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DISRUPTING CURRICULUM HEGEMONY THROUGH COUNTERSTORIES

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Conceptual Opportunities and Rationale for Asian American Representation In 4th Grade Social Studies TEKS

Amy Kitzman, Sarah Shingler, and Sarah M. Straub

Abstract: As retired United States Air Force Major Arthur D. Jacob (n.d.) notes, "Their story must not be forgotten. It deserves to be told. To date, it remains shrouded in history." As educators, we have the power to change that for our students and help them see themselves in the curriculum. In this paper, the researchers completed a structured vignette analysis to position themselves as they analyzed the 4th-grade social studies TEKS for opportunities to combat the hegemonic narrative. Undergraduates reviewed the TEKS to look for standards that allowed for countering this narrative and emerged with a practitioner plan for implementation that addresses the silenced narrative of Crystal City Japanese Internment Camp in Texas.

Key Words: hegemonic narrative, internment, counternarratives, structured vignette analysis framework

I was the teacher who had an excellent reputation for critical teaching in social studies content. My students would answer standardized tests with a "Eurocentric" response and, in the margins, write why the question was problematic or what a correct answer was from a multicultural perspective. One year, Lahki (pseudonym), a seventhgrade student of mine, approached me after class. Oh my gosh. This student. She was continuously questioning... She was the epitome of what a critically conscious student could be. Lahki mentioned how much she respected my decision to begin seventh-grade social studies with the inclusion of indigenous narratives. For context, my district had decided to eliminate the requirement to teach TEKS related to Native Americans because there were only one or two questions related to it on the 8th STAAR test that year. And then she asked, "What about my people? Did Asians do anything in Texas history?" Honestly, I was stumped.

"I d-d-don't know. Let me look it up and I'll get back with you tomorrow," I stammered. In the twenty minutes I had between grading, planning, coaching, tutoring, and all the other tasks educators complete before returning home to their obligations, I looked. And found nothing. I Conceptual Opportunities and Rationale for Asian American Representation (Kitzman, Shingler, & Straub, 2021)

told Lahki as much the next day and asked if she could do the research.

I hope you all bristled when you read that. Rather than me taking on the labor here, I was having her do it. I basically told her, "Yeah, you're worth about twenty minutes of my time. But, if you really care... you do it. Because I obviously don't." That was not my intention, and I did not realize the potential harm. But five years later, I still remember this conversation.

I couldn't go back and mend the conversation I had with Lakhi. At the same time, when two of my pre-service teaching students reached out to learn more about multiple perspectives in education, I was thrilled when they wanted to focus on Asian American voices specifically. It was an opportunity to share my past failures with fellow practitioners and hopefully provide recommendations on doing better in the future.

This article will continue with both my co-authors, Amy and Sarah, sharing their purpose for participating in this work. We will then describe the structured vignette analytical framework we used for analyzing the 4th-grade social studies TEKS for gaps and opportunities and share the results of this analysis. We will continue with an example of one particular space in which Asian American voices can and should be incorporated into the learning for our 4thgrade social studies students. We will then conclude with a call to action. We hope that teachers who read this article will finish with a sense of not only why this work must be done but how we can engage it and what it could look like.

Amy's Story

Growing up in a mixed-race household was normal to me. That had just been a part of who I was, and I knew nothing different. We

lived the way we did, and I never saw anything wrong with how people treated us. It was not until my freshman year of college that my eyes were opened to many stereotyping and biased actions against my family and me. Although there are many things that I could choose from to discuss, something that always stuck out in my mind was that I never saw a person in the literature that looked like me. The only time that I ever did was in a "Dear America" series book when it talked about a girl in a Japanese Internment Camp during World War II. This book, "Dear America, the Fences between Us: The Diary of Piper Davis" was the only thing I ever read in school that even included a character that looked like me. Even still, this character was victimized and written about from a White perspective.

To this day, I have not been able to pick up a book where the character was a "normal" character and who looked like me. I began to think about how people of minoritized 1 communities feel about literature. If they read about a character who looked like them, the character was usually a victim in the story, or the book is celebrated for being "diverse." The wheels began rolling when I started considering just how often stories from diverse communities are missing in our curriculum. I had neither learned of any Asians in Texas history nor any of my courses. history Were represented or omitted from the literature? To combat this narrative, we decided to research: Did Asians have any significant contributions to Texas history, or were they just left out?

Sarah's Story

From the time I entered kindergarten to the time I walked across the stage at my high school graduation, I was under the impression that Asian Americans played

suggest that groups are set apart based on social constructs that rely heavily on power and hegemony.

¹ The term "minoritized" is charged. We all recognize this. We used the term "minoritized" to

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little to no role in the history of the United States. My only experience learning about Asians, in general, was through the lens of foreign affairs and large-scale conflicts. There was no mention of Asian Americans that I can remember throughout elementary and middle school. However, in my final two years of high school, I took an International Baccalaureate History course, and I can recall Asian Americans mentioned a few times. It was not until college that I truly began to understand the role Asian Americans played in the development of the United States. I had a professor who went out of her way to educate us about the history of the United States from a multitude of different perspectives in an unbiased and truthful way through the use of many primary sources and various texts. I remember learning about the Japanese internment camps for the first time and being utterly shocked that this had happened in the country where I lived. I had gone almost twenty years of my life never hearing about it. That being said, one good professor in college is not enough. Although I still feel gaps in my education, I continually work to fill those gaps in preparation for my future students.

Structured Vignette Analysis

Above, we each shared personal anecdotes that included our emotional reactions. In qualitative research, vignettes are one strategy that enables the participants to define the situation in their own terms (Barter & Renold, 1999). Azman and Mahadhir (2017) further legitimize our decision to utilize structured vignette analysis. They suggest that there is a "significant potential of using vignettes in place of participant observations for culturally sensitive research contexts that are also regarded as highly private in nature" (p. 27). According to Azman and Mahadhir (2017), it enables them to be more introspective and take on firsthand interpretations rather than asking participants to perform their struggles to be analyzed by a secondhand observer.

We now applied these reactions to our understanding of cultural crises in a process known as reflexivity. Below, the paper will include our 4th Social Studies TEKS analysis, a strategy developed to address this crisis. Moreover, we will share overarching conclusions. The use of a structured vignette analysis "permits individual vignettes to describe distinct experiences connecting these stories through recounting the context and revealing new strategies developed to cater for the researchers' growing cultural awareness" (Pitard, 2016, HTML). This six-step framework (context. anecdote, emotional response, reflexivity, strategies, and conclusive comments) is essential for adding multiple perspectives and layers of awareness to the conclusions drawn (Pitard, 2017). It is a method of qualitative ethnographic research that will be described in greater detail below.

4TH SOCIAL STUDIES TEKS ANALYSIS

This section will highlight the necessary step of reflexivity in which the readers engaged as a critical element of structured vignette analysis. Reflexivity shows how we as individuals react to the lived experiences that we have. In this context, we reflected on the lack of representation we saw and chose to explore how this lack of representation as educators through our given curriculum.

Below, we will include a collection of TEKS that we view as opportunities to include diverse voices - specifically from the Asian American community. However, before we do, we must include a short literature review that demonstrates the necessity for such an analysis.

The Absence of an Asian American Presence

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One article that we connected to a lot throughout this analysis was written by Ellen Lee (2017). Entitled "Why are Asian Americans missing from our textbooks?", the article shared a predictable story of an Asian American student who rarely (unless tokenized) saw people of her own background represented in the course content - at least until an Asian American history class she took at the university level. This revelatory experience is something the authors of this paper seek to include as a part of mainstream considerations.

The fight for inclusion is not new. Although not successfully on a national scale, a group of Chinese-American teachers lobbied state educators in California to push for representation of minoritized groups beyond the sidebars of textbooks (Lee, 2017). One example of how omnipresent white hegemony is, comes from an analysis conducted by Christine Sleeter, a prominent scholar in multicultural education. As she explored California's curriculum, she found that of the people identified "recommended to be studied," 77 percent were white, 18% were African American, 4% were Native American, 1% were Latino, and zero were Asian American (Sleeter, 2005).² While we do not replicate this study for Texas social studies TEKS for K12, we do perform our own analysis below.

Hegemonic Narratives

Why do we prioritize white Eurocentric narratives? Research has shown that students of color earn better grades when they see themselves in the curriculum (<u>Dee & Penner</u>, <u>2016</u>). Further, white students also benefit from a more culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse curriculum (NEA, 2020).

² The racial and ethnic identifiers used in the Sleeter (2005) case were kept the same for this manuscript. We acknowledge that, since 2005, various updates to identifiers have been suggested. For example,

An inclusive curriculum challenges and exposes new perspectives and promotes critical discourse as students engage in social studies.

While we acknowledge that establishing ethnic studies courses may present a viable solution for the present, we must clarify that keeping stories of people of color regulated to electives coursework is not a long-term solution for dismantling white hegemony in the curriculum. Similarly, only including diverse voices during identified "ethnic heritage" monthly programming is problematic. For that reason, we intentionally searched for TEKS that were vague enough to allow for some creative interpretation.

TEKS Analysis

The reader will notice that the 4th-grade social studies <u>TEKS</u> currently do not mention the narratives of Asian Americans. In order to combat this, Sarah and Amy first researched various Asian American-related events and significant individuals from Texas history. Once the facts were gathered, we sifted through each TEKS in the fourth-grade social studies curriculum and noted areas where we thought Asian Americans could be incorporated or not explicitly mentioned where they could have been. We will use this as a foundation to explore potential curricular considerations of our own in the following section.

As we were examining the TEKS, we decided it would be best to meet for dinner and get to work. Over about an hour or two, we researched various topics surrounding Asian Americans to examine the TEKS for gaps and opportunities. We also spent a lot of our time discussing our thoughts on the lack of representation we saw, ways we could

Indigenous Americans, First Nation, and First Peoples are all accepted terms in place of Native Americans. We will address the complexities of the "Latino" identifier in our next footnote. Conceptual Opportunities and Rationale for Asian American Representation (Kitzman, Shingler, & Straub, 5021)

combat it, and our own personal experiences. Though we later discuss ways to create more inclusivity, it is essential to note that we discussed in detail all of the standards we saw that could include Asian Americans.

We found that, in general, the TEKS were representative of very few races or ethnicities aside from Europeans, Native Americans, and Latinos.³. The version of Texas history presented by the TEKS curriculum disregards Asian American's contributions to the state and country as a whole and silences the voices of their story. The alternative to this form of education, a non-Eurocentric version, is simply *not* told, resulting in the narrative of an entire group of people silenced. That is a disservice to all students, as it creates a false and partial version of the truth. We found particularly shocking in our study of the curriculum that, while students learn nothing of important events like the presence of Japanese internment camps in this state or Asian American contributions to society, students are required to learn the lyrics to the song "Texas Our Texas." In light of our research, acculturation topics such as these seem dim compared to the trials and victories of Asian Americans, and other invisible ethnic and racial groups.

Many of the TEKS above have an opportunity for growth by naturally adding Asian Americans into the conversations. There are numerous occasions throughout Texas history that Asian narratives were and are silenced. Something that Sarah and Amy found by researching Asian Americans in Texas that the large number of Asians who worked to complete the central railroad system in Houston (Chen, 2015). Although

Each of the identified TEKS above has a story related to Asian Americans, yet the conversations in the classroom are not present. Within minutes, Sarah and Amy were able to find countless documents about Asian Americans, but the TEKS keep them silent. If it takes a simple Google search, how is one of the fastest-growing groups in our country not mentioned throughout the Texas history curriculum? Lee (2017) mentions how legislation is passing bills to include ethnic studies into the curriculum, but does it really take a state bill to change the curriculum to be inclusive?

FOR PRACTITIONERS

From these identified gaps, we hoped to focus on one TEKS from a *content* perspective in either History, Economics, Culture or Science, Technology, and Society buckets. Additionally, we paired that TEKS with one from the Social Studies Skills bucket to encourage critical thinking and interpretation. Therefore, we decided to focus on:

• 5(A) explain the impact of various events on life in Texas such as the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and World War II and notable individuals such as Audie Murphy, Cleto Rodríguez, and Bessie Coleman and

categorizations are social constructs. We do also acknowledge that APA (7th edition) recommends Latin@ or Latinx.

the narrative of Chinese railroad workers is discussed concerning California, we were shocked that the connection to Texas was not included. Simply put, people like Edward King Tung Chen and Rose Don Wu were critical for the role of Asian Americans in Texas history, yet our students do not know their names or their stories (Chen, 2015).

³ This term is potentially controversial, and we adopted Latino instead of Hispanic or Latinx to align more with how this racial group is categorized in a K12 educational setting. We recognize that racial

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- other local individuals
- 19(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as technology; interviews; biographies; oral, print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about Texas
 - 19(D) identify different points of view about an issue, topic, historical event, or current event

In our interpretation, we will analyze the silenced narrative of activists internment camps who were actually located in Texas. We acknowledge that background knowledge must be established, so if the teacher notices that students are struggling with a frame of reference, we are going to link a great lesson on Japanese Internment camps from the New York Times. This lesson, a collection of high quality materials taken from Backman and Goncher (2017), provides students with a strong understanding of the cause and effects that led to internment as well as an understanding of what life was like in these camps using primary source documents. Then, our lesson will begin.

TEKS 5(A) asks students to explain the impact of various events on life in Texas. Our focus will be on the Crystal City Internment Camp and we will have students analyze the ways in which each of our notable people - Major Major Arthur D. Jacobs, Isamu Shibayama, and Edison Uno - engaged in activism or responded to the Crystal City Internment Camp.

CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrated a complete structured vignette analysis. As mentioned above, the context was stated: a need to address hegemonic forces in the curriculum. Each of the authors then shared their anecdote and the emotional response these

experiences evoked. After engaging in reflexivity, we came together to develop strategies and then shared those strategies with our readers. We will now conclude with comments on the layers within this framework - hegemony, our stories, the classroom, and our opportunity for a broader impact.

This assignment taught us just how much of history is silenced. Through our research, within moments, we were able to find many stories of silenced groups not represented in our elementary school curriculum. If we, as college students, can discover people with such impactful stories in history, we can question and address why they are not missing in the TEKS. The answer to that question is intentional white supremacy at worst and willful ignorance at best.

As future educators, we need to consider the representation and effects of hegemonic narratives on our students. To that effect, this process is easily replicated. Essentially, we can represent various narratives through the current curriculum by modifying and taking our student's education into our own hands. The hope is that this paper might influence other educators to take the time to think about the impact of our curriculum. So much of what is seen and heard in the classroom follows the typical hegemonic narrative, which does not reflect who our students are.

While we focus on opportunities to take the TEKS as they are and find ways to incorporate resistance to hegemonic narratives, we would like to express that systemic change is the ultimate goal clearly. The TEKS need to be more reflective of the contributions of many groups to our state and our nation. The curriculum writers are responsible for making these changes. Until then, teachers can hopefully use lessons learned from this article for ways to subvert a white supremacist curriculum.

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We can integrate history beyond the TEKS into our classrooms and tell the story of silenced narratives. After all, it is not just Asian Americans left out of our history books. As retired United States Air Force Major Arthur D. Jacob (n.d.) notes, "Their story must not be forgotten. It deserves to be told. To date, it remains shrouded in history." As educators, we have the power to change that for our students and help them see themselves in the curriculum.

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Conceptual Opportunities and Rationale for Asian American Representation (Kitzman, Shingler, & Straub, 9021)

APPENDIX

Table 1. Grade 4 Social Studies TEKS Identified as Opportunities for Inclusive Narratives

History

- 4(C) explain the effects of the railroad industry on life in Texas, including changes to cities and major industries
- 5(A) explain the impact of various events on life in Texas such as the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and World War II and notable individuals such as Audie Murphy, Cleto Rodríguez, and Bessie Coleman and other local individuals

Economics

- 11(A) identify how people in different regions of Texas earn their living, past and present
- 11(C) identify the effects of exploration, immigration, migration, and limited resources on the economic development and growth of Texas

Culture

- 17(A) identify customs, celebrations, and traditions of various cultural, regional, and local groups in Texas such as Cinco de Mayo, Oktoberfest, and Fiesta San Antonio; and
- 17(B) summarize the contributions of artists of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the development of Texas culture such as Lydia Mendoza, Chelo Silva, and Julius Lorenzo Cobb Bledsoe

Science, technology, and society

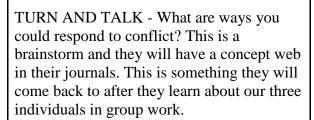
• 18(A) identify famous inventors and scientists such as Gail Borden, Joseph Glidden, Michael DeBakey, and Millie Hughes-Fulford and their contributions; and

Lesson Title: How People Respond to Conflict: A Look at Crystal City Internment Camp

TEKS:	•	
	5(A) explain the impact of various events on life in Texas such as the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and World War II and notable individuals such as Audie Murphy, Cleto Rodríguez, and Bessie Coleman and other local individuals	
	• 19(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as technology; interviews; biographies; oral, print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about Texas	
	• 19(D) identify different points of view about an issue, topic, historical event, or current event	
Objectives:	SWBAT <u>describe</u> the contributions of Major Arthur D. Jacobs, Isamu	
	Shibayama, and Edison Uno and the details of Crystal City Internment Camp	
	SWBAT <u>explain</u> how Asian Americans were able to impact legislation surrounding internment camps using (primary/secondary sources).	
Key Points:	Edison Uno fought to overturn the Internment Camp Act.	
	 Isamu Shibiyama advocated for the improvement of the situation for those affected by the internment camps. 	
	 Arther D. Jacobs advocated for the improvement of the situation for German American citizens and created a website to inform the public. 	
	• Individuals can react to the same conflict in different ways.	

	T	Γ
Hook: 5 minutes	Today we are going to read a poem by a Japanese man named Sojin Tokiji Takei. First, I am not going to tell you anything about the poem. We will read it as a class and then we will make predictions about what you think of the poem. *Read poem* Ask class; does anyone have a prediction on what this poem is about? Now that we have some predictions, I'm going to describe the scenario. Mr. Takei was a Japanese man in 1944, which means that as we know from prior knowledge, he was in an Internment Camp. Ask class: What is an internment camp? Let's reread this poem now and we are going to stop at each line and we're going to talk about what we think the lines mean. *Read each line by line then discuss* This is how Takei responded to conflict. He was a poet and wrote about his experiences. Now we are going to learn about some other Japanese people who were in Internment Camps and how they responded during this time in their lives.	Materials: Powerpoint for lesson: Lesson PPT Poem: The time has come For my arrest This dark rainy night. I calm myself and listen To the sound of the shoes. Torawaruru Toki wa kitarinu Ame no yoi Kokoro sadamete Kutsu no oto kiku — Sojin Tokiji Takei
INM: 8 minutes	Our main question for the day is "how do people respond to conflict?" In order to answer that question we are going to introduce some people who were prominent in Texas history and dive deeper into who they were. Before we look at the three people who were involved in some internment camps, we want to first talk about the Crystal City Camps.	Materials: Lesson PPT Add in an example graphic organizer here:

Crystal City Camp started on December 12, 1942 where they housed Germans, Italians, Latinos, and Japanese. This camp was a family camp which meant that there were many kinds of individuals ranging from young infants to elders. All people came from various walks of life but came together at this camp. They even had schools within the internment camps for the students that were held there.



- Major Arthur D. Jacobs
- o Jacobs was a German

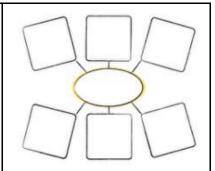
 American who went from

 Brooklyn to internment at

 Ellis Island, N.Y. and

 Crystal City, Texas. Then after the war
 he would be sent to a prison in

 Germany.
- Isamu Shibayama
 - O Shibayama grew up in Peru and was taken by U.S. forces into America and placed in the Crystal City Internment Camp. Following the war, when the internment camp was closed the family could not return to Peru and instead was sent to work on a farm in New Jersey.
- Edison Uno
 - Uno was the father of the redress (compensation) movement as he was an



advocate for Japanese American civil rights. Uno was born in Los Angeles and at first when the war broke out, his family got located to Colorado and then moved to Crystal City where they stayed even until after the war was over. He ended up being the last American citizen to get released from Crystal City. **Group Work: Materials:** 30 minutes Graphic organizer for student Now that we know the basics about the iournals Crystal City Internment Camp and the Impactful relevant individuals, we will now learn Individuals more about how individuals respond to conflict using their stories. We will learn Jacobs Shibayama Uno about Major Arthur D. Jacobs, Isamu Shibayama, and Edison Uno. You will be participating in a jigsaw activity to learn about these individuals. A jigsaw activity is where you read resources in groups, fill out a chart and then teach Jacobs: each other. https://snaccooperative.org/ar k:/99166/w6fz1m8x#biograp There will be a station for each individual around the room that contains resources about them. You will need to make sure https://www.foitimes.com/ that there is at least one person from your group at each station. Shibayama: You will have 15 minutes to read about your assigned person and write the most important information in your chart. Then you will have 20 minutes to go back to

your table and take turns teaching each other what you learned in your group.

By the end, your entire chart should be filled out.

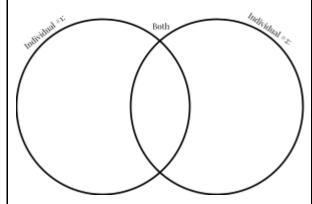
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Independent Work: 8 minutes

Now that you have information gathered from everyone at your table, you are going to pick two of the individuals and compare and contrast how they reacted during their time in an internment camp. If you need to refer back to the original documents, there will be one copy of each document on your table.



Using the Venn Diagram, students will respond to the question through a power paragraph answering; which do you believe is the most effective way to respond to conflict? A Power Paragraph has an opening and closing sentence with at least three supporting details.

Materials:

Venn Diagram Final product Rubric

Kubiic			
	3 Above Expectations	2 Meets Expectations	1 Below Expectations
Two individuals selected	Two individuals are selected	·	One or no individual are selected
At least five points are written under individual #1 (if five different points are not found, can explain one point deeper)	Six or more different points are written	Five different points are written	Less than five different points are written
At least five points are written under individual #2 (if five different points are not found, can explain one point deeper)	Six or more different points are written	Five different points are written	Less than five different points are written
At least three points are written under the "both" category. (if three different points are not found, can explain one point deeper)	Four or more different points are written	Three different points are written	Less than three different points are written

Anchor Chart:

Power Paragraph

1 sentence- Opening sentence (introduce)

2 sentences- First detail

Closing 4 minutes	This all now goes back to our big question what do you do when something isn't right? How do you respond to conflict? We have our anchor chart up and you are going to receive two sticky notes. Answer the following questions on separate sticky notes, then place them up onto our chart. • How did they respond to conflict? • How do you respond to conflict/what do you do when something isn't right?	(include 3 supporting details) 2 sentences- Second detail (include 3 supporting details) 2 sentences- Third detail (include 3 supporting details) 1 sentence- Closing sentence Materials: Sticky notes Main anchor chart How do you respond to conflict? How do you respond to conflict what do you do when something isn't right?
ACCS	 Self-selection on which person they would like to study Graphic organizers in multiple formats (bulleted list and Venn diagram) Timers visible throughout lesson, teacher can give warning as well Chunking Buddy system <u>ELPS</u>: C(4)(D) use pre reading supports such as graphic organizers, illustrations, and pre taught topic-related vocabulary and other pre reading activities to enhance comprehension of written text C(3)(E) share information in cooperative learning interactions 	