of history on the personal and cultural backgrounds learners bring to school, yet also expands students' understanding beyond surface relevance. Both approaches also take as their starting place "students' questioning of their own culture and experience, an investigation of the past which questions its traces, and theorizes its legacy and import for the present" (Seixas, 1993, p. 314). The first approach takes an interdisciplinary focus; the second centers solely on the study of U.S. history.

The Axe Handle Academy. The curriculum of the Axe Handle Academy, developed by Ron and Suzanne Scollon (1986), illustrates the possibilities Seixas (1993) suggests using an interdisciplinary approach. The curriculum is rooted in students' experience of their bioregion, as well as their culture and its history. Ron Scollon considers two aspects of the approach to be liberating in intent and effect (personal communication, n.d.) First, students' studies take them beyond local space and immediate time by comparing and contrasting familiar or recent phenomena with similar dynamics or issues across place and time. Second, the approach assumes the teacher's role is to

model the learning process, indeed, to be a co-learner with students.¹⁴

This approach originated in Alaska as a response to observations of educational systems at work in the state.¹⁵ An example that integrates science, literature, and cultural studies gives a flavor of the approach's potential for both rootedness and expansion that is prized by Banks, Floden and his colleagues, and the Scollons. Students at the Hughes School (K-9 school population approximately 30) began a study of the aurora borealis ("northern lights") with stories from community elders, later writing research reports about the aurora, and finally communicating by computer with students in Sweden, sharing legends and reports (Students of Hughes School, 1989-90).¹⁶ An integrated social studies-based unit for high school students might be prompted with the following set of questions adapted from Scollon and Scollon (1986):

- 1) Identify the political/governmental boundaries that divide your bioregion.
- 2) Trace changes in these boundaries over the last one hundred years. What influenced these changes?
- 3) Evaluate the effects of these divisions and changes on life in your region.

¹⁴ The title of the Academy originates with a Gary Snyder poem, "Axe Handles," which is, in part, built around a fourth century Chinese essay. In this essay, it is said that in the cutting of the wood to make an axe handle, the model is close at hand (Snyder, 1983).

¹⁵ Note that the manuscript describing the Axe Handle Academy was prepared for an Alaska Native organization concerned with education.

¹⁶ It is not possible to tell from the Hughes School document how much comparison between Hughes' community stories and information and that of Sweden went on in the course of classroom discourse. Without such comparisons and, perhaps, generalization, the power of the approach is diminished. Perhaps a collective piece summarizing such comparisons would be an appropriate addition to such documents in the future.

Student-historians. A second approach starts with an oral history project based on students' interests in local or immediate concerns. Its goal is to teach students the skills of being student-historians (Kobrin, 1992, 1993). Originating in student desires and concerns, with the goal of learning disciplinary skills, it is similar to the "Foxfire" philosophy (Wigginton, 1985, 1989; Knapp, 1993). However, the approach soon moves students into using skills of interpretation to judge primary documents and write their own historical accounts of, for example, U.S. involvement in wars over time and around the world. Kobrin (1992) argues that this approach holds promise especially for students who are typically marginalized in schools. Such students are usually poor and of color. He contends that

studying the past the way historians do can also nurture that sense of pride and integrity that makes for a whole person, especially for those whose story is typically marginal in current narratives ("multicultural" or not). Such a young person grown to adulthood is more likely to participate constructively in a democratic community than someone who feels marginal, disconnected, left out. What multiculturalism should mean for many youngsters in school today is figuring out that, whatever their background or social class, the United States is their country, too (p. 330).

Both approaches hold promise for connecting learners with communities--both present and past--a goal of studying history (Nord, 1990). Too, they hold potential to operate as authentic instruction (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993) involving 1) higher-order thinking; 2) opportunities to develop depth of knowledge; 3) connectedness to the world beyond the classroom; 4) the possibility of substantive conversation; and 5) the integration of social support for student achievement, for example, in the inclusion of cooperative group work.

In Summary

The concepts of cultural compatibility and continuity in teaching and learning carry vastly differing meanings and implications for particular scholars. While concerned for students' equal learning opportunities, these scholars diverge on the costs and benefits of continuity with everyday culture and knowledge when it comes to creating those opportunities. On the one hand, Singer (1988) maintains that communication lies at the heart of providing students with access to learning school skills and concepts and the interactional processes that will help minority students succeed in mainstream society. On the other, Floden, Zeuli and others argue that linking school learning to everyday cultures closes off opportunities to learn disciplinary knowledge and to envision alternative paths. Middle ground approaches involve mixed interactional patterns. Still others attempt to include learners' personal/cultural knowledge alongside with disciplinary knowledge.

Questions and Research that Follow

The previous discussion sheds some light on the issue of cultural differences between teachers and their students and teaching approaches taken in response. But, it also raises a number of unanswered questions: What approaches to the teaching of subject matter do practicing and prospective teachers of students who are culturally different from themselves think are appropriate those students and why? What do they think students who are culturally different from themselves should learn? What views of their students do they hold and how might these views relate to teachers' beliefs about instructional goals and approaches to achieve them?

These are the kinds of questions that separate this dissertation

research inquiry from other studies of culturally responsive teaching approaches. The issue of students' subject matter learning sets this research apart from more standard approaches to the question of cultural differences between teachers and students. In these ways, the present research inquiry has been informed and shaped by the work of the National Center for Research on Teacher Education (NC RTE), followed by the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (NCRTL), both at Michigan State University.

Kennedy's (1991b) edited volume, Teaching Academic Learning to Diverse Students, and McDiarmid's (1991) chapter within it, "What Teachers Need to Know about Cultural Diversity: Restoring Subject Matter to the Picture" capture and integrate the Center's recent lines of research. The TELT (The Teacher Education and Learning to Teach) study took as its object of study teachers' pedagogical reasoning (McDiarmid and Ball, 1988, 1989). In this view, the Center -- and my own research--has focused upon the ways teachers or teacher candidates weave together knowledge about subject matter, learners, learning, and context as they think about the tasks of teaching particular subject matter (see also Kennedy, Ball, and McDiarmid, 1993; NCRTL, 1991). In addition, although this has not been a part of my own study, the NC RTE investigated approaches used in various kinds of teacher education programs to influence these aspects of teacher knowledge (NC RTE, 1988).

The conceptual map in Figure 1.1 provides readers with a graphic display of the dissertation's various parts and its flow. With the first and second chapters as conceptual and methodological frameworks, I separately analyze the participating teacher candidates' understandings of subject matter (history in Chapter 3), culturally diverse students

(Alaska Natives in Chapter 4) and general pedagogy (teaching and learning in Chapter 5). Then, I turn to concerns that integrate these domains of knowledge and belief, examining the curricular goals and approaches the prospective teachers envision for teaching a unit on westward expansion to Alaska Native learners (Chapter 6). At the same time that I look at knowledge issues in their plans, I also consider the moral dimensions of their ideas as I appraise those plans for the opportunities they hold for minority students to learn U.S. history. Finally, I look at how the participants bring together these areas of knowledge and belief as they think about how to make subject matter relevant for students who are culturally different from themselves (Chapter 7). I conclude by discussing the nature of the research inquiry as it has been posed and what teacher educators might learn about preparing teachers to help culturally diverse students learn academic subject matter.

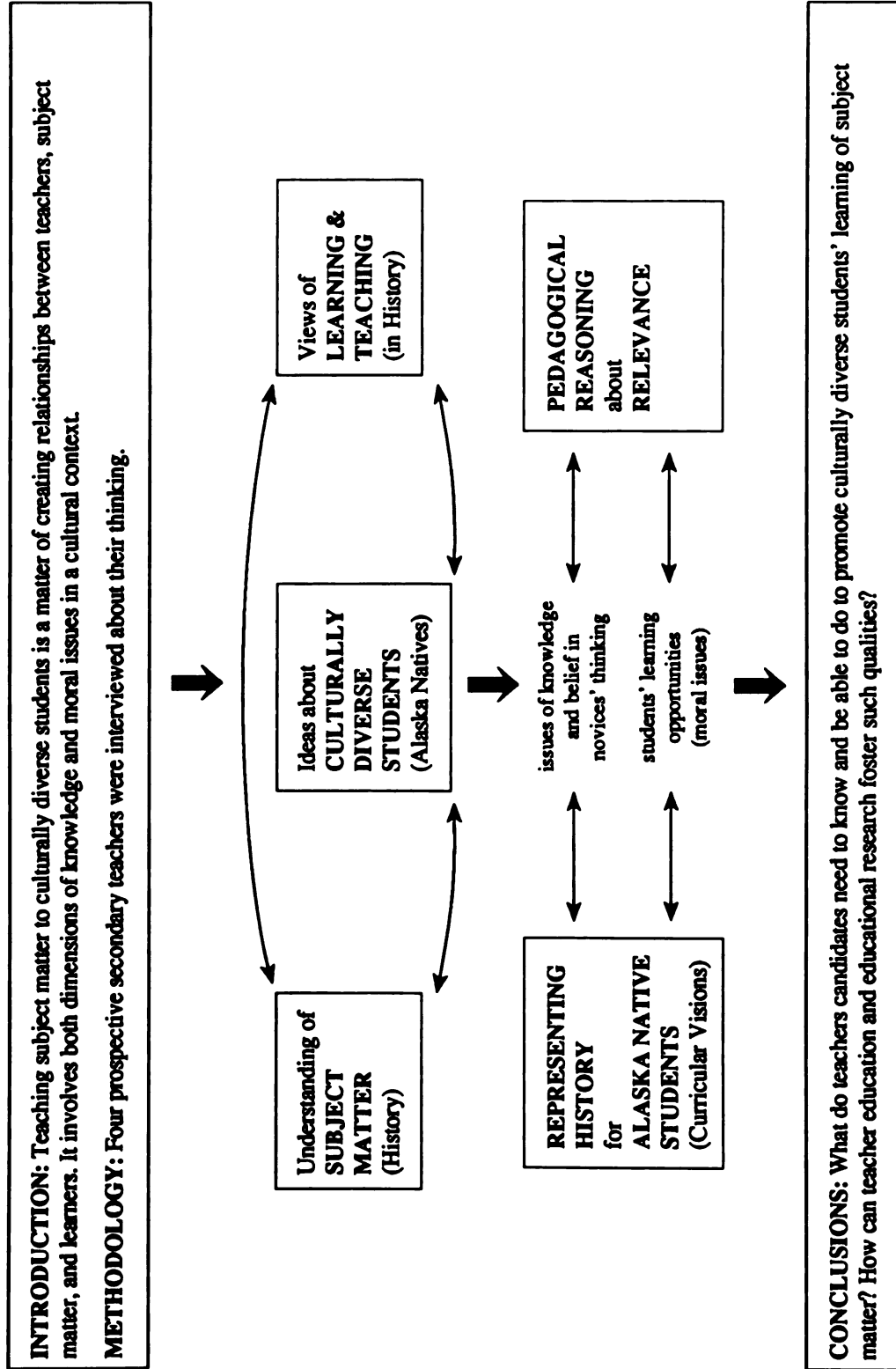


Figure 1.1. Conceptual Map: Teacher Candidates' Ideas About Teaching U.S. History to Students Who Are Culturally Different from Themselves.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

In order to learn about the perspectives of prospective teachers regarding the teaching of U.S. history to students who are culturally different from themselves, I interviewed four preservice secondary teachers. Through the interview I hoped to learn about their knowledge and understandings of U.S. history, their ideas about culturally diverse students, especially Alaska Natives, and their views on teaching and learning. I also wanted to learn about the teaching approaches they envisioned and how these approaches represented the ways that different areas of their knowledge and belief work in relation to each other. In addition, I hoped to learn whether or not these ideas changed over the course of their teacher education. Thus, using the same interview, I talked with the focal teacher candidates at three points across the final year of their professional university teacher preparation: 1) at the beginning of their methods classes, 2) at the conclusion of their methods coursework and before student teaching, and 3) after student teaching. For purposes of this dissertation, I have focused on the third wave of data collection. Thus, the analysis and findings presented here represent the ideas teacher candidates take into their first year of teaching.¹

¹ Also, because it focused on one wave of the data, the analysis reported here does not--indeed, cannot--speak to changes in the teacher candidates' thinking. I reserve this for subsequent analyses. One possibly productive line would be to analyze the prospective teachers' ideas about learners and learning across the three interview points.

Decisions Shaping the Research Design

Designing the research approach required conceptual decisions, as well as strategic ones. For example, I chose to focus on U.S. history as a research site for several reasons, which I discuss here at some length.

Subject Matter Makes a Difference

Jackson (1986) suggests that the kind of knowledge being taught influences whether or not cultural differences shape teachers' pedagogical decisions. He asserts that

differences between teachers and students in any or all of the aforementioned variables [e.g., age, social class, ethnicity, sex] are often irrelevant to what the teacher decides to do. The question of whether they are or are not relevant seems to depend chiefly on what is being taught (p. 28).

Although Jackson does not discuss this point in any depth, he hints that one fruitful distinction in terms of "what is being taught" may revolve around differences in teaching routinized skills or facts in contrast to interpretations of subject matter. Taking Jackson's perspective, cultural differences may not be relevant the way many preservice teachers think about teaching mathematics, for example, a subject which tends to be viewed as a set of rules and procedures to be memorized (Ball, 1988).

Following Jackson (1986), the teaching of history, however, probably reflects the influences of cultural differences between teachers and students. As a discipline, history involves interpreting "facts" at the same time that it involves developing interpretive accounts. Indeed, some historians argue that "history means interpretation" (Carr, 1961, quoted in Wilson, 1988, p. 285).

Thus, history is an especially appropriate and powerful subject matter through which to explore majority-culture teachers' thinking

about teaching minority-culture students. First, historical accounts link events, people and patterns, and in doing so interpretively, the key question of whose history shall be taught is raised. Implicitly, as well as explicitly, teachers and texts have often told the story of the mainstream culture--or the story that mainstream culture wants to hear. Yet, the daily experience of minority-culture students, such as African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, may push them toward resisting mainstream versions of U.S. history. They may not identify with the perspective they are being taught, or the slant on the historical story being offered. Indeed, they may not invest in learning U.S. history much at all, since they may feel little or no identification with the people whose history they think it is.

This situation leads to a second reason why history-- especially U.S. history--serves well as a site to observe teachers' thinking about teaching culturally diverse students: Teachers may tend toward special efforts trying to "hook" these students into involvement with the subject matter because they believe these youngsters may not identify with and be interested in it.

Westward expansion and development. The topic of westward expansion and development is an appropriate choice for several reasons, based on its place in U.S. history, its fit with the research framework, and its potential for teaching Alaska Native students.² First, as a

² Although the period of westward expansion and development may be said to have begun as early as the Louisiana Purchase, the period most typically referred to as westward expansion starts in the 1830's. It gains moral justification in the 1840's with the naming of the nation's "manifest destiny" and carries through the post-Civil War years with the settlement and development of the Plains and the Far West, ending in the 1890's with the U.S. Census declaration that the frontier no longer exists.

High school textbooks for U.S. history that are frequently adopted nationwide for U.S. history (Gagnon, 1988; Sewall, 1987) and in Alaska

topic central to the study of U.S. history, it can be seen to highlight cultural differences, a fundamental frame of the research inquiry. The period of westward expansion and development represents one instance of the confrontation of different cultures and races within U.S. history. Ideas about this confrontation are often carried in the form of vivid mental images of this period. These are culturally-based images of a "wild" West of Indian conflicts and cowboys, of "taming" and "civilizing" an undiscovered, savage land, which contribute to people's ideas about the development of the nation's character.

In terms of the study of U.S. history, the period of westward expansion and development also surfaces the issue of whose history is being taught. It offers teachers and textbook publishers one potent opportunity to try to rectify a Eurocentric slant on U.S. history that has been prevalent in textbooks in the past. They may make efforts to include more of the story from the perspective of peoples of color and attempt to present a minority perspective on events.

Second, I reasoned that a focus on this period might raise for analysis the ways these prospective teachers think about bringing together subject matter and students. The theme of cultural conflict--observed most obviously in the content of Indian wars and policy--seemed to hold promise for engaging Alaska Native students' interest. Present-

(Alaska Department of Education, 1987) usually split the topic of westward expansion and development into two chapters. The first emphasizes expansion, including the concept of manifest destiny, and is placed before material on the Civil War. The second stresses the development of the West between 1865-90 and is located as a chapter after the Civil War and Reconstruction. This second part usually focuses on the settlement and development of frontier lands and is closely aligned, in chapter placement, with material on the nation's industrial and technological development. Both chapters discuss relations with Native Americans, but it is the second chapter that typically emphasizes Indian wars and policy.

day changes in Alaska Native subsistence lifeways brought on by federal and state land resource management,³ the introduction of new technologies, concerns with maintaining Native language and cultural heritage, social problems of alcohol and drug use combined with an extraordinarily high suicide rate, the necessity of dealing with non-Native economic and political institutions, and now calls for Native sovereignty--all a part of the current circumstance for Alaska Natives--have parallels in the period of westward expansion and development. White people coming to mine Alaska's seas and gold deposits have also been a part of some Natives' history.

More generally, it was during the period of westward expansion and development that the purchase of the right to govern Alaska was made from Russia. Alaskan students, whether Native or non-Native, live in a state that was part of the historical expansion and development of the West. Indeed, it could also be argued that they live in a section of the country that is still part of westward expansion and development, in that Alaska remains a living representation, for the majority, of the nation's physical and psychological frontier, as well as its quest to develop natural resources in a major way.

Strategic Decisions

Since I wanted to get inside prospective teachers' heads as best I could, the use of an interview strategy as the primary tool for data collection followed naturally. Interviews allow for the deep probing of participants' thinking and provide an occasion for the participants'

³ For example, the governor of the state of Alaska closed the fall chum salmon season on the Yukon River in October, 1993, on the advice of Alaska Fish and Game biological studies. This subsistence harvest is life-sustaining for Alaska Natives. Especially hard hit were village communities on the upper river, in the Alaska Interior.

perspective (or "voice") to be heard. In Bogden and Biklen's (1982) words, I wanted to "gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that [I could] develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" p. 135). According to these researchers, building the research design around an in-depth interview puts the study squarely in the tradition of qualitative research. Further, they assert that when individuals who share a particular trait (but do not form a group) are the subjects of qualitative research, in-depth interviewing is the approach of choice.

In the following sections, I describe and discuss the sample of prospective teachers who were interviewed, the development of the interview protocol, the data collected, and the procedures used to collect it. I close by providing an overview of the analytic approach I used, as well as an extended example of an analysis requiring an alternative approach.

The Sample

For this study, I interviewed four prospective secondary teachers, two each with political science and English backgrounds. Three of the four were completing their teacher education programs as post-baccalaureate students; however, all of them were older than typical undergraduate students. They ranged in age from 25-37 at the time of the interview. (See Table 2.1) During the study, they were enrolled in the final two semesters of a professional teacher preparation program at the University of Alaska (i.e., methods coursework and its associated field-based experiences, followed by student teaching). Since the study was not designed to produce generalizable findings, it was not necessary that the sample represent teacher candidates at either this university or nationally.

Selection Procedures

Specifically, I was interested in exploring how these teacher candidates thought about teaching U.S. history, so I sought out teacher candidates who would be teaching at the secondary level, since subject matter concerns tend to be a central focus at this level. I looked to the university's standard secondary teacher education program as a source of possible participants. I sought participants who were U.S. history majors, or minors--or who might plan or be hired to teach--in U.S. history. Recall that I also wanted to know how these teacher candidates thought about teaching U.S. history to particular kinds of students--students who are culturally different from themselves, specifically Alaska Native students. Thus, I also looked for prospective secondary teachers who were interested in teaching in Alaska's small, rural schools which mainly serve Alaska Native communities.

I began by asking the instructors of the secondary methods block at the University of Alaska Fairbanks for the names of all currently-enrolled students with history or other social science majors, as well as students with English majors. I reasoned there would be both substantive and strategic reasons for including English majors in my request. On the substantive side, I reasoned that as a discipline, English shares with history a concern with interpretation. On the logistical side, the secondary teacher education program at the university Fairbanks had been experiencing low enrollments at the time I began the study, and I realized that my pool of potential interviewees could well be limited.

Further, it is quite possible--even likely, in the some settings--for teachers to be assigned teaching responsibilities outside

Table 2.1. Summary of Focal Teacher Candidates' Biographies

	Dennis	Esther	Linda	Roger
Age at Time of Interviews	36	28	25	37
Baccalaureate Degree • minor • graduate study (if any)	BA Political Science History	BA Political Science Music Public Administration	BA English Japanese	BA Secondary Education English
Undergraduate Graduation From • also attended	University of Alaska another state's university	Ivy League private college another private college	University of Alaska private college	University of Alaska —
Teacher Certification Subject Endorsement	Political Science	Political Science	English	English
Years in Alaska at Time of Interview	12 years	1 year	25 years (lifetime resident)	20 years
Student Teaching	• large, urban multicultural • middle school • history	• large, urban multicultural • high school • American government, world history	• large, urban multicultural • high school • American literature, composition	• small, rural Alaska Native • grades 7–12 • language arts, health
Other Work Experience Prior to Teacher Education	Mining Rural lodge management Commuter flying service management	Government agency	Teacher of Japanese at high school and college levels Tourist business	Pipeline worker Firefighter Support staff to halfway house for adolescents, including Natives
Other Notable Experience	—	—	Lived in Japan	—

their areas of subject matter preparation. This occurs in schools across the country (Ringstaff, 1987; Ringstaff & Haymore, 1987), as well as in Alaskan schools (Kleinfeld, McDiarmid & Hagstrom, 1985). In particular, Alaska's small, rural high schools typically hire 2-3 secondary teachers to carry the course load; in these schools English and social studies classes are often paired as a teacher's load. In larger, more urban, multicultural schools, teachers may also teach out of their area of expertise. Traditionally, beginning teachers have been assigned collections of classes that need to be "covered" or are the least favorite of other teachers. For social studies teachers, this may mean teaching U.S. history classes even though one's area of expertise is, for example, political science or economics. It may even mean teaching a single U.S. history class when the language arts are a teacher's certification area.

I considered how the inclusion of English majors and non-history, social science majors might affect the substantive focus of the study. For instance, I thought about how English teachers also teaching U.S. history might be inclined to draw upon their conceptions of English in figuring out how to teach U.S. history. Wilson (1988, 1989) notes this phenomenon in her study of teachers' subject matter knowledge of the Depression and New Deal era in U.S. history. I speculated that non-history, social science majors might hold conceptions of history similar to those with U.S. history backgrounds--for example, in their views on the value of studying history--but that their understandings of specific subject matter in U. S. history would presumably be less well developed. This would mean that such prospective teachers would have fewer specific subject matter resources upon which to draw in teaching particular topics. I concluded that the inclusion of English majors and

non-history, social science majors reflected the population of teachers who actually teach history in rural Alaskan schools, while not considerably shifting the focus of the research investigation.

I contacted the four students who most closely fit my criteria and individually verbally explained the study along with its associated risks and benefits. I invited each to participate and answered any questions in regard to the consent form, which also contained a written explanation of the study. Each of the four possible participants agreed to be interviewed for the length of the study.

Participants

The four secondary teacher candidates interviewed for this study are two men and two women, who, as mentioned earlier, ranged in age from their mid-twenties to late-thirties at the time of the study. They are all Caucasian. Three of the four hold bachelors degrees and were completing their teacher education coursework as post-baccalaureate students solely interested in securing teacher certification. The fourth participant was completing his bachelor's degree, with a minor in education which will also make him eligible for secondary certification. (He is also the oldest student.) Two of the prospective teachers are social science majors--both in political science, with one of them also possessing a history minor. The other two are English majors. Three of the four completed their student teaching in larger, urban, multicultural high schools located near the university, while the fourth completed his in a small rural, Alaska Native community.

The participants also brought to their final year of teacher preparation a range of experiences living in Alaska and interacting with persons of different cultures. At one extreme, one participant was born and raised in an urban area of the state; at the other extreme was

another who had moved to the state only several months before the study began. All of the study's participants brought some experience interacting with persons of cultures other than their own, but their experiences ranged widely--from living in other countries to having childhood friends of a different culture. One participant had lived year-round in rural Alaska before entering teacher education. Others possessed experiences with Alaska Native peoples through school or work relationships. Table 2.1 summarizes the backgrounds that Dennis, Esther, Linda, and Roger--all pseudonyms--brought to the study. Here, I include brief introductory portraits of each, in alphabetical order:

Dennis. At the time of the study, Dennis was 36 years old. He had completed a bachelors degree at a state university in the continental United States with a major in political science and a minor in history. Between that time and his admission to a teacher education program, he had lived and worked in a mixed Native-white, rural Alaskan community that served as a transportation hub, managing at different times a lodge and a flying service. Later he moved into an urban center when he was promoted within the flying service. In addition to these jobs, he has been self-employed as a gold miner.

Dennis completed his student teaching at the middle school level in a large, urban, multicultural school, teaching U.S. history to 8th graders. Immediately after student teaching, he was hired as a full-time substitute social studies teacher in a small, rural, Alaska Native village. At the time of our final interview, he had been teaching there for just three weeks.

Esther. Esther had arrived in Alaska from the East Coast less than a year before the start of this study, at age 28. She holds a bachelors degree in political science from an Ivy League college, with a

minor in music, and has earned a graduate degree in public administration. Before entering teacher education, Esther had worked for a governmental agency. She volunteered a description of herself as a "bleeding-heart liberal." She completed her student teaching in a large, urban, multicultural high school, where she taught American government and world history.

Linda. Linda was born and raised in Alaska in an urban setting. She was 25 at the time of this study. She remembers her parents reading her Native legends and recalls opportunities to play with Native youngsters when her family docked their boat at a village during summer vacations. In addition, Linda recollects weekly classes in Native language and culture for all students in her elementary school⁴ and the respect that was paid in her high school circle to Alaska Native families renown as dog-mushers.

Linda received her baccalaureate degree from Alaska's state university system, with major in English and a minor in Japanese. Before entering teacher education, Linda had lived in Japan and had taught Japanese language in a Midwest public school for a year under a provisional certificate. Because of this full-time teaching experience, the requirement for Linda's student teacher experience was shortened to 6 weeks. During that period, she was given full responsibility for high school classes in American literature and writing composition. She and Esther taught in the same large, urban multicultural school. Finally, Linda expresses strong concerns for the environment and once wore a tee-shirt to an interview declaring her "radical" political tendencies.

⁴ Linda also noted that these classes occurred in a period when plenty of money seemed available in schools, that is, during a time when money from the oil fields was flowing freely in Alaska.

Roger. Roger, the oldest of the participants, was 37 as the study began. He had grown up in the San Francisco Bay area and attended several racially mixed high schools, including one in which whites were a minority. However, he completed high school through an alternative route, in the process living off the land north of the Arctic Circle with a teaching couple. At the time of our interviews, Roger was completing his bachelors degree in English and earning a teaching endorsement. Roger had experience working with Alaska Natives on firefighting and oil field crews; he had also lived and worked with adolescents in a group home setting. He completed his student teaching living and working in a small, rural, Alaska Native village, accessible only by air. Of the four prospective teachers I interviewed, Roger struck me as the one who most enjoyed reading historical narratives.

Data Collection

Data were collected at three points across the final year of the participants' teacher education program--at the beginning of their "methods" coursework, at the end of this coursework but before beginning student teaching, and at the end of student teaching. I interviewed each of the four teacher candidates in four or five sittings at each point. For purposes of this dissertation, I have focused on the third wave of data collection, after student teaching, at the end of their teacher education program.

The Interview Protocol

This study relied on data collected with an interview protocol (see Appendix A). The interview schedule contained open-ended questions which urged participants to provide descriptive responses. Both general and specific probes encouraged participants to elaborate with examples and details. These probes also provided the interviewer with a mental

framework for assessing responses during the actual interview and for helping the interviewer to judge when and how far to encourage the respondent's thinking.

That the study attempts to surface a range of possible similarities and differences in the thinking of prospective teachers indicates the need for a fairly structured interview schedule. Such an interview protocol allows for the collection of comparable data across subjects (Bogden & Biklen, 1982). A semi-structured interview furnishes opportunities to collect such comparable data while it also provides occasions for both the participants and the interviewer to follow lines of thought that are particular to individual respondents.

The interview is constructed around the idea that prospective teachers hold knowledge and beliefs that they bring together in reasoning about pedagogical decisions. These sets of knowledge and belief concern subject matter; students, in particular culturally diverse students; and learning and teaching. Other kinds of knowledge and beliefs concern educational, community and political contexts. I assume that such knowledge, beliefs and considerations influence teacher candidates' ideas about teaching approaches. Thus, the interview includes questions that solicit the focal teacher candidates' background experiences and ideas related to these domains of knowledge. It also employs scenarios that elicit integrated responses, using several kinds of knowledge. These scenarios are grounded, in part, in the central tasks of teaching, such as evaluating curriculum materials and planning units of study.

Below, I lay out the content and structure of the interview. In addition, I describe the process by which each segment was developed.

Content and structure. For ease in conducting this lengthy and demanding interview and in analyzing it, I divided the interview into four segments. In part, I divided it into several segments so that the teacher candidates would be able to focus clearly and energetically on the questions and their responses. The parts were ordered so that teacher candidates' background knowledge and beliefs about subject matter, students, and teaching and learning were explored first, followed by situations eliciting more integrated responses which involved that background knowledge. In addition, the segments were sequenced so that the respondents were asked to describe their own ideas for teaching U.S. history before they were asked to respond to alternative approaches provided by the interview. In this way, it would be possible to sort out which teaching ideas the candidates brought with them to their first interview.

The four segments of the interview and their abbreviated reference codes are:

- > Part 1 consists of questions focused on knowledge of and beliefs about subject matter (SM);
- > Part 2 focuses on questions related to adolescent students, especially Alaska Natives, as learners of history (SS);
- > Part 3 consists of questions focused on the teaching and learning of U.S. history with Alaska Native students through the use of a Textbook and Unit Planning Exercise (TL); and
- > Part 4 uses a series of vignettes representing various approaches to teaching and learning in U.S. history, which the participants were asked to appraise (V).

In addition, at the second and third interview points-- after the block of methods courses and after student teaching, respectively--teacher candidates were also asked to describe the practicum setting in which they had worked and to discuss the teaching of a unit they had devised

or taught in that setting. (The Post-Practicum questions after student teaching are labeled PST). This part of the interview provided additional data on the focal teacher candidates' ideas about students and teaching approaches, as well as sources of those ideas.

Sources of interview items. For numerous interview questions and scenarios, I drew on and adapted instrumentation developed by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education (NC RTE) at Michigan State University for its study on Teacher Education and Learning to Teaching (TELT). The TELT study focuses on teachers' learning about the teaching of writing and mathematics to diverse learners. The Subject Matter segment (Part 1) of my interview adapts questions developed by NC RTE to elicit participants' background experiences with mathematics and writing, their views of themselves in relation to those subjects, as well as their conceptions of the subject matter and its value. For Part 2 (Students), I used an NC RTE scenario which focused on intending teachers' views of Native Americans, shifting it to a focus on Alaska Natives. Finally, Part 3 (Teaching and Learning of U.S. History with Alaska Native Students) depends for its framework and numerous questions on a textbook and planning exercise devised for the mathematics portion of the NC RTE study. (See also, Ball, 1988, who used a similar pedagogical situation in her dissertation study.)

In addition, Dr. Suzanne Wilson, also of NC RTE and formerly a researcher with Stanford University's Knowledge Growth in a Profession project, suggested interview strategies based on her dissertation research (Wilson, 1988). These suggestions were modified for Parts 1 (Subject Matter) and 4 (Teaching and Learning of U.S. History/Vignettes). Specifically, I developed a set of cards to stimulate respondents' recollection of history content. I also elicited

prospective teachers' understandings of the relationships of particular history content using these cards. In addition, I created a set of six vignettes, to best described below.

Piloting the interview. I drafted an interview and piloted it with other prospective secondary teachers during the final stages of their methods coursework. I asked five preservice teachers from both secondary programs at the University of Alaska Fairbanks to try it out with me. They piloted different parts of the draft questions, with special emphasis put on trying out the card task in "Understanding U.S. History" (part 1) and "Teaching and Learning: Teaching Vignettes" (part 4) since these were parts of the interview developed specifically for this study. The final interview protocol resulted from the pilot participants' responses and my observation of the functioning of the questions and tasks during the pilot sessions.

In the following sections I describe each part of the interview and explain how it was developed in more detail.

Part 1: Understanding subject matter (history). Primarily, this segment of the interview provides data on teacher candidates' conceptions of history and knowledge of westward expansion and development as subject matter resources potentially shaping their teaching approaches. It opens with general questions about teacher candidates' backgrounds and interests in history, overall, and in U.S. history, specifically. It follows with questions regarding their views on the purposes of studying history.

Central to Part 1 is the portion focused on prospective teachers' understandings of a particular period in U.S. history, westward expansion and development. A set of cards, each naming an event, person or set of persons, issue, or idea important to understanding westward

expansion and development stimulate participants' knowledge and understandings of the period. For each card, respondents are first asked to tell what they recall about the item. Then, they are asked to say how important they think it is to understanding westward expansion and development. The teacher candidates use a scale to indicate their perception of importance, ranging from 1 ("of no importance at all") to 5 ("of central importance"). Finally, the prospective teachers are requested to arrange the cards to show "how they go together," in the process showing how they relate facts, concepts and controversies associated with westward expansion and development. In addition, the intending teachers respond in terms of their conceptions of history.

I created a list of events, people, concepts and controversies concerning this topic by first examining parallel chapters in two major U.S. history textbooks adopted by high schools across the nation and another also used in Alaska. I asked a university history professor with a specialty in this period to examine the list for significant omissions.⁵ He found none, but suggested several revisions to the wording of the list, which I made. I also honed the list, focusing primarily on prominent aspects of the period after the Civil War. (The final list is to be found in Part 1 of Appendix A.)

Part 2: Ideas about students (Alaska Natives). The second segment of the interview contains items related to prospective teachers' ideas about adolescent students, especially Alaska Natives. Such knowledge and beliefs are potential resources for use in teachers' mediation of subject matter for particular learners. For example,

⁵ This historian is the only professor at the university who teaches a course devoted exclusively to the period of westward expansion and development.

teacher candidates may use these ideas as they try to "hook" students' engagement in learning history. This may be especially true in cases where prospective teachers must make special efforts because they cannot rely on a shared cultural background to draw students into instruction.

For the most part, the interview items are designed to elicit the prospective teachers' observations and beliefs about Alaska Native learners' cultural and subject matter backgrounds, as well as their motivations and interests. Participants are also invited to discuss what knowledge about students they consider important for teachers to possess. Except for the final inquiry, a scenario, questions in this segment take a straightforward tack, focusing on both teacher candidates' general knowledge of high school students and special knowledge of Alaska Native students. The final scenario solicits their ideas about the sociolinguistic and interactional patterns of Alaska Native students' in response to a contextualized teaching situation. I describe this scenario in more detail in chapter 4.

Part 3: Teaching and learning in U.S. history (textbook evaluation/planning exercise). This part of the interview is grounded in a central task of teaching and consists of a realistic, extended Textbook Evaluation/Unit Planning Exercise. I presented the teacher candidates with analogous chapters from two high school U.S. history textbooks and asked them to review each before our interview. During the interview, I asked them to lay out their goals for Alaska Native students' learning about westward expansion and development and to explain the activities and assignments they would use to achieve these goals.

The Textbook Evaluation/Unit Planning Exercise reflects a typical teaching situation wherein teachers examine and assess text material,

implicitly or explicitly determine goals, and choose or create activities and assignments to engage students and help them learn academic material. In selecting and developing teaching approaches, teachers try to satisfy or manage conflicting goals, priorities, values and underlying assumptions held by both themselves and others. This interview focuses on these issues and tasks in terms of teaching culturally diverse students, specifically, Alaska Natives.

This exercise involves participants in pulling together what they know and believe about various dimensions of teaching--subject matter, students, teaching and learning, and other considerations--as they figure out the content and approach for teaching about westward expansion and development. It allows a look at how the teacher candidates relate these domains of knowledge at the same time that it gives an idea of how they would represent history for students who are culturally different from themselves.

While the activity of evaluating the textbook is often a part of planning a unit of study, here this activity also has been designed to serve additional purposes. It serves as a means of getting at, first, how prospective teachers think Alaska Native students learn history and, second, which conceptions of history content and historical inquiry they think should be presented to those students. Finally, assessing textbook material elicits teaching approaches that teacher candidates think appropriately represent U.S. history and their views on the usefulness of textbooks in teaching.

I determined that the most appropriate chunk of material for the participants to use in textbook evaluation and instructional planning would be a chapter, rather than a section in a chapter. Broad patterns of cause and effect within history would not encourage looking at

content narrowly, that is, in textbook sections. Also, the content of U.S. history textbooks tends to be interwoven throughout a chapter, even when that chapter is divided into sections. Additionally, in the actual planning of history classes, teachers would typically deal with chapters as a unit of material, rather than individual lessons. This practice stands in contrast to planning in other subject matters, for example mathematics, in which teachers tend to teach lesson by lesson, not paying much attention to the overall thrust and content of the textbook by chapter (Ball, 1988).

I will return to the matter of textbook selection and consider it in depth after describing the final sections of the interview.

Part 4: Teaching and learning in U.S. history (teaching vignettes). In this segment of the interview, teacher candidates read and respond, one by one, to six vignettes, each developed around a different fictional U.S. history teacher's approach to instruction. Questions in this part ask the teacher candidates to react generally to the vignettes and also to discuss, more specifically, their ideas about using each approach with Alaska Native students in two contrasting settings--a small, rural school and larger, more urban school. Presenting vignettes to teacher candidates--especially preservice teachers--elicits ideas that inform the teacher candidates' planning and instruction. This is accomplished through their assessment of the approaches presented, even though they might not have been able to envision the approach independent of the stimulus. Also, it is often easier for a respondent to judge the promise and pitfalls of another's

teaching idea, rather than one's own.⁶

Each vignette portrays either a teaching episode or the teacher's description of his/her ideas for teaching particular U.S. history content. (See Appendix A for the full text of these vignettes. Also, I will describe them in more detail in Chapter 5.) Each vignette represents the intersection of a conception of U.S. history--that is, its nature and/or value--with differing approaches strategic to its teaching. The approaches also vary by aspect of history emphasized (e.g., political, economic, social) and U.S. history content. For instance, Mr. Flanders, who holds that teaching history involves making sure that students get historical chronology straight, is "observed" doing a lecture about the Civil War. In the second vignette, Ms. Brown puts forth her idea for doing a local oral history project so that her students will appreciate that they, too, are making history, that history is not just a thing of the past. Mr. Gomez wants his students to understand the Depression and New Deal era through role-playing so that they might deal intelligently with present-day and future problems.

Four criteria guided the development of the set of vignettes. I sought to include vignettes that would represent:

1. Central concerns and tensions in history:

Here I focused primarily on concerns with chronology, continuity, and causation. Issues of interpretation and judging differing accounts potentially arise in Ms. Brown's plan to "do" a local history. Also represented in the vignettes is the tension between history told as the story of key figures and/or society's powerful groups or as the story of common people.

⁶ I am particularly indebted to Suzanne Wilson for helping me realize the potential of using vignettes. However, like the scenario (Part 2) and the structured pedagogical exercise (Part 3), the use of vignettes as a research tool is exploratory and experimental (see Ball, 1988).

2. Range of aspects in history content:

In each vignette, I focused on different aspects of history--that is, for example, political, economic, military, social history. I also sought to develop vignettes that related history to other social sciences (e.g., geography in Miss Channing's teaching) and to the humanities (e.g., literature in Mr. Herndon's approach).

3. Typical, but contrasting, approaches to the organization of social studies instruction:

In regard to content, the most common curricular organization in social studies is chronological (Gross, 1981). Another common approach to structuring content is to develop topics or themes. The social organization of social studies classrooms often involves small group work (Stodolsky, 1988) as well as the traditional "lecture" method with question and answer recitation.

4. Approaches ranging in relevance to students:

I assumed that trying to make history relevant to students and their experience is one way teachers attempt to engage adolescents in its study. I assumed that for high school students relevancy grows from a) the degree of immediacy in the form of their learning experiences, and b) the use of localized and personalized issues, concerns and examples. Thus, vignettes include learning activities that range from first-hand and second-hand experience to learning through textual material. Some scenarios also include activities that might be seen as familiar to students, such as the study of one's community.

These vignettes, then, reflect issues that are central to the discipline and to the teaching of it. They have been based on conceptions and teaching approaches drawn from descriptions of history teachers and teaching approaches in recent literature (e.g, Evans, 1988; Gross, 1981; Wilson, 1988; Wilson and Wineburg, 1988), my own observations of history teachers, and personal pedagogical content knowledge. Not included directly were approaches that involve reading the textbook during class time as a primary strategy and inquiry-based projects. However, related approaches are included within other vignettes (Mr. Flanders and Ms. Brown, respectively). However, prospective teachers' ideas about the use of U.S. history textbooks as a teaching tool potentially come through their responses to the Text

Evaluation/Unit Planning Exercise.

Thus, these vignettes have been designed to elicit the prospective teachers' thoughts about the kinds of approaches they see themselves using with students who are culturally different from themselves, including their goals for such students. Their responses also reflect their views of history as a discipline. Further, the vignettes were meant to draw out teacher candidates' justifications for and other considerations about the use of certain approaches with culturally diverse students. These justifications and considerations reveal participants' possible concerns with factors in the teaching context beyond knowledge about students and subject matter (e.g., community dynamics, size of classroom group, management of time). Thus, these vignettes elicit the participants' knowledge and beliefs in each of the domains of interest in this study--subject matter, teaching and learning, students--as well as the ways they relate these domains to each other.

Post-practicum questions. In addition, after both methods coursework and student teaching, I asked questions about the teacher candidates' practicum experiences of that semester. They were designed to elicit information and the novices' perceptions about the sites in which they completed their methods and student teaching field experiences. I asked about the subject matter they taught, experiences with culturally diverse students (especially Alaska Natives), the school and community settings, and their mentor teachers. We also discussed a unit they had been responsible for planning and teaching which I judged to best fit with the purposes of the research inquiry. For example, because Esther did not teach U.S. history, we explored a unit she taught on civil rights. In Roger's case, we examined a unit he taught in a

language arts class on Indian myths and legends. Finally, I asked the teacher candidates to talk about what they might have gained from their practical experiences in terms of understanding history, culturally diverse students, teaching and learning in history, and anything else that was important to their learning about teaching.

I chose to ask about these areas because they reflected the other four parts of the interview. In addition, I hoped to gain a sense of the conditions in which they worked as novice teachers and their notions about what they had gained from practice.

The Textbooks

Another decision concerned which textbooks and chapters of the texts to use as stimulus to the evaluation and unit planning exercise. Critiques of textbooks and patterns of textbook adoption across the nation (Gagnon, 1988; Sewall, 1987, 1988) and in Alaska (Alaska Department of Education, 1987), as well as availability of actual textbooks, influenced the choice of Boorstin and Kelley's A History of the United States (Ginn and Company, 1986) and Risjord and Haywoode's People and Our Country (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982). The Boorstin and Kelley text is widely adopted by school districts nationwide and is also used in some of Alaska's larger urban schools. Risjord and Haywoode's text also enjoys wide appeal nationally, but was primarily selected because it has been frequently adopted by rural Alaskan school districts, which serve primarily Indian and Eskimo students.

The two texts are similar in the conceptions of history they embody. For example, both convey an historical chronology, and include parts of lessons and tasks for students that emphasize time sequence (e.g., timelines). Both texts also nod toward the role interpretation plays in historical narratives, each including a reading exercise that

contrasts accounts of Indian wars and policy. Of course, the texts themselves are interpretative accounts of the past, but they do not raise this, within these chapters, for students' consideration in any significant way. Additionally, both frame their accounts in terms of cause and effect, but they attribute outcomes to different kinds of effects. Boorstin and Kelley's (1986) explanations turn to vivid descriptions of individuals or lifestyles which are meant to represent key ideas and events. Risjord and Haywoode (1982) tend to emphasize movements and dynamics at broad social levels as causes.

An important difference between the Boorstin and Kelley (1986) and Risjord and Haywoode (1982) texts in their treatment of history concerns their efforts to help students make connections within the subject matter. Of the two texts, it is the Boorstin and Kelley (1986) account that attempts to connect aspects of the past across time and place. It contextualizes situations in the United States with information about situations in other parts of the world, notably Europe. It connects the outcomes of previous periods with the situations presently under discussion and forecasts future situations.

These two texts also include comparable material. Both texts focus on the idea of transforming the frontier as they deal with the subtopics of Indian wars and policy, mining, cattle ranching and cowboy life, farming, and the role of the transcontinental railroad. Also, both handle this material less in strict chronological terms than as sets of phenomenon occurring during the same period. In both texts, Indian issues are dealt with early on, while each chapter concludes with sections on farming. This progression implies that once the Indians were defeated and confined, the greater civilization and development of the West could occur through farming (Personal communication, Paul

Ongtooguk, July, 1989). In fact, Boorstin and Kelley (1986) argue that "civilization approached the Plains on three legs --water, wood and land" (p. 336).

Different histories. In spite of these similarities, the texts tell two very different histories. Comparisons of the numbers of pages devoted to topics and an examination of the terms in which the authors treat them reveal vastly different responses to the question of "whose history should be told and taught." The Boorstin and Kelley (1986) text emphasizes the story of white Europeans. Risjord and Haywoode (1982) devote more of the story to the experiences of indigenous peoples. The first set of authors sees the passing of the frontier as a triumphant story of individual, white Europeans' development of the frontier's riches. Risjord and Haywoode see it more as a conflict over resources between indigenous peoples and such enterprising Europeans which was disastrous for Native Americans. In addition, the latter authors make a point of stressing the role and contributions of minority peoples in, for example, the building of the transcontinental railroad. Also, they emphasize that "many" of the cowboys were freed slaves, in comparison Boorstin and Kelley's characterization of their "few" number.

Boorstin and Kelley's (1986) theme is "that the West rewarded people who had vision, self-confidence, courage and perseverance," the personality profile of "the American 'Go-Getter'" (Teacher's Guide, p. 132). According to these authors, these Go-Getters were people--mostly men--who would "try the impossible" and succeed in "making something from nothing;" they "helped find and develop the riches of the new American empire" (Boorstin & Kelley, pp. 335, 320). Boorstin and Kelley's emphasis on individual competition and on development is reflected in the number of pages devoted to mining, ranching and

farming, fully three-quarters of the chapter.

The remaining one-fourth of the pages are devoted to Indian policy and wars, which this text casts as a kind of civil war. In other words, Boorstin and Kelley (1986) portray the conflict between Native Americans and the U.S. government as a war between groups of citizens of the same country, even though it is difficult to conceive that Indians considered themselves to be "of the same country." Moreover, this text may end up reinforcing negative images and stereotypes of Native Americans. It describes Indians as "fierce occupants" (p. 321) who go "on the warpath" (p. 322). Additionally, the reader might well conclude that Boorstin and Kelley (1986) see Native Americans as not in possession of much vision, self-confidence, courage and perseverance, since Native Americans were clearly not rewarded by their encounter with white European peoples during westward expansion. To give Boorstin and Kelley credit where it is due, however, at times these authors also acknowledge the role of the U.S. government in the demise of Indian culture. For example, they clearly contend that the purpose of the Dawes Act was "to destroy Indians' culture" (p. 326).

The Risjord and Haywoode text attempts--with relative success--to provide a Native American perspective, emphasizing that Indians' ways of life were overcome by a dominant white, European culture in its efforts to take advantage of natural resources. These authors accomplish this, first, by spending about half of the chapter's pages describing and discussing Indian wars and policy, with only one-fourth of the text being devoted to mining, ranching and farming. Second, they use clear and forceful language in phrases such as "direct conflict" (p. 413) and sentences like "[t]he reservation system never worked well, and the American Indians detested it" (p. 418), which also try to reflect a

Native American viewpoint. They frame the period in images of oppression as white "enterprising individuals...developed [natural] resources," outraging Indians at the "invasion" of their land, who are only to be defeated by "superior numbers and firepower" (p. 430). Risjord and Haywoode (1982) climax the conflict between whites and Indians with an extended description of the Ghost Dance religion and the Battle at Wounded Knee. In contrast, the Boorstin and Kelley (1986) text chooses to culminate the Indian wars with the surrender of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce. They both conclude their respective sections on Indian wars and policy with a discussion of the failures of the Dawes Act, but Boorstin and Kelley leave the reader with a false sense of exoneration in declaring that the U.S. government worked to rebuild tribes and their culture so that by 1980 "the Indians numbered over 1.3 million-- probably more than when Columbus came to America" (p. 326).

Narrative style. Another characteristic of textbooks that distinguishes them is the style of writing each employs. Boorstin and Kelley's (1986) A History of the United States is the more engaging narrative to read (see also Sewall, 1987). According to one prospective teacher who read this chapter in a pilot interview session, "It flows like a story." The vivid turn of phrase, combined with in-depth descriptions, pull readers into a sense of the times and encourage them to feel they know the people or events portrayed. Boorstin and Kelley also describe several sides of the individuals on whom they focus, making them multi-dimensional and sometimes the benefactors of simply being in the right place at the right time. Risjord and Haywoode's People and Our Country leans more toward the style we've come to expect in textbooks, a narrative listing of events in a straightforward style which some have called "dry." They highlight in bold print sentences

that convey ideas the authors hold to be important. However, it is sometimes difficult to determine the basis on which these sentences were selected.

Teaching and learning. These texts are also constructed around assumptions about teaching and learning, as well as teachers and learners, in the context of history. Both texts do not assume much higher order thinking on the part of either students or teachers. For instance, they emphasize lower level questions (recall and comprehension) in section reviews and tests. Also, they hold views about what teachers need in a text in order to teach well. They include answers to section review and test questions. And, in Boorstin and Kelley, teachers are provided with numerous suggestions for supplementary resources (books, films and so forth), as well as elaborate lesson plans, virtually giving them scripts to follow.

Summary. Thus, in these two texts we have representations of history and westward expansion and development as a topic in U.S. history with some similarities and some differences. Generally, they convey similar conceptions of history, with an emphasis on cause and effect relations. Overall, both chapters represent the period of western expansion and development after the Civil War as belonging to white Americans, but with more or less room in the story for Native Americans. On the one hand, in its stress on Indian issues and other minorities, Risjord and Haywoode's (1982) People and Our Country gives the impression it is trying to rectify the imbalanced and wrongful past

treatment of peoples of color by textbook publishers.⁷ However, in the style of this text, history comes across as something that has happened in a manner and time disconnected from the reader.

On the other hand, Boorstin and Kelley's (1986) A History of the United States definitely gives less play to Native Americans. While not ignoring Indian-related issues, and even seeming, at times, to treat them in an even-handed manner, this text gives greater play to the white European "Go-Getters" who developed and lived in the West. In its writing style, this account seduces readers with the power of story and vivid detail.

Interview Procedures

How, then, did I use this interview schedule? It was used to interview the four focal prospective teachers at three critical points across their preservice teacher education program--as they began methods coursework, at the end of methods coursework before starting student teaching, and after student teaching. At the first data collection point, I conducted interviews in three or four sittings of between one and three hours each, depending on the pace set by the respondent and the number of follow-up probes I made. During the second and third waves, an additional sitting was required to accommodate the discussion of the teacher candidates' practicum experiences. Interviews were conducted in the privacy of my university office.

Creating a conducive environment. I wanted to create as comfortable and open an environment as possible for the prospective

⁷ Axtell (1987) speaks to acts of omission and commission committed by textbooks which involve Europeans and Indians during the "Age of Discovery." In particular, he points out problems with the way Indian's migrations, tribal names, and linguistic families are presented. As well, gross misunderstandings about Native American ideas around property, government, and religion are to be found in textbooks.

teachers who had generously agreed to give of their time and thoughts for this research. I was initially concerned with building rapport with them. I was especially concerned because respondents were most at risk for feeling embarrassed or put on the spot in the first interview segment, which was designed to elicit their knowledge of subject matter. First, I spent time at the beginning of this segment chatting with participants about how their semester was going and making a point that I was interested in how they thought about history, not what they "knew." Beginning this segment with personal accounts of history coursework and favorite teachers was also a low-risk approach. In addition, although I generally gave participants the subject matter response cards in random order, at times within the interview I changed the order of the cards so that the teacher candidates would not experience a series of cards to which they could not respond adequately. Finally, at points where the participants required extended time to think (unit planning) or read (vignettes), I turned off the tape recorder.

Probing responses. Questions to prompt and probe the teacher candidates' ideas in particular directions were built into the interviews. However, more general probes were also fruitful in producing richer, more detailed responses. For example, I often inquired whether the participant "could say more about that" or queried, "Can you give me an example of that?" I sometimes repeated back to the respondents a series of their responses to make as certain as possible that I had not misunderstood their ideas.

Recording the interviews. I audiotaped the interviews and labelled the tapes with pseudonyms, keeping them in a locked cabinet when not being transcribed. During the interviews, technical equipment

was visible, but participants soon became comfortable with its presence. Usually by the second or third segment of our first wave of interviews, they stopped looking at the tape recorder or leaning toward the microphone.

The audiotapes were transcribed verbatim by three transcribers I hired, known to me personally. I gave specific, written directions to each of the transcribers for the task so that they might be as faithful as possible to participants' exact words, inflections, and pace. In one case, a transcriber recognized the voice and speaking manner of a respondent and told me so. I did not confirm her attribution, but did caution her not to discuss her thoughts with anyone she thought was a participant or anyone else. I re-emphasized the confidential role she had taken on in transcribing the tapes.

Data set

The data set consists of sets of transcripts for each teacher candidate. The transcripts are divided into sections by the four or five parts of the interview. They range from approximately 150 to 300 pages per candidate, per wave. Dennis tended to give fewer complex responses even when probed, whereas Linda spoke at length with elaboration and detailed examples. Due to technical difficulties, I lost portions of interviews with both Esther and Linda; however, since I had also taken field notes, I was able to reconstruct enough of our conversation that the overall interview was still useful for analysis. When drawing quotes from the transcripts for inclusion in the text of the dissertation, I edited out fillers (um, ah) and repetitions of words so that the teacher candidates' ideas might be more understandable to readers.

Data Analysis

In this section, I describe the general process I used to reduce and analyze the data, giving examples from parts of the interview. Then, I lay out a situation where my analytic approach didn't work well and how I took another, more appropriate, tack. I close with the consideration of two issues that were raised in the course of these analyses.

A Working Process

As I began the process of data reduction and analysis, I first looked over the interview schedule and the intermediary research questions I had formulated to flesh out the broad inquiry discussed in chapter 1. I also read the interview transcripts by individual teacher candidate in the order of the five parts listed above. Later, I also read a particular part--focusing, for instance, on just the subject matter portion of the interview--across prospective teachers.⁸ At the same time I was reviewing the questions and reading the transcripts, I was also reading literature appropriate to a portion of the interview. For example, while I concentrated on the transcripts dealing with the teacher candidates' thinking about history, I was also reading

⁸ I found that only reading across teacher candidates while focusing on a particular interview question did not, in most cases, provide as coherent a picture of the prospective teachers' thinking as I had hoped this approach might. Both the set-up of the interview and their thinking lent themselves more readily to looking at a series of questions. Too, the prospective teachers' thinking, for example about historical causation, threaded through the interview in places I didn't always expect. Thus, I handled each part of the interview--for example, understanding of history--as a whole, reading complete transcripts of that part. At times when knowledge and beliefs about, for instance, students, was to be located in several portions of the interview, I read transcripts from all parts (e.g., ideas about students, teaching and learning in U.S. history). I did, at times, give special attention to sections within a certain part of the interview that had proven to be especially rich in the earlier overall reading.

literature by historians and educational researchers interested in teachers' knowledge of history and its teaching. Not surprisingly, I moved back and forth between the questions, the transcripts, and the literature.

Looking at language. Another aspect of this initial process evolved as I began to notice that the prospective teachers repeatedly used particular words and their synonyms. This occurred within individual cases, as well as across the set of intending teachers. For instance, I noticed that Esther frequently referred to the "why's" of history. Across cases, I read re-occurring references to "relating" and "connections." At this point, I used the computer software's search function to look for all instances of given words and sets of synonyms used by the teacher or suggested by a thesaurus, color coding them on the paper copy of the transcripts.

Constructing domains and categories. Next, I tentatively settled on a set of domains, or areas of focus, for the data reduction. The construction of these domains was based on the interaction of ideas raised by the teacher candidates in the transcripts, the research and interview questions, and the literature I read. For example, I explored several dimensions of historical understanding in the teacher candidates' thinking, including ideas about chronology, interpretation, and purposes for studying history. Both teacher candidates and historians raised these dimensions for consideration, and they fit within the questions I was posing.

At this point, I began to unpack the domains in one part of the interview and to define them. I was influenced by my reading, conversations I had with scholars (e.g., Suzanne Wilson) and advisors, and--of course--by the ways the teacher candidates thought about

matters. I made lists of what I referred to as categories in each of the domains and labeled the transcripts according to them. In the process, I added categories, omitted others, and refined still different ones. When this occurred, I also reconsidered portions I had already labeled with categories that had been changed. Having completed the coding of the transcripts in this way, I grouped sections of the transcripts by like ideas by teacher candidate. At this point, I either created a computer file by teacher candidate for a certain domain (e.g., Esther's ideas on the role of "facts") or constructed a visual representation of an individual's ideas, such as a conceptual map (e.g., each novices' "story" of westward expansion and development).

Seeing across cases. I then began to work across the teacher candidates in several ways. In one instance (ideas about students), I skipped over looking at individuals' ideas and immediately grouped the teacher candidates' knowledge and beliefs by category, across individuals. In another example, I had already written descriptions of each novice's thoughts on the goals and teaching approaches they would develop for a unit on westward expansion and development for Alaska Native students in a small, rural village school setting. Then, I devised a chart displaying the four novices' ideas in several areas (e.g., goals, learning tasks, social organization, role of textbooks, assessment, teacher's role). Working on such charts pushed me to look for and articulate themes or issues across the teacher candidates.

Composing analytic questions. With the data initially reduced, I turned to composing what I have thought of as analytic questions and completed these subsequent analyses. These analytic questions derived from three sources--from issues emerging from teacher candidates'

thinking, from the data reduction process, and from the concerns that were driving the research question. While they may have been rooted in one of the three sources, these analytic questions are still the product of the interaction of teacher candidates' thinking, my research questions, and literature. An example of a set of analytic questions emerging from the teacher candidates' thinking was:

If making learning relevant is important to these novices, what are the characteristics of relevance in their minds? What does it accomplish and how?

Further, I asked:

What might be problems and pitfalls with their ways of thinking?

I also constructed questions suggested by the process of data reduction. I found that these analytic questions interrelated with the intermediary research questions I had written prior to data collection. For example, before collecting data, I had wondered about the interplay of the teacher candidates' knowledge and beliefs about subject matter, culturally diverse students, and teaching and learning. Once I had reduced the data from the subject matter and teaching/learning transcripts, I noticed similarities in the teacher candidates' orientations toward history and the goals they set for Alaska Native learners. Thus, an analytic question I followed asked, "How do the novices' orientations toward history and their goals for teaching and learning for Alaska Native students interact?" In another similar, but broader, instance, I asked,

How do the teacher candidates' knowledge and beliefs about history, Alaska Natives, and teaching and learning in history shape their curricular visions (e.g., teaching goals and units)?

A third source of analytic questions drew from concerns that motivated the overall research inquiry. Recall, for example, that I have framed the overall research inquiry about teachers' knowledge in

terms of the moral dimensions of teaching. Thus, I asked questions of the reduced data such as:

What do these teacher candidates' curricular visions suggest about Alaska Native students' opportunities to learn history?

An Analysis Gone Awry: Reasoning about Relevance

The following account of an attempt at a certain analysis illustrates how faulty conceptual thinking leads to the use of inappropriate analytic strategies. It also represents an important outcome of the study in terms of my understanding how thinking about the phenomena under study provides guidance in the analysis.

One theme I noted early on concerned the issue of relevance. The teacher candidates talked frequently about helping students see relationships between history and their own lives, about selecting or emphasizing content that was "close" or familiar to students, and so forth. Their remarks about connectedness occurred in the expected places, such as in responses to questions about what would make history interesting to high schools students, generally, and to Alaska Native learners, specifically. Their concerns also surfaced in their thinking about the nature of history, especially in the value of its study. The issue of relevance--based as it is in relatedness--was embedded in the focus on my inquiry, too, in my concerns about how the teacher candidates think about teaching students culturally different from themselves.

My first approach to the analysis was to gather all of the rationales the teacher candidates had given to explain their teaching goals, their choices of historical content to emphasize in the study of westward expansion and development, and their teaching approaches (e.g., activities, assignments, social organization). I chose these warrants

as a site to examine the interplay of the teachers' knowledge about subject matter, students, teaching and learning, as well as other contextual considerations, in their reasoning about teaching. As an initial step, this move made sense because these statements of justification offered references to the different domains of knowledge and belief. I searched several parts of the interview, especially those parts which elicited ideas about students and teaching/learning, including the teaching vignettes.

I hoped to learn whether a particular domain of knowledge predominated in their reasoning about teaching. As I shall suggest later, I was mistaken in this goal once I thought more deeply and clearly about the nature of pedagogical reasoning. At this point, however, I began to label each of the justifications with categories referring to knowledge of subject matter, students, and so forth. I made the judgments based on my previous separate analyses of their understandings and ideas in each domain of knowledge and belief. This job completed, I counted up all the references to a particular domain for each teacher candidate. The results weren't especially fruitful or interesting. The numbers in each domain were fairly consistent across the teacher candidates, and I couldn't come to any clear or convincing conclusions as a result. In addition, I was concerned about the reliability of the way I'd understood and used the knowledge categories in labeling the rationales. It had been difficult to keep the domains separated, so I didn't know if I was labeling similar rationales in the same way across the novices.

As I thought about why I was worried about the question of reliability, I considered the nature of the coding problem--I hadn't been able to keep the categories separated. This process alerted me to

the conceptual error I had made early on: The process of pedagogical reasoning is an integrative one. Rather than being a process of taking apart, as I was trying to do in my analysis, pedagogical reasoning is about bringing different knowledge and beliefs together in a process of weaving or melding. Re-rooting myself and the analysis in the concepts that informed the research led me to look at these justifications for the way they spoke to bringing together knowledge of subject matter and students. This fits more closely with the meaning of relevance, as well. This experience reminds me, in a way, of Gudmundsdottir's (1990b) discussion of her self-described interpretive "mistakes" in the case of Nancy. In part, this researcher attributes her mistakes to the lack of an explicit theoretical framework grounding her analysis. It could be said that I fell into a similar trap when I did not initially deeply acknowledge and then, exploit, the framework I did have.

Two Related Issues of Analysis

The first issue relates to concerns for validity. Qualitative researchers consider coherence, consensus, credibility, and adherence to method in assessing the "truthfulness" of an inquiry and its report (Phillips, 1986). However, for Phillips, the telling mark of believability is that the researcher has looked for negative evidence. To do so, I argue, requires both intent and opportunity. That I read the interview transcripts from 7-10 times during the analysis provided me the opportunity to search for negative evidence. I re-coded passages as my understanding of categories and themes changed having taken new, possibly negative, evidence into account. At times, I held to my original interpretations, but after considering what I initially thought was disconfirming evidence for initial assertions. For instance, I first concluded that Dennis did not see history as an interpretive

discipline; rather, he thought of history as an accumulation of facts. However, as I worked at other analyses, I uncovered comments by Dennis referring obliquely to notions of interpretation, perspective, and opinion. With intention, I gathered these comments and held them as tentative evidence that Dennis, indeed, did see history as interpretive. Nevertheless, as I continued to refine my working definition of the nature of interpretation in history, I maintained that relative to my conceptions of history and the weight of his other remarks, he did not conceive of history as fundamentally interpretive--at least, in the ways he spoke about it in our interviews.

This example relates to a second issue that emerged from the process of data analysis. I realized that my undergraduate concentrations (essentially, minors) in history and anthropology had not led me to develop a coherent and flexible conception of these disciplines as interpretive. Of help, however, has been my developing appreciation over the course of my doctoral studies for the construction of argument. This awareness has served as a bridge to the re-examination of my own conception of history as an interpretive discipline. Still, in the process of designing this research inquiry and completing the analysis, I have needed to transform my understanding of history. Although I draw attention to this transformation in order to describe my learning during the research process, I do not see the general phenomenon as radically different from the iterative process through which researchers progress as they move toward more refined analyses. At the same time, I recognize that other researchers starting with a deeper subject matter background might look at this data with a more fine-grained analytic lens.

Drawing on the teacher candidates' interview responses in the following analyses, I use a code to make reference to the location of the participants' words and ideas in the transcripts. In subsequent chapters, the code in parentheses marks the name of the respondent (D, E, L or R), the data collection point (wave 1, 2 or 3), the part of the interview (SM, SS, TL, V, or PST) and transcript page number. So, for example, "(EW3SS25)" refers to comments taken from Esther's wave 3 interview on ideas about students, page 25.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHER CANDIDATES' UNDERSTANDINGS OF HISTORY

This chapter examines teacher candidates' ideas about history as a resource to draw upon in their thinking about teaching learners who are culturally different from themselves. In this analysis, I separate the teacher candidates' knowledge and beliefs about subject matter into two domains, reflected in the two sections of this chapter. The first domain concerns their general orientations toward history and aspects of the teacher candidates' biographies that appear to shape those orientations. I will define and explore their orientations in terms of dimensions commonly associated with understanding and teaching history, such as chronology and causation. The second domain involves more specific content knowledge in history--in this case, the intending teachers' knowledge and beliefs about the period of westward expansion and development in U.S. history. It describes their accounts of geographical expansion and the attendant conflicts between European and Indian peoples in relation to mythology typically associated with the time.¹

These analyses draw primarily on the novices' responses to questions about history as a subject matter. For instance, I asked about the teacher candidates' enjoyment of history, about what makes a "history buff," and about purposes for studying history. Central to the subject matter interview were two tasks, both revolving around a series of cards on which were written events, people, and terms associated with

¹ Subsequent analyses in Chapters 6 and 7 also show the interplay of the teacher candidates' subject matter knowledge with their ideas about learners, learning, and teaching.

westward expansion and development (see Appendix A). In the first task, the novices were asked what they recalled about the idea on the card. Then, they were asked to rank the significance of each content card for understanding westward expansion and development and to explain their rationale. In the second task, the prospective teachers were directed to arrange the cards in any fashion they wished to show how the cards "went together." I also analyzed the intending teachers' responses to the vignettes described in Chapter 2, which represent, in part, different conceptions of history.

Orientations Toward History

By orientation, I refer to practicing teachers' and teacher candidates' general understandings and beliefs about, in this case, the subject of history.² I assume that the prospective teachers' subject orientations incline or dispose them toward ways of thinking about teaching (see, for example, Grossman, 1985, 1991; Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989). In the present analysis, I use the idea of an orientation to subsume knowledge of what Schwab (1978) refers to as the substantive and syntactic structures of the discipline. Hence, orientations include conceptions of a given subject matter and what is important to know about it, as well as beliefs about how one knows in the discipline--that is, about the logical structures involving methods of verification and justification of conclusions (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989; Schwab, 1978).³

² I choose the term "orientation" rather than "conception" to accent the role this knowledge plays in teachers' thinking about pedagogy. An orientation implies directing or adjusting oneself in regard to a situation. It contains images of directions to take.

³ Drawing together elements of the concept of orientation common to a number of researchers, Grossman (1990a) includes "the beliefs teachers hold about the nature of a subject, what it means to know a subject, as well as beliefs concerning the most valuable aspects of subject matter"

Taking a lead from Grossman (1985, 1991), I base the analysis of these prospective teachers' orientations on dimensions of history important to both historians and educational researchers concerned with history teaching. Grossman (1991) has argued that, for English teachers, subject orientations are stances taken toward the interpretation of literary text. In other words, the orientations of the English teachers she studied have their roots in the discipline itself. Following this line, I focus here on frameworks or dimensions used to organize the field of history, another interpretive discipline. I arrange these dimensions as follows, given the ways the teacher candidates understand history:

- a) chronology and continuity;
- b) change and causation;
- c) significance of particulars and "facts;"
- d) interpretation; and
- e) purposes for its study.

Scholars interested in the ways teachers think about history (e.g., Evans, 1989; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988) have grounded their research in such dimensions. For instance, Evans (1988, 1989) explored teachers' conceptions of history, finding that their ideas about purposes for studying history dominated and shaped their pedagogy. Like Carr (1961), an historian, Wilson and Wineburg (1988) as educational researchers focus on the role of "facts" and interpretation in conceptions of history. They use such key dimensions of history to analyze prospective teachers' ideas about history and the ways they teach the subject.

The analysis of the teacher candidates' understandings of these

five historical dimensions will also raise questions about "presentist" thinking within their orientations. We will also see how the prospective teachers' individual backgrounds, as well as their personal beliefs and values, influence the way they think about history.

Chronology and Continuity

Chronology in history concerns the framing of the past in terms of time. Indeed, that notions about time and temporal sequence are central to history goes unquestioned by the teacher candidates interviewed. As Dennis puts it, chronology in history is a way of "keeping in mind that things happen in a time frame" (DW3V2). Wilson (1988), however, reminds us that chronology in history is "more than a lockstep progression through equally spaced years"

(p. 218). She maintains that historians see time moving at different paces. Further, more complex ways of thinking about chronology in history recognize themes and cycles--that is, continuities through time--as well as breaks in those cycles and from the past--or discontinuities (Wilson, 1988, Wilson & Wineburg, 1988).⁴

My analysis of the focal teacher candidates' ideas about history shows that they focus on chronology as a progression in time. For the

⁴ Mink (1987) speaks to the relationship of chronology and continuity using the image of time as a river in the following quote. In it, he distinguishes between attention to specific isolated dates and the relationship of the events signified by those dates to each other. "To comprehend temporal succession," he argues,

means to think of it in both directions at once, and then time is no longer a river which bears us along but the river in aerial view, upstream and downstream seen in a single survey....The date of an event is functionally an artificial mnemonic by which one can maintain the minimum sense of its possible relation to other events. The more one comes to understand the actual relations among a number of events, as expressed in the story or stories to which they all belong, the less one needs to remember dates" (p. 57).

most part, the continuity they see concerns sequential linkages through time, rather than themes or cycles. Thus, much of their thinking about chronology in history might be said to fall into the realm of the common sense, rather than the province of historians. However, Esther and Linda do also consider themes across time. But none of the teacher candidates discern discontinuities.

The teacher candidates' concern with chronology comes through in their reference to dates--especially in the cases of Dennis and Roger--and in their general concern for time sequence in the study of history. Dennis mentions, for instance, that the Klondike gold rush into the Yukon and Alaska occurred very late in the time frame of westward expansion and development, almost as the country was making its transition into a period of industrial growth.⁵ In another example, Esther quarrels with the manner in which one high school U.S. history textbook presents Indian policy in the period of westward expansion and development. She complains that the text "jumps right in the middle of it. You don't get to see the progression and changes in policy" (EW3TL11). For Esther, understanding historical changes requires understanding a temporal sequence.

Historical chronology underlies continuity in that it connects the present to the past and creates movement into the future (Wilson & Wineburg, 1988). Esther's concern with "changes in policy" above hints at how chronology helps to relate events to each other, to provide a

⁵ Here, however, Dennis's sense of sequence seems questionable in that the transition to industrial growth had already begun earlier. High school textbooks often place a chapter on the industrial age just after a chapter on westward expansion and development during the post-Civil War period. Perhaps Dennis's understanding of history is shaped by the organization of the school textbooks he has used to study or teach the subject.

kind of conceptual tie. In Linda and Esther's thinking, understanding chronology is the basis for seeing cause and effect relationships. Responding to a vignette of a teacher who emphasizes chronology in history, Linda argues that understanding the temporal progression of events helps to develop the idea of cause and effect. She agrees with the teacher that it's important to give students an idea of, in this case, how the Civil War developed, "but not even so much just because of the chronology, but because it's really important, I think, for students to be able to begin to develop an idea of cause and effect, cause and effect, cause and effect" (LW3V3). A section on causation below explores these ideas more fully.

Thus, continuity is built upon linkages in chronology. Primarily, these teacher candidates see linkages through time as linear. Linda is loquacious and metaphorical on this point. She contends that what has happened before is related to the present on a continuum (LW3SM3). She tightly links past and present along a continuous line using the metaphor of a thread running through time until the present day. Linda explains that it's possible to unravel the thread-line that stretches to any point in the past by virtue of the cause-effect connections linking events (LW3V3-4).

According to Linda and Esther, the weaving of continuity through time can also be discerned by looking at what they call themes. Linda, for example, links present with the past as she gives recent examples of historical concepts. For instance, she sees imperialism operating in the U.S. government's presence in Central America during the 1980's just as during the period of westward expansion and development (LW3SM19). In her view, manifest destiny continues as an ideological tool used by

the United States in attempts to dominate weaker countries around the world.

In summary. Chronology and continuity, then, play an important part in these teacher candidates' views about the nature of history. They seem to assume that linear connections exist, as if they have life outside of historians' accounts. In their view, history marches through time, providing continuity until the present, with anticipation of continuity into the future. Breaks in the chronicle don't seem to have been detected in the past and aren't foreseen in the future. In sum, their views of chronology and continuity reify history as having a dynamic of its own, rather than seeing historical accounts as an attempt to make sense of events of the past.⁶

Change and Causation

Central to questions of historical significance is the idea of causation (Collingwood, 1946).⁷ As Linda alluded to above, one way to connect events is through cause-effect relations. Although the language of cause and effect sounds fixed to the layman's ear, notions about causes are marked by qualifications for historians (Fischer, 1970; see also Wilson, 1991). Contingencies abound; there may be multiple causes for events; a measure of uncertainty is everpresent. Such elements make for a great deal of complexity in historical narratives.

Logically implied in examining causation as a dimension of history is the notion of change, as both are concerned with things being made

⁶ Ideas about chronology also interweave with some teacher candidates' thoughts about the significance of "facts" in history, as discussed below.

⁷ However, views of the importance of causation change through time. Fischer (1970) shows, for example, that historians, philosophers, and scientists condemned the idea of causation in the early twentieth century.

different. Fundamental to interpreting and attributing causation is noticing change. In what terms, then, do these prospective teachers describe historical change? One logical possibility is that they simply describe a difference between one point in time and another. Or, in addition to noting a change, they might also explain it in terms of particular factors, that is, causes or reasons for outcomes. Further, they could spell out the influence of these factors relative to the change (S. Wilson, personal communication, February 5, 1993).

For each of the teacher candidates, ideas about change--including cause and effect relationships--play an important part in their descriptions and explanations of westward expansion and development. On the one hand, Roger shows a tendency to describe the nature of change, placing concerns for causation in a secondary role. His responses emphasize the descriptive nature of how the country was formed or changed, rather than taking an analytical bent. For instance, in recalling the Mexican War, Roger mentions the Mexican general Santa Anna, the date 1812, and the war's association with independence for Texas. He argues that the Mexican War is important in terms of westward expansion and development because it "gives an idea of how the United States was formed...and of how we became what we are today" (RW3SM8).

On the other hand, explanations of change are offered by Dennis, Esther, and Linda, for whom cause-effect relationships are a central part of understanding history. For instance, Linda argues for studying "how we got there" and "what happened as a direct result," (LW3V3). These teacher candidates also talk in terms of "whys" and "ends" and "impacts." Most elaborate is the way Dennis uses cause-effect relations to organize ideas and information about westward expansion and development. In the following quote, Dennis specifies that some of the

aspects represented on the cards set up the events of westward expansion and development, which, in turn, made other things possible, resulting in particular impacts:

The Oregon Trail sort of set the stage for the transcontinental railroad to be built. Both of those...items made it possible for all of these other cards in the "very important" pile to have a place in our history. I think that ultimately it was the manifest destiny of the country and the mind of the people that inhabited the country to be involved in westward expansion and development. So, it sort of rides over and above all of this. Because of these [referring to the Indian wars in association with a card listing chiefs and warriors], it ultimately put these people on reservations, [which was] one of the biggest impacts I feel of what occurred because of the expansion....Manifest destiny and the railroad and the Oregon Trail set the stage for these things that happened to Indian civilizations and the reservations that were a result of that (DW3SM26-27).

In other words, Dennis contends that the movement of people and goods via the Oregon Trail and the transcontinental railroads, motivated by a belief in a manifest destiny, caused changes for Native Americans. The effect, in Dennis's statement, is the placement of Indians on reservations. Like a forthcoming example involving Esther's thinking about cause and effect in feudalism, Dennis's causal explanation seems to fall into what Fischer (1970) terms a reductive fallacy. This fallacy reduces complexity to simplicity and diversity to uniformity.

In another instance of cause-effect thinking, Esther frequently reiterates her interest in, and the importance of understanding, what she calls the "complexities" of history and political science. Doing so, she delineates her view on the significance of causation. She claims,

it's real important to understand the past, which is why my focus is on the whys. Why things happen. What it led to. The causes and effect as opposed to, "this king ruled from, you know, 1427 to 15, whatever" (EW3SM7).

While a student teacher, Esther taught a world history class during which she reports an emphasis on causation. She refers to a cause-

effect relationship as "the why's" and as "connections." Giving an example of how she stressed this connection, Esther told about a lesson on the link between one historical period and another:

I was trying to make a connection between the Romans and the Fall of the Roman Empire and the start of the Middle Ages. And a number of things happened when the Roman Empire fell. And not just strictly wars. Sociologically and economically a number of things happened that essentially set up the foundations for the Middle Ages. And so I wanted to show the connections between those two periods of history. Because frequently history is taught in blocks, and it's real hard to see the flow. So a couple of things I was talking about were feudalism and manorialism. Feudalism is more commonly understood. Why feudalism developed. First of all, what is feudalism? What's the definition of feudalism? But why did it develop then? Why didn't it develop fifty years from then? Why don't we have it today? Why didn't they have it during the Roman Empire? What was it in the fall of the Roman Empire that led to the development of feudalism (EW3SM8)?

Esther's explanation, however, reduces the causes of feudalism to a single interpretation. She claims that feudalism grew out of the conditions surrounding the fall of the Roman Empire. However, feudalism developed in various forms throughout Europe, some of which had relation to Roman administration, based on indigenous conditions.

In summary. Cause-effect relationships are concerned with explaining change, and they play a significant part in these teacher candidates' understandings of history. However, except for Linda's one caution that an historical cause-effect relationship isn't always clear-cut (LW3V3), these teacher candidates raised no questions about the plausibility of single cause-effect connections.⁸ Craig (1989, in McNeill, Kammen, & Craig) sees the belief in monocausality as a

⁸ Worth noting, however, is that interview questions did not ask the teacher candidates to explicitly speak about multiple causation or the role of contingency. Still, in the context of comments volunteered about causes and effects of westward expansion and development, virtually nothing was offered by the respondents to suggest qualification or speculation.

disturbing tendency in present day students of history. Overall, these novices did not discuss the possibility of multiple causes or the uncertainties of cause and effect relationships. They did not raise concerns for contingencies in laying out reasons for events or effects. Change, as explained by cause and effect in the views of these teacher candidates, has been pretty well accounted for.

The Significance of Particulars

Understanding history involves coming to terms with its particulars--specific events, persons, places, dates (Carr, 1961). These specifics are often referred to as "facts," imparting a kind of unquestioned truth or objectivity to them. While some particulars, such as the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, are not in dispute, other "facts"--such as the particulars surrounding the assassination of President John Kennedy--are not so clearly agreed upon.

One way to think about the nature of history might be to see it as relatively synonymous with so-called facts. Carr (1961) describes this commonsense view of history:

History consists of a corpus of ascertained facts. The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions, and so on, like fish on the fishmonger's slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him (p.6).

Equally extreme would be an opposite belief, that history is so much greater than the particulars that "facts" don't matter. A middle ground sees specifics as part of history, being woven together by historians' themes and embedded in context (Wilson & Wineberg, 1988)⁹.

These teacher candidates agree that to be a "history buff" a

⁹ Similarly, in the construction of an historical account, "facts" and interpretation work together in a dialectical fashion (Carr, 1961). This aspect of the significance of particulars in understanding history is considered in the segment on interpretation.

person needs to know and be interested in numerous particulars and details associated with those particulars. However, they also present contrasting views of the significance of particulars in understanding history. Dennis and Roger hold more to a commonsense view, such as that described above, in which history consists of information already ascertained. Dennis explicitly communicates that "history is made up of facts," (DW3TL7), whereas Roger implies the importance of particulars in his view of history.

In contrast to the other three teacher candidates, Roger volunteers more specifics and details in his responses to the content cards which represent some of the particulars associated with westward expansion and development. As well, a history teacher he admires is described as bringing into her teaching a "lot of facts and interesting details" (RW3SM3). For instance, he offers the tribal affiliations of each of the chiefs and warriors mentioned on one card; he gives the name of a mountain man; in response to the stimulus of "Oregon," he recalls that Lewis and Clark spent a "rainy winter" there. Whereas the other prospective teachers don't recall or they guess broadly about the Mexican War, Roger recollects its purpose, an associated date, and the name of a Mexican general. I do not argue here that Roger's recollections are necessarily accurate; nor do I propose that he understands history any more or less fully than do Esther, Linda, and Dennis. However, his memory for, interest in, or attention to specifics distinguishes his collection of responses from those of the other teacher candidates and admits the important place of particulars in his view of history. Perhaps Esther, Linda, and Dennis would say that Roger knows a lot of "facts." Overall, then, Dennis and Roger emphasize and value the place of particulars in their orientations toward history.

Linda's view represents the contrast to the "history as facts" perspective. She implies that history is more than specifics of the past. Indeed, her understanding of history gives the impression that particulars don't have much to do with what constitutes "history." Describing her own experiences in a high school history class, Linda notes she was expected to learn "facts." Instead, she contends, "that's not really what history's all about" (LW3TL77). Linda holds that "history is only viewpoints, history isn't any thing. History is just a collection of ideas and perspectives" (LW3TL50). Given this belief, she also argues that history isn't something to be found in a high school textbook (LW3TL10). Linda volunteers her agreement with people who might characterize her views about the nature of history as pluralistic, relativistic thinking (LW3TL50).

Another orientation toward particulars in history avoids extreme positions; rather, it includes "facts" as a part of history. Esther's view on this matter seems integrative. She treats the importance of particular events, people, places, and dates more evenhandedly than the other views explored, although she maintains that particulars are not as important as the "complexities" and "connections" of history. She sees particulars as essential to history--but as a backdrop. "Facts" are not sufficient in and of themselves to constitute "history."

Esther would say that by knowing "facts" a person can recall information about events like the Compromise of 1850 or the Ghost Dance and the so-called Battle at Wounded Knee. She distinguishes a fact--such as the card "California," a place that isn't especially important in Esther's opinion--from what it represents about westward expansion and development, an economic reason for migrating west (EW3SM18). She makes a similar argument in responding to "Ghost Dance" and the "Battle

at Wounded Knee." She mentions that she doesn't know much about the two, except that Ghost Dance was a "certain kind of religion" (EW3SM18); however, she ranks them of central importance because they would represent "how the Indians were treated as a result of the desire to expand and develop the West" (EW3SM18).

If Esther and Dennis were to find themselves in a discussion about the nature of history, Esther would likely say that Dennis is taking an historian's view "which would be--this is very unfair of me to historians--but just more looking at a chronology and the facts" (EW3TL51-2).¹⁰ Instead, she wants her students to think of history as "the big picture" filled with "complexities." In assessing history teachers who consistently use a lecture approach, Esther attests,

This is my bias against...treating [history] as facts. If you treat it as a chronology and have your little timeline on the board or you do your little outline that this happened, and this happened, and this happened, you'll end up treating it as isolated facts and you don't see the big picture. And learning how to see the big picture is part of what you go to school for (EW3TL51-2).

For Esther, focusing on chronology leads to seeing history as a collection of discrete pieces of information, rather than viewing it as a network of connections. In her view, the particulars play a facilitative role; they "help support understanding the how's and why's" (EW3SM19), instead of taking the lead. Thus, Esther's orientation toward history argues for the integration of chronology and particulars as an important part of history, but not history's most significant character. However, Esther's tone admittedly makes attending to "facts" sound petty.

¹⁰ We also see in this quote another illustration of the teacher candidates' lack of a sense that history is a constructed narrative. Rather, Esther's comment gives the impression that she thinks of "facts" and chronology as givens, not the production of historians.

Based on this perspective, Esther reveals that she's inclined to read the analysis, the why's and the connections, but I don't read the facts. And if you ask me a particular fact, which is one of the reasons I felt so insecure teaching world history [during student teaching], I don't remember the little itsy-bitsy details. I remember the big picture, the concepts and the connections. So I can't kick back and tell you a wonderful story about Richard the Lionhearted (EW3SM4).

As much as Esther downplays the role of "facts" in history and its teaching, she still sees them as important to understanding history for herself as a teacher. As a teacher, she believes that knowing "facts" is useful in determining what to teach and how to pitch the content:

For me, conceptually it's real helpful to understand the chronology of what happened. For me, personally, having a timeline in my head is real important, just so I know what happened when. You live in a house, but you don't see the framing. But the framing is still important. It's almost like I need that framing in order to construct a meaningful lesson. If you don't have the facts...you can't decide as a teacher what you don't want to stress and how you want to approach a particular topic (EW3SM35).

In using the analogy of a house frame, Esther alludes to the key supporting role of particulars. However, by choosing this comparison, she also suggests that more than the posts and beams are needed in order to make the building a whole, complete and functional home. In this way, the completed house gives one a "big picture" from the outside, whereas inspecting only the framing may not tell the novice builder what one is looking at.

In summary. The tendencies of these teacher candidates range widely as they consider the significance of particulars in understanding history. At the two ends of the range are Dennis's and Roger's views opposing that of Linda. Dennis and Roger tend to see "facts" as very important, even central to understanding history; whereas, Linda thinks of such particulars as not the least important. Esther's view fits between them, foregrounding the "big picture" of connections and

complexities. Still, Esther sees a role for the teacher having a knowledge of facts as this knowledge shapes her ability to select content and give it meaning.

The range of prospective teachers' thinking on the place of particulars in understanding history is reminiscent of Carr's (1961) analysis of the nature of history. He sets a 19th century view of history--in which history is seen as objective facts without inherent meaning--against a view of history Carr attributes to Collingwood. In the latter perspective, history is but interpretation with the possibility of infinite meanings. In a synthesis of the two extremes, Carr concludes that history is a "continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between past and present" (p. 35). This interaction includes the historian's interpretation--which particulars are considered to be "facts" and how an historical account is constructed. What role, then, does interpretation play in the orientations of these novice teachers?

Role of Interpretation

History, consisting in large measure of interpretation, emphasizes accounts of events, not the events themselves (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). The "doing" of history essentially involves the interpretation of evidence (Carr, 1961; Collingwood, 1946); indeed, "historians are always at work reinterpreting the past" (McNeill, from McNeill, Kammen, & Craig, 1989).

Mink (1987) puts the work of interpretation in relation to other dimensions of history: "The historian tries to understand a complex process as a function of its component events plus their interrelationships (including causal relationships) plus their importance, all interpreted in a larger context of change" (p. 80).

According to Mink (1987), this activity requires historical judgment rather than historical explanation. In his view, judgment is an act of synthesis, of seeing whole, rather than analysis.

I argue that, logically, at the base of understanding history as interpretation is a basic awareness that alternate accounts could be defensible. It is at this level that the teacher candidates refer to multiple perspectives on history. At a second level, history can be seen as an act of human construction, requiring judgment, created in a social context (Gross, 1981). At this level, history is viewed as an argument. A third aspect of understanding history as interpretation is to consider how arguments and explanations are constructed (e.g., Collingwood, 1946). Understanding history in these ways--especially at the second and third levels--implies that history is not a "given," that history is not a settled matter.

The four study participants each gave a nod toward the possibility of multiple perspectives in viewing the past. For instance, they approved of the inclusion of several views of the Battle of Wounded Knee as presented in one high school U.S. history text. Even Dennis, who also argues (above) that history consists of facts, notes in passing that "history can be interpreted in a number of different ways" (DW3TL21). Although Dennis grants the place of different perspectives, this quote implies that he sees history as a known entity which can be viewed from different standpoints. It is as if history is a tree in a field that can be seen to have different appearances by walking around it. Similarly, Esther discusses her views on interpretation from her perspective as a political scientist. She argues that learning to look at situations and issues from various perspectives facilitates seeing

different potential policy outcomes.¹¹

Linda is the most forthcoming and articulate in her thinking about the place of interpretation in history and its importance to understanding the past. She volunteers her ideas concerning each of the three facets mentioned above. At the most basic level, she believes that the most important thing to understand about history is that "there's more than one perspective out there" (LW3SM5). Linda assumes that there are lots of different viewpoints in history (LW3TL10,50). She pleads for our learning to see and value the perspectives on past and present events held by people of color.

What does Linda mean, though, by differing viewpoints? For her, it seems, truly including different perspectives means the inclusion of non-white, non-western worldviews (LW3V67). She argues that Miss Channing--a teacher who draws parallels between the British colonization of Virginia and the Russian colonization of Alaska in the final teaching vignette--is not providing "two-sided history." She sees this as an insufficient effort in the right direction, but notes that the lesson as described in the vignette wasn't particularly Native American-centered.¹² If Linda were to teach Miss Channing's lesson over, she would include the conflict of the Europeans versus the Native Americans and the Russians versus the Alaska Natives. Whether simply including

¹¹ Below, in the section exploring how teacher candidates' backgrounds shape their views of history, I describe in more detail how Esther's political science perspective figures in her views on interpretation.

¹² Apparently Linda did not notice that in this vignette, the teacher included the British and Russian relationships with indigenous peoples. However, what's important here is Linda's perception that Native peoples are insufficiently represented or that they are absent from the lesson. And, indeed, as the vignette is constructed, the story of colonization is not told from Alaska Natives' point of view.

minority people's experience in the story counts as representing the past from the viewpoint of those peoples, in Linda's opinion, isn't clear.

For Linda, history is not a "given," something received from the past. It is not a settled matter. It isn't "a thing" (WL3TL77). When discussing the style of Mr. Flanders, who was described in a vignette emphasizing historical chronology using a lecture approach, Linda saw the problem with the approach as making history sound as if it had been settled. She was concerned that no student would question that the teacher's point of view was only one point of view (LW3V15).

Linda also sees history as a socially constructed argument and comments on how history is constituted in her view. For example, she implies a distinction between a record of the past and "history" which involves making choices about what to include in an historical narrative. In one vignette, Ms. Brown envisions having her students write a history of their community involving interviews of local elders. Linda thinks of Ms. Brown's idea quite positively, in that it allows students to think of themselves in the present as part of history and to determine what will count as history (LW3V15).

Linda explains that constructing history is a human endeavor to explain the past. She claims that

when history is written down somebody writes it. It isn't just like it falls out of the sky into a rock and it's there. There's a person writing it, and these people have basic ideas that they believe in and basic reasons that they're writing it in the first place (LW3TL77).

By way of illustration, Linda draws on an example from her understanding of Japanese history. She argues that in a time of challenge to his legitimacy, a Japanese emperor had a story written in which the sun goddess conferred on him undisputed leadership forever. Linda

continues, "And that's been done all over the place with history writing" (LW3TL78). Here, she appropriately implies that history is an act of human construction, but she also insinuates that the purpose for writing history is explicitly manipulative, perhaps even devious. Linda expects that her students are also likely to write from a personal or self-serving point of view, like the historians to whom she previously has alluded.

However, Linda also notes the value of getting other points of view on a given historical account when she suggests what might happen if her students were to read each others' written accounts of the past. She thinks their accounts would be held to more public scrutiny, with students arguing that a particular account might not be a fair representation of the past. Taking advantage of the disagreement, Linda would point out that "just because [the author] wrote it down, does that mean that that's the only way it was or is that just a possibility that exists..." (LW3TL78)?

Linda's comments reflect her belief that individual historians are inherently biased in their accounts. Holding up historical accounts to the light of others' views makes the point that historical narrative reflects acts of interpretation, rather than a given truth about the past. Still, Linda makes no comments about how evidence might be used to construct an historical explanation, so she continues to convey the impression that historical interpretation is merely subjective. This impression gives additional weight to her earlier self-professed observation that her perspective is relativistic.

Linda believes that history is like a puzzle consisting of many pieces. The process of understanding history means putting as many pieces together as possible, which is accomplished by getting multiple

perspectives on the past, so that "we get a little closer to seeing the complete picture" (LW3TL10). According to Linda, this process requires an active curiosity and a refusal to accept

just the way it's written in black and white on one page. You need to read a whole bunch of pages and then start talking to a whole bunch of people, and start doing all sorts of wondering yourself before you're ever going to understand anything (LW3SM6).

In this comment, Linda discourages taking ideas from just one text source, but urges reading many materials, talking with a variety of people, and thinking hard oneself about what is being heard.

Specifically, Linda thinks that reading primary sources allows the student of history to process the description of the past oneself (LW3TL24). However, Linda doesn't note that primary sources, themselves, are an incomplete record of the past because the writer--although witnessing or experiencing the event firsthand, for instance--has already made an interpretation by virtue of his/her choices about what to include in the account.

Linda gives the impression that given enough differing perspectives, especially from people of color, a complete historical picture can just about be achieved. Without nonmajority perspectives, the picture is woefully incomplete, in Linda's view; but with these viewpoints, the picture becomes clearer and more well-rounded. Still, she implies that there is a picture of the past that is to be pieced together.

In summary. All of the teacher candidates acknowledge the place of interpretation in understanding history. However, except for Linda, these teacher candidates do not talk explicitly about the role of interpretation in understanding history. Several possibilities might explain this circumstance. For one, these prospective teachers weren't

asked directly about the place of interpretation in understanding history. Nor were they asked explicit questions about causation, a dimension about which they had much to say on their own. Then, there is the potential of teaching to shape the ways teacher candidates think about history. Consider, for example, that as novices about to enter their first year of teaching, the study participants may have already determined what they believe their students can or should learn about history at a particular level. If they were thinking about history in terms of its teaching, these teacher candidates may not have spoken much about dimensions of history they did not see as part of their teaching. Finally, a likely explanation is that some of the teacher candidates do not understand in a complex way how interpretation works in history. Instead, they may think in a commonsense way that situations can be looked at from different angles.

Purposes for Studying History

The interviews also asked prospective teachers to assess the value of studying history. What use would these teacher candidates expect of history? Or, might they simply see the desire to make meaning of the past as a natural human inclination? How would they see the worth of gaining knowledge of other times, peoples, and places?

Commonly, history is thought to teach how to understand current issues and to make rational decisions (Evans, 1989; Himmelfarb, 1987). Beyond this, the study of history supports the development of judgment (Gagnon, 1988)--which seems to imply an element of wisdom in addition to the ability to put together information leading to a plan of action. Another essential purpose often mentioned is that history helps us understand our human nature (Collingwood, 1946; Kammen, 1989, in McNeill, Kammen & Craig), including deepening our sense of place and

identity (Stricker, 1992).

Generally, these beliefs surfaced readily in the teacher candidates' talk about history's value and in their ways of thinking about teaching history. According to all the prospective teachers, a central purpose of studying the past is to understand the present, with an eye toward participating now and in the future. Esther says it most succinctly when she declares, "If you understand [the past], you can better understand the present to make more informed decisions about the future" (EW3SM7). These prospective teachers also voiced agreement with the common adage, "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it," as it speaks to the pitfalls of not understanding history.¹³

In this view, then, understanding history helps frame problems of the present and acts as a guide to future action. If parallels between the past and present can be discerned, understanding history may even save one from reproducing earlier mistakes. In addition, studying genuine --rather than textbook--history, especially from differing perspectives, also provides a measure of protection against the "deceit of the traditional way history and current news is presented to us" (LW3SM3). This purpose, then, values studying history so that people know where they've come from in order to also know where they're going. It assumes the predictive value of history and gives practical importance to its study.

A second important purpose of studying history expressed by two of these teacher candidates centers on learning about other cultures and histories, so that the peoples of the world can live in greater harmony. In Linda's and Roger's vision, history concerns not only learning about

¹³ Although this adage is common to everyday ways of talking about the worth of history, it originated with George Santayana.

one's identity, but especially about other peoples and their cultures. Roger remarks that "one of the primary functions [of history] is to teach people about different cultures and values, so that we can understand people better" (RW3SM13).¹⁴ He anticipates that learning about other cultures and their values will teach respect and empathy.¹⁵ Examining history through the perspectives of different peoples, according to Linda, increases the possibility of good in the world. Linda proclaims the virtuous goal of making the world a better place, arguing,

We're not gonna get better as a people, as a planet and all until we start trying to understand each other. And that means not just saying that my way is the right way, my version of the story is the right version. We have to start understanding each other's [versions] and sort of meld them together, and then we can actually communicate and possibly do something good (LW3SM6-7).¹⁶

Whereas the outcome Roger foresees is the development of an appreciation of people who are different from oneself, Linda also expects an unidentified action to result. Characterizing herself as idealistic, she displays a change-oriented, even reform-minded, disposition.

These teacher candidates also imply that a better world can be created for minority students by their study of non-European perspectives, an opportunity children of color traditionally haven't

¹⁴ Roger's own expressed interest in history is learning about how different cultures live and have lived, about their values, their problems and how they have solved them (RW3SM1). The context in which he speaks is an historical one, but he gives the impression of an interest in anthropology as much as history.

¹⁵ Gagnon (1988) discusses history's goal of developing a sense of "shared humanity" as promoted by the Bradley Commission on History in Schools. This goal holds that studying history helps students understand both themselves and the idea of "otherness."

¹⁶ Linda also sees the need for students to study world literature in order to understand "other ways of being" and to become world citizens (LW3PP15).

had. They anticipate increased pride in their culture and self-esteem for minority students when their history is included in the school curriculum (e.g., EW3TL37). For example, as Roger explains his goals for teaching the period of westward expansion and development to Native students, he sees the opportunity for them to "get a sense of their identity...and a sense of pride" (RW3TL45).

In summary. These novices hold two primary purposes for studying history. First, they believe in its significance for practical guidance in the present and future. Second, two of them also believe that learning about ourselves and other cultures fosters better human interaction. These purposes can be held separately; they also interrelate. For instance, speaking again in terms of a continuum, Linda maintains that "if we think we're a dot on the time graph...we don't have a very good sense of who we are and what to do when something new happens in our lives, or in the world" (LW3SM3). Linda helps us see that we aren't just "dots" in the temporal progression of events. As humans we aren't merely static, present-day beings. Understanding our human nature requires understanding our heritage, and understanding our heritage helps us take action in the present and foresee appropriate measures in the future.

Both of the primary purposes held and discussed by Dennis, Esther, Linda, and Roger aim to be utilitarian. Even their belief in the value of learning about human nature takes on practical overtones. In contrast, Himmelfarb (1987) argues that an appeal to usefulness for studying history is irrelevant. Instead, history naturally appeals, in her view, to our deep-seated interests in our shared pasts, satisfying "a profound human yearning for knowledge about our roots" (p. 243). Yet, none of the prospective teachers responds explicitly out of this

perspective. None of them suggests that the value of history might be its appeal to the intellect and spirit (see, Himmelfarb, 1987).

Nor do these prospective teachers see studying history as a way of looking at the "what if's" that might have changed the past in both dramatic and subtle ways. Rather, they focus on what they see as the known linear relationship of the past and present, geared mostly toward a world of decision-making and action, without an understanding of the role of historical interpretation.

Were these teacher candidates to accept the tentativeness of accounts of the past, they might actually use this condition to foster the practical aims they hold. McNeill (1989) provocatively and convincingly argues this case:

When teachers of history admit that their best efforts at understanding the past are only tentative and sure to be altered in time, skeptics are likely to conclude that history has no right to take students' time from other subjects. If what is taught today is not really true, how can it claim space in a crowded school curriculum?

But what if the world is more complicated and diverse than words can ever tell? What if human minds are incapable of finding neat pigeonholes into which everything that happens will fit? What if we have to learn to live with uncertainty and probabilities, and act on the basis of the best guesswork we are capable of? Then surely the changing perspectives of historical understanding are the very best introduction we can have to the practical problems of real life (p. 105).

A Presentist Perspective

The interaction of the teacher candidates' understandings in each of the above dimensions of history raises a concern that they are peering at the past from the perspective of the present. Historians refer to this fallacy with the awkward term "presentism." They describe it as judging past events by present day perspectives rather than interpreting those events through the circumstances and prevailing ideas of a different time (Fischer, 1970; Gagnon, 1988; D. Wilson, 1992).

Discussing Thomas Jefferson's character in light of his ownership of slaves, Douglas Wilson (1992) sees a presentist view as "a malaise that currently plagues American discussions of anything and everything concerning the past: the widespread inability to make appropriate allowances for prevailing historical conditions" (p.62).

Recall in the cases of these teacher candidates that in their notions about time sequence and in their utilitarian purposes for studying history, they tightly link past and present with connections into the future. This interaction pushes the prospective teachers toward an emphasis on aspects of the past that have an obvious relationship to the present and on judgments about the past based on current perspectives. In addition, the novices' general lack of understanding about the role of interpretation in history seems to encourage them to see the past as a given which can be depended upon to give guidance to present-day and future decision-making. This, too, encourages a focus on seeing the value of the past through the lens of the present.

For example, of the four novices, Esther most emphasizes history's value for the contributions it can make to present and future decision-making. Later, we will hear Esther argue that the only reason Native students need to understand westward expansion and development is so that they can be effective voters and policymakers for Native communities in the present and future (EW3TL5-6).

Further, Roger, Dennis, and Linda rely on a tight continuity between past and present in their justifications of significance for particular aspects of westward expansion and development in response to the subject matter content cards they examined during the interview. In part, these prospective teachers weighted particular dynamics, events,

or people of the period based on their "staying power," that is, whether they were currently recognizable or still at issue. For example, Roger refers to General George Custer as a "household name" (RW3SM4) and gave him the highest rating of significance on this basis. In another instance, Dennis argues that studying about reservations is of "prominent importance" because they are "still in existence today" (DW3SM15).

However, the most dramatic case is Linda, who explains or justifies the significance of fully 72% (18/25) of her content card responses with present-day references. These references range widely: For example, Linda explains "California" as a place where expansion now occurs in popular culture rather than it being a geographical destination in the time of expansion. In another illustration, she notes the fact that the "Ghost Dance" is still performed as a ceremony celebrating Indian spiritual tradition by the American Indian Movement and that "reservations" endure as a form of apartheid. Interestingly, both Linda and Dennis see the "Mormon migration" as "very important" to understanding westward expansion because, as Dennis states, "it's still there" (DW3SM17). In other words, the results of the Mormon migration remain in religiously-oriented Utah. In Dennis's thinking, this rationale seems to be based on present-day conditions more than on the significance of the Mormon migration to the period. In this presentist view of the past, a certain endurance until the present, such as the mark made by the transcontinental railroads, demonstrates continuity and significance (DW3SM20).

From this analysis, it is difficult to know clearly whether or not the orientations of these teacher candidates are, indeed, presentist in perspective. Yet, evidence of the interaction of other dimensions in

their views of history may well encourage their inclination to "prune away the dead branches of the past and to preserve the green buds and twigs which have grown into the dark forest of our contemporary world" (Fischer, 1970, p. 135). If this is the case, history-as-current-events would supplant history-as-account-of-the-past.

Personal Lenses for Viewing History

Teacher candidates' individual backgrounds and their personal beliefs--that is, their subject matter lenses, individual values, and commitments--shape the way they see history as a subject and the way they interpret particular aspects of westward expansion and development. Using one's interest as a yardstick by which to judge the importance of topics is another kind of personal lens through which history can be viewed. Finally, teaching as a practice needs to be considered as it molds teacher candidates' thinking about history.

Subject matter lenses. Specific subject matter perspectives inform the ways teacher candidates look at history. Linda and Roger--both with subject matter backgrounds in English, rather than in history--view history (at least in part) through the lens of the language arts and humanities. Earlier, for instance, Linda noted that her arrangement of the content cards categorized them "like a play" (LW3SM58). She grouped the cards into piles labeled people, places, events and acts, ingredients, and guiding ideas. Like a play, there are actors, settings, a plot, elements that make up the plot, as well as themes. Roger gives the impression that he's interested in history as seen through the subject matter lenses of humanities and anthropology. He mentions that he likes "to read about interesting people and how different cultures live and their values and some of the problems that they've faced and how they've solved their problems" (RW3SM1).

Esther makes her subject matter orientation explicit. Her background combines an undergraduate major in political science with graduate studies and work experience in public policy areas. For her, policy issues are pre-eminent. In the following quote, Esther explains that the particulars of history--specific events and people--support looking at issues from various perspectives, which result in differing policies. She argues,

I think you can get a lot more valuable learning by being first able to think about the differing perspectives. You get the facts kind of in your head. You've done the reading previously. Maybe I've spent ten minutes going over it, going over the homework, or whatever, to make sure that we're all coming at this with, we know who Custer is. Just kind of basics like that. And then really wanting to spend more time on the fact that there are different ways to look at the issues, there are different policies that will come out of that. And that's got real immediate applicability. You can't tell I have a political science bias, can you (EW3TL51)?

Elaborating on her political science bias, she says,

For me, policy is important, [it's] what it comes down to. What was the policy? Don't tell me about the facts. You have to know what the facts were, [but] what was the policy, what was the impact of that policy (EW3TL51)?

Apparently, Esther sees facts as the particulars that contribute to the end-product, the policy. Her political science background is the lens through which she looks at the past, rather than an historical perspective which she earlier described as only a collection of disconnected "facts." For her, political science provides the opportunity to look at events from different perspectives and to see a bigger, more complex, policy picture.

Personal interests in history. In addition to subject matter backgrounds, teacher candidates' orientations toward history can be shaped simply by the intending teachers using themselves as a standard against which to judge the inherent interest and importance of

historical topics. About his interest in history, Dennis declares,

It seems very relevant to my life, and it just seems applicable to things that happen daily. And it's something that continues to be repeated through all sorts of media representation, and it feels good to know something about what they're talking about when you see it (DW3SM1).

In a specific example, Dennis doesn't recall anything about General Taylor's march along the Rio Grande during the Mexican War, but he seems quite comfortable ranking its significance relative to understanding westward expansion and development. He comments, "I'd put him as 'somewhat important,' just because it doesn't set me off at the moment.

The interview continues:

I: But you do feel comfortable saying that he's somewhat important even though you're not sure what it's about?

D: Yeah.

I: Why is that?

D: Just because you wouldn't have made these cards up if it wasn't important (DW3SM14-5).

So Dennis assumes that Taylor must have been important enough in regard to understanding westward expansion and development to be included in the cards for the interview, but he was not important enough for Dennis, himself, to have any reaction, any spark of interest.

Finally, in discussing the notion of frontier, Dennis plainly uses his own interest as a yardstick of a topic's significance. He justifies assigning the idea of frontier a ranking of "very important" because

it represents a sort of excitement to me. So if I'm interested in it, then I'm going to want to talk about it a little bit. If I think it's very important, then I'm going to convey it. And I'd give it a little time and consideration (DW3SM18).

Dennis indicates that his interests and understandings of history will likely influence what he spends "time and consideration" on in his

teaching.¹⁷

Value commitments. Personal values can also inform how teacher candidates think about history. Linda, for example, holds a strong belief in the value of protecting the environment. In the forthcoming section on knowledge and beliefs about westward expansion and development, she cautions against exceeding the limits of the land and describes a frontier mentality as using resources for greedy gain. Discussing mining during westward expansion and development, she further argues that understanding mining is "of central importance," in part because "physically it affected the earth more than other elements of westward expansion" (LW3SM34).

Teaching practice. I've discussed how three specific perspectives rooted in personal perspective or background can shape the way teacher candidates understand history. The nature of teaching practice can also influence how prospective teachers look at history. In practice, the teachers' task is to bring together subject matter and learners. Thus, teachers may think about history, not so much as history, but as a subject matter to be organized so that it is understandable to particular learners. In the present study, the teacher candidates both organize their understandings of westward expansion and development and make assignments of significance of particular aspects in relation to teaching practice.

¹⁷ That Dennis seems to judge the worthiness of subject matter based, at least in part, on his own interests and excitement, recalls Buchmann's (1985) exploration of personal vs. role orientations in teaching. She argues that the wisdom of action in teaching must be judged by reference to contexts beyond the teacher's own activities, for instance student learning or equity. Based on the observation that the word "teacher" refers to a role, she asserts that personal justifications are out of place. She notes, instead, three impersonal aspects of teachers' obligations, including that "they apply regardless of personal feelings, likes or dislikes" (p. 1).

For instance, Esther arranged the content area cards "to show how they go together" around a teaching unit. She begins, "Okay, I'm going to start with frontier. And the way I've done this is conceptually how I see things related and also the flow of how I might teach it"

(EW3TL33). Esther uses the idea of frontier as

giving an overall conceptual framework of what this idea of a frontier is to kind of help kids, to kind of hook them in. And then I would start talking about the economic reasons, the reasons why people moved west, get into kind of where they moved to, and then talk about more specifically how westward expansion and development took place particularly related to Native policy, Indian policy (EW3SM33).

She concludes her description of the card arrangement as a teaching unit by talking about Alaska, summarizing

I would give them a taste of Alaska at the beginning, pull in examples of Alaska throughout, but end up with a more in-depth case study in Alaska. And again, it would be a way of showing them that the past can be useful. Yes, there's a reason for studying this" (EW3SM34).

That Esther organizes her knowledge and beliefs in the manner of a teaching unit, when not called upon explicitly to do so, illustrates how a novice's understanding of history may be filtered and shaped by looking at a subject through the lens of teaching practice. Esther's thinking also shows how her orientation toward history--specifically her understanding of its purposes--interacts with her overall concerns with engaging students and organizing historical material for teaching.¹⁸

¹⁸ As further illustrations, Linda reflects that she was thinking about how she develops categorization items on tests when arranging her cards. Explaining his valuing of cattle drives as "very important," Dennis mentions that it's importance "would depend on how you'd want to approach it and deal with it, as you dealt with the subject matter. One of the things I found out is time goes so fast, you don't have time to deal with anything. It just kind of flies by" (DW3SM9).

What is History to These Teacher Candidates?

What can be said broadly, then, about the orientations of these teacher candidates, without compromising or oversimplifying their individual views on the subject? Overall, and except for Linda, these novices see history as a given thing, as if the past were known. Generally, they do not understand or ignore that historical accounts are socially constructive narratives.

First, their common vision of the purposes of history-- as help in understanding the past and guidance in making decisions now and in the future--suggests a view of history as possessing a strong continuity. In this view, they overvalue continuity at the expense of change (McNeill, Kammen & Craig, 1989). A secondary purpose, to understand other peoples and their viewpoints, is related to the primary one in its usefulness as a lens for framing present problems and guiding action. In these purposes, the prospective teachers miss the potential of history to connect with human nature and spirit (see Himmelfarb, 1987).

Second, whatever these novice teachers' thoughts on the significance of particulars in history, they tend to relate these particulars through cause and effect associations. For some prospective teachers, notably Esther and Dennis, cause and effect relations are the linchpin for connecting aspects of the past. However, their views on the importance of chronology and the roles of particulars in understanding history seem to shape the kinds of cause-effect linkages they create. On the one hand, Dennis seems to have a strong sense of chronology in history and gives "facts" a key role in history as a subject. The cause-effect linkages he constructs seem to string together particulars about the past. On the other hand, Esther grants chronology and "facts" supporting roles. Her emphasis in cause-effect

associations accents overarching connections.

Third, these teacher candidates possess a broad awareness that interpretation is a part of history, and they also use it implicitly to construct their own understandings of the past. However, aside from Linda, these teacher candidates say little more explicitly about the role of interpretation in understanding history. For Linda, this dimension of history is a key to her orientation. However, she does not give attention to how one distinguishes a plausible interpretation from one that is less plausible. She comments that history is constructed, but doesn't attend to how an interpretation is made, grounded, or judged. Valuing different perspectives seems linked to a second purpose of studying history for Linda, that of understanding other peoples. Focusing one's orientation on varying viewpoints isn't required, however, to see the understanding of other people's perspectives as a purpose of studying history, since this is also Roger's goal.

Overall, these teacher candidates tend to see history as events continuously linked through time, in cause-effect relations, to the present. In the cases of Dennis and Roger, where particulars are seen as central to the nature of history, chronology also plays an important role. To these novices, history is useful in practical terms to sort out present day problems and to provide direction for current and future decision making. History also helps students learn about their own identities as well as about the cultures of other peoples.

How, then, are the novices' orientations shaped? The ways teacher candidates think about history appears to be informed by their subject matter backgrounds, personal values, commitments, as well as self-interests. At the same time, their presentist leanings and purposes for valuing history interact.

Knowledge and Beliefs about
Westward Expansion and Development

This section explores teacher candidates' understandings of a particular period of U.S. history, which raises issues about the interaction of European and indigenous peoples. We will also see that these novices' general orientations are reflected in their understandings of westward expansion and development. To open, I describe the prospective teachers' general images of westward expansion and development and the themes that frame those images. Then, I explore the content of the networks of ideas they hold. I also examine these networks against myths often associated with westward expansion and development. Further, I look at what these teacher candidates do not know about westward expansion and what they wish they did.

This section draws on the analysis of teacher candidates' ideas about westward expansion and development elicited by showing them a series of cards on which were written events, people, activities, and terms associated with the period. After the intending teachers mentioned what they recalled in response to the card prompt, they were asked to rank on a 1-5 scale the significance of the prompt in terms of understanding westward expansion and development. The scale ranged from "not important at all" (1), to "not very important" (2), through "somewhat important" (3), to "very important" (4), concluding with "of central importance" (5). None of the candidates ranked any card lower than between 2 and 3.

Framing Ideas

Americans often think of westward expansion and development as a heroic period in U.S. history. In this view, Americans were called by divine and moral imperative to explore and populate the whole of the

continent, spreading "American" ways, defining the American character-- individually and collectively--by seeking and mastering previously unknown challenges and hardships, by creating a world where only the "wild" had been before.¹⁹ Is this how the focal teacher candidates also view the period? Or, do any of them view the period as a

mosaic of failure, financial and personal, but also, in the largest sense, moral...an irresponsible white male's adventure, hugely destructive of the land itself, of the native peoples, and even of the white male's own women and children (McMurtry, 1990, p. 32)?

What knowledge and beliefs about westward expansion and development inform the intending teachers' ideas about teaching this period to students who are culturally different from themselves?

Overall, Dennis, Esther, Linda, and Roger see westward expansion and development as a time of physical movement in which land unknown to Europeans was explored and claimed by them. As well, opportunities to develop or live off the land through farming, mining, and ranching drew "Americans" to the West, according to these teacher candidates. Esther, especially, emphasizes this economic aspect of westward expansion and development. She describes the period as "the whole move west in U.S. history, economically, socially, the whole idea of exploring the last frontier" (EW3SM9). Linda adds an ideological dimension:

Westward expansion is the movement of people and material goods and American culture, American ideas across the continent. So it was both physical and ideological expansion. And it's the way we define ourselves still, by this idea of the dimensions of our country and the dimensions of our ideas (LW3SM8).

¹⁹ In his discussion of revisionist histories of the Old West, McMurtry (1990) also provides an explanation for the persistence of these common beliefs about the period. He posits that Americans have had difficulty acknowledging, as Turner (1893) argued about the frontier, that "something was over" (McMurtry, 1990, p. 32). In the case of westward expansion and development, "the Old West need never be over. You might as well say that America could be over..." (p. 32).

She calls our attention to what she sees as the period's deeply rooted function of shaping the identity of the United States as doctrine and population spread across the geography. Separately, Dennis reminds us of the value put on liberty in that self-definition when he describes westward expansion and development as a time of "looking for greater freedom" (DW3SM5).

The frontier and manifest destiny. The concepts of "manifest destiny" and "frontier" frame these teacher candidates' ideas about westward expansion and development. The prospective teachers argue the importance of these ideas as the banners under which the events of the period unfolded. They characterize these notions as "conceptual frameworks" (EW3SM14, LW3SM28), "themes" (RW3SM23), or "guiding ideas" (LW3SM19, DW3SM2) that "ride over it all" (DW3SM26). All of them responded to the prompt of "frontier," recalling images of open country, the adventure of striking out into the unknown, the romance of discovering new lands, along with the heroic struggles and hardships that went with it all.

Linda describes this view most clearly and elaborately. For her, the idea of "frontier" holds new possibilities, opportunities of righting past mistakes, all without limits. Frontier refers to a state of mind, as well as to physical space. "Frontier," she says, "is the idea that there's always more, there's always farther to go, there's always open space you can get to eventually. There's always a chance for you as a person in the community or in life..." (LW3SM28). She adds, "It's sort of like a hope," illustrating how Alaska is like the frontier to contemporary Americans (LW3SM19). Linda acknowledges that the sense of frontier is "incredibly important" and "deep-seated" for Americans (LW3SM18,19). But she sees a dark side to the idea of

frontier when limits aren't recognized and respected. She argues that "there are limits to what the land and people can take" (LW3SM16). In her view, a frontier mentality "depletes the land of its natural resources [to] make ourselves richer" (LW3SM17).

Ideas about frontier pair with notions about manifest destiny²⁰ for Dennis and Linda. Dennis sees manifest destiny as of central importance "because it gives light to the sense that everyone had an opportunity to pursue their dreams and ideals. It's a movement in time, a movement by people to express their own individuality." When asked why he assigned the highest value to manifest destiny in terms of understanding the period, Dennis responded "because I think it's important to be an individual" (DW3SM20-21). We will see, below, that manifest destiny plays a significant, although implied, role in Dennis's understanding of the struggles between European and Indian peoples. However, he is misinformed that everyone had the opportunity to pursue their dreams and ideals. It is likely that women and Native Americans, to name two members of two groups, did not share the experience of westward expansion and development that Dennis sees.

Whereas Dennis sees manifest destiny as a positive expression of individuality, Linda takes a more cynical view: "It was our manifest destiny to spread out all over the rest of the continent and make it America, make it American and populate it with Americans," she explains.

²⁰ Boorstin & Kelley (1986) describe the concept of manifest destiny as a "catch phrase" (p. 246) for the westwardly expansive movement of the 1830s and 1840s. They credit the New York newspaperman, John L. O'Sullivan, for writing about "our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us" (Boorstin & Kelley, 1986, pp. 246-7). These historians find other roots for the idea of manifest destiny in the Puritans's religious and moral concerns with creating a City of God.

It was important because it was the "guiding light" for getting us across the country, for people suffering incredible hardships and doing terrible, awful things in the name of manifest destiny. It's definitely of central importance because it's a kind of controlling ideology that was hanging over everyone's heads (LW3SM20).

Linda argues that acting within the mindset of manifest destiny, new Americans were manipulated to suffer themselves and to impose suffering on others. Linda sees manifest destiny continuing in the world today in the U.S. government's on-going practice of imperialism in places like Central America.

Only two of the four prospective teachers, however, recognized the term "manifest destiny." In response to this card, Esther expressed a sort of off-handed resignation about her lack of recall:

E: Oh golly. This is one of those terms I've seen before (pause) but I really can't recall what it is.

I: Is that why you said, "Oh golly?"

E: Yeah, it's back there. But it would probably take me a long time to bring it forward. It's in there somewhere (EW3SM17).

Esther's response, in the context of her remarks about the place of "facts," gives the impression that she may well see the term, manifest destiny, as another "fact." Were she to recall its meaning, she might well see it as a concept helping to explain why westward expansion and development occurred as it did. Nor does Roger recollect the meaning of manifest destiny; at one point he even hints that manifest destiny may be a consequence of westward expansion and development (RW3SM24).

Summary. To these prospective teachers, the period of westward expansion and development mainly represents a physical and economic phenomenon. The idea of "frontier" overarches their understandings of the period. Yet, the concept of manifest destiny is recognized by only two of the novices, being emphasized by Linda as an ideological aspect

of the period. This overview foreshadows the specific storylines discussed next. Storylines in Westward Expansion and Development

Broadly speaking, Dennis, Esther, Linda, and Roger construct similar accounts of westward expansion and development, which revolve around the land and the indigenous peoples living on that land. First, I will summarize and illustrate their descriptions of the period in relation to geography and the land. Second, I'll analyze their views on the place of indigenous peoples in westward expansion and development. Then, I'll hold these two storylines against common myths associated with the period. Finally, I will note the kinds of material about westward expansion and development with which the teacher candidates seem unfamiliar and note the sorts of information and ideas about which they wish they knew more.

"Progress" across the land. These prospective teachers essentially agree that the story of westward expansion and development is broadly one about the "American" population seeking out and responding to the lures of the land across the rest of the continent. In their view, it is a story of "progress" in which Americans establish their presence on the land; the resources of the land are lures for people from the East Coast and for immigrants to the United States. It is a story of hardships and hard-won advancement, individually and nationally. It's also a story of endings. Linda captures many of these elements in her discussion of the transcontinental railroads. She comments,

This is of central importance because this is what linked the East Coast with the West Coast. It was significant in establishing possible ways of trade, economic shipping, cash goods back and forth across the country, so opening up lots of markets. It made the country all of a sudden small, as opposed to limitless. All of a sudden you could go from 'sea to shining sea' sitting down (laugh), not climbing over mountains and having all sorts of

hardships and terrible things happen. It was important in populating the West, and it was sort of the end. Once the gold spike was driven, they were all connected all of a sudden (LW3SM49).

In Linda's view, then, economic forces began to close the frontier, to limit possibilities. Access to areas of the country was eased by new technologies, yet such "progress" also brought about endings.

Within this broad plot, the teacher candidates emphasize different themes. One emphasis in the story of claiming and developing the West stresses a rational, economic account of events. Another slant pitches the story of westward expansion and development toward the more nonrational, highlighting the risk and struggle of the times for "Americans."

Esther advances a storyline around the importance of the economic reasons for expansion that is in keeping with her concern about "why's." In her final assessment of the significance of aspects of westward expansion and development, Esther ranks the railroad, mining, cattle drives (which she refers to as ranching), farming, reservations, and Alaska as "of central importance." She temporarily sets aside reservations, as representative of Indian policy, as well as Alaska, as a teaching consideration. Esther then refers to the rest as "these job categories [that] are the why's people came west" (EW3SM30). About mining, Esther, thinks about

gold mining in particular, silver mining to a lesser degree, and just the whole idea that you could make a fortune...just stick your shovel in the dirt and that's it, you're rich. That brought so many people out, and then they didn't find their fortune and then they stayed because they didn't have the money to go back (EW3SM20-1).

Here, then, Esther moves past the folk myths often heard about mining to speak about the economic consequences of "going bust."

Another emphasis puts more stress on the climate of the period.

Dennis and Roger infuse their accounts of westward expansion and development with a sense of wildness, adventure, and hardships. Roger, for example, sees mining as a reason why people moved west, just as does Esther. He also speaks at more length and in more detail about what he sees as the mindset of the time. He says, "It's interesting to see...the mentality of the people who came out here and worked and what they were looking for, and the frenzy that took place." He elaborates in response to the stimulus of a related card: "Well, I think California would be of central importance, too, because of the gold rush and it being such a wild place." He continues,

I just think of it as a different world from the East Coast. There they were on the Oregon Trail. They ended up in Oregon, but [then] they went down to California. When I think of Oregon, I think of California...just wide open and wild frontier country (RW3SM17-8).

In another example about farming, which similarly emphasizes risk-taking, Dennis imagines

farmers and people struggling in the Midwest and trying to figure out what to do to make that land work and [it] makes me think back to the Homestead Act and lots of people thinking that this was their shot. This was their one chance to make it. They got their land and they struggled. Some people survived and others didn't. Real hard times (DW3SM13).

When asked how important he thought farming is to understanding westward expansion and development, he replied, "I think it's very important. It shows that people had hopes and dreams and ambitions, and some people could make it and others didn't. It takes a lot of work to make that happen" (DW3SM13-4).

This storyline of "progress" centers on the experience of the new Americans from Europe. According to most of these teacher candidates, these Europeans took risks, but many were also rewarded. As the primary exception, Linda draws attention to the greed and insensitivity she also

detects during this period.

Struggles between Indians and Europeans. What part of the story of westward expansion and development do indigenous peoples have to play in the images of these teacher candidates? That these teacher candidates treat the aspects of the period related to Indian peoples as "very important" or "of central importance" indicates the significance of Native Americans in westward expansion and development. Overall, these novice teachers see Indians as having experienced the most severe impact of expansion and development in the West. As Roger notes, "I think of westward expansion...as a move against the Indians" (RW3SM6). Although Esther does not condone it, she also sees creating reservations as "one crucial step" in settling the West. According to her, putting people who are indigenous to the region in a set location allowed the land to be opened up for expansion and development by the new Americans (EW3SM12). Roger explains more fully that "the United States was making agreements with the Indians, and then they were breaking them as people were migrating westward for gold. They [the U.S. government] were continually breaking their agreements" (RW3SM15). According to Roger, the "proud Indians" (RW3SM12) stood up for their rights and fought for the land on which they lived. Still, the U.S. government went about "corralling the Indians and eventually trying to put them on reservations" (RW3SM12). In sum, then, these prospective teachers maintain that as a result of the movement West and the development of the land, the lives of the Indian peoples were changed immeasurably and negatively.

Looking more closely, however, characterizations of the dynamics of the impact differ. These characterizations also reflect the teacher candidates' orientations toward history generally. Below, I look at two

contrasting explanations of the forces at work in the struggles between Europeans and Indians. One view, illustrated by Dennis, sees the struggle as inevitable and unfortunate. No intervention would have changed the unavoidable outcome. The ideas held by Dennis give the impression that a stronger force overpowered America's indigenous peoples inadvertently, merely as a matter of course. Although one can feel sad about the results, they were inescapable; the results were a logical conclusion to the forces at work in the times. A second view, represented by Linda's remarks, sees the conflict as a purposeful policy of subjugation, even obliteration, led by the nation's government.

Whereas the first view envisions a common movement made up of individuals coming in conflict with indigenous peoples, the second one understands the struggle as a result of purposeful governmental policy.

Illustrating the first view, Dennis explains how the destruction of the bison caused the Indians an important problem:

[It] had a lot to do with some people going west and making lots of money. [Bison] were highly involved in the Indian lifestyle, and because of that and because when Europeans people discovered the huge herds of bison and killed them off, it presented the Indians [with] problems and the whole struggle that was inevitably going to happen happened also because of the bison (DW3SM22).

When asked to elaborate on the inevitability of the struggle between Native Americans and Europeans, Dennis further explained,

People that were already there since who knows when were not going to willingly leave something that they had lived with and experienced for as long as they could remember. They had cultural ties and all of those sorts of things to the land. The fact that we as a country were involved in a westward expansion and as much as we wanted to give consideration to these people and their culture, we were expanding and that expansion in and of itself was going to cause problems. So it was an inevitable struggle that was going to take place" (DW3SM23).

Dennis sees the unavoidable clash of two forces--the unstoppable momentum of European expansion against the entrenchment expected of

indigenous peoples who are grounded in traditional lifeways on the land.

The struggle between Indians and Europeans culminated, according to Dennis, with the Ghost Dance and the Battle of Wounded Knee. To him, this cultural-religious phenomenon and the subsequent massacre are of importance in terms of "what it did to Indian civilizations. At that point, it was like 'Go to the reservation'" (DW3SM24). This event represents for Dennis

the hardship and the forced change that was brought to these people and the devastation that occurred, the human lives that were sacrificed. It's real sad for me to think about all of that, that it had to take place in order for things to continue to expand. [It's sad] to see them lose their way of life, to have that taken away, and not necessarily to have much of a say so. To be overpowered (DW3SM25).

Asked to speak explicitly about reservations, Dennis rationalizes that they were a response to a "lost" people in need of a refuge. The reservations were a solution

to a whole civilization of people who were sort of lost or at a loss because of the expansion that was encroaching at the time. It was a solution in that it gave them a place to go, a safe haven. Not necessarily one that they really wanted, the one that they were presented with (DW3SM15-6).

He also associates reservations with "unhappy people" and ruminates about the kind of solution their creation was:

It was a solution, but I don't think it was the solution. I don't know what else could have been done, but it's just a real tough one. But I think that it was [of] prominent importance in studying that period mostly because it's still in existence today. There are still people that are dealing with it, trying to make their lives today (DW3SM15-6).

Dennis's commentary about the conflict between Europeans and Native Americans is grounded in his more general orientation toward history. First, his explanations rest on the belief that history has its own dynamic. He cannot see that another solution might have been possible--say, the withdrawal of people from certain Indian areas, or

the U.S. government's holding to agreements. Instead the power of "history" combined with the country's manifest destiny leads to unhappy, but unchangeable, consequences. Thus, Dennis sees Native Americans as victims.

In addition, cause-effect relations are also strong in his views, although Dennis does not consider multiple causal explanations. His comments belie a single explanation for the cause of the struggles between Indian and White peoples. He doesn't mention, for example, the kinds of encroachment by miners, forts, and settlements on tribal hunting grounds; treaties not upheld; or killings on both sides (Brown, 1981).

Representing the second perspective is Linda's view of the period--that the U.S. government enacted policies to exterminate Indians. Linda's language is strong and laced with images of destruction. She sees General George Custer as effective, although not necessarily admirable, in carrying out his mission to expand U.S. territory by "wiping out Indian territory and wiping out Indians...and wiping out ways of life" (LW3SM11). Bison were "systematically wiped out by a policy of extermination that paralleled the policy exterminating Indians." As a result

they eliminated the Indians' possibility of holding out in a fight or surviving 'cause there was no food to eat and they used it for clothing and other things as well. It was part of their culture as well as part of their diet. So it was an important element in destroying Indians' lifestyle and wiping out a species (LW3SM47).

In her depiction of the events at Wounded Knee, Linda paints a picture of a helpless people massacred:

The people were overpowered in a treeless--I've been there as I keep saying--a treeless, bare area. The Indian people were completely wiped out. And it was the end of Indian resistance there, so it was the end of an era. U.S.-Indian relations entered

a sort of caretaker--although we don't take care--caretaker era (LW3SM12).

She reserves her harshest words and condemnation for a response to the prompt "reservations":

Once Indians had been effectively controlled and nearly wiped out in genocidal policies, we supposedly were really...the American government was good to them by allowing them a place to live and do their thing and have a spot that was their own. And (sigh), the reservations, I think, are a form of apartheid that exists even today in our own country and I abhor them personally and having seen them I abhor them even more than I did before (LW3SM35).

Linda distinguishes the status of indigenous peoples in Alaska, who in the main do not live on reservations. She argues that at least Alaska Natives have a chance to hope, whereas

reservations seem the most devoid of hope of any place on earth, the ones I've seen....I think they're of central importance because they're probably the most inhumane thing as a nation we have done to human beings besides slavery (LW3SM35).

Linda puts the question of Indian conflicts and policy in human terms, which are juxtaposed with the faceless force of the U.S. government. At the same time, she uses cause-effect thinking, like Dennis. She explains the placement of Indians on reservations as an outcome of policies to exterminate both Indians and the bison upon which they depended.

Both Dennis and Linda see the conflicts between Indians and Europeans as a domination of Indian peoples by European- Americans. Native Americans are seen as victims. However, the two perspectives represented by Dennis and Linda contain contrasting motives. The account Dennis provides--that placing Indians on reservations became an unfortunate, unavoidable solution--communicates a kind of innocence. Responsibility for the negative results of westward expansion and development isn't placed anywhere. But, in Linda's account, a

malevolence seems to motivate the U.S. government. Neither perspective, however, attends to uncertainties, contingencies, or multiple causes.

In sum, westward expansion and development is seen, by most of these teacher candidates, as a time of hope for "Americans" spreading across the continent. As it drew to a close, most Indians were restricted to reservations, places as Linda describes them, "devoid of hope" (LW3SM35).²¹

Knowledge and Beliefs as a Reflection of Folk Myths.

The period of westward expansion and development can be thought of as a manifestation of a particular way of viewing the world. It includes the belief that westward expansion and development was a divinely destined plan to fill an otherwise empty land, that Europeans had a right to fill the void, that they brought civilization, and that "progress" advanced across the continent. Another related set of ideas surrounding the period reflects a national self-definition as a hardy and hopeful people, who met and surmounted great challenges.

How do the knowledge and beliefs of these teacher candidates relate to such mythology?²² Taken together, the teacher candidates' accounts of progress across the continent and conflicts between Indian and European peoples places them along a continuum in relation to this question. Dennis's and Linda's accounts place them at opposite ends of the continuum, while Esther's and Roger's accounts station them more

²¹ Overall, Linda's perspective sounds much like what McMurtry (1990) describes as a revisionist view of westward expansion and development. From a revisionist standpoint, this period is seen as a moral failure and as an "irresponsible white male adventure" (p. 32). In contrast, Dennis's view emphasizes such adventure.

²² Here I use the term mythology as a way of thinking about a recurring theme that embodies cultural ideals or gives expression to deeply-held beliefs.

toward a middle ground.

More specifically, first, these teacher candidates--except, perhaps, for Linda--appear to hold the notion that "progress" was, indeed, advanced by Americans choosing to take risks and willing to endure hardships. In particular, Dennis and Roger accent adventure, wildness and excitement, and overcoming obstacles. For instance, Roger explains that the Homestead Act is very important because "it gives an idea of what people were up against at the time, how important it was for people to own land, and what they would go through to get it" (RW3SM16). Dennis emphasizes the personal abilities and motivations he sees active during the period. For him the Homestead Act and farming show that "people had hopes and dreams and ambitions, and some people could make it and others didn't. It takes a lot of work to make that happen" (DW3SM13-4). As Dennis speaks about the Oregon Trail, he thinks too about the Lewis and Clark expedition:

I think it's very important in that they mapped the way for future travelers, and it was an exciting time for the people that were involved. It's a good example of how [with] planning and ingenuity and just a little courage, you can go out and make your mark. Take the steps to changing the future" (DW3SM16).

Dennis paints a world where virtually anything is possible with foresight, cleverness, bravery, and a willingness to take risks. In this world, anyone can shape the future to his mold. These views are in keeping with Dennis's earlier comment that manifest destiny concerns, in part, an individual's right to express himself. The "American dream" seems alive in Dennis's beliefs.

Linda, too, recalls myths about progress, but her tone seems more realistic, even contemplative. Frequently, she takes an observer's stance, identifying and commenting on myths about the period. Talking about homesteading, Linda mentions that it sounded very easy, but it

wasn't. She notes that it was an important way for the government to get land settled and to populate the states. Relating homesteading to Alaska, she argues that believing homesteading is still possible is a continuing part of the American dream.

Second, these teacher candidates also agree that struggles between Indian and European peoples brought about risk and hardship of another sort for Indians, whose connection with the land was dramatically altered. However, these prospective teachers are not of the same mind about accepting the moral dimensions of the conflict. Dennis, who sees American progress during westward expansion and development in positive terms, views the conflict between European and Indian peoples and its outcomes as inevitable and, therefore, necessary to accept. Esther's tone is more critical, even sarcastic:

If you eliminate the buffalo, the Indians don't have any way to live any longer. Put them on a reservation and say, "Oh, golly gee. We'll provide for you now since you can no longer provide for yourself because, oops, we took away all your buffalo." And it opens up land for non-Indians to move in (EW3SM22).

In this quote, Esther also uses cause-effect thinking to explain that a result of westward expansion and development was the placement of indigenous peoples on reservations. She sees the U.S. government's movement of Indians to reservations as purposeful and useful to fulfilling the desires of the new Americans. This is consistent with her policy orientation; indeed, she implies that the destruction of the buffalo and the settlement of Native peoples on reservations as a policy. Her perspective contrasts sharply with the way Dennis spoke earlier about reservations as undesirable, but necessary, safe havens, brought about by the inevitable march of historical events.

What Teacher Candidates Say They Don't Know and What They Wish They Did

If the storylines about European-American progress and conflict

with Indians reflect some of what these prospective teachers know about westward expansion and development, what kinds of information and ideas do they not seem to recognize or understand? There seems to be a fair amount of consistency in what these novices fail to recall during the interview. As mentioned above, two of the four have nothing to say about the concept of manifest destiny. This is probably the most glaring omission in their individual and collective knowledge about the period. Without the intellectual and ideological context of manifest destiny, the move westward is potentially presented in an overly simplistic manner. Motivations are constrained to adventures and economic gain. This is a limited story.²³

Generally speaking, what these teacher candidates seem not to recall are particular people and governmental acts. In relation to Indian policy, these intending teachers do not recognize the Dawes Act--policy to allot acreage to Indians to farm--and Helen Hunt Jackson, author of the first widely read criticism of Indian policy. Speculating generally about the Mexican War and General Taylor, they offer these aspects as another example of national efforts to claim territory. They misconstrue the Great American Desert to refer to the deserts of the Southwest, rather than the difficult-to-farm prairies. They wonder aloud whether Polk was president or secretary of state at the time. The Compromise of 1850 draws no response.

Those kinds of particulars are what history buffs know, according

²³ These beginning teachers might well be said to have had a notion about manifest destiny that was evident in their stories about westward expansion and development and rationales for what was significant to understanding the period. Whereas recognizing the term doesn't necessarily mean that a particular teacher candidate would use it as a base from which to explore Europeans' perspectives on the period, not recognizing the term diminishes this possibility.

to these prospective teachers, and none of them claim to be history buffs, although Dennis and Roger believe they may be moving in that direction. Why were these particulars consistently difficult for the teacher candidates to recall? Perhaps they were specific enough that these prospective teachers couldn't draw upon their general knowledge or images of the period learned in classrooms and through the media. Or, they may be the kinds of specifics about which we might expect that even historians would need to refresh their memories.

In comparison, what do these novices want to know more about in regard to westward expansion and development? How do they think they'd learn these things? What these teacher candidates say they want to know more about strongly suggests the influence of their general orientations toward history once again. Linda and Esther don't mention particular aspects they'd like to learn about, but Esther does want to learn some specific "facts" (see discussion about orientations toward particulars in history, above). Linda's motivation is to move beyond the one perspective she was taught. Dennis and Roger specifically mention wanting to learn more about Indian-related matters.²⁴

All of these novices would turn to written material, including college-level texts and first-hand accounts such as personal diaries from the period or Helen Hunt Jackson's criticism. Their concern seems to be with having enough information to teach about the period. And, they often prefer to learn about the past when it's in the form of

²⁴ Interestingly, Dennis specifically mentions wanting to know more about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which he sees as a matter of Indian rights. This federal legislation, passed in 1971, represents a way in which Dennis might link potential concerns about land and relations with the U.S. government for his present-day Athabascan Indian students with similar concerns for Indians during westward expansion and development.

stories, such as to be found in personal diaries, just as they believe their students do.

In Conclusion

Dennis, Esther, and Roger tend to see westward expansion and development as a positive period of progress, of physical movement and economic development by European-Americans. In their views, this activity had dire outcomes for the country's indigenous peoples, dramatically changing their lifeways and resulting in their restrictions to reservations. They see westward expansion and development as a period of conflict. While Linda would also agree with this characterization, she infuses it with ideological and moral dimensions.

All of these teacher candidates, however, understand the story from the perspective of Europeans; that is, they start the story with the activity of new Americans rather than with indigenous peoples. This includes Linda, who actively values the viewpoints of Native Americans. Still, the novices' storylines contrast, on the one hand, an acceptance of inevitable outcomes with, on the other hand, outrage at results that didn't have to occur.

In addition, the prospective teachers' general orientations toward history are reflected in their more specific understandings of westward expansion and development. Most obvious is single cause-effect thinking to explain events of the period.

The Quality of Teacher Candidates' Subject Matter Understandings

I began this chapter positing that the teacher candidates' understandings of history provide a resource to draw upon in their thinking about teaching learners who are culturally different from themselves. What, then, is the quality of the subject matter resources

these prospective teachers possess? First, I focus on their general orientations; then, I look at their specific understandings of westward expansion and development. Finally, I discuss two dynamics that appear to shape their understandings--personal biography and teaching practice.

Orientations Toward History

Most striking in the teacher candidates' orientations toward history is their belief that the value of history and its study is utilitarian. In their views, understanding the past helps us make sense of the present and assists us in avoiding similar erroneous ways of thinking and acting now and in the future. History serves as a guide to wise action.

However, this view of history is problematic in that the examination of a chosen slice of the past does not inevitably lead to precise knowledge of the future. Contexts across time and place change, making situations not exactly comparable and more complex than some teacher candidates might anticipate. This is to say that

the study of history does not lead to exact predictions of future events. Though it fosters practical wisdom, knowledge of the past does not enable one to know exactly what is going to happen in the future. Looking at some selected segment from the past in order to find out what will occur "next time" can mislead the unwary, simply because the complex setting within which human beings act is never the same twice. Consequently, the lessons of history, though supremely valuable when wisely formulated, become grossly misleading when oversimplifiers try to transfer them mechanically from one age to another, or from one place to another. Anyone who claims to perform such a feat is sadly self-deceived. Practical wisdom requires us instead to expect differences as well as similarities, changes as well as continuities--always and everywhere. Predictable fixity is simply not the human way of behaving. Probabilities and possibilities, together with a few complete surprises, are what we live with and must learn to expect (McNeill, 1989, p. 109).

These teacher candidates are disposed to see history as strong on continuity, rather than on change. Given this situation, the probability increases that these intending teachers are inclined to

oversimplify the usefulness of history. At the same time, they miss history's potential to connect with human nature and spirit, even with some talk by Linda and Roger that learning about other cultures will foster better communication and harmony.

Second, the teacher candidates' views on historical causation also limit their understanding of history. They tend to look upon cause-effect relations as single, tightly-coupled unchanging explanations. These cause-effect relations provide much of the continuity they see through time. These novices do not refer to explanations involving multiple causation; nor do they give the impression that they see causal models changing over time in the way historians do (see Fischer, 1970).

Third, these teacher candidates lack a profound understanding of history as an interpretive discipline. Without such an understanding, these novices are apt to be unable to judge the plausibility of a particular interpretation or to help traditionally disenfranchised students construct accounts of the past that are also plausible. Except for Linda, they don't focus on what Schwab (1978) calls the syntactic structures of a discipline. These structures give a subject its logic for admitting knowledge; they provide an idea of what it means "to do" the subject, here, "to do" history. Along with teacher candidates' ideas about the organizing concepts of a given subject and the beliefs they hold about the value of its study, syntactic structures orient them toward their subject matter for teaching.

Instead of thinking about the role of interpretation in history, these teacher candidates mostly consider history to be a given entity, a sort of gift from the past, rather than a tentative and changing account based on accepted evidence and argument. Linda is the exception; yet, she slants the role of interpretation toward the subjective. She is

inclined to argue that history is personally biased by the writer. While social scientists do select research problems based on their own values and interests, they are still bound to the discipline's rules of evidence and argument.

Because the prospective teachers--again, except Linda--don't understand that historians create accounts, they are at the mercy of the historical accounts they read. As well, they make their own interpretations of the past, but don't see them as such, instead thinking of their own interpretations as "history."

Finally, these teacher candidates lean toward using the perspectives of the present to study and evaluate the value of the past. Their general emphasis on pragmatic purposes for studying history, reinforced by their views of continuity in time and singular causation models, leads toward using concerns of the present as a filter for determining what is of value from the past. Recall, for a vivid illustration, the teacher candidates' attributions of significance to events in westward expansion and development based on their relation to the current time.

Understandings of Westward Expansion and Development

In general, these four teacher candidates see westward expansion and development as a period of conflict between progressive European-Americans claiming and developing the land and its resources and indigenous peoples trying to retain their lifeways upon that land. As a result, Indians were placed on restricted reservations. Some of the prospective teachers accept the inevitability of this clash and its outcomes, while seeing the period as evidence of progress for the United States. Other novices resist such explanations and attitudes. Some of them, notably Linda, raise to consciousness the moral dimensions of this

period. Overall, however, their understandings focus on physical movement and economic phenomena.

In contrast, the explicit roles of intellectual history and ideology in U.S. history are virtually absent, or tenuous at best, in their views of westward expansion and development.²⁵ Two of the four prospective teachers completely lack an understanding of the concept of manifest destiny.

In sum, these intending teachers look at westward expansion and development with one particular lens and explanation. Instead, they might have come to understand the period in one of several possible ways. They might, for example, think of the outcomes of the period as having to do with accidents of geography and technology or disease (Diamond, 1989), rather than economics and rugged individualism. It is unlikely that these teacher candidates see alternative ways of thinking about this period. Nor, for the most part, do they appear to realize that they have created or accepted particular interpretations of westward expansion and development.

Dynamics That Shape Subject Matter Understandings

The analysis of these teacher candidates' understandings of history suggests two dynamics that inform their ideas. These dynamics strike a contrast: The first centers on individual teacher candidates' backgrounds; the second broadly concerns the overall nature of teaching practice.

The intending teachers' subject matter orientations appear to be informed by aspects of their personal biographies--their subject matter

²⁵ More broadly, FitzGerald (1979) and Gagnon (1988) note similar deficiencies in history textbooks.

backgrounds, personal subject matter interests, and value commitments.²⁶ Most dramatically, Esther's study of political science appears to shape what she values in history--changes in policy--and how she sees history--as a collection of "facts." Personal values, such as Linda's environmental commitments and her honoring of Alaska Native perspectives, also fashion the ways prospective teachers think about history. In Linda's case, it appears that values in regard to the environment and cultural diversity that she reports being held by her parents are reflected in her orientation toward history. Similarly, Grossman (1990a) found that subject matter serves the expression of teachers' more general values. In addition, Gudmundottir (1990a) argues that teachers' values shape their thinking about teaching subject matter.

Second, the teacher candidates' understandings of history may well be interwoven with their ideas about teaching. As mentioned earlier, these teacher candidates may not think so much of history qua history, but as a subject to be taught. If so, this condition shapes their thinking about the nature of history such that it is not possible to distinguish "pure" subject matter understanding from their understanding of history as a school subject to be taught to particular learners.²⁷

²⁶ This finding is in keeping with Nemser's (1983) conception of learning to teach as a continuum that includes aspects of prospective and practicing teachers' personal backgrounds.

²⁷ This is a question worth pursuing in subsequent analyses of data from waves 1 and 2 of the interviews.

If teaching is creating relationships between teachers, subject matter and students (Hawkins, 1974), we have focused here on one leg of that triangle--teachers' understanding of the subject matter. In the next chapter, I turn to the novice teachers' beliefs about their Alaska Native students.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHER CANDIDATES' IDEAS ABOUT DIVERSE STUDENTS

This chapter focuses on teacher candidates' knowledge and beliefs about culturally diverse students for purposes of teaching subject matter. As noted earlier, Jackson (1986) argues that knowledge of students is a kind of knowledge about teaching. Too, if we think teaching involves relating subject matter and students within a particular social context, then what teacher candidates know and believe about their students shapes how they see possible instructional goals and the potential of particular approaches. For instance, ideas about students influence what teacher candidates are inclined to select or emphasize about the subject matter, as will be shown in the later analysis of the teacher candidates' pedagogical reasoning.

In this chapter, I highlight the beginning teachers' beliefs about Alaska Native youngsters. However, also included, as appropriate, are their views about a range of students of color.

What understandings about students who are culturally different from themselves do the novices in this study take to their first year of teaching? The following analysis centers on the teacher candidates' ideas about diverse students that are potentially useful in linking learners and subject matter. As we shall see, these prospective teachers' views, overall, are not stereotypical. However, they seem to understand little about Alaska Native students as learners of history. This potentially limits the number, variety, and effectiveness of ways that novices may relate students and subjects.

I also ask where the intending teachers' ideas about diverse students may have come from, noting the important role of their recent student teaching experience. Finally, I examine two potential lenses which are likely to shape novices' future learning about diverse students--that is, the kinds of knowledge about students they claim to value for teaching and the perspectives which direct their attention to certain aspects about those students.

The analysis draws primarily from the portions of the interview focused on ideas about diverse students (part 2) and about teaching/learning approaches (part 3). I asked the teacher candidates to speak to their experiences with Alaska Natives and other minority students, their beliefs about what these students like (or not) about attending school and studying U.S. history, their knowledge about students' frames of reference for studying U.S. history, their ideas about the ways these students participate (or not) in classroom activities, and so on. I organize their knowledge and beliefs into ideas about who students are in and out of school contexts for the sake of reporting the findings. However, these aspects are integrated both within the students as persons and as teachers experience them in teaching practice.

Teacher Candidates' Ideas about Culturally Diverse Students In School

This section pairs with the next to give a picture of prospective teachers' ideas about diverse students in and out of school. These ideas function as another resource from which to draw as the teacher candidates envision teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native students. This section describes and analyzes teacher beliefs about Alaska Native students in four areas:

- 1) motivations toward school;

- 2) interests in and preferred styles of learning, generally, and of history, specifically;
- 3) background knowledge and skills they bring to learning history; and
- 4) patterns of participation in school settings.

Where applicable, I include the teacher candidates' beliefs about diverse students more broadly or about specific groups, such as African-Americans.

Students' Motivations Toward School

Motivations for diverse students in regard to school primarily relate to adolescents' social concerns, according to these focal teacher candidates. Mainly, these motivations are centered on concerns with peer interaction; however, they may also focus on broader social questions, such as racial issues. In addition, the prospective teachers believe that adolescents' age influences their motivations in relation to school.

These intending teachers hold that adolescents want to be in school because of the "socializing opportunities" (LW3SSFN2) it offers. Both Alaska Native and non-Native students desire this "camaraderie" with peers (DW3SS25-6; RW3SS18). However, according to Linda, the function of interactions with friends may vary depending on the size of the community and, thus, the tightness of the links among students. Linda maintains that students in small schools based in homogeneous, isolated rural villages with interconnected kinship systems have known each other throughout their lives. She thinks that these adolescents may not be as much interested in establishing groups of "ins" and "outs," as they are in working out hierarchies within a group. Beyond opportunities for interaction with peers, for some students, school is also a respite--during the regular academic day, as well as after hours--

-according to some of these prospective teachers. Roger believes that for some of his Alaska Native students, coming to school provides a safe and dependable environment away from chaotic home situations of substance abuse and suicide. Dennis also observes that the school in a small community is a place to cut down the isolation of Alaskan winter weather and darkness.

Linda suggests another kind of socially-based motivation for her African-American students, which she describes as their "honest activism" (LW3SS2) toward racial issues within the school environment. According to Linda, Black students tried to change curriculum offerings to include courses on African-American literature and history.¹ She explains the situation and her view of it:

I mean [the Black students] really did things on their own and talked about and, the problem was then that to them everything had come down, in literature, to a race issue. Which is, of course, not what it's all about. It ended up [that] they wanted to apply that to everything and it was very difficult to make them see that there were other things that were equally important to look at. Even when the main issue and the story was [about] race, that wasn't the only issue in the story. And that wasn't the only issue in the discussions we're trying to have... (LW3SS24).

The instructional dilemma Linda faced involves how to acknowledge her students' orientations and priorities, while also stretching their perspectives to include additional issues. "But I don't think that's a terrible problem," she continued.

¹ Linda was apparently pleased to find this kind of activism motivating some students. Recalling the earlier discussion of the influence of Linda's personal values on her orientation toward history seems useful here. Linda is personally active in trying to influence causes she cares about deeply. For instance, she was active in writing letters to the editor about issues of peace and justice. Her acceptance, even tacit approval, of her Black students' efforts may well be a reflection of her own dispositions toward activism, especially when it comes to giving voice to unheard and underappreciated perspectives. Indeed, Linda included a six-week unit on poetry in American literature focusing on mostly minority poets.

I think that they'll get over that. I think that it's okay that they still have those glasses on, that they're seeing everything through those glasses. They'll probably start to broaden themselves as they go out. It's better than (laugh) seeing everything through the teacher's eyes (LW3SS24-5).

So, Linda is willing to live with her students' perspective because she sees it as theirs, rather than one attributed to another person's view blindly taken on. Her analysis of the Black students' proactive motivations toward racial issues within the institutional context foreshadows the description below of her thinking about minority students' experience of school systems.

Whether school attendance and knowledge is a priority and whether students have positive attitudes toward school may depend, in the views of these teacher candidates, on the age of the adolescent. Both Roger and Esther note that older students (juniors and seniors) seem to move away from concerns having to do with school, instead leaning toward concerns about jobs or simply getting on with their everyday lives after high school (e.g., EW3SS4). Roger, for instance, observed that for the Alaska Native seniors in the small rural school where he completed student teaching, "it's just rebellion against the institution of school, against maybe some of the teachers. What they're wanting is the piece of paper to be able to go out and get a job or to be able to leave and to get on with their lives" (RW3SS4).

In contrast, Dennis and Roger see their students in younger adolescent years (7th-10th grades) as more willing to participate in school activities, good-natured, and respectful of them as teachers (DW3PST2, RW3PST1-2). This held true in the teacher candidates' views across groups of students and school settings.

Thus, teacher candidates might consider what they see as their students' desires to interact with peers, broad social and personal

concerns for the inclusion of diverse groups in the curriculum, and the ages of adolescents in deliberating about what and how to teach U.S. history to Alaska Natives.

Beliefs about Learners' Interests and Learning Preferences. The focal teacher candidates see Native students as generally interested in learning, especially when they are actively involved with materials and tasks. However, these prospective teachers also hold widely differing views on whether or not Native learners are interested in learning U.S. history.

Native students' interests in learning. What attitudes about learning do these intending teachers think Alaska Native students bring to their encounters with school subject matter? Dennis and Roger--both of whom had taught in small rural schools with Athabascan students--volunteer the most direct comment on this question. Overall, they find these Alaska Native students to be "curious" and "eager to learn" (DW3PST33), as well as hard-working and anxious to do a good job (RW3PST20). Dennis, having taught in an urban multicultural setting as well, also made a comparison between Alaska Native and non-Native students in his classes, which sheds a positive light on Native students' commitment to school learning. He observed that some Alaska Native students were having difficulties, but were sincerely trying to learn, whereas some of his in-town students "just didn't feel like being involved in the learning process" (DW3SS12).

In addition to being generally interested in learning, Alaska Native students are specifically interested in ideas that are close to them, according to Linda and Roger. For instance, Linda believes that Alaska Native learners would find the Native American issues related to Westward expansion and development easiest to understand because of

their identification with, and so interest in, such concerns. She argues this is because

all of them are now shareholders in corporations² and through that alone, if nothing else, if not having been talked to by older people in the village, and people who've experienced discrimination first hand. I'm sure they can identify with what's going on to the Native Americans because, I guess, just because of the way that I feel when I read about women [from the period of Westward expansion and development], I identify with it more strongly. And I would imagine it works the same way, [but] I don't know" (LW3TL35).

Already knowing something about the content is part of what engenders interest in the subject matter, in the view of some of these teacher candidates. For instance, Roger thinks that the community history project described in the vignette about Ms. Brown's teaching approach would interest students in a small, Alaska Native school because these learners feel a sense of pride about their community and already know something about it. In fact, he had observed his Athabascan students' interest in composing a brochure about their community to send to a class in the continental U.S. in response to their request for information for a social studies project.

However, Roger also realized that the real concern from the learners' point of view may be in studying something, anything, that's just plain interesting. In reference to his older students, Roger observes that hooking subject matter onto students' culture isn't necessarily a guaranteed trick: "...whether it be about their culture, it just has to be done in an interesting way" (RW3SS11). He also

² In the early 1970's, the federal government established village and regional corporations to manage Native land holdings as part of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). At that time, each Native person became a shareholder; however, a cut-off birthdate for automatic corporation membership was also established. Thus, Linda makes an assumption that needs confirmation in regard to her students' status as shareholders.

observed that his students liked him to give examples of things that they know about that are Indian (RW3SS11). So, Roger suggests that it may be the feeling of already knowing about something that creates interest for students, not merely because it is close to home. Following his line of thinking, what gives culture its power to connect students with subjects is that it feels known to students. I return to Roger's considerations in Chapter 8 which deals with how the teacher candidates think about making subject matter relevant to Alaska Native students.

Native students' interests in learning history. These teacher candidates' views on learners' interest in U.S. history range widely. However, much of their reasoning rests on the assertion that interest in U.S. history is based on how close events and issues are to students' experience.³ On the one hand, Esther and Linda do not find students to be especially interested in history. Linda asserts that Alaska Native learners, in particular, are not interested in U.S. history since, "let's face it, U.S. history is not their history" (LW3SSFN3).

According to Linda and Esther, if students are to become engaged with history, it will come through contexts that are familiar. For example, Linda claims that Alaska Native students are interested in Native American issues (LW3TL5). Esther also assumes that because the learners are Alaska Native, they would be most interested in the history of U.S. governmental policy toward their group as it continues to affect them today (EW3TL29).⁴ In keeping with the belief that the closer to

³ This claim fits with the teacher candidates' views of learning, discussed in chapter 5.

⁴ Esther's comment is also a good one in which to see the ways her personal lens for thinking about history--political science--interact with her assumptions about learning and learners' interests to result in

students' lives, the more likely they will be interested in history, Esther notes-- based on her student teaching experience--that world history is more difficult to engage students in than even U.S. history.

On the other hand, Roger believes that high school students are interested in history. In a sort of "something for everyone" argument, Roger maintains that there's some aspect of history that attracts each student, in part because they're curious about other peoples. He, too, explains that Alaska Native learners would find, for instance, the colonization of Alaska interesting because it concerns "issues and events that directly affect them" (RW3V30). Dennis agrees with this line of thinking, saying that like other learners, Alaska Native students want to know "how the history evolved and the events that took place lead up to the present time...how they were part of history ...how it can benefit them in the future" (DW3SS30).⁵

In sum, Esther and Linda argue that adolescents, and Native students in particular, are not interested in U.S. history. These students are disconnected from history, but can be engaged with its study if self-interest takes the lead.⁶ Roger and Dennis agree with this reasoning, but contend the opposite--that Native students are

an emphasis on Indian policy issues.

⁵ This is another illustration of the interaction between teacher candidates' ideas about history and their ideas about students. Here Dennis' view of history as a continuous progression explains what he assumes will interest Alaska Native learners.

⁶ Intriguing in light of the teacher candidates' overall beliefs that familiarity breeds interest is Esther and Linda's contention that their Native students also would be interested in cowboys as an aspect of Westward expansion and development. In this case, novelty or difference creates interest. Both prospective teachers believe that students' media images of cowboys, in combination with the differences between Native culture and cowboys' lifestyles, would create interest in the topic for Native learners.

generally interested in history. Assuming interest or disinterest in U.S. history on the part of one's students might well lead teacher candidates to consider different goals for students' learning, as well as different learning activities.

Learning preferences and dislikes. In the minds of the four teacher candidates, these preferences relate to the ways Native students would most likely engage with the study of U.S. history and best learn it. Although Esther cautions that every individual and each class differs in their preferences, a strong primary theme of these intending teachers' remarks calls attention to learning as interaction with ideas and materials.⁷ Within learning approaches that provide interaction, structure and variety are also preferred by Native students in these teacher candidates' minds.

Each of the teacher candidates asserts that learners, including Alaska Natives, like to get involved in the process of learning. According to these intending teachers, students like to be doing something, engaging with simulations and plays (EW3TL21; LW3TL40; RW3TL21,26,30), interacting with computers (DW3TL21; RW3SS7,12) or coloring in maps (DW3TL8). They like to learn from stories (DW3SS31; EW3SS20,TL20; LW3TL89; RW3TL1,13), in which historical information and ideas are woven together and embedded in colorful context, rather than presented as a string of "dry" disconnected facts. Esther likens learning from stories to a discovery approach to learning, which allows students to figure things out on their own. Movies and videos represent visual involvement (DW3TL36,V39; RW3TL21,26).

⁷ This idea is central to Esther's, Linda's, and Roger's thoughts on the nature of learning, generally, as discussed at more length in Chapter 5.

Most of the teacher candidates believe that their students prefer a structure to organize their learning experiences. According to Dennis, Esther, and Roger, their students like to have a framework for their study, so that they know what to focus on, what they're doing, and where they're headed (DW3TL42; EW3TL38,V7; RW3TL40-43,PST21).

A corollary in Roger's view of his Alaska Native students is their inclination to be what he called "little perfectionists" (RW3TL40) in their need to know just what they were to be doing in their studies. Roger expounds on why he believes this might be so in the context of his students' lives and backgrounds: "I think it's because that's the way they were brought up. I think their parents were real strict with them in a lot of different ways, in some ways. In others, not" (RW3PST21). Roger has also listened to the views about this matter of other teachers in the school where he student-taught. Other teachers observed that youngsters are often held up to ridicule when they make mistakes; they get laughed at, it's unpleasant for the adolescent, and this experience carries over to school. Asked what he thought of the teachers' explanations, Roger reflects,

I think that in some ways, that's true. I guess what I think is that they don't have much room for fools or not doing things right. They always want to know if you know what you're doing. Or, do you not know what you're doing. I think that maybe it comes from, you know, I mean they're out there and they see people dying all the time and they don't want anybody to make too much of a mistake" (RW3TL41).

Presumably , Roger is making reference to the need for survival strategies in an unforgiving wilderness.⁸

⁸ Roger's reflections can be held against Stiegelbauer's (1992) account of Native American elders' images of learning. Stiegelbauer describes a way of looking at learning that might appear to Western minds as a tension between individual and community.

Variety in learning activities is also preferred by Native students, according to Dennis and Linda, although their reasoning differs one from the other. On the one hand, Dennis sees variety as a way of maintaining students' engagement with activities. He claims, "I don't think anybody reacts well to the same thing day after day after day. It's like having a job that has no variety to it. You'll get sick of it" (DW3V7). On the other hand, Linda thinks of variety as a way to keep learners involved with ideas. The following quote refers to her observation that she could get numerous knowledgeable people involved in mining, representing different perspectives, to talk with her class during a unit on Westward expansion and development. Linda comments, "That's important, not just 'cause then I don't have to stand in front of the class and teach, but because the more people they can hear besides me, the more interesting it is for them" (EW3TL98).

Only Dennis adds that students like to learn history when they like the teacher (DW3SS28). Realistically, Dennis may not be far off the mark here. Many of us have reported that we learned a lot in a classroom in which we liked the teacher. Speculating, it may well be that Dennis is concerned on a personal level with his reputation as a teacher and whether his students like him. This belief potentially limits students' learning opportunities if the teacher's instructional choices reflect his or her worries that students will like the class and the teacher. What is needed is to employ this personal relationship in

service of students' learning of subject matter, not just the teacher's ego.⁹

Interestingly, the notion of students interacting with each other around academic material as a preferred way of learning does not receive much attention in these teacher candidates' ideas about how adolescents like to learn. Only Roger, who worked solely with Alaska Native students during his student teaching, insists that his students preferred working in groups (RW3SS7, TL27, 57, V10, 22). He notes that the students know each other, like to interact and socialize with each other, and do cooperative learning activities (RW3V10). Although Esther and Linda mention using group work, they do not see this kind of interaction as something students necessarily like when it is the teacher who breaks them up into groups.

Unlike Roger's students who come from an homogeneous cultural group, Linda's classes represented cultural heterogeneity. Linda notes that the difficulty of group work seems to lie in students having to work with other learners from different cultural groups. Speaking about her American literature class, Linda says,

I broke them into groups all the time. This particular class (laugh), I broke them into groups because they didn't like being broken into groups, because of the cultural diversity of the class. The White red-necked kids hated the Black kids. And the Hispanic kids thought that the Black kids were cool, but the rest of the kids were really out of it. And a whole bunch of kids who had just moved up recently in [military families], transferred in the middle of the year and didn't fit in anywhere and had a funny way of talking. I forced them to work together (laugh), which

⁹ Discussing the role of Eros--that wanting of friendship or pleasure--in education, Schwab (1978) alerts teachers to pitfalls in the use of what he calls "affective interpersonal relations." He warns that "the weak teacher may direct the Eros, not through himself to the objects of the curriculum, but upon himself" (p. 117). Kohl (1984) also raises cautions about the role of ego in teaching.

didn't always work beautifully, so I did an awful lot of that" (LW3PST35-6).¹⁰

According to these teacher candidates, adolescent students do not like more passive approaches typical of school--sitting and listening to teachers lecture (LW3TL89,V12-3; RW3SS7,12); reading and analyzing history textbooks (DW3TL9; RW3V14-5); taking notes and completing other writing assignments (EW3TL53,67; LW3TL89; RW3PST17). In particular, Dennis maintains that his Alaska Native students in a small rural school setting become overwhelmed by demanding textbook material (DW3TL5-6,9). He and Roger mention that adolescent learners will rebel or reject teachers and subject matter when they feel overwhelmed with the written word or feel they're unable to do a task right.

Similarly, Esther believes that most of the students in her culturally and racially mixed classes were very uncomfortable when they had to think for themselves, rather than copy out of the text (EW3TL15). Feeling uncomfortable with ill-defined tasks makes it potentially difficult for students to participate in learning processes that require more interaction with material, either intellectually or in activity. Indeed, Esther reports that some of her students don't like to participate in simulations, such as the one about the Great Depression described in the vignette of Mr. Gomez's teaching. Sometimes they "fold

¹⁰ Lest readers conclude that students who are culturally alike will prefer working in cooperative groups, whereas students from diverse backgrounds will not, I'd add (anecdotally) that student teachers working in small rural schools also report complaints from their Alaska Native students about having to work with other Native students from rival families, for instance. My observation is based on several semesters of reading student teachers' journals in which they describe trying out cooperative group learning strategies. The basic phenomena--the dislike of interacting with "the other" who is seen as different and lesser--seems similar to what Linda describes.

their arms and say, 'I don't know. I'm not FDR. How am I supposed to know how I'd do it?' (EW3V29).

Summary. In thinking about what and how to teach U.S. history to Native learners, teacher candidates might base their approaches on what they believe are students' interests in learning, generally, and learning history, specifically. Some teacher candidates see Native students as disconnected from U.S. history. At the same time, these teacher candidates, along with the others, also believe that Native students can be interested in the study of U.S. history when it is presented as of direct benefit to their lives as Natives. Of special note in this analysis is the disparity between what the four prospective teachers resoundingly declare is a prime motivation for adolescents about school--interaction with their peers--and the kinds of learning approaches they think these same students prefer. Working in peer groups is not mentioned by these prospective teachers.

Native Students' Subject Background and Skills

Teacher candidates also carry ideas about the kinds of knowledge and skills they believe Alaska Native learners will bring to the study of Westward expansion and development.¹¹ I analyzed the novices' responses to questions about material that might be challenging for Native students to learn and about ideas that Native students might already possess that would shape their learning about Westward expansion and development.

¹¹ I distinguish between teacher candidates' beliefs about knowledge and skills they believe are likely to exist, and learners' background they presuppose in order to teach about this period. This distinction rests on the difference in the level of certainty the intending teachers feel between background that does (or does not) exist and background that they hope will exist. I raise their ideas about the former, here, as beliefs about learners.

Framing the prospective teachers' ideas about their Native students' preconceptions and potential learning difficulties is a general observation made by three of the prospective teachers about all learners. Esther, Linda, and Roger contend that, overall, their students experience difficulty linking historical ideas and events in cause-effect relationships, across time, and in relation to their own lives (EW3SM3,TL61; LW3TL93-4; RW3TL19-20). For instance, Esther found that

the why questions or why it was important really stymied kids. They could define something, but couldn't always tell me why it was important. And there isn't always a right answer to that. I mean there's more than one right answer to that. They had a really difficult time [with] that. And it shows that they can regurgitate an answer. But they can't apply what they've learned and figure out why is this in the history book. And I used to ask that all the time: Why did this make the book? Who the heck cares (EW3TL61)?

Esther observes that her students, overall, experience difficulties attributing significance to historical events and issues. Another challenge is using what they have learned in new situations.

Roger hinted at one condition that may contribute to the difficulty of Alaska Native students in making connections when he wondered aloud about his students in a small, rural school: "Sometimes I wonder if they even know they're Americans" (RW3TL53). The detachment from U.S. history that Native students may feel could help to explain some of the particular difficulties they experience in making connections. More broadly, learners may also experience the same challenges based on their disconnection from the past, an adolescent propensity to focus on the present, or cognitive development.

Contrasting views of rural and urban students' subject backgrounds. Some teacher candidates suppose that students attending large, urban, multicultural schools are likely to bring a broader base

of background knowledge to the study of Westward expansion and development than do Alaska Native students in small, rural schools (i.e., Dennis and Linda). For example, Dennis says in reference to students in large, urban, multicultural schools, "I think they would be more inclined to see the bigger picture and bring more background information to a study like this in history from their previous experience to be able to handle a larger more all-encompassing view of the time period" (DW3TL5). In Dennis' view, this situation may be partially based on the notion that students are expected to know more at an in-town school than they would in a village school (DW3SS11).

How then, might Dennis and Linda respond if Alaska Native students in or from a small, rural school do not possess the same breadth of background as students in a large, urban school? Dennis continues, explaining that he would narrow his scope: "I just think that in a smaller, rural setting you might spend the time more valuably and give more to the students by focusing on some small aspect of it and just channeling in on that" (DW3TL5). Instead, Linda would build Native students' background knowledge to the point she believes to be necessary to then help them learn about Westward expansion and development (LW3SSFN4). Dennis, then, seems to think of the background knowledge of Alaska Native students from small rural schools as a limitation, whereas Linda simply sees it as a starting place. While Linda's response seems to keep open more learning opportunities, both she and Dennis expect more subject background from urban students in large schools. Whether this expectation is accurate is open to question.

Background knowledge held as images. Some teacher candidates believe that the subject-related background Alaska Native students bring to the study of Westward expansion and development is based on their

experiences as Alaskans and media images (EW3TL26-7, LW3TL30-2) more than a specific knowledge about events or issues of the period. Both Esther and Linda believe that Alaska Native learners in small, rural schools bring experiences and images of resource development in Alaska. As Linda explains,

Well, they've seen it happening. I mean within their own lifetime in our state. The exact same thing [as during westward expansion and development]. They've seen it with their own eyes. They should be able to understand this expansion that's happening right here, right now. The use of resources the same way. The treatment of Native peoples the same way (LW3TL30).

Linda argues that Native students' first-hand experiences and observations give them a sense of the dynamics that also occurred during Westward expansion and development, such as relations between the U.S. government and indigenous peoples around resource issues. Still, she wonders whether or not they have a sense of "the big picture;" that is, that "they realize they're part of a pattern that was done to Native people across the United States" (LW3TL6). This concern fits with her belief that all students experience difficulties making connections among periods, settings, and themselves.

Alaska Native students also carry images of Westward expansion and development picked up from television or movies,¹² according to both Linda and Esther. For instance, Esther thinks that these learners would have "a lot of Hollywood ideas about what the Wild West was....The romantic cowboy and the evil Indians is how it is portrayed in the movies for the most part. Vigilante justice being a-okay" (EW3TL27). These images portray indigenous societies and the land in which they lived as uncivilized. They reinforce the idea that White individuals

¹² Most Alaska Native villages have access to the Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET) and other cable offerings through satellite transmission.

who take matters into their own hands are to be admired for their courage and fortitude. Native students, then, enter the study of Westward expansion and development with negative messages about themselves.

Entry skills for studying history. These teacher candidates also possess ideas about their Alaska Native students' skills to study history in the areas of reading and writing. Only Linda argues that reading and writing abilities aren't necessary for learning history, but they can be useful as ways of thinking about history (LW3TL27).

Reading comprehension and writing skills of Alaska Native students are weak according to Dennis and Roger (DW3TL9,V24; RW3TL20,38,40). Dennis points out that his students tend to become overwhelmed when reading textbook material (DW3TL9). Similarly, Roger notes that the learners he encountered during student teaching in a village school didn't retain or understand much of what they'd read. He recognized that they needed preparation before reading texts.

While Dennis and Roger have taken what might be called a skills orientation toward the usefulness of reading and writing in learning history, Linda and Esther attend to their multicultural students' attitudes toward reading and textbooks. In a reiteration of Esther's earlier point, Linda sees all kinds of students as passive consumers of text--describing them as big, slurping sponges--who accept what they're given (LW3SS6). Esther also notes that students in her in-town multicultural student teaching setting couldn't be counted upon to read text independently (EW3TL9).

Regarding study skills, such as note-taking, Dennis again makes a comparison between rural Alaska Native students and multicultural classes in large schools. He says that his rural students don't take

notes very well, but that urban students can listen to a lecture, take notes, and take information away from that lecture (DW3V5). Esther, however, cautions that even her seniors in the large, multicultural school where she completed student teaching hadn't yet learned that they need to make decisions about what's important enough to go into their notes (EW3V6). And further, she claims that her Alaska Native students represented the complete range of communication skills (EW3SS12).

Summary. The ideas these teacher candidates hold about their Native students' subject-related knowledge and skills are general and shallow. They do not, for example, bring up specific or complex concepts, such as the notion of frontier or changes in federal policy regarding Native Americans, that teachers with more experience helping students' learn about Westward expansion and development might raise. Except for Linda, the novices' comments about Native students' backgrounds could apply to virtually any other learner studying Westward expansion and development.

Generally, what these teacher candidates do believe is that all of their students find it difficult to make connections between historical events and ideas, as well as between themselves and the subject matter. In particular, Linda and Esther argue that Native students would not be interested in studying U.S. history because it is not part of their backgrounds.

Some of the prospective teachers also believe that the background of Alaska Native students from small, rural schools isn't as deep or as reliable a base for learning history as that of students from large, urban, multicultural schools. Noteworthy is the distinction between Dennis and Linda's dispositions--in the case of Dennis, to narrow the subject matter focus, or in the case of the Linda, to build up necessary

prerequisite knowledge. Other prospective teachers think their students' subject-related experiences and images are a stronger base of students' preconceptions than specific background knowledge.

Patterns of Participation

This segment concentrates on the prospective teachers' beliefs about their Alaska Native students' patterns of social interaction and participation within a large, urban multicultural school setting. I analyzed the teacher candidates' responses to a scenario in which they are asked to imagine being hired midway through the school year to teach U.S. history, taking over for a teacher going on maternity leave. The respondent is asked to imagine a group of Alaska Native students sitting together at the back of the class while White and Asian-American students are sitting in the front. The Alaska Native students don't volunteer to answer questions or to participate in discussions. Later the first day, the respondent--as new teacher--imagines mentioning this to colleagues in the teachers' lounge, who say that Alaska Native students are naturally shy and that asking them questions embarrasses them, so it's best not to call on them. I asked the teacher candidates what they made of these teacher-colleagues' explanation of the situation.

These teacher candidates do not agree with the perspective their imaginary colleagues bring to working with Alaska Native students. They wrestle with their colleagues' attributions of Native students as "naturally shy" and the generalizations in which their colleagues speak. Roger is most eloquent about the consequences for students' learning: "I don't like the explanation," he insists. "I don't like assuming this about them,...that it's not polite to ask them questions. And to just sort of leave them in the back of the room" (RW3SS25-6). Roger explains

his discomfort with the explanation, observing that these Native students may be in the back of the room, not learning anything. He asks a question that would help a researcher understand the situation and a practitioner take wise action: "Why are they there?" (RW3SS26). Even though Roger can see that it might be easier for a teacher to just let these students continue not saying anything, more important to him is that the teacher isn't actively helping students learn. He concludes, "If you want to really teach them, then you're going to have to find a way of getting them involved somehow" (RW3SS26). In Roger's view, then, learning is fostered by engagement, and it is the teacher who facilitates this involvement.¹³

At the same time, these prospective teachers do tend to accept their imaginary colleagues' comments as being legitimate and realistic (DW3SS35), as well as reasonably true (LW3SSFN7), and having some validity (EW3SS25). To use Dennis' words, these teacher candidates see many of their Alaska Native students as "quiet," "reserved," inclined to "stick to themselves quite a bit," in places like the lunchroom but not necessarily in the classroom, and as not wanting to "stand out at all" (DW3SS4, TL35, PST23). Linda observes, along with Dennis, that Alaska Native students didn't participate easily in groups. She explains that

working in groups together as a bunch of Native students they seem to be [good at working in groups], but when they're stuck, as one Native student in the middle of a bunch of other students from other cultures, as far as I can tell most of them just clam up. And they don't do anything, even if there's a lot going on upstairs. You sure can't tell and, in a group which feels like they're [the Native students] not pulling their weight, and they would feel like they were left out, it just wouldn't be necessarily very good. It would take a lot of teacher

¹³ Teacher candidates' views on their roles as teachers is part of the discussion both in Chapters 5 (visions of teaching) and 6 (curricular visions).

intervention in some groups possibly to make sure everything was going okay (LW3V43).

In groups where Native students are with others like themselves, they participate fully according to Linda, but when placed with culturally heterogeneous groups, they do not verbally participate.

This observation exemplifies an important distinction between these teacher candidates' perceptions of Alaska Native students and the characterizations made by the scenario's teachers. These teacher candidates describe Native students' behavior in a particular setting, rather than Native students by nature. Comments made by each of the candidates support this claim. Because this is an important distinction implied by the focal prospective teachers, and because this kind of thinking may be unexpected of novice teachers, I let their words speak for themselves, even at some length. Linda, especially, brought insight to her observations of the impact of school's institutionalized systems on minority students' participation. Her analysis and words form the core of this segment.

Beginning with Native students at a small school in a Native community, Dennis and Roger paint a lively picture of their students' participation, in comparison to images of their behavior in large, urban schools. Dennis describes his in-town Native students as "pretty shy," but he also reflects on this view in light of his recent experience as a full-time substitute living in a small, rural community:

I know that everything says they're shy; they're not shy. They want to be heard. They want to be recognized. You get a whole class of Natives together, and they want to fight to see who gets to be recognized. Everybody wants a turn, well not everybody. I've got a couple of kids that we call on, but I think I've figured out that [one of them] needs glasses (DW3SS35-6).

Apparently, in this setting, Dennis only calls on students whom he thinks are not participating, meaning only a few in this case. He sees

Native students acting in a "shy" manner in a large school, but actively participating in a village school.

In addition, Esther and Linda analyze the dynamics of minority students' classroom participation. Esther discusses teachers' generalizations and how they do not apply to some of her students.¹⁴ Assessing her imaginary teacher-colleagues' view of Native American students, Esther declares, "I think it's generalizations. I'm not saying it's not without its validity, but it is a generalization" (EW3SS25). She continues,

When I'm thinking about the specific Alaska Native students...they're thinking about Alaska Native students in general. And, for example, the one Alaska Native student I had who wants to be a lawyer, she may be quiet in class, but she did volunteer. And if I asked her a question point blank, she would not be embarrassed, given who and what she is. So it's the kind of information, say you were coming from Outside¹⁵ somewhere and you knew nothing about Alaska Natives, you put it in the back of your head and keep that in mind, and you try lots of different things to get more participation, if that's important to you. And people can participate in different ways (EW3SS26).

In this quote, Esther calls attention to the need to think about particular students in considering teaching dilemmas and approaches, rather than basing such deliberations on perceived characteristics of a certain cultural or racial group. Later, she also holds herself up as an example of a young student who didn't verbalize her responses aloud but kept up with the academic matter. She concludes that both Native and non-Native students may do the same.

¹⁴ I also explore Esther's strong concern with making generalizations and her concomitant orientation to individuals in a subsequent section on the perspectives used by the teacher candidates to come to know their students.

¹⁵ The term "Outside" is used by Alaskans to refer to places other than Alaska, usually locations in the continental United States, or "Lower 48."

Linda analyzes what some teachers may see as minority students' apparent lack of involvement in a large, urban school and concludes that their behavior is a reasonable response to the situation. Linda points out that being quiet as a way of nonparticipation makes sense under circumstances in which these students likely do not feel a part or feel respected. During her student teaching experience at a large, urban, multicultural high school where Alaska Natives were a minority, Linda describes Natives as active in their response to the environment. She noted that

even when called upon, they often chose just not to participate. I mean it was an active choice. It wasn't just 'Oh, I don't know, I'll just sit here and look dumb.' They chose not to participate as far as I'm concerned. And I think that that was probably a relatively reasonable choice. Because among their peers--peers meaning just students the same age, not students of the same culture--they were not highly respected, I don't think. Because they talked different or they looked different or they don't have the right clothes or whatever the case might be. Or, maybe 'cause they've been taken out for special programs all along the way, and haven't always been there. I don't know what the case is, but they didn't fit in, very obviously they didn't fit in. And, I guess I found it very disturbing" (LW3SS9-10).

Thus, Linda gives credit to her Native students for making a choice. She sees the choice as an understandable one under the circumstances she describes, where other students made judgments of Native students' worth based on speech and dress. Even teachers don't seem to have respect for minority students' abilities to have figured out the system that works against them (LW3SS16). Subsequently, Linda also argues that the absence of a minority presence in the school's curriculum contributes as well to the choice to not participate (LW3PST68).

Linda doesn't believe Alaska Native and other minority students are so much opting out of a system as they are making an intelligent response to a system that is pushing them out. She asserts that minority students are "victims" (LW3SS14) of a system that doesn't recognize or

value their personal worth. She contends, "This isn't something the students have done. They haven't messed themselves up in the system, opted out just because that's a fun thing to do. It's something that has been done to them" (LW3SS14-5). Similarly, about her junior and senior Black students she says,

when they've gotten to be that old, they already have figured out how everything works. They're not dumb. I mean, they know what's gonna work and what isn't and what they're gonna be included in and what they're not gonna be included in and what they're gonna be accepted in and what they're not gonna be accepted in. And, I'm sure that it's a lot easier than fighting things to just choose to stay out of things that you know either are not your realm or are going to end up putting you at a disadvantage somehow. I guess I couldn't articulate exactly what it is that's making them make those choices, but, I don't, some teachers think, 'Oh, they're just lazy,' or, I was told that they didn't care. I guess maybe they have come to a point where they don't care, or else they're gonna get hurt. I mean you would have to decide that you don't care, if it's not working for you or else you're going to get really despondent and terrible things are going to happen. So, it seems to be a pretty reasonable choice to make, to me. I can imagine myself making it in, not necessarily in academic situations, but in other situations (LW3SS13-14).

Instead of accepting that minority students are "lazy" or "don't care" as suggested by some of the teachers where she did her student teaching, Linda sees their nonparticipation as behavior in response to a the school as a foreign and hostile institution.¹⁶ When asked what she learned during student teaching about students who are culturally different from herself, Linda summarized, "School is more stacked" against minority students "than I ever imagined" (LW3PST83). She concludes,

As long as that all continues to exist, these guys are gonna continue to drop out. It doesn't matter that you give 'em special programs or special help. When they're being told in every single class that their way is the wrong way and that they have to learn our way, well I don't imagine they're going to stay around very long for that 'cause they're intelligent people" (LW3PST89).

¹⁶ Linda characterizes schools as institutions "foreign" to Alaska Native culture (LW3SSFN9).

Sorting students along academic tracks--or what she calls, "socialization" (LW3PST88)--is one way that school is stacked.

Tracking, in her view, is a powerful vehicle for conveying the message that many minority students do not have access to the richest learning opportunities. She describes the pattern of access to different levels of classes at her student teaching site:

I mean it was so incredibly obvious to me at this school that all of the advanced classes and the AP were very White students. And this is an extremely culturally diverse school, an ethnically diverse school. So to have that happen means there's a lot of sorting going on somewhere along the way. And all of the lower classes--not just the main level classes-- all of the lower classes or the remedial classes were all almost exclusively minority students" (LW3SS11).

Linda also links this sorting to socio-economic levels, noting that the only minority students who were in AP classes at the high school from which she graduated in the same district were students whose parents were professional people, such as doctors, lawyers and professors (LW3SS12). Linda concludes that teachers and school systems act in "criminal" ways: "The crime is that we pretend to give equal education and we're not. The crime is that we're supposedly valuing everyone equally and we're not. It's systematic sorting that's effective" (LW3SS12).

In Linda's thinking, minority students protect themselves from an environment that doesn't include or accept them by dropping out in different ways. They may literally quit school. Or they may work hard to maintain a failing gradepoint while remaining in school (LW3PST52). Linda expresses amazement about the lack of outrage and response of the school, community, and even the university to minority students' dropping out. She proclaims,

There's obviously something not working right when the biggest drop-out rate is among Alaska Native students. You would think

somebody would be very upset and that that would be on the front page of the paper or something. Or, at least that it would have been mentioned in passing to those of us who were methods students [from the university] studying specifically in this district. It never came up. I don't know if that's the same at all the other schools, but, it's something to be very worried about (LW3SS10).

Thus, Linda traces minority students' experiences through an alien system--disinvitation, nonparticipation, dropping out. She seems to honor and respect these students' perspectives, but she may not also recognize their "failure" as mutually constructed (Erickson, 1987; McDermott & Gospodinoff, 1981) within the institutional arrangements she abhors. Further, she may not acknowledge that some minority students make a statement for their identity by making a stand against the institution.

That Dennis and Roger don't make such observations as Linda or Esther do might be related to the conditions in which they did their teaching. For instance, teaching in small, homogeneous Alaska Native school settings or in larger, multicultural schools with only a small minority population may have shielded Roger and Dennis from observing the phenomena that prompted Linda's remarks. Still, Dennis does make observations about the experiences of rural Native students who come into large, urban schools from small, rural ones. He notes that they often experience social difficulties.

Another reason that teacher candidates such as Dennis and Roger may not have commented on such dynamics is that they may not have seen what was there to be observed by someone with a perspective like Linda's. Linda's apparent disposition to examine social structural conditions may have allowed her to see minority students' experiences in both more broad and more complex ways.

Conclusions

These teacher candidates suggest few specific ideas about what their Alaska Native students might know or how they might think about U.S. history, especially Westward expansion and development. However, they do possess positive perspectives about Native learners that could allow them to resist overgeneralizations and easy explanations about diverse, minority students. Generally, they see Native students as interested in learning, eager to interact with peers, and willing and able to participate in interesting, inviting classroom activities.

Teacher Candidates' Knowledge and Beliefs about Alaska Native Students

What teachers believe about their students as learners within the school context is only part of a more complete and complex understanding of adolescents and what they bring to school learning. Teacher candidates' ideas about who their students are beyond the walls of the school also provide lenses to interpret classroom situations and inspiration for deliberations about what to teach and how to connect learners with subject matter. This section analyzes what the prospective teachers understand about their students' perspectives and concerns, based on their ages, cultural, community, and family backgrounds, and current and possible future economic lives.

The theme of this section concerns students' identities. First, I explore teacher candidates' ideas about what I will call their students' "roots"--that is, what they believe about their Alaska Native students' cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, and familial/community backgrounds. Each of these areas intertwines with the others, locating students in an extensive web of connected identity. Next I note their understanding of adolescents' social-emotional concerns. These concerns

seem to be cares that individual adolescents wrestle with, even though they are common to many adolescents. Finally, I explore the teacher candidates' beliefs about Native students' possible futures.

Alaska Native Students' "Roots"

Students' backgrounds shape their identities as members of a group and as individuals. This segment examines the teacher candidates' knowledge and beliefs about the roots of their Alaska Native students' identities. Although their understandings do not appear to be especially deep or complex, their general awareness is fairly wide-ranging.

Here, I look at their ideas about Native culture, families and communities, socio-economic standing, and language. These aspects intertwine within the students' lives and within the teacher candidates' thinking. For these reasons, the descriptions of what the prospective teachers believe should be taken as a whole picture, rather than as demonstrations of complete (or incomplete) understandings in particular areas.

These teacher candidates tend to use or respond to the term "culture" as a category which catches any quality or feature relating to Native peoples. For example, they associate Native culture with characteristics of village life, communication patterns such as length of pause time between speakers (EW3SS12), close family ties (DW3SS16), and subsistence living (LW3SSFN2). While most of these prospective teachers seem to think about culture as a kind of lifestyle or behavior, Linda thinks of culture as a world-view (LW3TL46).

Culture and language. For two of the prospective teachers, language and culture are related. Dennis realizes that different cultural groups within the Alaska Native community have different

languages (DW3SS19). Linda believes that language is the predominant way through which one views the world. Further, she argues that the patterns of English usage employed by bilingual Alaska Natives reflect their first language (LW3TL46).¹⁷

Culture and socio-economic characteristics. In the minds of these teacher candidates, socio-economic level is also related to culture (DW3TL16, LW3TL33), and is just as important in shaping students' viewpoints (EW3PSTFN3).¹⁸ Most of the teacher candidates think of subsistence living when asked about their Alaska Native students' socio-economic backgrounds. Linda describes a subsistence life as one that's dependent on the land. She adds that not all students and their families have the same desires to accumulate material goods or accumulate the same material goods as others (LW3SSFN2). In addition, Roger implies that the standards used in cities to determine poverty may not be appropriate for judging worth in a small, rural, subsistence-based community (RW3SS31). Dennis extends the discussion of subsistence-based economies to include the transition to what he calls a more capital-intensive lifestyle (DW3SS17). Esther used subsistence cultures as the entry way to the study of world history during her student teaching. She thought it important for her students to understand subsistence cultures because "there's a tendency for city

¹⁷ Recall that Linda has a strong background in the Japanese language. She has also taught Japanese language classes at the university level.

¹⁸ For example, Esther sees the difference in perspective between two of her Black students as the difference between upper-middle and lower class backgrounds.

folks to look down on that. I want to encourage respect and appreciation for subsistence cultures" (EW3PSTFN2).¹⁹

Culture, families and communities. The two teacher candidates who offered ideas on Alaska Native families and communities were those who had experience living and teaching in small, rural communities. Roger completed 12 weeks of student teaching in a village setting, and Dennis had just been hired as a full-time substitute several weeks before being interviewed. Communities differ from village to village (RW3SS13), but extensive, closely-knitted kinship networks tie communities together and create a strong sense of belonging (DW3SS26, RW3SS7). For instance, youngsters are able to move from relative to relative, especially if alcohol-related family pressures need to be escaped (RW3SS13). Even though Roger believes that youngsters experience "pretty hard lives at home" (RW3SS8), he also realized the strength of village ties. When he joked with one student about taking the boy into town upon his return from student teaching, he found that the youngster didn't want to go because, according to Roger, "that was the only life that he knew, and it was the world to him" (RW3S32).

Similarly, when asked what he knew about his Alaska Native students' cultural backgrounds, Dennis answered in terms of family and community ties:

I guess they come from very small communities, very isolated communities, and there are lots of family ties, a lot of extended families...workings that go on and a lot of closeness that evolves out of that. A lot of community sharing and a real sense of belonging to something that you lose when you come into an urban area, and you get disenfranchised from all those feelings and those ties that you have in your little community (DW3SS16).

¹⁹ Consistent with her views on how students learn, Esther also justified her focus on subsistence cultures by noting she had "tried to root their study of the beginning of civilization in something that they already knew" (EW3PSTFN2).

Like Roger, Dennis accents Native youngsters' sense of belonging in a setting that is well-known to them. Understanding that strong social relations are central to family and community life would help novices think about teaching approaches that capitalize on group learning, for instance.

Native culture in relation to the dominant White culture. These teacher candidates also hold ideas about Alaska Natives in relation to so-called mainstream, White culture. For instance, as mentioned earlier, Roger wondered whether his students knew that they're Americans (RW3TL53). None of the interview questions explicitly asked the prospective teachers to speak to this relationship. That they volunteered numerous remarks may indicate that part of their perception of Native identity is its definition in terms of interaction with White peoples. Their comments may also reflect their experience as a White minority person in a Native village setting, or may mirror political realities.

For instance, Linda mentions phenomena that speak to Native peoples in relation to Whites--the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the history of Native education in Alaska, the epidemics of the 1900's--as Native history (LW3SSFN2, TL40; see also RW3SS24). Still, she also criticizes a well-known Alaska history text for assuming in its contents that no Native history existed before contact with Whites (LW3SS29). Linda sees Native peoples as "the oppressed" in relation to the dominant White society (LW3TL111).

Esther mentions her belief that some villages "hate" Whites (EW3SS17). Roger, however, notes that in his experience Native village people may view Whites with suspicion because "they see a lot of White people maybe come out there, and they seem sort of foolish to them

sometimes. They don't really understand them. So they view them with suspicion. But they respect people in their own culture because they know what they're talking about" (RW3SS30). Linda expressed the view that the history of a village's relationship with White peoples would influence her teaching.

Summary. These teacher candidates tend to think of Native students' cultural identities as tied up with close social networks and a subsistence way of life. They imply that some Native peoples--if not in conflict with Whites-- at least look askance at them. While knowing that different Native languages exist, they offer, except for Linda, little about the complex relationships of language and culture, the vitality (or lack) of first languages in particular regions of Alaska, and so on. Thus, these prospective teachers would seem to possess a basic foundation of awareness about their Native students' cultures. They have yet to focus on differences between cultural groups within the wider Native community.

Adolescent Characteristics and Concerns

Adolescence is about change according to the teacher candidates. Some explicitly direct remarks to this theme. For instance, Dennis talks about adolescents' feelings and of their "emotional changes and transitions and hopes and fears and ambitions and all of that sort of thing that goes on in students' minds" (DW3SS1). Others implicitly make the observation by distinguishing "younger" and "older" adolescents in regard to identity development--that is, as they express interest in and valuing of things within or beyond school and community (EW3SS4; RW3SS4,6). For example, Roger sees that his younger students accept and find value in Native stories and traditions, whereas his older students don't as readily (RW3SS6,10).

Whether Native or non-Native, whether in a small or large school, in a rural or urban setting, adolescents share common concerns in the views of these teacher candidates. They name the same set of social pressures no matter the age or race of their students, or the community context.²⁰ Adolescents' lives outside of school are concerned with human relationships--including sexuality (DW3SS7-8) and racial issues (LW3SS24). Difficulties within adolescents' homes may involve addiction and suicide (RW3SS8). Some students are married and/or living away from parents' homes; others in city schools are homeless (EW3SS3). Youngsters and their families may often be involved with social service systems (EW3SS13). Adolescents may be truly depressed (RW3PST1), and suicide in the home and among peers is increasingly a fact of life for adolescents (EW3SS4), especially among Native populations. Interwoven are issues about the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs (LW3SS2).

Alaska Native Students' Possible Futures

What, then, do these novice teachers see as Native students' possible futures? Responding to a question about what Native youngsters might do after high school, Esther provides a thoughtful way to look at the inquiry. She raises the issue of cultural perceptions and reminds us that value judgments about people's worth are often made based on this question. She says,

Well, we think you've got to go to college and then you're going to get a job. That's how we conceptualize it. You don't go to college and you decide to get married right away and have babies...that's viewed rather negatively. Oh, it must be because you're not very smart. So, just to keep that in mind" (EW3SS17-8).

²⁰ Since this is so, the list of data sources for each concern are quite lengthy. Thus, I list only one representative data source for each concern.

Through a western middle-class lens, Esther still admonishes herself and others to try to see alternative futures as worthy.

The prospective teachers envision a range of possibilities for their students' futures. Their ability to picture these possibilities seems connected to the range of their experiences teaching and living in or interacting with Native communities, both rural and urban.

To begin with, both Esther and Linda--who taught in a large, urban, multicultural school--wondered whether some Alaska Native students would make it through high school (EW3SS16, LW3SS31). Dennis and Roger did not raise the question of Native students' graduation rates from small, rural high schools. Linda thought that some of these Native adolescent dropouts might become skilled laborers or attend mechanics school.

Roger sees students who do finish high school also taking advantage of vocational schools (RW3SS16). He believes that some of his students will move back and forth between town and village, getting involved with construction, joining union apprenticeship programs in order to work on the expansion of the village airstrip, and so forth.

Esther also predicted two of her Native women students would go into law and/or politics after college (EW3SS16). Roger also believed that some of his students would go to college, later going into the forestry field, nursing and secretarial work.

Many Alaska Native students will either remain in or return to their villages according to these teacher candidates. Esther--who claims not to know much about Alaska Natives--sees limited job opportunities in small villages and Native regional population centers (EW3SS15). However, Linda and Dennis see a variety of choices open to their students growing into young adults in Native communities,

including subsistence living and activities that maintain the community (DW3SS24, LW3SS33). For instance, Dennis suggests his students may work in Native village or regional corporations that were set up as part of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, be a school aide, or develop and run small businesses (DW3SS24). In Roger's view, some students will "hang out in the village," doing seasonal work such as firefighting in the summer. He also notes that not all his students seem happy with prospects of staying at home after high school; he describes them as "bored with village life" and wanting to move (RW3TL57).

These ideas give a sense of the futures that may motivate Native students through the eyes of the focal teacher candidates. Their visions of young adults' lives after high school also offer an idea of what the teacher candidates believe they're preparing Native students to do, or the kinds of lives they might lead. In sum, these intending teachers convey the impression that they see their Native students' possible futures in much the same way they might for the range of their other students. The teacher candidates seem to have taken into account Alaskan social and economic contexts in reasonable ways, even though some of the lifestyle options may seem unusual to readers unfamiliar with those contexts.

Summary. Two aspects of Native students' identities and concerns beyond the school context stand out in the thinking of these teacher candidates. One is a recognition of Native students' cultural backgrounds; the other is an acknowledgement of social forces and problems pressuring young adults. These prospective teachers convey an appreciation of their Native students' cultural backgrounds, but they seem to see them as static. That is, they often seem to focus on traditional Native ways of life, as they believe these to be exemplified

by village life. It is almost as if these teacher candidates--except, perhaps, Linda--see "true" culture as preserved in a past, unchanging state, being lived out in the present. Instead, these novices need to attend to the ways in which Native culture is adapting based on thousands of years of values and ways of life that have helped these peoples survive and prosper. Too, these novices need to recognize the movement back and forth of Native peoples between rural and urban settings.

Sources of Teacher Candidates' Ideas about Students
Who Are Culturally Different from Themselves

Before our interviews, these teacher candidates had opportunities to gather ideas about Alaska Native and other minority students, like those ideas reported above. They developed these ideas through both formal and informal means --across personal experiences growing up in and out of school, during university coursework, and throughout field experiences as part of their teacher preparation.²¹ Most striking is the grounding of their ideas about culturally diverse students in their student teaching experiences. Their responses to the interviews are profoundly influenced by their encounters with particular students in particular settings.

I draw on interview questions explicitly asking about these intending teachers' experiences with Alaska Natives and about the kinds of students they encountered during student teaching. In addition, the novices offered other comments about their experiences throughout the interviews. Range of Experiences with Culturally Diverse Students

²¹ In addition to data from the third wave of interviews on which this dissertation is based, I also draw upon the first wave. During the first set of interviews teacher candidates talked about their backgrounds with Alaska Natives and other minorities.

Table 4.1 shows the multiplicity and range of the teacher candidates' opportunities to learn about culturally diverse peoples. It places Linda at one extreme with probably the most numerous and widest range of potential learning experiences over time. At the other extreme is Esther, whose knowledge of Alaska Natives is virtually nonexistent, according to her own report, and whose experience of cultural diversity is limited relative to the other prospective teachers. Dennis and Roger's experiences place them between these two extremes.

Table 4.1 also summarizes potential sources of ideas about culturally diverse learners in the lives of the teacher candidates. The range of sources illustrates Nemser's (1983) conception of learning to teach as a process drawing from experiences across the lifespan, with influences of psychological, social, institutional, and professional natures.

Family and friends. For example, early experiences with families and friends provided occasions to learn about cultural diversity for Linda and Esther. Linda was born and raised in Alaska. As a youngster, Linda's parents read her Native legends. Summers gave her opportunities to play with Native youngsters when her family docked their boat at a village site (LW1SS11). In the case of Esther, a strong friendship with a Vietnamese girl during her teen years introduced Esther to the idea that behavior takes on different meanings depending on the cultural context (EW1SS18).

K-12 schooling. Schools also played an important role as a source of experiences with cultural diversity. During her elementary years, Linda participated in school-funded weekly classes focusing on Native language and culture (LW1SS11). Roger attended a number of racially-mixed high schools in the San Francisco Bay area, including one setting

he described as having a ratio of 80% Black to 20% White students (RW1SS35).

Adult life and work. Prior to entering the university teacher education program, Dennis, Roger, and Linda lived and worked in cross-cultural settings. For instance, Dennis lived in a rural Alaskan transportation hub, a community that attracted both Natives and Whites. He managed a lodge and helped to run a flying service. In this context, he mentions that "I've always felt like I have a good rapport with Native people" (DW1SS9). Roger, too, worked in rural Alaska, working intensively with Alaska Natives on seasonal firefighting crews and at an oil field. Roger also helped out at a group home for adolescents, including Native youngsters (RW3SS16). Finally, Linda spent a year living in Japan as an exchange student, as well as teaching English as a second language.

University courses. Two of the teacher candidates comment upon university courses as a source of ideas about Alaska Natives and cultural diversity. However based on the frequency of mention across the four prospective teachers, university courses do not appear to play as strong a role in providing opportunities to learn about Alaska Natives and other diverse minorities as have their personal experiences and student teaching.²² Dennis sees university coursework as a lens for picking up on and making sense of dynamics in school and communities. In the context of recounting how his feelings have been changed about Native communities' efforts to maintain subsistence

²² It would be useful to know how university courses in subject disciplines and in education shape teacher candidates' ideas about culturally diverse students, especially Alaska Natives.

cultural ties in the face of changes to a more capital-intensive economy, he stated that,

If a person were to walk into a school environment cold as an outsider, I don't think you'd have the appreciation for it that you would as someone working in the profession that has had a lot of the class background to bring with you and to pick up on some of these things that were going on. You might not see them otherwise" (DW3SS19).

However, Esther cautions that foundations and methods courses--for instance, those dealing with interethnic communication--can also contribute to overgeneralizing and perhaps stereotyping in the minds of teacher candidates (EW3SS7-8).²³

Still, Esther mentions an introductory course in cross-cultural psychology as a source of ideas about Alaska Natives. However, she focuses on her actual interactions with a small group of Yup'ik Eskimo students during a class project, rather than on the content of the course (EW1SS15-17).

The Influence of Student Teaching

These prospective teachers' ideas about culturally diverse students have been profoundly influenced by their encounters with particular students in particular settings over the course of student teaching.

Student teaching settings. Table 4.1 summarizes the settings in which the teacher candidates completed student teaching. Three of the four teacher candidates taught in large, urban, multicultural schools. Esther and Linda worked at the same mid-town high school, a school of approximately 1500 students, with about one in four students overall

²³ Researchers and teacher educators make the same argument. See, for example, McDiarmid (1990), McDiarmid and Price (1990), and Noordhoff and Kleinfeld (1993).

from minority ethnic groups (27%). Specifically, about 12% of the students are Black and seven percent are Alaska Native/American Indian.

Dennis completed student teaching at a local middle school of about 750 students with a minority population overall of approximately 15 per cent. About half of those students are Alaska Native/American Indian. In addition, after student teaching and three weeks before our interview, Dennis was hired as a full-time substitute in a small, rural K-12 school serving 35 Athabascan Indian students in interior Alaska.

In other words, at both the high school and middle school, an average class would contain two or three Alaska Native students. The main ethnic difference between the schools--and between Esther's and Linda's compared to Dennis's experiences with diverse populations--is the proportion of the African-American population (12% at the high school, compared to only 3% at the middle school). However, given the high school's tracked classes, minority students were overrepresented at particular course levels. For example, Linda estimated that some of her classes were 50% White and 50% students of color. Because the middle school is organized around teams of students and teachers, classes tend not to be so dramatically leveled as they are at the larger, tracked, high school.

The only teacher candidate to student teach in a small, village school was Roger. This K-12 school served approximately 100 students in an Athabascan Indian community in interior Alaska, accessible only by air. An approximate number of students at the secondary level would be 35-40.

Two of the prospective teachers taught required classes in the area of social studies, and two of them taught language arts classes. Dennis taught 8th grade U.S. history, and Esther taught 10-12th graders

world history and U.S. government. Linda taught American literature and writing courses to 10-12th graders, and Roger taught all language arts for 7-12th grade students.

Student teaching as a site to learn about culturally diverse students. The prospective teachers' responses to the interviews are laced with numerous examples drawn from their student teaching illustrating their observations and beliefs about diverse students. Readers will recall from previous sections, for example, teacher candidates' ideas about Native students' interest in social interaction as a motivation to attend school, their views that Native students prefer an approach to learning that is active, their observations and analyses of minority students' patterns of participation and nonparticipation in varying school contexts, and their beliefs about the strength of Native family and community connections.

In addition to direct experience with diverse learners during student teaching, interactions with teacher-colleagues at their school sites potentially influenced the teacher candidates' ideas about their students. But the novices differed on the worth of others' ideas about students. On the one hand, Dennis found working with teachers in a small Native village school who had previous experience with Native Americans in reservation schools to be helpful in learning about students' cultural ties (DW3SS23). On the other hand, Linda insisted that she had "learned never to listen to what teachers say" (LW3SSFN7). She thinks that after about three years, teachers become burned out and begin to hold more and more restricted views of their students.

In the previous two sections, I have conveyed what the teacher candidates believe about their culturally diverse students, especially

Alaska Native adolescents. I've also suggested where their ideas may have come from in looking briefly across their life experiences and student teaching. If learning from experience plays a key role in the development of ideas about students, then, in what ways novices attend to their students has important implications, especially in situations where they do not share a common frame of reference.

I argue that what beginning teachers think they want to know about culturally diverse students and why they believe this knowledge is of worth shapes their future learning about these students. I also hold that how novices direct their attention in regard to their students--for example, toward individuals or toward groups--influences what they have the opportunity to notice about the adolescents they teach. I explore these two frames of reference in the following sections.

Valued Knowledge: What Teacher Candidates Want to Know
About their Students and Their Warrants for this Knowledge

Two interview questions provided data for this analysis. The first question, within the interview focusing on knowledge of students, asked, "What would you want to know about your high school students in order to teach them U.S. history?" The second part of the interview, centered on planning to teach Westward expansion and development, questioned, "What would you want to know about Indian or Eskimo students in order to teach them this material?" For each question, I listened to the teacher candidates' initial responses before providing as prompts additional categories of possible knowledge about students--such as knowledge about subject matter background, language, and culture. Novices also volunteered comments on valuing knowledge about students elsewhere in the interviews.

What Teacher Candidates Want to Know about Their Students

Overall, the teacher candidates tended to speak in general terms when asked to name knowledge they'd find valuable to know in order to teach. On the one extreme is Dennis, who has little to say in response to either interview question or the probes. Although he does very briefly mention subject matter and cultural knowledge, his overall response seems to be summed up when he answers the question, "What would you want to know about your Native students in order to teach this material?" with "I think that (long pause) I don't know" (DW3TL15). On the other extreme, Linda gives lists of multiple aspects of her students' backgrounds that she'd want to know. The cases of Dennis, Esther, and Roger give a sense that as novices they may not yet know enough about students for them to understand what knowledge about those students would be most helpful in teaching them history.

I sorted these prospective teachers' responses into three major categories: subject matter knowledge, personal history and concerns, and cultural background. I consider each of these in the order of their overall importance to the group of teacher candidates.

Subject matter knowledge. Overwhelmingly, the prospective teachers wanted to know about their students' subject matter backgrounds. All respondents mentioned wanting to know about their students in this way, with Roger and Linda repeating it in both questions. Knowing about students' subject matter backgrounds means several things to the teacher candidates, including having an idea of what students have already studied in history, along with what they may have studied or are currently studying in related courses, such as American literature. For instance, Dennis states, "I think the primary thing to know is what they come with" (DW3SS32). Knowing students'

subject matter backgrounds also includes getting a sense of their interests in history.

Two of the teacher candidates also want to know about how students have learned history. What Linda and Roger want to know about previous teaching/learning situations differs in important ways, however. Roger focuses on teaching methods and learning tasks that students liked (RW3SS22, TL22), whereas Linda concerns herself with the purposes of studying history conveyed in students' previous classrooms and students' accompanying attitudes (LW3SSFN5). Linda wants to know "what they've learned, has it always been something they're supposed to regurgitate on a test? I would want to know how accepting they were of having everything come from just one perspective" (LW3TL39).

Personal histories and concerns. Second, these intending teachers want to know about who their students are, in the sense of their students' personal concerns and individual histories. Roger, for instance, feels he needs to know about students' emotional health. Given her focus on individual students, it's not surprising that Esther also makes mention of these matters, as well as Linda. Esther responds, "I don't think [I'd want to know] anything other than what I hope I'd have learned to teach them, period"-- that is, "who they are and what they're interested in" (EW3TL30). In particular, she is concerned with what it's like to be a teenager, what students are doing in their lives beyond school, and so forth. However, Linda's desire to know more about who her students are seems more closely related to school learning. For instance, she wants to know about her students' views of school, whether they like it or not, as well as any travel to the areas being studied in Westward expansion and development. Such travel would give learners mental images on which to hang new learning (LW3SSFN5).

Table 4.1. Summary of Teacher Candidates' Reported Experiences with Alaska Natives and Other Minority Peoples: Potential Sources of Ideas about Cultural Diversity

	Least Apparent Opportunity		Most Apparent Opportunity Over Time	
	Esther ^a	Dennis ^b	Roger ^c	Linda ^d
Family and Friends	Vietnamese friend during adolescence			Parents read her Alaska Native legends, summer visits to Native village
K-12 Schooling			High school student in large urban setting 80% black 20% white	Weekly classes on Native languages & culture in elementary school
Adult Living & Work Settings		Lived in mixed Native/non-Native rural transportation hub Managed lodge and flying service with Native employees	Worked with seasonal firefighting and oil field crews, including Native workers Worked & lived in group home with Native adolescents	Lived in Japan teaching English as a second language
University Courses	Introductory cross-cultural psychology	General reference to usefulness for making sense of communities		
Student Teaching				
Type of School Setting	large, urban multicultural	large, urban, multicultural	small, rural Alaska Native village	large, urban multicultural
Level	high school	middle school	middle & high school	high school
Approx. Number of students in School	1,500	750	35	1,500
Approx. Proportion of Minority Students in School	27%	15%	virtually 100%	27%
Approx. Proportion of Minority Students in Classes Reported by Novices	25%	[not known]	virtually 100%	50%
Approx. Proportion of Alaska Natives in School	7%	8%	virtually 100%	7%
Grade Levels Taught	8th grade	10-12th grades	7-12th grades	10-12th grades
Subject Matter Taught	U.S. History	World History, U.S. Government	all Language Arts, Health	American Literature, Writing Composition
Post-Student Teaching		Hired as full-time substitute in Alaska Native village		

- a. Esther has had the least apparent opportunity to learn about cultural diversity, especially about Alaska Natives. Her narrow background contrasts with the multiplicity and range of Linda's experiences.
- b. Dennis's recent hiring as a full-time substitute in an Alaska Native village school would have, presumably, provided an intensive opportunity to learn about Alaska Natives.
- c. Roger's student teaching experience provided an intensive experience to learn about Alaska Natives.
- d. Linda has had the most apparent opportunity to learn about cultural diversity, especially about Alaska Natives, if we look across the wide range of her lifetime of experiences.

Cultural backgrounds. Third, teacher candidates want to know about their students' cultural backgrounds. Two of them initially volunteered this response; the other two also replied positively to a probe asking about the value of cultural knowledge for teachers. Esther and Linda link Alaska Native history with culture, as reflected in Esther's statement:

Cultural in terms of history, know enough to be able to relate it to what you're teaching here. How has development of Alaska affected your culture? So that you can make a connection between how development in the mid-1800's affected the culture of the Indians. So you would have to know a little bit about what the culture was like before that, before development, and what it's like now. And that's going to vary from Native group to Native group and from village to village (EW3TL32).

Here Esther wants to know about Native students' cultural backgrounds in order to connect them with both their own Native history and U.S. history. In her view, a teacher will need to know about Native culture before development so as to track changes similar to those in the lifeways of Native Americans across the continent. She also implies that knowing about a Native history and culture will be insufficient because these vary across Native groups and communities. Realizing that there is not one Native culture and history, but many, is an important understanding for any teacher.

Summary. What it is that these teacher candidates would want to know about Native students is remarkably similar to a similar framework described by Kennedy (1991). She maintains that teachers need to consider three aspects about learners for purposes of teaching. First, they need to understand the knowledge students bring with them and how this knowledge might influence what is learned. Second, they need to have an idea of students' interests, inclinations, and motivations. Third, they need to be aware of students' cultural backgrounds.

That these beginning teachers want to pay attention to such aspects of their students is an essential starting place. That they want to pay attention to their students' cultural backgrounds is important. However, their understandings of students' thinking about history remains superficial.

Warrants for the Value of Knowledge about Students

I noted two kinds of warrants for valuing knowledge about students after asking the teacher candidates why they felt particular knowledge was important for teachers. The first warrant concerns connecting students and subject matter. The second pertains to survival, either for students or teachers.

Connecting students and subjects. First, these candidates say understanding one's students is necessary so that links between students and subject matter can be made. Roger reasons

Because when you know what their culture is and who they are, then you can get them into the text better by giving examples that you know will mean something to them. Like in Bisonville, you can always make them more interested if you associate things that are going on outside of [the village] with something else in [the village]. And so the students seem to understand it much more. It's just like talking about the Ghost Dance. You might associate that with [a particular traditional cultural event] (RW3SS23).

Dennis echoes this thinking when he explains why he'd want to know more about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which entails learning more about his students' Native backgrounds:

In a small setting, I could see how that could lend itself nicely to talking about treaties and Indian rights and the progression of things that have occurred as a result of what happened then and what's happening now. It would lend itself to an interesting debate on where Indian rights are now (DW3TL45).

He hopes to learn more about a key piece of legislation (passed in 1971) that tremendously influences Alaska Natives' lives.

For teachers, another aspect of connecting students and subject matter involves knowledge of students so as to determine whether or not they are "with you." Teachers come to understand their students well enough to detect their levels of cooperation, disinterest, or fatigue, and to make adjustments in their teaching approaches (Pinnegar 1988, 1989, cited in Carter, 1990). In essence, by keeping students "with" them, teachers facilitate students' investment in the learning process or in particular subject matter.

As illustration, Linda contends that it's important to understand students' views of school because if they don't like to be in school, "I need to spend more energy letting them know why we're doing what we are" (LW3SSFN6). Roger believes that to know students' interests in the subject matter is important "so you can use that as sort of some common knowledge between you and the students" (RW3SS23).

What these teacher candidates know about their students, then, presents a starting place for relating subjects and learners, and for getting them "with you." As will be seen in Chapter 9, the prospective teachers' efforts to relate subject matter and learners plays an important part in their reasoning about what and how to teach the period of Westward expansion and development.

Surviving school. For Dennis and Linda, knowledge of minority students in the context of school systems helps the teacher help those students survive and, perhaps, succeed in an alien or challenging environment. For instance, Linda insists teachers should understand that minority students' nonparticipation reflects their treatment by a system which doesn't respect them, not their lack of care about learning. Similarly, Dennis speaks for understanding Alaska Native students in the school context. He remarks that teachers need to

understand that their Native students may act "shy," may want to stick with other Native students, and may not want to stand out in class "because, if they are having difficulty with the social part of being in a big school, you need to realize this and give them the moral support they need to help them make the transition. Particularly the new students are going to have a lot of difficulty with that" (DW3SS10). For both Linda and Dennis, teachers who understand their minority students' behavior in context, rather than as a characteristic, will offer support instead of leaving those students alone.

Increasing their abilities to cope with situations they may find challenging is another reason three of the four teacher candidates give for valuing knowledge about students. For instance, Esther believes teachers need to understand that "teenagers always like to socialize, that they're in school to be with their friends" because "you'd lose your mind otherwise" (EW3SS1). Realizing that this is typical adolescent behavior--or realizing that students may have concerns other than school on their minds--a teacher can keep what adolescents do in perspective and not take it personally (EW3SS1). Esther says that

school may not be a prime priority for a particular student. And if you keep that perspective, I think it's just real important to understand and not to take things personally. Why is this one student sleeping through all of my classes? What's going on? Is it drugs? Is it alcohol? Is it because his best friend just blew his brains out, which is what had happened? So, it's just kind of understanding where they're coming from (EW3SS4).

Thus, one way to survive for teachers is not to take adolescents' behavior as a statement about oneself.

From another perspective, Dennis and Linda look at teachers' roles in small, Native communities and suggest that in order for teachers to interact successfully, they need to understand the community. For example, Dennis states that teachers should understand the significant

socio-economic changes that are going on in villages so that they can get along with community people (DWSS24). Linda proposes that understanding historical relations between a specific Native village and White peoples would help her understand how to approach teaching Westward expansion and development without getting into trouble. She explains,

I guess if they had historically good relations, then, Native American issues would be less volatile, it would be easy to work into them without stepping on toes and [yet] there wouldn't be a lot to relate to....However, if they come from a village that has negative interactions, or been wiped out by some sort of disease 89 years ago, there's gonna be a very different attitude towards White people in general and this whole history of the rest of America in general. And, it would make a big difference in how I'd approach it (LW3TL40-1).

In this quote, Linda integrates concerns with teacher survival with concerns for linking students and subject matter.

Summary. Most notably, these prospective teachers say they value knowledge about students because it helps them in attempts to engage Native students in learning subject matter and to support those students in difficult school settings. For themselves, these novices also see knowledge of students as a mediator of their personal responses to adolescents and a help in negotiating community relationships.

Looking to Learn: Teacher Candidates' Perspectives

Other perspectives held by the novices are also likely to influence what they have opportunities to learn about their culturally diverse students as beginning teachers. The collective responses of these prospective teachers offer a range of possible frames of reference, each of which points a beginning teacher toward different aspects of their students. As I see it, the teacher candidates take one or more of the following approaches to looking at students. They approach looking at students in light of 1) felt similarities and

differences between themselves and their students, 2) students' individuality, 3) group membership, and/or 4) treatment by institutional systems. I discuss and illustrate each perspective, as well as outline potential risks associated with each viewpoint.

Finding Felt Similarities and Differences

Teacher candidates may try to understand students who are culturally unlike themselves by comparing and contrasting similarities or differences they feel between themselves and those youngsters. The teacher candidates might, for example, compare personal qualities and life experiences with those of their students.

Some of these prospective teachers see themselves as like their adolescent students when they, themselves, were in high school. To illustrate, Roger--who went to high school in the late 1960's and early 1970's--had rebelled against school just as he sees his own students doing, although perhaps for different reasons (RW3SS1). Or, take Esther's belief that she can relate to students whose friendships are the most important thing about school or students who are quiet in class (EW3SS26) because she felt the same (EW3SS2).

However, Linda advises that "you can't assume you're like your students, especially if those students are of a different cultural background [than your own]" (LW3SSFN2). And, indeed, for the most part, these teacher candidates tended to see differences between themselves and their Native students. Only Esther, who claims to know little about Alaska Natives, does not speak about differences. She may not yet know enough about Alaska Native peoples to see them.

This possible explanation becomes credible when it's noted that the two prospective teachers who spent time student teaching (Roger) or substitute teaching (Dennis) in Native communities cited differences

between themselves and their Native students. In particular, they remarked upon distinctions in terms of personal qualities and behaviors based on cultural backgrounds and worldviews. Roger, for instance, notes that he's willing to take more chances or to be alone more than he sees his students doing:

I would say that I'm probably much more adventuresome than they would think. They would think walking down to the river would be a dangerous thing. Why would I want to do that? But I would put on my running shoes and run down there. And they would think, 'Well, gosh, there might be a bear down there or something.' So they don't take chances, and I would. I don't think they like to be alone. And I don't mind that. And I think that I'm probably more interested in their culture than they are in my culture (RW3SS29-30).

Dennis, having moved into a village as a full-time substitute several weeks before our interview, focused on differences between himself and Native peoples. He shares, "I think I enjoy being with them and in some ways sort of focus on the difference between myself and them and how they look at things and do things. I haven't really got to the similarities yet" (DW3SS8). When asked what differences he detected, Dennis mentioned that

They're very unstructured. I don't pride myself on structure, but when I look at them, they don't have any real structure at all that I can focus on. They're real individualistic people, and it may be this particular cultural group that I'm dealing with...but they're independent and each of them is capable of being extremely self-reliant (DW3SS30).

Risks accompany each of these perspectives. Each approach to looking at one's students carries possible unintended negative consequences. Dennis's comment raises an important risk involved in using felt similarities and differences as a way to learn about one's students. When looking at students in this way--especially when the teacher cannot make a "presumption of shared identity" (Jackson, 1986)--it's easy to make judgments about them according to one's own system.

Dennis may have already fallen into this trap when he remarks that Natives do not have a structure he can "focus on." In his choice of words, Dennis hints that his learning about Native students is being limited by his own frame of reference. Assuming that structure does not exist because it doesn't look like one expects means that Dennis may not try to look for the structure that no doubt takes a form he doesn't recognize yet.

Looking at Students as Individuals

Esther's perspective best illustrates looking at students as individuals. She asserts that, "Every student is different. Every class is different" (EW3PSTFN3) or conversely, "Each class is different and each kid is different" (EW3SS29). When asked what stood out to her about the three or four Alaska Native students in her American government class during student teaching, she replied, "Don't generalize...you can't generalize" (EW3SS5). When asked to describe her Native students' communication or interactional styles, she responded, "It varies by student," (EW3SS12) and proceeded to individually describe seven of her Native students in different classes along this dimension. She concluded, "I never thought of these kids as Natives. I just thought of them as kids" (EW3SS15).

Esther sees her students' successes and difficulties as products of "who they are" or "what they are" (EW3SS6,8,26). About her Black students who slept in class, she warns that it had "nothing to do with their color, just the kids. It's the kids that they were" (EW3PST9). About the difficulties of securing jobs she saw for Native peoples in small towns and villages, she is careful to explain this is a function of the size of the communities, "not because they're Natives" (EW3SS17). She summarizes, "...I could not generalize about any of my Alaska Native

students. I mean, some were flunking and some were A+++++. And I'm not sure that's related at all to their ethnicity, but rather to who they are."²⁴

In addition, Esther spoke about the dangers of generalizing, especially as she thought she heard overgeneralized remarks from other teachers. She declares,

I got real tired of hearing comments, 'So-and-so did such-and-such because she's Black.' I think you find yourself pegging people as soon as they walk into your classroom. 'Oh, you're Alaska Native, that means you're not going to write well, you're not going to want to talk in class.' You know, whatever...I think it's real dangerous. I think it's real dangerous to fall into that trap because it's stereotyping. Now I would say on the whole my Native students were quieter. The students that spoke up were my White students. Native students as a whole were quieter. But I have White students who were quiet. And I'd be hesitant to say they're quiet because they're Native. Because that sets up expectations, you know, teacher expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies" (EW3SS9-10).

Later, Esther added that she saw teachers consistently responding to student failure as a problem with drugs and alcohol. She continued, "They wouldn't look at any other factors. And it's the same thing with 'You're Black, therefore the problem has got to be this and the solution has to be this.' It's real programmed thinking as opposed to looking at the student as an individual" (EW3SS10). Here, Esther--who does seem to know many of her students as individuals--is willing to speak about her Native students as a group in relative ways. However, she does not attribute the characteristics she notices to shared racial, ethnic, or

²⁴ Esther notes that she didn't work with many Alaska Native students in her courses into which were tracked average students, implying that she might have had more Native students in basic or remedial courses, as Linda also previously suggested. In addition, Esther mentions that there were not enough Native students in any one class to think of them as a group (EW3PST7-8). Still, the frequency and consistency of her responses around the need to look at students as individuals and to avoid making even comments of a general nature suggests the strength of her perspective beyond the conditions of her student teaching.

cultural backgrounds. She also makes a critical observation that rigid and premature naming and framing of problems leads to limited solution possibilities.

How Esther looks at students primarily as unique individuals reflects a standpoint exemplified by most intending teachers (Paine, 1988). Teacher candidates like Esther and those studied by Paine may miss the special qualities of students rooted in those students' differing group memberships. In perhaps thinking of themselves as "color-blind," they may refuse to acknowledge who their students are as parts of interconnected communities based on race, culture, socio-economic backgrounds, and so forth. .

Looking at Students in Groups

Esther has put herself in opposition to those who would describe their students based on group membership. She has cautioned--with weighty reason--that to look at students through that lens invites stereotyping. She leans heavily toward taking an individualistic perspective, even though (at one point) she describes her Native students' behavior as a group.

Yet, some other candidates seem able to respectfully describe students who are culturally different from themselves while speaking about them as a group. To illustrate, I draw on Linda's characterization of and enthusiasm for her African-American students. She describes them as creative in language use, making language their own, making it fit their world. She saw them as reacting "completely and honestly and bluntly." She saw them as concerned with racial issues in and out of school, as well as able to synthesize ideas well (LW3PST84-5).

Here, Linda speaks with obvious enjoyment about getting to know African-American adolescents, with whom she'd had little experience prior to student teaching. Linda may relate to these students, in part, because she feels a connection between who she sees them to be and how she sees herself. Linda is very much an activist, speaking out on behalf of causes in, for example, letters to the editor. As a language arts teacher, she is intrigued with the purposes and uses of language. And, as an individual apparently raised in a family to appreciate cultural diversity and with international experience of her own, she seems to want to celebrate the abilities and perspectives of others.²⁵

The teacher candidates' responses to the scenario analyzed above, in which they ask their imaginary colleagues about their Alaska Native students' class participation, also give a sense of how these intending teachers might think about their students as having common characteristics without necessarily stereotyping them. Recall that the prospective teachers tended to agree with the basic idea that the Native students were quiet, that is, in a large school setting where they were minorities. Some of the teacher candidates had made contrary observations about Native students in small village schools. And, the intending teachers did not care for the kinds of expectations and consequences for learning that their imaginary colleagues had set up based on their assumptions.

Unintended negative consequences may also arise from looking at students as groups. The danger of prejudgments readily comes to mind. Indeed, teacher educators may inadvertently contribute to such a problem

²⁵ Linda's enthusiasm for and description of her African-American students as a group may also be an example of learning about students through a sense of felt similarities.

as they attempt to build novices' knowledge about diverse students. Speaking about characteristics in regard to particular racial or cultural groups, teacher educators and staff developers may actually reinforce, add to, or even create stereotypes for novices (Cazden & Mehan, 1989; Delpit, 1986; Grant, 1991; McDiarmid, 1990; McDiarmid & Price, 1990). Esther makes a similar point:

You take these courses to make you more culturally aware. And they are very valuable, but what they also are are generalizations. Blacks will act this way. Whites will act this way. Asians will act that way and Alaska Natives will act this way. Bunk! People are people. Yes, ...some generalizations are useful to a point of making you aware that people are different. But I could not generalize about any of my Alaska Native students." (EW3SS6).

When teachers lump students into categories, they may misunderstand or fail to recognize the complex mix of qualities each student is. Teachers may limit getting to know students in these complexities when they focus on group characteristics.

Seeing Minority Students in Institutional Context

Another lens for understanding one's students is to look at their experience in and treatment by the institutional school system. Linda most dramatically expresses this viewpoint, but Esther also alludes to it. Recall that in the context of discussing patterns of participation, Linda expounded upon the reasons for minority students' nonparticipation in a system that doesn't respect or attend to them. She also spoke at length about tracking as an illustration of unequal learning opportunities for students of color.

Esther, too, understands her African-American students by looking at how minority status constrains school learning experiences. First, she describes the racial tensions of the high school where she completed student teaching in which Blacks hung out at one end of the building and

the opposite end of the school contained the Whites. Then, speaking about her unit on civil rights in two American government classes, each of which had three or so African-American students, Esther notes that, "During this section...I would have full attention of the Blacks but they wouldn't talk up...And it was very unfair for me to expect that. But I had really hoped for a much more passionate discussion of the injustices and the discrimination in this country" (EW3V31-2). She no longer hopes for that kind of passionate discussion because her students were so uncomfortable with the topic. When asked why her expectations might not have been fair, Esther observed, "Because it puts them on the spot. They are not only a minority in the country, they're a minority in the classroom. Women's rights, half the kids are girls in the room. So there's safety in numbers" (EW3V33). Drawing on her own professional experience in business and government where she was often the only woman, Esther adds, "I know that feeling that anything you say, if you were to have a discussion of women's rights and you're the only woman in the room, instantly anything you say is loaded. So it really just wasn't very fair of me to hope for that [class discussion]" (EW3V34). In classes or schools where students of color are in the minority, opportunities to explore sensitive or controversial topics may be constrained by the dynamics of domination, unless teachers and school leaders are especially effective in developing a safe, risk-taking environment for everyone.

Learning about minority students by looking at their treatment by the school's systems may additionally provide teacher candidates a broad perspective when compared with the view afforded by focusing only on individuals or cultural or racial groups. As Linda suggests, a prospective teacher may come to better understand the contextual factors

which shape students' lives and opportunities to learn. Linda's view of her minority students sees them as making reasonable choices; we get a sense of her respect for them as purposeful actors in the situation. However, a risk of giving undue power to the systems at work in minority students' school lives is that individuals may come to be seen as merely victims, passive sufferers. Then, these students may be thought of as powerless to understand or deal with their situations. Such an assessment reproduces the dominant-minority power relationships already in place. Even Linda comes perilously close to accepting this view in her use of the term "victim."

In Conclusion

I have suggested four frames of reference that individually or in combination lead teachers to notice certain aspects and not others about culturally diverse learners. Each perspective carries risks. No one viewpoint is likely to help teachers gather all that might be appropriate or helpful for them to understand about Alaska Natives. Thus, in order to fully learn about students who are culturally different from oneself, especially of a so-called minority culture, beginning teachers need to be able to shift perspectives readily. They also need to learn to look outside the walls of the school, a disposition I discuss below.

Cultural Respect Is Necessary, But Not Enough

The most positive aspect of these teacher candidates' ideas about Alaska Native and other minority students is the apparent overall lack of obvious stereotyping and the presence of general respect for their culturally diverse students. Possible concerns are raised, however, by Dennis's perspective in getting to know his students as a new long-term substitute teacher, or his belief that Native students in small schools

do not possess a strong subject matter background. Esther may limit a richer understanding of some students by not recognizing their cultural identities. Linda's near-overzealousness may make her prone to take the side of those she sees as "victims," with the possibility of being patronizing. Roger's focus on teaching methods instead of what his students know about the substance of history may limit their learning opportunities no matter how much he respects them as persons. However, as a foundation for facilitating learning, their basic perspectives on Alaska Native and other minority students is important and necessary.

Yet, generalized knowledge about culturally diverse learners does not appear to improve teachers' abilities to connect subject matter and those students (National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, n.d.). McDiarmid (1990) concludes that "the connection between...teachers' knowledge of the historical and cultural background of learners and teachers' capacity to assist culturally different children develop meaningful understandings of subject matter is...speculative and tenuous" (p. 17). So, it is not enough that the focal teacher candidates possess an awareness and respect about their students' cultural backgrounds. They also need the capacity to connect culturally diverse learners with subject matter.²⁶

The knowledge and beliefs these beginning teachers hold about culturally diverse learners remains general, lacking specificity and complexity. This is the case with both their understandings of students' cultural frames of reference and the novices' ideas about students' subject matter preconceptions, interests, potential learning

²⁶ This capacity is at the center of Chapter 7, concerning the teacher candidates' efforts to link Alaska Native learners with ideas about Westward expansion and development.

difficulties, and so forth. For instance, novices may say they value students' cultural backgrounds. But more deeply, they also need to know how school knowledge is perceived in learners' cultures (McDiarmid, 1991). Further, they need to seek to understand the role that a particular family's experience with educational institutions may also play in shaping the attitudes and backgrounds particular students bring to learning history. Thus, mediating subject matter in a meaningful way for diverse learners may prove a challenge for these beginning teachers.

These prospective teachers appeared to gain much of their current understanding about students from their recent encounters with diverse learners during student teaching. Thus, we might expect that they would continue to build conceptions of students who are culturally different from themselves over their first intensive year(s) of teaching. Several dispositions may influence their future learning about diverse students: I suggest that novices with relatively unstereotyped ideas about diverse students may be better positioned to learn about those students as learners of subject matter. In addition, the kinds of knowledge about students these novices claim to value and their reasons for their worth also directs their attention to particular aspects of who students are. Finally, the novices' tendencies to look at students who are culturally different from themselves in several ways--comparing their own backgrounds and characteristics with those of their students, seeing them as individuals or as groups, and noticing the terms of institutional treatment--would also filter and shape what these beginning teachers come to further understand about these students.

The preceding implies that educators in a position to support beginning teachers need to help novices focus on the kinds and quality of knowledge about students they are developing. In addition,

university supervisors of student teaching or internships, as well as mentor teachers, peer coaches, department heads, and principals need to call attention to the ways novices are going about trying to learn about students who are culturally different from themselves. These persons could also help novices learn to look beyond the walls of the classroom and school and into community settings to learn more about their culturally diverse students. (For examples of rural Alaskan teachers who take this approach to learning about their students, see McDiarmid, Kleinfeld, & Parrett, 1988.)

It would be useful to know how teacher education across courses and field experience shapes such dispositions. As well, it would be specifically useful to know how teacher candidates and first-year teachers develop knowledge and beliefs about culturally diverse students from their practice.

In closing, Roger reminds all teachers to take seriously learning about their students. Reflecting in the context of small, Native village schools, Roger's comment holds for all settings, especially where teachers and students cannot presume to share a common frame of reference: "I think it would be important for the teacher to know that you're going to go in there and teach something, but they're going to teach you some things about who they are too" (RW3SS32).



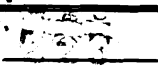
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TEACHING U.S. HISTORY TO ALASKA NATIVE STUDENTS: KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS
OF PROSPECTIVE SECONDARY TEACHERS

Volume II

By

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A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER 5

VIEWS OF LEARNING, VISIONS OF GOOD TEACHING IN HISTORY

As we have seen, these teacher candidates bring to their first year of teaching ideas about the subject matter of history and culturally diverse students. They also carry beliefs about learning and teaching in terms of history and culturally diverse learners.

Their notions about learning and teaching reflect each other: Views of learning are reflected in their ideas about teaching, and in their visions of teaching we see images of how the prospective teachers think learning does--and should --occur. A key theme in their views of learning concerns the need to create connections between students and subjects, especially when--from the intending teachers' perspectives--Alaska Native learners do not relate to U.S. history. Thus, their visions of good teaching in history accent ways they see the teachers in the teaching vignettes, described in Chapter 2, trying to link students' backgrounds with history.

At the same time, the prospective teachers' beliefs about history, culturally diverse learners, and learning interact to shape their visions of teaching. For instance, their ideas about purposes for studying history interact with beliefs about students to put an emphasis on teaching approaches that have promise for relating who students are with U.S. history. Finally, the novices' ideas about teaching also speak to their conception of the role of teacher.

This chapter builds on the beginning teachers' ideas about learning implicit in the discussion of their beliefs about culturally diverse learners in the previous chapter. It highlights the importance

in the minds of these teacher candidates of making connections between learners and subject matter. In addition, it foreshadows subsequent chapters which examine the teacher candidates' curriculum plans and the ways they reason about what and how to teach U.S. history to Alaska Native learners.

Teacher Candidates' Views on Learning in History

Dennis, Esther, Linda, and Roger hold working ideas about how learning occurs. Below, I describe their beliefs about the nature of learning in history and the conditions which best contribute to that learning. While I partially separate these two sets of beliefs for analytical purposes, they interrelate both in the responses of the prospective teachers and in the world of teaching practice.

Nature of learning

What kind of work do these teacher candidates believe students need to do in order to learn U.S. history? Looking at the teacher candidates' responses with this analytical question in mind helped me examine their working notions about learning.¹ Except for Dennis, these teacher candidates see the work of learning as interacting--interacting with ideas and materials through activities. Dennis, however, seems to see learning as a process of absorbing and reacting. Indeed, Esther, Linda, and Roger would probably see Dennis' view of learning as one in which the teacher does the work, not the students.

Learning as interaction and discovery. According to Esther, Linda, and Roger, learning as a process of interaction involves students in "figuring out things instead of having somebody tell [them]" (RW3V6).

¹ I do not attempt to analyze the teacher candidates' ideas about learning across a set of learning theories. Rather, I focus on one polarity of views about learning that most obviously surfaces across the prospective teachers' responses.

That is, in Linda's view, learning means students are led to discover things on their own. Both Linda and Esther believe learning occurs when learners are allowed room to make mistakes. Recall, however, Roger's image of his Athabascan students as reluctant to do anything they didn't know how to do. Perhaps his students would refuse to interact with ideas or materials if they didn't understand them or the task.²

According to Esther, learning entails integrating information, synthesizing ideas, and applying new understandings. For her, youngsters are learning when they respond to essay questions and participate in simulations. Essay questions require interaction with ideas and integration because

they make you synthesize. [They involve] taking everything [students] have heard, watched, and seen and putting it all together in a different way and applying it. That's what you need to do when you're a grownup in the world, not regurgitate facts (EW3TL22).

For Esther, learning in school, then, should reflect learning that occurs out of school in adult roles.

Students learn more fully when they interact with ideas, especially in the form of a simulation, according to Roger and Esther. Roger contrasts Mr. Flanders, who dramatically lectures about the Civil War from an outline in one vignette, with Mr. Gomez, who uses a simulation of the Depression in another scenario. Roger concludes,

I think that teaching history by way of lecture has only so much value. [Mr. Gomez's] way gives students a better idea, a better perspective of what's going on when they actually have to sit down and do the role playing and they kind of visualize the...events much better by going through it this way. And I think they'll learn a lot from it" (RW3V23).

² Linda also notes her understanding of traditional Native ways of learning in which novices learn by observing, along with participating (LW1SS16). She does not note, however, the possible conflict between her view of learning through discovery and making mistakes with her understanding of traditional Native ways of learning.

Esther agrees that interaction with ideas through participation in a role results in a much richer understanding of the issues than simply being told information. She gives the example of teaching labor history during student teaching. She contends that students understand why strikes occur when they've had to get inside the role and to think and feel like strikers:

You understand that down to the name calling and so on, the kinds of tensions and emotions and difficulty in reaching compromise. If you have to do it, you understand it. If you're just told 'Side A and Side B disagree on point X,' well, so what? Why can't they agree? Because you haven't been forced to come up with an agreement. When you are, you have a much better understanding of what's happened" (EW3V46).

In Esther's view, being told information doesn't help students understand history in the way that being required to participate in a situation does. Like simulations, activities in which students interact with each others' thinking--for example, when they listen to each others' previously written journal responses being read aloud--are also profitable in Roger's view of learning.

Learning as acquisition and reaction. On the other side of the coin of learning is the view that learning involves acquiring or absorbing information and ideas, followed by a reaction to the material. Take note of the language Dennis uses as he describes how his Alaska Native students performed in the large, urban middle school where he completed his student teaching: "[They were] taking in the material that was presented and being able to let the instructor know that they had absorbed it, giving it back" (DW3SS5). Although the dynamics of "taking in" and "giving back" imply a kind of dialogic relationship between student and teacher, these terms do not necessarily suggest an interaction with the ideas being taken in by the students. Associated with this view of learning is the notion that teaching is "getting the

information across" (DW3TL36). Once information is received, students respond. For example, in describing Miss Channing's teaching approach, Dennis alludes to putting material in front of students and getting their reactions to it (DW3V43). Dennis seems to consider learning to be a kind of stimulus-response activity, with memory of material as its end. This view stands in contrast to a more interactive view of learning, which involves synthesis and application as its goals, as Esther explained.

Activities function in different ways in the two orientations toward learning. In the reactive view of learning, activities seem to operate as a way either of getting material across to students or as a means of holding their attention during the process. In a view of learning as an interactive process, activities are primarily contexts for the work of learning.

Learning as "digestion". Another way to look at this contrast in views of learning in history is to explore the metaphor of learning as digestion, a recurring image in Linda's talk. Linda thinks about the work of learning as a kind of processing of ideas, making them one's own. She thoroughly objects to "predigested" history (LW3V1,6,20) in which teachers such as Mr. Flanders and Mrs. Kennedy in two of the vignettes have processed the lesson's ideas into such predetermined chunks that there's nothing for students to chew on. Linda prefers that her students encounter "raw" material instead of having them regurgitate fragments of history. She wants to present them with viewpoints and ideas that they can take or leave or transform into their own understanding. For instance, she approved of a worksheet entitled, "A Kansas Homesteader Builds a Sod House" that accompanies one of the high school U.S. history texts (Boorstin & Kelley, 1986) which she examined

during an interview. She explained,

[It] describes what was done, kind of like an excerpt from a diary or something like that. And those are really interesting. Those make the class come alive a little bit because they're real people saying, history. Whether he's dead or not is beside the point. They're real people, they're not a guy who sits there, synthesizes it, [so the class] slurps it all up and spits it back up. It's not regurgitated. This is one point of view and you take it in just as it came, it's raw. And that's the best way for them to do 'cause they can process it themselves very effectively" (LW3TL13).

Linda sees learning in history as the processing of information that has not already been formed into a sanitized argument. From this perspective, Dennis' view of learning as absorption brings to mind the picture of nutrients being ingested via intravenous tubing without the requirement of transformation within an individual's system.

In sum, then, the views on the nature of learning most obvious in these teacher candidates' comments are the inverse of each other. On the one side, learning is thought of as the reception and response to predigested transmissions of information. This notion contrasts, on the other side, with learning seen as interaction and reconstruction of ideas.

Conditions for Learning

These intending teachers also carry ideas about the conditions under which learning in U. S. history occurs most readily and profoundly. According to their views, these conditions foster students' interest and lead to deepened understanding of subject matter. The most important condition in the minds of these prospective teachers is connectedness, to which I turn first.

Making connections. Using terms such as "connections," "linkages," "associations," and "correlations," each of the teacher candidates espouses the belief that learning occurs when teachers help students relate to the subject under study. More specifically, they

believe that learning will thrive the more the distance between learners and subject matter can be decreased. Relevance of subject matter to learners creates a conduit through which interest and understanding flow.

These prospective teachers frequently used language evoking images of proximity. They argue that material, ideas, and circumstances which are be "close" to their students will foster learning. I refer to this belief as the "principle of proximity." The essence of the idea is contained in Esther's response to Miss Channing's teaching approach, which she believed showed promise to be effective in helping Alaska Native students learn U.S. history. In that teaching vignette, Miss Channing focuses on the concept of colonization by refreshing their understandings of English colonization on the Eastern seaboard of the United States and extending the idea to the Russians' exploration of Alaska and their colonization of Kodiak Island. Esther explains,

[Miss Channing's approach] takes something very far away from the kids, 'Ho hum, this is boring. Why am I studying this?' Hooking it in with something [that's] real close--Alaska history--to make it more relevant, at least to some of them. Now in a smaller setting, in a rural setting, these kids are Alaskans and so I think in a lot of ways it can be even more relevant to them, particularly if you're teaching in Kodiak (EW3V43).

Esther believes that students are disinterested in the study of material that is removed from their experiences. To apply a concept to a more local situation--that is, the idea of colonization in Alaska history, or the specific history of Kodiak--presumably increases interest.

However, Esther also considers a potential trap in the assumption that learners who live in a particular area are necessarily interested in things related to it. She continues,

In a multicultural setting, what I found here in town was so many of the students have just moved into town or have only been here for a year or two, and teaching about Alaska, they're really just

not interested. You know, you have a mixture of kids who are Alaskan or who have been here for as long as they can remember, but you also have the kids who just got here whose mom or dad are in the military. And so then you have both. You sort of have a Lower 48 classroom and an Alaskan classroom (EW3V43).

She noted that some students were "completely unknowledgeable about this state. That was just something I forgot to take into consideration, you can get a lot of transients" (EW3V43). While recognizing the fallacy of some of her guiding assumptions concerning students who turned out to be transients, Esther still misses the more central question of where students' identifications and interests lie. For instance, does she assume too much in believing that adolescents--even long-time residents--relate to the events of several hundred years ago or to locations in a state that may be as far from their home as Detroit is from Philadelphia? Does she assume too much when believing that Alaska Native learners affiliate with Alaska as a state, a governmental entity?

According to these teacher candidates, students' motivation to learn history increases when such connections are made. Linda notes that such linkages will help "students see themselves as connected to history so that they will want to learn it" (LW3SSFN1). She maintains that creating associations will help learners identify with the material and will foster their wanting to learn it.

Whenever I had students who were far removed from what we were studying I would try to do this, whether it's in time or culture or place or whatever. If they were far removed, then bringing something that was close to home into the issue would just make it easier for them to identify with (LW3V6).

Students' interest is piqued when the familiar is included in lessons. Based on his experience student teaching in a small rural Athabascan village, Roger suggests using similarities between U.S. history and local or tribal history which students (presumably) already know. He says,

It seems like the Indians I was working with, it seems like the best way of doing things would be show them examples of how certain events in United States history were similar to events that happened in their own history that they're really familiar with. They don't think of it in terms of history, they just think of it in terms of they know this. And so you can show them that history is really relevant to them. It seemed like whenever they hear of something that's going on in their community or something like that, they just perk right up (RW3SS24).

Given these reasons, it's not surprising that Roger views favorably the community history project Ms. Brown describes in the vignette of her teaching approach. Roger sees this project--in which students will publish a local history after collecting oral histories from residents--as directly related to the students because it centers on their community (RW3V35). In sum, familiarity breeds learners' interest, in the view of these prospective teachers.

Other kinds of connections create optimal conditions for culturally diverse students' learning, as well. In addition to relating subject matter to students, ideas within the subject matter can also be linked to one another. Such "parallelisms" (e.g., LW3V62) between historical ideas or events are linked across time and place. Dennis finds Miss Channing's approach to be illustrative:

I think that the correlation between the two colonial periods and two different places is good to help students assimilate that things happen in different places but are in a lot of ways the same....Making it Alaskan would encourage some interest among Alaskans (DW3V37).

The result, according to Linda, is that students will come to make connections on their own (LW3SS6). In Linda's view, as well, ideas that are related to each other--and especially ideas that are related in context--make for more powerful learning experiences. For instance, teaching units should be planned so that they cohere, thus helping students to learn connections between ideas or information (LW3PST60). Reading literature such as The Virginian or Black Elk Speaks "makes it

easier to understand things" compared to memorizing fragmented information from a textbook (LW3TL53-54).

Concerns with linking learners and the subject matter at hand occupy a central place in the thinking of these prospective teachers. They believe that identification with and interest in material--and ultimately learning--occurs when close connections are made between students' experiences and the subject. However, they also note other conditions which they believe foster learning of U.S. history, and it is to these I now turn more briefly.

Building intellectual supports. Learning occurs more readily and more deeply when intellectual supports are built into content and activities, according to most of these teacher candidates. Most important in the minds of Dennis, Esther, and Linda is the need to provide learners with enough background information that they are able to succeed at understanding material or doing a task. For instance, Esther sees the need to "lay the groundwork" for students about to do a simulation of the Great Depression. To illustrate, she would give students factual material and a framework for their roles as bankers:

I found it's generally a lot more effective if they have at least some idea of where to go. If you don't just say, "Okay, it's the Great Depression and you're a bank. Go for it." You need to give them some more things to work with, [and then] kids can get a much richer understanding of the complexities of the time (EW3V27).

In another case in point, Linda contends that Alaska Native students would need to have their background knowledge in geography built up in order to locate and picture the places and conditions involved in Westward expansion and development.

Dennis shares the concern that students have enough support to be successful; however, he takes a slightly different tack. Rather than being concerned that learners have developed the background necessary to

engage in the act of learning something new, Dennis wants to ensure that learners have acquired enough information or skill within the lesson to successfully complete follow-up practice activities. For example, he wonders whether Miss Channing has given her students enough guided practice³ so that they can independently compose a short report comparing and contrasting English colonization on the East coast with Russian colonization in Alaska as assigned in the vignette.⁴ The implied difference centers on what's needed for success in learning-- sufficient existing frameworks to construct new ideas or enough practice within the lesson to demonstrate acquired understandings. These two conditions are most likely not mutually exclusive, however.

Learners also benefit when material they are studying is organized around a framework in the view of most of these teacher candidates. For instance, Dennis sees the lecture outline provided by Mr. Flanders in the first vignette as a way to help learners focus on key ideas. Esther wants to make sure that students are given an overview of the material as a kind of conceptual roadmap. She approves of the chapter overview provided in one high school U.S. history textbook she examined as part of an interview; she also begins her unit on Westward expansion and development with a conceptual organizer.

Introducing variety. Including a variety of learning approaches

³ Guided practice is a term often associated with clinical teaching practices, especially those designed by Madeline Hunter. The term refers to the practice of skills under the guidance and monitoring of the teacher prior to students being allowed to practice on their own and without help. Looking at learning in this manner implies that students must have sufficiently mastered material during the lesson to practice independently without fundamental error and to perform the practice task at a high rate of success.

⁴ That Dennis is concerned with students having enough guidance to compose their report may reflect his view of learning as absorption and reaction.

facilitates learners' interest and understanding. This common tenet of learning psychology finds supporters among the prospective teachers in this study. Some hold that students don't all learn in the same way, so it's necessary to appeal to different modes of learning. Referring to Mr. Flanders' lecture style in the first vignette, Esther notes that, "If it's the only thing you do, I think you're going to be losing some kids who don't pick up information from lecturing. So, I think it's important to build in lots of different things" (EW3V5). Dennis reaches the same conclusion, but uses different reasoning. He believes that incorporating numerous different learning media--discussions, readings, videos, and so forth--maintains students' interest as well as protects a teacher's reputation, "So that you don't become the boring old history teacher than nobody wants to go see" (DW3V45).

Linda takes a slightly different slant on the issue of variety in learning approaches. Linda, too, tries to light up students' interest using a variety of strategies and materials. However, her purpose is to keep students off balance, not make learning more comfortable. Novelty and surprise were Linda's allies. She described the beginning to a poetry unit in American literature in which she used xeroxed copies of lyrics to rap songs and songs by "The Doors" rock band; however, she didn't initially identify the writers. She declared, "From then on out, I kept catching them off guard all along the way. I really think that's a pretty effective way to do it. They had no idea what to expect" (LW3PST47).

Rather than focusing solely on variety in the means of learning, Linda also centers on variety in subject matter as a facilitator of deep understanding. For example, she argues for giving learners multiple examples of a concept across time and place. She sees Miss Channing's

approach as powerful in this way:

To relate similar events that happen in different cultures at different times, so the students really understand. The more variety you give them, the better chance they have of understanding something. So, they have a really good chance of understanding what a colony is and what colonization is all about (LW3V59).

Linda maintains that understanding is more likely when students can see commonalities across instances in multiple settings.

Having fun. Finally, infusing fun into learning also increases interest and understanding. Roger likes Ms. Brown's local history project because "it's a fun way for the students to learn, and if it's fun they're going to learn more." History that "comes alive" through a readers' theater⁵ about the Middle Ages counts as fun in Esther's classroom. Linda approves of Mr. Gomez's simulation of the Great Depression: "This role playing, jumping into it rather than just reading about it from a detached point of view, is simply more fun. And I guess I really think if it can be fun, why not have it be fun?" (LW3V39). Linda wants learning to be fun for herself as much as for her students, but thinks of her desires to have fun as very unteacher-like. She explains,

I'm supposed to have some sort of pedagogical, theoretical background [for] everything I do. And some sort of giant, grand goal, but, I don't know, if it's fun then all those things are a lot more easily brought about. And so, I'm gonna certainly have fun if I'm gonna be doing this for a long time in my life (LW3V44-45).

In other words, one condition for Linda's long term commitment to teaching is to find some fun in it. Dennis, however, sees having fun differently than the rest. While he retains the idea of having fun

⁵ The strategy referred to as readers' theater comes from the language arts. It involves the participants in reading aloud script-like passages that create or re-create a scene or event without sets, costumes, or acting.

within the context of the subject matter, he does so with the idea of making a joke out of an historical event or character.

The view that learning is best when it's fun is apparently important to each of these teacher candidates. However, this view is not a key consideration so much in and of itself to these prospective teachers, but as it supports their concerns--except for Dennis--to make learning interactive or interesting. Also, that this study focuses on the thinking of secondary teacher candidates may help explain the minor role "having fun" plays in their views. Secondary school usually places subject matter at the center of its purposes, rather than learners and learning. Perhaps were the focal teacher candidates prospective elementary teachers they'd be more inclined to use such language and to hold as a primary goal making learning enjoyable for its own sake.

Summary. According to these prospective teachers, learning in U.S. history occurs when culturally diverse students are motivated by interest. In the views of these teacher candidates, learning in history is made more interesting and ideas are more readily and deeply understood when the conditions of learning involve connecting students with subject matter, building in intellectual supports, introducing variety in learning media and multiple illustrations of concepts, and having fun as much as it's possible.

Visions of Good Teaching in History

Central to the novices' views of learning is the belief that as the level of students' interest in history increases, so does learning. In their line of thinking, one way to develop interest is to help students identify with the material being studied. A useful strategy, in their views, to develop such an identification is to relate history to students' backgrounds.

Thus, good teaching in U.S. history, according to these teacher candidates, turns on attempts to bring together learners and subject matter and to link aspects of the subject matter itself. Listen, for example, to Linda's words:

The teacher should always be linking, whatever they're teaching, especially if it's history but any subject that matter at all, to what the students know about their world. And if the teacher's not doing that, then he's not really teaching, he's just kind of standing there, or she's just standing there lecturing. The only way I'm ever gonna make my students learn anything, make them care about learning anything, I can't make them learn anything, is to make it, some connection between their lives, and the issues or the information we're discussing (LW3SS5).

In this quote, Linda implicitly values--even holds as an ideal--a definition of teaching which is more than simply giving out information to students. Creating connections-- especially creating a relationship between learners and subject is seen as the central task of teaching. This theme weaves through the prospective teachers' responses to six teaching vignettes depicting varying approaches to history instruction, which I describe below.⁶

The intending teachers' visions of good teaching in U.S. history are intertwined with their views of history as a discipline, as well as their beliefs about learners and learning in history. For instance, they respond positively to approaches in which teachers' beliefs about the purposes of studying U.S. history are similar to their own-- specifically, that understanding the past helps in understanding the present and in making wise decisions, or that history helps us understand other peoples. Too, their ideas about learners and learning play a part. Recall from the analysis of their ideas about students

⁶ Even Dennis, whose working theory of learning is centered on students' assimilation of and response to information, values connecting students' lives with subjects.

that these teacher candidates think all learners experience difficulties in trying to make connections between ideas or events within history and between their own lives and the subject. In addition, some of them (notably Esther and Linda) believe that Alaska Native learners do not relate to U.S. history. Thus, the beginning teachers also think that approaches which bring U.S. history close to "what students know about their world," to use Linda's words above, are desirable and effective for Alaska Native learners.

Each scenario briefly describes a fictional history teacher's approach--his or her goals, subject matter content, and teaching/learning activities. Table 5.1 summarizes the scenarios as each represents the intersection of a dimension of historical understanding with a kind of pedagogical activity. (See Appendix A for complete vignettes.) As context for the teacher candidates' responses to these vignettes, I introduce in summary fashion, and in the order the teacher candidates encountered them, each teacher's instructional approach:

Mr. Flanders: This teacher primarily uses lecture, along with questions of students to get across the chronology of the Civil War. His presence fills the room. Students take notes from a broad outline. He also opens issues of how Lincoln saw slavery.

Ms. Brown: This teacher feels that her students do not know the community they've been raised in, and so she plans an oral history project that will also make the point that people are all part of making history. Students will create a book that can be given to the community. Planning, interviewing, transcribing, and publishing activities will take 1-2 days of each week across the year.

Mrs. Kennedy: This teacher focuses on a textual analysis of the Declaration of Independence, using a copy of the original document, to set the stage for studying the Revolutionary War. Students write a paragraph at the beginning of the period about sovereignty and add to it at the close of class, turning it in to the teacher.

Mr. Gomez: This teacher's theme for the year is "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." In this vignette, he uses several simulations and role-playing activities to help students

understand the Great Depression so that similar problems might be avoided in the future. He also uses present-day examples to compare with period events.

Mr. Herndon: This teacher uses Black History Month as an opportunity to study the civil rights movement, to stress the contributions of African-Americans to U.S. history, and to look at U.S. history from the point of view of minority peoples. He wants his Black students to develop pride in their heritage. He integrates Black music and literature.

Miss Channing: This teacher builds on her students' knowledge of colonization on the East Coast, comparing this colonization with that by the Russians in Alaska. Students view a videotape, summarize their learnings with the teacher, and are assigned to write a short analytic essay.

. I highlight four of these teaching approaches--those envisioned by Mr. Gomez, Miss Channing, Ms. Brown and Mr. Herndon. These vignettes represent for the teacher candidates especially positive efforts to create connections --first, between students and subjects, and secondarily, within history itself. In referring to the prospective teachers' responses as "visions of good teaching," I call attention to their evaluation of the approaches.

Mr. Gomez: Doomed to Repeat the Past

I asked each teacher candidate after we had discussed the six vignettes, "Which approach do you think best fits either who you are or whom you would like to be as a U.S. history teacher?" "Mr. Gomez," three of the four novices answered. Even the fourth prospective teacher (Dennis) also spoke positively about Mr. Gomez and wanted to incorporate his approach into his own. What is it about U.S. history and its teaching as represented in Mr. Gomez that appeals so strongly to these intending teachers?

In this vignette, Mr. Gomez had expressed concern that his high school students didn't value the study of history, so this year he began his classes with a discussion of the phrase, "Those who do not know

history are doomed to repeat it." When his classes were ready to study the Great Depression, he planned a unit that would involve simulations, role-playing, and debates, while associating events of the period (e.g., stock market crash) with relatively recent occurrences (e.g., Black Monday on the U.S. stock market, October, 1988).⁷ For instance, Mr. Gomez pictured small groups of students taking on the role of economic groups or institutions and re-playing the Crash of '29 and its aftermath. He imagined having students trying to step into President Roosevelt's shoes to discuss and determine problem-solving approaches and solution strategies.

Mr. Gomez's instructional approach reflects the nature of history in ways that are similar to the teacher candidates' ideas about history. That is, he links the past, present, and future in a way these teacher candidates value. Too, the prospective teachers find in this vignette a focused effort to help students see history's relationship to their lives. For some of the teacher candidates, Mr. Gomez's pedagogical strategy also fits comfortably with their ideas about learning as interactive and about learners' preferences for active engagement.

Purposes for studying history. Primarily, this scenario reflects the teacher candidates' strongly expressed views on the value of studying U.S. history discussed in Chapter 3. In fact, Esther declares that her goals are the same as those of Mr. Gomez: "Basically what I think he's trying to accomplish is kind of what my goal in history is-- understand the past, understand the present, make decisions about the future so that we won't repeat history" (EW3V26). What Esther sees in

⁷ The data was collected in 1990, two years after Black Monday, so that for the prospective teachers this event would have seemed closer in time than it does to readers now.

Mr. Gomez's approach is a pragmatic purpose like her own.

Dennis and Roger agree, while also speaking explicitly about making history relevant to their Native students through this approach. As a case in point, Dennis explains that he thinks Mr. Gomez "wants students to make that connection between how history plays in the past and will repeat itself in the future, and how those people that pay attention to that drama are apt to take advantage of those situations in their futures" (DW3V25). When asked what he thought of this approach for Alaska Native students in a small, rural school, Dennis replied that it would be relevant for them, too, because "they're every bit as much a part of history and capable of being doomed or duped...as someone in an urban setting" (DW3V27).

Thus, Dennis and Roger (RW3V19) argue that showing history to be related to the present and the possible future makes it relevant to their students' lives. Here, their ideas about learners and learning--in that proximal images are powerful interest-grabbers for students--interact with their ideas about historical continuity and the practicality of studying history as a guide to action.

Bases of good teaching. For what other reasons do these teacher candidates admire Mr. Gomez and want to model themselves after him? As we saw above, some of the answer has to do with what the teacher candidates perceive as a consonance in their views about history and its relevance. They also see in him two other aspects of their own views of good teaching and the teacher's role: First, Roger sees in Mr. Gomez a teacher who bases his instruction on knowledge of students. He says, "I think [Mr. Gomez is] considering where the high school student is at. And he is designing his lesson plan around what he knows about the students" (RW3V33). In addition, to Roger, Mr. Gomez is "considering

what the students will respond to" (RW3V21). Roger believes that from the students' point of view, the approach "isn't very intimidating, it seems like he's welcoming students" (RW3V21).

Second, Esther and Linda recognize a teacher whose approach to helping students learn is to create situations in which learners can discover or construct their own meanings. This view of learning is like their own. Esther contends that Mr. Gomez is trying to get students into the timeframe of the Great Depression by experiencing it, rather than merely hearing about it (EW3V26). She believes this approach helps learners develop a richer understanding of issues than would result from their being told (EW3V46). In addition, Linda argues that

Mr. Gomez is more what I'd like to be, he has the students doing most of the discovering, on their own. And certainly he's in there influencing them because he's designing the simulations etc. But he's out of the picture while this is going on. He's not there. They're able to do it on their own, and find out on their own, and it's very valuable for students to see that they can do that (LW3V68).

Esther's and Linda's views of Mr. Gomez's approaches to learning and teaching reflect their ideas about learning as an interactive process and their beliefs about students who prefer to learn by doing.

Elements of success. These prospective teachers also note what they see as requirements of this approach in order for it to succeed. According to Dennis and Linda, using simulations demands a great deal of careful organization by the teacher. Dennis seems especially impressed that Mr. Gomez has taken one key idea--that of the continuity between past, present, and future--and has used it as a theme to organize the year's curriculum. Esther and Linda think that another kind of

Table 5.1. Possible Approaches to Teaching U.S. History Represented by Six Teaching Vignettes.

Pedagogical Strategies						
Dimensions of Historical Understanding	Lecture	"Doing History" Community History Project	Critical Reading of Text in Key Documents	Simulations Role Play	Cultural Artifacts (literature, music, etc.)	Audiovisuals
Chronology of key events, figures	Mr. Flanders (Civil War)					
Social of record of past		Ms. Brown (Stories of everyday people's lives)				
Series of causes & effects			Mrs. Kennedy (Revolutionary War/Declaration of Independence)			
Explanation of the past as a guide to present & future action				Mr. Gomez (Great Depression/ New Deal)		
Diverse perspectives					Mr. Herndon (Civil rights/ contributions of minorities)	
Recurring themes						Miss Channing (Colonization)

groundwork is also needed--in this case, that their students possess sufficient frameworks to participate so that learning occurs (e.g., EW3V27).

For instance, Linda mentions what she sees as a problem of cultural distance and, perhaps, the lack of familiar economic aspects in regard to Native students' background knowledge. She believes this problem is especially important in relation to this particular simulation because the ideas of a global economy and the role Wall Street plays don't necessarily affect someone living a subsistence lifestyle, except for their participation in Native corporations that may have money invested. She concludes, "Again, in this case, it would very much be somebody else's history" (LW3V42). Here, Linda's concern with "cultural distance" indicates her use of the principle of proximity again.

Seeing oneself. Finally, I also noted that Mr. Gomez touches a personal view the teacher candidates have of themselves as teachers. Perhaps this is because they could actually see themselves trying this approach. Dennis and Linda see themselves having fun planning and teaching this way (DW3V28, LW3V44). Roger, as well, would like to work with students in this manner, but isn't so sure that he'd be creative enough to design such a lesson plan. "If I didn't feel comfortable and confident, I might not try to do something like that," he says (RW3V23). Esther, however, may well feel more confident about using this approach because of her own experiences as a learner in role-playing activities and her successful efforts at trying simulations during her student teaching (EW3V26,28).

In sum, each of the teacher candidates hold Mr. Gomez's goals and pedagogical strategy in high regard. Except for Dennis, they all see Mr. Gomez as a role model. This is not surprising given the congruence

they find between their ideas about history, learners and learning and those of Mr. Gomez.

Miss Channing: Historic Parallels

Like Mr. Gomez, Miss Channing tries to develop connections within the subject matter. Rather than connecting past, present, and future as did Mr. Gomez, she develops an historical phenomenon, colonization, across time and place. In addition, the teacher candidates see Miss Channing's instructional strategy as one that succeeds because it brings learning U.S. history close to their Alaska Native students' lives.

In this vignette, Miss Channing wanted her students to understand the concept of colonization by comparing and contrasting the English colonies, such as Williamsburg, Virginia, with Russian colonies on Kodiak Island, Alaska. After a review and strengthening of students' background knowledge about colonization on the continental Eastern seaboard, Miss Channing showed a videotape depicting Russian colonization in Alaska. Students then described and discussed English and Russian colonies in terms of economic activity, political structures, and growth patterns. They also considered the effect of climate and geography on the colonies, and the colonies' effects on the area's indigenous peoples. Students in this scenario were assigned the homework task of writing a short report comparing and contrasting the European and Russian approaches to colonization in the Americas.

Connections within history. In this vignette, colonization on the East coast is related to colonization in Alaska. Dennis thinks that

the correlation between two colonial periods and two different places is good to help students assimilate that things happen in different places but are in a lot of ways the same. I think by making it Alaskan, [it] would also encourage some interest among Alaskans" (DW3V37).

Here, Dennis refers to the subject matter "correlations" Miss Channing

develops around the concept of colonization, across different places. Roger does the same, calling her approach one that's based on "associations." He believes it would be an effective approach for Native students in a small, rural school "because they would be able to see the associations between American colonies and early contact [between] the Europeans and Alaskans..." (RW3V31).

Linda refers to Miss Channing's lesson as taking a "parallel events" approach (LW3V62) in which this teacher tries to "relate similar events that happen in different cultures at different times" (LW3V59). Previously, I mentioned Linda's view that students' learning increases with multiple examples across varying contexts. Esther agrees, noting that comparing and contrasting such colonization efforts gets into some of what she calls "complexities"--that is, "not just listing how...it's getting at the why's, and why is this important, and how is it different? Getting into more complex thinking skills and analytical skills" (EW3V45).

Connections between history and students. Like Mr. Gomez's approach, Miss Channing's vignette also demonstrates efforts to bring together subject matter and students. For Linda, making history accessible to students is especially important if those students are relatively disconnected from the events or ideas at the start. She maintains that

whenever I had students who were far removed from what we were studying, I would try to do this. Whether it's in time or culture or place or whatever. If they were far removed, bringing them something that was close to home into the issue would just make it easier for them to identify with (LW3V66).

Focusing on what Alaska Natives might learn about colonization in Alaska, Roger reiterates the principle of proximity: "These are issues and events that directly affect them" (RW3V29).

In sum, the teacher candidates' responses to Miss Channing's lesson design echo their ideas about learning, in this case that learning is facilitated by making connections. These prospective teachers see a need to close any perceived gaps between students and the subject matter, as well as to arrange the content to maximize connections within history. Whereas Mr. Gomez made these historical linkages through time, Miss Channing also makes them across place.⁸

Ms. Brown: Community Ties

The teacher candidates' responses to the previous two vignettes show them to be focusing on connecting students with academic content by bringing the subject closer to their students' lives. In the following two vignettes, Ms. Brown and Mr. Herndon, the accent is more explicitly on connecting history with students' backgrounds.

In the case of Ms. Brown, it is the students' ties to the community that are of interest. Her idea is to have her U.S. history students write and publish a Foxfire-like⁹ local history. This would be an important contribution to the community as well as to students' understanding of the people and the place where most of them have grown up. Ms. Brown also thinks that this project--involving 1-2 days per week over the school year interviewing elders for stories, transcribing the interviews, writing and publishing--will also help her students come

⁸ Another condition of learning noted in Miss Channing's vignette is the use of videotapes as a strategy to introduce variety to the history classroom. Dennis also likes to use videotapes for personal reasons, because they allow him "an opportunity to be creative" and because they lend themselves to group discussion which he likes (DW3V40).

⁹ "Foxfire" has become known as an approach developed by Eliot Wigginton after the name of a series of books published by his classes about aspects of their community. Using learner interest as a starting point, students investigate their community as an avenue for mastering a spectrum of curriculum demands (Knapp, 1993; Wigginton, 1985).

to appreciate that they are making history just as have the older people in their community.

Connecting students to history. All four of the teacher candidates enthusiastically endorse Ms. Brown's approach. They describe it with adjectives such as "creative" (DW3V10), "very innovative" (EW3V13), and "progressive" (RW3V11). They agree that they would like to teach in this manner.

The novices' assessment of Ms. Brown's goals reflect their own views of history. Except for Dennis, they perceive Ms. Brown's goal to be teaching "how history is made" (RW3V7) in that "we're all part of history and that history isn't just something that happened in the past. It's happening now. And they're part of it even though they may never make that history book" (EW3V12). Esther sees this as a central understanding of history, that it is something that is happening. That's what makes it interesting. It also makes it much more relevant to realize that even when you're reading about Napoleon or Lincoln or whatever, this is something that's happening to people. It just didn't happen the way the textbook [said it] did. Lots of things were going on, just like lots of things are going on today" (EW3V12-3).

This view of history taps into ideas about learning as best engendered by studying material that is close to students.¹⁰

In Esther's and Roger's cases, "how history is made" says more about their views of the substantive nature of history than about the process by which an historical account comes to be written and accepted

¹⁰ In an interesting twist to the "proximity principle," Roger also notes that the writing of a local community history would encourage students "to write about it so that people down the road would be able to understand what they're saying, and that what they're doing right then and there is an important project" (RW3V9). What makes the present activity important, then, is its future usefulness, not only the current interest it encourages. Perhaps Roger believes that the apparent immediacy of the project to the students' lives gives power to look beyond its present effect to its future contributions. In this way, he hints that the project is to be a piece of history, not merely an interesting activity to keep students' interest engaged.

by the community of historians. This latter process is what Schwab (1978) calls the syntax of a discipline--canons of evidence that guide inquiry, the ways in which new knowledge is brought into the field (see also Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989). Unlike the other teacher candidates, Linda refers to "how history is made" in the manner of a syntactical structure.

Linda includes in Ms. Brown's purposes that the students will "decide what counts as history to a certain extent" (LW3V15). Here, she alludes to the socially constructed nature of history. Presumably, she is referring to the way historians gather particulars and shape an account of the past given the rules of evidence in the community of historians. In Linda's view, if students brought a conception of history that it is like a book on a shelf to be read, Ms. Brown's approach would be good at destroying that misconception (LW3V20). In other words, according to Linda, if students think of history as a fixed matter, consisting of chronological accounts of events involving dead White men, Ms. Brown's approach would require those students to revise their ideas about who history is about and how it is constructed.

In contrast, that Esther thinks of the community history project as a "real whole language approach" (EW3V13) belies seeing the approach as a vehicle for helping students learn about history as a constructed account. To Esther, Ms. Brown's approach merely incorporates activities that she believes are more typically found in a language arts classroom--such as interviewing, writing, and reading materials other than textbooks--rather than in social studies courses (EW3V13). She, along with Dennis and Roger, apparently does not recognize the power of these activities in the service of "doing history"--including, for instance,

the need to determine which stories are included in the account and on what basis.

Considerations. The teacher candidates also express concerns and questions about the approach envisioned by Ms. Brown. All of them remark on the amount of time and effort required from teachers and students, and its impact on the curriculum. I will explore their concern about the use of time in Chapter 8 on pedagogical reasoning. The teacher candidates also wonder about the organization such an approach demands. Both Dennis and Roger assume that in order to successfully manage this approach conceptually and logistically, Ms. Brown must be a teacher with long years of experience because "a new kid on the block doesn't take on a project like that" (DW3V11). On the one hand, Dennis believes she has already laid out the curriculum for the whole year based on her knowledge of pedagogical strategies for teaching history and what students know about U.S. history as they come into her class (DW3V11). Yet, Roger considers Ms. Brown to be relatively unorganized. "She's writing the book as she goes...she's taking the class along and seeing where they go" (RW3V10). Interestingly, then, Dennis and Roger infer distinctly opposite conclusions about Ms. Brown's organization. Further, Dennis and Roger also express personal discomfort about the experience and organization required by Ms. Brown's approach (DW3V15, RW3V8).

In addition to considerations about organization, the prospective teachers also think about how school and community size might shape the approach. They maintain that such a community oral history project would be especially appropriate for students in a small, rural school, in part because the community seems self-contained. Esther, for instance, maintains the reason she would use this approach "first and

foremost" in a small school setting relates to size and the potential for getting the whole school involved. A by-product would be the chance to build pride in a group's culture (EW3V14-5). In thinking about this project for a larger, urban, multicultural classroom, Esther is concerned with the conceptual difficulties of including the numerous communities within the larger setting. She mentions, "You're not talking about one community. It's a collection of communities. And how do you go about capturing all of those communities to create a representative history" (EW3V15)?

Key to the teacher candidates' responses is, again, the idea of using the familiar, the known, or that which is close to students to increase interest, in service of learning. Only Linda recognizes the possibilities of Ms. Brown's project to convey the syntactic nature of history and, hence, for students to encounter and gain a fuller sense of the nature of history. That Linda is the only novice who sees history as a socially constructed account involving interpretation may help to account for the difference between her view of Ms. Brown's approach and the responses of the other teacher candidates.

Mr. Herndon: Black History Month

According to these teacher candidates, another purpose for studying U.S. history, especially as it relates to culturally diverse students, concerns developing an understanding of oneself and of other peoples. Mr. Herndon's vignette captures this purpose for these intending teachers. This scenario also pertains to their ideas about connecting students and subject matter through the selection of history material that is familiar, close, or important to those students.

Mr. Herndon uses the occasion of Black History Month for his U.S. history students to concentrate on the civil rights movement, while he

stresses the contributions of African-Americans and their experience in U.S. history. Desiring that his Black students will develop pride in their heritage, Mr. Herndon plans, for example, to create a bulletin board montage of pictures of Blacks in U.S. history and to have students read from the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, Beloved, as well as to learn spirituals. After focusing on African-Americans for the first part of the month, the class will spend the second half examining possible commonalities between African-American experience and other minority groups in U.S. history.

Connecting history with students. Except for Linda, the teacher candidates find Mr. Herndon's approach to be exciting and effective. They tend to think of such studies as an avenue to connect important history content (e.g., the civil rights movement, contributions of minorities to U.S. history) with who their students are, thereby developing meaning in school subject matter for minority students. In terms of that subject matter meaning, Esther sees potential to interweave chronological history with a theme such as minority contributions, making it possible to accomplish two goals at once (EW3V35-6). As for making history meaningful to culturally diverse students, both Esther and Dennis lean toward using this approach with a group of students who are predominantly of one culture. Dennis says he might try Mr. Herndon's approach "if I were, for instance, in an all Black school, I would focus on something like this knowing that it would have a lot of meaning to people in that school" (DW3V33). He also relates the approach to his own efforts with a similar project in the Alaska Native school where he was recently hired. In this case, he is videotaping (with students) the physical community and events that

represent it.¹¹ Esther would focus on Native Americans in U.S. history were she to use this approach in a school serving Alaska Natives (EW3V36).

However, it may not only be who the students are that influences this approach. It may also be who the teacher is, at least according to Dennis. He wonders aloud whether or not Mr. Herndon may be Black himself. Although Dennis is not willing to definitively claim this, he raises the question in light of the teacher's accentuation of "periods, places and people that [Mr. Herndon] feels are of particular interest and prominence [and through which] he's not afraid to make a statement" (DW3V32). To speculate, it may be that Dennis's lens for determining what's important in subject matter--that is, his own interests as a teacher, discussed in Chapter 3--lead him to surmise that Mr. Herndon selects content on a similar basis. If this is the case, then Dennis may also presume that persons who are most interested in the study of a particular culture or ethnic group are members of that group. His comment that "some of us are more culturally oriented than others" (DW3V31) supports this line of speculation.

Interconnected with the idea of making U.S. history meaningful to minority students, Dennis and Esther also mention the power of this approach to, in Esther's words, "build pride in a particular culture's contribution to this country" (EW3V37). The advantage Esther sees is in

¹¹ This project is a requirement of the university teacher education program Dennis attended which remained for him to complete before recommendation for full certification. Because he was hired as a full-time substitute at the end of his student teaching, he apparently used his new position as a venue to complete this assignment. It probably also served as a way for him to get to know the village community, although at the time of our interview he seemed only to be getting the project started, and so I was unable to learn how it functioned for him.

enhancing minority students' opportunities to succeed: "I think if you have a real solid foundation of who you are and where you come from, you can go anywhere. If you're not proud of that, you'll be really hindered" (EW3V37).

The approach has the added benefit of making the study of history bear on present-day concerns. In this regard, Roger notes that Mr. Herndon has

considered the fact that it's Black History Month, and that he knows there'll be a lot of information on the radio and newspaper and television and that he will therefore have a lot of material to teach and it will be reinforced by [what] the students obviously will see around them. So his lesson plan will play off an actual happening in society which is the best way to teach social studies (RW3V25).

Roger believes that the best way to teach history is to connect it to current events. Doing so would presumably communicate to students the immediacy and usefulness of the subject, thereby increasing their interest in studying it.

Given the many apparently positive possibilities of Mr. Herndon's approach as it is analyzed by Dennis, Esther, and Roger, what are its limitations? To summarize, Linda argues that focusing on one minority group raises questions about the criteria for determining that focus and sends a false message to learners about the separate and minor role of minority peoples in U.S. history. In the Chapter 7, I discuss unintended negative consequences of this approach in more depth in the context of pitfalls around making history relevant for culturally diverse students. Still, Linda willingly used this separatist approach at the end of student teaching in an effort to "cram [Black literature] all into six weeks" at the end of an American literature course for which she was responsible (LW3V52). Below, I discuss the commitments that led her to this action when I examine the teacher candidates'

thoughts on teachers' role.

Mr. Flanders and Mrs. Kennedy: Disconnected Teaching

The four teacher candidates see the lecture strategy used by Mr. Flanders and Mrs. Kennedy's close, critical reading of text as approaches that do not engage students. Some imply that these approaches reflect a view of learning in which students are passive recipients of information, and thus, they do not engender students' interests (e.g., LW3SS7-8, RW3V14, 16). For instance, Linda explains that lecturing is "just delivering information." In contrast, "real teaching is when you get students to the point where they can discover things for themselves" (LW3SS7). Linda sees lecturing as "dragging" students to a place where the teacher wants them to arrive, rather than leading their curiosity (LW3SS7-8). Other beginning teachers see lecture and textual analysis as lacking in the kind of variety that keeps students of history focused, invigorated, and learning. To illustrate, Dennis is concerned that Mrs. Kennedy may not be getting through to every student if closely reading documents is a consistently used approach because, "It seems dry and boring and people turn off to that" (DW3V24).

Still, all of these novices also see a purpose and a time for using a lecture approach. In fact, they say they often use this approach for its capacity to help students frame ideas, especially when the subject matter is fragmented, and to get across information in available time, usually in short supply. Instead of beginning the study of the Revolutionary War as Mrs. Kennedy did with a close textual analysis of the Declaration of Independence, Esther would lay the groundwork for her students--using a lecture format--to talk about the

context and influence of the Enlightenment, Locke, Rousseau, and others (EW3TL22).

Teacher Candidates' Ideas about Role

If we take the teacher candidates' visions of good teaching in history as an indication of their conception of the role of teacher, it follows from the analysis of their responses to the vignettes that one important obligation of that role, according to these novices, is to bring students and subject matter together in the service of learning. For beginning teachers, these novices' concerns about learning are relatively strong overall.¹²

Roger presents one aspect of this view of the teacher's role in the following comment, in which he places his general sense of obligation to help students learn school subject matter in terms of his relationship with them. Asked what he might have "unlearned" during student teaching, Roger told me that he now tries to "be more of a teacher." Being "more of" a teacher means concentrating on fostering learning, not merely building friendships with students. He explains that the role of "a professional" teacher is to "try to push my objectives and get the students to learn. I don't feel like I can get the students to learn just by being nice. I have to use my position as a teacher to get them to work and to learn the assignments" (RW3PST32). At one level, Roger's comment sounds like the typical student teacher learning about classroom management. And, perhaps it is that. Yet, on

¹² Research into teacher concerns that is based on stage theories (see, Fuller, 1969; Fuller and Bown, 1975 for examples of one seminal works) which reflect the assumption that teacher candidates focus on certain concerns before others. This dissertation research suggests that novices may have ideas, even concerns, about multiple aspects of teaching that develop at the same time. (See Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1981 for a critique of stage theory in teacher development.)

another level, his remarks convey that he has claimed his purpose as a teacher to help students learn, even if this means shifting away from a kind of teacher-student relationship that would likely be more comfortable and enjoyable for him.

Linda expresses her concern for subject matter learning in terms of culturally diverse students' equal access to opportunities. Recall her impassioned commentary on the tracking of students in the large, urban high school where she completed her student teaching. She added that "the crime is that we pretend to give equal education and we're not. The crime is that we're supposedly valuing everyone equally and we're not. It's systematic sorting" (LW3SS12). Linda believes that she must try to help all students learn, including those traditionally underserved by schools when she says,

[It's] not that I think I can change every single individual human being and not that I think that I can save people....But I really think that I'm not doing my job unless I'm trying to aim at everybody and their own needs, at least to the extent that I understand them (LW3SS16).

While all of the prospective teachers express their role obligations in thinking about ways to promote learning of subject matter, two of them (Esther and Linda) also explicitly take as part of their role the need to offset messages of the dominant society within the subject content.

Linda and Esther actively use opportunities to counter impressions students receive from the curriculum about culturally diverse peoples. For instance, Linda taught a six-week poetry unit in American literature using only works by people of color because their presence was not a part of the standard curriculum (e.g., LW3PST42). Although she quarreled about such an approach in her response to Mr. Herndon's vignette, she was willing to take it herself because the omission of

minority writers was a "grave injustice" and because there was only a "limited amount of time in which to right it" (LW3V56). She also tried to include in the unit on westward expansion and development activities and materials that would convey an Indian perspective so that the unit would not be one-sided (LW3TL91). Esther also tried to raise students' consciousness about racism through the study of the civil rights movement (e.g., EW3V31-32).

In the context of this dissertation study, the teacher candidates' commitments to their role center on helping culturally diverse students learn subject matter. This is a notable and worthy commitment, even though some of the prospective teachers express it in ways that are less deliberate or complex than might experienced teachers. As well, the extent to which they are able to enact this commitment is open to question.

The Interaction of Domains of Knowledge and Belief

In the views of these prospective teachers, understandings of history, culturally diverse learners, and learning interweave and take shape in their visions of good teaching in history. My analysis of their responses to the teaching vignettes suggests the following: The novices' notions about historical continuity (past-present-future) interact with their purposes for studying history for its pragmatic decision-making value. These notions fit with their beliefs about students, generally, and Alaska Native learners, in particular, as having difficulties making connections in learning subject matter. At the same time, the teacher candidates believe that learning occurs most readily and profoundly when students and subject matter have a close, existing relationship. And, except for Dennis, they also hold that learning requires interaction with ideas and materials. The prospective

teachers want to increase students' identification with the material and thereby raise interest in learning it, in the context of the guiding assumption that interest increases actual learning.

Thus, the teaching approaches in history that appeal to these beginning teachers for use with Alaska Native students are those that--in the teacher candidates' perspectives--draw on the students' backgrounds, respond to learners' desires to interact with materials and ideas, hold promise for closing perceived gaps between learners and U.S. history, and, in the process, also reflect useful purposes for studying the subject.

This analysis of the vignettes allows us to see teacher candidates' ideals--their beliefs about what good teaching looks like in history and their commitments to the role of teacher. The next chapter concerns how their ideas about history, culturally diverse learners, learning, and teaching ideals take form in the approaches the prospective teachers generate themselves for teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native students.

CHAPTER 6

REPRESENTING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN U.S. HISTORY FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

[Teachers] hover in thought and imagination around the needs of their students, a body of subject matter knowledge, and the ways they endeavor to have their students encounter it. -- Lyons, 1990, p. 160

The essential purpose of teaching is to help others' learn worthwhile things, making teaching a moral enterprise. Teachers "hover in thought and imagination" as they envision what to teach and how to teach it. As they conceive goals for and design approaches to help students learn subject matter, they construct what I will call "curricular visions," which are described in more detail below. In so doing, they bring together--as Lyons (1990) suggests-- concerns about students and subject matter with ideas about learning and teaching (see McDiarmid, Ball & Anderson, 1989; Wilson, 1988). This interweaving of domains of knowledge results in subject matter representations which, in turn, offer particular learning opportunities for Alaska Native students. Thus, both knowledge dimensions and moral dimensions of teaching are at issue here (see Ball & Wilson, 1993).

In this chapter, I describe and discuss the teacher candidates' curricular visions which take form as they consider teaching Alaska Native youngsters about the period of westward expansion and development in U.S. history. I also explore the influence of particular domains of knowledge and belief on the teacher candidates' ideas, finding that their views of history and learning are strongly evident. Further, I

appraise their visions in terms of what they offer minority students opportunities to learn. Most notable is the general lack of opportunity for Alaska Native students to learn about history as an interpretive discipline. In the next chapter, I focus more directly on how these teacher candidates reason in bringing together areas of knowledge and belief in teaching U.S. history to culturally diverse students.

Representing Learning Opportunities

I argue that the teacher candidates' curricular visions represent particular occasions for culturally diverse students to learn subject matter. What does it mean, then, to represent learning opportunities, and why is it important to look at these representations?

In order to explore these questions, the initial assertion needs to be limited in two ways. First, the teacher candidates' visions are just that--visions. They are not isomorphic with the curriculum as it might be enacted by the teacher candidates. Second, these curricular visions do not necessarily represent the curriculum as it is experienced by students. Learners are not passive; what they have opportunities to learn is, in part, constructed in interaction with teachers and materials and mediated by the background perspectives and knowledge they bring to learning.¹ I do not claim that the novices' curricular visions are either what students will learn or only what is available to learn.

What is Meant by "Learning Opportunities"

With these qualifications in mind, I claim that both what and how teachers teach bounds and shapes the subject matter to which students

¹ Doyle (1990) maintains that teachers act as authors bringing a kind of text to students who then interact with that text to co-author the actual content that is produced and transformed.

have access. Hence, the learning environments the teacher candidates envision necessarily limit and steer students' attention in particular directions. What students have opportunities to learn is circumscribed and molded by the goals and purposes imagined and the subject matter content stressed. In addition, the nature and organization of academic work shape students' learning opportunities. This is to say that teachers' instrumental choices influence what curriculum is offered (Zumwalt, 1989), just as do educational aims.

The moral dimension of teaching is manifested, in part, in the boundedness of curricular visions. Teachers' choices about both ends and means carry moral import (Strom, 1989; Tom, 1984, 1987). Youngsters' subject matter learning opportunities are defined whether teachers are accepting others' purposes, selecting or adapting approaches from the existing recommendations of program guides, or determining ends and means with autonomy. Moreover, whether choices about means and ends are conscious and articulated or unintentional and tacit, in effect, they limit accessibility to subject matter.

I suggest that at least three aspects of students' subject matter learning are bounded and shaped by the teacher candidates' curricular visions. They are:

- 1) ideas about the subject matter; and
- 2) ideas about how the subject matter is studied;
- 3) knowledge about particular subject matter content;

I define each of these aspects in greater depth in the process of appraising these novices' curricular visions in terms of minority students' learning opportunities.

I have spoken about learning opportunities for students, in general. However, this research centers on how prospective teachers

think about teaching students who are culturally different from themselves, that is to say, so-called minority students. The question of learning opportunities takes on increased significance in speaking about student populations who are traditionally ill-served by schools. Oakes (1985), for instance, reminds us that the numbers of students of color in lower-track classes--where goals are often narrow and instruction is technical--is disproportionately high.

What "Representing" Subject Matter Means

Representing subject matter in teaching has come to have a special meaning since Shulman and his colleagues framed the area of pedagogical content knowledge as a domain of teachers' knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1987; Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987). In this conceptualization, representing subject matter means formulating it in ways that are comprehensible to others. Representation of subject matter is inherent in the work of teachers (McDiarmid, Ball, & Anderson, 1989); it is also central to the lives of students as Wilson observes (1988): "...The way in which students experience a particular piece of subject matter in their classroom will involve some type of instructional representation" (p. 261).

Representing subject matter is part of a process of pedagogical reasoning in which teachers transform their own understandings of particular subject matter into forms that are accessible to their particular students (Shulman, 1987; Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987).² Indeed, figuring out good representations is a key part of the intellectual work teachers do. Doing so requires wrestling with one's

² I include mention here of pedagogical reasoning to put the idea of subject matter representation in context before describing how the teacher candidates' curricular visions represent subject matter for diverse students.

own understanding of a concept or procedure while considering how students would encounter or connect with that same idea or process.

The idea of representing subject matter is consonant with Dewey's (1902) much earlier concept of "psychologizing" it. In his view, psychological aspects of particular subject matter describe the subject matter's relation to the learner--both in its origin and significance in the experience of the learner, as well as in the way subject matter needs to be folded back into that experience. Thus, Dewey (1902) argues,

What concerns [the teacher] is the ways in which that subject may become a part of experience; what there is in the child's present that is usable with reference to it; how such elements are to be used; how his own knowledge of the subject-matter may assist in interpreting the child's needs and doing, and determine the medium in which the child should be placed in order that his growth may be properly directed. [The teacher] is concerned, not with the subject-matter as such, but with the subject-matter as a related factor in a total and growing experience. Thus to see it is to psychologize it (p. 23).

Representations are products of pedagogical reasoning; they are the result of teachers' attempts to psychologize the subject matter, to provide Dewey's "medium" (Ball, 1990). In Shulman's (1986) words, representations are "the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations" of subject matter topics (p. 9). As such, they highlight certain aspects or features of the subject matter (Ball, 1993).

Representations as analogies, illustrations, and so forth may take on varying proportions relative to the subject matter under study. For example, Ball (1988) argues that subject matter as studied in school is a representation of a given discipline. I presume this to mean a representation of both substance and ways of knowing within a discipline. Seemingly at the other extreme are representations for

specific topics, such as a simulation to teach about the Stock Market Crash of '29 or pizza pies to illustrate the idea of fractions. Wineburg and Wilson (1991a, 1991b) term this more specific, topical type a contextual representation.³

Ball (1993) suggests a helpful alternative way to look at the nature and function of representations. She proposes we consider them a kind of "thinking space" in which youngsters can do (that is, work on ideas) and learn; this is to say, a "representational context."⁴ Although this conceptualization of representations is formulated in terms of teaching and learning in mathematics, I see the notion of representational contexts as thinking spaces as sufficiently flexible that it can also be used in regard to subject matter representation in other disciplines. I think of the teacher candidates' curricular visions of history, to be analyzed below, as examples of representational contexts. As sets of goals and purposes, ideas about content worth learning, and learning and evaluation activities organized into units of study, these curricular visions provide a representational context for both interacting with and learning about the substance and nature of history.

In my research, the teacher candidates' curricular visions stand as representational contexts of minority students' opportunities to learn U.S. history. In the following section, I discuss the notion of

³ Another type they note is an epistemological representation, which highlights ways of knowing in the subject matter. They also argue that some of the best representations function as both contextual and epistemological types at the same time.

⁴ The idea of "representational contexts" is related to Doyle's (1986) notion of "content representation," which he describes as "the ways in which the curriculum is made concrete in the classroom tasks teachers define for students" (p. 365).

"curricular visions" and use it to describe the teacher candidates' ideas about teaching westward expansion and development to Alaska Native students.

Curricular Visions

I borrow the term, "curricular vision," from Zumwalt (1989), who uses it to argue that to be "professionally responsible beginners" (p. 174), novices need to hold a broad view of curriculum, one that includes more than concern for instruction. Such a view would include consideration of the "what's" and "why's" of teaching in addition to the "how's."

Thus, in examining the focal teacher candidates' curricular visions, I include their ideas concerning:

1) goals and purposes of studying U.S. history:

- a) historical understanding
- b) specific content about the period of westward expansion and development to be emphasized;

2) academic work chosen or developed by the teacher candidates to foster their goals and purposes:

- a) learning activities or tasks
- b) social organization of these learning tasks
- c) textbooks and other learning materials
- d) approach to assessment

3) the role teacher candidates see themselves playing in order to achieve their curricular visions and to advance students' learning.

Given this set of constituent parts, the following analysis of the teacher candidates' curricular visions focuses on the "what's" and "how's" of teaching. One account of the intending teachers' justifications--that is, their "why's"-- is to be found in Chapter 7, which concerns the ways they reason about making subject matter relevant

to Alaska Native students.

Data Sources

The four teacher candidates were asked to envision teaching the topic of westward expansion and development to eleventh grade Alaska Native students in a small, rural school.⁵ I asked these novice teachers about their goals for Native students' learning, the content they would emphasize, and the kinds of activities and assignments they would select or devise. Most of the teacher candidates also included some assessment task.

I provided analogous chapters from two standard high school textbooks⁶ as a stimulus and context for the task, but made a point of stating to the teacher candidates that it was their choice to use the textbook chapters or not as they put together their plans. In the process of the task, I also asked the prospective teachers to assess these chapters for strengths and flaws. Their responses gave me a sense of what, in their views, might be important to emphasize in the study of westward expansion and development.

Given this task and the stimulus of the textbook chapters, the teacher candidates' curricular visions took form in teaching units. Their curricular visions are summarized in Table 6.1. Below, I consider, first, their aims in teaching westward expansion and development, dividing their ideas into two types of goals--broad goals for understanding history, followed by specific areas of content to be

⁵ Such schools usually serve homogeneous Indian or Eskimo, making White teachers "outsiders" to the community. Class size ranges from 1-20 students, with 10 youngsters a typical number.

⁶ They are Boorstin and Kelley's A History of the United States (Ginn and Company, 1986) and Risjord and Haywoode's People and Our Country (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982). The chapters were discussed in Chapter 2.

emphasized in the study of westward expansion and development.

Goals: Understanding History

By goals, I mean the general directions these teacher candidates want to help culturally diverse students move in understanding U.S. history, broadly, and westward expansion and development, specifically. These goals give purpose to the prospective teachers' ideas about what their Alaska Native students should learn in studying U.S. history. They show the general orientation the novice teachers take toward what's important for Native students to understand about history.

The general goals and purposes analyzed in this section are based on the intending teachers' responses to the question of what they would want their Alaska Native students to "get out of" studying westward expansion and development. Teacher candidates also expressed them in the context of assessing the given textbook chapters.

The teacher candidates' goals and purposes reflect two interrelated types of connections they want to help students make as a result of studying westward expansion and development in U.S. history. The first type of connection is within the subject matter; the second links subject matter and students. Respectively, they want to help students 1) tie together past, present, and future and 2) to relate history to their lives. Linda adds a third goal to foster Native students' understanding of history as an interpretive discipline. This is consistent with her orientation toward history and her responses to Ms. Brown's community history project.

Connecting Past, Present, and Future

The four novices want students to make historical connections between past events and present day situations. The prospective teachers' use of language such as "continues to affect them today"

(DW3TL2), "something that's ongoing" (EW3TL6), "part of a pattern" (LW3ATL6), and "going on to the future" (RW3TL4) convey the tight linkages between past, present, and future in the goals of these prospective teachers. Dennis, for example, wants Native students to learn how expansion

had such a great impact on the cultural values of the Indian tribes...and how that affected them at that time and how it continues to affect them today. How that can be very relevant to what's going on in Alaska with different Native groups and different parts of the state (DW3TL2).

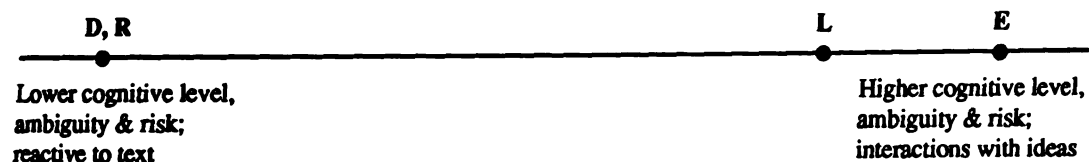
Later, he more specifically adds,

I think I'd want them to see [westward expansion and development as a] period that culminated with an end to the sort of freedom and wide open spaces of the West and North America that came to a close at the end of the 1800's. It was the onset of a whole new period that meant that there would be a lot of development in the future and that the whole area would become a whole lot more civilized. That all the events that we were about to study were in essence like milestones that would eventually lead up to that (DW3TL18).

Dennis highlights links within the subject matter itself; the events to be studied are markers through time, leading up to the known result. He thinks Native students need to see the impact of westward expansion and development on indigenous cultures during that period, and they need to understand the continuing impact of that time in the present.⁷ At the same time, he sees ties between these outcomes and his students, making the content (in his view) relevant to them. In this way, Dennis's goals reflect the integration of both types of connections.

⁷ Below, I return to Dennis's use of the word "civilized" to characterize the changes brought on by westward expansion and development.

Dimension A: Intellectual Demands of Learning Tasks

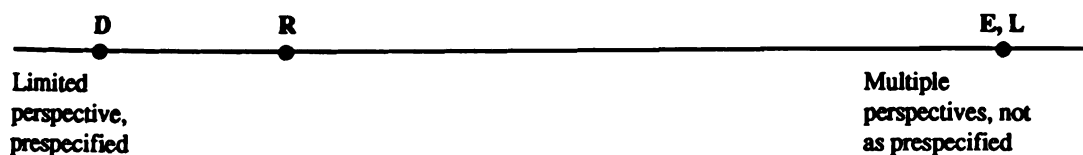


Dimension B: Social Organization of Learning Tasks

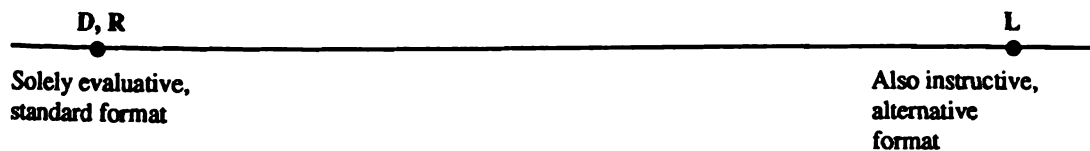


Dimension C:

Learning Materials: Textbooks and Other Resources



Dimension D: Assessment of Learning^a



a. Esther did not include a formal assessment task, so she is not included in this dimension.

D = Dennis
R = Roger
E = Esther
L = Linda

Figure 6.1. Comparisons of Teacher Candidates' Positions Relative to Each Other in Four Aspects of Academic Work

Both Linda and Esther also want Native students to be able to relate what they learn about westward expansion and development from the 1800's to the present and the future. However, their views are significantly distinguished one from the other in the temporal perspective each takes. Notably, Linda calls for learners to understand the past in historical terms, not just in terms of the present. She says,

I'd want [Native students] to be able to compare and contrast what was done to Native Americans in the Lower 48, with what was done to Native Americans in Alaska, with some sort of historical perspective, not just what's happening right now. But, what happened in the past. What happened in the past there, what happened in the past here. How is it different, how is it the same? If we have these issues arise again in the future...or if these issues continue to be alive, what is the background on them? And, how can we make good decisions based on knowing what already happened (LW3TL6)?

Linda wants her students to see similarities and differences between Native Americans in the continental U.S. and Alaska Natives. She desires this with an eye clearly focused on understanding the past for its historical value as well as for its connection to understanding the present and making good decisions in the future.

Esther, in contrast, squarely places temporal attention on the present, not the past. Understanding the past serves the present. She explains her goals for Native students:

I think I would want them to understand what happened in the past only to have a greater understanding, a richer understanding of what's going on now in Alaska (emphasis added). You know, what has gone on in the past in Alaska. And what is even going on now in Alaska in terms of development. To have a better understanding of the stages that Indian policy went through and be able to relate that to a policy toward Alaska Natives. And that's something that's ongoing. So...when they get to the point of being voters and being more active participants in their Native corporations and potentially being Native leaders and political leaders in the state, they would have that base to draw on (EW3TL5-6).

Although Esther, too, expresses a desire for Native students to

understand what went on in Alaska historically (e.g., EW3TL33), she emphasizes learning about history for its present-day and future uses in the comment underlined above. Esther's accent on learning about the past mainly for its value in the present and future is consistent with her previous comments on the worth of a political science focus.

Connecting U.S. History and Students' Lives.

Helping students to see connections between the past, present, and future also serves a second type of connection these teacher candidates desire--to relate history to Native students' lives. For instance, in the above quotations, we can detect the teacher candidates' aim that students will use their understandings of the past to act purposefully and effectively in the future. Recall Esther's wish that Native students be able to draw on their understandings of past Indian policy when they become voters, active participants in their Native corporations, and political leaders (EW3TL5-6)

Another goal held by most of the teacher candidates seeks to connect U.S. history and students' lives through helping Native students "to get a sense of their identity and a sense of pride" (RW3TL45) out of studying the period of westward expansion and development. Dennis echoes, "I want them to have a strong sense of their culture and their ethnicity" (DW3TL30). Roger further explains that he'd want them "to understand how the Indians were mistreated...and how important it is for people to respect cultural values. And I would want them to get a sense of where they are in today's society" (RW3TL50, see also RW3TL52).

Indeed, when asked what they thought their Native students might actually take away from the study of westward expansion and development, Dennis, Linda, and Roger responded in terms of the development of those students' identities. Although their responses are not explicit goal

statements, we might look for their remarks to reflect their purposes, since expectations by their nature contain assumptions and desires. The development of identity as an result of studying westward expansion and development seems to be an implicit goal and a hoped-for outcome of three of the teacher candidates. For instance, Linda believes that "the main thing [Native students] get out of it is understanding themselves. And that means understanding issues that are related to their life right now today.... We get there by studying this stuff" (LW3TL120). Dennis contends that his students would gain a closer association to their own culture as they come to see Native Americans of the period as their ancestors (DW3TL44).⁸

Taking an active stance. Linda extends the idea of Native students getting to know themselves through the study of westward expansion and development. She holds as a goal that Native adolescents also learn to acknowledge the power they have to name problems and to act to change them. Remarking about the results of the time period, Linda declares, "I would want [Native students] to be able to see that problems are only gonna be solved by acknowledging that they exist and then doing something about them, and these guys have the power to acknowledge that they exist" (LW3TL52). Later, she comments

I mean, they have a chance to make policy and change policy themselves. They don't have to just read what's in a book, they can put it in a book themselves. And, I don't want them all to grow up and become politicians because I'm not sure I think that's really valuable. But, they can make a difference if they want to... (LW3TL87).

Thus, Linda seems to also hold an implicit goal that her students come to see the potential power they possess and to become active in changing their world. This push for political and social activism is consistent

⁸ Whether this is an appropriate assumption is an open question.

with the admiration she expressed for her Black students as they tried to influence the literature curriculum at the school where she student taught.

Learning to Look at History.

Linda holds yet another goal worth noting--her desire that Native students will learn about "this thing about perspectives" (LW3TL49). In her goals, Linda wants Native students to understand that what is called history results from looking at the past from a particular stance and that numerous standpoints are possible. She declares that second in importance to understanding Alaska Native/American Native issues would be students learning

that there are lots of different viewpoints in history and that history is only viewpoints, history isn't any thing. History is just a collection of ideas and perspectives. And that would be the second most important thing. Because I want them to be able to see the whole world that way. And I know that's evil according to lots of different ways of thinking, pretty terrible, sort of, pluralistic, relativistic thinking. But until I'm stopped I want my students to be able to do that. They don't have to like it. I mean I just want them to be able to do that, and then if they don't ever use it in their life, that's fine, that's their business (LW3TL49-50).

Accentuating that history is not a settled matter or a given record of the past, Linda holds as an important goal that students will learn different perspectives on the period of westward expansion and development. However, that she doesn't speak about wanting students to understand how, for example, historians' accounts of the past involve making judgments about evidence, her views may, indeed, sound relativistic to others, including her students.⁹

⁹ Esther also mentions the goal of having her Native students understand "how you can have differing perspectives. And how that impacts policy. And that's real important to understand when you're going to be a voter" (EW3TL52). Here, however, Esther focuses on understanding multiple perspectives for their usefulness, just as she did in her explanation of the power of political science as a lens on

In Summary

In both their explicit goals and implicit purposes for Native students' learning, these teacher candidates focus on developing linkages. They want to emphasize historical connections across time. They wish to help Native students see connections between their lives and the past. In the process, they want to also support the development of students' cultural self-concepts.

Finally, in the case of Linda, we see two additional, possibly potent goals: In one, students would come to see the role of perspectives as central to understanding history. In the other, they would learn to take an active stance toward shaping their world. Linda's broad goals and purposes would seem to fit well within what some scholars (e.g., Grant & Secada, 1990; Sleeter & Grant, 1987) have called "education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist." This approach to multicultural education has been described as "preparing young people to take social action against social structural inequality" (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, p. 434-5).

These goals and purposes act as broad guides shaping what the teacher candidates believe Native students should come to broadly understand about history. In the following section, I continue to focus on the "what" of their curricular visions in the specific concepts and information about westward expansion and development they believe should be studied.

the subject matter. Her view stands in contrast to Linda's outlook, which seems to center more on students understanding that history is a constructed account of the past.

Goals: Subject Matter Content Emphases

What specific content in the study of westward expansion and development do these teacher candidates think is important to stress for their Native students? What story, or whose story, of this period would they be told? I draw from several aspects of the interview task --again from their responses to the question of what they would like Native students to "get out of" the study of westward expansion and development, from a series of specific probes asking whether or not they would teach certain content highlighted by the text (such as mining or railroads),¹⁰ and the topics they mention in the planning of the units.

The teacher candidates' expressed subject matter content emphases that reflect what they hope Native students will take away about the "stuff" of westward expansion and development. They tend to speak in terms of "big picture" ideas, rather than about the importance of learning particular aspects of the period. Overall, the teacher candidates plan to emphasize the impact of westward expansion and development on indigenous peoples. To do so, they include a focus on activities such as mining, farming, ranching, and the development of the railroads. However, as will be seen in both sections below, the different slants taken by the novices communicate different views of whether or not a "better" world resulted from westward expansion and development.

Native American Issues

In varying manners and to different degrees, each of the prospective teachers wants to make Native American issues the

¹⁰ Unfortunately, I failed to ask Roger this series of probes, but data for his responses about content emphases is complete in every other way.

centerpiece of study for their Alaska Native students. Dennis aspires to emphasize the impact of the period on indigenous peoples; Esther and Roger underscore the attendant ironies; Linda stresses the present condition of Native Americans. The story they would tell focuses on the negative outcomes of westward expansion and development for Native peoples. However, versions of this story would be substantially different based on the ways they see relationships between the U.S. government and Native peoples.

To begin, a comment by Esther makes clear her desire to make Native American issues central. She states--in the context of assessing one of the two textbook chapters--that she likes the placement of the material on Indian wars and policy at the beginning of the chapter "because I think that's where the stress should be on westward expansion and development is Indian policy. I think that's the most important part..." (EW3TL17).

Linda acknowledges and stresses negative outcomes of westward expansion and development for Native Americans.

[There's] a lot of negative things to focus on, but there are a lot of positive things to focus on too, because you can bring in the wisdom of lots of the people who were leaders during that time....But as far as the issues go, they're mostly negative things that I would focus on. There's a lot of specific ones, but the main one is just the extermination of peoples and cultures and languages and the relationship [of Native Americans] to their world and their own cultures and languages (LW3TL52).

While recognizing the need for a positive balance to the negative content emphasized, Linda would still focus on the destruction that came with development during the period. She would highlight losses and discontinuities in the experience of Native Americans historically. Further, Linda would accent such messages as she sees them played out in the present, including the "systematic discrimination and apartheid

that's resulted since the time of this chapter. And it's still around today" (LW3TL52). Here, Linda points to systemic, structural results of westward expansion and development for Native Americans, as part of the substance she would emphasize.

Government-Indian relations. To this point, we've seen that the teacher candidates want to ground their curricular visions of westward expansion and development on Native American issues, especially stressing the negative effects of the movement on indigenous peoples. The prospective teachers also have a related story to tell about the character of relations between the U.S. government and Indians. We can place Dennis, Esther, and Linda along a continuum reflecting degrees of acceptance of government treatment of Indians during the period. At the one extreme, Dennis seems almost to beg for an understanding of the difficulties government policymakers faced. At the other end, Linda indignantly compares past and present treatment of Native Americans to government-planned apartheid--that is, intentionally segregating Indians on the basis of race. Esther takes a middle ground.¹¹

Both Dennis, at the one extreme, and Esther, taking the middle ground, want to deal with the dilemmas of policy-making and the inherent varying perspectives that accompany these dilemmas. First Dennis speaks. He would emphasize the difficulties of policymakers, seeming to pitch for some sympathy for their efforts. He says,

...it was Indian policy that tried to cope with all of the various problems and situations that came out of [the] migration [of peoples moving west]. And I think it's important...to see that they were trying to understand the problem, but it was a difficult problem to deal with...that provisions were made to try and work with the Indians at the time (DW3TL19-20).

¹¹ Roger does not voice a well-defined view on government-Indian relations.

Like his earlier stance toward the inevitability of White dominance, innocently achieved during westward expansion and development (see Chapter 3), Dennis focuses on what he sees as governmental goodwill in a challenging situation.

Esther points out the complexity of policymaking and communicates that U.S. policymakers were often attempting to make good-faith efforts. But, she also acknowledges the duplicity of changing policy, along with a certain expeditiousness when it was beneficial to the government to make changes. Esther--taking a kind of observer stance-- explains a cycle of how the government ("they") made one policy, only to change its wants.

[The U.S. government] did this, but then they wanted that. So they did this, but then they wanted that. So they did this, and then they wanted that. How that all worked. How in some cases policy was changed because "Ooh, we stuck you on good land before. That was a mistake." So that was a policy change. In other cases, it was a real genuine attempt to address past wrongs. And say, "Okay, this hasn't worked. This hasn't been fair. Let's try something else." Now that may also fail. So, [students should] understand how the development of the west forced changes in the treatment of Native groups" (EW3TL52).

Esther holds up contrasting cases of governmental treatment of Native Americans, based on the motivation she ascribes to the government: In some cases, the government takes advantage of indigenous peoples; in others, it makes sincere efforts to rectify past wrongs.

Linda goes farther in describing the relationship of the U.S. government to Indians. She gives a picture of the government assaulting Native Americans, even in the present. She fervently states,

It's not just that there was a policy and it's done. There still is a policy and there still is a war. As far as I'm concerned, it's not a war of like 'bang, bang, you're dead,' but it's a war going on. And for lots of people. [At this point, Linda inquired if I knew of the Village Voice newspaper and recollected a piece she had read there about a stand-off at the American-Canadian border in upstate New York which involved Native Americans and federal marshals.] Anyway, all this is going on right now and

that's an actual war. Even if you just talk [from] the apartheid point of view [about] what's going on with the reservations, that's war and it's not done....Policy is still being made (LW3TL87).

Taking a conflict orientation, Linda argues that Indian policies endemic to the period of westward expansion and development have not just shaped present-day treatment of Native Americans. Such policies, in Linda's view, are also being actively pursued by the government in efforts to dominate and control Native Americans.

In sum, the teacher candidates' stories about the "stuff" of westward expansion and development would give Native American issues an important place. What is actually told learners would seem to be shaped by each teacher candidates' slant toward U.S. government-Native American relations.

Settling and Developing the Land

Another "big idea" held to be important by the intending teachers as a learning goal for Native students relates to a set of topics concerned with changes brought to western lands. The concept of "frontier" was raised by Esther and Linda in this regard. Broadly, Esther argued that being able to understand concepts is required to comprehend history in a flexible way (EW3TL24). More specifically, Linda related the concept of frontier to conflicts in resource development, both historically--for example, between ranchers and farmers (LW3TL3)--and presently, as in Alaska (LW3TL7).

The topics of mining, ranching, farming, and the railroads--as facets of expansion and development--also have a place in all of these teacher candidates' learning goals for Native students. In Dennis's case, for instance, this means emphasizing the role such activities played in the migration of people westward, which resulted in the

closing of the open land. In particular, he stresses mining for (in his view) its major role in drawing people to migrate west, which in turn "changed the west from what it was to what it became" (DW3TL18). For Esther, including these aspects of westward expansion and development fits with her view that to understand history and the particular period, students must understand the complex interrelationships of who's, how's, and especially, why's that these topics represent.

Did the changes brought on by settlement and development of the land bring about a "better" world in the view of these teacher candidates? Roger, and especially Dennis, might answer "yes." Both Dennis and Roger use the term "civilized" to describe the positive results of westward expansion and development. Recall in his goals that Dennis remarked, "[Westward expansion and development] was the onset of a whole new period that meant that there would be a lot of development in the future and that the whole area would become a whole lot more civilized" (DW3TL18, emphasis added). In addition, Roger would emphasize "how the country became civilized and expanded when the railroad was able to export goods from the East to the West" (RW3TL31, emphasis added).

To "civilize" means to "bring out of a primitive state; educate or enlighten" (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1982, p. 277). To hold that enlightenment or progress out of a primitive state was brought to Native Americans implies that such qualities as enlightenment and social development were lacking in the indigenous peoples of the time. The idea that "civilization" came along with the settlement of Europeans in the west and the development of natural resources for apparent economic gain represents a particular notion of progress. Not all cultures, or individuals within a given culture, would see progress in this way.

Thus, in the context of trying to make Native Americans the centerpiece of westward expansion and development, Dennis and Roger may also--without directly saying so-- present Native students with a subtle message that a "better" world resulted from the conflict and hardship Native Americans endured. In contrast, the slant taken by Esther, and especially Linda, in regard to the treatment of Indian peoples might communicate the message that "progress" has not come for Native peoples.

In Summary

Two content-based "big ideas" are part of the teacher candidates' curricular visions. The prospective teachers express a desire to make the impact of expansion and development on Native Americans the foreground of study. They also focus on factors such as mining, ranching, farming, and railroads, and in the case of Esther and Linda, the concept of "frontier." At the same time, they also convey contrasting judgments about whether or not the outcomes of westward expansion and development made the world a better place and for whom.

Academic Work

The strategies envisioned by the teacher candidates can be thought of as particular visions of "academic work," (Doyle, 1983). For purposes of the current analysis, I assume that academic work encompasses what youngsters do, how they are organized to do these things, the materials they have available to help them accomplish the work, and the ways in which that work is evaluated. I ground this view of academic work in Erickson's (1986) conception of classroom task environments as the interweaving of 1) the structure and content of subject matter and 2) the structure and content of social relations. As this conception suggests, subject matter and social organization interact to create different kinds of academic work.

The Character of Academic Work

In order to frame the analysis of the prospective teachers' visions of academic work for the purpose of helping Native students learn about westward expansion and development, I discuss what I mean by 1) aspects, 2) demands and 3) sources of knowledge in academic work.

Aspects of academic work. In the following sections, I analyze four aspects of academic work that contribute to the teacher candidates' curricular visions: types of activities or learning tasks, including the social relations that organize them; the role of learning materials, especially textbooks as a particular type of knowledge source; and assessment. Presumably, these aspects of academic work are selected or designed to foster the broad goals and content learning valued by these teacher candidates. However, we should not assume a strict correspondence between the activities and the teacher candidates' guiding purposes; the novices were not asked to express daily learning objectives, nor to associate particular goals with particular tasks.

Demands of academic work. Doyle (1983) and his colleagues (Doyle & Carter, 1984) describe academic tasks (in part) in terms of their intellectual requirements, as well as the degree of ambiguity and risk they carry for students. Here I refer to these intellectual requirements, ambiguities, and risks as one kind of demand carried by the prospective teachers' curricular visions. I will describe these demands in more detail below.

I also consider the social organization of classroom tasks as an order of demand (see also, Erickson, 1986). For instance, activities that require interaction with other students--say, in small cooperative groups--are of high demand, ambiguity, and risk when social roles are ill-defined or call for flexibility. High school students also feel "at

risk" when they try to behave in ways appropriate to peer norms. Thus, combining a task involving construction of understanding with small group interaction may well beget a challenging learning situation for students unless the teacher arranges or depends on limited or known social roles, or the teacher controls the difficulty of the academic task. At the same time, given appropriate support, students may have the opportunity to develop deep understandings about subject matter through the joint construction of meaning. Thus, we can see that these sets of demands represented by each teacher candidates' plans tell us, in part, about the kinds of learning opportunities potentially afforded minority students.

Sources of knowledge in academic work. The character of particular academic work also reflects its sources of knowledge. Sources of knowledge range across types of text material and different people, such as teachers or experts in the field or other students. Text sources that may be encountered by students include primary historical materials, as well as published textbooks. Even certain evaluation approaches may be considered sources of knowledge when they support instructional goals at the same time they judge learning (Clark & Ben-Peretz, 1993).

Sources of knowledge also influence the availability and shape of potential learning opportunities in the prospective teachers' curricular visions. That is, particular sources of knowledge convey messages about the nature of history, ideas and information about particular subject matter content, as well as impressions about how history is learned and what constitutes knowing. For instance, textbooks may communicate to readers that history is a given record of the past, a settled matter. Classrooms where students are a significant source of knowledge--for

example, where they are involved in argument in an effort to make sense of historical evidence--may convey the message that history can be explored in focused discussion around logical interpretation of evidence with peers.

Data sources. Within the broader task of articulating a curricular vision, the teacher candidates were asked to describe the activities and assignments they would use to help eleventh grade Native students in a small school learn about westward expansion and development. They were given the option of using a textbook or not in their plans. Probes were used to elicit a timeline, comments on the social organization of activities, use of textbooks, and so forth. It is from this set of responses that I draw for the following descriptions of aspects of academic work.

Structure of Teacher Candidates' Visions of Academic Work

In the context of the interview task, the teacher candidates structured their curricular visions into plans for units of study. These units integrate the four aspects of academic work described above, presumably in an effort on the novices' part to help students move toward the learning goals and purposes they articulated earlier. I foreground each of the aspects for the sake of analysis across the prospective teachers, but do so knowing that each aspect is always in interaction with the others.

The intending teachers' units of academic work range from one week in duration for Esther to four or five weeks in Roger's plan. Dennis and Linda plan their units to take about two weeks. (See Table 6.1.) Esther is concerned about the amount of time in a standard academic semester she has to cover content; she even considers not teaching about westward expansion and development if it means that she might not have

time enough to have students study World War II, the Vietnam War, and other more recent events (EW3TL2-4,7-8). She would teach the Vietnam War because, first, it frequently doesn't get covered, and second, it combines domestic and foreign policy (EW3TL4). "Teachers make decisions based on what's important to them," she says, "and what they think kids should know" (EW3TL4). That Esther wants to get to more recent history is not surprising in that her beliefs about history, as well as her goals and purposes for Native students in its study, are keenly oriented toward the present and future.

In the opposite, Roger seems unconcerned about time, planning a series of week-long mini-units which add up to between 20 and 25 days, or about one-seventh of the school year. He does not volunteer a rationale, in the way Esther does, for the length of time. For example, Roger might be expected to say that he considers this topic to be especially important to Alaska Native students, and thus worthy of the time and attention.¹²

Examining the four aspects of academic work, I note a distinct contrast between Dennis's and Roger's units and those of Esther and Linda. On each of the dimensions of academic work laid out in Figure 6.1, Dennis's and Roger's units can be described as more like each other's than they are to Esther's or Linda's approaches, and conversely, Esther's and Linda's are more like each other's than like either Dennis's or Roger's plans. Indeed, Esther's and Linda's units are remarkably similar in their approaches.¹³ Esther's and Linda's

¹² Unfortunately, I did not ask Roger to give his rationale for the length of time he planned to devote to his overall unit.

¹³ As I analyzed these units, I frankly wondered whether Esther and Linda, who seemed to be good friends within their teacher preparation program, might have discussed their plans outside of the interview

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approaches tend toward demanding higher cognitive functioning, learning as interaction with ideas and materials, social participation structures as multifaceted and webbed, learning materials that represent multiple resources and take a critical stance toward textbooks, alternative formats for assessment, and a view of the teaching role primarily as a facilitator. Dennis's and Roger's approaches tend toward requiring lower cognitive functioning, learning as reception and reaction, social participation structures as bidirectional and tracked, learning materials as limited in perspective, traditional assessment, and a view of the teaching role primarily as a mediator of the textbook.

As in the previous sections on purposes and subject matter content emphases, I refer the reader to Table 6.1 for a summary of each aspect of academic work below.

Learning Activities/Tasks

By activities, I mean tasks teachers plan for students to do for the purpose of learning. They include reading, writing and drawing, listening, observing, and conversing as means of gathering information and doing research, completing projects and writing reports, participating in simulations, developing and evaluating historical

situation. However, I'm confident for two reasons that this was not the case, at least so that it might have influenced the data. For one, Esther and Linda are individually strong women with their own clear opinions. As I came to know them over the period of a year, they struck me as persons who don't do things simply because someone else recommends it or because it's expedient. Further, and perhaps more importantly, I was reminded upon looking back at the dates of their post-student teaching interviews that, because of Linda's shortened practicum, several months separate Esther's and Linda's conversations with me about the units.

arguments, watching media presentations, going on excursions, and so forth.¹⁴

These activities or tasks are specific representations of topic level subject matter ideas, as well as illustrations of what history is about and how it is studied.

Starting places. How to begin a unit is a particularly important instructional choice. The starting place holds the potential of capturing student interest, bridging entering knowledge with the new ideas to come or dislodging students' inappropriate conceptual frameworks, foreshadowing key subject matter themes, and so forth. The beginning of a unit may be the first in a series of intellectual building blocks; it may be the story of the entire unit in a nutshell. It may tease with partial information or provoke with a problem or dilemma. In the beginning, both cognitive and affective aspects engage the learner. The starting place is the first connection between learners and subject matter in the unit in both respects.

These teacher candidates' attempts to bring students and subject matter together are notably alike in their starting places. All four prospective teachers try to help students get their bearings in the beginning. As well, they all want to begin their units with visual material, with three of them starting their units with a video or film focusing on Native American issues within the context of westward expansion and development. Although the function of each of their starting places is the same, the teacher candidates' approaches are quite different. Some attempt to be inclusive in their overviews; others focus on a single point of entry into the unit. Most apparently

¹⁴ Unlike Brophy and Alleman (1991), I include for purposes of this analysis reading and listening as "activities."

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do not attend to the affective dimension of getting started.

Roger's and Esther's starting places try to give Native students an inclusive introduction to the time they will study. Roger's vision of a starting place is a good example of how the beginning of a unit can tell the whole story. His framework might be called holistic, in that the initial activity encapsulates the major elements of the unit. He chooses to have his Native students view and discuss the video "Little Big Man" as preparation for the rest of the unit. This video is told from the point of the view of Native Americans. Roger believes it will excite his students as an epic story in a medium they're used to (television), while it also portrays all the different elements of westward expansion and foreshadows what they will read in the textbook (RW3TL26-7).

Like Roger, Esther also wants to provide a summative capsule at the beginning. Her start-up activities might be described as survey and sample. That is, she wants to give an overview of the period at the beginning of the unit and to give students a sample of the ideas to come. She wonders about using the (then) new commercial film, "Dances with Wolves" or another recent release at the time of our interviews, "Quigley Down Under," about a cowboy character in Australia.¹⁵ She's looking for a way to "hook them into the timeframe of the period...the mood of the period" (EW3TL37-8). She also envisions giving students an overview,

¹⁵ I did not ask Esther whether or not she envisioned watching either complete film. However, given her concerns with limited time for the student of westward expansion and development, along with the other introductory activities she plans for the first day, I assume that she would plan to show a segment. Naturally, the particular segment she selects will set a tone and direction for the unit of study.

just telling them who the major players are, or what we're going to be talking about over the next week...because they like to know what's coming up. Who are the major players, the Indians, miners, ranchers, farmers, and so on. Why was the West developed? How was the west developed?...We're going to be going into the reasons why the west was developed, for example, give them one reason...Just give them a taste of what's going to be coming up (EW3TL38).

On the one hand, Roger's video and his reasons for using it (its epic quality, for instance) seem to invite both students' emotional and intellectual engagement. However, he does not mention a significant quality about "Little Big Man", its Native American perspective, for its potential power to draw Alaska Native students into the study of westward expansion and development. On the other hand, Esther's idea seems primarily designed to lay out a conceptual frame of reference. She needs to consider how the starting place of a unit can also bring in students' emotional investment in learning, as well as satisfy their intellectual needs for a conceptual map.

Rather than provide an overview, Dennis and Linda use a single point of entry to get Native students into the study of the period. Dennis's starting place begins at the end. Also geared toward providing an intellectual framework, Dennis will tell the end of the story first.

By showing a film about Chief Joseph,¹⁶ he hopes to

develop that interest, to kind of set the hook, to let them know that there was a final outcome to all of the things that we're going to talk about so that they have something as a frame of reference to work from as we develop. They can see what's coming and formulate opinions keeping in mind that this is what eventually happened and how could this have perhaps been different and maybe changed what we just saw (DW3TL23).

¹⁶ Chief Joseph, of the Nez Perce tribe, is often remembered for leading a long and difficult march during the last Indian war, as his people tried to cross the northwest border ahead of the trailing U.S. Calvary. His final eloquent speech after capture is well known for his declaration that he would "fight no more forever."

Dennis seems to believe that knowing the ending might help students develop a conceptual map. He also gives the impression that knowing what resulted from westward expansion and development would help students imagine the ways other actions might have reshaped the outcome. Still, his unit--as he described it--doesn't build on this notion.

At the same time, Dennis doesn't seem to take into account the potential emotional force of this starting place. On the one hand, perhaps it will "hook" students as he hopes because they will be eager (or angry) to figure out ways that the situation might have been made different for Native Americans. Still, on the other hand, the emotional brunt of the Indian's bitter compromise may discourage youngsters from wanting to learn more about how this came to be.

Finally, Linda also wants to help her students get their bearings, but her entree is to give students a sense of where they are in space and historical time. She thinks about using topographical maps to help her students see "where we are, what's there" (LW3TL58), such as mountains and deserts. She would lead her students along an imaginary walk asking them what they see. In fact, she wishes videotapes might be available to facilitate their geographical orientation. In keeping with her own subject matter perspective, Linda believes students "start seeing things from other perspectives and that's one way you can do it" (LW3TL58). In a manner of speaking, she also wants to help them develop a perspective for what is to come.

Historically speaking, this approach appears to be a clever way to get students into time and place, while at the same time it also sets the stage for the unit's theme about perspective. Interestingly, Linda's background in language arts is again evident if we look at her starting point as establishing a setting. However, the activity seems

Table 6.2. Comparison of Teacher Candidates' Understandings of U.S. History and Their Expressed Goals for Alaska Native Students' Learning

	Understanding of U.S. History	Expressed Goals for Native Learners
Dennis	Chronology/progression Particulars important Causation Useful for present & future decision-making	Understand the impact of westward expansion and development on Indian tribes and present-day effects
Roger	Chronology/progression Useful for coming to know identity of self and others Useful for present & future decision-making	Understand how country was formed Understand human nature, develop a sense of place Associate U.S. history with own experience as Natives—develop pride
Esther	Continuity "Facts" supplementary Causation Useful for present & future decision-making	Understand whys Apply what they learn about westward expansion and development to current policy towards Alaska Natives and in future roles as voters and members of Native corporations
Linda	Continuity Causation Interpretation Perspectives Useful for present & future decision-making Useful for coming to know identity of self and others	View history as a variety of perspectives Find parallels in Native American issues between past and present so as to make good decisions

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emotionally flat (at least as described) and, perhaps, cognitively difficult to pull off; so, its success at drawing in Native youngsters seems in doubt.

To summarize, the starting point of the unit is an important activity for engaging students with the subject matter at hand. Arguably, these teacher candidates are thinking about matters of import in their ideas about how to frame students' learning and to engage them with the content. They do not merely try to excite their students' interest. However, overall they also do not attend to the affective dimensions of getting started. Only Roger's showing of the complete epic video "Little Big Man" holds promise for engaging students at this level. But, it should be noted that he may be able to accomplish this because he is unconcerned with, or unaware of, the amount of time spent on this unit relative to the rest of the U.S. history curriculum.

Intellectual demands of different types of tasks. The sets of learning tasks envisioned by Dennis and Roger on the one hand, and Esther and Linda on the other, illustrate very different kinds of activities. For the most part, tasks imagined by Dennis might be described as "text/talk" -- students read the textbook and talk about it with the teacher in order to glean a good understanding of its ideas and information. This task is reactive to the textbook. In contrast, many of the activities planned by Esther and Linda are based on interaction with ideas, through interaction with teachers, materials, and other students. For instance, Esther imagines small groups preparing for a simulation.

I argue that the level of intellectual demand associated with sets of activities, such as those presented in the units envisioned by the teacher candidates, is shaped by 1) cognitive requirements of the tasks,

and 2) the potential for substantive interaction with ideas in those activities. Within the cognitive requirements we can also see how tasks make connections (or not) with the world beyond the classroom.¹⁷

Earlier, I introduced the idea of cognitive requirements, ambiguity, and risk (Doyle, 1983; Doyle & Carter, 1984) as orders of intellectual demand in learning tasks. Here, I refer to cognitive requirements as the order of cognitive processing required by an academic task or sets of tasks, such as memorization, comprehension, and application. Task ambiguity and risk then follow from the fact that academic tasks are embedded in evaluation systems (Doyle, 1983; Doyle & Carter, 1984). Ambiguity relates to the degree of precision of answers or products to be generated, and risk involves the potential that students can meet criteria that have been set for those answers or products. For example, activities that require the construction of understanding, rather than the reproduction of answers, are high in both ambiguity and risk.

Dimension A in Figure 6.1 compares the teacher candidates' positions relative to each other along the dimension of intellectual demands associated with the sets of activities they envision. Using Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of cognition, I see tasks that require memorization, translation and comprehension as lower in cognitive level, risk and ambiguity. Such are the types typical of Dennis's and Roger's units. Activities that require application, analysis, synthesis and

¹⁷ Interestingly, these aspects of what I call intellectual demand are also promoted as dimensions for judging "authentic instruction" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993). These standards are 1) the degree to which students use higher order thinking; 2) the substantive character of the knowledge in the lesson and students' understanding of them; 3) the value and meaning of learning beyond the instructional context; 4) the extent to which talking to learn is embedded is possible; and 5) the degree of social support for achievement.

evaluation are based on understanding ideas and information, while they also push to bring together those ideas or assess them. Performance of activities at this level also requires a potentially higher tolerance of ambiguity and risk. Esther's and Linda's units represent opportunities to think at these higher levels.

As it happens in the cases of Esther and Linda, again in contrast to Dennis and Roger, higher cognitive levels are also associated with learning tasks that appear to have greater potential for being interactive.¹⁸ In the cases of Esther and Linda, activities that are interactive encourage, for example, examining differing perspectives or applying concepts to students' lives. Of course, critically reading text can also involve substantive interaction with ideas. However, as I will show below, it is the level of cognitive demand that discourages interaction with ideas, especially in the case of Dennis.¹⁹

The tasks envisioned by Dennis and Esther form the outer limits along this dimension of intellectual demand, in terms of both cognitive level and opportunities to interact with ideas. Below, I explore the contrast between learning tasks in more detail in the visions of Dennis and Esther. In the process, I also situate Roger's thinking relative to Dennis's and Linda's ideas relative to Esther's.

The tasks contained in Dennis's and Roger's units place relatively

¹⁸ Learning that is interactive refers to a view of learning described in Chapter 5. Recall that being interactive means engaging with ideas as well as with materials and other students.

¹⁹ In an on-going study meant to describe authentic instruction, Newmann and Wehlage (1993) initially find that characteristics of authentic instruction such as higher-order thinking and depth of knowledge are statistically clustered. This clustering is similar to what I observe in the case of Dennis and Esther.

low demand on students' intellect and tolerance for ambiguity and risk.²⁰ In these units, where reading and responding to the textbook predominate, students generally seem to be expected to take in and reproduce information and ideas mediated by that textbook and teacher.

Reading and responding to the textbook occupies a key role in the set of activities Dennis imagines. Primarily, the Native students he teaches would seem to be involved in memorization, translation, and comprehension activities in a whole class setting. Their understanding of the material presented by the text is developed through the interaction of teacher and students, through discussion that is described by Dennis as a back-and-forth, question and answer process (DW3TL28,29). When Dennis focuses on mining, for instance, the class reads the appropriate textbook sections and discusses it as a whole group. Dennis sees himself adding personal stories from his earlier work experience as a gold miner in Alaska. While potentially more intellectually challenging than talking about the contents of the

²⁰ As background, the set of learning tasks (exclusive of assessment) in Dennis's unit can be summarized as follows: After a transitional introduction on Friday of the previous week, Dennis's unit begins with a film about Chief Joseph and a discussion of students' impressions of it. The focus changes to mining to conclude the first week, during which time the appropriate textbook sections are read and discussed as a whole group, with Dennis providing personal stories from his own experience as a gold miner in Alaska. The first part of the second week centers on what Dennis calls the "overrunning of the Indian peoples." During this section on Indian relations, students experience an approach similar to the previous one as Dennis leads the reading of the associated textbook section, along with questions and answers between teacher and student, again in a whole group setting. Before the final test, Dennis would have his students create a timeline to draw together the various aspects of the text and his unit, including the role of the transcontinental railroad. (He does not mention the role of farming in his plans, although his earlier intentions had been to include this content for Native students.) He thinks of the timeline as helping students to see an evolution of change across the period, from open spaces in the west to a land locked up by private owners, and the accompanying impact on Indian peoples.

textbook, the timeline activity still seems to function in Dennis's unit primarily as an occasion to make sure the textbook material is well-organized in learners' minds. Having ideas held together with a conceptual map is a worthy goal, but only goes so far here as an opportunity to interact with ideas and information.

Like Dennis, Roger's unit is essentially textbook-based, even though he includes some nontextbook-oriented language arts tasks.²¹

²¹ As background, the set of learning tasks (exclusive of assessment) in Roger's unit can be summarized as follows: It examines Indian issues, mining, the building of the railroads, and farming in mini-units of 5-7 days each. In his initial thinking, Roger began the unit with the video, "Little Big Man," which, in his recollection, integrates mining, farming, Indian wars, Custer, the massacre at Wounded Knee, and Indian religions. As an alternative, students would read a play about Wounded Knee Roger has located. The class would then read the textbook section on Indian wars and policy, which is the second section within the chapter text he prefers. Roger thinks he would highlight for students the causes of Indian rebellion, the slaughter of the buffalo, and the Dawes Act, as well as perhaps draw diagrams of battles on the board. After this whole group discussion, students would be organized in small cooperative groups to compete against other groups in a game reviewing for a test. The second mini-unit, on mining, follows a similar pattern. In this case, the mini-unit would begin with students working in pairs to create charts comparing the Alaska gold rush to that of California and/or Colorado (e.g., years of operation, value). Roger also considered the option of including a play about a dance hall girl in a mining town. The third and fourth mini-units, on the railroads and farming, respectively, truncate the pattern, deleting the stimulus activity. Roger says he would tie together the expansion of the railroad with the Indian wars. The section on farming would emphasize the migration of European peoples and the hardships they encountered in their attempts to farm a difficult land.

As Roger closed the unit in his original plan, he realized that beginning with the Lewis and Clark expedition might accentuate the kinds of changes that had occurred over the period of westward expansion and development. He explained how the unit might hang together around this theme:

I think [starting with Lewis and Clark] would be a good lead-in to the Indian wars because at that time they were greeted by the Nez Perce real friendly....And then the farming would be a good 'out,' a good way of concluding the segment and how the prairie, how the buffalo were killed, how the Indians were on reservations and the land was now being cultivated. And the railroads were expanding with the cities in the West. And the cattle were being moved. And big cities were popping up (RW3TL33).

His mini-units follow a pattern that is built around the textbook--do a stimulus activity, read and discuss the textbook, play a review game, complete the test. However, after the first two mini-units (Native American issues and mining), Roger drops the initial activity.

Although the unit functionally revolves around the text, Roger also makes an effort to include activities other than text reading--such as plays, crossword puzzles, and "fast writes,"²² as well as review games.²³ Still, they seem to be places to "play out" what is to come or has been revealed in the textbook. They seem intended to be introductions or extensions rather than tasks which invite interaction with ideas or their application. While they do not seem to increase the intellectual demands of Roger's unit, they well provide some variety and, hence, potential interest for students in ways that Dennis's unit apparently cannot.²⁴

Esther and Linda's units appear to be of higher demand in terms of cognitive level and tolerance for ambiguity and risk. They involve

In making this contrast, Roger captures both the changes during the period and its bitterness for the indigenous peoples who had greeted Lewis and Clark.

²² "Fast write" is a term originating with the writing process movement which refers to the initial stage of getting ideas on paper without censoring them or being concerned with writing mechanics such as spelling. Teachers in other subject areas also use this tactic as a stimulus activity to generate ideas before group discussion or as a quick response to give the teacher feedback on what students are taking away from a lesson.

²³ Such activities apparently reflect Roger's language arts background.

²⁴ Roger might be surprised with this analysis because he volunteered explicitly that he didn't see himself relying on the text (RW3TL38,44). I would presume that he considers the additional kinds of activities described above as evidence that he has not relied on the textbook. Yet, the way in which these activities are planned to function may actually reinforce the textbooks centrality.

students in analysis and application, as well as comprehension level tasks. They envision task environments that provide students with opportunities to interact with ideas, materials, and each other outside the bounds of textbooks and teacher-student dialogue.

Beyond this, Esther also involves students in activities that are highly contextualized.²⁵ For example, during the second day, she has students talking in small groups about different perspectives on Indian policy gleaned from various materials, as Linda also does, but with the goal of presenting simulated testimony to a governmental policymaker (EW3TL40).²⁶ Or, in the third day's activities, students write letters from the perspective of a miner or rancher or farmer to family in the East, or they develop what Esther refers to as a "press release" which, for example, might try to convince Easterners to come work as a miner (EW3TL42). Such activities place students in a role which requires them to develop understandings of westward expansion and development in

²⁵ As background, the set of learning tasks in Esther's unit can be summarized as follows: Esther would set the mood of the period by showing a contemporary Hollywood film, such as "Dances with Wolves," reading excerpts from period novels, or coming into class in period dress. She intends to give an introductory overview of the period around the who's, how's, and why's of westward expansion and development. The second day revolves around varying perspectives on changing Indian policy as students analyze pre-selected text materials (though not necessarily from the textbook itself) in small groups before role-playing testimony before a student panel simulating policymakers. The next day, students would write letters or what Esther calls "press releases" from the perspective of miners, farmers, ranchers, or railroad workers. Again, students would work in small groups, finally reporting to the whole group. Day four brings a guest speaker to comment on the development of Alaska -- in relation to mining, oil, fish and game regulations -- and its impact on Alaska Native peoples, especially on their subsistence lifestyles. Finally, Esther would draw together their learnings and have students try to make projections into the future, imagining ways to ensure that similar mistakes aren't made again.

²⁶ This activity, on a small scale, is quite similar to one used by a teacher referred to as Jensen in which students prepared to argue the question of taxation of the American colonies by England before the Revolutionary War in front of a panel (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991a, 1991b).

service of completing a simulated task. Even Esther's final-day activity asks students to apply what they have learned to a present day context.²⁷

In part, whether these contextualized activities actually require higher cognitive functioning depends on what Esther accepts as an appropriate product. Tasks that are merely "creative" without being grounded in appropriate history would not seem to qualify as, for example, synthesis or application activities.

Further, Esther's and Linda's units appear to demand more of Native students in that learning tasks are oriented toward what history is about, as well as its concepts and information, especially in Linda's unit.²⁸ That is to say, their units are geared toward helping students

²⁷ Linda also includes a role-playing task at the close of the unit, described in more detail in the section on assessment. However, the situation seems less contextualized than contrived, as least in the depth Linda explained it here. It could well be that she would provide students with a reasonable and realistic setting in which they would converse in role once faced with planning for actual students.

²⁸ As background, the set of learning tasks in Linda's unit can be summarized as follows: Linda sees her unit as one that integrates and reviews ideas throughout its span, rather than building information by topic in sequence. That is, she says she deals with the same material throughout the unit emphasizing different aspects or slants, in relation to each other. She has conceived of the first week as an examination of the relationships between Indians and other groups such as miners, farmers and ranchers. The second week focuses on issues raised in the first week as they relate to her particular Native students' culture and community.

Using topographical maps, Linda begins with an exploration of the countryside, so as to build students' background knowledge of the geography and their sense of the physical conditions in which westward expansion and development unfolded. She also reviews historical precursors, such as the Civil War, as they relate to the migration of people into the West. The bulk of the week explores varying perspectives on the groups and events of the period. The second and third days introduce what Linda refers to as the "different characters" associated with the period, such as Indians, miners, ranchers, farmers, and so forth. Linda intends to act out the perspectives of such characters (while perhaps dressed for the part) or to use media to present information related to each group, each groups' issues, and their interrelationships. The fourth and fifth days involve students in

develop central subject matter ideas about the period, while also facilitating their examination of issues and experiences through differing perspectives. Linda even takes the idea of looking from different perspectives somewhat literally as she begins the unit trying to give students a sense of time and place. She also models, in a sense, taking different perspectives as she acts out various characters of the period during the second and third days.

However, Linda's unit may involve more learning about the various perspectives related to westward expansion and development than actually learning how history is constructed from those different perspectives. Given Linda's dispositions, it seems likely that she would at least touch upon how assumptions shape argument, yet we cannot know from what she said--and was asked--in the course of the interviews whether the activities she describes would actually become a systematic study of interpretation in historical accounts. Hence, I have not placed Linda and Esther at precisely the same point on the continuum in Figure

6.1.²⁹

piecing together parts of the historical puzzle as they individually read teacher-selected articles or textbook excerpts representing differing perspectives. Later, students present what they've learned to the whole class. For instance, Linda would include a piece on the U.S. Calvary's point of view about the Indians. During the individual presentations, she would be at the board drawing together the ideas in both words and a graphic form, such as a timeline or chart.

Week two of Linda's unit centers on what she refers to as local issues that are related to westward expansion and development. Like Esther, Linda would invite knowledgeable community members to speak on subsistence and resource issues, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA), and so forth. Before the final assessment activity, Linda would have students complete a writing assignment to draw together their ideas in response to the unit.

²⁹ Whereas the learning tasks Esther imagines are oriented toward application and their design appears to accomplish that, it's not clear whether the design of the tasks Linda envisions are likely to accomplish her goals of developing students' understanding of how perspectives and interpretation in history, in contrast to simply knowing about the

Summary. As representational contexts, the activities teachers select or design for culturally diverse learners to study U.S. history convey invitations and demands. These prospective teachers envision the beginning a unit of study on westward expansion and development as a place to provide a cognitive framework for later instruction. Although their ideas about learning are built around the central role of students' interest in history, they often miss opportunities to actively develop that interest using affective dimensions.

Generally, the analysis of types of activities and their cognitive demands distinguishes Dennis's and Roger's approaches from Esther's and Linda's. Whereas activities described by Dennis and Roger tend toward the acquisition of ideas and information, those mentioned by Esther and Linda also hold potential to require synthesis and application. Dennis and Roger ground their approach in the text, but Esther and Linda make use of activities with context. Overall, Dennis and Roger picture activities that invite reaction to information and ideas rather than activities that call for interaction with those ideas or materials as Esther and Linda try to do.

Social Organization

How social relations are organized within learning tasks is the focus of this section. As Erickson (1986) argues, the structure of social relations is actually part of a task--giving it shape, complexity and an order to demand--rather than an external vehicle realized for the accomplishment of the task. In this way, classroom social organization becomes another representational context (Ball, 1993) for the nature of history and how it's studied.

different perspectives of the period. There is not enough detail in the data on this point to say.

Using the teacher candidates' descriptions of the learning tasks they imagined, I noted the social interactional structures they intended to use, either through their explicit mention or my own inference. I looked for social structures that predominated, formed the core of the academic work, or were regularly interwoven through the units. I also searched for the range of different types of social structure each teacher candidate pictured.

Range and variation of social relations in the teacher candidates' academic tasks are evident in Table 6.1. Across all the prospective teachers, the structures they envisioned included whole class, small group, and individual work. The range reflected by individual teacher candidates is narrow for Dennis and wide for Esther. In other words, Dennis's unit shows that he will use just one participant structure, whereas Esther integrates three. In addition, the predominance and role played by different social structures in each of the teacher candidates' units positions them along a continuum as in Figure 6.1.

The types and range of social structures envisioned by the teacher candidates fits well within the framework developed by Philips (1983). Philips (1983) argues that social relations in a classroom setting are organized around types of encounters that differ from each other primarily in the number of students in interaction with the teacher. She observed ways of allocating student involvement, and thus organizing interaction, in elementary classrooms on the Warm Springs Indian reservation. The four participation structures she sees are whole

class, small group, one-to-one (teacher-to-student), and individual desk work.³⁰

Whole class structures. In the Philips (1983) framework, and in the present analysis, whole class organization involves all the students in interaction with the teacher. This structure virtually dominates Dennis's plans³¹ and is also included in the learning tasks of the other teacher candidates. For instance, Dennis pictures a kind of back-and-forth, question and answer exchange between the teacher and students in what he calls "discussion" of the textbook reading (DW3TL26,28). The predominance of the bi-directionality of teacher-student relations seems to create a "track" off of which it's difficult for either the teacher or students to step. Thus, I place Dennis at the extreme along the dimension of social organization in Figure 6.1.

However, the nature of the interaction in whole class work may differ at any given time, based on the interplay of cognitive demands of the academic work and the teacher candidates' perception of a teacher's role. Esther, for example, imagines a short lecture during her

³⁰ I claim that these participant structures are also familiar to most practicing teachers, at both the elementary and secondary levels. However, high school classrooms appear to be primarily organized in whole class structures. These participation structures give us an idea of how turn-taking is likely to be organized, but they do not, in and of themselves, tell us about the nature of the discourse. For example, in a whole class interaction, the discourse may take form as teachers questioning students, interactive discussion or conversation, Socratic exploration or development of an argument, and so forth. The data allow for the examination of participant structures, but for the most part, give only a sense of the discourse patterns within those structures since studying such patterns was beyond the scope of the study.

³¹ I do not know how Dennis would organize the timeline task prior to the test. One could imagine the whole class developing a timeline to reflect what they had learned from the textbook, especially in a small school, and given Dennis's penchant for whole class activity. Certainly, small group and individual projects are also possible avenues. Dennis does not volunteer either of these latter alternatives.

introductory survey of westward expansion and development. And, another variation of the whole class structure is to be found in Linda's unit when students report to each other their findings about different perspectives on the events of westward expansion and development, while Linda organizes their ideas at the board.

Small group structures. Small group work is a regular feature of the academic work envisioned by Esther and Roger. However, they think of small group work differently than does Philips (1983), who describes small group organization as a structure in which the teacher interacts with one group while other students do individual desk or seatwork. In Esther's and Roger's visions, the small groups work simultaneously, while the teacher facilitates the activity. Although Roger also plans regular whole class reading and discussion of the textbook, small groups also play an important part in the review game he uses in each of his four mini-units. In this review game, small "cooperative" groups (RW3TL26) compete with each other to win points if they can answer questions based on the content studied. In this activity, Roger would presumably still take a visible role in order to lead the game, dispensing questions and judging responses. Nevertheless, the key role and regularity of this small group game moves Roger slightly away from the bi-directional, tracked nature of the social structures used by Dennis and toward a more varied and multi-directional set of relations which Esther represents.

The amount of small group work in Esther's unit, brief as it is, makes it a strong element of her curricular vision. Of the five days she allots for studying westward expansion and development, she sets

aside two of them for small group tasks.³² During the second day, students work in small task-oriented groups to analyze varying perspectives on Indian policy that are reflected in textual materials (pre-selected by Esther) in preparation for role-playing testimony before a policymaker. On the third day, they work in small groups to write letters or "press-releases" from the perspective of miners, farmers, ranchers, or railroad workers. Such small group work, combined with these contextualized tasks, potentially gives students opportunities to make sense of ideas and information in conversation with their peers. In this way social relations have the potential to become webbed in the multiple directions that interaction can occur--that is, between teacher and student and between students. Esther sees herself supporting, pushing, and pulling the small groups. In this process, a complex learning network can begin to grow.

Linda's students would also work in varied social participation structures, with whole group and individual work predominating, along with some small group activity, to be described in the section on assessment. The social organization of Linda's academic work is more closely related to the multi-directional, webbed relations associated, in part, with Esther's unit, than it is to Dennis's and Roger's teacher-student interactions. Still, she appears to consistently mediate conversations between students in her activities--for instance, the individual presentations described above--and on that basis, I position

³² This is especially interesting on two interrelated counts, both being related to the brevity of time Esther envisions for this unit. First, the inclination to lecture is strong when time is brief and content is vast. Second, the notion that small group work takes too much time also leads away from planning for this structure when time is limited. Here, Esther may have underestimated the actual amount of time the small group tasks she has imagined will take, but what is important to note is her disposition to plan them under constraining conditions.

her between Roger and Esther.

Individual structures. Finally, the individual tasks in these curricular visions are of two types: Within the unit itself, students work individually on research assignments and writing tasks, such as "fast writes" designed (in these cases) to give them an occasion to respond to the material under study. In addition, these individual tasks are routinely shared with the whole class through reports and presentations. Thus, individual work potentially becomes part of what other students have opportunities to learn, in contrast to the individual seatwork more typical of elementary classrooms which usually serves the purpose of individual learning. The second type of individual work is located in the assessment tasks envisioned by Dennis and Roger. I explain these in more detail below.

In summary. Acting as a part of the demands and context of learning tasks, social relations can be organized along a continuum ranging from participation structures that center on teacher-student interaction to those that involve webs of interaction between students as well. The academic work envisioned by these teacher candidates is spread across this continuum. On the one end is Dennis's dependence on the bi-directional nature of the teacher-whole class structure. On the other end is Esther's unit, which has built in small group tasks, potentially illustrating multi-directed, webbed interactions.

Learning Materials: Textbooks and Other Resources

In the previous sections, we have seen that the cognitive demands of learning activities interact with the social relations that organize them. The role of particular learning materials also shapes the academic work imagined by the teacher candidates and interacts with aspects of cognitive demand and social relations. In particular, we

have already begun to get a hint of the central role of textbooks in Dennis's and Roger's units.

Dimension C in Figure 6.1 describes qualities of learning materials as providing limited or multiple perspectives. To say that the perspective of learning materials is limited is to speak about two qualities. First, the number and range of different types of materials can be wide or limited in the case of particular teacher candidates. Second, the breadth of knowledge that might be possible to access within learning materials may be more or less specified in advance. To use the metaphor of digestion with which Linda characterizes learning, we could say that textbooks are typically replete with well-digested, even watered down, material. Journal articles and primary documents are still digested, but they may also provide knowledge that requires the reader to make sense of--that is, digest--on his or her own.

Again, Dennis's and Roger's curricular visions differ from those of Esther and Linda, here in the use of limited or multiple learning resources. Central to the difference in their approaches is the role of the textbook.

Range and variation in learning materials. A range of learning materials, including textbooks, films and videos-- and in a limited way, also play scripts and maps--is evident across the four prospective teachers. However, the teacher candidates differed on the use of limited vs. multiple perspective materials. Dennis and Roger tended toward using limited resources, both in type and character, relying on the textbook. Both Esther's and Linda's units depend on materials they've selected from a variety of sources to provide students with multiple points of view. Esther and Linda plan to use journal articles as well as primary sources, such as excerpts from diaries, speeches, and

treaties. Linda refers to such primary sources as "pure texts or raw texts" (LW3TL73), even though these sources still reflect a particular perspective by virtue of the fact that they are "slices" of the past record or are to be taken in political contexts.

Role of textbooks in teaching history. The ways in which these prospective teachers consider and use textbooks in teaching history reflect their relative dependence on them. As is already apparent, Dennis's and Roger's units rely on the textbook as the centerpiece. The textbook stands as a primary source of knowledge for both teachers and students. In the cases of Dennis and Roger, the textbook also provides a clear direction for teachers. In fact, Dennis confirms, "I would probably depend on the text" (DW3TL26). He also reflects on the influence of the text on his thinking during the interview, saying that he was dissatisfied with his unit. He had wanted to use Native American issues as the theme for his unit, but began it (after showing the film on Chief Joseph) with mining. He says, "I know why that happened because I went from my thoughts to my text and my text started with mining. So we went with mining" (DW3TL34). Although Roger does not see himself as relying on the textbook (RW3TL38,44), its key role in his unit belies his perception, even while he includes supplemental activities.

Thus, students' opportunities to learn history are shaped by the quality and characteristics of a given textbook, as well as by the teacher's capacity to help students learn from it. However, sticking close to a textbook doesn't always foretell negative consequences for teachers and students. Some researchers (Reynolds, et al., 1986; Ball & Feiman-Nemser, 1988) report that novices' thinking about subject matter

and pedagogy may be opened up or deepened in the process of following a textbook.

Esther and Linda draw on--but do not appear to depend on--the textbook as a resource. They use it with more discretion than do Dennis and Roger. For example, they do appear to use the chapter materials provided in the interview as a base for the curriculum plans they envision. As well, they would each put to use text materials (within the textbook or its teacher's guide) which contrast perspectives from Native American, governmental, and newspaper sources. Interestingly, these textbook materials are themselves primary source materials.

That Dennis and Roger include frequent reading of the textbook by students in class may help to explain what they see as of importance in these books. They tend to focus on structural aspects more than content, especially as these aspects make the material accessible to students. For example, Dennis prefers one textbook (Risjord & Haywoode, 1982) because he thinks it is written in small segments with a simple sentence structure, making it easy to read and outline for his Native students (DW3TL11). Roger thinks this text's lists of objectives, along with section overviews and reviews, make obvious to students what's important for them to learn (RW3TL6). He especially likes its story-like quality, making the text more engaging for students (RW3TL7-8).

Criticisms of history textbooks. Obvious differences exist in the ways the teacher candidates think about textbooks, generally, and these text chapters, specifically. These differences again pit Dennis's and Roger's views against Esther's and Linda's thinking. For the most part, Dennis and Roger seem to accept the textbook chapters they examined (DW3TL7,10; RW3TL10).

However, Esther and Linda believe that generally textbooks are

narrow and limited by their very nature. When asked about the weaknesses or flaws in one of the two textbook chapters she was given to review, Esther remarked, "Oh, it's a textbook. By definition, that's a weakness...[because] you can't get everything into it. You really have to make some very difficult decisions about what goes in and what goes out" (EW3TL18). Linda, too, sees scope as a problem, providing a catching visual image to make her point. Referring to a telescope as a kind of window, she implies that some "windows" for looking at history may be wider than others:

[Textbooks have] got your eye focus[ed] on this little, little narrow telescope for a slot, and you can only see what they want you to see. That's what textbooks do in the first place. I mean in general...[they] only give you a little narrow window to look out of" (LW3TL25).

In saying that textbook readers are only allowed to "see what they want you to see," Linda alludes to the perspective taken by a given textbook. She also sees a particular problem with these specific textbooks--their lack of balance in viewpoints--as she exclaims in this interchange:

L: I mean it's all skewed in the first place, but (sigh) the more balance the better.
 I: And what is it that needs to be balanced here?
 L: The adjectives used! And the descriptions. The perspectives need to be focused, I think, by not using as many loaded words...not being so overbearing, being written in a know-it-all sort of way. It means being more balanced. I mean I don't think anything ever really is balanced, but "more" is the key word (LW3TL25-26).

Linda acknowledges there is a particular perspective in each text, but she also recognizes the role of rhetoric in conveying that perspective. She accurately points out that word choice slants meanings. Drawing on adjectives and descriptions used in the Boorstin & Kelley (1986) text chapter--including an example describing Indians as "fierce occupants of the Great Plains" (p. 321)--Linda argues that a negative picture of

Indians results. She explains,

everything about the Indians in here is relatively negative. There's no understanding. The other chapter, [Risjord & Haywoode, 1982] for instance, says in italics (laugh) even, something like, "The Indians always detested the reservations. The reservation system never worked." Here it makes it sound like, "Well, it wasn't real pleasant for 'em but they dealt with it okay" (laugh). It's not sympathetic to the Indians. It's all from a White Man point of view. And that's what I object to most about this whole chapter (LW3TL18).

For Linda, rhetoric conveys a perspective in the textbook chapters on westward expansion and development that either points the reader toward a Native American's or "White Man's" point of view.³³

Linda also compares the Boorstin and Kelley (1986) text treatment of Indians to what she sees as its positive view of a key term, "go-getters." In the authors' use, go-getters are optimistic, competitive, spirited "New Americans" such as cattle ranchers and cowboys, miners, farmers and their families, who "helped to find and develop the riches of a New American empire" (p. 320). Linda doesn't take this language to be positive, however. Instead, she sees these go-getters as

the ones who took and took and took and never gave back and killed and killed and killed and never felt sorry and this is supposed to be something that's the American dream and the American way of life. And yes, that is really what happened, but do we have to glorify it? Can't we see it for what it was? And see it in a context of being inhumane to people and being irresponsible with how to use resources...I guess I'm putting my political interpretation on it as well. But there needs to be some sort of middle ground to present this" (LW3TL17).

By the end of this passage, Linda softens her initial ire, but she is still willing to put her "political interpretation" on the situation and to call for naming the inhumaneness and irresponsibility that she observes in the use of natural resources and treatment of indigenous

³³ Given no shades of gray, the "know-it-all way" of the text's language that Linda mentioned earlier may well result from word choice and sentence structure that sound objective when actually they gloss questions, controversy, or conflict.

peoples during westward expansion and development. In sum, Linda sees the Boorstin and Kelley text chapter as presenting a "bigoted" and "not...very broad perspective" on the history of the period (LW3TL17).³⁴ Her conclusions recall Linda's beliefs about the nature of history described in Chapter 3 as she argues that unless minority peoples' perspectives are represented in an historical account, it is one-sided.

It is not surprising that Dennis and Roger do not criticize in any depth the textbook chapters they read, given their apparent acceptance of them as a centerpiece of their approaches to teaching about westward expansion and development. Or, speculating in the reverse, they do not think to give the textbook a less prominent place because they do not possess the subject matter perspective and background that would allow them to analyze the textbook in the way that Linda does. Linda's view of history as built on perspective is reflected in her critique of these texts.

³⁴ Linda's belief that this chapter presents a one-sided story leads her to describe her picture of the textbook's authors as follows:

L: I guess I have this mental image of people who wrote it. Like the little old guy with white hair and a mustache or something. Um, nothing against old guys with white hair.
 I: How does that come through? I mean, what is it about this that makes you picture such an author?
 L: Because it's bigoted. And, I just imagine somebody who's really old-fashioned and has accepted all the old ways of thinking of people and things. I don't see lots of points of view in this one. I see one point of view. And I don't know why I say a little guy in a mustache, but I just see somebody who hasn't done a lot of extra reading of viewpoints and perspectives him- or herself. It doesn't seem to be a very broad interpretation of history" (LW3TL17).

Assessment

Assessment is the final aspect of the teacher candidates' units I consider here. I focus primarily on end-of-the unit summative evaluations planned by the teacher candidates. Although Esther did not volunteer to plan such an assessment, she did speak about more informal, on-going ways which would help her get a sense of her students' understanding of the unit.³⁵ Hence, she is not included on Dimension D in Figure 6.1.

In this analysis, I distinguish between assessment that is plainly and solely meant to be evaluative (Dennis and Roger) and assessment that may also be instructive for learners (Linda). This distinction also separates standard from alternative formats in the cases of these teacher candidates. On the one side are tests which assess individual mastery of prespecified knowledge completed in isolation from peers. On the other side are alternative tasks providing opportunities to "test" students' learning, at the same time that their learning could be reshaped or extended by the completion of the task.

Typical tests. Examples of standard evaluative tests are a part of both Dennis's and Roger's units. Both teacher candidates think the tests would contain items to assess factual information, "just to see if they had the framework to work with" (DW3TL43), as well as essay questions. Dennis describes the essays on his test as items that

³⁵ Although she planned no summative assessment, Esther noted with approval the kinds of essay questions in the teacher's guide which, in her view, require students to synthesize ideas. In addition, she suggests that the kinds of questions students initiate as they work through a set of lessons give Esther a sense of what they're getting out of the unit. For example, she believes her students are beginning to see interconnections between ideas when they start to ask questions about "what would happen if...." Writing journal entries which require students to apply what they've learned is another useful formative assessment tool, in Esther's view (EW3TL60-63).

evaluate "opinion-based understanding" such as, "Write a paragraph on Wounded Knee" or "What does Chief Joseph mean to you?" (DW3TL44).

Roger also envisioned a review task, which he thought of as a kind of assessment, explaining that "in order to see if they were retaining all this information, I'd have a review" (RW3TL27). This review activity is the game described earlier in which small cooperative groups compete against each other for points gained from correctly answering questions about the material studied in the unit. Presumably, these questions would grow out of the textbook since Roger's unit is built around it. Further, because of the competitive, probably fast-paced nature of the game, it seems likely that the questions will be limited to lower cognitive levels.

Alternative assessments. Linda's assessment approach represents a very different sort of evaluation, one in which further learning is not only allowed to take place, but is intended by the task. Her unit concludes with a small group, role-playing activity. In it, students converse from assigned perspectives representing aspects of the period.³⁶ She describes the task as, "giving them a card that says, 'O.K., you're Sitting Bull, and you're Custer, and you're somebody else,' and I threw you all together in the same place, and this is how you're gonna start your conversation, go" (LW3TL62). We do not know, in this case, in what kind of context Linda would place these role-players, and, without that, the strategy seems somewhat flat and artificial.

Like Esther, Linda notes that this kind of task requires students to pull together and apply what they've learned, contrived as we may see

³⁶ Here, Linda wants to make sure that voices representing perspectives not often included in textbook history are also heard, such as the voices of women.

it in this case. Linda explains her rationale saying, "They have to know a lot to do [this task]. They have to know more about what went on and the issues involved than they would on a test, because they have to be able to react as that [assigned role]" (LW3TL62). Linda also expresses her comfort with students working with other students in order to help them succeed, including one student telling another that he or she is on the wrong track, or students giving correct information to each other.³⁷

This approach is unusual in terms of assessment. First, it mixes evaluation with instruction. This characteristic alone is enough to distinguish it radically from typical tests. Yet, there are other reasons that it is atypical. Second, students' accomplishments are mutually constructed events, not solo performances. That is, successful products will not look alike. Also, the knowledge to be displayed in order for the construction to be judged successful has not been completely prespecified. Of course, some basic understanding of the period is required in order to adequately play one's role, as Linda pointed out earlier. But, different learners may bring different knowledge to bear on the simulation and still be judged successful. Indeed, it is in students' having a wide range of information and ideas, combined with their choosing particular ideas in response to others' comments, that indicates the depth and flexibility of their learning.

Beyond allowing for student learning, Linda's assessment task also

³⁷ Linda's assessment is somewhat surprising in light of one aspect of her views on the purposes of studying history -- its usefulness in making sense of present day dilemmas and taking action on those understandings. Instead, Linda keeps the focus on understanding the past; she does not then use students' historical understanding to make sense of a present day situation or to appraise solutions to a current problem. Doing so would be a natural extension of this assessment in keeping with her orientation.

helps her learn more about her students' thinking than just what they articulate knowing as that is held against a relatively certain, inflexible standard. This allows moments of re-teaching within the activity itself, or even more fully later in time. Whereas most evaluation is intended to act as closure to learning, Linda's assessment keeps learning opportunities open for both students and teacher.

The nature of Linda's assessment task and the ways it is different from standard end-of-the-unit evaluations reflect what Clark and Ben-Peretz (1993) see as the need to "reframe testing to emphasize and amplify the learning potential of tests" (p. 2). In their view, this means creating assessment tools that allow both teachers and students to learn from preparation for the test, the test experience itself, and reflection on the test.

In summary. The typical tests envisioned by Dennis and Roger are sharply contrasted with Linda's alternative. With the kind of contextualized task Linda envisions, being tested potentially becomes a less onerous task for both students and teachers. Too, this kind of task keeps the focus on higher cognitive processing as students must synthesize and apply what they have learned. However, we do not know the standards Linda would use to judge the adequacy of students' learning in a setting where the event is mutually constructed.

Teacher's Role

The above analyses of the teacher candidates' thinking about what and how to teach about U.S. history allow us, I argue, to also infer their beliefs about their role. The goals and purposes they hold for Native students in studying westward expansion and development combine with their visions of academic work to help us understand the part these novices see themselves playing in order to achieve their curricular

visions and advance Native students' learning.

The notion that teachers are more or less visible to students in their instructional role is useful in this analysis.³⁸ Dennis and Roger appear to be "visible" teachers in that they take the lead on most activities, directing class textbook reading and discussion, and, in the case of Roger, review games and supplemental activities. Esther and Linda are more "invisible" in that they also envision activities that are directed by tasks and materials or shaped by students' interactions. Still, they also imagine lecturing--for instance, Esther's unit overview--and helping students bring together learning from individual and small group tasks--such as Linda's consolidation of information in a board graphic as students report their research. In particular, Linda maintains a more visible profile in her role than does Esther.

Although they are less consistently visible and directive in their teaching role, Esther and Linda appear to be more active in shaping the unit in comparison to Dennis and Roger. They frame the conceptual focus of the unit, choose resources and text materials, and invite community guests. That is, they select ideas and activities for Native students to encounter. In contrast, Dennis and Roger take their lead from the textbook. Overall, Esther and Linda generally act as framers and facilitators of activities, whereas Dennis and Roger tend to act as mediators of the textbook.

³⁸ Wineburg and Wilson (1991a, 1991b) discuss two contrasting models of effective high school history teaching. One of the teachers they describe illustrates a style of classroom leadership that is highly visible; the other is also present and active in her role, but develops activities in which learning is less dependent on her direct input.

In sum, the curricular visions imagined by these teacher candidates involve their goals and purposes for studying westward expansion and development, the academic work they envision to advance these goals and purposes, and their views of the teacher's role in fostering Alaska Native students' learning in U.S. history.

Overall, their expressed goals and purposes promote history as a continuous thread connecting past, present, and future, a linkage that helps us understand present conditions and make wise decisions now and in the future. In terms of their goals for Native students' learning of subject-specific content, these prospective teachers want to emphasize Native American issues and the impact of land settlement and development on indigenous peoples.

Academic work to achieve these goals and purposes takes form in the integration of learning tasks, social participation structures, learning resources, and assessment. Overall contrasts between Dennis and Roger, on the one hand, and Esther and Linda, on the other, highlight very different kinds of approaches, even when individual variations are taken into account.

On the one hand, then, Dennis and Roger build their units mainly around the textbook, with comprehension of text emphasized in teacher-student dialogue. The exception is Roger's repeated use of a small group review game and his efforts to include introduction or reinforcement activities such as reading a play about the period. Their roles become centered on mediating the textbook.

On the other hand, Esther and Linda select tasks and materials that create environments for students to construct meaning in interaction with ideas and information. These tasks tend toward higher

cognitive processes such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of perspective. In addition, these tasks often involve students in conversation with each other, especially in Esther's. Thus, Esther and Linda act as framers and facilitators in their teaching roles.

Knowledge and Moral Dimensions
in Representing Learning Opportunities

The teacher candidates' curricular visions reflect their knowledge and beliefs about what and how to teach Alaska Natives in U.S. history. As embodiments of ideas about teaching, these curricular visions allow us to examine the interaction of their ideas about subject matter, diverse learners, and learning. As I argued above, these curricular visions are also representational contexts offering students particular learning opportunities. Given both conditions, we see that intellectual and moral dimensions of teaching are inexorably interwoven in teachers' practical dilemmas and deliberations (see Ball & Wilson, 1993; also Chapter 1).³⁹

I illustrate this premise by, first, looking for evidence of the prospective teachers' knowledge and beliefs about subject matter, learners, and learning in their goals, approaches to academic work, and ideas about the teaching role.⁴⁰ Then, I re-examine these

³⁹ Critics of pedagogical content knowledge (e.g., Sockett, 1987) argue that the concept overemphasizes technical, knowledge aspects of teaching, in what is essentially a moral enterprise. Rather, Ball and Wilson (1993) contend that moral and knowledge issues are integrated in teaching.

⁴⁰ Similarly, Wilson (1988) and Ball (1988) examined the interaction of different domains of knowledge and belief in instructional representations. For example, Ball (1988) studying preservice teachers as they entered teacher education, utilized a normative framework of warrants (mathematics, learning, learners, context) to judge their representations as well as to appraise the processes of their reasoning. Wilson (1988) examined the thinking of

representational contexts from the perspective of what they might offer Alaska Native students the opportunity to learn about U.S. history--that is, the moral dimension.

Knowledge Dimensions

How are the prospective teachers' ideas about subject matter, culturally diverse learners, learning and teaching manifested in their visions for teaching westward expansion and development to Alaska Native students? What is the nature of their influence? Most obviously, we will see that their views of history and learning in history powerfully shape the goals, academic work, and teaching roles they envision. This finding is consistent with Grossman's (1991) conclusion that novice teachers' orientations toward English played out in their curriculum planning, particularly in their stated goals and simulated planning.

Understanding of history in purposes for teaching. Most striking in the goals these teacher candidates hold for Native students' learning in history is the reflection of their understandings of history as a discipline (see Table 6.2). A key idea hooking their understanding of history and with what they hope Native students will come to understand about history is the notion of a continuous chronological thread that links past, present, and future. This idea makes possible seeing history as useful for making sense of the present and future, as well as for guiding decision-making now and later.

Also consistent with most of the novices' understandings of history is what's missing from their goals for Native learners. Except for Linda's case, what is not part of their broad purposes for teaching

both novice and experienced teachers for patterns in which concerns for history, learners, and teaching and learning were manifested.

U.S. history is helping Native students see history as a socially constructed account of the past, developed with the aid of disciplinary rules of evidence and argument. In Linda's case, her understanding of history as a puzzle in which multiple perspectives are the pieces is to be found in both her expressed goals for Native students' learning and in the academic work she plans.

Understanding of westward expansion and development in subject matter emphases. The specific content about westward expansion and development that these teacher candidates think they will emphasize for Native students also mirrors both their view of history and their understandings about the period as described in Chapter 3. For instance, Dennis's view of history gives causation an important role. This role surfaces in the emphasis he expresses on the "impact" of westward expansion and development on Native peoples. However, the academic work he plans does not achieve this goal, as he also observes. In another case in point, one of Esther's goals is to have students understand the economic reasons why Europeans moved westward, an idea fundamental to her understanding of the period. In addition, the tasks she plans apparently work toward this end.

In Chapter 3 we saw that the teacher candidates' understanding of westward expansion and development rested on two foundations--the settlement and development of the land and the impact of this activity on indigenous peoples. These understandings inform the subject matter they plan to emphasize in their units. For instance, Linda wants her students to consider what she calls the perspectives of groups such as miners, farmers, ranchers, and the U.S. government. She also wants them to understand the viewpoints of Indian peoples and their relationships with these groups. Finally, she thinks Alaska Native students should

come to see the impact of these perspectives and interaction on Native Americans then and now. Each of these goals reflect her understandings of history; the academic work she plans also embodies these understandings and goals. To conclude, the teacher candidates' understandings of history as a discipline and their specific understandings of westward expansion and development shape the goals and academic work they plan for Alaska Native students.⁴¹

Ideas about learners and teaching in goals for teaching history.

Except for Dennis, these teacher candidates believe that all students, including Alaska Native learners, experience difficulties making connections within the subject matter and between themselves and subjects. The analysis of their responses to the teaching vignettes also demonstrated the value they place on approaches that develop such connections. Further, their broad goals for teaching history and more specific subject matter goals for westward expansion and development reflect the desire to build these links. Esther, for example, wants Native students to be able to apply what they have learned from studying westward expansion and development to current issues of Indian policy. Doing so would both recognize historical connections and encourage these students to see how history relates to their own lives.

In the following chapter, I discuss in more depth how the teacher candidates think about developing connections between Native students and U.S. history. Their reasoning about making subject matter relevant to Alaska Native learners provides a way of looking at the interaction

⁴¹ As noted earlier, the academic work Dennis described does not appear to achieve his goals. However, his expressed desire to reshape the unit so that it better demonstrates the impact of westward expansion and development on Indians is further evidence that, for Dennis, views of history, goals for Native students' learning, and the academic work he plans are, in fact, intertwined.

of ideas about subject matter, learners, learning, and teaching.

Ideas about learning and teachers' roles in academic work. I also find obvious evidence of the novices' ideas about learning in history and how it is fostered for Native students in the tasks, social organization, learning resources, and assessment they plan. Comparing the plans of Dennis and Esther provides the most dramatic illustration and contrast.

The academic work Dennis planned reflects his view of learning, up to a point. Dennis' reliance on reading and discussing information in the textbook using a whole group back-and-forth, question-and-answer format between teacher and student suggests the influence of his belief that learning involves the acquisition of information and students' response to it. Recall his use of the image of students' "taking in" information and "giving it back" to the teacher. His unit test is traditional in format, using primarily low-level recall questions, with some questions for students to also give what Dennis calls their "opinions." Dennis also calls for including variety in teaching approaches so that students don't get bored with instruction. However, his unit relies on basically one approach, which suggests that Dennis's broad view of the nature of learning in history overrides his more specific ideas about how that learning is fostered.

Esther's view of learning and her ideas about academic work also mirror each other. The academic work Esther planned generally involves students in interaction with materials, ideas, and each other. Many of the tasks she envisions involve synthesis or application of knowledge, using multiple learning resources, rather than depending on the textbook. All this fits with her view of learning as interactive construction, rather than primarily as acquisition and reaction.

Esther's teaching role is congruent, too, with her views of learning in that she mainly frames and facilitates the learning environment.

Roger's and Linda's ideas about history, Alaska Native learners, and learning in history are also evident in their teaching units, but with modification. For instance, Roger expresses the view that learning should be interactive, but his plans rely on reading and responding to the text. Still, he thinks about including activities such as doing research on mines, enacting plays, and competing in review games. Linda also asserts that learning is interactive, yet the interaction she plans is mainly between students and ideas or materials, or between herself and students in whole class settings. However, she does picture an alternative assessment activity in which learners interact with each other in constructing a role-playing dialogue.

Summary. These teacher candidates bring intertwining knowledge and beliefs to their deliberations about what and how to teach westward expansion and development to Alaska Native students. Their ideas about history, Native learners, and learning and teaching in history are reflected in the goals, academic work, and teaching roles they envision.

Moral Issues

Given that the novices' curricular visions represent U.S. history, what is it that Alaska Native students have the opportunity to learn from the goals, academic work, and teaching roles these prospective teachers picture? Answers to this question respond to moral issues in teaching.

Earlier I suggested that at least three aspects of students' subject matter learning are bounded and shaped by the teacher candidates' curricular visions. They are:

- 1) broad ideas about the nature of history;

2) ideas about how history is studied and new historical understandings developed; and

3) content knowledge about westward expansion and development.⁴²

What opportunities do the novices' curricular visions offer in these three dimensions of knowledge? How do they compare to the goal of learning history for flexible understanding?

By understanding history, I mean knowing both the "stuff" of history--information and ideas--and the frameworks that organize it. I mean being able to relate aspects of history to each other as well as to apply historical understandings to situations beyond the classroom. To understand history also requires an appreciation of how knowledge evolves within standards in the field. Such understanding of history holds the potential to help students develop powers of judgment necessary as citizens of a democratic society and an understanding of one's identity and human nature. Finally, it keeps open future learning in the way Dewey (1938) suggests that truly educative experiences support continued learning, rather than the foreclosure of opportunities.⁴³

Opportunities to understand the nature of history. The approaches to teaching westward expansion and development to Native learners envisioned by these prospective teachers communicate messages to students about what history is as a discipline. Most strongly conveyed

⁴² These three areas parallel dimensions of subject matter knowledge for teaching explored by Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman (1989) as substantive, syntactic, and content knowledge, respectively.

⁴³ My thinking about understanding in history has been influenced by The Bradley Commission on History in Schools (1988), Gagnon (1988), Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman (1989), Kobrin (1992, 1993), McDiarmid, Ball, & Anderson (1989), the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1987), Newmann (1993), and Wilson (1991).

to Native students by these novices' curricular visions is the notion that history is a useful tool for understanding the present, informing the future, and guiding wise action now and later. This is possible because continuity through time is assumed. In this way of thinking, history is a pragmatic discipline. Roger and Linda also see history as a way to understand ourselves and others, which somewhat softens the utilitarian view by also putting attention on the human condition.

The view of history communicated by some teacher candidates also includes concerns that multiple perspectives--especially those of underrepresented peoples such as Native Americans--be a part of the study of history. This view potentially provides a more well-balanced questioning and accounting of the past. However, the teacher candidates' notions about perspective do not convey a multiplicity of experiences or standpoints, say, within the Native American community. Nor is conflict or change within perspectives represented.

Ideas about causation are also central to the definition of history Native students have an opportunity to learn. Emphasizing the "impact" of westward expansion and development on Native Americans is a good example of how the novices' units make causation important to understanding history. Overall, however, no sense of tentativeness about history is communicated--no evident concern for multiple explanations of causation or contingencies in past events.⁴⁴ Further, the idea that causal explanations change over time (Fischer, 1970) is absent.

In conclusion, this utilitarian view of history as relatively

⁴⁴ Fisher (1970) warns against causal explanations that reduce complexity to simplicity such that they are "constructed like a single chain and stretched taut across a vast chasm of complexity" (p. 172).

fixed is grounded in notions of continuity and causation. Native students are encouraged to think of history as useful for making connections. Specifically, they are encouraged to believe the tired maxim, "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." The kinds of connections they are urged to make, then, are not so much generative as they are meant to avoid problems and mistakes. This view of history does not develop new ways of thinking for Native students; instead, it gives the impression that if a present or future use cannot be found or imagined for the study of particular aspects of history, they are not worth exploration. Or, such a "presentist" view judges people and actions of the past by current perspectives rather than circumstances or prevailing ideas of the times (Gagnon, 1988). This

makes for bad history, swapping truth for a temporary glow of moral superiority. Worse, it deprives students of perspective on themselves. By ignoring the reality of change from the past, it ignores as well the change there will surely be after us, producing still different fashions of thought--by which we should not necessarily wish to be judged (Gagnon, 1988, p. 46).

The utilitarian emphasis makes history sound purely rational, when much of human interaction is not. It diminishes the place of changing perspectives, contingencies, twists and turns through time.

Opportunities to learn how history is studied and knowledge evolves. Two kinds of curricular visions create very different learning opportunities for Native students in regard to historical knowledge. In one kind of vision, knowledge is communicated as a settled matter, external to learners, and narrow in perspective. Dennis's and Roger's reliance on a textbook for both themselves and students likely conveys that knowledge is to be found outside oneself; it is to be accepted and absorbed from those sources. In addition, the rhetorical tone and limited perspective of most textbooks makes history sound as if it were

a given record of the past. Students experiencing this vision of history would be encouraged to find given answers outside of themselves.

Another vision of historical knowledge, illustrated by Esther's and Linda's units, sees knowledge primarily as constructed by learners in interaction with ideas, materials, and/or conversation with peers. Studying history in this vein potentially requires analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Potentially, this vision provides the opportunity to understand that studying history requires looking for multiple perspectives.

Of the four teacher candidates, only Linda begins to include in her approach how historical accounts are constructed through acts of interpretation. Overall, their curricular visions lack any apparent systematic effort to help Native students see that history is an argument created within a community of historians using accepted standards of evidence. To include this aspect in the study of historical knowledge is not to call for creating "little historians." Rather it is to call for the creation of learning opportunities that help students--in this case, minority learners--gain power to understand and shape their environment. In this regard, McDiarmid and his colleagues (1989) argue for a flexible understanding of history that means

knowing a subject well enough to increase one's understanding of and thereby power within one's environment. Such an understanding of history, for instance, enables one to take a critical perspective on the "facts" and to see them as interpretations rather than as absolutes--to question why women figure so narrowly in history or to challenge the portrayal of Native Americans in accounts of early America (p. 194).

Without opportunities to learn how history is constructed, Native students are (again) likely to come away with a sense of history as more settled and fixed than it is.

Opportunities to understand the content of westward expansion and development. Judging from the content emphases and academic work envisioned by the teacher candidates, Alaska Native students would have fairly significant occasions to learn about the Native American experience of westward expansion and development, especially in Esther's and Linda's visions. In the recent climate of growing multiculturalism in the United States, such learning opportunities are beginning to be more common. Or, in the cases of these teacher candidates, their focus on Native American issues may reflect a concern with connecting Alaska Native learners with U.S. history content (see Chapter 7). Perhaps taking a lead from the textbook chapters they read for our interview, these teacher candidates framed the clash between Europeans and Native Americans in economic terms. As they see the conflict, Europeans claimed dominion over land and developed or destroyed resources that were part of the natural world integral to Native Americans lifeways. Whether the prospective teachers see the outcome as inevitable or progressive shapes the actual content Native students may learn. Students in Dennis's class, for example, would be presented with a portrayal of Indians who are "run over" by "civilization." Linda's students would be offered a view of Native Americans as victims of greedy oppressors. In Dennis's view, no blame is affixed, and acceptance is required. From Linda's perspective, guilt is assigned; anger and recompense are justified. Whether readers agree with either of these characterizations, they represent different messages to learners about social action.

Notably absent from the intending teachers' curricular visions is the opportunity for students to learn about the intellectual framework or ideology of the period of westward expansion and development.

Unfortunately, this is in keeping with observations by scholars who have noted the lack of intellectual history in U.S. history textbooks (FitzGerald, 1979; Gagnon, 1988). The concept of manifest destiny is nowhere to be found in the curricular visions of these teacher candidates, and the idea of "frontier" deserved mention only in Linda's goals, but not her unit as it is described here. This leaves students without much of a context in which to judge the events of the time in terms of the period. It makes it difficult to explore the clash of worldviews that is a significant part of the cultural conflict in westward expansion and development.

Developing an Understanding of History for Minority Students

The interaction of domains of knowledge in the teacher candidates' thinking have implications for the moral dimensions of teaching. In this case, Alaska Native students' opportunities to learn U.S. history are shaped by the interplay of the intending teachers' ideas about history and learning in history by culturally diverse students. Native students' opportunities to understand history in the ways I described above seem more likely in Esther's and Linda's classes than those of Dennis and Roger. Yet, none of these teacher candidates appear to adequately present Native students with opportunities to understand history as socially constructed accounts of the past. And, in particular, students in Esther's classes run the risk of adopting a presentist view of history.

Still, as beginning teachers, the four teacher candidates express important concerns about bringing together culturally diverse students and subject matter. In the next chapter, I explore how they think about relevance in response to this concern. Whereas the present chapter has

Table 6.2. Comparison of Teacher Candidates' Understandings of U.S. History and Their Expressed Goals for Alaska Native Students' Learning

shown that knowledge and beliefs interact to shape learning opportunities, the next describes how the prospective teachers use knowledge of learners and learning to develop connections between students and subject matter.

CHAPTER 7

PEDAGOGICAL REASONING ABOUT CONCERNS FOR RELEVANCE

In previous chapters, I have separately examined and discussed the teacher candidates' understandings of history, their beliefs about culturally diverse students, and their ideas about teaching and learning. These domains of knowledge and belief serve as resources upon which the intending teachers draw in thinking about connecting students and subject matter. In the last chapter, I analyzed and assessed their curricular visions embedded in units of study on westward expansion and development in U.S. history, units that represent potential opportunities for culturally diverse students to learn history. These units also illustrated the influence and interplay of several domains of knowledge and belief in the teacher candidates' thinking. In the present chapter, I consider one aspect of how these teacher candidates reason about bringing together culturally diverse students and subject matter.

Pedagogical Reasoning

The work of teaching is to make worthwhile subject matter accessible to students, that is, to represent it to learners in ways that are true to the subject matter while also being understandable to learners. Reasoning about this task involves the weaving together of knowledge and beliefs about subject matter, learners, learning and teaching, and context (Ball, 1988; McDiarmid, Ball & Anderson, 1989; Wilson, 1988). For Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1986), this work requires "pedagogical thinking" in which end-means thinking and attention to student learning are central. In sum, teaching requires

transforming one's own comprehension of subject matter into a form understandable to others, which is the essence of a process of pedagogical reasoning (Shulman, 1987; Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987).

According to Shulman (1987), the transformative aspects of pedagogical reasoning require that teachers come to terms with their understanding of the subject and purposes for teaching it, as well as interpreting subject matter materials, such as textbooks. As part of this process they also determine ways to represent key ideas with analogies, examples, demonstrations, and so forth. This transformation also requires selecting and organizing teaching methods. In addition, teachers must adapt these representations and methods to learners' general characteristics, as well as tailor them to the particular youngsters with whom the teacher works.

Thus, Wineburg and Wilson (1991b) suggest that in the process of pedagogical reasoning, history teachers must turn both inward and outward. They need to turn inward in order to "comprehend and ponder the key ideas, events, concepts, and interpretations of their discipline." (p. 332). In turning outward, they must also try to "think themselves into the mind of students" (p. 333).

Rooted in a conception of teachers' knowledge in which subject matter is viewed as the "missing paradigm" (Shulman, 1986), pedagogical reasoning usually takes subject matter as its starting place (e.g., Shulman, 1987; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987). As it has been described, the process of pedagogical reasoning gives only a minor--albeit an integral--role to who students are and teachers' knowledge and beliefs about them. Although Shulman (1987) notes that teachers may occasionally begin a process of pedagogical reasoning based on considerations of students, he suspects this condition prevails in

special circumstances, such as in planning for very young children or special education populations.

Rather, I argue in this chapter that consideration or knowledge of students may well play a more central role in the focal teacher candidates' reasoning about teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native learners than this consideration or knowledge would seem to be accorded in Shulman's (1987) model. Whether conscious or tacit, these prospective teachers' beliefs about students are strongly active in their thinking about teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native learners.

Relevance as a Strategic Site for Examining Connections

On both commonsense and pedagogical levels, the idea of making the study of history relevant to youngsters has strong appeal. As learners in and out of school we realize how much and how well we learn when we think the topic or skill at hand is related to our lives and interests. Moreover, intending teachers are repeatedly urged in educational psychology courses to associate new learning with something students already know.

Being relevant, according to The Oxford English Dictionary (1984), refers to being in a state of connection or pertinence. In a general sense, relevance refers to how one matter bears upon another. Relevance, then, creates a relationship or an association between ideas and learners. Often, relevance is established through usefulness and application or close relation in time.

Teacher candidates have these meanings in mind when they speak of making subject matter relevant to their students. For example, Linda speaks of making "some connection between their lives and the issues or information we're discussing" (LW3SS6). More specifically, Dennis explains that making history relevant to his Alaska Native students

means "making it apply to them as individuals. So what we're talking about in history today appears to be something that is affecting you or could affect you. That's not always an easy association to make" (DW2SS28-9). As illustrated by Dennis and Linda, then, making subject matter relevant means linking content with who students are, their lives, and the phenomena that affect them. It is not surprising to learn that the etymological root of relevance is "assisting," and it is just such assistance in fostering learning that the teacher candidates count on when they try to connect their Alaska Native students with U.S. history.

Two rationales encourage looking at relevance as a strategic site for learning about teacher candidates' reasoning. One justification is based on calls for the increasing of diverse students' engagement in school learning by relating academic knowledge to learners' cultural backgrounds (e.g., Banks, 1993; Au & Mason, 1981; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Philips, 1983). In most such cases, attention has been given to language, communicative style or interactional patterns as the cultural background through which academic engagement is to be fostered.¹ However, as represented by Linda's and Dennis's remarks above, the focal prospective teachers think of relevance in relation to subject matter. They do not use the term to refer to classroom social relations, say, in the sense of making the study of history more "relevant" to students through the use of known or comfortable social participation structures.

¹ Villegas (1991) argues more broadly that teachers can engage students in actively learning through instructional content, methods, and materials that are relevant to their students' cultural experiences. As an example, Lipka (1991) describes an Alaska Native teacher's art lesson centered on a cultural event, beaver round-up. Most importantly, according to this researcher, the lesson reinforced cultural values through both its content and the social relations that organized it.

A second grounds for examining teacher candidates' ideas about relevance is to be found in research on teachers' understanding of history. Research on novice teachers' thinking about teaching U.S. history (Wilson, 1988) also refers to the role of relevance in beginning teachers' pedagogical reasoning. Wilson (1988) mentions that for two of the four novice teachers she studied who possessed low pedagogical content knowledge in history, "the critical interaction between learners and content was the issue of relevance. Relevance, to them, meant teaching students about things that were going to be useful in their lives" (p.299). However, Wilson's claim arises in the context of her investigation of teachers' understandings of U.S. history. Here, I focus on the issue of relevance in the context of teacher candidates' ideas about teaching U.S. history to culturally diverse, minority students. Thus, the present investigation allows us to examine teacher candidates' pedagogical reasoning at the intersection of their ideas about subject matter, culturally diverse students, and learning.

Indeed, I suggest that the teacher candidates' everpresent concern with relevance--that is, with relating Alaska Native learners and U.S. history--arises from the interaction of their knowledge and beliefs about subject matter, culturally diverse learners and learning, and themselves as novice teachers. I also propose that this concern with relevance arises from the interplay of a particular set of beliefs held within the context of a cultural gap the teacher candidates acknowledge between themselves and Native students. These intertwining beliefs are:

- 1) that a continuous thread of history connects past, present and future;
- 2) that students have difficulties making connections within history and between their lives and history; and

3) that learning requires students' interest be developed through bringing subject matter close to learners' existing interests, knowledge, and daily or future lives.

The issue of relevance, then, serves as a special site for examining teacher candidates' pedagogical reasoning. In addition, other warrants, such as the consideration of time as a limited instructional resource, set boundaries on the prospective teachers' thinking about relevance.

A Cautionary Tale: Making Academic Learning Relevant

Susan Melnick, a researcher and teacher educator at Michigan State University who is white, tells a story about her efforts to help Black high school seniors in a college preparatory writing class learn to write a persuasive paper (personal communication, July 20, 1993). As a participant-observer, Susan had spent many days in the school and in this particular class. She wanted to make this activity one that would be relevant to her students. So, she chose to use Malcolm X as the centerpiece of a writing task; after all, her students were wearing Malcolm X tee-shirts and caps, and in Susan's view, seemed fairly politically aware. In the writing task, students were to state a thesis regarding the presence or absence of change in Malcolm X's views on separation from or cooperation with white people and argue it. In preparation for writing, Susan had students watch a videotape about Malcolm X; she also thought she would have them talk about possible evidence for each thesis.

However, her plan to use Malcolm X to create a relevant context for the writing task fell woefully short. Why did this happen? Susan contends that she made two "mistakes" in her reasoning. First, she assumed that because Malcolm X was Black, and her students were, too, they'd be interested in talking and writing about him. But Susan concludes that trying to connect with students' cultural background is

not enough to make an instructional representation work. Second, she says, "I assumed that because they were Black, they knew about Malcolm X" and that they would be willing to talk about what they knew of him. Here, Susan found that her Black students did not know about Malcolm X and were not accustomed to discussing ideas in classes. Susan realized that she knew little about what these Black students had experienced previously in social studies classes, either in terms of content or norms of interaction which might be of use in thinking about teaching English.

Susan Melnick's story helps us think about several issues in relation to questions of relevance. In the first place, we have in this story a thoughtful teacher and researcher who has taught Black students in secondary English classes before becoming a teacher educator. Yet, we see how easy it is to slip into unwarranted assumptions about students' backgrounds in an effort to make subject matter relevant. Thus, we are reminded that trying to develop or capitalize on potential relevance in academic lessons is not a simple or straightforward endeavor even for experienced teachers. Second, Susan's story also cautions us not to ignore students' academic backgrounds in becoming focused on issues of culture. A significant question becomes, then, what knowledge of students is helpful in connecting learners with subject matter when teachers and students are of different cultures?

How, then, do the teacher candidates in this dissertation study think about connecting Alaska Native learners with U.S. history as they try to make subject matter relevant for these students? What knowledge and beliefs do they bring to bear on this endeavor?

We will see that these novices apparently think of making subject

matter relevant to learners as an inherent good. They see relevance primarily as a means to engage potentially reluctant students with subject matter from which they are most likely disconnected. As such, determining the relevance of subject matter or representations helps the teacher candidates select or emphasize particular content.

Overall, the teacher candidates' concern for connecting students and subject matter in engaging ways is to be lauded. However, as they think about what and how to teach culturally diverse students in the context of making subject matter relevant, I find their reasoning to be relatively superficial. As well, they miss opportunities to profoundly influence their Native students' thinking about history as a subject and their views of themselves. Yet, it is worthwhile to carefully examine these novices' thinking so that we might understand as researchers and teacher educators how to help novices move more deeply into questions of connecting students and subject matter.

This chapter, then, offers a description of the teacher candidates' thinking about relevance in teaching. It shows how their ideas about subject matter, students, and learning both interact with and shape their ideas about teaching. In the process, I suggest a framework for examining elements of relevance in the ways these teacher candidates reason about teaching culturally diverse students. I close with a discussion of potential traps which might be associated with concerns for making U.S. history relevant to students. In the next and final chapter, I discuss an educationally more powerful approach to creating relationships between students and subject matter.

The data I draw upon in describing and discussing these intending teachers' pedagogical reasoning about relevance--and which supports my assertion that knowledge and beliefs about students play a key role in

this reasoning--range across three parts of the interview. Responses from questions about students, teaching and learning, and the teaching vignettes provided both explicit evidence of the teacher candidates' thinking about relevance, as well as opportunities to infer ways they bring together ideas about subject matter, learners, and learning. For example, I asked directly what they thought would make history interesting to their Alaska Native students, and why they would teach certain topics in westward expansion and development. In other instances, I examined how these novices bring considerations of students and learning to bear on thinking about subject matter by examining their references to relevance for evidence of various domains of knowledge and belief.

Bringing Together Learners and Subject Matter

Returning to the teaching vignettes of Mr. Gomez and Miss Channing provides a useful place to examine how the teacher candidates' ideas about students and learning interweave in their visions of making history relevant for Alaska Native youngsters. As the focal teacher candidates deliberate about engaging Alaska Native students in school learning in these scenarios, they consider two aspects of the subject matter that may be made relevant--particular views of history as a subject and particular historical content.

Recall that Mr. Gomez had centered his U.S. history course on the theme, "those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it" and, in the vignette, he was planning to teach the Great Depression using a simulation. Overall, the prospective teachers agreed with the view of history he intended to communicate. Specifically, Dennis's and Roger's assessments of Mr. Gomez's approach make explicit how they see relevance developing when subject matter is shown to apply to their students'

lives. In fact, Roger thinks that Mr. Gomez is "trying to get the students interested in history and how it's related to their lives" (RW3V19). Dennis further illustrates, explaining,

[Mr. Gomez] wants to make history relevant. He wants to bring history to life. He wants students to make that connection between how history plays in the past and will repeat itself in the future, and how those people that pay attention to that drama are apt to take advantage of those situations in their futures (DW3V25).

Dennis and Roger, then, argue that showing history to be related to the present and the possible future makes it relevant to their students' lives. Here, their ideas about learners and learning--in their views that learners' interest is motivated when content is related to something familiar or close--interweave with each other. At the same time, they also interact with Dennis's and Roger's ideas about historical continuity and the practicality of studying history as a guide to action. When asked what he thought of this approach for Native students in a small, rural school, Dennis replied that it would be relevant for them, too, because "they're every bit as much a part of history and capable of being doomed or duped...as someone in an urban setting" (DW3V27). In these examples, then, Dennis and Roger describe the relevance of their views of history as a subject for Native students.

A second teaching vignette, that of Miss Channing, also shows how teacher candidates bring together ideas about subject matter, students, and learning. In this case, particular content is made relevant to students. Miss Channing had arranged her lesson on colonization around a comparison between English colonization on the East coast and the Russian colonization of Kodiak Island, Alaska. Esther's assessment of

the approach is positive as she argues,

I think it would be a very effective approach. Well, it takes something very far away from the kids, "Ho hum, this is boring. Why am I studying this?" Hooking it in with something that's real close, Alaska history, to make it more relevant. At least to some of them. Now in a smaller setting, in a rural setting, these kids are Alaskans and so I think in a lot of ways it can be even more relevant to them, particularly if you're teaching in Kodiak. In a multicultural setting, what I found here in town was so many of the students have just moved in town or have only been here for a year or two and teaching about Alaska, they're really just not interested" (EW3V43).

Esther operates from two bases in her contention that this approach relates the subject matter content to Native students. For one, she believes that learning occurs when students and the subject matter are brought into close relationship. Second, about her Native students, she assumes that those in smaller schools--and here, she is most likely referring to Alaska Native students in small village sites--will be interested in the content because they are Alaskans. In other words, she presumes that such Native students feel an identification, and perhaps allegiance, with the state.² She reinforces this supposition when she compares these Native youngsters in small schools to students in a multicultural, urban classroom, which in the school where she completed her student teaching included students from a nearby military base, some of whom had not spent much time in Alaska. Esther believes these sojourners do not come to her classes with a connection to Alaska and its history. Thus, the distance between them and the subject matter is greater, and their interest less strong, than for youngsters who have lived in the state for most or all of their lives. For purposes of teaching, then, the study of colonization in Alaska is not as relevant

² There are certain potential problems with Esther's reasoning, based on the assumptions she makes about Native students. I will explore these and other possible traps later in the chapter.

to the sojourners, according to Esther, as it would be to Natives. Here, again, we see the intertwining of ideas about students and learning in interaction with subject matter around issues of relevance.

Commentary from Roger also illustrates the interaction of the teacher candidates' ideas about subject matter, students, and learning in their concerns for relevance. Roger comments that if his students were to be Athabascan Indians, as his were at his student teaching site, he would want to "teach things that pertain to their culture" (RW3SS22) because

it seemed like the Indians that I was working with, it seems like the best way of doing things would be to show them examples of how certain events in United States history were similar to events that happened in their own history that they're really familiar with. They don't think of it in terms of history, they just think of it in terms of, well, they know this. And so you can show them that history is really relevant to them. It seemed like whenever they hear of something that's going on in their community or something like that, they just perk right up" (RW3SS24).

Roger holds that learning occurs when linkages are created between two histories, that of the United States and that of Alaska Natives. Based on his observations during student teaching, Roger believes his Native students will invest in learning--indeed, they "perk right up"--when historical content is made familiar, or relevant, to them. In fact, Roger reiterates this reasoning in thinking aloud about knowledge of Native students he'd want to have in order to teach a unit on westward expansion and development:

When you know what their culture is and who they are, then you can get them into the text better by giving examples that you know will mean something to them. Like in [the small community where I did my student teaching], you can always make them more interested if you associate things that are going on outside of [the community] with something else in [the community]. And so the students seem to understand it much more. It's just like talking about the Ghost Dance. You might associate that with [another local dance event] (RW3TL23).

Roger's knowledge of his students--the ways they like to learn described

in the first quote, and his sense of their cultural background, mentioned in the second remark--interacts with his ideas about learning as a process based on the association of familiar material to the unfamiliar.

Making subject matter relevant, then, means in the case of these teacher candidates, using what's known about students as a starting place to represent subject matter in ways such that those students will recognize it as valuable to learn. In this view, it is the close tie to students that gives subject matter power.

A Framework for Examining Elements of Relevance in Pedagogical Reasoning

Here, I suggest a framework for examining elements of relevance in the ways these teacher candidates reason about teaching history to culturally diverse students. In the process of their deliberations about connecting students and subject matter, these prospective teachers also speak about aspects of relevance that help give the concept shape. Below, I lay out elements of the concept: 1) levels of relevance, 2) qualities of topics or representations that facilitate connections with Alaska Native learners, and 3) functions of relevance in terms of teaching and learning. At the same time, I continue to point out ways the teacher candidates bring together domains of knowledge and belief, but such observations now serve as background.

Levels of Relevance

Two levels of relevance are evident in the teacher candidates' deliberations about teaching U.S. history--broad and specific. By "broad relevance," I refer to instances in the teacher candidates' responses in which they discuss relating subject matter to students using topics or ideas having a wide scope. Linda, for instance, says

that her primary focus when teaching westward expansion and development to Alaska Native students would be on Native American issues. She proclaims she would "definitely choose Native American issues because it's not only relevant as far as how they got to be where they are in Alaska in Native history, but it's also relevant to their everyday life right now" (LW3TL5; see also LW3TL60). In other words, Linda thinks that Native learners could relate to U.S. history because it helps to explain present circumstances. For example, presently in Alaska, Natives deal with both state and federal governments in regard to natural resources and their subsistence lifeways.³ Using Linda's way of thinking, this aspect of Native students' everyday world makes the study of the historical relationship between, say, Plains Indians and the U.S. government over which lands Native Americans could hunt on a subject relevant, broadly speaking, to Alaska Native adolescents of the 1990's.

Another sort of consideration about relevance is more specific. Instances of specific relevance make connections between particular aspects of historical content and students' experiences. That is, they act as analogies between historical ideas in specific time and place and more definite aspects of students' backgrounds as perceived by the teacher candidates. These instances of specific relevance, then, can be thought of as contextual representations (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991a, 1991b).

Dennis provides an illustration of relevance at this level as he

³ In September of 1993, for the first time in Alaska's history, its governor closed the subsistence fishing season for salmon on the recommendation of the state's Department of Fish and Game. This harvest would have stocked both Interior Natives' larders for the winter and fed their sled dogs.

deliberates aloud about the potential connections between raising cattle and cowboy life during westward expansion and development and his Alaska Native students' cultural background. He sees a comparison between the lifestyle of frontier cowboys and Alaska Native ways of trapping in the wilderness using snow machines. He claims,

in some ways you can correlate that to things like trapping and living in the wilderness. Make some associations there....This was a real independent, free living-off-of-the-land kind of lifestyle, and the people that did it were hard working but at the same time they didn't have a lot of structure in their lives. They were free to roam and just kind of like get out of there. Get on your snow machine and take off in some direction. If you don't have enough gas to get back, then you're going to have to deal with that when the situation comes up and that's kind of the way it was for a cowboy" (DW3TL20).

Elsewhere, Dennis has mentioned that he sees the Alaska Native students he has most recently worked with in a small, village school after student teaching as individualistic, independent, and self-reliant; he also mentions being unable to perceive structure in their lives (DW3SS8-9). Thus, he uses his observations and beliefs about his Native students' cultural backgrounds as a base for considering the relevance of a specific aspect of history for his students. With this example as a transition, I now move to an analysis of the teacher candidates' reasoning about the capacity of a topic or representation to connect with Native students.

Qualities that Facilitate Connections

What do the teacher candidates think would make a broad content topic or a specific representation relevant for their Native students? Primarily, they consider how close or familiar the subject matter is--or could be made--to their students' backgrounds as they perceive those backgrounds. Roger sees Ms. Brown's community history project as relevant and engaging for Native students in a small school because

"it's directly related to the students and their community" (RW3V35). More specifically, Linda "always wants to relate [history] to something really close by" (LW3TL47).

Familiarity. I draw on Linda to provide several illustrations of how the teacher candidates use the factor of familiarity to reason about relevance because she is the most explicit and articulate in her thinking. When asked what she thought Native students might find challenging in the study of westward expansion and development, she replied,

I suppose possibly the farming [would be challenging]. The ranching wouldn't be such a problem. Many of them are in groups of people that used to be migratory, following animals around. And I would imagine the drives to market and all those kinds of things are something that can pretty easily be conveyed to them. With the subsistence lifestyle, you understand what it is to be dependent upon the land. And so, even to that extent they might understand farming. But, if they've never seen a farm, and thought of the way it works, I mean I certainly hadn't really ever seen a "farm" farm. It's a far cry from something you have here" (LW3TL33-4).

In these deliberations, Linda draws upon her knowledge and beliefs about Native students' cultural backgrounds. She implicitly conveys a judgment that ranching is more relevant to her Native students than farming based on the closer analogies she sees ranching carrying to a subsistence way of life. While farming might be compared to Native people's connections to the land, this analogy seems to be less powerful for making subject matter relevant in Linda's view than is the apparently closer link between cattle drives and the ways Natives traditionally followed migratory animals. In addition, Linda also mentions that her students, like herself, are unlikely to have a mental image of a large farm and how it functions.⁴ Worth noting here, but to

⁴ Keep in mind that Linda was born and raised in Alaska, a state with very little arable land and few large farms such as those in the Midwest.

be discussed further in the section below on relevancy's potential pitfalls, is Linda's assumption that following migratory animals as part of a subsistence life is analogous to following cattle on a drive to market.

Effects on students' lives. A second kind of relatedness the intending teachers consider in deliberating about relevance concerns the effects of historical events or issues on their Native students. For instance, Roger approves of Mr. Herndon's approach, involving teaching about minority groups and the civil rights movement during Black History Month, because "he taught material that was directly affecting the students at that particular time" (RW3V34).

Relevance based on actual or potential effects on students' lives is not necessarily dependent on learners' familiarity with the subject, however. Responding to the vignette describing Mrs. Kennedy's lesson on the Declaration of Independence, which the teacher candidates all seriously questioned in one way or another, Linda spoke about the value for Native students of the goal of understanding this document within the history of this nation. She believes that Native students would be unlikely to easily relate to it, since they "didn't ask to be American citizens" and the document "wasn't written for them [or] written in a time when they probably would have been included in it" (LW3V27). However, she implies that a study of the Declaration of Independence for her Native students is relevant to them, not in terms of its historical value to the United States, but because "at some point they may need to write their own Declaration of Independence...and I want them to be able to do so" (LW3V28).

Linda's reasoning can also be traced as she takes account of Native students' backgrounds in her response to Mr. Gomez's approach

using a simulation to study the Great Depression. In this quote, she alludes to both familiarity and effect as qualities of subject matter that can make it relevant for diverse learners. Initially, she is concerned that the Alaska Native students wouldn't be familiar with the idea of a stock market. Then, she looks at ways in which the Great Depression may have affected the students or a global economy affects them now. Important to keep in mind as context to understanding her remarks is the existence of village and regional resource-holding corporations set up in 1971 by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Linda explains,

There's an awful lot of givens here that they're not gonna have. Concepts of stock markets and...I can't even name specifics because I really don't know what of this would be familiar to them and what would be unfamiliar. But, I think that there would be so many more things, there'd be distance, I mean both, in miles and culture (laugh) from their way of life that it'd be very difficult to conceive of pulling this off very effectively....Although the Depression certainly affected Alaska, this idea of Wall Street and the huge gigantic global economy doesn't necessarily affect someone who's got a subsistence lifestyle. It does to the extent that now they're part of corporations. But aside from that, I mean traditionally and, as far as basically on an everyday basis, I don't think that this is something that they're gonna always feel themselves. Except, as the corporations exist and have money invested here and there. Again, in this case, it would very much be somebody else's history (LW3V41-2).

Linda's notion that a cultural distance exists between Alaska Native students and U.S. history interacts with her ideas that learning is fostered by bringing learners and subject matter in closer proximity. Thus, she grapples with whether or not Native students would be sufficiently familiar with the stock market or their subsistence lives affected enough by the global economy to warrant seeing Mr. Gomez's simulation of the Great Depression as relevant to these learners.

What is it about Native students that Linda focuses upon in this reasoning about relevance? Perhaps it is her belief that Native

students lack subject matter background (stock markets and global economies) which shapes her thinking. However, the knowledge and beliefs Linda more likely draws upon in deliberating here about the relevance of Mr. Gomez's approach is culturally based. Linda gives us two clues that she is focusing on students' cultural backgrounds. First, she looks to corporation membership as a potential link between the students and the events of Great Depression; she knows that corporations are based on cultural group membership. Second, she concludes that a study of the Great Depression for Native students would remain a study of "somebody else's history," a phrase that again implies concern with group membership.

In sum, qualities of subject matter that make it relevant to Native students, in the views of these teacher candidates, are its familiarity to diverse learners and its potential or actual effects on their lives. The aspects of subject matter the prospective teachers' emphasize as contributing to relevance are in keeping with their ideas about the nature of learning in history. That is, these intending teachers believe that learning in history is fostered, even deepened, when using what I have called the "principle of proximity."

Functions of Relevance

I construed two primary functions served by making subject matter relevant to culturally diverse students based on the teacher candidates' discussions of connecting Alaska Native learners with U.S. history. First, subject matter that is relevant helps to engage students with school learning. Second, considering relevance of subject matter to culturally diverse students helps teachers determine what content to select or emphasize. I suggest that, in teaching, these functions interact as teachers select content they believe to be relevant to

diverse learners with the intended effect of engaging them in its study.

Increasing culturally diverse students' engagement with school learning. In the views of these teacher candidates, subject matter that is relevant to students potentially increases their engagement. For instance, when asked what Native students would find interesting about the study of westward expansion and development, Esther anticipated their engagement with issues of Indian policy. Policy concerns are also of interest to Esther, given her political science background, as a subject matter lens for making sense of history (see Chapter 3). Here, however, she bases her reasoning on beliefs about students' cultural backgrounds and ideas about learning interests that would flow from that background. Esther explains, when asked why she thought her students would be interested in matters of Indian policy, "Because they are Indians. They are Native, be they Indian or Eskimo. So governmental policy toward Native people I would hope would be very interesting to them since they are of this group and its policy that will continue to affect them throughout their lives" (EW3TL29).

Esther's understanding of history interrelates with ideas about learners and learning in this response. Her notions about a tight historical continuity interweave with purposes she values for studying history to contribute to sound decision-making in the present and future. This view of the subject matter orientation also meshes with her ideas about learning and learners--who, for instance, don't make connections easily between themselves and subject matter, according to Esther. In this case, Esther's ideas about learning are implied. She implies that when students identify with peoples or are affected by events, learning increases. Here, these students are Alaska Natives who presumably will relate to policy affecting Native Americans as well as

themselves. In Esther's thinking, all of this adds up to increased interest on the students' part and their engagement with academic materials.

Beginning with virtually the same words as Esther used above, Dennis remarks on the value of studying the period of westward expansion and development for Native youngsters. At a broad level, this is what Dennis does when he claims that his Native students will get a sense of themselves out of studying Indian policy. His thinking apparently rests on a belief that because his students are of similar cultural background to Native Americans of the period, there are lessons that they can learn:

Because they're Indian. They're Eskimo. They're Native. And I want them to have a strong sense of their culture and their ethnicity...They need to watch out for themselves because they need to look out for their own best interest obviously. That we can see by studying this period and what happened was they're going to get ripped off. They're going to get stabbed in the back(DW3TL30).

Dennis's remark illustrates how his orientation toward subject matter links with his ideas about students. Here Dennis seems to assume that the study of westward expansion and development is relevant to his students because past, present, and future are tightly connected; hence, the value of studying it is to avoid problems of the past. In this case, it means knowing--to Dennis's way of thinking--that white people will inevitably stab Natives in the back and learning to protect one's interests.

Both Esther and Linda think along similar lines when they argue that starting with a slant on the content to bring it close to their particular students will invite engagement. Esther claims, in her response to Mr. Herndon's approach, that her focus would be on the contributions of members of the minority group most represented in her

class, for instance, Native Americans before African Americans if most of her students were Alaska Native. From there she would expand to talk about other minorities, such as Blacks, women, Hispanics, and others(EW3V30). Linda agrees in that she would begin with events close to the lives of her Native students and expand from there to events and issues farther away in place and time from her present day learners (LW3SSFN4).

Selecting and emphasizing content for Native learners. Attending to relevance in subject matter also helps teachers select content and determine which ideas and information to stress. In the following illustrations, we see how particular content is chosen based on the teacher candidates' views of their students, in combination with ideas about learning. I do not mean to imply that relevance is the only basis on which they ground content selection; indeed, each of them justifies content emphases on its importance to subject matter understanding as well. Yet, when put in terms of teaching, their thinking often turns to making subject matter relevant as a means to connect subject matter and students.

As Roger considers why he wants to emphasize Indian wars and policy with eleventh grade Native students, he bases his rationale on beliefs about learning and about these students as learners. He declares,

I think those are the things that those kids would think [were] more interesting and that they would get more out of because I think that the chiefs and the events that happened, they would all think would be really interesting and it would somehow connect them to the events since they're in there as well. And they all seem to be interested in other Indians (RW3TL39).

Roger's considerations broadly show that he would choose what content to emphasize based what he thinks would interest Native students. And,

what he believes will catch that interest are the stories of people and events that are culturally close to them.

Accenting Native issues when working with Alaska Natives may seem an obvious choice of content in attempts to make subject matter relevant. However, analogies between less evident topics and the lives of Native students demonstrate similarity in reasoning on the parts of, for instance, Linda and Dennis--two novices who often think very differently from each other. Take, for example, each one's puzzling over the question of whether to include study of the Pony Express in their units on westward expansion and development. Both of them see it as an appropriate inclusion, given its power for relatedness to Native students. Linda muses,

I mean these guys have mail planes, they can understand the Pony Express and, [they] used to have sleds doing the same thing. So I think that's worth talking about and showing how it's not all that rare, there just wasn't snow involved necessarily or something (LW3TL56).

Given that mail service in rural Alaska occurs through the agency of "bush" pilots, maintaining communication over great distances by Pony Express riders braving the elements may not seem so far fetched or "foreign" to youngsters living in village Alaska in Linda's view.⁵ Given this implied relevance to Native students, Linda concludes it's "worth talking about" (LW3TL57).

In comparison, Linda also volunteers why she would not include Annie Oakley in the unit for Native students.

But, Annie Oakley, you know I like Annie Oakley and, I like the musical ["Oklahoma"], and all that kind of stuff. But I guess I'm

⁵ Although it can't be known from Linda's words whether or not she was thinking of it, it seems possible that Linda may have also been making reference to the reknowned Iditarod Trail from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska, which originated as the winter route taken by dog team to deliver life-saving serum.

not really sure I would present her to students in a Native village. There are much more important things to spend my time on. And not that she wasn't an interesting gal but...she was kind of, not the norm or anything. And she's not, what she did wasn't directly related to something that I want them to know really deeply. So I, I might not focus on her (LW3TL56-57).

Because Annie Oakley is not directly relevant to Native students' experiences in Linda's view, she sees no reason to include her in the study of westward expansion and development, even though Linda expresses an interest in the role of women during this historical period (LW3TL35), and she has a personal interest in Annie Oakley.

Dennis follows the same line of thinking about the relevance of the Pony Express and its appropriateness for inclusion in the unit. Because his first response is a negative one, and then he changes his mind, we can see how his reasoning works in the following exchange:

I - Would you have your Native students study about the Pony Express?
 D - I might. I don't see it as being really important, I guess.
 I - All right. Now...
 D - Well maybe so.
 I - Maybe so? You changed your mind?
 D - Maybe so. Did we get the mail flight to the village? And the Pony Express was the mail service, so there might be a little something there" (DW3TL22).

After thinking about it, Dennis decides to include study of the Pony Express for reasons similar to Linda's, that the Pony Express can be compared to an aspect of Native village students' daily lives.

Selecting content for urban, multicultural settings. The examples above illustrate ways the teacher candidates select broad topics and specific representations based on issues of relevance, which in turn are grounded in their ideas about students. Another source of insight into their reasoning about content selection based on relevance is contained in the modifications they would make to their units on westward expansion and development for a second instructional setting. At first,

the prospective teachers were asked to articulate their curricular visions of a unit on westward expansion and development for eleventh grade Native students in a small, rural school. With these ideas as a base, the novices were then asked to talk about similarities and differences between their original unit and one for students in a large, urban multicultural school that included Alaska Natives.^{6,7}

Most notable in their modifications is the teacher candidates' acknowledgement that with the shift in student population would also come variation in the accent on Native American issues and youngsters' connection with this content. Both Dennis and Linda argue that they would de-emphasize Indian issues (DW3TL3-4, LW3TL94) and would include more attention to what they see as other key topics associated with westward expansion and development, such as mining, ranching, and farming. However, Linda remains committed to maintaining Native American issues as the most significant aspect of the period. In this way, her modified unit is more inclusive, but keeps its focus, whereas Dennis appears to shift the center of attention in his unit. Finally, although Esther claims that she would maintain the same goals and content emphases for a multicultural class as she had set out for Native students, she believes that the consideration of Native American issues

⁶ I presume the teacher candidates pictured large, urban multicultural schools such as those in Fairbanks, in which each of them participated early in their teacher education program. In these schools, the proportion of minority students runs one-fourth to one-third of the school population. Except for Linda, whose student teaching classes were often half-filled with students of color, the prospective teachers may have imagined mainly white faces in larger, urban classes. Thus, we have the potential contrast between the novices' reasoning about Native students and white students.

⁷ The data reported here reflects the responses of Dennis, Esther, and Linda. Unfortunately, I inadvertently reworded the question for Roger in such a way that he, in essence, responded to a different probe.

is "probably going to be a lot less personally loaded" (EW3TL57).

Dennis is most direct about the changes he sees:

I would think that in a more urban setting there may not be quite the amount of emphasis on the relationship between the Indians and the cultural things that were impacted. Although that still has a great deal of relevance and importance, but it would probably be more a progression that was part of a U.S. history course that started probably with the Revolution and went through time to the present and today's events (DW3TL3).

With the student population now including Alaska Natives among the faces of White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian students, Dennis takes the spotlight off Indian concerns and the cultural impact of events of westward expansion and development on indigenous peoples. In its place, he pictures a diffuse account of historical progression through time. He would increase attention to mining and the expansion of the railroad. In regard to Indian affairs, Dennis would foreground the efforts of the U.S. government to be fair and equitable with the indigenous peoples, although "it didn't always work out the way they hoped it would" (DW3TL5).

While Dennis apparently continues to base his reasoning on who he perceives his students to be, his concern for subject matter also seems to shift to a more general storyline. Indeed, he argues that urban students are probably more inclined to see a "bigger picture" and would also bring more subject matter background to the study of westward expansion and development (DW3TL5). Interestingly, the emphases Dennis describes for students in a large, multicultural setting end up sounding remarkably similar to the unit he actually planned for Native students in a small school--the one he expressed dissatisfactions about because it did not adequately stress Indian issues.

Like Dennis, Linda uses beliefs about students, combined with her views of history and ideas about learning, to determine the content she

would select and emphasize for students in an urban, multicultural setting. In such a setting, she would include more consideration of mining than she would in a rural, Native village school. Below, she explains that she might spend more time on mining because

it's close to home and, it's something they can relate to and, and I can get really good people to come talk to them. And that's important because, not just 'cause then I don't have to stand in front of the class and teach but, because, the more people they can hear besides me, the more interesting it is for them. It helps me, it also helps emphasize this, thing I want them to know about different perspectives (LW3TL98).

Linda, then, uses knowledge of students to come to a different judgment than does Dennis. Linda wants to continue to have students study material that is relevant to them ("close to home"), but she also bases her reasoning on her understanding of history ("different perspectives"). Thus, her thinking differs from that of Dennis, presumably because of the differences in her beliefs about students, subject matter and learning compared to those held by Dennis.

Declaring she wouldn't be getting rid of anything, just spending more time on one thing than another (LW3TL97), Linda also elaborates how she would maintain an emphasis on Native American issues as the core of the unit for a multicultural class. In this setting, she anticipates the possibility of raising "Hannah Arendt's idea of 'irresponsible co-responsible' left over from World War II and Nazi Germany" (LW3TL95) in an effort to push her students to grapple with the moral dimensions of westward expansion and development. Linda says she'd have the class question themselves:

Are we oppressors without officially making the policy ourselves if the policy benefits us and hurts someone else? Are we then sort of culpable at the same time? I would try to bring that moral issue in there. And not necessarily end up with a decision at the end, but just make them scratch their heads a lot about it (LW3TL108).

In this way, Linda takes account of who her students are without radically shifting away from Native issues, which seems to have been the outgrowth of Dennis's reasoning, based as it was on different understandings of history and beliefs about Native students. However, Linda does not acknowledge that by spending more time on one aspect of the subject than another, she does influence the content students have opportunities to learn.

In summary. Overall, these teacher candidates are inclined toward selecting or stressing subject matter content that they perceive to be connected to Native students, that is, relevant to their cultural backgrounds. In the next section, I will analyze how such inclinations and the processes of reasoning associated with them are also shaped by the prospective teachers' attention to other considerations.

Warrants that Bound Reasoning about Relevance

In the process of making instruction relevant to Native students, these intending teachers also take into account other warrants. Some of these warrants are based in sources external to the teacher-student-subject matter relationship, and others are internal to the teacher candidates themselves. The prospective teachers' thinking about relevance is shaped by their considerations of classroom, community, and societal contexts, as well as concerns about themselves as learners and beginning teachers. These considerations tend to limit, curtail, delay, and obstruct the novices' dispositions toward making subject matter relevant.

Time as a Classroom Context

As a resource, time is a structural aspect of the classroom context. A key concern to Esther and Linda in selecting relevant content relates to the limitation of time available for U.S. history in

the school curriculum. When classroom time is taken into consideration, we will see that these teacher candidates' ideas about history and how history is learned limit the extent to which they pursue as relevant emphasizing particular content or taking a certain approach.

For instance, in considering Miss Channing's comparative approach to teaching about colonization on the East coast and in Alaska, Esther holds in tension her concerns for relevance and her concerns about time. She leans toward the content that she believes to be more relevant to Native learners because the colony of Williamsburg as "very, very far away from here, and very foreign to Alaska. So I think focusing on the colonization of Alaska by the Russians would be a real way to hook them in" (EW3V42). But, she adds that she's not sure how much time she'd spend on colonization because she "has a hunch you just don't have a lot of time to spend on this" (EW3V42).

The interaction of time limitations as a part of the classroom context and issues of relevance also surfaces in Linda's discussion about the value of having her Native students study westward expansion and development. She begins with the thought that what's to be given the most time and emphasis is material that is relevant to students' lives:

Certainly, I think lots of it could be taught. I wouldn't necessarily focus on everything equally, simply because of time if nothing else. You can't possibly focus on everything equally and you have to do something that's most relevant to students' lives, which would be the Native American issues...because it's not only relevant as far as how they got to be where they are in Alaska in Native history. But, it's also relevant to their everyday life, right now....I don't know if they necessarily know about the big picture and realize that they're part of a pattern that was done to Native people across the United States (LW3TL5).

Linda also points out that Native American issues are worth the time and emphasis because they are relevant both historically and in students'

daily lives. Presumably in Linda's thinking, such "double-relevance" gives Native American issues more power in terms of relatedness--and perhaps as value to historical understanding--and enhances their emphasis in terms of time given over to them.

Linda reiterates and reinforces these ideas in a follow-up comment about the amount of time she envisions her unit on westward expansion and development taking:

Two and half weeks is maybe a little long to spend on this except that the issues in here, to me, just thinking of what comes before this and what comes after this in relation to Alaska Native students, these would be issues that would be much more worthwhile to focus on than, say, spending forever on the Civil War or something like that. So I would justify spending a little extra time here that way (LW3TL81).

One approach, then, to managing the dilemma⁸ of subject matter coverage and limitations in time foregrounds the issue of relevance as a mediating factor. This is Linda's reasoning. But, another example of Esther's thinking may present a contrasting case in managing this dilemma.

Here's the situation in Esther's mind: Given the time limitations of a typical U.S. history course, she might not teach westward expansion and development if it meant not having time to have youngsters study World War II or the Vietnam War, for example. She explains,

I think we make lots of plans to cover certain things and odds are this would be in your sort of initial outline or organization of the course. Whether or not it is something that might bite the dust so you can cover other material, it's difficult to say unless you're actually teaching and seeing how the pacing is going and what's going on. It definitely would be something I'd like to teach but if it was a choice between this and teaching about World War II or between teaching this and being able to make it through the Vietnam War, this would go (EW3TL2).

⁸ Lampert (1985) argues that dilemmas are not resolved, so much as they are managed by teachers, as they continuously reconsider and reconcile conflicting "goods" in the everyday world of classrooms.

Esther thinks the study of westward expansion and development would require at least a week, but to teach it adequately, she believes, would take about a month, or one-ninth of the academic year. Actually, she'd rather be able to give her students the opportunity to study history through the Reagan presidency (EW3TL3).⁹

Esther has also noticed that it is the inexperienced teachers who have difficulty judging what to "dump" at midyear or as the semester closes. In fact, she found herself needing to curtail and compress some units in her world history and American government courses during student teaching due to lack of time toward the end of the semester (EW3TL7).

Because Esther doesn't say--and wasn't asked--why she thinks getting to the present is important in the study of history, we are left to speculate on a couple of possibilities. One way to look at her struggles with time and content is to assume that her interest in reaching the present is evidence of her views on learners and learning. Taken this way, we might hypothesize that this would make history more relevant because it brings subject matter close to students' concerns about the present and shows effects on their lives. Another conjecture may also come into play--one which sees the power of Esther's subject matter orientation at work. Esther clearly views the value of history as its use in present day and future decision-making. Perhaps her understanding of history shapes her reasoning about content selection as much as, or more than, her ideas about connecting subject matter and students. Perhaps what most confidently can be claimed is that in Esther's reasoning, warrants grounded in views of subject matter,

⁹ The data for this study was collected in 1990, during the Bush administration.

learners and learning, as well as context appear to interact.

A missed opportunity. Yet another site for examining the teacher candidates' reasoning about time considerations pertinent to issues of relevance is their responses to the vignette of Ms. Brown's teaching approach. Ms. Brown had determined to have her class write a history of their community based on interviews of elders. Three of the teacher candidates expressed concern that Ms. Brown planned to devote one or two days a week over the year to this project in her U.S. history class.¹⁰ Still they also apparently see the approach as relevant given their comments about the close ties the students have to the community as an object of study.

It seems, however, that limited time resources constrain the teacher candidates when it comes to choosing this content represented by Ms. Brown's vignette as a central part of history and its study. For example, Esther argues,

I guess my one concern is that's an awful lot of time, one or two days a week. What else is she going to be doing? If this is her overall objective and teaching the kids the chronological [history] is less important, fine. But I think it'd be something you'd have to think about very seriously. Am I willing to dedicate one or two days a week to doing this? And if you are, fine. But it is going to require that you cut other things (EW3V18).

Esther finds time that goes toward what she considers to be valuable learning goals acceptable. But some other content will have to go in

¹⁰ Only Roger did not react to this dimension of the approach. However, time as a dimension of classroom context is apparently not as salient to him as it may be to Linda, Esther, and Dennis. Recall that the unit he envisioned for westward expansion and development ran 4-5 weeks. Moreover, he did not comment on the unit's length relative to the limits of time across the year for a U.S. history course, nor did he mention that he was willing to spend this much time on the topic because of its importance.

trade to have the time to focus on a community history like this one in this depth.

Dennis agrees, but gives the argument another tone. Whereas Esther communicates a sense of the teacher as professional curriculum decision-maker, Dennis gives the impression that he sees himself and other teachers as curriculum implementers. He bases his wonderings on

just what I know about how much you're expected to cover in the course content and curriculum guide [and] what that sets up for you. [That's] not to say that this [community history] doesn't have a very important role to play and would certainly fill a lot of those requirements, but I don't know. I'd have to think about that some more (DW3V18).

In the above illustrations, these prospective teachers wrestle with tradeoffs that practicing teachers know well -- subject matter coverage vs. time. These intending teachers look for ways to make content relevant to students, but hesitate when 20-40 percent of the instructional time is to be "spent" as Ms. Brown plans. In the process, they miss a significant opportunity to teach Native students--any students--about the nature of history as a constructed argument rather than a given record of the past. Ms. Brown's approach provides occasions for students to gather evidence and to determine how that evidence shapes an argument (or "story") about the past. Potentially, this approach communicates to students what history is about as a discipline, while it also has the benefit of being relevant to students' backgrounds and interests.¹¹

Speculating on explanations for the reasoning of these teacher candidates in regard to Ms. Brown's approach leads to at least two possibilities. First, the vignette as written may obscure its

¹¹ See Kobrin (1992, 1993) for accounts of successfully teaching history to minority students in a manner similar to the approach taken by Ms. Brown.

opportunities for learning about the nature of history. Second, even granting the first explanation, it also seems likely that the prospective teachers' views of history work against seeing opportunities in the approach to represent history as a social construction based on interpreted evidence. Only Linda comes close to recognizing this aspect of the vignette when she notes that it would allow students to be a part of choosing what counts as history (see Chapter 5).

In conclusion, the prospective teachers' views of history and how history is learned limit, even obstruct, their efforts to make subject matter relevant when concerns for time also enter the picture. For instance, Esther's view of history as having value because of its connection to present-day conditions likely influences her decision about inclusion of westward expansion and development in the study of U.S. history. Dennis's and Esther's apparent lack of understanding of interpretation in the syntax of history as a discipline may well cause them to miss the learning opportunities contained in the community history project, instead of merely seeing it as a "neat"--albeit relevant--activity.

Community and Societal Considerations

Although not as strong a warrant across the teacher candidates as considerations of students, subject matter, learning, or the context of classroom time, rationales based on community and societal grounds are also a part of the teacher candidates' reasoning.

Community considerations. Esther contends that the ability to successfully study the local community's history (in Ms. Brown's plan) depends on the cooperation of that community, which, in turn, depends on the teacher's relationship to its members. She says,

It's also going to depend on the community and whether or not the community would be supportive of your kids coming out and asking questions. And that's going to depend a lot on your--particularly in a small setting--your relationship with the community. And if you unfortunately or fortunately are working in a village that hates whites, and there are villages out there like that, this may be an approach you'd want to wait a few years to try. You have to have a comfortable relationship with the community, and there as o b a pense of trust built up before your kids will go out (EW3V17).

Esther believes that teachers' use of such an approach, although potentially relevant to Native students in a village setting, may need to be delayed because it takes time to develop trust between a Native community and White teachers.

Dennis, too, expresses concerns about community support, especially when the community and teacher may not share a belief in the value of particular aspects of the curriculum. Before the following remark, Dennis has spoken with admiration about Mr. Herndon's focus on minority contributions to U.S. history. He has also said that he would like to highlight Black history as a relevant study if he were teaching in a predominantly Black setting because it would have meaning to his students (DW3V33). But he is concerned that focusing on such content may be controversial. He refers to a controversy in the university's local community over basal readers during the time of our interviews, led by a so-called fundamentalist religious group. He also seems to allude to the role of the principal in mediating between teachers and community values.

With the foregoing as context, Dennis speaks about the kinds of circumstances that would discourage him from emphasizing content about minority peoples:

Knowing that I was going to get a lot of flack from administration or something like that, I guess. At least as long as I'm a new teacher...The politics of it I guess. [Makes reference to recent controversy over reading texts in local district, which were seen

by some parents, in Dennis's words, as "satanic."] I mean, you know the current issue here rightfully is the books that are being used in the schools. That kind of stuff can come back to haunt you and can stay with you for a long time. To make a bold statement--not that this [Mr. Herndon's focus on minority contributions] is even making a bold statement, I guess I'm just using this as a way of making my own bold statement--you have to be careful of that kind of thing (DW3V34).

Apparently, Dennis feels at risk. He is concerned about support from his principal. He does not want to alienate the community at the beginning of his career. Here, then, we see how deliberations about relevant content interact with considerations of community values, mediated by Dennis's concerns for his status as a beginning teacher. This concern for self is described in more detail below.

In both the cases of Esther and Dennis, efforts to make subject matter relevant to Native students are curtailed by their consideration of potential negative community concerns.

Societal considerations. The teacher candidates' considerations of societal events and issues also shape how they grapple with determining content in the context of relevance. This takes two forms. For one, Roger and Linda see the use of current events as a way to make history relevant. For example, Roger asserts that students should study Black history, in part, because

Martin Luther King's birthday is a national holiday and that the things he fought for are valued and are still talked about. And that those issues are still current in today's society would make it definitely something that should be studied (RW3V25).

He further reasons that events in the forefront of the national attention--such as the Persian Gulf War, which occurred during the time of Roger's student teaching--are worthy of study because lessons can be "directly involved with ongoing events in society today" and because "these are issues that are actually occurring and affecting [students'] lives" (RW3V28). This example runs counter to the tendency of other

considerations to limit the teacher candidates' efforts to make subject matter relevant. Instead, giving attention to societal issues may also open up possible connections between history and students' interests in learning material that is "close" to them through the use of current events.

Esther's consideration of the way her classroom reproduces the society at large illustrates another warrant that potentially discourages efforts at creating relevance. Esther tells the story of her experience teaching about the civil rights movement in an American government class during student teaching. She noted that she had the attention of her Black students, but that they didn't speak up in class discussions about racism. She concludes,

It was really disappointing. And so, as much as this is something that I would do and I would do again and again and again and again, I don't expect that I'm going to have this passionate discussion and they're all going to walk away being converted to the fact that racism is horrible and it exists in this country and so on. I don't have those kind of expectations any more because it just didn't materialize and there was only so much I could do. I had their full attention, these students didn't nod off on me, but they were real uncomfortable in talking about it....It puts them on the spot. They are not only a minority in the country, they're a minority in the classroom. Women's rights, half the kids are girls in the room. So there is safety in numbers (EW3V32-3).

Esther says she won't change her goal of raising (all) her students' consciousness about racism. Yet, she no longer expects invigorated discussion of this phenomenon and its dynamics, especially from her minority students, for whom she may have felt this study would be most relevant. Instead, she justifies her change in expectations on the basis of her observation that her Black students lack voice because they are a minority in the classroom, just as they are a minority in the society at large. While this conclusion rightfully acknowledges the reproduction of societal structures in public schools, it also

unfortunately leans toward accepting this condition as inevitable.

Like concerns for time, the intending teachers' consideration of community and societal issues may restrain their pushing forward with approaches they believe to be relevant to Native students or other students of color. However, this is apparently not the case when it comes to emphasizing current events. Here, their ideas about how history is learned--with the help of proximity in time--actually foster developing tighter connections between students and subject matter.

Concerns about Self

Finally, the teacher candidates' thinking about relevance is also shaped by ways they see themselves as learners and as beginning teachers. All of the prospective teachers talked about themselves as learners in the context of selecting content as relevant or in terms of instructional strategies and materials. Dennis, for example, justifies his choice of content in his unit on westward expansion and development on "what would be of interest to me, for one thing, in this study" (DW3TL39). Linda makes the analogy between herself as a learner investigating women's issues and Alaska Native students studying Native American issues (LW3TL35).

As well, three of the prospective teachers take into account their status as beginning teachers. Just as Dennis speaks of his discomfort in a quote above, Roger also mentions that he would consider teaching in ways such as Mr. Gomez does--using simulations to relate history to students' lives--only if he felt creative and confident enough (RW3V23). In contrast, Esther claims that she's at an "experimental stage where I just wanted to be flooded with ideas" (EW3V47). Linda doesn't speak about herself as a beginning teacher at all, perhaps because she already had experience teaching Japanese language classes in a school setting

before she came to a teacher preparation program.

Again, the novices' inclinations toward making subject matter relevant to Native students may be narrowed, in the cases of Dennis and Roger, by considerations about themselves--that is, their own interests in learning and confidence as beginning teachers.

In Conclusion

The warrants these teacher candidates consider in relation to issues of relevance interact with their ideas about subject matter, learning and teaching in U.S. history. At the same time these considerations--of time, community relations, current societal events, and perceptions of self--shape the novices' ideas about teaching approaches meant to bring together culturally diverse students with subject matter. That is, the teacher candidates think about excluding certain content or delaying taking particular approaches (Esther); they may sidestep potential controversy (Dennis); and, they lack confidence to try an approach they might value (Roger).

Constructing Relevance as a Lacing Activity

Taking a step back to summarize the teacher candidates' views of relevance is needed before moving into a critique of relevance as a key concern in representing history. To do so, I nominate and explore a metaphor about "lacing" as descriptive of the way the prospective teachers think about connecting students and subject matter.

These teacher candidates give the impression they see connecting Alaska Native youngsters with U.S. history an activity in which relevance constructs a linkage between the separate worlds of students and subject matter. The image of lacing brings to mind pictures of weaving a shoestring through eyelets across sides of the shoe. Or, it may remind some of pulling together the sides of a corset. Of course,

lace itself is a product of intertwining threads. In similar fashion, relevance acts like a series of threads that draws together and fastens what intending teachers believe about their students with what they understand about the subject matter.

These prospective teachers--as well as most of us when we talk colloquially about creating relevance in education-- speak in terms like Esther does when she says that "understanding where [your students] are coming from...can help you make your lesson more relevant to them..." (EW3SS4). In such talk, it is the subject matter or the lesson that is made relevant; students are not usually changed to help them better understand subject matter. Rather, the student is the starting place in thinking about making subject matter relevant. From this place, teachers look for what they believe in the subject matter might show promise in its relatedness to students. The result of making subject matter relevant is to draw the subject matter closer to the student, almost like throwing a lasso around the horns of a steer to catch it and draw it in toward the rider.

Yet, the assumption upon which this metaphor of lacing is based-- that students and subject matter inhabit separate worlds--could be misleading. Dewey (1902) suggests that the student and the subject are of the same continuum, not distinct elements. Instead of seeing a gap between the child and the curriculum, Dewey suggests that we need to,

Abandon the notion of subject-matter as something fixed and ready-made in itself, outside the child's experience; cease thinking of the child's experience as also something hard and fast; see it as something fluent, embryonic, vital; and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process. Just as two points define a straight line, so the present standpoint of the child and the facts and truths of studies define instruction. It is continuous reconstruction, moving from the child's present experience out into that represented by the organized bodies of truth that we call studies (p. 11).

Dewey cautions that both subject matter and the child's experience are not fixed, although they are the two points that define the continuum. For Dewey, too, the learner is the starting place; the child's experience is reconstructed into representations of the "organized bodies of truth." Dewey also thinks of these subject-matters as systematized outcomes of the human race's experience and efforts to understand its world. Thus, making subject matter relevant to students using Dewey's perspective would be more a matter of reconstructing students' experiences than creating a new link to bridge a nonexistent gap.

In spite of Dewey's cautions, the teacher candidates' reasoning about issues of relevance may make sense under the circumstances they were asked to envision--teaching U.S. history to students who are culturally different from themselves.¹² Two conditions potentially contribute to their sense of the separateness of students and subject matter. First, there is the matter of the cultural differences that exist between the intending teachers and their students. Because these teacher candidates are white, they may feel--at some level--that they represent U.S. history. Indeed, Linda hints at this thinking when she explains that she couldn't teach in a Native village school because she would be "acting as a cultural missionary" (LW3SSFN9). In other words, going into a culture different from her own and participating as an

¹² We do not know if Dewey would have thought differently under the educational conditions of cultural diversity faced by teachers in the 1990's. When Dewey refers to subject matter studies as the organized collections of the human race's experience, we do not know whom he pictured as the human race. How mixed a set of races and cultures would Dewey have us picture as "the human race?" Would he have seen culturally diverse learners and the curriculum as of the same continuum if the subject matter studies he refers to emphasized knowledge and the organization of that knowledge in ways that were mainly European in nature?

agent of an institution that is foreign to that culture would result in teaching her culture, according to Linda. However, Linda still feels comfortable teaching Native students in large, urban school setting because, in her way of thinking, these students or their families have made a choice to live in town. Thus, she doesn't feel awkward about conveying skills and content associated with her culture to Native students in large, urban schools (LW3SSFN9).

Second, beliefs that the novices hold about their students relative to the subject matter may shape their sense that these students and subject matter are separate. Some of these novices believe that U.S. history is not their Native students' history (e.g., LW3SSFN3, RW3TL53). At the same time, they also hold that all students, including Alaska Natives, experience difficulties making connections between historical ideas or events and between themselves and that subject matter (e.g., EW3SM3, EW3TL61).

For these reasons, the teacher candidates come to see Native learners and history as separate from each other. Thus, the work of teaching as connecting culturally diverse students and subject matter becomes an effort at drawing the two together with a series of laces. That the teacher candidates (except for Linda) mostly seem to operate as if history were a settled matter--even if looked at from different perspectives, as in Esther's case--may also contribute to the lacing metaphor as viable. Seeing history as all of one piece may give some perceived stability to the subject matter, making it seem a fairly straightforward task to bring it closer to students. The primary instructional work, then, is to find the right "lace."

Potential Pitfalls in Relating Culturally Diverse Students
and U.S. History

Although the teacher candidates consistently viewed using relevance to interlace students and subject matter in a positive way, there are potential pitfalls associated with attempts to create relevancy for students--especially when those students are culturally different from the teacher. These unsuspected dangers come in two forms--as part of the process of pedagogical reasoning and as a product of efforts to make learning relevant.

Unsteady Grounds and Faulty Analogies

In the process of reasoning about connecting students and subject matter, teacher candidates draw upon their beliefs about students as well as their understandings of subject matter. Starting with what they believe about Native students, these prospective teachers often try to find aspects of the subject matter that will attract those youngsters. Their ideas about students, then, take on special importance in reasoning about making subject matter relevant.

Sometimes, however, the teacher candidates' ideas about students may not be well-founded. Sometimes lack of experience with Native peoples or a general lack of knowledge about typical cultural ways inhibits teacher candidates, like Esther, from adequately connecting Native learners and U.S. history. Even teacher candidates who are relatively knowledgeable about and sensitive to Alaska Natives, such as Linda, make both blunders and subtle gaffes in their thinking about making content relevant and appropriately representing it.

Hence, one of the traps in reasoning about relevance is grounding subject matter representations on inappropriate knowledge or beliefs

about Native students. One result is faulty analogies.¹³ To illustrate, I return to examples provided earlier by Esther and Linda in the discussion of reasoning about topics and representations as potentially relevant to Native students.

Esther, you may recall, had approved of Miss Channing's approach to teach the concept of colonization by comparing and contrasting English colonization in Williamsburg, Virginia, with Russian colonization of Kodiak Island, Alaska. She argued that Native students in a small school, village setting would engage with and better understand colonization in Alaska because, as she put it, "they are Alaskans" (EW3V43). Esther takes a basic observation about Native students (their state of residency), integrates it with her operating ideas about learning (youngsters become engaged with ideas that are familiar to them), and arrives at the conclusion that such a lesson as Miss Channing conceives will "make [history] more relevant" (EW3V43) to Native students.

Yet, one of her basic assumptions about Native students--that they identify with the state's history--may be erroneous. Adolescents may not feel a part of a place so large, nor any governmental entity. More importantly, Native students may well feel connected to a cultural group--for example, in succession, Alaska Natives, Aleuts or Eskimos,

¹³ Of course, an analogy may also be faulty because it misrepresents the subject matter, even though it may be based on appropriate understandings of students. DeLattre (1984) reports how experienced educators fell into this trap in the design of a simulation on due process. In this case, educators set up a mock trial of Goldilocks from the story of "The Three Bears" as a way for students to participate in the jury process. Apparently, their assumption that students knew the story well enough for it to serve as the grounding for the unit was not mistaken. Instead, according to the author, the problem was the unintended messages about what the judicial system does, including prosecuting children who are unfortunate enough to be hungry and lost in the woods.

Yup'ik Eskimos--and to a particular community. Tribal membership is likely to be more salient to these learners than attachment to an area bounded by the government.

While Esther's assumption seems a small gaffe, it most likely misrepresents Native students' felt group membership and personal sense of identity. Using this assumption as a base for representing Alaska history may also cause Esther to miss the potential relevance of the ways colonizing nations interact with indigenous peoples and their resultant loss of life through disease and loss of access to land. Such a theme could truly connect Native students' concerns (even in the present) with historical themes.

A second example of faulty analogies based on assumptions about students comes from Linda. Although Linda's starting ideas about her Native students' background sound appropriate enough, she misses how her reasoning may, in the end, misrepresent those students by comparing their cultural activities to a livelihood that isn't truly analogous.

In determining whether or not ranching and farming were relevant to Native students as topics of study in westward expansion and development, Linda compared each activity to her ideas about Native students' cultural backgrounds. She concluded that students could potentially relate to each topic, but ranching--including cattle drives--held more promise because many of the students come from

groups of people that used to be migratory, following animals around [e.g., caribou]. And I would imagine the drives to market...are something that can pretty easily be conveyed to them. With the subsistence lifestyle, you understand what it is to be dependent upon the land (LW3TL33).

On the surface it appears, according to Linda's reasoning, that aspects of Native students' cultural background could be analogous to ranching--that is, in living off the land, or as Linda notes, in moving with

animals across the land. The ideas about Alaska Natives on which Linda grounds her reasoning are shaky. First, that Alaska Native people were migratory, following animals across the land, is mistaken. Rather, they set up seasonal camps as bases for subsistence activities. Moreover, fundamentally, ranching and subsistence are different activities. They have differing purposes, having to do with both economic and spiritual matters. What Linda terms "ranching" during the period of westward expansion and development involves driving cattle to market, whereas subsistence involves seeking signs of animals which are willing to be "caught." The first activity involves men using the land as a pathway to profit, the other sees land, animals, and people as a spiritually integrated system. Perhaps the only aspect of the analogy that may work appropriately is the comparison between activities of both cowboys and subsistence hunters as structured by their tasks and by conditions in the natural world. However, Dennis fails to perceive how Native lifeways are structured in his comparison of trapping to cowboy life (DW3TL20).

In Linda's reasoning, we see how Native students' belief systems may be taken for granted, even unintentionally misrepresented, which risks denying essentially who they are (see also, Locust, 1988). At the same time, this faulty analogy doesn't get across the intended subject matter ideas appropriately, either. Ranching, "long drives" of cattle, and cowboys would be misunderstood through the lens of subsistence hunting.

In sum, these examples show that teacher candidates' reasoning about issues of relevance may be based on skewed ideas about Native students. Students' backgrounds are misunderstood and, subsequently, misused at the same time that opportunities to adequately represent

history are also lost.¹⁴

These findings fit with other scholarship focused on teachers' work with students who are culturally different from themselves (e.g., Delpit, 1986; Kleifgen, 1988) in which it has been observed that intending and practicing teachers do not adequately attend to or seek out an understanding of their students' sociocultural backgrounds in order to link them with academic content. However, in the examples of Esther and Linda, we find specific evidence of the ways teacher candidates bring together ideas about students and subject matter in the process of conscientiously trying to relate the two in the context of history and cultural diversity.

This is difficult business, this work of transforming subject matter to make it relevant to students' cultural backgrounds. It is at the heart of teaching and the intellectual work associated with teaching. I do not suggest that it is only the status of these teacher candidates as novices, or gaps in their understandings of subject matter or students that contribute to the faulty analogies they would use-- although these likely play a role. I do suggest, however, that reasoning about the adequacy of the bases on which curriculum decisions are made is also part of a teacher's responsibility.

¹⁴ Some readers may find my critique of Esther's and Linda's assumptions about students and the representations based on them too harsh or picky. Surely, it is difficult to think off the top of one's head in an interview setting, to give concrete examples on the spot. While granting this, I also argue that spontaneously giving illustrations is just what teachers must often do in the course of interaction with students. In the course of planning, teacher candidates have the opportunity to deliberate on the merits of representations as relevant and appropriate.

Traps of Separatist Thinking

Another pitfall in reasoning about relevance appears as teacher candidates think about spotlighting particular ethnic or racial groups, in the way Mr. Herndon planned for Black History Month. You may recall that three of the teacher candidates found this approach to the study of civil rights and Black Americans' contributions to U.S. history to be exciting and effective, especially in its efforts to develop meaning in school subject matter for minority students.

Yet, Linda raises important questions about this approach, which has been referred to as single-group studies in typologies of multicultural education (Grant & Secada, 1990; Grant & Sleeter, 1985, 1989, Sleeter & Grant, 1987). This approach presents knowledge about a particular group separate from the regular classroom curriculum, usually in distinct units or courses.

Here, I present the dangers of single-group studies in Linda's words and, then, briefly place her views in the context of multicultural education. Linda contends that separating minority studies from the mainstream of the U.S. history curriculum devalues minority peoples, even as it may be an effort to include underrepresented groups. In her view, efforts to "sneak in all the people in minority groups who got left out" (LW3V49) are made by "somebody who's trying to make up for something that they feel guilty for" (LW3V50). Unlike Dennis, Linda volunteers that she can't conceive that Mr. Herndon is African-American. She asserts,

I'm pretty sure Mr. Herndon isn't Black when he does this...I just can't imagine someone who is Black leaving themselves out of everything up until February. I mean, this is like someone who's a woman [leaving] themselves out of American history until they get to quilts or something (LW3V49).

She calls the approach a strategy to "pacify the minority groups," which

acts as a poor "substitute for actual integration of the multicultural elements of America into our culture" (LW3V54).

In addition to moral and conceptual grounds for rejecting this approach, Linda also sees practical difficulties. In her view, such a "bizarre and artificial" (LW3V51) approach also causes problems when teachers use it in a multicultural classroom, rather than with a homogeneous cultural group. Dennis and Esther recognize the difficulties Linda raises, too. Linda puts it thusly when asked about this approach for multicultural groups:

Well, depending on what the setting is, it's even worse because you might have a lot of students during Black History Month who happen to be Black. But you have even more who are Hispanic and they never get their own month. And maybe you're in a place where there are more who are Polish or Hmong. And they don't get their own month so what are we saying here? I mean (laugh) we're saying that somebody else deserves, that these guys have enough people running around or they've been here long enough that they have their own month, or that such terrible things have been done to them that we gave them their own month (LW3V51).

In these remarks, Linda notes the infinite Balkanization of the U.S. history curriculum. She also mentions two, apparently vacuous, root criteria that would seem to be used to determine whether or not a particular group is to be identified as "worthy" of having its own month for study -- numbers in the group and its treatment. Both of these criteria reflect the group's relationship with the dominant society, rather than acknowledging its contributions on their own terms.

Instead, Linda and scholars concerned with multicultural education (e.g., Banks, 1991; Grant & Sleeter, 1989) would prefer to see a more inclusive approach, one which weaves concerns for diversity through the curriculum. For instance, Grant and Sleeter (1989) provide exemplary lessons across all subjects and grade levels illustrating the possibilities of integrating issues of race and ethnicity, social class,

gender, and disability in the teaching of subject matter.

In addition, Sleeter and Grant (1987) suggest another problem with the approach taken by teachers like Mr. Herndon in their discussion of single-group studies. They criticize this approach for its lack of attention to issues of social stratification, which results in a failure to raise consciousness of racial oppression or to motivate social action.

Dangers of a Presentist View

One of the ways these teacher candidates think that history can be made relevant to Native students--indeed, to any student--is to show learners that history is actually of immediate concern. This focus on the present as a means to develop relevance contains possible risks in terms of what diverse students may learn about the nature of history.

The interplay of their ideas about history and learning in history leads these prospective teachers toward establishing relevance by focusing on the past in terms of the present. One influence is the prospective teachers' view of history in which past, present, and future are tightly connected. At the same time, they believe that learning is fostered when subject matter is brought close to students; one way to close the gap is to accent content that is timely to students' lives. Hence, the potential is high in the cases of these novices for valuing the past through the lens of its worth to the present.

Esther's thinking best represents the dangers of such presentist perspective in concerns for relevance. More than any of the other teacher candidates, Esther holds fast to the purpose of studying history as understanding the past and the present in order to make informed decisions both now and in the future (EW3SM7). In stating her goals for Native students in the study of westward expansion and development,

Esther flatly states, "I think I would want them to understand what happened in the past only to have a greater understanding, a richer understanding of what's going on now in Alaska" (emphasis added) so that they could more actively participate as Native voters and leaders in business and politics (EW3TL5). Too, she sees history not just as "something that happened in the past," but also something "that is happening now" (EW3V12). At the same time, she also argues strongly that she might not have Native students study the period of westward expansion and development so that she would have more time to teach recent history, such as the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, or the Reagan administration.

Esther is correct that twentieth century history is often inadvertently omitted when teachers run out of time to teach it. However, we get the impression from the slant and strength of Esther's views that she is likely to make subject matter relevant by emphasizing looking at the past for its use to the present and future. Esther sees the value of the past as it gives meaning to the present. Thus, present-day events and ideas act as a lens for determining the worth of the past.

What is the risk in this approach? The presentist view gives increased significance to events based on their proximity to the present and tends to ignore events the farther away they are from the current period (Fisher, 1970). However, this method of sampling history "in the name of modernity and relevance and utility" actually "sacrifices precisely that kind of knowledge which historians can most usefully provide: knowledge useful in the establishment of present trends and future tendencies" (Fisher, 1970, p. 136). Thus, Esther and teachers like her run the risk of actually undermining their goal to help

students understand the present and see possible futures by understanding the past. More importantly, however, they also potentially disadvantage students' opportunities to understand the past in its own terms.

Limits of Relevance on Minority Students' Learning Opportunities

Another trap associated with making education relevant is also concerned with social inequalities that result, in this argument, from attempts to maintain continuity between everyday experience and school learning (Floden, Buchmann, & Schwille, 1987). These authors argue that to achieve the special related purposes of school--promoting equality of opportunity and developing disciplinary understanding-- "breaking with everyday experience" is required for all students. In this argument, what is to be broken away from is the "natural attitude" in which "the world seems centered in time and space around oneself, and objects seem important only for achieving personal ends" (pp. 486-7). The power of these individual, social, and ethnic attitudes is that they seem to be apprehensions of the world, rather than interpretations. In becoming more objective and in learning concepts from academic disciplines, students become able to imagine possibilities for their lives, rather than being limited to what seems to fit with messages received only from their immediate environments. Thus, for these scholars, access to the usually privileged knowledge of academic disciplines is liberating for any student.

How the teacher candidates in this dissertation study think about selecting content based on, for example, its potential relevance to students' backgrounds might well concern these scholars:

That schools should develop students' capacities to break with everyday experience suggests changes in the content of instruction. Instruction should not rely on learning tied to the

local context, but should rather draw more on materials set in a larger context. Teachers should be wary of introducing students to new ideas by pointing out their relations to everyday ways of thinking (p. 492).

However, two aspects of the "breaking with experience" argument as presented by Floden and his colleagues make it difficult to judge whether or not relevance as these teacher candidates use it to select content and determine its relative emphasis counts as illustration of relying on local context and everyday thinking. For one, it is not clear what these scholars specifically refer to in terms of school practice in using the terms "everyday experience" and "everyday thinking" from which learners are to break. Second, the argument gives no example from educational practice that would provide a reader with a grounded sense of how learners can be helped --in the context of disciplinary learning--to break from experience while maintaining an overall sense of personal meaning.

Nevertheless, it is appropriate to be concerned that the learning opportunities of Native students--indeed, any students--are likely to be inappropriately circumscribed by focusing primarily on what is seen to be relevant. This needlessly limits what students might actually find interesting and worthy of study given exposure.

Hazards to Student-Teacher Relationships

Evidence from Roger's student teaching experience also suggests that teachers' attempts to link subject matter and students using their cultural backgrounds may put at risk the relationship students have with their teachers. Roger had asked his junior and senior Indian students to write about how to put a fishnet into the river after they had walked down to the banks for a demonstration. They refused to do it, saying "We don't want to write about that....because we're never going to do it

after we graduate" (RW3SSS10). What seemed like a good idea in using cultural material to bring students and academic work together backfired, and Roger backed off of the assignment.

He concluded that using learners' culture as a hook isn't necessarily a guaranteed trick because he assumes that his older students aren't especially interested in their culture. He explains,

Well, they're not interested in really learning about their culture. A lot of times, I think, teachers will try and make a special effort to teach them certain things about their culture. But they're not really interested in that per se. All they want is something that's interesting. Whether it be about anything or whether it be about their culture, it just has to be done in an interesting way. They like you to give examples of things that they know...(RW3SS11).

Roger sees the students' response to writing about setting the fishnet in terms of their disinterest in their culture. Following Roger's line of thinking, what teachers need to know about their students is about what interests them. That is, if their culture interests them, then using it as a way to link learners and subject makes good sense. If they are not interested in their culture, then cultural material is not be counted upon to construct relevance. Familiarity with the subject also increases students' engagement, according to Roger. It is on this basis that he would use "examples of things they know about...".

However, another explanation may also be plausible, even likely. Perhaps Roger's students found his reference to and use of their culture to be patronizing, and they actively resisted his attempts to use it as a motivation for the writing task (Ongtooguk, personal communication, September 15, 1993). If this is the case--that students feel manipulated and patronized by teachers--then learners may come to distrust teachers' intentions.

In Conclusion

The potential pitfalls I have discussed here raise further questions about the novices' apparently well-intended, but relatively superficial, reasoning about how to connect Alaska Native learners and U.S. history. Their thinking about relevance mainly reflects a utilitarian perspective, a focus on the means of teaching. Left relatively unattended in their concerns with relevance are profound questions of the ends to be achieved by attempts to connecting students and subject matter and the assumptions that undergird their rationales. Thus, even well-crafted and relevant representations of history may not adequately deepen or extend students' learning in history, when their primary purpose is to draw potentially reluctant learners into the study of something they may not initially find appealing, but the teacher candidates think they should know. So, thinking about making subject matter relevant to culturally diverse learners may, indeed, be in the service of learning, but the question must also be asked, "In service of learning what?" The teacher candidates appear not to ask this question explicitly--except, at times, for Linda--and, thus, miss opportunities to facilitate a liberating learning experience while they also honor their students' cultural perspectives and experiences.

In sum, I have explored in some depth possible pitfalls of trying to make subject matter relevant to culturally diverse learners not so much to discourage efforts to do so, but to point out that the enterprise is hardly straightforward or always of positive result. This raises questions about the preparation of teachers who intend to help culturally diverse students learn U.S. history. I take up these issues in the final chapter. Before leaving the discussion of ways these teacher candidates reason about relevance, however, let us return a

final time to the question of what knowledge they draw upon in their deliberations.

Consideration of Students Is Central
to Pedagogical Reasoning

I have argued in this chapter that consideration of students plays a more prominent role in the thinking of the focal teacher candidates than might have been expected given the current model of pedagogical reasoning most widely recognized in the field. Examining the ways they bring together knowledge and beliefs about students and views of learning with ideas about subject matter in the context of teaching concerns for making history relevant has allowed us to more clearly observe the consideration of students, whether it be articulated or not by the intending teachers.

In Shulman's (1987) view, teachers "adapt" and "tailor" subject matter representations, given what those teachers know and believe about learners, generally, and their particular students (pp. 15,17). In this model, then, teachers' knowledge and beliefs about students help to refine instructional representations. Instead, for the novices I interviewed, knowledge and beliefs about students play a more fundamental and equal role in relation to subject matter understanding in reasoning about teaching.

In fact, the teacher candidates' beliefs about culturally diverse students--as disconnected from U.S. history--apparently push some of them to select particular aspects of history for emphasis or certain representations above others. In other cases, their ideas about learning--as fostered by subject matter that is "close" or familiar to learners--influence the choice of content and specific representations. Thus, as a starting place in pedagogical reasoning, selecting content

and determining what of it to emphasize is not isolated from other dimensions of transformation involving teachers' knowledge and belief. Indeed, selection of content and purposes for teaching it are shaped by the interaction of ideas about students and learning. This suggests that content goals are shaped by the process of transformation, rather than being determined prior to this aspect of the pedagogical reasoning process, as Shulman (1987) suggests.

Perhaps it is the particular teaching context of this research that has vividly surfaced the role of knowledge and beliefs about students in the context of questions about relevance. Cultural differences between these teacher candidates and their Alaska Native students may raise for the intending teachers issues around perceived distance, especially in combination with their understanding of history and their views of learning. Thus, these prospective teachers may be sensitive to the lack of connection they feel between themselves and their students, as well as between their students and the subject matter. This lack of shared identity may be influenced by the prospective teachers' roles as a representatives of both the subject matter (Kennedy, 1991a) and of western, mainstream culture. In effect, issues of cultural difference and dominance take form in concerns about relevance. Relevance then becomes the place of critical interaction of teachers' knowledge and beliefs about students, learning, and subject matter, which carries with it moral dimensions in its implications for minority students' learning opportunities.

We have arrived full circle to Susan Melnick's story of using Malcolm X as a relevant context for teaching writing to Black students. Recall that its key question asked, "What knowledge of students is helpful in connecting learners with subject matter when teachers and

students are of different cultures?" Thus, we have also arrived at a conundrum: In situations where beginning teachers are most likely to want or try to draw on their knowledge and beliefs about students who are culturally different from themselves, their potential lack of knowledge about students--and especially about minority students--may be most evident. Although these teacher candidates do not appear to hold negative or stereotypical views of Alaska Native learners, they lack a deep knowledge of the cultural perspective and experiences of their Native students. Linda may be the exception to this conclusion; yet, in thinking through representations to connect Native students' cultural background with westward expansion and development, Linda's analogies are, at times, faulty. In addition, as we have discussed in Chapter 4, these prospective teachers generally do not have a firm understanding of their Native students' subject matter backgrounds. How, then, might teacher education support their learning about culturally diverse students' cultural and academic backgrounds?

CHAPTER 8

THINKING ABOUT TEACHING PARTICULAR SUBJECT MATTER TO PARTICULAR STUDENTS

An important and widespread problem in teacher education is preparing teachers to work with students who are culturally different from themselves. When I began this study, I wanted to respond to this problem overall, and I wanted to push my thinking as a teacher educator in Alaska. As a result of this research and its findings, I now have some new ideas about the nature of the research problem and the preparation of teachers for cultural diversity. These ideas center on the need to consider the problem on both general and particular levels. In this last chapter, I discuss the evolution of my understanding of the research inquiry and relevant findings. In the process, I also begin to rethink the teacher education program in which I work and suggest what teacher education might learn from this research.

Questioning the Research Inquiry

In Chapter 1, I framed the study's overarching research question in terms of "prospective secondary teachers' ideas about teaching U.S. history to students who are culturally different than themselves." I looked upon the investigation as one concerned with teachers' knowledge about subject matter, about culturally diverse learners, and about how they brought the two together in thinking about teaching. I chose U.S. history as a subject matter because I thought it might illuminate the dilemmas of teaching academic content to students who are culturally different from teachers, especially as I focused on the topic of

westward expansion and development. Further, I took Alaska Native learners as a case of students who were culturally different from the white, middle-class teacher candidates I interviewed. Alaska Natives represent a special cultural population Alaska. In short, I was seeing this research as a study about teacher candidates' knowledge and reasoning under conditions of cultural difference between teachers and students. I saw subject matter as part of this context, a kind of variable. It's not surprising that I looked at the problem in this way given that the teacher education program of which I'm a part focuses primarily on cultural diversity apart from subject matter. But the nature of the question has shifted for me.

Ways of Looking at the Research Problem

I now see three ways to think about this research problem. In the first and broadest way of thinking, the inquiry is about teaching any subject matter to a group of students that is culturally different from white, middle-class teachers. The salient aspect of the question, then, is the circumstance of cultural difference between teachers and students. History is only a proxy for academic content in this view. Considering the problem this way, what teachers know about teaching culturally diverse students cuts across subject matter. In other words, their knowledge about teaching is seen as applicable to any subject matter setting. In addition, teachers' knowledge about teaching in circumstances of cultural difference is seen as useful with varieties of students. Thus, in this conceptualization, teachers' knowledge is thought of as general and applicable across situations of varying subject matter and students.

A second way to view the research problem is to consider it as a question of teaching subject matter to particular students with whom white, middle-class teachers do not share a cultural frame of reference. In this way of thinking, the question concerns what it means to teach given students; again, subject matter can vary. The subject does not matter for purposes of understanding the problem from this perspective. Here, the aspects of teachers' knowledge of most interest and value are those that focus on teachers' ideas about particular students who are culturally different from themselves.

The third and most specific way of looking at the problem considers how white, middle-class teachers think about teaching particular history to particular students who are culturally different from themselves. This conceptualization focuses on the particularities of teaching a given subject to a given group of students. The condition of cultural difference between teachers and students still prevails, but teaching considerations are inescapably shaped by the specific subject matter. Further, what teachers consider under these circumstances is also shaped by what they know about certain students. I worked at this level most obviously when, for instance, I described the teacher candidates' curricular visions for teaching westward expansion and development to Alaska Native learners in a small, rural Alaskan village school (Chapter 6) and their reasoning about relating the study of this period to these particular learners (Chapter 7).

Finally, in this third conceptualization of the research problem, knowledge and belief about history and Alaska Native students don't just intertwine, they interact. This is to say that how teachers think about

history for purposes of teaching is shaped by considering particular students who are culturally different from themselves--in this case, Alaska Natives. At the same time, ideas about students are molded by looking at them as learners of history.¹

Framing the Original Research Problem

Originally, I conceptualized the problem as one of teaching in the context of cultural differences. I considered the inquiry to be oriented toward the middle level described above. Thus, I used U.S. history as a vehicle to dramatize conditions of and raise concerns for cultural differences. In other words, the choice of history as a subject matter for this study was a methodological one, rather than a substantive one. I selected U.S. history over, for instance, European history or content such as mathematics because I believed that minority students (e.g., Alaska Natives) would see U.S. history differently than their white, middle-class teachers would as members of the dominant culture. However, I could have chosen another subject in which minority voices are often not well represented in the school curriculum, such as American or literature.² In sum, I wasn't pressing on the content to

¹ Of course, teachers who focus on a particular collection of individuals as they consider or enact instructional plans for a given subject matter unit makes the study of the problem even more specific. This level of particularity requires that a teacher or teacher candidate be actively or recently involved in working directly with students.

² Readers might question my assertion that the choice of history was primarily methodological in light of the way I constructed the teaching vignettes. These scenarios were mainly developed to represent the intersection of different conceptions of history with varying teaching approaches. Once I had chosen U.S. history, I did want to know how the teacher candidates thought about the nature of history and built the vignettes to elicit their views of that subject. In their discussions of these vignettes, the prospective teachers also told whether they thought the teaching approach would "work" with Alaska

extract its full influence on the question of teacher candidates' thinking about teaching students who are culturally different from themselves.

In addition, to better ground the students' side of the equation, I focused on teaching U.S. history to Alaska Natives because this minority is most visible within the state. Also, the teacher candidates attended a university that emphasizes cross-cultural and Native issues in its mission and in the foundations courses for these novices would have completed earlier in their teacher education program. Thus, thinking about teaching Alaska Native learners made sense in the context of Alaska.

Finally, I believed that giving the interviewees as concrete a situation as possible in which to envision teaching would elicit their thoughts. This made sense given other researchers' experience with respondents who tended to provide vague, socially appropriate answers they thought should be voiced in the research setting, such as ideals about equal educational opportunities for all students.

I anticipated the inquiry would focus on prospective teachers' perceptions of students with whom they did not share a common cultural frame of reference and the ways their ideas might shape their learning goals and teaching approaches in U.S. history. I intended this inquiry to speak to the general concern of preparing teachers--most of whom across the United States and within Alaska are white and middle-class--to work with students of different cultures. In other words, I thought

Native students. In other words, they were called upon to make a judgment about the appropriateness of an approach for students who are culturally different from themselves.

about the problem of multicultural teacher education in terms of preparing teachers for work with "culturally diverse students" generally.

Reconsidering the Particulars

Based on the findings of this study, I now think about the nature of the research problem differently. I now claim that thinking about teaching particular subject matter to particular students is not just a vehicle for getting to what's generally the case about teaching students who are culturally different from white, middle-class prospective and practicing teachers. Doing so also has standing in its own right as a way to look at the research problem and as a way to learn about teaching and teacher education. It is through looking at the particular, and across particulars, that knowledge and skill is built up. I refer to knowledge about--in the case of this study--history, Alaska Native learners, and ways of bringing the two together. The building up of such knowledge is not through the application of generalizations to particular situations. All of this is not to say, however, that teacher candidates must learn an infinite number of ways of teaching specific historical topics, for example, to different sorts of students in different school settings. I return to this point below in discussing what teacher educators might learn from this research.

The question of teaching and teacher education involving cultural differences between teachers and students calls for acknowledging both the more general nature of the problem, while at the same time being concerned with the particulars of specific subjects and students. If this is the case, then teachers and teacher educators need to hold both

the general and particulars in mind.

Below, I summarize the findings of this study and use them to illustrate how journeying through the rich particulars of teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native students helps us move toward more generalized ideas about teaching academic subject matter to students with whom their white, middle-class teachers do not share a cultural frame of reference. At the same time, I will point out some special issues and challenges that arise from the interaction of the subject of U.S. history with considerations of Alaska Native students. Focusing on specific subjects, learners, and settings also helps us think about how teacher education might facilitate prospective teachers' knowledge development.

Understanding U.S. History for Teaching

The secondary teacher candidates interviewed for this study hold orientations toward history that are limited. They see history as possessing a tight continuity from the past, through the present, and into the future. This strong line allows them to hold as a primary purpose for studying history that it helps us to make sense of the present and to make good decisions both now and later.

Three of the four prospective teachers see history as a given from the past; they appear not to understand historical accounts as social constructions. Even Linda, who comes closest to recognizing history as interpretive, appears to lack a full understanding of what it means to think of historical accounts as acts of social construction. She does not, for example, refer to processes of judging interpretations as plausible and arguments as credible. And, although she does not think

of history as a given, she does believe that there is a history to be pieced together.

In their stories about westward expansion and development, these novices lean toward single causal explanations. In these stories, Europeans--inevitably or purposefully--come to dominate the land and indigenous peoples of the West. In the process of trying to include a strong Native American element, these intending teachers the teacher candidates end up portraying Indians as victims of oppression. The prospective teachers' apparently good-intentioned efforts to represent the destruction of Indian lifeways oddly mirror the dominant/majority-nondominant/minority relationship that is already structurally evident between these white, middle-class teachers and their Alaska Native students.

Possible Explanations for Novices' Views of U.S. History

Why might these teacher candidates hold such orientations toward U.S. history in their views of westward expansion and development? How might we try to explain, for instance, the absence of understanding history as interpretive and the presence of the strongly utilitarian purposes they hold for studying U.S. history?

One possibility may be that they lack the subject matter preparation to see history and its role in another way. None of them, after all, is a history major. Perhaps history majors would have an appreciation for history as an interpretive discipline since it is likely that, at the least, they would have been required to successfully complete a course on historical method. A minor in history, such as that held by Dennis, probably only represents the collection of a

certain number of credit hours, perhaps in particular categories deemed important by the history department. In addition, many college students pick up from the organization of their courses that learning history involves being told what information is important and absorbing it.

Also, many high school students experience the study of U.S. history as a collection of events, people, and dates to be memorized. Thus, it is unlikely that they come to the college history courses they may take with a critical stance toward detecting and formulating arguments.

Another explanation may be that these novices are fixed on trying to make U.S. history interesting to students whom they see as culturally disconnected from it. In other words, white, middle-class teacher candidates might tend to accent what they see as Alaska Natives' lack of connection with the U.S. history because they do not see these students as like themselves. (Presumably, white, middle-class folk do tend to see themselves as "Americans" with a general interest in U.S. history.)

Subject Matter Challenges

If thinking about teaching students who are culturally different from white, middle-class teachers is shaped by the particulars of subject matter, are there aspects of history or of knowing history that are especially important for teachers to consider? In the following discussion, I consider the findings about the novices' orientations toward history in light of what might be learned about teaching culturally diverse students, generally.

Whereas these white, middle-class teacher candidates are members of the dominant majority culture, their students of color--who are

likely to also be poor--are part of a so-called minority. Given this imbalance of power that extends beyond usual teacher-student relations, the question of "whose knowledge should be taught and learned" is raised. Typically, minority students do not find their stories and perspectives included in mainstream U.S. history courses and textbooks. They are disenfranchised in terms of the educational curriculum, as well as society's structure.

Fostering an understanding of history as a socially constructed argument gives these students power to de-construct and re-construct historical interpretations. It could give traditionally disenfranchised students the where-with-all to pose questions about the past, rather than merely receive others' answers. It could give them opportunities to decide what knowledge is of worth and on what grounds. Such possibilities may also build disenfranchised students' knowledge and pride in their histories, which have typically been marginalized. Being more connected to history, these minority students may also become active participants in democratic institutions and processes.

Thus, it is problematic that three of the four teacher candidates in this study tend not to see historical accounts as involving interpretation using particular methods and standards of evidence. They are generally limited, then, to including minority aspects in the historical narratives they have learners study. This is an important step, but insufficient if culturally diverse learners are to have opportunities to use what they learn about history to change their own

environment.³

Ideas about Alaska Native Students for Teaching

Exploring the teacher candidates' particular ideas about Alaska Native learners also leads to seeing more general issues about the teaching of U.S. history to culturally diverse students when teachers are white and middle-class. Overall, these teacher candidates seem to have more awareness of Alaska Native students' cultural backgrounds than they do of those students' subject matter backgrounds. By this, I mean to say that they have a basic knowledge of Alaska Native culture, and they display a basic cultural respect for these students. For example, they tend to think of Native students' cultural identities as tied up with close social networks and a subsistence way of life. Further, they do not attribute Native students' ways of participating in large, multicultural schools to these students' "shy" natures. Instead, they tend to see this behavior as a response to classroom conditions and institutional structures. (Esther possesses a more limited knowledge than the others.)

However, they tend not to know very much about who their Alaska Native students are as learners of history, and specifically as learners of United States history. For example, they don't have much sense about conceptions of history that Alaska Natives may hold or about the particular knowledge of U.S. history they might possess. Still, these novices do make assumptions about whether or not Alaska Native learners

³ We might also expect that were the teacher candidates to possess a fuller understanding of history as interpretive, the metaphor of lacing to describe subject matter relevance would also change. This metaphor is dependent upon the novices' view of history as something given and relatively unchanging.

relate to U.S. history. Three of the four prospective teachers think Alaska Native students experience difficulties making connections within the subject matter and between themselves and the subject matter. They see this as a general problem for all learners. Yet, Roger and Linda also contend that Alaska Native learners are disconnected from U.S. history because they may not think of themselves as Americans.

Authentic cultural respect is vital and necessary to teaching students who are culturally different from oneself. Such respect for who students are provides an environment in which white, middle-class teachers take minority students seriously as people and as learners. When teachers possess a respect for cultural differences, they are inclined to look for what students know and bring to learning rather than assuming that what they don't understand as teachers about their students indicates learners' lacks. Having an attitude of cultural respect for all learners encourages teachers to believe in their students and to seek out ways to promote their learning. Thus, cultural respect fosters an interactional environment in which subject matter learning is made possible.

However, cultural respect is not enough to facilitate culturally diverse students' understanding of history. Teacher candidates must also possess sufficient knowledge about their students--in this case, as learners of U.S. history--to take advantage of a respectful learning environment in promoting subject matter learning.

Special Issues about Cultural Diversity

If thinking about teaching U.S. history to students who are culturally different from white, middle-class teachers is shaped by

knowledge of particular students, what is it that teacher candidates need to find out about Alaska Natives in order to help them learn U.S. history? That history is concerned with chronicling the past should push teacher candidates to try to learn how the past is viewed within Native students' families, communities, and cultures. More specifically, they would do well to try to learn how knowledge of the past is kept in Alaska Native cultures. For example, how do traditional oral stories and dances function in the culture as a record of the past? Who "holds" such "records" and how? Is the past to be questioned, or is the story of the past seen as an absolute? Finding out about Alaska Native students' cultural backgrounds as they relate to the essence of history might then lead novices to consider how what they have learned about the past from a Native perspective is similar to or different from history as an academic discipline. For example, how are oral stories in Native culture similar to or different from "stories" in the sense of a disciplinary historical account?

A second issue arises when teaching students who are culturally different from oneself is foregrounded against teaching U.S. history. Recall that these teacher candidates believed and highly valued "making learning relevant." However, this notion goes relatively unexamined in these novices' thinking, as well as in teacher education and in its literature. What does it mean to make learning relevant? These novices suggested that they could help relate Alaska Natives to U.S. history by having these students study history that was "close" or was grounded in the "familiar." Some of them talked about having Native students study their "own" history. What, then, is one's own history? How close does

history need to be in time and place to be one's own? Perhaps, as Linda--white and middle-class--suggests, studying African history is studying "her" history. African history is relevant to Linda because African slaves played, and their descendants continue to play, an important part, for instance, in the economic, social, cultural, and political development of the United States.

Yet, looking at how these teacher candidates think about relevance in bringing together U.S. history and Alaska Natives, we see the limits of their subject matter backgrounds and their ideas about these students. It's not surprising that how they think about making history relevant to Alaska Native learners is superficial because their own resources are limited.

Considerations for Teacher Educators

What is it, then, that this research has to offer teacher education and teacher educators? I introduce the discussion with some brief observations about its meaning for my own work.

Before the present dissertation study, I had considered the task of preparing teacher candidates for cross-cultural and multicultural classrooms relatively separate from questions of teaching subject matter. As well, I had generalized the teacher education task to preparing teachers to work with students who are culturally different from themselves. To uncover these assumptions is a surprise because the teacher education program with which I am closely connected does integrate subject-specific concerns about learning in the context of teaching Alaska Native students. Yet, I now believe that program faculty, including myself, have treated the two knowledge domains--

subject matter and culturally diverse students--as separate entities. Although we weave together these domains as considerations in teaching, we've missed considering what it means to teach particular subject matter to particular students.

The Subject Still Matters

This research underscores the importance of both substantive and syntactic subject matter knowledge in teaching. In the case of history, teacher candidates' understanding of the syntax of the subject would allow them to make history profoundly relevant for minority students. As it is, these novices devise and rely on somewhat contrived and superficial connections between Alaska Native students and history.

Understanding the nature of interpretation in history helps beginning teachers to foresee ways they can foster disenfranchised students' understanding that some historical narratives are more plausible or powerful than others. Indeed, they can help minority students realize that there are other stories to tell. If novice teachers understand syntactical structures in history, they can create occasions for minority students to construct histories of their own. Such linkages between history and students who are culturally different from their white, middle-class teachers (as representatives of the dominant, mainstream culture) are more powerful and profound examples of relevance than the teacher candidates are able to offer with their limited orientations toward the history.

In a manner of speaking, such an approach is responsive to students' cultures, but not in the ways typically thought of as "culturally responsive." Using culturally responsive approaches,

teachers select content they believe to be appropriate to students of a particular culture, and/or they adapt culturally compatible interactional or social organization patterns to school activities. In the present case with history, disciplinary knowledge makes an authentic link to students' cultural backgrounds.

How might we think about gaps in prospective teachers' knowledge about particular subject matter? The solution that some readers may suggest to the problem of prospective teachers' subject matter backgrounds is that teacher candidates ought to possess a certain depth or flexibility of subject matter in order to be admitted to a teacher preparation program. This assumes all that is necessary in learning to teach is to add on pedagogical knowledge and skill to existing subject matter knowledge.

Instead, this research suggests that teacher education focus on helping teacher candidates evaluate, select, and design appropriate and authentic instructional representations. That is, courses in pedagogy need to move beyond providing instructional methods unrelated to what they illustrate about the subject matter as a discipline or about particular topics. Novices can learn to analyze the limits of their subject matter representations for what students have opportunities to learn. For example, teacher candidates in a subject-specific course exploring issues of teaching and learning in history might examine a debate strategy used by a history teacher to reflect on what this activity conveys to students about the nature of history. In the process of appraising representations, teacher candidates must also wrestle with their own understandings of history. In these ways,

professional education is also wrapped up with transforming and learning subject matter.

Students Matter

In the case of teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native students, these teacher candidates depended upon their knowledge of students much more than we might have been thought given the current model of pedagogical reasoning. However, the knowledge about Alaska Natives they had to use as a resource was limited. In addition, they misused what knowledge they did have and overgeneralized from it. In all of this, we saw the limits of cultural respect. Hence, what teacher candidates need to learn is the value of particular knowledge about particular learners.

How might we think about gaps in prospective teachers knowledge about particular students? Treating the problem of teachers' knowledge about culturally diverse students as one that requires the acquisition of information about certain groups (e.g., Blacks, Alaska Natives, Asian-American) isn't especially helpful in diminishing stereotypes or in connecting culturally diverse students with subject matter. What teacher educators can learn from the present research is to focus novices' attention on learning how to learn about particular students in relation to subject matter. This does not mean attending only to subject matter background that has been learned in school. Certainly, it means that. Susan Melnick's story about using Malcolm X to teach writing to Black students reminds us of the need to look at what students have learned about norms of interaction in school settings, as well as what they have come to know about particular topics and ways of thinking about a subject.

But, it also means learning about students' perspectives and knowledge pertinent to school subjects that derive from their families, communities, and cultures. For example, teacher educators would focus preservice teachers on the kinds of learning that are valued in students' families and communities, as well as how their families and communities view school learning.⁴ Or, to use the previous example from history, they would try to learn about traditional ways of viewing the past.

Knowing how to learn about students outside of school demands a sense of where and how to look. It means having learned that particular kinds of community institutions or gathering places and events are potentially rich. At the same time, it means being an active participant in community life, a participant who holds judgments tentatively while looking for disconfirming evidence. This does not mean being a mere, aloof observer. In addition, teacher educators need to help beginning teachers appraise the appropriateness of knowledge from such resources in terms of disciplinary learning.

The Matter of Relating Particular Content with Particular Students

This research pushes teacher educators to take seriously the need for beginning teachers to get inside the subject matter and their students in order to be able to connect the two in authentic and powerful ways. Teacher educators could begin by leading prospective teachers through a process such as the one described in this study in

⁴ Respect for parents and communities is required, just as cultural respect is necessary. Teacher candidates need to operate on the belief that families do want what they think is good for their children, even when novices may initially think that parents "don't value education" (i.e., schooling).

which novices thought aloud about teaching U.S. history to Alaska Native students. What do the teacher candidates need to understand about history in the context of teaching this subject to students who are culturally different from themselves? What do they need to learn about Alaska Native students in the context of their understandings about U.S. history?

This is the kind of practical process teachers need to go through when faced with an actual class of learners who are culturally different from themselves when subject matter learning is the goal. Yet, teacher educators and teacher candidates cannot be expected to "cover" each of the possible combinations of subject matter and learners. Not only is time insufficient, but such an approach is inappropriate. For both practical reasons and for reasons of fostering flexible professional thinking in teacher candidates, teacher educators need to help them generalize the process. The discussion of cases of practical reasoning--in which practicing and preservice teachers' thinking about subject matter, culturally diverse students, and ways of bringing the two together is expressed--would help teacher candidates learn a way of thinking. In addition, such cases could also provide opportunities to assess the relevance and authenticity of instructional representations.

Teacher candidates should leave teacher education having learned what is important to take into account in teaching--knowledge of particular subject matter and particular students--as well as ways of thinking about bringing the two together. They should leave teacher education with a sense of where and how to look in various settings for such knowledge. They should be developing criteria for assessing the

appropriateness of that knowledge. Having learned such a process would help beginning teachers to think like a teacher who carefully considers the interaction of specific subject matter, on the one hand, with particular culturally diverse students, on the other.

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