A MEANS TO AN END
A Middle Level Teacher's Purposes for Using Historical Simulations

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Historical simulations are often criticized for being superficial, reinforcing negative stereotypes, and skewing students' view of history. Simulation critics argue if inexperienced teachers implement simulations, they may adversely influence students' psychological development, especially if students take roles as perpetrators or victims. Additionally, critics assert simulations can focus on the horrors rather than the accomplishments of the group under study, and deflect attention from current oppressions. These critiques come from various groups who are concerned with simulations related to issues of oppression, racism, or genocide. Despite these criticisms of classroom simulations, many teachers continue to use and embrace them to simulate different historical events. This article focuses on the espoused purposes of 1 eighth-grade teacher whose practice and views stand in contrast to the critics' assertions about historical simulations. We discovered he reported 4 different purposes for using simulations: to hook students into the unit of study, to provide them with a foundation of historical knowledge, to assist them in learning diverse historical perspectives, and to connect the past to the present. We argue he is a case of a teacher using simulations as a means, not an end, for meeting the many goals he has for his students as they learn history.

"Simulations oversimplify history." "Simulations lead to superficial learning and students' skewed views of history." "Simulations reinforce negative stereotypes." These are the oft-remarked criticisms about the use of historical simulations in social studies classrooms. These critiques come from various groups who are concerned with simulations related to issues of oppression, racism, and/or genocide (e.g., Anti-Defamation League, 2006; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.). Simulation critics also argue if inexperienced teachers implement simulations, they may adversely influence students' psychological development, especially if students take roles as perpetrators or victims. Additionally, critics assert simulations can focus on the horrors rather than the accomplishments of the group under

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study, and deflect attention from current oppressions (Drake, 2008; Schweber, 2004; Totten, 2000). Despite these criticisms of classroom simulations, many teachers continue to use them to simulate different historical events (not just simulations dealing with oppression or racism).

Simulations are not the only social studies teaching tool that has been scrutinized. Textbooks, once the bane of social studies classrooms, have become more widely accepted if used in educative ways such as having students question authority (Bain, 2006) or analyze a text from a historiographical position (DeRose, 2006). Lecture, a widely criticized teaching approach, has gained wider acceptance when used by ambitious teachers (Grant, 2003) who are effectively "visible" (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991) in the classroom. Secondary sources took a back seat when primary sources became "all the rage" (Barton, 2005), and digital technologies received mixed reviews about their ability to assist student learning (Diem & Berson, 2010).

Like simulations, all these pedagogical tools are simply that—tools of the craft: the more deft the craftsperson, the more masterful the outcome. Thus, with a talented teacher, the use of simulations can foster students' historical thinking and appreciation of the past. Barton and Levstik (2004) suggest simulations are a good teaching method if used not as an end, but as a pedagogical tool to encourage student learning about history. Simulations can also assist middle grades teachers in providing active, purposeful learning experiences for their students as outlined by the National Middle School Association (2010), now known as the Association for Middle Level Education, in its *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* 2010 document.

REVIEW OF SOCIAL STUDIES SIMULATION LITERATURE

Clegg (1991) defined a simulation as a real phenomenon model usually involving decision making or conflict resolution, which teaches students the principles related to the situation under study. Simulations establish an alternate environment within the classroom that reflects another scene in life (i.e., covered wagon or Oval Office). Teachers often use simulations to encourage students to react to the simulated environment (Larson & Keiper, 2007) and in doing so may foster students' critical and historical thinking skills in middle grades social studies (Waring & Robinson, 2010). Teachers report simulations make history more engaging and relevant to students in high schools (Alvarez, 2008; Pace, Bishel, Beck, Holquist, & Makowski, 1990), middle schools (Edmunds & Wall, 2009; Sanchez, 2006), or both (Moorhouse, 2008; Russell, 2010; Schur, 2007; Woolley, 2011). However, most of the current literature about social studies simulations relies heavily on anecdotal evidence or is dated (DeLeon, 2008).

Studies relevant to the study described here are a content-analysis of two published historical simulations (DeLeon, 2008) and three studies evaluating middle school students' motivation and learning about world issues using a web-based, role-playing simulation (Gehlbach et al., 2008; Ioannou, Brown, Hannafin, & Boyer, 2009; Johnson, Boyer, & Brown, 2011).These studies illustrated simulations can increase middle level students' content knowledge as well as their interest in social studies, thus showing simulations are a desirable pedagogical strategy.

Additionally, two qualitative studies have explored social studies teachers' thinking aboutsimulations.The first study by Maloy and La Roche (2010), explored teacher candidates' beliefs about the use of student-centered activities in their field experience courses. In their study, they provided descriptions of history teacher candidates' thinking about the use of simulations and role plays with middle and high school students. The teacher candidates believed simulations brought history to life, made factual information more memorable, and made abstract ideas real to students. They also related simulations could be complex and

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result in mixed student learning. For example, some of the teacher candidates' students overacted their simulation roles, did not learn the requisite historical information, or were unable to divorce themselves from the present. The teacher candidates also gained several insights about using simulations, such as they must be scaffolded to assist student learning.

The second study, Schweber's (2003) investigation of a semester-long simulation of the Holocaust in an upper-level history elective, is the only research effort to document a practicing teacher's thinking about the use of simulations. In this study, the teacher had several purposes for implementing a lengthy simulation. She wanted her students to learn the historical conditions of the Holocaust, refine their values, and gain humility. The teacher's overarching goal for the simulation was to personalize the Holocaust for her students. Schweber (2003) found the teacher was able to convey a significant amount of information about the Holocaust to the students and foster a high level of engagement, despite encountering several challenges during the simulation. In her final analysis, Schweber (2003) argued simulations can assist students in learning about the Holocaust, but only if teachers ensure they do not lead to superficial learning.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In recent years, social studies educators and reformers have called for more descriptive research about the influences on teacher decision-making that encourage teachers to use best practices. Some studies have focused on the impact of teacher epistemological views of history (Slekar, 1998), teacher preparation (Doppen, 2007), social climates (Cornbleth, 2008), high stakes testing (Grant, 2006), subject-matter knowledge (Wineburg& Wilson, 1991), pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), beliefs (Grant, 2003), and most recently, purposes for history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

Barton and Levstik (2004) argued teachers' purposes for history education play a significant role in their instructional decision-making. In their review of recent research about best practices in social studies classrooms, they found that although teachers' sophisticated disciplinary understanding of history was a prerequisite for fostering best practices, it was not a guarantee for enactment. They also found when teachers have clearly articulated goals for their students, they are better able to implement teaching strategies consistent with their aims.

Barton and Levstik (2004) suggested the primary purpose for history education is to teach history for the common good; to prepare students to be participating citizens in a pluralistic democracy. In order to do so, they suggest teachers adopt four possible teaching "stances" or approaches: *identification* (having students make connections with some aspect of the past); *analytic* (asking students to analyze particular aspects of the past); *moral response* (inviting students to remember, admire, and condemn past events and people); and *exhibition* (having students display information about the past). Within each stance, they identify three distinct purposes teachers may have for fostering students' abilities to participate as members of a pluralistic democracy. Thus, the individual teacher's goals for history education influence the types of activities, like simulations, implemented in the classroom. Similar to Grant (2003), who argued there are "currents and cross-currents of influence" (p. 183), Barton and Levstik found that multiple influences and purposes determine how a teacher makes decisions and acts as an "instructional gatekeeper" (Thornton, 1991).

Researchers have investigated the role purpose plays in a beginning high school history teacher's practice (van Hover & Yeager, 2007), a middle level teacher's use of primary sources (Gradwell, 2010), a high school teachers' use of technology to support historical inquiry (Swan & Hicks, 2006), and two university instructors coteaching a history education course (Fantozzi, 2012). At this time, no

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studies have investigated the purposes of teachers who enact historical simulations to encourage students' understanding of the past. In this paper, we add to the middle level literature on social studies simulations and teachers' purposes by describing clearly defined views about why and how one middle level teacher, Andy Bender,[1] enacted history simulations. We argue that despite critics' views about simulations, he is a case of a teacher using simulations as a means, not an end, for meeting the many goals he has for his students as they learn history.

METHOD

We (two teacher educators) began investigating the use of inquiry to teach social studies as part of the Social Studies Inquiry Research Collaborative study.[2] During this study, we discovered two middle level teachers working together to create an engaging, challenging simulations-based U.S. history curriculum. Thus, we expanded our research to continue studying the two teachers' practice. The following research questions guided the additional year-long qualitative study (fall 2008-spring 2009): (a) What are middle grades teachers' purposes for using simulations in their U.S. history class? (b) How do middle grades teachers implement simulations in their U.S. history class?, and (c) What supports and obstacles do middle grades teachers encounter when they implement simulations in their U.S. history class? This article focuses on the first research question and on the single case of Andy Bender because we found his espoused purposes were more developed than the other teacher in the study. We also chose to write about Bender's distinct purposes for teaching history because they were similar to those described by Barton and Levstik (2004). An instrumental case study methodology (Stake, 1995) was employed to investigate our research questions.

We drew on Ghere's (2009) typology, a categorization of different types of simulations he used with college students. Ghere (2009) separated classroom simulations into four types: role play, game, map, and trial. In role play simulations, students assume individual roles to learn about historical concepts and events. In game simulations, there is usually competition which can promote teamwork and cooperation among students. Map simulations offer students the opportunity to make choices about territorial options and to visually present those decisions. Many times map simulations focus on topics such as diplomatic conventions, explorations, or colonization. Trial simulations require students to use critical thinking skills as they enact a legal trial or debate a controversial issue.

Participant

We purposely selected the participant (Merriam, 1998) Andy Bender, an eighth-grade U.S. history teacher at Springfield Middle School, a rural public school in New York. He was chosen after being identified by local teacher educators and administrators as an "ambitious" (Grant, 2005) or "wise" teacher (Yeager & Davis, 2005), an area of social studies research we have focused on for some time.

At the time of the study, Bender, who has an undergraduate degree in political philosophy and a master's degree in adolescence education, had been teaching history for 14 years. He has presented workshops at state and national conferences and has received numerous local, state, and national teaching awards for his active teaching approaches. Additionally, 5 years ago, he started an award winning human rights summer institute for middle and high school students and teachers.

Site

Springfield Middle School is located in a small rural town in New York. At the time of the study, the middle school had approximately 475 students in Grades 6-8, with an average class size of 19 students. The school district's population was 97% White, 1%

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American Indian or Alaska Native, 1% Black or African American, less than 1% Hispanic or Latino, and 1% Asian or Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander. Twenty-seven percent of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Bender taught five sections of heterogeneously-grouped eighth-grade U.S. history classes. All students in the observed classes were White and 2-4 students in each of his five classes had Individualized Education Programs.

At the time of the study, students at Springfield Middle School took the New York State Intermediate U.S. History Exam, a three-part test containing 45 multiple-choice questions, three to four constructed response items, and a document-based question containing content from the *Grades 7-8 Social Studies: United States and New York State History* section of the *Social Studies Resource Guide* (see New York State Education Department, 1999).[3] Although the exam results did not influence students' ability to graduate, teachers and schools were held accountable for their students' pass rates as test scores were made public and reported in the New York State School Report Card.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collected included a biographical questionnaire (see Appendix A) at the beginning of the study, one hour-long, in-depth, semistructured interview toward the end of the study (see Appendix B), six simulation observations throughout the year (three per semester), and classroom artifacts (e.g., handouts, notes, assessment tasks). In the questionnaire, Bender was asked about his postsecondary education, years teaching, courses taught, and awards or recognitions received. We interviewed Bender about his views of teaching and learning history, purposes for teaching history, beliefs about simulations, and sense-making of the state standards and assessment. We observed all but one simulation together. During observations, we took field notes, which were later typed, and collected relevant documents, such as readings and class handouts. We also rated each simulation using Social Studies Inquiry Research Collaborative study instruments (see Appendix C).

Data from observations, interviews, and class handouts were inductively analyzed, which generated a first set of codes. Then, to aid the interpretation of our findings, we turned to Barton and Levstik's (2004) theories about teachers' purposes, our conceptual framework for the case study. As we continued our analysis, which involved member checks, checking confirming and disconfirming evidence, and triangulating across all of our data sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006), we realized that Bender's overarching purpose for using simulations was to encourage students to learn about the past in order to inform the present and better prepare them to be participatory citizens (Barton &Levstik, 2004).

One limitation of this study was the small number of teachers. Also, we did not interview students because our focus was to capture the teachers' practice and views. Thus, although our findings are not generalizable, they are important to the field of middle level social studies education because they illustrate a teacher's complex, developed purposes for teaching adolescents, and how they influenced his pedagogy. Additionally, we collected observation data, which captured student dialogue, as well as students' test scores on the state exam, and student work samples from one of the simulations. These additional sources of data assisted us in analysis.

Through our analysis, we found Bender developed specific methods of preparing, implementing, debriefing, and assessing each of his simulations. We also discovered he articulated diverse purposes for using simulations, which closely aligned to Barton and Levstik's notions of teaching history for the common good (2004). In this article, we argue that despite criticisms that simulations may not be a good method of instruction in the middle level classroom, Bender used them as a means to attaining the learning goals he had for stu-

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dents. We explore his purposes for using simulations in the following section.

THE MEANS THAT LEAD TO SEVERAL ENDS

We found Bender possessed distinct purposes for using simulations with middle level students, which connected to several of *This We Believe* (2010) characteristics of successful teaching: to hook students into learning, provide them with a foundation of historical knowledge, and foster perspective-recognition. We also found the teacher's overarching purpose for implementing simulations was to encourage students to learn about the past to inform the present. These purposes illustrated that Bender viewed his classroom simulations not as the culminating experience of a lesson or unit, but as a means to achieving his learning goals for students. He wanted students to become hooked and engaged. He also hoped they would learn to think critically and historically. Finally, he hoped his class would assist students in becoming productive, caring citizens.

During the 2008-2009 year, we observed six of the ten simulations Bender implemented in his eighth-grade classroom. Each simulation took three to five periods of class time. One to two periods were spent preparing students with the background information necessary for the simulation and one period was spent debriefing the simulation. Two of the observed simulations, the Supreme Court and Triangle Fire, were trial simulations where students chose roles as attorneys and judges and enacted specific court cases. Two simulations, Ellis Island and Depression Soup Kitchen, were role plays where students dressed as immigrants or people living during the 1930s. One simulation, the Stock Market Game, required students to keep track of stocks during the late 1920s, and then decide what to do with their money when the market crashed. Finally, in a Women's Rights Play, students acted out parts from a script Bender created from historical documents. For purposes of this article, we briefly describe one of the simulations, the "Triangle Fire Trial," because it highlights Bender's espoused purposes for using simulations. For more descriptive examples of the simulations we observed, see DiCamillo and Gradwell (2012).

A Portrait of Practice: The Triangle Fire Simulation

For 1 week, Bender taught students about the events surrounding the 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory and then enacted the "Triangle Fire Trial." The simulation was part of a larger unit on Immigration and Industrialization. The first day of Bender's simulation began with a lecture and class discussion about the effects of the hazardous working conditions of the Industrial Revolution. Bender then proceeded to show a PowerPoint presentation depicting various historic images from the era and described the basic background of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire event. He explained what shirtwaists were and showed examples on the screen. He discussed the events of March 25, 1911, when 146 garment workers died in the largest industrial accident in the history of New York City. Next, Bender tried to illustrate how quickly the fire spread in the packed factory:

> In 10 minutes, the factory went up in flames. On a normal day, there were up to 500 workers in the factory. (He points to a poster of the Triangle Fire). Girls worked in an assembly line. There was extra fabric on the floor and in the bins. What does that mean for fire? Cotton—very flammable. Come over here and I'll show you what I mean.

He directed the class to accompany him to the rescue window of the classroom. As students gathered around him, he opened up the window and took out a small mound of dryer lint to show how flammable it could be. He lit the lint on fire as he held it out the window, then dropped it in the snow where it extinguished itself. Bender asked the students, "Feel this

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breeze? It's quitting time and the doors are open and a breeze comes in. Oxygen fuels the fire."

The students returned to their seats and Bender continued with an impassioned lecture and discussion about the causes of the fire. He showed the students floor plans of the Asch building where the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory resided and discussed how workers became trapped inside the building. He mentioned that doors were locked, fire escapes did not work, and the elevator shaft was engulfed in flames. Then he connected the event to a book the students were currently reading in their English language arts classes, *Ashes of Roses*. Finally, he presented a brief PBS video about the Triangle Fire and ended the class showing the students a PowerPoint display of images to provide set-up for the simulation. He said:

> Look up at the screen. You see a picture of the building, a newspaper article, the owners Max Blanck and Isaac Harris, cutthroat businessmen. There is a term, manslaughter. If Hunter (he points to one of the students) beats me on the head, it is murder. If he throws a pen and hits in me in the eye and kills me, it is manslaughter. Are these men guilty of manslaughter? We are going to have a trial with witnesses and lawyers.

For two more class periods, students read and researched primary source documents about the historic fire and prepared arguments and witness statements to use during the trial. Students chose roles as attorneys or witnesses for the prosecution, attorneys or witnesses for the defense (of the owners of the factory), or as jurors for the trial.

The simulated trial observed in Bender's class was primarily unscripted, and students came dressed as attorneys, factory workers, firefighters, and jurors. Bender remained silent throughout the trial. Students took their roles seriously and appeared engaged the entire class period. For example, during one exchange, the lead prosecuting attorney interviewed the fire chief, who stated that he was "really angry because Blanck and Harris [the factory owners] had locked the factory doors so the factory workers could not escape and they are guilty without a doubt." In the end, the student jurors decided that the factory owners were guilty, contrary to what historically happened, prompting clarification from Bender about the final verdict. For their homework assignment, students wrote a poem from a selection of viewpoints of the fire (i.e., bystander, fireman, policeman, Triangle employee, reformer, etc.) and connected it to recent fires happening in Asian factories.

When asked why he created the "Triangle Fire Trial" simulation, Bender explained:

> The goal was for them to understand how dangerous the Industrial Revolution was and what an incredible event [the Triangle Fire] was and to get them emotionally hooked. The secondary goal there is to see how bad the Industrial Revolution was for workers and the big goal is to compare that knowledge to workers' rights today and compare factory fires in China that are happening, [to one's] very similar to Triangle.… All of this knowledge helps our students be more informed world citizens and consumers; which, while important on its own, is an important first step in the worldwide eradication of child labor.

The Triangle Fire vignette illustrates the several layers of Bender's espoused purposes. He wanted to capture students' interest in the fire by getting them "emotionally hooked." He wanted students to have the opportunity to experience the perspectives of the factory workers to illustrate "how bad the Industrial Revolution was for workers." Bender also hoped students would be able to "compare that knowledge to workers' rights today" as well as understand how the event "has a huge impact on how we live today." Additionally, Bender's essay assignment demonstrated his greater espoused goal of helping students make connections from the past to inform the present; "an important first step in the worldwide eradication of child labor." These purported multilayered and intertwining purposes were consis-

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tent as he discussed other simulations he enacted in the classroom.

Discouraging Interest or Motivating Students?

Some critics assert simulations can hinder students' interest and engagement in history and adversely influence their psychological development (Drake, 2008). In contrast, Bender believed simulations encouraged his students' motivation in the course. Interviews revealed Bender was well aware of research suggesting many middle school students find the study of history uninteresting and unimportant because they rarely have opportunities to learn history in an active manner (Kobrin, Abbot, Ellinwood, & Horton, 1993). Bender also understood middle level research that suggests teachers matter in creating motivating learning environments (Daniels, 2011). Bender said he implemented several of his simulations, such as "Ellis Island" and "Depression Soup Kitchen," at the beginning of the unit, to "hook" or spark students' interest and to get them "involved" in their learning. He asserted that, in contrast to more traditional methods of teaching, these brief, one-day simulations encouraged students to view history as meaningful and relevant:

> In order to really learn something, yeah, you could read it through a textbook, but that is going to go in one ear and out the other. Do [the simulation] first, hook the kid, let them do it, hold their hand a little bit, and then complement it with incredible visual images. Then let them practice on their own through a worksheet … let them write about it on their own … and then show them what really happened, and they are hooked and learning becomes real and makes sense.

Bender was similar to teachers in other studies (e.g., Cunningham, 2007; Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2003) who believe it is their responsibility to make history interesting and engaging for their students and to foster a passion for learning among middle grade learners (Musser et al., 2013). Bender also discussed how shorter simulations were a good method for engaging middle school students who are used to using a variety of technology:

> It [the simulation] has to be done in the most interactive way you can, and, obviously, it has to be age appropriate and not every class is good for that; but whenever we can, the student has to be hooked within 30 seconds and involved within 5-10 minutes and then needs to see visual reinforcement, which is so easy to do with our digital age. So, contrary to the traditional beliefs and things we have been told as teachers … my class has to be interesting; it has to be entertained at some point.

In contrast to teachers Pace (2003) and DiCamillo (2010) studied, who thought students needed to be entertained with humor and games in order to learn history, Bender explained he did not think students needed to be entertained with humor, but he did think they needed to be emotionally invested in their learning.Bender clarified:

> I'm not talking about [entertaining] the comical way, but the way people complain when they go church—they will choose one service over the other because the priest is more interesting. I think that tells you a lot about how human beings learn; they want someone who is interesting [to teach them] and then when they do find that, especially when they are involved on an emotional level, that is when real learning happens, and I dear say, human growth.

Students are able to "care *about* the people and events of the past when [they] select some as more interesting or personally meaningful than others" (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 229). Importantly, Bender thought once students were hooked through the simulations, they were more likely to think critically about historical topics:

> I'm putting educational capital in the bag … when I need them to withdraw and think about the issues they can … no question it

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> helps them think critically. I can't imagine doing it any other way … if they weren't having fun and they weren't interested, then it would not work, but [by] hooking them [the learning] is fun.

Bender also explained that after students were hooked by a simulation, they were able to focus on more routine but necessary learning activities, such as taking notes and writing document based questions (DBQ's) for the state exam:

> When our simulations are rolling and when that involvement is high … the DBQ should show that. So, once we get them hooked on stuff, then we'll say, okay, we need to take a break today and focus on more traditional things to make sure your skills are there. Generally, they are.

Bender added his students were "eager" to write DBQ's on state tests because they had "a lot to share." He attributed their positive attitudes toward the test to his use of simulations.

Oversimplifying History or Providing a Foundation of Historical Knowledge?

One of the key arguments against the use of simulations is they oversimplify history (Anti-Defamation League, 2006). Bender teaches a 1-year survey course in American history which makes it difficult to go in-depth on every topic. However, he believes simulations can provide the factual and contextual information necessary for higher level thinking. Bender explained he regularly used simulations in his course to ensure students know basic names, dates, and facts about history:

> The purpose of history education is, first of all, they need to know basic terms. I want compassionate kids when leave here but I don't want them to be compassionate idiots. They gotta' know terms like suffrage and totalitarian, the basic canon of historical terms. So, that is part of our conversation, because, as Americans, we are watching the news … [which is] most of the time, conveyed in analogies. Like … Obama was accused of being an appeaser—so what is an appeaser? Well, let's go back to Chamberlain … so, the basic vocabulary is the big thing.

His views echoed what many researchers (Bloom, 1986; Ravitch & Finn, 1987) have long argued; students should understand basic historical facts before they can think at higher levels about complex historical events and questions.

When probed further, Bender said simulations helped eighth graders gain factual knowledge by "immersing them in the obvious":

> The golden rule that we try to go by with teaching anything is that you look at the obvious first. In order to teach actively, what is going on in what you are teaching? … So, Ellis Island … so what are they? They are immigrants. What did they do? They went through inspection. So, we've got immigrants, inspectors, and tests. So let's create immigrants, inspectors, and tests. So, in all these situations [the simulations], where we could, we try to look at the obvious and immerse them in the obvious.

Bender thought by role playing immigrants going through inspection at Ellis Island, students would learn basic information about immigration at the turn-of-the-century. He also discussed his Supreme Court and Triangle Fire trial simulations, and explained by role-playing attorneys, judges, and witnesses, students learned basic court processes. It is important to note Bender adamantly stated he would never ask students to enact an historical event like slavery or the Holocaust:

> We can't put a kid in the situation of being a Nazi or a Jew. We can't recreate a lynching for obvious reasons. So, there are certain things that just for propriety sake that we don't want to go near.

His views patterned Holocaust education critics' recommendations (for example, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.) and stood in contrast to the teacher in Schweber's

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(2003) study, who thought it was appropriate to simulate the Holocaust.

Additionally, Bender asserted once his students possessed a solid foundation of historical knowledge, they were able to "understand big ideas" and "think critically" about historical concepts:

> The critical thinking is not going to happen unless they are invested, unless they understand it, the basics of it. How can you compare Columbus to Neil Armstrong unless you physically understand Columbus and physically understand Neil Armstrong and are involved? … In order to compare that and have that conversation of who's more heroic and who's more adventurous, or who had the bigger accomplishment, they have to understand things from a basic primal level to go off.

Bender thought simulations helped students learn factual information, which would then assist him in scaffolding their thinking to understand big ideas and historical questions such as "Who's more adventurous—Columbus or Neil Armstrong?" When Bender has his students participate in simulations to learn how the past is linked to modern day events, it has the potential for them to contribute to a participatory democracy; for "without knowing what produced an issue under discussion, students would be doing little more than debating in the dark (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 73.)

Trivializing Peoples' Experiences or Teleporting to the Past?

Some critics believe simulations trivialize the experience of the victims (Anti-Defamation League, 2006). Bender thought they transported students to the past so they could learn diverse historical perspectives. He stated, "They [simulations] are designed to hook the kid and suck them out of their world into the story." For Bender, simulations were a means to access the past, or in his words, the "fairy dust you sprinkle on these kids that allows them to enter that world [of the past]."

Bender used two role play simulations (Ellis Island Role Play and the Great Depression Soup Kitchen Role Play) not to trivialize the experience of those who lived in the past, but to foster perspective recognition (Barton & Levstik, 2004). He did so because he believed role play simulations offered a way for students to step into the past:

> It's like the Star Trek thing when they are vaporized and come into another world. In all these simulations there is this magic moment when you see it on their faces when they go from their 2009 world into [the world of the past] and that teleporting is what all of these have in common.

Bender believed "teleporting" students into the past led to a "magic moment" when they were able to get a sense of what life was like during that historical era. For example, for the Ellis Island Role-Play, one of Bender's goals was "to allow them to understand what actually happened at Ellis Island, and the larger issue there is to show the problems immigrants faced." For the Great Depression Soup Kitchen Role-Play, Bender had similar goals. He wanted students "to empathize and understand what life was like for your grandparents." He felt they could benefit from this understanding because of the current economic downturn: "up until last October, these kids have grown up in a time of prosperity where they don't know what it is like to be evicted or anything else." Bender was not trying to perpetuate stereotypes or negative views of immigrants and Depression-era citizens. Rather, he wanted his students to connect on an emotional level with historical actors, similar to Linda Strait, one of the teachers in Grant's (2003) study, who engaged her students in a Civil Rights simulation to foster historical empathy.

Bender's simulations usually spanned a few class periods and began with class time devoted to preparing students for their roles. After the actual simulation, there was always a follow-up debriefing period where he would point out the limitations of role playing. He would also assign an assessment task, often authentic in

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nature (King, Newmann, & Carmichael, 2009). For example, after students participated in the Great Depression Soup Kitchen Role Play Simulation, Bender asked them to compete a diary entry in which they discussed what their life was like during the 1920s, Stock Market crash, and the Great Depression. They also were asked to explain how the Great Depression influenced their lives today. Bender explained:

> What unites the two experiences is that in the simulation they have ownership of their learning and [with] writing a diary, [the] ownership continues. In other words, in the simulation we put them into this fictionalized world and the writing assignment allows them to articulate their experiences.

The diary writing assessment complemented Bender's role play simulation and pushed students to identify with the past and consider how the Great Depression influenced their families' history and their lives. According to Barton and Levstik (2004), "identification is necessary for democratic life, because without attachment to community, individuals would be unlikely to take part in the hard work of seeking the common good" (p. 46).

Overemphasizing Past Struggles or Informing the Present?

Bender believed when students were hooked, engaged, and thinking critically about history through their own eyes and the eyes of those who lived during the past, they were more likely to care about the past, and, in turn, care about the present and future. Yet, another criticism of simulations is when the focus is on historic groups' struggles to overcome injustice or hardship, not enough emphasis is placed on the group's achievements (Drake, 2008). When Bender first started teaching American history, he recognized his instruction consistently centered on the struggles of marginalized groups in history:

> Once I got into teaching eighth grade, I realized that there were connections in American history; there is this path of looking at how the country evolved and issues of social justice, whether it is how immigrants were discriminated against, the story of African-Americans, the story of women, the story of Native-Americans, the story of Japanese Internment, the Holocaust, and now inclusion of gays and lesbians in mainstream society. You see, throughout twentieth century American History, the Declaration of Independence really comes alive.

Because of his views, many of Bender's simulations focused on marginalized groups. For example, in his Supreme Court Trial simulation, Ellis Island Role Play, and Women's Rights Role Play, Bender emphasized the important struggles of everyday citizens, immigrants, and women because he wanted his students to recognize the heroic actions of individuals. When students learned about Alice Paul, his goal was for them "to connect how heroic Alice Paul was to the struggles of Afghan girls being sprayed with acid by the Taliban." Bender's purpose was in line with Barton and Levstik's (2004) recommendation for teachers to deemphasize heroes in history and to emphasize individuals' heroic actions. In doing so, teachers like Bender offer a more nuanced view of individuals fostering students' ability to contribute to the common good.

Bender also believed emphasizing the heroic actions of ordinary Americans through simulations provided students with powerful examples of citizens working for social justice:

> When we look at all those issues, they all have somebody who stood up and who made a difference, whether it was Rosa Parks [or somebody else]. There is somebody who is cool to me historically but also lends a powerful example to our kids on how to live and how to live a good life. To me [these examples] help to answer the question of why history important; a) the stories are important and b) they also show us how to live.

Critics worry historical simulations may divert students' attention from modern day oppressions (Drake, 2008). Yet, Bender used

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simulations as a means to connect the past to the present and inform the future. Similar to Husbands et al. (2003) study of history teachers in eight English comprehensive schools, Bender was interested in promoting moral development among his students. As he noted, he wanted his students to make "higher connections." He said:

> The goal is to make people realize that the things that are happening today don't necessarily have to happen. If they do happen, maybe they are connected to something in the past, and after looking at those things in the past, [then ask] how can we use their mistakes and strengths to look at the future.

Bender used simulations as an avenue for students to learn lessons from the past; an oft-stated purpose for teaching about the past, but one "in need of more careful examination (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p.75)." Barton and Levstik explain that many teachers believe history provides lessons that can guide our actions today. However, they caution that students must not be "fed" the lessons by their teacher; instead students should reflect on historical events from their own perspectives and formulate their own lessons they learned from them. Bender explained he implemented simulations to engage his students in the past so they could eventually become active, informed citizens. He did not use simulations as the culminating exercise of a unit or lesson, but instead as means to attain his learning goals for students: to hook them into the study of history, to learn factual information about the past, to promote perspective recognition, and to make connections between the past and present. His ultimate goal was to encourage students to care about the past and future. He mused: "The true test of my class is the lessons [my students] are going to pass on to their kids about how to live."

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Few research studies explore social studies teachers' purposes, and no studies focus on teachers' reasoning for implementing simulations in a middle level classroom. Much can be gleaned from this study for researchers, middle level professionals, teacher educators, pre-service teachers, and practicing teachers with respect to teacher purposes and middle level education.

Critics believe historical simulations can trivialize history, perpetuate stereotypes, and lead to students' superficial understandings of peoples' emotions of the time period (Drake, 2008; Schweber, 2004; Totten, 2000). However, these criticisms stem from simulations about acts of oppression, genocide, or racism. Bender's case is instructive because he makes pedagogically sound choices about the types of historical events he simulates and ensures his students do not engage in simulations about events such as slavery or the Holocaust. Bender's pedagogical decisions are rooted in his well-defined purposes for teaching history.

Grant (2003) suggests there are crosscurrents of influences that impact teachers' decision making. Bender's case supports this claim as he did not use any one simulation to meet one specific goal, but instead to meet several goals, such as hooking students, building content knowledge, fostering multiple perspectives, and making connections to the present. This study adds to the emerging line of history education research "that strives to holistically capture the nuance and variability in teachers' thinking, rather than focusing narrowly upon one aspect of it" (Cunningham, 2007, p. 592). Instead of focusing on one of Bender's purposes, this case study illustrates the multilayered nature of his decision making. It also presents a more complex view of Bender's pedagogical thinking.

Because Bender held developed purposes for teaching, he was able to make appropriate, pedagogically sound decisions about curriculum and instruction. Barton and Levstik (2004) argue that when teachers possess developed purposes, they are more likely to make good pedagogical decisions that encourage students' understanding of history. Our research supports this claim and illustrates the influence teacher purpose has on instruction. When

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Bender wanted his students to recognize historical perspectives, he had them role play characters from the past. When he wanted them to learn about details of particular Supreme Court decisions, he had students enact a trial simulation. Bender did so without adversely influencing his students' performance on standardized exams. In fact, in an analysis of the state testing data for the three years leading up to the time of the study (New York State District Report Cards, 2007-2009), Bender's students outperformed their peers across the state and scored comparably against peers in similar schools identified by the state (DiCamillo & Gradwell, 2012). However, we make no claims to the extent the simulations impacted students' historical understanding since student interview data were not collected. This is an area for future research.

While Barton and Levstik (2004) argue purpose is an important influence on history teachers' pedagogy, they are less clear about how teacher educators can assist pre-service and practicing teachers' in developing their purposes for teaching history for the common good. We believe teacher preparation programs can help preservice teachers think about their purposes by reading case studies about ambitious or wise teachers like Bender. The hope is that the more models of teachers who possess developed purposes the preservice teachers read and discuss, the more likely they will be to develop habits of thought that focus on teaching students to become intelligent, caring citizens in our global world.

Finally, this study adds to the ongoing conversation about middle grades teaching and learning. To assist middle schools in creating effective schools, the National Middle School Association, now known as the Association for Middle Level Education, developed a research-based position paper entitled, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (2010), outlining the essential characteristics of successful middle schools. In the area of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, the five characteristics are:

> (a) Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them, (b) Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning, (c) Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant, (d) Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches, and (e) Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure it.

Bender's curriculum and instruction brought these characteristics to life. The description of his purposes for using simulations, and his active, simulation-based curriculum illustrate that the Association for Middle Level Education characteristics are possible (Shulman, 1987) for middle grades teachers.

Yet, more research on teachers' purposes is needed. Questions for future research might include: (a) What influences the types of purposes teachers possess as they enact active learning strategies like simulations? (b) To what extent are the goals a teacher possesses for simulations actually met?, and (c) How can teacher educators foster purpose development among teacher candidates? Because few studies investigate teachers' purposes for implementing simulations, this study provides a portrait of possibilities. Bender's case is one example of a teacher using simulations not as an end, but as the means for engaging students in the learning of history to inform the present and future.

NOTES

1. All names are pseudonyms.
2. Information about the SSIRC study can be found at http://www.auburn.edu/academic/societies/ssirc

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APPENDIX A: PREOBSERVATION TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

Pre-Observation Questionnaire (Please complete prior to interview)

Teacher Background Data: Please provide us with some general background information so that we can describe the population of teachers who took part in the study.

1. What is your gender?
   - o Male
   - o Female
2. What is your age?
   - o 25 or less
   - o between 26 and 35
   - o between 36 and 45
   - o between 46 and 55
   - o greater than 55
3. What is your ethnicity?
   - o African American
   - o Asian American
   - o Latino/Hispanic American
   - o Native American
   - o White (other than Latino)
   - o Other/No Response
4. How many years have you been a teacher?
   _____ Total years
   _____ Years in this school
5. Are you National Board certified?
6. Are you highly qualified according to your state's definition of this term?

Course Data: What is your schedule of classes for this year (Modify the table as necessary)?

Fall Semester	
1st block/period	
2nd block/period	
3rd block/period	
4th block/period	
5th block/period	
6th block/period	
Spring Semester	
1st block/period	
2nd block/period	
3rd block/period	
4th block/period	
5th block/period	
6th block/period	

Pre-Observation Teacher Interview Guide

Teacher Background data (continued)

- How many years has it been since you completed the coursework for your existing teaching credential or teaching certificate?
- Did you have some type of alternative certification (i.e. fifth year program, Teach for America, etc.)?
- What is the highest degree you attained?
- What was your undergraduate major in colAplege (name/school)? If applicable, provide the name of the degree program for Master's level or higher.
- Did any of your degrees require a concentration in one or more of the social science disciplines? If so, specify the field(s).
- How many years have you been teaching this course (the one linked to the mandated test)?

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Challenging Tasks

Review the challenging assignments with each teacher before the interview if possible. Ask for the following information for each task:

1. Can you provide a description of what you want students to do for this task?
2. How does this task fit within what students have already done and what they will do afterwards? Is it part of a larger unit of instruction? What experiences have students had to prepare them for completing this assignment or activity?

Work collaboratively with the teacher to determine the best observation day for each task. The guiding purpose of this discussion should be to select the day that best provides insight into how instruction has prepared the students to complete each task.

3. If the teacher makes a case for a particular observation day, provide his/her rationale for selecting that day.

APPENDIX B

Interview #2

1. Tell us a little about your teaching philosophy.
2. Why do you use simulations in your class?
3. How did your teaching (with simulations) develop over time?
4. Describe the types of simulations that you use.
5. Which simulations encourage students' interest and engagement?
6. Which simulations assist students in thinking critically about history (or thinking historically)?
7. Do you think some simulations are stronger than others (in terms of helping students think critically about history)?
8. Which simulations are most authentic?
9. Do you think students learn more from simulations than they do from traditional methods of teaching?
10. Does teaching with simulations help students pass state exams?
11. What supports/obstacles do you face when implementing your simulations?
12. Do you think simulations assist students with learning disabilities in comprehending the curriculum?
13. What are the benefits and challenges of your collaboration with colleagues (in regards to simulations)?
14. Is your principal/school staff supportive of your teaching? Explain your response.

See next page for Appendix C

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APPENDIX C: AIW SCORING RUBRICS

AIW Scoring Criteria for Classroom Instruction

Scoring instructions: To determine scores for the four standards, follow the technical scoring criteria as outlined in the tips below. Consider the descriptions for scores 1-5 on each standard to constitute the *minimum* criteria for that score. If you find yourself between scores, make the decision by asking whether the minimum conditions of the higher score have been met. If not, use the lower score. In determining scores for each standard, the observer should consider only the evidence observed during the lesson observation. "Many" students refers to at least one third of the students in a class; "most" refers to more than half; "almost all" is not specified numerically, but should be interpreted as "all but a few."

	HOTS • *To what extent do students use lower order thinking processes?* • *To what extent do students use higher order thinking processes?*	***Deep Knowledge*** • *To what extent is knowledge deep?* • *To what extent is knowledge shallow and superficial?*
Score	***Lower Order thinking only*** *1 2 3 4 5* ***Higher Order thinking is central***	***Knowledge is shallow****1 2 3 4 5* ***knowledge is deep***
5	Almost all students, almost all of the time, are performing HOT.	Knowledge is very deep because the teacher successfully structures the lesson so that almost all students sustain a focus on a significant topic and do at least one of the following: demonstrate their understanding of the problematic nature of information and/or ideas; demonstrate complex understanding by arriving at a reasoned, supported conclusion; or explain how they solved a complex problem. In general, students' reasoning, explanations and arguments demonstrate fullness and complexity of understanding.
4	Students are engaged in at least one major activity during the lesson in which they perform HOT operations, and this activity occupies a substantial portion **(at least 1/3**) of the lesson and many students are performing HOT.	Knowledge is relatively deep because either the teacher or the students provide information, arguments or reasoning that demonstrate the complexity of an important idea. The teacher structures the lesson so that ***many*** students ***sustain*** a focus on a significant topic for a period of time ***and do*** at least one of the following: demonstrate their understanding of the problematic nature of information and/or ideas; demonstrate understanding by arriving at a reasoned, supported conclusion; or explain how they solved a relatively complex problem.
3	Students are primarily engaged in routine LOT operations a good share of the lesson. There is at least one significant question or activity in which some students perform some HOT operations.	Knowledge is treated unevenly during instruction; i.e., deep understanding of something is countered by superficial understanding of other ideas. At least one significant idea may be presented in depth and its significance grasped, but in general the focus is not sustained.
2	Students are primarily engaged in LOT, but at some point they perform HOT as a minor diversion within the lesson.	Knowledge remains superficial and fragmented; while some key concepts and ideas are mentioned or covered, only a superficial acquaintance or trivialized understanding of these complex ideas is evident.
1	Students are engaged only LOT operation; i.e., they either receive, or recite, or participate in routine practice and in no activities during the lesson do students go beyond LOT.	Knowledge is very thin because it does not deal with significant topics or ideas; teacher and students are involved in the coverage of simple information which they are to remember.

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Tips for Scoring HOTS	***Tips for Scoring Deep Knowledge***
• Lower order thinking (LOT) occurs when students are asked to receive or recite factual information or to employ rules and algorithms through repetitive routines. As information receivers, students are given pre-specified knowledge ranging from simple facts and information to more complex concepts. Such knowledge is conveyed to students through a reading, work sheet, lecture or other direct instructional medium. Students are not required to do much intellectual work since the purpose of the instructional process is to simply transmit knowledge or to practice procedural routines. Students are in a similar role when they are reciting previously acquired knowledge; i.e., responding to test-type questions that require recall of pre-specified knowledge. More complex activities still may involve LOT when students only need to follow pre-specified steps and routines or employ algorithms in a rote fashion. • Higher order thinking (HOT) requires students to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transfer their meaning and implications. This transformation occurs when students combine facts and ideas in order to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. Manipulating information and ideas through these processes allows students to solve problems and discover new (for them) meanings and understandings. • When students engage in HOT, an element of uncertainty is introduced into the instructional process and makes instructional outcomes not always predictable; i.e., the teacher is not certain what will be produced by students. In helping students become producers of knowledge, the teacher's main instructional task is to create activities or environments that allow them opportunities to engage in HOT.	• Knowledge is shallow, thin or superficial when it does not deal with significant concepts or central ideas of a topic or discipline. Knowledge is also shallow when important, central ideas have been trivialized, or when it is presented as non-problematic. Knowledge is thin when students' understanding of important concepts or issues is superficial such as when ideas are covered in a way that gives them only a surface acquaintance with their meaning. This superficiality can be due, in part, to instructional strategies such as when teachers cover large quantities of fragmented ideas and bits of information that are unconnected to other knowledge. • Evidence of shallow understanding by students exists when they do not or can not use knowledge to make clear distinctions, arguments, solve problems and develop more complex understanding of other related phenomena. • Knowledge is deep or thick when it concerns the central ideas of a topic or discipline and because such knowledge is judged to be crucial to a topic or discipline. • For students, knowledge is deep when they develop relatively complex understandings of these central concepts. Instead of being able to recite only fragmented pieces of information, students develop relatively systematic, integrated or holistic understanding. Mastery is demonstrated by their success in producing new knowledge by discovering relationships, solving problems, constructing explanations, and drawing conclusions. • In scoring this item, observers should note that depth of knowledge and understanding refers to the substantive character of the ideas that the teacher presents in the lesson, or to the level of understanding that students demonstrate as they consider these ideas. It is possible to have a lesson that contains substantively important, deep knowledge, but students do not become engaged or they fail to show understanding of the complexity or the significance of the ideas. Observers' ratings can reflect either the depth of the teacher's knowledge or the depth of understanding that students develop of that content.

Appendix C continues on next page.

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Score	***Substantive Conversation*** • *To what extent is classroom discourse devoted to creating or negotiating understandings of subject matter?* ***no substantive conversation*** *1 2 3 4 5* ***substantive conversation***	***Connectedness to the Real World*** • *To what extent is the lesson, activity, or task connected to competencies or concerns beyond the classroom?* ***no connection*** *1 2 3 4 5* ***connected***
5	All features of substantive conversation occur, with at least one example of sustained conversation, and almost all students participate.	Students study or work on a topic, problem or issue that the teacher and students see as connected to their personal experiences or actual contemporary or persistent public issues. Students recognize the connection between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom. They explore these connections in ways that create personal meaning and significance for the knowledge. This meaning and significance is strong enough to lead students to become involved in an effort to affect or influence a larger audience beyond their classroom in one of the following ways: by communicating knowledge to others (including within the school), advocating solutions to social problems, providing assistance to people, creating performances or products with utilitarian or aesthetic value.
4	All features of substantive conversation occur, with at least one example of sustained conversation, and many students participate in some substantive conversation (even if not part of the sustained conversation).	Students study or work on a topic, problem or issue that the teacher and students see as connected to their personal experiences or actual contemporary or persistent public issues. Students recognize the connection between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom. They explore these connections in ways that create personal meaning and significance for the knowledge. However, there is no effort to use the knowledge in ways that go beyond the classroom to actually influence a larger audience.
3	Substantive Conversation Feature # 2 (sharing) and/or #3 (coherent promotion of collective understanding) occur and involve at least one example of sustained conversation (i.e., at least 3 consecutive interchanges).	Students study a topic, problem or issue that the teacher succeeds in connecting to students' actual experiences or to actual contemporary or persistent public issues. Students recognize some connection between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom, but they do not explore the implications of these connections which remain abstract or hypothetical. There is no effort to actually influence a larger audience.
2	Substantive Conversation Feature # 2 (sharing) and/or # 3 (coherent promotion of collective understanding) occur briefly and involve at least one example of two consecutive interchanges.	Students encounter a topic, problem or issue that the teacher tries to connect to students' experiences or to actual contemporary or persistent public issues; i.e., the teacher informs students that there is potential value in the knowledge being studied because it relates to the world beyond the classroom. For example, students are told that understanding Middle East history is important for politicians trying to bring peace to the region; however, the connection is weak and there is no evidence that students make the connection.
1	Virtually no features of substantive conversation occur during the lesson.	Lesson topic and activities have no clear connection to anything beyond itself; the teacher offers no justification beyond the need to perform well in class.

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Tips for Scoring Substantive Conversation

- This scale measures the extent of talking to learn and to understand in the classroom. There are two dimensions to this construct: one is the substance of subject matter, and the other is the character of dialogue.
- In classes where there is little or no substantive conversation, teacher-student interaction typically consists of a lecture with recitation where the teacher deviates very little from delivering a preplanned body of information and set of questions; students typically give very short answers. Because the teacher's questions are motivated principally by a preplanned checklist of questions, facts, and concepts, the discourse is frequently choppy, rather than coherent; there is often little or no follow-up of student responses. Such discourse is the oral equivalent of fill-in-the-blank or short-answer study questions.
- In classes characterized by high levels of substantive conversation there is considerable teacher-student and student-student interaction about the ideas of a topic; the interaction is reciprocal, and it promotes coherent shared understanding. (1) The talk is about subject matter in the discipline and includes higher order thinking such as making distinctions, applying ideas, forming generalizations, raising questions; not just reporting of experiences, facts, definitions, or procedures. (2) The conversation involves sharing of ideas and is not completely scripted or controlled by one party (as in teacher-led recitation). Sharing is best illustrated when participants explain themselves or ask questions in complete sentences, and when they respond directly to comments of previous speakers. (3) The dialogue build coherently on participants' ideas to promote improved collective understanding of a theme or topic (which does not necessarily require an explicit summary statement). In short, substantive conversation resembles the kind of sustained exploration of content characteristic of a good seminar where student contributions lead to shared understandings.
- To recognize sustained conversations, we define an interchange as a statement by one person and a response by another. Interchanges can occur between teacher and student or student and student. Sustained conversation is defined as at least three consecutive interchanges. The interchanges need not be between the same two people, but they must be linked substantively as consecutive responses. Consecutive responses should demonstrate sensitivity either by responding directly to the ideas of another speaker or by making an explicit transition that shows the speaker is aware he/she is shifting the conversation. Substantive conversation includes the 3 features described above. Each of the features requires interchange between two or more people. None can be illustrated through monologue by one person.

Tips for Scoring Value Beyond School

- This scale measures the extent to which the class has value and meaning beyond the instructional context. In a class with little or no value beyond, activities are deemed important for success only in school (now or later), but for no other aspects of life. Student work has no impact on others and serves only to certify their level of competence or compliance with the norms and routines of formal schooling.
- A lesson gains in authenticity the more there is a connection to the larger social context within which students live. Two areas in which student work can exhibit some degree of connectedness are: (a) a real world public problem; i.e., students confront an actual contemporary or persistent issue or problem, such as applying statistical analysis in preparing a report to the city council on the homeless. (b) students' personal experiences; i.e., the lesson focuses directly or builds upon students' actual experiences or situations. High scores can be achieved when the lesson entails one or both of these.

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