Personal Epistemological Beliefs and Teaching Practices: A Case Study of Three High School History Teachers

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ABSTRACT

PERSONAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND TEACHING PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF THREE HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY TEACHERS

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Northern Illinois University, 2020
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This study explored the personal epistemological beliefs of three veteran secondary-level history teachers concerning the teaching of history, how students learn history, how those beliefs are enacted, and the congruence of those beliefs with teaching practices. Using a qualitative approach, data were gathered through the Beliefs about History Questionnaire, observational data, and in-depth teacher interviews including a think-aloud and video-based interview. Personal epistemological beliefs and historical reasoning provided frameworks to examine the description of beliefs and congruence of those beliefs in instructional practices.

The findings show that the teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs were shaped by their own experiences as learners and teachers. Also, their personal epistemological beliefs indicated that teachers’ see their history instruction as an urgent need but when confronted with time constraints, cut explicit civic competence connections. Finally, although the teachers struggled to describe their personal epistemological beliefs, their actions demonstrated sophisticated beliefs concerning the nature of knowledge and knowing in history.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers engage in high quality professional learning, including seeking out additional resources for models or conducting a lesson study, that help them consider the framework of their beliefs and challenge their
assumptions. These shared conversations and learning experiences with colleagues or instructional coaches, help to challenge teachers to self-reflect on the congruencies between their described beliefs and instructional practices. Further, administrators should design curriculum maps that explicitly articulate the beliefs upon which it is based and actively work to remove obstacles to implementation while providing professional learning and support to teachers. Finally, teacher preparation programs should continue to model instructional practices focused on historical reasoning while helping pre-service educators reflect upon their own personal epistemological beliefs about history.
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Special thanks to Kendall, Mark, and Rose who were willing to work with me for hours to share their thinking and classrooms. It is a privilege to work alongside such kind and thoughtful professionals. I only hope that we continue to grow together. The honor is mine.

Most of all, I would like to thank my family who are always a rock of support for me. Gary and Sharon who cheered me on. My friends who allowed me to share my successes and struggles. To Scott, for your continued support and love through this process; I appreciate that you are my champion. And to Katherine, Maggie, and Graham – I love you beyond everything. Your hugs and kisses mean the world to me. I love you all.
DEDICATION

To my incredible children: Katherine, Magdalena, and Graham – for your tireless encouragement and hugs. May you be inspired to follow your dreams.

To Scott: for always supporting this effort

To my family and friends: for listening to me, for years, talk about this

To Mom: I wish you could be here to see this
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Study

For the past 10 years, I have served as an instructional coach in a mid-size suburban school district in Illinois. After the advent of the Common Core State Standards in 2010, I created and implemented a series of professional learning events for social studies teachers to examine the standards and work with the idea of disciplinary literacy. My approach to the workshop centered on skills, perhaps naively assuming that by providing different instructional approaches targeted to skills, teachers would be able to implement new strategies into their instruction. However, during this workshop, one of my colleagues protested quite vehemently, “Kids can’t do this kind of work; and they shouldn’t be doing it.” My response at the time, I am sure I was flustered. But the thought stayed with me: for this teacher it was not an issue of skill; it was an issue of belief. His beliefs about teaching social studies, beliefs about the nature of social studies, and beliefs about students’ learning social studies influenced his perception of how to teach social studies.

After this experience, I thought about my own background with social studies. I am a product of the traditional social studies instruction of rote memorization, in which I excelled because I am skilled at memorizing material. It was not until college that I realized social studies was not about memorizing at all. It was about interpretation and reasoning. I then discovered my passion for social studies. As I taught more and more social studies courses, eventually
specializing in teaching history, my love of active problem-based instructional techniques emerged, even when they were a challenge to implement. But as I interacted with more teachers, I realized my beliefs, which stemmed from my rejection of traditional memorization, were quite different than those who embraced history because of the perceived stability of facts. Therefore, this study explored how veteran high school history teachers described their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history and their beliefs about learning history. In addition, this study explored how these beliefs were enacted and showed congruence with their teaching practices.

Social studies itself is a very broad field of study and encompasses many disciplines dominated by history, geography, civics, and economics at the secondary level (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2017). The disciplines are united as social studies through common themes and skill standards. While the NCSS emphasizes that the purpose of social studies is to promote the goal of active citizenship of students, this goal can be interpreted in multiple ways (NCSS, 2016). For some, the goal suggests practicing skills of citizenship throughout high school; for others this goal means to learn a solid foundation of facts to be active citizens post-high school (Stanley, 2005). These broad parameters about social studies provided little guidance in terms of instructional decisions or priorities of instruction until the C3 Framework for Social Studies was introduced in 2013 (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013).

The C3 Framework – so called for college, career, and civic life – emphasizes the importance of inquiry, questioning, and skill-based instruction at all levels of social studies instruction. The introduction of this framework and a new set of standards has renewed national attention on social studies and, more specifically, on social studies instruction. This framework
was adapted and adopted by Illinois in 2016. The Illinois standards do not determine content, as the decision is left to each school district, but they do delineate skill standards for students. However, there is no state assessment aligned to the social studies standards. Without a standardized assessment that tends to provide guidance regarding how to measure a standard, the teacher or district can define and implement the standards with little consistency. The centerpiece instructional strategy in the C3 Framework is the Inquiry Arc, a type of performance that is difficult to meaningfully assess on a standardized test.

The C3 Framework describes a vision for history instruction that aligns with empirical research: an emphasis on active student-centered instruction based on discipline-specific skills (NCSS, 2013). The pedagogy emphasized in the empirical research concerning secondary history instruction at the secondary level is based on constructivist ideas of active engagement of students and on performance tasks rather than more traditional techniques like lecture (Stacy, 2009). More specifically, most research about active engagement can be organized with a framework of six facets of historical reasoning: asking historical questions, use of sources, contextualization, argumentation, use of substantive concepts, and use of meta-concepts, as suggested by van Drie and van Boxtel (2008). However, it is a challenge to teach these historical reasoning skills. It requires that a skilled teacher not only understand the skills themselves but also understand how to teach the skills to a wide variety of students.

Further research into the instructional practices of high school teachers also reveals a well-documented research-implementation gap. There are many reasons researchers theorize about the implementation gap, including, but not limited to, the incredibly high demands of bureaucratic tasks as well as the lack of time, lack of skills, lack of deep content knowledge, lack of professional learning, attitudes of complacency, and the variety of beliefs about the discipline,
students, and school itself (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Leming, Ellington, & Schug, 2006; Maloy & LaRoche, 2010; Russell, 2010; van Hover & Yeager, 2004; Wiersma, 2008; Yilmaz, 2008a). Additional research, however, documents instances of teachers utilizing models of instruction related to historical reasoning and the challenges they face (Bain, 2008; Brooks, 2011; Freedman, 2015; Hammond, 2010). This research illustrates the many experiences of teachers and the complexity of teaching. Of the many influences on teachers, the role of teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning in history and the congruence of teaching practices is the focus of this study because it helps us understand teachers and teaching better.

This introductory chapter presents the foundation and structure of the proposed study. This chapter includes brief descriptions of the conceptual frameworks that are further explored in Chapter 2. The problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and significance of study create the context for the research. The methods are introduced briefly but are explained in detail in Chapter 3. This chapter concludes with a general overview of the other chapters of the study.

Conceptual Frameworks

The first central conceptual framework that guided this study is personal epistemology. Personal epistemology provides a structure for describing teachers’ beliefs related to teaching and learning in history. Also, because this study concerns history instruction, there is a need for a framework to guide historical understanding. A framework of historical reasoning instructional strategies is used for this purpose.
Personal Epistemology

Epistemological studies focus on the nature of knowledge and the process of knowledge construction (Hofer, 2008; Schommer-Aikins, 2004b; Schraw & Olafson, 2008). The seminal research into epistemology, conducted by William Perry in 1968, studied how college students developed their views about knowledge and knowledge construction (Schommer-Aikins, 2004b). Perry’s research explored epistemic cognition as a developmental model with nine stages that categorizes the changes in thinking and knowing over time, from more absolute ideas of knowing to more abstract and conflicting constructs of knowing (Perry, 1968). Since this initial research, many branches of epistemological studies have emerged to study how learners move from believing that knowledge is fixed and absolute to realizing the tentative nature of knowledge (King & Kitchener, 2004). Other researchers have explored personal epistemology as a system of beliefs as opposed to just a developmental scale (Schommer-Aikins, 2004a; 2004b). Schommer-Aikins (2004a) emphasized the direct and indirect impact of epistemic beliefs in that they often mediate perceptions of learning significant in education. For example, if a learner perceives the task to be rote, even if it is not, then he or she might only select memorizing as a study tool. In more direct cases, personal epistemology may serve as a filter for decision-making. Schommer-Aikins emphasized the complex nature of personal epistemologies and that beliefs are part of a lifelong process, which is especially important for examining the personal epistemologies of veteran history teachers, the focus of this study.

Research concerning the role of a teacher’s personal epistemology is relatively limited, as most research has focused on college students as either learners (Lising & Elby, 2005) or as future educators (Burn, 2007). In the research related to elementary school teachers, Feucht
(2010) developed a theoretical representation about the role of personal epistemology in teaching. She theorized that the epistemic climate of a classroom is moderated by the teacher’s personal epistemology. The teacher’s beliefs manifest into various parts of classroom instruction to create the overall culture of norms for students and student-learning. Other researchers found that a teacher’s personal epistemology impacts his/her students and the students’ personal epistemology (De Corte, Eynde, Depaepe, & Verschaffel, 2010), but more research is needed in various disciplines. Brownlee, Schraw, and Berthelsen (2011) argue that we know little about the personal epistemology of teachers, but personal epistemology is one way we can better understand teaching and learning.

It is challenging to measure personal epistemological beliefs because of the complexity and contextualized nature of beliefs. Some researchers utilize self-reported epistemic questionnaires to capture larger trends through repeated large-scale usage, which is useful to help define belief systems. Some of these instruments include the Reflective Judgement Interview, the Beliefs about Knowing and Learning, and the Epistemic Belief Inventory, among others (Duell & Schommer-Aikins, 2001). Review of the instruments shows they should be used with caution, as the variation of findings indicates that the constructs may not capture the intended beliefs. Gaete, Gomez, and Benavides (2017) recommend not relying only on a self-report instrument in research as it can decontextualize a belief, people can intentionally or unintentionally misrepresent their beliefs, and responses can be easily misinterpreted by a researcher. It is important to supplement research on personal epistemological beliefs with other more qualitative measures to provide context and additional depth.

Other researchers examine domain-specific aspects of personal epistemological beliefs. In history, Maggioni, VanSledright, and Alexander (2009) created the Beliefs about History
Questionnaire (BHQ) to capture the epistemic beliefs of teachers of history with three different categories: the objectivist, the subjectivist, and the criterialist. These categories broadly show the range of stances a teacher could have in their perception of knowledge and knowledge construction in history. The objectivist stance expresses beliefs about the fixed nature of history. For example, beliefs concerning history as memorizing facts or expressing that history as “just what it was” show the “authorless view of history” (p. 197). The subjectivist stance, the opposite stance of the objectivist, reflects beliefs that history is made up of different perspectives but still attempts to “discriminate between ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ residuals of the past” to build description (p. 197). Ultimately, the subjectivist stance views history as entirely subjective and, therefore, any personal opinion is as valid as the next. The criterialist stance, which represents more sophisticated epistemological views of knowledge and knowing in history, reflects the belief that “history results from a process of inquiry in which the questions asked by investigators inform the analysis of the sources” (p. 197) that generate historical arguments. These stances represent a continuum of beliefs; people’s beliefs can be between the stances or change based on context, which can be described as “wobbling” (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014, p. 43). The stances are depicted in Figure 1.

These three categories of domain-specific beliefs attempt to capture and describe a history teacher’s personal epistemology. Examination of how these beliefs are enacted and congruent to teaching practices informed this study of teachers’ personal epistemological views of history and teaching practices.
Historical Reasoning

Empirical research about history instruction varies by topic and by focus. Some examine instructional resources (Nokes, Dole, & Hacker, 2007; Paxton, 1997, 2002) while others focus on strategies central to the discipline of history (Monte-Sano, 2008, 2011; Reisman, 2012; Wineburg, 1991). Overall, because the research is wide-ranging, it is useful to employ a framework to categorize and define instructional strategies in history to better organize the many scattered ideas. van Drie and van Boxtel (2008) proposed a framework of historical reasoning with six facets to better discern research and practices: asking historical questions, use of sources, contextualization, argumentation, use of substantive concepts, and use of meta-concepts. This framework is shown in Figure 2.
Because of the renewed emphasis on historical reasoning, there are many rich resources readily accessible to help teachers support this kind of thinking. Recent iterations include the “Thinking Like a Historian” work promoted by many history organizations like the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG; 2017), the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (2017), and even the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS; 2017). The framework of historical reasoning complemented this study concerning teacher personal epistemology by helping to name, categorize, and describe the teaching practices of the participants as aligned to empirical research to provide more depth.

Problem Statement

Within Illinois, there is a large amount of teacher discretion in what and how to teach social studies. The state directs control of social studies curriculum to each of the many school districts (Illinois State Board of Education, 2016). Since there is little alignment between school districts and no common measurement of social studies at the state or national level, teachers operate within a very confined context of their department, school, and/or district. In addition,
the outcomes of social studies are very broadly defined and can be interpreted differently. Teachers also enter into social studies through various disciplines, which means that a college student who emphasized a study of civics may well be teaching history. All of these factors mean that the beliefs of a teacher could play a significant role in what and how history is taught. There is a need to examine teachers’ beliefs regarding teaching history to better understand how the beliefs manifest in their teaching practices.

In addition to the wide latitude of teacher discretion in teaching history, there is also a question about the use of research-advocated instructional practices (Fogo, 2014; Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Ragland, 2015). Teacher implementation of research-based instruction in social studies varies widely, with most teachers self-reporting and being observed utilizing more passive traditional methods of instruction like lecture (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Fitchett, 2010; Ragland, 2007; Russell, 2010). Other studies show teachers implementing research-based instructional practices but also document the challenges they encounter (Bain, 2008; Hammond, 2010; Kohlmeier, 2006). More investigation is needed to provide additional information about the context of high school social studies. It is possible that beliefs may be a more significant contributor to the research-implementation gap as beliefs implicitly or explicitly dictate what teachers choose to spend their instructional time on and mediate their thinking.

Although the theory-to-practice gap in social studies has been documented, utilizing the lens of epistemological beliefs of teachers in social studies is limited (Martell, 2011; Ragland, 2007). Research on teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs about social studies in general, and history in particular, is considerably less than other disciplines, especially compared to science (Dolphin & Tillotson, 2015; Eick & Reed, 2002; Kang & Wallace, 2005). Additionally, research that has been conducted so far focuses on preservice or novice educators (Maggioni, et
This is an exciting moment in social studies education with the new C3 Framework and renewed attention on social studies instruction. The C3 Framework offers an inspiring vision for any social studies teacher to reflect on his/her own instruction and beliefs. The research needs more insights about how teachers approach their craft of teaching and how they face the many challenges of teaching. The timing for this research is ideal.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purposes of this study were to explore how veteran history teachers described their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history and beliefs about learning history and how these beliefs were enacted and showed congruence with their teaching practices. The study focused on veteran secondary history teachers at one Illinois high school. The study allowed comparison since the individual teachers all shared the same teaching climate and context. To explore these purposes, the study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about the teaching of history?
2. How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about learning history?
3. How do secondary history teachers enact their personal epistemological beliefs?
4. How do secondary history teachers demonstrate congruency between their described beliefs and history teaching practices?
Significance of the Study

The results of this study provide deeper insight into how the personal epistemological beliefs of veteran teachers manifest in their teaching practices. Although studies have been conducted in this area with novice educators (Bain, 2008; Brown, 2009; Harris & Bain, 2010), veteran teachers’ beliefs are much more complex as they draw on years of experience in teaching. For some veteran teachers, their perceived personal epistemological beliefs may be congruent with their instructional practices, while for others, there may be discrepancies for any number of reasons. The exploration of personal epistemological beliefs helps contribute to the research to better understand teaching and learning in a high school context.

Although there are many reasons teachers select instructional strategies, this qualitative research study honors the complicated cognitive processes of teaching and the wide demands on secondary teachers. The teachers’ stories offer a glimpse into the complexity of thought processes and decision-making, something that is sometimes oversimplified. The findings of this study also offer professional learning providers insight into how to address underlying personal epistemological beliefs about unfamiliar instructional strategies instead of making assumptions about teachers’ skills or time. This research helps practitioners reflect on how their own personal epistemological beliefs are represented in their planning and teaching and expands the scope of the limited literature concerning the personal epistemological beliefs of veteran history educators. This is important as the renewed interest in social studies education offers an opportunity to recommit to the learning experiences educators provide their students.
Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in the current study:

**Historical Reasoning:** emphasizes the activity of students and the fact that students not only acquire knowledge of the past when learning history, but also use this knowledge to interpret phenomena from the past and the present (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008).

**Personal Epistemology:** Epistemology is the study of what can be counted as knowledge, where knowledge is located, and how knowledge increases. The personal epistemology of teachers is characterized by a set of beliefs about learning and the acquisition of knowledge that drive classroom instruction (Olafson & Schraw, 2010).

**Social Studies:** the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence (NCSS, 2017).

**Veteran Teacher:** for the purposes of this study, a teacher with ten or more years of experience teaching social studies.

Methodology

This study of the personal epistemological beliefs of secondary history teachers and the congruence with their teaching practices was conducted as a qualitative case study to explore the system of teachers’ beliefs and instructional practices. A qualitative study provides insights and stories concerning the teaching and learning of history. The data were collected through a survey, interviews, think-aloud lesson planning, and observations. The data collection period was four months. Data were analyzed using a three-step coding process advocated by Hesse-Biber (2017): description, topical, and analytical. Methodological procedures are explained more in Chapter 3.
Organization of Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study by presenting the problem, providing an overview of the conceptual framework, and contextualizing the purpose and research questions. Chapter 1 concludes with an overview of the significance of the study, the methodology, and definitions of key terms.

Chapter 2 provides a more extensive review of the relevant literature. Within this chapter are more thorough explorations of the conceptual frameworks of personal epistemological beliefs and historical reasoning. In addition, examination of the purpose of social studies, key instructional practices, and the research-implementation gap provides a context of the status of social studies, and history, research. This chapter has a particular focus on veteran educators when available.

Chapter 3 details the methodology used to conduct the study. The findings from the collected data are documented in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 presents analysis of the findings and recommendations for various stakeholders as well as suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The research explored the personal epistemological beliefs of secondary-level history teachers concerning the teaching of history, how students learn history, how those beliefs are enacted, and the congruence of those beliefs with their teaching practices. This literature review examines the purpose of social studies, research about effective secondary history instruction, and research concerning the personal epistemologies of teachers. These areas provided a basis for the research in this study.

Purpose of Social Studies

The evaluation of instructional practices in social studies and, therefore, history, instruction must be conducted through the lens of the definition and purpose of social studies. By defining the outcome for students at the end of their K-12 educational journey, the teachers’ teaching practices should align to achieve this purpose and vision.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) was founded in 1921 as an association devoted to K-12 social studies instruction (NCSS, 2016). Membership includes teachers, administrators, and others focused specifically on social studies instruction. This organization defines social studies as “the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.” NCSS explains that “social studies promote knowledge of and involvement in civic affairs” and civic competence. This involvement can be considered as
learning about and utilizing the democratic values of our society, an incredibly broad definition and purpose that presents challenges and multiple interpretations in real world implementation.

In addition to a widely interpreted purpose, social studies has been marginalized in recent educational policy, leading to neglect. In 2008, after years of implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, the NCSS position statement (2008) lamented, “the marginalization of social studies curriculum, instruction, and assessment at all grade levels” and noted that “education for citizenship has taken a backseat to education for career and college” (p. 277). Because social studies was excluded from the testing associated with No Child Left Behind, the statement reflected fear of the decrease of instructional time dedicated to social studies (Leming, et al., 2006; Misco & Shiveley, 2010). However, because of this disregard, many teachers in social studies have had considerable autonomy.

**College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework**

In 2010, Michelle Herczog, president of the NCSS, announced the updated social studies vision statement in response to the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative. She applauded the CCSS as an improvement to the incredibly diverse state standards that existed. By 2013, the NCSS responded to NCLB and CCSS by releasing its own framework for state standards called the College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013). With this change, the NCSS (2016) embraced the idea that social studies education prepares students for any post-secondary future, a more inclusive emphasis than its 2008 vision. This vision also introduced ideas about the complexity of democracy and the diversity of the social studies disciplines. Emphasis in the current vision is on “discipline-specific literacy [and] multi-disciplinary awareness” (p. 180). With the C3 Framework, the goals for social studies still
emphasize civic competence and civic efficacy but provide more specific instructional guidance. The C3 Framework emphasizes the importance of inquiry, questioning, and skill-based instruction at all levels of social studies instruction. The introduction of this framework and a new set of standards renewed national attention on social studies and, more specifically, on social studies instruction. The C3 Framework describes a vision for history instruction that aligns to empirical research: an emphasis on active student-centered instruction based on discipline-specific skills (NCSS, 2013; Stacy, 2009).

However, there can be many interpretations of the same vision. For example, civic competence can be defined in different ways. Stanley (2005) examines the idea of civic competence as educating about the nature of the social order of the United States. When attempting to define the social order, teachers must consider whether to educate to transmit the social order that exists to maintain the status quo or to educate to promote civic skills to transform the social order to make change in society. Both of these options could be used to describe civic competence, but they also offer many conflicting ideas about what civic competence means, one of several problems that arises around the broad purpose and definition of social studies. NCSS (2013) acknowledges that “there will always be differing perspectives on [the] objectives. The goal of knowledgeable, thinking, and active citizens, however, is universal” (p. 5). In another example, Kelly, Meuwissen, and VanSledright (2006) found, buried within an education bill in Florida, the statement that “American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable” (p. 115). This directly contradicts a skills-based view of history and social studies as interpretation of multiple sources and perspectives. A similar study, conducted in Sweden, found that public statements by politicians promoted a study of history as a way to transmit knowledge and facts rather than as a
way to develop the critical thinking skills of citizens (Elgstrom & Hellstenius, 2011). Many levels of contradictory messages, especially within a heated political debate, make it difficult to come to consensus about how to realize the vision of social studies.

The C3 Framework offers an ambitious and challenging vision, but the levels of implementation are staggering. The NCSS, while a reputable national organization, has no authoritative power over social studies in the United States, so the framework remains merely a recommendation for states. The framework must be interpreted at state levels, then reinterpreted at the district level, and further implemented in a practical sense at a classroom teacher level. For example, the framework was adapted and adopted by the state of Illinois in 2016. The Illinois standards do not determine content, a decision left to each school district, but do delineate skill standards for students. There is no state assessment aligned to the standards. Without a standardized assessment that tends to provide guidance as to how to measure a standard, the teacher or district can define and implement the standards with little consistency. The centerpiece instructional strategy in the C3 Framework is the Inquiry Arc, a type of performance that would be difficult to meaningfully assess on a standardized test as well. This leads to inconsistencies across the state and even between teachers in the same context. Overall, the C3 vision offers a purpose for studying social studies and history: developing civic competence and civic efficacy, but that purpose can be widely interpreted.

**Defining History Teaching and Learning**

The C3 Framework defines a vision of instruction for each discipline within social studies and for each, how it contributes to the whole. For instance, the goals for teaching history specifically focus on historical reasoning to build civic competence. The research takes many
different forms, qualitative and quantitative, but the consensus is clear: constructivist, active
generation while emphasizing critical-thinking and historical thinking skills (Bain, 2008; Engle,
2003; Freedman, 2015; Gerwin, 2003; Hicks, van Hover, Doolittle, & VanFossen, 2012; Martell,
2011; VanSledright, 2004; Yilmaz, 2009). Researchers remark on the complexity of the
discipline and advocate for deeply nuanced and complex methods of instruction that include
emphasis on performing tasks authentic to the work of historians, which reflects the trend of
thinking related to cognitive apprenticeship.

Because of the scope and scale of research into effective instructional practices in
history, it is useful to employ an organizational framework to review the literature. The
theoretical framework of historical reasoning, created by van Drie and van Boxtel (2008), offers
a way to organize and analyze how researchers have approached studies of effective history
instruction. van Drie and van Boxtel suggest six inter-related components of historical reasoning:
asking historical questions, using sources, contextualization, argumentation, using substantive
concepts, and using meta-concepts.

While each of these facets of historical reasoning has significant empirical research
related to it, overall the research has several themes. First, active student learning with historical
reasoning tasks in instruction and assessment is emphasized. Also, every study includes student
understanding of facts and details of historical events (De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Felton,
2010; Monte-Sano, 2011; Reisman, 2012), showing that mastery of content can be accomplished
through historical reasoning tasks. Finally, the variety of these studies indicates that there are
many ways teachers can teach historical reasoning skills. This is significant, as a teacher’s beliefs
may well play an important role in deciding which instructional methods to utilize. Outlining the
empirical research concerning the facets of historical reasoning helps illustrate some of the ways
teachers could conceptualize their beliefs about teaching and learning history. The reciprocal relationship between the ideas of teaching history through authentic work and historical reasoning applies to the concept that for students to actually learn history, they must do the thinking and demonstrate competence in the aspects of historical reasoning.

**Asking Historical Questions**

The first facet, asking historical questions, is defined as “asking descriptive, causal, comparative, or evaluative questions about historical phenomena and about the sources that give information about the past” (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008, p. 92). This facet has the least amount of empirical research in secondary history instruction, and the few that have been conducted examined teachers’ use of questions during the instruction or structure of instructional tasks. No studies were located that examined student-generated questions in history, a focus of the C3 Framework. Several researchers focused on the questions teachers asked during writing tasks. The studies found that discipline-specific questions that required the use of evidence helped students use historical reasoning in their writing (Monte-Sano, 2008; Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2012; Stoel, van Drie, & van Boxtel, 2015). These studies provide strong qualitative and quantitative evidence for examining writing tasks assigned to students to encourage historical reasoning. These task designs show ways a teacher’s instructional decisions manifest within instruction. They also show how teachers define learning history for students and how students might best learn history. All of the studies are limited in scope and scale.

Two studies (Reisman, 2015; Reisman & Fogo, 2016) explored the verbal questions teachers asked during whole-class discussion. Reisman classified five teacher talk moves and the types of questions asked during whole class discussion. Shockingly, of the 7,000 minutes of
collected footage, only 132 minutes consisted of disciplinary whole-class discussion. The quality of the teachers’ questions varied and often allowed students to answer while ignoring historical evidence (Reisman). A study by Reisman and Fogo (2016) found that one teacher, while attempting to enact a new curriculum, asked factual questions with mostly an initiation-response-evaluation pattern that discouraged critical thinking. The emphasis on factual questioning communicated that learning history for students is factual.

These studies about asking historical questions show how teachers can support historical reasoning through task design and questioning during instruction, but none of these studies deeply examined why teachers made these choices, something that needs further exploration. Exploring these aspects of instruction through a lens of personal epistemological beliefs provides deeper understanding of how a teacher makes decisions.

Using Sources

The vast majority of empirical research on history instruction focuses on using sources. This can be defined as the “evaluation of sources in relation to the question at hand and the selection, interpretation, and corroboration of information from sources in order to answer a historical question or to provide evidence for a claim about the past” (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008, p. 92). The foundation for research into using sources often references the seminal research of Wineburg (1991) in which he defines the heuristics used by historians: sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration. These three heuristics have become woven into the framework and methodology of many other studies (De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Felton, 2010; Freedman, 2015; Monte-Sano, 2008; Monte-Sano, 2011; Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2012).
Several studies focused on student use of heuristics and found that students do not necessarily pay attention to the heuristics of a source unless there is explicit direction to do so through task design or instruction (Bain, 2008; Britt & Aglinskas, 2002; Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish, & Bosquet, 1996). One quasi-experimental study by Reisman (2012) found that students improved in historical thinking, transference of historical thinking strategies, factual knowledge, and general reading comprehension when a teacher implemented the Reading Like a Historian (RLH) curriculum designed by the Stanford Education Group (2016). This curriculum emphasizes the use of primary sources to answer historical questions. However, the implications of this study are more significant in that none of the teachers implemented all of the lessons or used them to their full potential, but even with low implementation, the students in the treatment classroom showed statistically significant growth. A follow-up study by Reisman and Fogo (2016) focused on one teacher attempting to use this curriculum. The findings initially indicate that a curriculum is affected by teacher knowledge and teacher thinking. This study is more theoretical than empirical, which shows that more research is needed in the area of how teachers think about curriculum they implement.

Other researchers focused on the actual sources used in classrooms. Paxton (1997, 2002), for example, examined author visibility in textbooks as compared to primary sources and their effect on students. He found that students held mental conversations, wrote longer essays, and showed awareness of audience with a primary source oriented curriculum. Nokes et al. (2007) compared traditional textbook teaching to primary source teaching with heuristics. Students with primary source instruction outperformed students with traditional textbook instruction. Further, Nokes (2010) documented the literacy practices of eight history teachers. Each relied on textbooks and only used primary sources to reinforce the points made during lecture, a limited
use of rich sources. In addition, Stoddard (2012) examined how non-print sources, like movies, were used in history classrooms. He found that teachers tended to present movies as fact rather than helping students use heuristics to understand the interpretation. Again, this research is small in scale but shows that additional research is needed about how teachers select sources and how they decide what instructional tasks for students to complete with the sources provided to define learning in history.

Contextualization

The historical reasoning facet of contextualization, although part of Wineburg’s (1991) original heuristics, receives its own schematic within the framework of van Drie & van Boxtel (2008) because it requires a different kind of knowledge than sourcing and corroboration. Contextualization is described as situating a historical phenomenon into a particular time to appropriately analyze it; it also encompasses the processes of historical empathy (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). Most of the research on contextualization specifically, without other heuristics, occurs in other countries, as it is part of a formalized and nationalized curricula (Huijgen, van Boxtel, van de Grift, & Holthuis, 2017).

Studies of contextualization examine the advanced knowledge and cognition required for students to access many interconnected conceptual understandings to contextualize information adequately. Limited research in this area indicates the challenges of teaching contextualization (van Boxtel & van Drie, 2012) and the lack of reliable assessment instruments to measure contextualization (Huijgen, et al., 2017). Research into historical empathy explores how teachers try to foster empathetic thinking with students through teacher actions (Brooks, 2011; Cunningham, 2007; Kohlmeier, 2006) or through writing prompts (Virja & Kouki, 2014). The
limited research into historical empathy in the United States shows that emphasis on this historical reasoning facet is very dependent on a teacher’s beliefs about its importance (Brooks, 2011; Kohlmeier, 2006), as both studies share how one teacher attempted to emphasize empathy. The role of beliefs in making this decision is a trend that requires additional exploration.

**Argumentation**

The historical reasoning facet of argumentation is emphasized in the CCSS (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Argumentation includes various components: creating a claim, supporting that claim with argument and evidence, weighing interpretations, and accounting for counterarguments (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). Most of the time, argumentation is present in the form of writing. The empirical research related to argumentation focuses on students’ use of documents, whether it is through more formal document-based questions (De La Paz, Ferretti, Wissinger, Lee, & MacArthur, 2012; Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2012; Young & Leinhardt, 1998) or use of a wide-range of primary source materials to write about (De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Felton, 2010; Monte-Sano, 2008; Monte-Sano, 2012). The very basis of an argumentative essay is the rich source material for students to utilize while writing.

The findings from the research corroborate that explicit instruction on history-specific writing techniques is necessary. Studies showed student growth in argumentative writing was predicated on careful guidance from a teacher (De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Felton, 2010; Young & Leinhardt, 1998) and when students were provided a writing prompt based on evidence with feedback focused on evidence-based reasoning (Monte-Sano, 2008; Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2011; van Drie, Braaksma, & van Boxtel, 2015). Although there is strong corroboration
among the studies, there is little exploration as to why teachers decide to provide evidence-based instruction or feedback.

**Using Substantive Concepts**

The historical reasoning facet of using substantive concepts concerns the historical phenomena, structures, persons, and periods used to organize information to conduct historical analysis (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). This is similar to contextualization, but substantive concepts are organizing ideas in history. Sometimes these ideas are taught as vocabulary when, in fact, they are a concept with a construct behind them. Research into discipline-specific conceptual teaching is limited. Existing empirical research examines how teachers instruct with concepts through explicit conceptual emphasis (Twyman, McCleery, & Tindal, 2006), helping students create multimodal representations (Prangsma, van Boxtel, & Kanselaar, 2008), or concept mapping (Nair & Narayanasamy, 2017). These three studies have distinct limitations with measurement tools, scale, and location.

**Use of Meta-Concepts**

The final facet of historical reasoning is use of meta-concepts. These are the processes historians engage in within historical inquiry, such as heuristics related to historical change, comparison of phenomena, causation, and use of varied sources among other things (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). One way to consider a meta-concept is how someone would explain the significance of the historical phenomena or, in high school, how students might apply historical reasoning outside of classroom contexts. For example, students might apply meta-concepts while reading about a current event in a newspaper as a way to best learn history. This is an emerging
area of research, as studies indicate a student’s background knowledge relates to how he or she perceives significance (Hammond, 2010; Mendez & Tirado, 2016; Mosborg, 2002; Seixas, 1993, 1994). This facet is also important as it may most directly link to the purpose of social studies: utilizing the skills of active citizenship such as understanding the historical background of current events.

These six facets of historical reasoning serve as an organizing tool to examine the types of student tasks and instructional moves of a teacher. Although all facets have had some empirical research, further exploration is needed. On a note of caution, it would be very challenging for a teacher to be able to fully implement all facets of historical reasoning because of the complexity of the skills. It is assumed that teachers might prioritize one facet over another, but further qualitative studies could offer insight into how teachers conceptualize the craft of teaching history.

Other Studies of Instructional Practices in History

Two researchers, Smith and Niemi (2001), took a different approach to examining teaching practices in history by studying the relationship between coursework in U.S. history and student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test. One correlation found that “methods that involve the increased use of complex writing tasks, in-depth reading, extensive use of student discussion, and use of learning tools, are strongly related to students’ scores” (pp. 33-34). Although in general the relationship between NAEP achievement and active engagement in tasks that demand historical reasoning may be limited as the data are all self-reported, given the 4,465 students in Smith and Niemi’s sample, the findings suggest the trend definitely has merit. Also, it is difficult to determine if there is direction in the data:
whether the high achievement came from active instruction or if students who tended to perform well had access to higher-level classes that emphasized active instruction.

Some researchers sought to create a list of the core of instructional practices in history. Instructional practices advocated by researchers like Fogo (2014) and Ragland (2015) include historical inquiry and use of historical questions, using historical sources, supporting historical reading skills, employing historical evidence, using historical concepts, supporting historical writing, engaging in historical investigations, conceptualizing historical content, and making personal connections to history. Many research articles advocate for one method over another (Engle, 2003; Martell, 2011; Misco & Shiveley, 2010; Stoel, et al., 2015; VanSledright, 2004; Yilmaz, 2008b), but ultimately, the focus is engaging students in the authentic practices of the discipline.

Beyond active engagement, recent research explores Thinking Like a Historian as a best practice (De La Paz, 2005; Nokes, et al., 2007; Reisman, 2012). This research explores the novice to expert relationship and advocates for teaching students the tools and language of the discipline. One iteration of this research includes the research out of Stanford University (SHEG) related to the Reading Like a Historian (RLH) program. This series, and many like it, combine strong literacy skills emphasized in the CCSS with the tools in the discipline of history.

Additional researchers approach defining best practices in history through an epistemic lens (Bain, 2008; Yilmaz, 2008a). The research in this field focuses on the complex and challenging epistemic cognition that occurs within the study of history in particular. The cognitive demands necessary to study history require a skilled teacher who comprehends the epistemological underpinnings of the discipline (Bain; Yilmaz). The best practices related to
epistemic cognition in history require explicit modeling, metacognition, and authentic tasks for students to undertake.

Overall a few themes clearly emerge. First, the frameworks of most studies focus on cognition, epistemological underpinnings, expert-novice apprenticeships, and disciplinary-specific thinking. Also, most research advocates for instructional practices based on a constructivist approach. Each promotes active engagement in the classroom through thoughtful and authentic instructional practices. This is best summed up with the statement from Peter Stearns in 1994 that best practices emphasize “meaning over memory” (as cited in Ragland, 2015, p. 611). The next section explores the bridge between theory and practice.

**Teacher Implementation of Effective Instructional Strategies**

A significant amount of research conducted in social studies centers on teachers implementing research-based instructional practices (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Russell, 2010; Wiersma, 2008). This section of the literature review first examines what practices teachers use in instruction. Then it explores challenges in-service and pre-service teachers experience using these practices.

Several studies examine the use of research-based instructional practices by in-service history teachers. Two studies utilized teacher surveys (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Russell, 2010). History teachers in both studies overwhelmingly self-reported the use of passive instruction techniques like lecture or teacher-led discussion (Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Russell, 2010). In the Bolinger and Warren (2007) study of Indiana teachers, any techniques that aligned to researched practices were reported at 18% or under. A broader, but similar, study by Russell (2010) showed the use of lecture skewed more than any other method in that 90% of the teachers
used this method more than half the instructional time. Reading primary sources, a method advocated by almost every research study, was indicated by only 32% of the respondents (Russell, 2010). Some researchers drew conclusions that contradicted these findings as in smaller case studies, teachers have been seen using a variety of best practices (Wiersma, 2008; Yilmaz, 2008a).

Even with the exceptions, most research indicates a strong theory to implementation gap of teaching practices in history instruction, especially at the secondary level. Many causes are theorized in the research: lack of content knowledge, lack of pedagogical and theoretical knowledge, lack of motivation, lack of efficacy, and bureaucratic challenges in high schools (Duffield, Wageman, & Hodge, 2013; Ragland, 2007; Yilmaz, 2008a). Bureaucratic challenges for high school history teachers included not enough time to plan and reflect, a coverage-oriented curriculum, bureaucratic demands on time, large class sizes, lack of community support, and lack of training on learner-centered techniques. However, in almost every study, teachers indicated a positive attitude toward learner-centered instruction (Russell, 2010; Wiersma, 2008; Yilmaz, 2008a). Yilmaz also noted that the teachers in her study struggled to discuss any theoretical frameworks beyond constructivism and could not speak to learning theories within the discipline. This may indicate a lack of deep conceptual knowledge regarding research-based practices.

Although some research focuses on in-service teachers, most research analyzes the challenges facing pre-service and novice educators. In addition to the previously mentioned challenges, pre-service educators also must adjust to the demands of teaching. The research related to pre-service educators in history advocates for many changes, including learning experiences in college modeling best practices and learning journals to foster reflective teaching (Brown, 2009; Folsom, 2011; Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Maloy & LaRoche, 2010; Martell, 2011;
Overall, the gap between theory and practice is well-documented, with an emphasis on pre-service and novice educators. More research is needed to explore the instructional strategies of veteran educators.

Personal Epistemology

The study of epistemology encompasses a vast field of research and provides a guiding framework for this study. First, a broad overview of the field is described and defined. Then personal epistemology research with teachers is explored, and finally research concerning history teachers is reviewed.

Personal epistemology is a philosophy at the individual level and reflects how a person thinks about knowledge and knowing (Hofer & Sinatra, 2010). The focus of personal epistemology and what separates it from other epistemological research is the individual and personal nature of cognition about knowledge and knowing (Brownlee et al., 2011). Epistemology is concerned with the origin, nature, limits, methods, and justification of human knowledge, while epistemic relates to knowledge more generally as well as the conditions for acquiring it (Hofer & Sinatra, 2010).

These very personal beliefs are significant in that an individual’s understanding of reality is seen through the filter of his or her own beliefs (Fives & Buehl, 2010). Furthermore, personal epistemology is considered to be activated during the process of learning and influences the extent to which we make meaning or engage in complex problem-solving (Hofer, 2002). The personal epistemological beliefs of teachers, then, are very relevant. The exceedingly complex job of teaching can be construed as a problem-solving endeavor because of the multiple decisions that need to be made. “Teachers with sophisticated personal epistemologies are more
likely to be able to engage in ill-structured problem solving and argue based on evidence for a “best’ solution” (Brownlee et al., 2011, p. 7). Finding appropriate ways to measure, define, and then address teachers’ personal epistemologies is important because of the large influence they can have on the way teachers define teaching, knowledge, and learning for themselves and their students.

Broadly, there have been several lines of research into the personal epistemology of teachers. These four categories, as organized by Schraw, Brownlee, and Berthelsen (2011), depicted in Figure 3, are 1) epistemological development, 2) epistemological beliefs, 3) epistemological theories, and 4) epistemological resources. These categories help to organize existing literature and also present different frameworks of analysis.

The research on epistemological development conceptualizes that personal epistemology goes through stages from naive beliefs to sophisticated beliefs. For example, Brownlee et al. (2011) created categories called absolutist, subjectivist, and evaluativist views. Criticism of the development model challenges whether development is really stage-like and whether it accounts
for the domain-specific aspects of beliefs.

The conceptual model of epistemological beliefs posits that an individual possesses independent multidimensional beliefs that influence learning. Schommer (1990, 1994) described five separate dimensions: certain knowledge, simple knowledge, omniscient authority, quick learning, and innate ability. Conversely, Hofer (2004) proposed two dimensions concerning the nature of knowledge: the nature of knowing and the process of knowing. Beneath the nature of knowing are two sub-categories about the certainty of knowledge and the simplicity of knowledge. Beneath the process of knowledge are two factors: the source of knowledge and the justification of knowledge.

The third conceptual model of epistemological theories focuses on general theories of knowledge along a continuum of naive to sophisticated worldviews. “These models assume that an individual’s personal epistemology is comprised of multiple beliefs that together as an integrated set of beliefs, comprise a unified belief system” (Brownlee et al., 2011, p. 267). This model uses the term personal epistemology to represent one’s collective beliefs.

The final conceptual category is epistemological resources that “envision personal epistemology as a context specific set of epistemological resources, rather than developmental stages, or a set of individual beliefs” (Brownlee et al., 2011, p. 268). Epistemological resources suggest that beliefs are highly variable based on the context, and that there are multiple ways of knowing for an individual. The four conceptual models help to define the lens of studying personal epistemological beliefs, but they are often combined to allow researchers to conduct a hybridized analysis.
Teacher Personal Epistemology

Beyond general studies about personal epistemology with students, research concerning teachers’ personal epistemology is an emerging field. Feucht (2010), after a study of 98 elementary school teachers, developed a theoretical representation of what she terms the “educational model of personal epistemology” or EMPE (p. 58). This model illustrates the importance of a teacher’s personal epistemology as she captured what she termed the epistemic climate of the classroom: the students, the teacher, the content knowledge taught by the teacher and learned by the students, and the instruction used to convey knowledge. At the center are the teacher’s personal epistemological beliefs that manifest into various parts of classroom instruction to create the overall culture or set of norms for the students in the class. Although this study took place in an elementary school setting, this model helps conceptualize how a teacher’s personal epistemology can manifest into instruction as a filter of how to conceptualize a history classroom and history instruction.

Figure 4: An educational model of personal epistemology. (Feucht, 2011). Reprinted with permission (see Appendix C).
Feucht’s (2010) theoretical model reflects the idea of examining the overall epistemic climate in a classroom. Some other studies in this line of research examined classroom interactions (e.g., Tabak & Weinstock, 2011), while others interviewed teachers to hear the metaphorical language teachers use to describe their teaching (e.g., Patchen & Crawford, 2011). These studies show different ways to approach methodology and focus on the broad field of personal epistemological research.

Research into teachers’ personal epistemology reflects the contextualized nature of schools and disciplines. Some studies show that a teacher’s personal epistemology impacts his or her instructional decisions. Tillema (2011) found that teachers struggle with practicing what they conceptualize as well as conceptualizing what they practice. Other studies show that the congruence between teachers’ stated personal epistemology and instruction may not align because of other factors like curriculum pressures (e.g., Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2004). Overall, Hofer (2008) discussed the lack of research of teachers’ personal epistemology and teaching practices. Feucht (2011) noted that personal epistemology and teacher practice are often moderated by the broader teaching and learning environment. This research raises many questions that need further exploration.

Epistemological beliefs of teachers are important because research indicates that teachers who viewed knowledge as more complex and uncertain often offered more open-ended complex instructional tasks to their students (Schraw et al., 2011). They also focused more on the metacognition behind a particular task (Bromme, Pieschl & Stahl, 2010). Those with naive epistemological beliefs saw knowledge as absolute and tended to use transmission as the primary mode of instruction (Schraw et al., 2011). These beliefs helped mediate the ways teachers worked with students. Maggioni and Parkinson (2008) described this as the epistemological
moves of the teacher. Epistemological moves “are the discursive practices that teachers use to
direct students’ attention toward what counts as knowledge and appropriate ways of obtaining
that knowledge in the specific situation” (p. 453).

Examination of teachers’ personal epistemology often feature novice educators because
they tend to have significant growth in the first years of teaching (Tezci, Erdener, & Atici, 2016).
Bendixen and Corkill (2011) studied pre-service and experienced teachers to examine whether
personal epistemological beliefs changed over time, substantiating the view that beliefs develop.
Utilizing the Epistemic Beliefs Inventory (EBI), Bendixen and Corkill found that beliefs about
learning tended to become more complex and were consistent with research that links
constructivist teaching and advanced personal epistemologies. Ozgun-Koca and Sen (2006), in
their study of pre-service educators, showed the importance of studying teachers’ personal
epistemological beliefs as a way of influencing their instructional choices. Overall, the study of
in-service teachers’ epistemological beliefs is limited, but all of these studies indicate the
challenge of adequately capturing personal epistemological beliefs, as explored in the next
section.

Measuring Personal Epistemology

The research on personal epistemological beliefs is rich and varied both in conceptual
models of beliefs and in the methodologies for research. The most frequent research
methodologies about teachers are self-reported epistemic questionnaires. Duell and Schommer-
Aikins (2001) summarized the different epistemic belief inventories used in research. In their
review of measuring instruments, they described the instrument, what beliefs it measured, and
how it was validated in research. Included in their review are the Reflective Judgment Interview,
the Beliefs about Knowing and Learning survey, the Epistemic Belief inventory, and the Epistemological Understanding by Judgment Domain survey, among others. Critiques found that all the measurement instruments should be used with caution, and the variations in the findings indicate that the constructs may not capture the intended beliefs. DeBacker, Crowson, Beesley, Thoma, & Hestevold (2008) encouraged researchers using these types of belief questionnaires to carefully define the dimensions of the beliefs under study. Further criticism of the commonly used belief questionnaires focuses on the self-report aspect of the instrument. Gaete et al. (2017) identified the difficulty of articulating unconscious beliefs and perhaps the unintended way people might misrepresent their real thinking. Also, Gaete et al. noted the ambiguity of responses might be easily misinterpreted by the researcher, thereby leading to bias within the research. Most importantly, self-report decontextualizes the belief, so sometimes a belief is more complicated and contextualized into a particular situation.

Although Gaete et al. (2017) emphasized the need to triangulate data, they also encouraged participant observations, video-based interviews, and learning studies. These methods allow the subject to become aware of and articulate the beliefs underlying their actions. Overall, inventories to categorize and assess something as complex as beliefs need to be used cautiously in research. Use of any questionnaire should be aligned with other qualitative measures. However, even with multiple measures, Ortwein, McCullough, and Thompson (2015) found it was difficult for teachers to elaborate on their thinking about the theoretical views of knowledge and related education epistemology. This reinforces the idea of approaching personal epistemology with varied methods.

However, there does appear to be a consensus on several issues related to teachers’ personal epistemologies. First, a teacher’s personal epistemology impacts his/her students and
the students’ personal epistemologies (De Corte et al., 2010), but there is still room to research how this works, especially in different content areas. Secondly, many teachers’ personal epistemologies are domain-specific (De Corte et al.), which indicates that various disciplines need further exploration since not all domains have had as much research as others. Finally, there appears to be a consensus that personal epistemologies are “nested” (p. 293). Teachers have general personal epistemologies, academic knowledge epistemologies, and domain-specific epistemological beliefs, among others (Tsai, 2002). More research needs to be conducted concerning the alignment and contextualization of these beliefs.

In addition, more research on teachers is needed since much of the research in educational settings has been conducted on college students as either learners (Lising & Elby, 2005) or as future educators (Burn, 2007). Brownlee et al. (2011) argue that we know a little about the personal epistemology of teachers, but personal epistemology is one way we can better understand teaching and learning. There is a gap in the research about personal epistemology and teacher practice (Brownlee et al., 2011): i.e., research on teachers’ attempts to capture the personal epistemological beliefs, how those beliefs manifest in the classroom, and how the beliefs impact student learning. Capturing personal epistemological beliefs continues to be a challenge, but researchers emphasize the use of multiple measures to reduce researcher bias and to honor the complexity of the concepts of beliefs.

**Domain-Specific Teacher Personal Epistemology**

From the general theoretical and empirical studies, the research surrounding teachers’ personal epistemologies becomes very domain-specific. Muis, Bendixen, and Haerle (2006) reviewed years of empirical research to conclude that many personal epistemological beliefs are
both domain general and domain specific. Hofer (2006) noted that individuals can be examined about general epistemic beliefs, disciplinary perspectives on beliefs, and discipline-specific beliefs. She argued that there are significant issues with measuring personal epistemologies, especially as they become more domain specific. Even with research becoming narrower, there is a wide variance in research about each discipline: math and science research have the most robust line of inquiry. The research in these fields typically starts by defining the personal epistemological beliefs of the domain, usually by measuring students’ personal epistemologies to support a given framework and most often at the college level. The research into K-12 teachers’ personal epistemologies becomes the focus later in the culmination of the research, often applying the learning from students to the teachers. For this reason, some of the research about teachers feels disjointed as the researchers apply the findings from the studies about students to those about teachers. Researchers then try to bridge the gap between lines of inquiry to advance the progress (Ernest, 1991; Muis, 2004; Roesken, Pepin & Toerner, 2011).

A good example of the breadth of the research concerning teachers’ personal epistemology occurs with science. The research into the personal epistemological beliefs of science teachers is, by far, the most thorough and robust. Even after removing the studies focused on preservice teachers and students, there are over 25 empirical studies just about teachers of science. These studies attempted to capture teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs and studied their relationship to student learning. The thoroughness in this research does not yet exist in other disciplines.

Initial qualitative studies of teachers in science examined science-related discourse patterns during instruction (Leach, Hind, & Ryder, 2003) and teachers’ vocabulary usage (Waters-Adams, 2006) as well as the implicit language during a lesson (Oliveira, Akerson,
Colak, Pongsanon, & Genel, 2012) to show how teachers communicate their beliefs. An additional line of inquiry concerning the epistemic thinking shown during class instruction examined the epistemic moves and responses a teacher makes to support student thinking through the interplay of discourse (Elby & Hammer, 2010; Lidar, Lundquist, & Ostman, 2005; Ryder & Leach, 2008).

Other seminal personal epistemological ideas emerge from the research in science. Tsai (2002) conducted a seminal study about beliefs regarding teaching science, learning science, and the nature of science. Based on 37 interviews, he suggested that teachers’ beliefs are “nested” (p. 777) when all three beliefs align. This alignment tended to occur in teachers with greater experience. When not aligned, the teachers struggled to express a consistent pedagogical view of science. This study further illustrates the complexity and layers of personal epistemological beliefs. Another seminal finding involves the development and use of Likert-style questionnaires to capture, define, and categorize personal epistemological beliefs within a discipline (LaPlante, 1997; Luft & Roehrig, 2007; Tsai, 2002; Yang, Chang, & Hsu, 2008). Trigwell, Prosser, and Waterhouse (1999) concluded that a teacher’s approach to teaching does relate to the students’ approach to learning. These questionnaires attempt to provide a framework for analysis and common language to use to describe beliefs.

Many researchers have approached the study of personal epistemologies through case studies. Case studies concerning secondary science teachers focus on multiple points of data like observations, interviews, document studies, simple questionnaires, and artifacts (Bencze, Bowen, & Alsop, 2006; Bennett & Park, 2011; Duschl & Wright, 1989; Jackson & Talbert, 2012; Kang & Wallace, 2004). The case studies all created in-depth profiles of the teachers to show the
By reviewing the research concerning personal epistemological beliefs in science, the thoroughness reveals that much more research is needed in all disciplines that study all aspects of learning. Exploration of the research into teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs shows varying approaches, varying aspects of the beliefs, and varying instruments. Although there is some research concerning teachers’ beliefs in general, domain-specific research shows more robust study. The challenge for research into personal epistemologies focuses on the gap between expressed beliefs and enacted beliefs.

**Social Studies Personal Epistemology**

The research on teacher personal epistemology in social studies is difficult for several reasons. First is the broad definition of social studies. For this reason, most research explores each discipline within social studies as separate entities. Additionally, research from other content areas is often applied to research within the social studies realm. However, Shaver (1982) warns against this process. He argues that the inherent nature of knowledge in the social sciences is not similar to science or math because the basis of human interpretation, thinking, and complexity is so different. Schommer-Aikins, Duell, and Barker (2003) actually compared results from varying disciplines that utilized Biglan’s (1973) two main dimensions. Biglan viewed some disciplines as hard versus soft and pure versus applied. He noted that sciences are hard and pure, while the social studies are classified as soft and pure. These theoretical studies indicate the unique nature of knowledge and knowing in each discipline.
Continuing this line of research, Longstreet (1990) lamented that the research into social studies lacked a unifying epistemological framework because of its imprecise definition and lack of interest by researchers. He also noted that while the same frameworks should not be applied to social studies, researchers had not yet developed one. Interestingly, Lim (2015), 25 years after Longstreet (1990), argued that social studies should move to a signature epistemology. Clearly, a united epistemological framework for social studies did not progress much in that time. Lim presents a theoretical argument that positions connectedness and relational epistemology at the center of social studies. He says that “more than the skills of logic and argument analysis, then, critical thinking in social studies education needs to bring back the social into students’ thinking, to enable them to appreciate...social relations in which we participate” (p. 14).

Another challenge of the research is that much of it focuses on preservice teachers (Sullivan, 2011). Very few studies focus specifically on in-service teachers, but investigating in-service teachers is significant in that Thornton (1991) argues the social studies teacher is the curriculum gatekeeper. The teacher gets to decide the curriculum, instructional activities, emphasis, and focus for students. He argues there should be a focus on building teachers’ capacity to make thoughtful decisions and be aware of their own beliefs.

**History Teacher Personal Epistemology**

Of all the social studies areas, the most research on personal epistemology concerns history with three main themes: defining knowledge in history, use of specific historical thinking pedagogies, and measuring domain-specific epistemologies. Evans (1988) did not refer to epistemologies but instead to the conceptions of history by teachers and students. He found that teacher conceptions varied and that student conceptions were poorly formed. Evans also saw that
teacher conceptions shaped curriculum choices and that student conceptions were influenced by their teacher’s conceptions. He encouraged history teachers to be more explicit about the meaning of history and how it is communicated to students.

Another researcher, Lyons (1990), used other methodologies to capture teacher epistemologies. She conducted some beginning research on epistemologies in her analysis of 49 teacher narratives. Through the use of teaching dilemmas, she examined the teachers’ ideas of the self as a knower, the student as knower and learner, and the teachers’ stances toward knowing in history. Results showed that the teacher manages, but does not resolve, dilemmas of teaching and that teachers’ work ought to be seen as “comprising several interacting epistemological tasks, coming together in an encounter with knowledge, in particular contexts and with specific students” (p. 175). This study reinforces both the complexity and contextualized nature of teachers’ personal epistemologies.

Wilson and Wineburg (1993) viewed teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs as part of the larger construct of pedagogical content knowledge. Through the use of performance assessments, they found that two teachers held very different conceptions of their roles and responsibilities and perceptions of students’ abilities, especially related to the idea that knowledge in history is constructed. Monte-Sano and Budano (2013) also conceptualized personal epistemology as a facet of pedagogical content knowledge, i.e., how one knows in history. In their exploratory multiple case study of two novice teachers over three years, they found that new teachers showed growth in all aspects of pedagogical content knowledge, but it was especially challenging to define knowledge and communicate historical epistemologies to students.
Seixas and Peck (2004) also studied the ways of knowing in history and spent time defining knowledge. Their theoretical article conceptualizes the significant themes and historical thinking abilities students should utilize in a secondary classroom. There is no mention of the teachers, but Seixas and Peck present a framework for defining knowledge in history. Yilmaz (2008a) also studied teachers’ conceptual understanding of knowing in history, especially the dichotomy of history as the past or history as an interpretation of the past. In her study of 12 teachers, she found that most looked at the outcome of historical knowledge without considering the process and forces that shape historical interpretations. The teachers who valued objective knowledge tended to possess naive epistemological views of history.

Other researchers examined history teachers’ personal epistemologies through different lenses of historical thinking. Hartzler-Miller (2001) conducted a case study on one first-year teacher to see how he implemented historical inquiry, something he excelled at in college. The teacher did not use historical inquiry at all with his students because it did not align to his view of knowledge in history for high school students. He preferred to control how students analyzed history rather than allowing them to construct their own interpretations. This was an instance in which the teacher knew how and why to encourage historical inquiry but enacted a different notion of this practice when teaching based on the result he wanted from student learning. Voet and De Wever (2016, 2017) also examined teachers’ conceptions of historical inquiry and the use of historical inquiry with students. They studied teachers’ knowledge of inquiry methods through observations and interviews. Ultimately, teachers’ beliefs about history seemed to exist separately from their knowledge of inquiry and were not seamlessly integrated. Again personal epistemologies were not the central focus on these studies.
Maggioni, Fox, and Alexander (2010) mentioned teacher actions only through a study of students. They assessed how students’ domain-specific epistemic beliefs changed over time when teachers engaged them in analysis of multiple texts differently in different classes. Maggioni et al. (2009) found that historical thinking and critical reading of texts did not develop by themselves, but they required purposeful integration into instruction. Stoddard (2010) also studied teachers’ pedagogical choices when the text was historical media. In the collective case study of two teachers, he found that the teachers’ epistemological beliefs influenced how they saw film, game, and multimedia use in the classroom. He suggests there is an aspect of personal epistemology related specifically to media literacy for history teachers.

Offering a counterpoint to the studies of one aspect of historical thinking and personal epistemology, Cunningham (2007) tried to holistically capture the nuance and variability of teachers’ thinking. Rather than focusing on one aspect of historical thinking that was too simplistic, she argued that teachers react to many things based on context and beliefs and that the integrated nature of knowledge use is more important to study. Cunningham suggested 13 kinds of knowledge teachers in history utilized in the ecosystem of the classroom, including knowledge of content, knowledge of students’ misconceptions, knowledge of how students might be able to focus on that particular day, and more. She termed all of these a teacher’s pedagogical reasoning, which shows the highly contextualized ways beliefs are manifested through choices and reactions of teachers.

More recent research features how history teachers’ epistemologies relate to student learning. Maggioni et al. (2010) did this by defining competence in teaching history as the teacher knowing the epistemic underpinnings of history and consistently utilizing and adapting that knowledge to help students engage in historical thinking. In their study of three classes of
students and their teachers, Maggioni et al. (2009) found that students’ conceptualizations of history were influenced by teacher instruction. Weinstock and Roth (2011) also examined the relationship between teachers and students. Although they did not specifically study history, they researched 600 students in 21 history classrooms through examining autonomy. Weinstock and Roth found a correlation between teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs about student autonomy and actual student autonomy behaviors. The implication is that the beliefs teachers have about their students influence their instruction and how students perceive themselves as learners.

There have been more attempts to define the epistemological beliefs specific to the domain of history. Buehl, Alexander, and Murphy (2002) created the Domain-Specific Beliefs Questionnaire (DSBQ) for history that was administered to college students. They found that while students’ epistemological beliefs do vary in different domains, not all beliefs are domain-specific. Buehl et al. also asserted that Likert-style surveys can unearth epistemological beliefs.

Maggioni et al. (2009) developed the Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ) to define epistemological beliefs about the nature of knowledge in history. This research viewed personal epistemological beliefs as developmental, as the BHQ is derived from two general theoretical models of developing epistemic cognition: the Reflective Judgement Model and the Levels of Epistemological Understanding Model. It utilized a history-specific epistemological model that emphasizes the development of conceptualizing history. By synthesizing these ideas, Maggioni et al. (2009) developed three stances: the objective stance, the subjectivist stance, and the criterialist stance.

The objectivist stance “paints an authorless view of history” (Maggioni et al., 2009, p. 197). The past is simply the things that happened, which reflects a fixed knowledge mindset. The
Subjectivist stance recognizes that history is interpretive but does not reconcile the issue that arises with conflicting accounts of the past. This stance tends to see history as subjective in that one opinion is as good as another. The criterialist stance views history as a “process of inquiry in which the questions asked...inform the analysis of the sources” (p. 197). This reflects a sophisticated belief of the tentative nature of knowledge.

The BHQ was initially validated with fifth-grade teachers and college professors. Further research helped to refine the tool through use with preservice teachers (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014), which showed that many displayed epistemic “wobbling” (p. 43) or transitioning from one level to another. The use of the BHQ was supplemented with interviews of the preservice teachers as well, furthering refinement and validation of the instrument. The BHQ was also used on a large-scale study with 132 history teachers in Tanzania (Namamba & Rao, 2016). The results suggest that teachers who indicated a higher criterialist stance also predicted student-centered instructional approaches. However, this study relied only on self-reported data. This instrument shows promise for capturing beliefs, but has not been fully utilized in different settings including in-service teachers.

The research into personal epistemologies of teachers in history is varied and still in the beginning stages. More research is needed to provide deeper insight into the varying contexts of teachers, both general and domain-specific. Additional research on the personal epistemology of history teachers is definitely warranted. Deeper understanding of how personal epistemologies are reflected in the classroom provides greater insight into the many aspects of student learning and teacher learning.
Conclusion

This literature review outlined the purpose of social studies, instructional practices related to history, and teachers’ personal epistemology. Overall, the broad and almost universal purpose of social studies makes it difficult for an outcome to be defined. Without a clear outcome, beyond civic competence, the field is filled with many options for instructional practices. Researchers’ conclusions advocate for constructivist learner-centered tasks that apprentice students into the thinking of the discipline and historical reasoning. Even though the research on instructional practices is growing, the gap between theory and practice is evident. Most studies show that lectures and other teacher-centered techniques are the preferred instructional methods. However, some studies show attempts by teachers to realize the methods advocated by researchers. Studies show the gap between theory and practice for both in-service and preservice teachers and reveal that instructional methods are complex and require sophisticated understanding of the epistemology of knowledge. Beyond the complexity of knowledge, the structure of school and the demands on teachers presents challenges that are difficult to overcome. A focus on teachers’ personal epistemology offers insight into how teachers approach the craft of teaching.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This study explored how veteran high school history teachers described their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history, how those beliefs are enacted, and the congruence of those beliefs with teaching practices. The following research questions served as a guide to the study:

1. How do veteran secondary social studies teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about the teaching of history?
2. How do veteran secondary social studies teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about learning history?
3. How do secondary history teachers enact their personal epistemological beliefs?
4. How are high school history teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs congruent with their history teaching practices?

This chapter presents the methodology used to gather information to best answer the research questions. The chapter is organized with the following sections: overall research design including researcher role, site selection including school setting description and participant description, data collection procedures, and data analysis processes including data integrity procedures.
Research Design

This study followed a qualitative design, which provides a complex and detailed understanding of an issue to develop insight (Creswell, 2007). The issue in this study – how history teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs align with their teaching practices – required deep exploration of the context of the teachers and their thought processes to best answer a how question. Previous research indicated that teacher beliefs are layered and often context-dependent (Schommer-Aikins, 2004b), which made a qualitative study most appropriate. Often beliefs cannot be quantified or they can be stated but not acted on. For these reasons, a qualitative study better captures the descriptions of a teacher’s personal epistemological beliefs.

There has been some research concerning personal epistemological beliefs in social studies that follow both qualitative and quantitative traditions (Bain, 2008; Maggioni & Parkinson, 2008; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014). However, comparatively, disciplines like math or science have dominated the field of research concerning personal epistemology (Bennet & Park, 2011; Kang & Wallace, 2005; Luft & Roehrig, 2007; Schommer-Aikins & Duell, 2013; Tsai, 2002). Following a qualitative approach recognizes the intricacies and challenges of teaching and how beliefs play a role in those challenges. A qualitative study provided more perspectives and depth about personal epistemological beliefs in history. For these reasons, this study continued in a qualitative tradition to contribute to the growing foundation of research.

The multiple case exploratory case study design utilized multiple points of data to provide rich and holistic information about teaching history at the high school level (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). As Hesse-Biber (2017) describes, exploratory case studies contain “rich data-gathering possibilities” (p. 222) and allow “researchers to gain new insights”
(p. 223) to formulate ideas, especially for future research. This exploratory case study helped to better understand the process and dynamics that support the previously researched connections between personal epistemological beliefs and instruction (Hashweh, 1996; Kang & Wallace, 2005; Tsai, 2002). The case study had a psychological orientation, as the research concerned beliefs and instruction focused on individuals to investigate human behavior (Merriam, 1998). Since this was a multiple case study, including different teachers with varying beliefs and diverse backgrounds allowed the researcher to synthesize different cases to offer thick description and nuanced perspectives (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). As is typical of the case study design, this research was limited in time (Hesse-Biber, 2017), location, and number of participants.

Bracketing the Researcher’s Experience

As a long-time employee in the targeted district and school, it is critical that I acknowledge my assumptions and perspectives about history teaching (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I have worked at West High School [pseudonym] for 15 years as both a teacher in the Social Studies Department and instructional coach for the entire staff. Previously, I worked as a middle school social studies and language arts teacher for six years, also in the district. My masters’ degree is in educational leadership, but I have never held an administrative role. I earned National Board Certification in Social Studies in 2009, renewed in 2018, and also have an endorsement in Gifted Education. I have relationships with all of the participants in the study, as I am a colleague in the same department. These relationships vary per person. For example, I am the mentor for all new social studies teachers, so some teachers have grown from my mentee into a colleague. For others, I partner with them in my instructional coaching work as we seek to
improve instruction in the classroom. I am also a collaborative member of the U.S. History Professional Learning Community (PLC) with four other teachers. We work together to plan common assessments and analyze student data. Often I have either led or co-experienced professional learning with these teachers.

My own beliefs about education center on the idea that all students deserve great teachers. I believe in the transformative nature of education and that all students should have adults who are invested in their future. From my earliest experiences learning to become a teacher, I have believed in a constructivist active pedagogy for students. As a social studies teacher, I see the importance of creating relevance and enjoyment in the learning process. In practice, this means that I seek out strategies that help to increase engagement with and for students while still being rigorous. I consistently try new instructional practices and openly invite students to provide feedback.

My beliefs about history instruction have changed with time. When I first started, I was tentative in my beliefs about my purpose in teaching history; I struggled to balance skill mastery and content mastery. It often felt like I focused on one without the other. With more experience, self-directed professional learning, and reflection, I began to better understand and communicate the purpose of studying history to my students. Each year, I try new ways to design instruction to help students practice the skills of historians and develop a love of history. Most of this change in beliefs occurred through my own desire to learn. More broadly, I believe that students should be challenged and that engagement comes with authentic and difficult work. Since I usually teach a standard-level class with identified students with special needs, I emphasize high leverage reading and writing skills that help in all classes. I rarely lecture and prefer other methods for students to build context to analyze historical sources.
My stance when I took the Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ) tended to be more criterialist on paper. For example, I focus on heuristics, thinking like a historian through metacognitive strategies, and historical argumentation and inquiry. However, I find some subjectivist tendencies in my teaching practices. This is often due the apathy many students feel toward history and I am just excited to have students conduct any interpretation at all! I do not tend toward objectivist stance responses very often. I see congruence between my beliefs about teaching and learning history and my teaching practices, but I do struggle to realize them to their full potential – mostly due to finding instructional strategies that help achieve my goals. I am also aware of times my teaching practices do not align with my beliefs and work to change and revise my planning to adjust.

As an instructional coach, I have also developed many key skills over the years that have changed my own practice. I have learned how to deeply reflect on and participate in powerful conversations as well as understand adult learning and use data effectively to make changes. In this position, I have had extensive training in cognitive coaching techniques and classroom observation, both of which helped with this research study. Since I tend to be highly reflective and professional learning oriented, I often think about and research my beliefs about many different topics.

All of these experiences are significant for my research. First, my perspective accepts and encourages many approaches to teaching because my work as an instructional coach shows me there are many pathways to successful teaching. Secondly, because I am a practicing teacher, I remain realistic about the daunting challenges of teaching history on a day-to-day basis. Finally, I am practiced at basing my conclusions on the evidence gathered during a research process. I am able to do this as my work centers on evidence to make decisions.
Site and Participant Selection

The following section first describes the setting of the study, including the district and school site. Then it outlines the participant selection process, and finally the participants themselves.

School and District Setting

The participant school is located in a suburb of a major Midwest city with a student population around 2,000 and a teaching staff of 142. The school has a 97% graduation rate and is considered high performing. The school has a college preparation orientation with 92% of students enrolling in college or university following graduation. In the past couple of years, there has been an increased focus on preparing students for a non-college experience such as trade school or career. The school’s student population is becoming more diverse with time but is currently 86% white, 6% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 2% other. Six percent of the population is low income; 8% have identified special needs serviced through Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The teachers in the school promote a culture of professionalism and innovation, shown by a high teacher retention rate of 92% (Illinois State Board of Education, 2108). The teachers, as a group, work diligently to meet the needs of students by questioning their practice and engaging in ongoing conversations about student learning.

The school was selected because it met several criteria. First, as a sample of convenience (Merriam, 1998), I chose the high school at which I am employed for the study. According to Mertens (2005), convenience sampling means that the persons participating in the study were chosen because they were readily available.
Beyond convenience, West High (pseudonym) was also selected for other reasons. The school is located in a district that encourages teacher creativity and innovative teaching practices. This is evidenced by the robust professional learning focused on innovation and student engagement offered within the district. Over 28% of teachers at the school have achieved National Board certification with support from the school and school district (National Board Professional Teaching Standards, 2018). The school administration itself encourages and honors teachers who take risks in classroom instruction, as shown by teacher leadership during school improvement days and recognition during staff meetings. Instructional coaches located in the building work with teachers to refine their practice and high quality teacher reflection, especially in partnership with a coach, which is regarded as expected practice by school administrators. This school environment is significant as it may allow teacher beliefs to play a larger role in instructional decisions since the culture supports teacher autonomy. Previous studies show that curriculum expectations, bureaucracy, and school climate can negatively influence a teacher’s instructional choices (e.g., Yilmaz, 2008a). In addition, curriculum guides for the school district are fairly brief and teacher-developed, so teachers have some freedom in their instructional and curricular choices. As shown on parent and student feedback surveys, innovative teaching practices are embraced by the community, and these stakeholders express high confidence in the teaching staff.

Beyond the cultural characteristics of the school, the building is accessible to the researcher and the researcher has developed relationships with the teachers, but is not in a position of influence for any of the teachers nor involved in daily collaboration. Since the researcher has knowledge of the teachers and the culture of the school and school district, the familiarity allowed rich description of the context (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Yin, 2014). Additionally,
the teachers were more likely to participate in the study because they knew the researcher, which helped in gaining access and trust (Creswell, 2007).

The researcher met with the administrators of both the school (Appendix D) and district (Appendix E) to arrange permission for the study to commence.

**Participant Selection**

The pool of potential participants was initially narrowed because of the site selection and research focus as all needed to work at West High School and teach history. By ensuring that participants were at the same location, the focus was more on their beliefs rather than variations in context. However, questions were included about how each participant perceived West High and the district so assumptions were not made by the researcher concerning the context.

Beyond the research site, the participants were selected through purposeful sampling, a technique in which the researcher selects participants for particular characteristics (Creswell, 2007; Ishak & Bakar, 2014; Patton, 2002; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). These characteristics included: veteran status, type of history course taught, results of belief questionnaire, and willingness to participate in the study.

The first characteristic was the teachers’ veteran teaching status: those who had taught at least ten years. Veteran status was important because previous research featured the challenges facing novices in teaching social studies and learning to become a teacher (Maloy & Roche, 2010; Reitano & Green, 2013; van Hover & Yeager, 2004; Yilmaz, 2009), which complicates a study of personal epistemology since novices are still learning how to teach. Focusing on veteran teachers assumed they have already developed expertise and experience in learning to teach and learning to teach social studies. A study of veteran teachers offers an opportunity to add insight
to the study of the phenomenon – teachers’ personal epistemology.

A second characteristic was the type of history course taught. It was important to restrict participation from history teachers who only taught Advanced Placement (AP) level classes, as AP has a particular set of outcomes and standards that tend to drive teaching practices (Monte-Sano, 2008; Stahl et al., 1996). Only one teacher was removed from the potential participant list for this restriction.

Six potential participants were identified at West High School based on the criteria previously outlined: veteran educators who taught a non-AP history class. The potential participants were asked to complete the Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ; Appendix F) and a demographic questionnaire about their experiences (Appendix G). All six consented to the questionnaires. The belief survey followed the refined categories originally outlined by Maggioni et al. (2009): objectivist, subjectivist, and criterialist stances. This created the comparison inherent in a multiple case-study design. The demographic survey gathered other teacher characteristics, such as education and experience, to help the researcher capture the range of experiences of the potential participants.

The final question of the demographic survey was willingness to participate in the research study. Three of the six participants expressed willingness to participate, which was the targeted number of participants. The three were selected then based on convenience and willingness to volunteer their time. The rationale for selecting three teachers, or cases, was to balance heterogeneity of the participants to better synthesize the depth that multiple points of evidence provide. Without more people and the resources available to the researcher, it would be impossible to gather diverse types of data to allow rich and thick descriptions. However, with fewer than three people, the ability to compare, contrast, and synthesize was limited. Experts in
case study research do not specify a number of participants for case study research; they only
describe the need for saturation of data (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin,
2014). Previous research concerning history instruction or personal epistemology utilized case
studies with one person (Bennett & Park, 2011; Brooks, 2011; Jackson & Talbert, 2012;
Reisman, 2016; Sullivan, 2011), two people (Eick & Reed, 2002), and three people (Kang &
Wallace, 2005). Only one case study on history instruction focused on four people to derive a
new conceptual framework (Cunningham, 2007). For these reasons, inclusion of three
participants was considered ideal for manageability and diversity in the data.

Description of Participant Teachers

The participants in the study included two females and one male. Each has only ever
taught at West High School, with experience ranging from 10 to 18 years. All had an
undergraduate degree in history, while two participants also had a focus in political science. Each
participant earned a master’s degree; two have a Master’s in Teaching with an emphasis in
history education, while the third has a Master’s in Literacy Education with an emphasis of
reading in the discipline of history.

Each participant selected to be part of the study signed an Adult Consent Form
(Appendix H) that included the purpose of the study, estimated time commitment for each
portion of the study, contact information for those having knowledge of the study, intended
beliefs and risks of participation in the study, and permission to be both audio and video taped.
To protect participant privacy throughout the study and its publication, participants were
referenced by self-selected pseudonym. The confidentiality of the participants in this study was
protected in several other ways. The name of the school and name of the community were
changed to protect confidentiality. Additionally, all electronic records and videos were saved on password protected computers and a password protected external hard drive. All paper records were stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. A description of each participant follows.

Rose

Rose can best be described as passionate, outspoken, and honest about herself and her teaching and says she is blunt and forthright with others. During the study, she was entering her 13th year of teaching, all of it (including her student teaching experience) at West High School. Rose was also seven months pregnant and feeling very uncomfortable with her physical self. During the interviews, Rose leaned back and unconsciously rubbed her belly, talking and laughing about the crazy emotions she felt because she was pregnant. A few times, when speaking about her own experiences, she started to cry and then laugh that she was crying at all.

Rose’s interviews often meandered through various topics when she answered questions, referencing her own childhood and experiences as a learner and also the current political climate. Rose’s comfort in discussing her childhood was also an effort to tell a tale that was different than what she perceived as the norm to help others not feel alone when they are product of a divorced home. She mentioned that she shared these experiences, and her struggles with mental health, with her students in an effort toward transparency so the students could see her as a trusted adult. Rose’s references to the political climate surfaced through many different channels: talking about her own family dynamics and articulating key skills in teaching history and general frustrations with developing lesson plans that would not be misconstrued by students as too politically biased. The political climate was constantly on her mind.
Rose developed her passion for history through her stepfather, who loved learning about history at roadside attractions and odd museums while reading many books about history. She is a devoted reader of historical fiction books and always has a recommendation for a great story, especially ones that depict the empowered woman as the protagonist. Throughout the interviews, Rose described two pivotal history teachers: one she saw as a role model to aspire to because of his passion and the other as the anti-model to never become because of his arbitrary practices and lack of passion. After the end of eighth grade, she decided that she wanted to teach history to make it come alive for students.

Rose eventually earned her Bachelor’s in History with teacher certification but considered herself “a historian first and a teacher second” (Rose, Interview 1). After a few years of teaching, Rose pursued a Master’s in Literacy Education with a focus on Disciplinary Literacy in the Social Sciences. She often provided resources and frames of thinking about literacy with her professional learning community (PLC) and the department as a whole.

Rose was immensely proud of the work that she does, was outspoken about her opinions, and easily admitted her own insecurities and weaknesses. She said she is uncomfortable trying out new strategies and ideas unless she feels like she has the confidence and efficacy to do so. Mental rehearsal is important to her thought process.

When Rose took the Beliefs about History Questionnaire, her results placed her clearly in the criterialist stance of personal epistemological beliefs with a consistency score of 20 of the 22 statements. When her responses “wobbled” (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014) through a lesser degree of agreement/disagreement, it was toward an objectivist stance, which views history knowledge as stable. The scoring of the BHQ is further explored in the procedures of this chapter.
Mark was fast-talking and energetic with the ability to engage others with his kindness and enthusiasm. He was a self-described history nerd and his desk was filled with gifts from students through the years – like a Frederick Douglass finger puppet or Lincoln memes. Mark has an infectious sense of humor; for example, he spent a few weeks deciding on his pseudonym for this study, eventually selecting Mark in a nod to W. Mark Felt, the informant from Watergate. During the study, he was entering his eleventh year at West High School. Mark was also an alumnus of West High School and returned to teach after college.

Mark decided to become a teacher in part because of familiarity: both parents were teachers and he thought they seemed fulfilled with their profession. Mark often spoke of teaching in the sense of a vocation, something that gives back to the community and contributes to the next generation in a meaningful way. Throughout the interviews, the idea of teaching as a calling consistently resurfaced and his descriptions returned to the broader philosophical ideas related to the purpose of education and the importance of the work that he does with students. Mark said he was always attracted to the social sciences in his own education and even more so in college. He described the social sciences as so important because there is something deeper to it, something beyond just a class students are required to take.

Mark earned his bachelor’s degree with a double major in history and political science and then returned to school to become certified to teach. He earned his Master’s in Teaching early in his teaching career. Mark typically taught upperclassman history and civics classes, including AP United States History and American Studies, an integrated class on American literature and U.S. history for juniors.
Mark, like Rose, was proud of the work he has done with students. He was also a leader in the department and school and was often asked to contribute to committees about innovative practices or present a new technology tool that he tried out. He valued and was comfortable with risk-taking and would try a new instructional technique and collect student data to see how it worked. Mark appeared constantly in motion and in thought. During the interviews, he compressed many ideas together, speaking quickly and elaborating each idea with examples and thoughtful reflections. Mark was quick to point out places to improve his work but also knew to celebrate the thinking of his students.

Mark’s scores on the Beliefs about History Questionnaire placed him firmly in the criterialist stance of personal epistemological beliefs with a consistency score of 20 of the 22 statements. When his responses “wobbled” (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014) through some degree of agreement/disagreement it was toward an objectivist stance, which views history knowledge as stable.

Kendall

Kendall was like a perpetual motion machine, always moving at a fast pace and speaking in concise and clipped phrases. It seemed as though she tried to conserve energy with adults so she could bring charisma and energy to her work with students in the classroom. Conversations were punctuated by laughter, tangents to barely related topics, and abrupt shifts to serious issues. Kendall was almost legendary for her work with AP European History, with students earning a 95%-100% pass rate for over 10 years running. Students became her groupies and competed to become teaching assistants in her class the next year. Her classroom was filled with visuals, including student contributions of inside class jokes about historical figures and nerd history
humor. There were actually three life-size cardboard cutouts of historical figures, including Winston Churchill and Louis XIV for whom students make hats throughout the year. At the time of the study, Kendall was entering her 18th year at West High School.

Kendall earned her bachelor’s degree with a double major in history and political science, intending to pursue a law career. After interning at a law firm and hating it, she quickly returned to school to get a teaching certificate because she loved history and she liked working with kids. Her master’s degree was in Secondary Education with an emphasis on European history. Kendall taught AP European History and U.S. History, never really deviating from those classes. She was instrumental in the curriculum design of both of those courses.

Kendall, like Rose and Mark, felt fulfilled and proud of the work she does with students at West High School. She had incredibly high expectations for herself and everyone she works with, including colleagues and students. Kendall was a force to be reckoned with but did not consider herself to be a leader in the school. She was always a learner, and with her energy devoted to her own students; she could be resentful toward anything that required her to deviate from that focus. Even with this pride, Kendall expressed insecurity, unconsciously seeking affirmations and assurances, even during interviews about her own beliefs, punctuating the conversations with “is that okay?” or “is that what you need?”

Kendall’s singular love of history and its stories was communicated to colleagues and students alike, often sharing weird history anecdotes and creating moments of laughter and levity. Kendall was energetic, passionate, and dedicated. She valued her own processing time to figure out instructional challenges and took risks on her own terms, always keeping how she considers students to learn history best at the center of her thinking.

Kendall’s Beliefs about History Questionnaire results also placed her somewhat in the
criterialist stance of personal epistemological beliefs with a consistency score of 17 of 22 statements. Her responses “wobbled” (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014) with several inconsistencies, ultimately rejecting the subjectivist stance but strongly agreeing with the objectivist stance several times. When she reviewed her own questionnaire during the first interview, she remarked how she misread some of the statements, so the accuracy of her score on the BHQ is unclear.

Data Collection

To develop in-depth and rich analyses characteristic of a case study, this study utilized multiple sources of data: survey, various types of interviews, and participant observation. Each method of data collection helped to answer the how research questions for the study. Figure 3 outlines the order and purpose of the data collection procedures. The following subsections explain the procedures for each data collection strategy.

Figure 5: Data collection procedures.
Questionnaires

The first data collection technique was a survey to gather basic information regarding beliefs about teaching history and learning history. The utilized survey instrument was the Beliefs History Questionnaire (BHQ) created by Maggioni et al. (2009). In their quantitative study, they validated the measure through repeated use with elementary school teachers and college professors. Additionally, this instrument was used quantitatively with pre-service teachers and in-service teachers (Maggioni & Parkinson, 2008; Maggioni et al., 2009; Namamba & Rao, 2017; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014), so its use had additional validation. This survey of beliefs contributed to the “internal generalizability” of the research and helped the researcher to “identify and correctly characterize the diversity of...beliefs in the...group studied” (Maxwell, 2010, p. 478 italics in the original). The survey was administered on paper to each of the participants (Appendix F) during early August, prior to the beginning of the school year, so the information could be used to select the participants. Permission to use the BHQ was granted by email with Maggioni and VanSledright in February of 2018 (Appendix I).

Interviews

The interviews in the case study were the main means of probing teacher thinking and provided depth and insight to answer the research questions. Throughout the five-month study, the interviews followed Seidman’s (2006) interview structure. The think-aloud interview and the video-based interviews are explained in the following subsections, as each utilized a different protocol.

The first interview was called the Focused Life History (Appendix J). This interview was
designed for the teacher to tell as much as possible about himself or herself in light of the phenomenon of study: personal epistemology. The interviews occurred within the first weeks of the school year for each of the teachers. Types of questions in this interview included the following: Thinking of yourself as a learner of history, what was your ideal environment? and If someone asks you “what is history,” what will you tell him or her? At the end of the interview, each teacher was asked to reflect on his/her responses to the Beliefs about History Questionnaire to provide insight into their answers. In this interview, the questions were broader and less context specific to capture the larger picture of beliefs.

The second interview was called the Details of the Experience Interview (Appendix K). The purpose of this interview was to focus on the concrete details of the teachers’ own experiences with personal epistemology in the context of their day-to-day work. Some examples of the questions included the following: 1) How does your classroom reflect an ideal history teaching environment? How does it not? and 2) How do you describe your role as a history teacher in your classroom? The second interviews occurred after school from August to September when it was convenient for the teachers.

The final interview, called Reflection on the Meaning (Appendix L), was for the teacher to discuss his or her understanding of the experience following the other data collection techniques. Some of the questions included the following: 1) What do you see as the relationship between your beliefs about history and your practices in the classroom? and 2) Have your beliefs and practices changed over your teaching career? How? Why? This interview also allowed for follow-up questions on any unresolved topics. This occurred after all of the data were collected from October to December at a time outside of the school hours convenient for the teacher.
Each of the interviews adhered to a semi-structured protocol. The questions served as a guide, but follow-up probes were asked by the researcher to add depth and complexity (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For example, during an interview with Kendall, the researcher asked, “Could you describe that experience some more,” which was not part of the initial protocol.

The questions from these three interviews were validated in several ways. First, many of the questions concerning personal epistemology had been utilized in previous studies (Bennet & Park, 2010; Jackson & Talbert, 2012; Luft & Roehrig, 2007; Maggioni et al., 2010; Olafson & Schraw, 2010; Tsai, 2002). The personal epistemology questions concerned how the teachers viewed the nature of knowledge in history, their beliefs about teaching history, and their beliefs about learning history. Additional questions added by the researcher were peer reviewed for clarity and use by a peer examiner. This peer examiner was a doctoral candidate who had taken qualitative research classes and was trained in interview protocols through her job as an instructional coach.

Each interview was videotaped for additional reference throughout the study. The videotapes provided a primary source to which the researcher could return instead of relying solely on the researcher’s own notes. This technique reduced researcher bias in the analysis (Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Think-Aloud Interview

The think-aloud interview technique varied from a typical interview structure utilized in the Seidman (2006) structure. In a think-aloud, the participant enunciates his or her thought process while completing a task (Charters, 2003; Fang, 1996). Since thought processes are unobservable, a think-aloud reveals the “thought process that teachers engage in prior to
classroom interactions, as well as the thought processes or reflections...after classroom interactions” (Fang, 1996, p. 49). In this case study, the teacher verbalized his or her thoughts and rationale while sharing a plan for an upcoming lesson. This deepened and augmented the data collected about personal epistemological beliefs in instructional planning. Only one think-aloud was conducted because of the intensity of the task. The think-aloud was conducted after the second interview, which allowed the planned lesson to be captured during the classroom observation. The teacher selected the lesson for the think-aloud as one that showed their personal epistemological beliefs to best analyze the described and/or enacted beliefs.

A strong limitation of the think-aloud is that it cannot “reveal deeper thought processes in their true complexity because they have to be simplified into words” (Charters, 2003, p. 70) but is still considered an effective and reliable source of information for higher-level thinking processes (Charters, 2003; Ericsson & Simon, 1980). Since epistemological beliefs are difficult to articulate, the researcher provided directions for the lesson planning task to verbalize the process but not structure the task to influence the participant (Appendix M). For example, one of the prompts asked, “As you talk through an upcoming lesson, tell me: How do you think about the components that you include in a lesson plan? Why those components?” While the teacher was talking, it was important the researcher remained silent and allowed the participant space to articulate his or her thinking thoroughly (Charters, 2003).

During the think-aloud, participants were asked to share the documents they would use to support the lesson, including student handouts, student prompts, or other supporting materials. These documents were included in the analysis of the planned lesson, the observations, and the video-based interview.

Most researchers recommend time for a participant to reflect on the process during a
think aloud. To meet this goal, questions were included at the end of the interview for participants to provide a short reflection. The think-aloud interviews were videotaped to provide future reference beyond the researcher’s notes. They added depth to the other sources of data and provided insight into the teaching practices and classroom observations.

**Teacher Observation and Video-Based Interview**

The final means of data collection was observation of the teacher participant conducting lessons with his or her students and an interview based on those observations. The purpose of these data were twofold. First, it further corroborated the evidence gathered from the multiple interviews and the survey by observing how the ideas described were utilized in practice (Yin, 2012). Secondly, the interview minimized researcher bias regarding participants’ motivation during an observation as they shared their own thinking rather than the researcher making assumptions about instructional practices.

**Teacher observation and video-taping.** The teacher participant selected a class to videotape himself or herself teaching the lesson sequence that included the lesson planned during the think aloud. The camera was set on a tripod at a wide angle in an area of the room that captured only the teachers’ actions and language. For Rose and Kendall, the researcher was present to operate the camera and observe the lesson. In those settings, the researcher acted as an observer-participant as the class knew the role of the researcher and was aware of her presence (Merriam, 1998). Mark operated the camera on his own, as the researcher was unavailable during the time of his class.

The teacher observations were videotaped for two reasons. First, the recordings served as a source to reference beyond the researchers’ notes to provide a credible line of evidence.
Secondly, the videos were used to structure the video-based interviews.

Since student voice and possibly student images were captured on audio and video but were not the subject of the study, passive parent consent (Appendix N) and student assent were obtained (Appendix O). The parent consent form was sent by each of the participants to their class through the school’s email communication system. No parents refused to allow participation. The researcher stopped by each selected class to explain the purpose of the study and the process to obtain student assent. Two students refused to sign the assent, one in Mark’s class and one in Kendall’s class. In Kendall’s class, the researcher oriented the camera to not capture the student’s image. In Mark’s class, Mark arranged the seating for the videotaped lesson to keep the student off video. During transcription procedures, no students’ spoken language was noted, as the focus was on teacher language.

The videotapes were analyzed through the protocol guide (Appendix P) that focused on teacher language, actions, and tasks. The researcher is trained in observation analysis through her work as an instructional coach. This analysis helped her make decisions about which parts of the video-taped lessons to show the participant. Further elaboration as to how those decisions were made follows.

**Video-based interview.** The video-based interviews were conducted after the observations were complete because the observation analysis alone could not capture the in-the-moment reasoning that occurred during instruction. The interview attempted to elicit the reasons underlying classroom events to help recall instructional decisions (Alonzo & Kim, 2016). During the interview, the researcher showed each teacher multiple 30-45 second clips of himself or herself teaching and asked what he or she was thinking at that point in time. During the interview, approximately 10-15 short video segments were analyzed (see Appendix Q).
To select the clips for the video-based interviews, the researcher watched the videos in their entirety and found potential moments to review based on the developed criteria. The criteria included moments in which the teacher 1) asked students questions and facilitated discussion, 2) responded to students during instruction, 3) decided to transition to a different part of the lesson, and 4) utilized materials and resources. The criteria also included an effort to ask the same question about different examples of the same teaching practice, especially as they related to how the participant saw that practice communicating or reinforcing ideas about the nature of knowledge and knowing in history.

Questions were tailored to the clip selected but also showed patterns across the participants. For example, some of the questions posed to participants after watching a short clip were: How did you feel about this response? How does it represent your view of historical knowledge or historical thinking? How did this interaction promote your beliefs about historical thinking and historical knowledge? Did the students use the resources the way that you intended? How did your directions and the task promote historical knowledge and historical thinking? The series of questions based on video attempted to ask participants to share their view of connections between teaching practices and personal epistemological beliefs. The purpose of this interview was also to minimize researcher bias, which was important in a study concerning beliefs. The researcher practiced this technique with a peer examiner prior to use in the research. The questions for each clip were reviewed by a peer examiner. The interviews were video-taped and transcribed in the same method as previous interviews.
Alignment

Alignment of the research questions with the previously mentioned data collection strategies is outlined in Table 1. As a whole, these data methods captured the described personal epistemological beliefs of the teachers and their teaching practices with opportunities for great depth.

Table 1

Alignment of Research Questions with Data Collection Strategies and Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ) &amp; Demographic Survey</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused Life History: Interview #1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of the Experience: Interview #2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think-Aloud: Interview #3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Observation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video-Based: Interview #4</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on the Meaning: Interview #5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

To effectively conduct qualitative data analysis, the researcher triangulated the data using multiple data collection strategies. The protocols for analyzing the data are outlined in the following subsections. First, the survey results are described. Then transcription procedures for the data are discussed. Finally, the coding procedures are described and the validation procedures are explained.

Survey Analysis

The Beliefs about History Questionnaire results were tallied through the method outlined by VanSledright and Reddy (2014). The Likert scale on the survey describes six levels of agreement/disagreement: strongly agree (6), agree (5), somewhat agree (4), somewhat disagree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The range is then weighted. A score of 6 = +3, 5 = +2, 4 = +1, 3 = -1, 2 = -2, and 1 = -3 (range strongly agree = +3 to strongly disagree = -3). The statements also contained two subscales, as some statements attempt to capture beliefs about history and others capture beliefs about history teaching and learning. The statements that aligned with a criterialist stance toward history are questions 3, 11, 13, 18, and 21; objectivist stance are questions 5, 16, and 19; the subjectivist stance are questions 2, 8, 12, and 14. VanSledright and Reddy also assessed a consistency score of objectivist and subjectivist responses to criterialist responses. This shows how many statements with which participants expressed agreement with the objectivist and subjectivist statements and disagreement with the criterialist statement. VanSledright and Reddy calculated this score by totaling the “disagreements with criterialism” subtracted from the number of items, 22, and then dividing by
22 to arrive at a percentage (p. 47). Through this method, they identified that some people show “epistemic wobbling” or inconsistent attempts to “integrate the role of the object (the past) and the role of the subject (the knower)” (p. 43). They designated the two stances as transitional, or TR1 and TR2. This process provided part of the basis for identifying and describing personal epistemological beliefs, an area of research that is difficult to capture. The results of each teacher’s questionnaire results were outlined in the participant descriptions.

Transcription Procedures

All of the other data sources were video recorded. These recordings were then transcribed verbatim by a professional service. While reviewing the transcript, the researcher listened to each recording multiple times to make corrections and to write “short memo[s] about a given passage” (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 309) to note parts of the research data that were initially interesting or insightful. The transcribed research data served to enhance confirmability as all data can be traced back to its source with a clear chain of evidence (Mertens, 2014; Yin, 2014). The accuracy of these data in transcription served as the foundation of the analysis (Yin, 2014). Multiple copies of the transcripts were utilized to conduct coding, analysis, and trustworthiness processes. The researcher reviewed the transcripts at each stage of the data analysis process to ensure the conclusions were rooted in the primary sources. All transcripts were stored as Word documents on a password-protected external hard drive to make searching each document easier.
The coding procedure and protocol were identical for the interviews, observations, and think-alouds. After the data transcription, the researcher conducted initial data exploration by highlighting what seemed important and marking up the text. Hesse-Biber (2017) emphasizes the need to focus on the description of what is in the data before beginning specific coding procedures. The researcher kept memos of ideas during this exploration phase after each data analysis session. Creswell (2007) also emphasizes the need for initial margin notes and overview of the data.

After describing the data, the researcher then began coding the data through the general process outlined by Hesse-Biber (2017) and Creswell (2007). First, descriptive codes were assigned to create general topics. Then the descriptive codes were grouped to form categorical codes. Finally, analytical codes were generated to capture the broader themes. This process ensured that the analysis by the researcher was rooted in the actual data and carefully documented the researcher’s thought processes to increase validity of the findings. Because there were multiple teachers in this case study, the researcher established patterns, or pattern-coding (Creswell, 2007), to find corresponding ideas across the data. Yin (2014) also advocates for the cross-case synthesis to find similarities and differences among the cases being studied, which is why the researcher pattern-coded.

Throughout the coding, the researcher engaged in memo-writing (Hesse-Biber, 2017), a technique that reveals the thought process of the researcher and, through review, help to form new ideas or relationships in the codes and the data. The memos served as an “intermediate step between the coding and the interpretation” (p. 324) of the data. The memos were reviewed
routinely during the data analysis stage to provide a point of reflection for the researcher through this documented thought process.

As a way to document the development of themes, the researcher worked to organize, and reorganize, potential themes and subthemes across the participants by noting the number of data points related to each research question. These patterns were fluid and revisited with each ensuing session of data analysis. An example of this organization is shown in Table 2 related to research question 1, which depicts one iteration of the evolving themes and subthemes. Through additional data analysis and review by a peer examiner throughout the process, these ideas continued to be refined to eventually support the assertions articulated in Chapter 4.

Table 2

| Major Themes, Subthemes, and Number of Data Points for Research Question 1 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Theme           | Subtheme        | Data Points     | Total |
| Elements of the Criterialist Stance | Complexity of Knowledge | 20 | 98 |
|                 | Doing the Work of Historians | 38 | |
|                 | Honoring Perspectives & Stories | 22 | |
|                 | Role of Questions | 18 | |
| Views of Teacher Role | Varying Instructional Methods | 23 | 89 |
|                 | Teacher as Designer | 26 | |
|                 | Teacher Role During Instruction | 40 | |
| Teaching as Civic Responsibility | | 24 | 24 |

Data Integrity Procedures

In qualitative research, criteria for judging the quality of research are important to ensure that the data collection and analysis are as accurate as possible (Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber,
Credibility was addressed through many methods. First, different sources of data allowed triangulation to show consistency of evidence across sources of data, as previously described (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Mertens, 2014). Secondly, the researcher practiced prolonged and persistent engagement through the length of observations and number of interviews. For example, Table 3 shows the length of time for each interview and observation. The volume of the data collected over time increased the credibility of the data across the teacher participants.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Kendall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview #1</td>
<td>41:58</td>
<td>45:13</td>
<td>20:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #2</td>
<td>34:49</td>
<td>29:16</td>
<td>21:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #3:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Aloud Interview</td>
<td>19:38</td>
<td>16:16</td>
<td>10:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview #4:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video-Based Interview</td>
<td>37:11</td>
<td>36:38</td>
<td>28:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #5</td>
<td>19:51</td>
<td>11:10</td>
<td>10:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Interview Time</strong></td>
<td>2 hrs., 33 min</td>
<td>2 hrs., 18 min</td>
<td>1 hr., 31 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Observation Time</strong></td>
<td>2 hrs., 13 min</td>
<td>1 hr., 41 min.</td>
<td>1 hr., 24 min</td>
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</table>
captured what they said. Codes developed during the data analysis process were member checked less formally through conversations with each participant (Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Mertens, 2014; Yin, 2014). Peer debriefing, conversations with the peer examiner about developing ideas, helped the researcher maintain progressive subjectivity. The peer examiner was an instructional coach who had been trained in data analysis and qualitative design through courses at the doctoral level. These design elements all increased credibility.

Transferability of the data was achieved through thick description and multiple cases. The researcher provided careful description of the context, known as thick description. The use of multiple cases worked toward analytical generalizability, an idea that the cases offer additional insight into theoretical framework of personal epistemology (Yin, 2014).

To address the dependability of the data, a case study protocol detailed every step of the process (Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Yin, 2014). The protocol allowed others to see the researcher’s decisions and the rationale behind the decisions. To aid in this process of transparency, the data were organized in a database. The database, saved on an external hard drive, was organized by participant name and type of data.

Confirmability, the idea that the researcher’s judgment is minimized and the decisions made by the researcher are logical and explicit, was addressed in several ways (Mertens, 2014). First, researcher memos throughout the process helped to “practice reflexivity” (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 327), which provided an internal dialogue for consistency as new data were collected. It also supported the chain of evidence, tracing the development of an idea, as advocated by Yin (2014) and Hesse-Biber (2017). Transcripts and videos of the raw data served as a way to track data back to their sources. Finally, a peer examination of the data occurred at the conclusion of
transcription and data analysis (Hesse-Biber, 2017). The examiner provided feedback to the researcher to ensure that the data analysis was accurate.

Conclusion

This case study was designed to collect thorough and meaningful data from three veteran history teachers to gain insight into how beliefs about teaching and learning history demonstrate congruency to teaching practices. Varied types of data provided a nuanced study through the collection of surveys, interviews, think-alouds, and participant observation. After the collection of the data, the researcher analyzed the data using a three-step coding process and memos to document the researcher’s process. The data were reviewed through member checking and peer examination. The next chapter details the findings based on the collected data.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The research explored the personal epistemological beliefs of three secondary-level history teachers concerning the teaching of history, how students learn history, how those beliefs are enacted, and the congruence of those beliefs with teaching practices. This chapter contains the results of the qualitative study conducted to answer the research questions. It is organized first by directly answering each research question through exploration of the relevant themes. The second portion of the chapter is organized around three assertions that present further analysis of the data by examining all the research questions, synthesized with relevant research literature to illustrate its importance.

Themes and Subthemes by Research Question

The first section of the chapter explores the themes and subthemes related to each research question. Research questions 1 and 2 focused on the teachers defining their personal epistemological beliefs related to teaching and learning history. Questions 3 and 4 examined how their definitions were enacted and demonstrated congruence to their instruction. Because of the linear nature of the questions, the answers to questions 3 and 4 rely on the themes from questions 1 and 2. The following Table 4 outlines the themes organized around each research question.
Table 4

Research Questions Aligned to Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about the teaching of history?</td>
<td>Evidence and the Use of Authentic Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about learning history?</td>
<td>Active Engagement with Historical Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of a Safe Classroom Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do secondary history teachers enact their personal epistemological beliefs?</td>
<td>Teachers Were Cognizant of Enacted Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs Were Shown Through Their Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How do secondary history teachers demonstrate congruency between their described beliefs and history teaching practices?</td>
<td>Described Beliefs Were Most Evident in Lesson Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Actions Reflected Some Described Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Reflections Were Based on Described Beliefs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Major Themes Related to Research Question 1**

Research question 1 asked: How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history? To address this question, the teachers were asked to describe and provide examples of their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history. Also teachers were asked to complete the Beliefs About History Questionnaire (BHQ) to support or reject various belief statements related to personal epistemological stances about teaching history, learning history, and knowing in history.
Three veteran secondary history teachers described their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history with elements pre-dominantly from the criterialist stance of teaching history. The criterialist stance, as defined by Maggioni, et al. (2009), asserts that history is a reasonable account of the past. Focused on critical inquiry, the study of history compares sources, especially ones with contradictory evidence; forms historical interpretation based on evidence; and develops historical arguments.

When considering the teachers’ beliefs about teaching history, two major themes emerged related to research question 1: 1) evidence and the use of authentic sources and 2) civic responsibility. These themes, and explored subthemes, are depicted in Table 5. Findings for the themes follow.

Table 5
Research Question 1 Aligned to Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Theme: Criterialist Stance</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about the teaching of history?</td>
<td>Evidence and the Use of Authentic Sources</td>
<td>Historical Interpretations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Perspectives &amp; Empathy</td>
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<td>Contextualization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Civic Responsibility</td>
<td>Relevance of History</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in Practice</td>
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**Theme 1: Evidence and the Use of Authentic Sources**

The teachers emphasized the central importance of evidence in history, an idea that emerged across all the data points. For example, in the Beliefs about History Questionnaire, scores of -3 and +3 indicate the strongest agreement and disagreement with a particular statement. All three teachers answered with strongly agree “it is fundamental students are taught to support their reasoning with evidence” and “students need to be taught to deal with conflicting
Although there are other criterialist statements on the questionnaire concerning how history comprises components of critical inquiry, these two statements focus on the question of evidence quality. Additionally, there were two statements to which all the teachers marked strongly disagree: “There is no evidence in history” and “Since there is no way to know what really happened in the past, students can believe whatever story they choose.” The rejection of these statements also relates to the importance of evidence and how it is used in a history classroom. These four statements were the only ones in which the three teachers all marked the farthest degree of agreement and disagreement, which shows that the issue of evidence was a central part their thinking about history.

All of the teachers emphasized that historical interpretation, based on evidence, was the cornerstone of their teaching, which fostered student engagement, ownership, and agency. This goal reflected the criterialist view that the nature of history concerns a creation process. For example, Rose expressed her love of teaching history because “there is no one right answer...I tell my students this all the time” (Rose interview 1). She saw historical interpretation as a way for students to think originally.

Kendall saw the basis of knowledge in history as interpretive and a story derived from interpretations that speak to students. She said:

I would say that history is the study of the past, but it’s also the interpretation of the past and it’s a story. It’s the story of our society, of the world. Knowing the past and making interpretations, but you could say, also learning from the past and critiquing it. There’s so many different interpretations of it. I think just studying the past as a story. Does that make sense? (Kendall interview 1)

Kendall’s central focus was interpretation and stories and embraced the many interpretations possible when studying history, like Rose. But Kendall brought up an underlying idea concerning the nature of critical inquiry of history in her phrase “critiquing it.” She did not
clarify what the critique might look like for students. Further, Kendall referenced the tentative nature of knowledge in history by explaining how interpretations can change over time. She expounded:

There’s facts. There’re certain things, but there’s also interpretation. You can look at the past, and what’s interesting is the current society affects how we look at history. One year, you can look at that and be like, ‘Oh my gosh,’ but then as things change currently and people’s views change, you can look at that differently. I’m finding that as an adult because how I view a thing maybe 20 years ago is different on how I might view it today as a mom. I don’t think history is concrete, but there are basic facts. There’s basic facts, the Declaration of Independence was created at 1776 by this person for this reason, but you can interpret from there. [laughs] (Kendall interview 1)

Kendall’s description showed her love of the ever changing nature of historical interpretation, especially as the current society changes and perspectives grow. She explicitly stated that knowing was not “concrete,” rejecting a fixed knowledge mindset. She also showed that the interpretations still need to be fact-based.

Mark echoed Kendall’s emphasis of fact-based interpretations but elaborated on the power of unique student interpretation. He said:

I think [interpretation] is an important thing in regards to how students learn best is that they have a sense of agency that I can do this and my opinion is valid. If I can do the work and I’m using text-based answers or fact-based answers. (Mark interview 1)

He connected the idea of student historical interpretation as a way for students to feel empowered to contribute to the critical inquiry of history. His last statement, like Kendall, emphasized that not just any opinion is valid: it must be text- or fact-based. For each of the teachers, although fostering unique student historical interpretations was a central part of teaching historical reasoning and knowledge, critiquing and challenging interpretations based on reasoning and quality of evidence were more recent additions to their teaching.
Mark discussed this in the sense of combining strong evidence with interpretation. To him, it was significant that students did not just select evidence convenient to an argument they wanted to prove. He stated:

I think that’s something that I’ve definitely evolved with… in my teaching in trying to help kids, not just for evidence, but make sure they’re considering the entire or as much of the historical record as we can because to do otherwise is dishonest. You’re missing the integrity part of it. [I ask] is their interpretation evolved? There is a lot of nuance involved but let’s not mistake nuance for factless interpretation. (Mark interview 1)

Mark described that he previously did not question a student’s thesis or interpretation as long as there were a few facts in it. However, he said this practice changed with not only his experience in teaching but also in light of seeing oversimplified arguments and misuse of evidence-based arguments in national political discourse. Mark described that “part of our job as teachers [is to make] sure [that students’] opinions are coming from an academically honest place” (Mark interview 1). Mark framed the idea of the defensible argument as a point of ethics for teachers of history.

Rose paralleled Mark’s sentiment about correcting or challenging student interpretations that were not historically valid. She noted the interpretation must be fact-based and the “facts need to lead us to our interpretation… It’s interpretive but it’s still a fact based and we can’t ignore one and favor the other” (interview 2). Even though, as Rose previously stated, there was “no one right answer” (interview 1), those answers must still be reasonable. The teachers all acknowledged that their own standards of defensible interpretations have increased over time and explained it helped to communicate to students that the standards of knowledge and knowing in history require rigorous scrutiny and critical thinking.

Evidence and interpretation comprised a main part of their views of historical knowledge and knowing, but they struggled to define the differences, or relationship, between truth and
interpretation. Rose, for example, described the relationship between truth and facts by using the term truth interchangeably with interpretation. She stated what she often said to students:

What’s important to me is that you can find your truth and how you interpret the world, and that you can use facts, true facts. Facts are facts. Truth is truth as long as you can support it with facts. (Rose interview 3)

Rose’s statement shows that she sees truth as personal and specific to each person, as shown by her phrasing “your truth” and each person’s interpretation of the world around him/her. She further described that “your truth” can change over time and be different than others; she stated, “My truth is not your truth, and history is about trying to garner an understanding” (Rose interview 1). Mark also used the term truth as a creation process. He described, “We are still trying to create truth. We are still trying to figure out what did happen. I feel like again you have to take as much evidence in as we can” (Mark interview 1). Mark’s use of the word “we” instead of “you” indicated collective work: that truth can be arrived at through a group effort by examining as much evidence as possible. It was not clear how the teachers teach the concept of truth in history to their students because truth might imply stability of knowledge.

Use of authentic sources. When describing their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history, the teachers emphasized the importance of engaging students with authentic sources in various ways as frequently as possible, especially to practice historical interpretation. The teachers considered authentic sources as non-textbook sources meaningful to the topic being taught.

Speaking of primary sources specifically, the teachers saw them as humanizing and engaging, especially as a way to develop empathy. For example, Mark described:
You look at the record; you look at this person’s primary source or that person’s phone call or diary entries or letters or whatever might be to get a better sense of where they’re coming from. You can’t have history knowledge or history learning without doing history, without looking at those sources. (Mark interview 2)

Mark’s explanation includes an emphasis on historical empathy and using the sources to create knowledge through interpretation and analysis. Kendall and Rose both iterated this same sentiment about ensuring that the human part of history was clear to students because it helped them understand the nature of historical knowledge as not rote facts but the stories of people.

Rose’s description of the story of history includes the dynamic nature of history. She said, “To me, it’s in the word, the story. History is not a series of dates, facts, events, and people in a static environment, it’s the story that weaves them altogether” (Rose interview 1). Kendall viewed the story inherent in history as what attracted her as a learner in her youth and what continues to engage her students. She said, “I think that the most effective way [for students learning history is] …you have to have stories…It’s a story. If you’re just up there just telling facts, it doesn’t connect to them…I feel students best relate if you can break it down and relate it to them, but it has [to be] a story” (Kendall interview 1). For each of the teachers, the story not only built empathy, it also reinforced the tentative nature of knowledge in history as each person contributed a different perspective to the historical record.

The teachers also passionately spoke to the inclusion of perspectives often excluded from what they perceived to be traditional history instruction. Rose described the worst way to teach history as only emphasizing that “there’s only one perspective. Teaching the white privileged perspective. The male Eurocentric view of history” (Rose interview 1). She further viewed the teaching of perspectives as a matter of ethics in teaching history. Rose stated, “You’re honoring the experiences of all the other different groups that were involved in that same event. I think
when we [leave them out], we dishonor their name and their experience and their sacrifice that they made” (Rose interview 1). She felt it was her responsibility to share the stories that could challenge students’ beliefs and build deeper empathy for others.

Mark also emphasized that the worst way to teach history “is telling this is what it is and not revealing that there are other perspectives or other voices…to discount other voices or to discount other theories or interpretations. That’s not how you should teach history” (Mark interview 1). The teachers felt that inclusion of multiple perspectives in teaching history was important for students to understand the tentative nature of history knowledge and that gathering more perspectives about an event strengthens the interpretation.

Beyond building empathy, the teachers also framed the use of sources as a way to engage students since they are inherently interesting for students to read and analyze. For example, Kendall described:

I think our school is progressive … I think that we promote student engagement. This is going to sound really basic, but we really promote using visuals, and I think visuals are engaging. We promote using documents, but not overwhelming, extremely long ones, breaking them up, the corroboration that we’ve been doing. (Kendall interview 2)

Kendall referenced key historical reasoning skills like teaching students to construct interpretations even with conflicting evidence through corroboration. Additionally, she described strategies she used to help struggling readers, like chunking the texts and using visuals, demonstrating that the inclusion of primary sources, even challenging ones, were a commitment and a priority for her. The use of the term “progressive” shows a deliberate rejection of what she perceived to be traditional practices of teaching history.

Beyond primary sources as humanizing and engaging to teach and learn history, the teachers also mentioned the use of heuristics with primary sources, but the emphasis on the
process of heuristics varied by teacher. For example, Kendall’s previous example focused on corroboration of sources, a heuristic used within historical reasoning. Rose was the only teacher who explicitly stated that the heuristics of how to analyze sources was a way of knowing in history. She stated:

When I think of knowledge of history, I think of how do we know history, how do we learn history...In order to know history, we have to read history because that is where it is...I think of we need to go through those heuristics of history like sourcing, contextualization and corroboration. Then do that historiography. (Rose interview 1)

Rose clarified that “reading history” also includes visuals, video, and other non-print texts. She viewed the metacognitive use of heuristics as a way of constructing reasoned accounts of the past by evaluating and corroborating various kinds of evidence.

In the teachers’ descriptions of the use of authentic sources, most of the emphasis was about engaging with primary sources. Non-textbook secondary sources were mentioned as a way to expose students to expert historical commentary to supplement primary source study. None of the teachers mentioned utilizing secondary sources to deconstruct an author’s argument structure or conduct analysis. For example, when reflecting on her answers to the Beliefs About History Questionnaire, Kendall stated:

*Kendall:* Students who read many history books learned that the past is what the historian makes it to be. That’s an interesting question…

*Interviewer:* What do you think about it?

*Kendall:* I’m just like, I never thought of that. You read history books to learn that the past is what the historian makes it to be. I don’t know if students are aware of that.

*Interviewer:* That they don’t understand the argument going on?

*Kendall:* Right. It’s funny because I started becoming more aware of that as I taught [AP European History] because of the fact that it is such a biased book in many ways. I would read it, I’m like, ‘That’s really biased.’ All books are to an extent. I’ll be like, ‘Why are you spending so much time on this when you mention this briefly, but that’s in my opinion, pretty significant,’ but then someone would disagree with me. It’s interesting. (Kendall interview 1)
Kendall’s reaction to the statement showed that she knows students probably lack the skill of understanding the argument and bias but does not indicate that it should be included in her teaching of history.

**Contextualization.** Doing the work of a historian, especially in the interpretation of primary sources, includes contextualizing information into a time period, an idea emphasized in the facets of historical reasoning (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). Contextualization avoids making poor historical interpretations and arguments by acknowledging the conditions of a specific era, but the challenge of contextualization is how much information is needed to truly understand a moment in time. All of the teachers mentioned the importance of teacher-provided contextualization as a component of source analysis. For example, Rose was the most emphatic about the role of direct instruction to provide contextualization based on her own experiences when she was frustrated as a learner of history. She elaborated:

> I’m a firm believer of the importance in direct instruction and that kids need the schema. They need the background to be able to make the connections we want them to make. There is a place and a time for direct instruction and explicit instruction, and then there’s a place and time for making those connections and having the kids dig deeper into the sources in that. (Rose interview 1)

Another challenge of contextualization was how much was needed, an idea expressed by all three teachers. Mark described this most explicitly when elaborating on his role as the teacher in the history classroom. He said:

> Well, I guess there’s a content expertise that comes along with being the teacher and being the adult in the room…Part of my role is helping set up that situation or that environment, and that will spark their curiosity. It is a really important role the teacher has. Knowing what sources, information background that … What to put in front of them to help them interact with that learning. How much, how little, that’s something I always wrestle with, is how much context to give. How much background frontloading to give? That’s an important role of the teacher because if you just flop a document down in front of a kid and say go, they don’t know what to do with it. (Mark interview 2)
Mark referenced the challenge that confronts history teachers: there is always more information that could be provided to contextualize an era or a document. He admitted he struggled to know how much context was needed so students would interact with the document in a way that honored the author and time period but did not take too much time or was overwhelming. Mark’s use of the word “give” twice indicates that he viewed the contextualization process as inherently part of the teacher content expertise as the way to set the situation or environment.

Theme 2: Civic Responsibility

Another theme of the personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history was the concept that teaching history is bigger than the classroom and the content. The teachers perceived history knowledge as conceptual and incredibly relevant to students. In fact, the teachers spoke with urgency and passion about the importance of teaching history. The teachers felt it was their civic responsibility to foster student agency and civic responsibility.

Relevance of history. The teachers emphasized the relevancy of their content, especially regarding ways to foster civic responsibility to teach history. Each discussed a focus on bigger themes or ideas that students might meaningfully encounter in their own lives. Mark summed it up by stating:

I feel there’s something deeper to social studies…this belief has evolved definitely as I’ve been teaching about helping prepare citizens and voters and it’s not just about the content, it’s about the thinking that goes along with the questioning, the reasoning, the argument building. Those are all things that I really believe in that we’ve got probably the most important of the subjects. (Mark interview 1)

Mark emphasized the idea that he believed teaching history focused on the type of thinking that he wanted students to emulate as part of civic responsibility. The teachers each saw a direct
connection between what they teach and the world that their students will encounter. For example, Kendall described that

probably the biggest thing [in history] is making a claim in an argument and proving with the evidence… In our society I feel, [to] be a strong…American citizen or global citizen is you could have your ideas, but you’ve got to backup with true facts that are of great sources. (Kendall interview 1)

Kendall’s use of the phrases “true facts” and “great sources” spoke to the idea that she believed people in American society were lacking the basic fundamentals of making a strong argument with credible evidence or deconstructing an argument to evaluate it. The teachers saw teaching history not simply as a job and their own passion, but as their own civic responsibility to help foster strong citizenship values.

The teachers all used the idea of relevance as a way to plan for their teaching through a concept or a question. For example, Mark described that he uses this question as a filter right now: “How does it affect our world nowadays, or how does it affect our role as citizens?” (Mark interview 5). Rose said that during her planning, she “starts [with] today and goes back to understand where we are in our world” (Rose interview 2). These filters revealed the personal epistemological beliefs of the teachers in how they perceived what students should know when teaching history.

Additionally, the use of strong questions increased the relevance of their teaching to move toward civic responsibility. Mark, for example, summarized the different types of questions by describing his belief in the power of open-ended questions where there’s not necessarily a right or wrong answer. There’s probably like the idea that students get to be historians and draw their conclusions about it. I think that’s an important thing. Where, yes, there might be fact-based questions when it comes to like the understanding of the concept, but I think I’m turning it into an open-ended question for when it’s something bigger, analytical. (Mark interview 5)
Mark valued that a meaningful open-ended question brought authenticity to what was being studied and deepened the analysis. He recognized the purposes of different types of questions like fact-based and open-ended as playing a role in his teaching of history. Rose, similarly, asked students to develop their own questions for an on-going historical inquiry project. She said:

We’re spending today developing our compelling and supporting questions of what they want to research, and moving away from the informative how has ‘insert question here’ to something that they can take a stance on, that they can take a perspective on, that they can contribute. (Rose Interview 5)

This description captured her ideas of student agency and voice through historical questioning and argumentation, skills perceived to be relevant to develop civic responsibility.

Changes in practice. The teachers recognized moments in their career when their views changed about teaching history and increasing the emphasis on civic competence. Mark detailed the incremental evolution of his thinking about knowledge and knowing in history, which eventually led to

the idea that it’s not just college and career ready but civic ready too. One is analyzing primary sources: how does one become a better voter or a better citizen that can read between the lines. I think that’s probably been the stuff that’s happened most recently that’s taking me to where I am right now. (Mark interview 5)

Mark viewed his learning as ongoing and constantly being refined. Kendall noted a change in her instructional practices and her perception of newer instructional practices related to the growth in her content knowledge, which helped make stronger connections. She described:

When I started…, you rely [on notes] a lot because you don’t know the content as well. I don’t think you can make as many [connections]. Well, it’s just I would have to literally have a sheet of paper about what’s going on in the background because I didn’t know that, or I knew I did, I wasn’t comfortable with it…

I was much more conservative when I started [teaching]. I was like, ‘This, this, this, and this.’ Now, I’m open to new ideas. (Kendall interview 5)
Kendall viewed her initial growth as a teacher as mastering content knowledge during instruction, which eventually evolved into a confidence that helped her feel more “comfortable” with other instructional practices, something she would not have been able to do her first years of teaching.

In addition to being more comfortable with teaching, they each recognized the changes to their practices, especially to increase the relevance of history for the students. For example, Mark said, “Every time I do a lesson I want to try to connect it back to something relevant and meaningful for students. I think that’s something that is a belief of mine that has solidified and I’ve evolved that I now try to do on a regular basis” (Mark interview 5). He said early in his career he focused more on vocabulary and chronological thinking rather than conceptual themes and ideas, similar to Kendall’s description. Mark’s use of the term “solidified” captured the idea that he saw his own beliefs as tentative and then became more firm with perceived evidence that supported them. For Mark, and the rest of the teachers, this meant that evolving his practices to include more active engagement and doing the work of historians was something that became more important over time.

Each teacher recognized that early in their career, they struggled to balance the teaching of history dynamically while also learning to teach the content like Kendall described. As they began teaching, they formed a vision of practice that imitated a favorite teacher or avoided replicating a teacher they did not like. These particular teachers became markers of comparison for them. For example, Rose emotionally described two pivotal educators for her. She said:
[My seventh grade teacher] really started this intense interest not only in history but women’s history and that really carried on until it got killed by my junior year history teacher…He would have us read out the textbook every night and then he’d read us those same pages in class every day. At that time, he killed my passion for the subject but on the other hand he really solidified me what my career choice was going to be, which was teaching. That year, as much as I hated history…I think now that that’s what solidified for me when I wanted to be a teacher because I didn’t want to put kids through that, like, ‘Don’t kill history for people.’ I decided I want to be a teacher like my 7th grade Social Studies teacher… it wasn’t the teaching. It was everything that he did around it, that was the teaching and the connections he made. (Rose interview 1)

Rose’s detailed description of these two educators, who communicated different messages about epistemology in history, in her own learning demonstrated the ongoing influence on her thinking. Mark also described an educator who exposed him to a different type of history learning that he said formed the basis of his teaching. He elaborated:

I do remember, it was either the sophomore or junior year… it was the first time [I] was …exposed to not the textbook…we read some of the primary sources about like Las Casas and another version of what Columbus was doing. I remember that was kind of eye-opening; he always just said...shift your paradigm. That was kind of something that made me think that there’s more to this than just the story, right? That there’s something deeper to it. I know the professor of college who really pushed this idea about making us understand not just the content, but like historiography and how you do history. That was kind of a big one and I normally started doing a lot more of the disciplinary literacy stuff here that I think is what really clicked. It unlocks kind of the approach that I’ve really kind of embraced. It has to the back of my mind. But that was, I think what really helped me solidify exactly what it is and what I’m going to be trying to do. (Mark interview 1)

In Mark’s description, his teacher who communicated active epistemological beliefs about history had influenced how he wanted to teach. When he experienced professional learning about disciplinary literacy, he realized how to make his vision happen through tools and methods. Kendall, like Rose and Mark, had an educator who really shared his passion for teaching with his students through active engagement with historical reasoning. She described:
My senior year of high school. I just remember [my teacher]. He always stands out to me because he was very energetic and passionate. He taught us, it wasn’t just like, ‘Here. Go do this.’ He instructed us, but he was passionate. We had music, we looked at lots of visuals, and I just enjoyed the discussion conversations. I remembered that class, and it’s so bizarre. Especially since we’re redesigning US history, I always think about how that was current stuff but it was related more. That’s my inspiration. (Kendall interview 1)

Kendall’s priority of visuals and sharing passion were inspired by this teacher. Even as her practices changed over time, her vision of this ideal environment remained for her as she built her own classroom.

In summary, research question 1 explored the personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history. The beliefs focused on evidence and authentic sources and the importance of civic responsibility, including the challenges related to each and the growth over time of each teacher.

### Major Themes Related to Research Question 2

The findings of this study revealed two major themes related to research question 2: How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about learning history? The first major theme was the flip-side of the theme related to teaching history: for students to learn history, they must engage in the processes outlined as part of the criterialist stance of history knowledge and historical reasoning skills. The second theme concerned the importance of the classroom environment to learning history. These themes and related subthemes are depicted in Table 6. These themes were gathered through in-depth interviews of the three teachers as well as the Beliefs About History Questionnaire.
Table 6
Research Question 2 Aligned to Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Theme: Criterialist Stance</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. How do veteran secondary history teachers describe their personal epistemological beliefs about learning history?</td>
<td>Active Engagement with Historical Reasoning</td>
<td>Role of Authentic Sources</td>
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Theme 1: Learning History Requires Active Engagement with Historical Reasoning

The teachers described elements of the criterialist stance in their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history as outlined in the findings of research question 1. Based on the information previously described, the teachers believed that for students to learn history, they should be able to do the work of historians, engage with historical sources and questions, and practice the components of civic responsibility. Mark summed it up in his description of why it was important for students to learn history actively:

The whole point of this is for them to take the next step in their knowledge and abilities. If we want them to be good voters and good historians that can understand the context of why we’re here, then it shouldn’t be passive or easy for them, that sometimes they have to grapple with tough questions. Sometimes they have to stake claims and pick a side…I think the biggest thing is that students have to be involved in. It’s got to be meaningful for them. (Mark interview 5)

Mark’s comments included the concepts of both discrete knowledge and processes, relevant and meaningful learning experiences, and rigorous critical thinking tasks. Like Mark, Kendall and Rose emphasized that the students needed to be actively engaged with the many components of historical reasoning to learn history.
Additionally, the teachers captured the nonlinear cognitive process and the perseverance necessary for students to learn history. Rose described the idea of the messiness by stating:

When the struggle is real; that is when learning is happening too. Because they’re mucking through it because learning is mucking in and history is mucking in. I think when they’re struggling with a concept is also when learning is happening. Because they’re trying. It’s not always those great, ‘Aha’ moments, but sometimes when you’re really digging in with the kid and working hard with them because they’re still sticking there with you. They haven’t given up on it. (Rose interview 2)

Her use of the word “mucking” and “digging” indicated that learning history should not be easy nor clear, a reference to the tentative nature of knowledge in history. Rose alluded to the classroom learning environment in which students would be encouraged for persevering through a challenging learning task.

Mark also described the cognitive struggle that students should engage in to learn history. He stated, “Students have to be hands-on, minds-on. Students have to be thinking and questioning and challenging” (Mark interview 5). Mark’s phrase “hands-on, minds-on” indicated that the learning task was rigorous for students that it took student effort and cognitive challenge for students. Kendall emphasized this even further as she stated that student engagement as one of her two core beliefs about students learning history. She elaborated:

Another core belief is, I think, engagement, and engagement does not always mean the student’s just on their own, looking at a computer screen. I think engagement can be, sometimes, it’s literally taking notes and listening to others, it could be a student presentation, a teacher presentation. Engagement could just be looking at visuals and engaging in that, doing something, but I think there’s different parts of what that looks like. (Kendall interview 2)

Kendall’s priority of engagement shows her belief that students must be active in many different methods and modes to learn history.
The use of authentic sources was a key idea in the personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history as previously described with research question 1. When talking about reading and accessing sources for students to learn history, there were differences in how the teachers viewed the role of these sources. For example, Rose saw the use of sources as primarily for students to engage with historical reasoning and creation of knowledge in history. This is shown in her about how people know and learn history:

> When I think of knowledge of history, I think of how do we know history, how do we learn history. For me, history is about interpretation. In order to know history, we have to read history because that is where it is. It’s a written format primarily. Since in the last century, it’s also become a visual history that is whether you’re reading a book or reading a movie, it’s still reading a text. I think of we need to go through those heuristics of history: the sourcing and contextualization and corroboration. Then do that historiography. What does this person’s interpretation of history contribute? (Rose interview 1)

Rose’s description focused heavily on use of texts for students to learn history and the processes of history. She believed that to learn history is to read, access, and analyze text while also seeking out evidence for interpretation and argumentation.

The idea of accessing texts, especially visuals, was also important to Kendall, specifically as part of a repertoire of methods to engage students in class. She described:

> I think [students] learn [history] differently. That’s why I try to mix things up. Depending on the audience…They seem to do well if you are energetic, you ask higher level questions, you use a lot of visuals, you give them sources. (Kendall interview 1)

Kendall saw the use of sources as inherently interesting to students, which increased their attention to the learning and as a way to apply the content students had learned through critical thinking. She did not focus on the heuristics of source analysis as part of knowledge and learning in history. Kendall’s personal epistemological beliefs about learning history focused on using texts as a way to study concepts and practice historical interpretation.
In his response on the Beliefs about History Questionnaire Mark initially disagreed with the statement “good general reading and comprehension skills are enough to learn history well.”

During his interview, he clarified:

[This statement] is interesting though. As I look at that now, you do need good reading and comprehension skills. That is an important part, but I feel like, I think why I said disagree is there’s a lot of other thinking skills that go along with this. The [statement] about the argument creation kind of the sorting and the outlining an organization of evidence and the weighing of evidence that I think, yes, to get the input is there but then you have to do the thinking about the material once you put it into your brain. (Mark interview 1)

Mark’s clarification emphasized that while reading was important to learning history, it was not the central nor most important historical reasoning skill in his mind. Mark’s use of the word “input” and the phrase “put it into your brain” indicated that he saw reading in history as a way of learning and engaging with content knowledge to build arguments. The phrase “weighing of evidence” referenced back to asking students to consider the strength of evidence to form an interpretation and argument. He said he saw many different types of thinking as important in the process of learning history, but it was not as simple as he perceived comprehension; the thinking was much more complex and unique to the discipline.

Aligning assessment of learning tasks that reflect definitions of knowledge and knowing.

Since personal epistemological beliefs relate to knowledge and knowing, what teachers defined as evidence of learning from students was important. Each teacher discussed how they assessed student learning in history, referencing much of general research about assessment practices: informal, formative, summative, and discrete knowledge assessments. They discussed checking for student understanding routinely as part of the learning process. Mark talked about assessment by suggesting there are many different ways students can show their learning. He said:
Formative assessments help, just to solidify like, ‘Okay, we see the reactions to their poster, their statement on things or the way kids are talking and they correspond sort of the avenue.’ Those things all show learning. I think you can tell during those active periods, based on body language. If they’re leaning into it. If they’re looking over to their other partners’ stuff like hand gestures.

Those are all of the sort of things that show-- I guess that show engagement. I think it’s showing learning because they’re learning skill stuff and communication skills. We have so many. You can engage the learning in a gajillion different ways. That’s kind of hard to pinpoint down. (Mark interview 2).

Mark’s statement revealed much about the complexity of assessing to what extent students have learned history. The informal cues of engagement told him that learning was happening, but “hard to pinpoint down” referenced the amount of choices he felt he had to assess students on their learning, especially with “skill stuff” and “communication skills” that might be beyond historical reasoning processes. Since the knowledge and processes of historical knowledge are complex, it presented a challenge for the way a teacher might gather information or measure as to whether a student has learned history.

When it came to more history-specific assessment practices, each articulated what they look for as evidence to show student learning in history. The indications of learning related to their personal epistemological beliefs about knowledge in history. For example, Rose said:

I see the light go off, it’s in their eyes…When conversations, discussions and there’s great participation and they’re making those deeper connections even to today, or just something that to that person might seem innocuous and no connection whatsoever, but in their minds they’re trying to understand this and this is the process by which they’re understanding that. (Rose interview 2)

Rose’s description showed that she valued deeper connections or informal cues students are processing to develop insight into the concept, something common to all teaching. But her reference to “deeper connections even to today” indicated she saw learning in history uniquely as seeing patterns and relationships across time periods in history through themes or ideas,
something that she said she valued as knowledge. Rose’s explanation also acknowledged something that she cannot see – the mental processes students were engaged in to make meaning as a component of learning in history.

Kendall also defined the methods she used to assess student understanding, which emphasized the variety of techniques she used to check for different types of knowledge. She said:

You do ticket in the doors and you do your summative and your formatives and things. I think a lot of it too, though, is just the sense of the conversation going on in the class. Granted it’s not everybody, but you can tell when people are getting it and then you do your more formal checks. I think it’s a feeling too. I know this sounds weird, but sometimes you’re just, they’ll look at you, you’re like, ‘Yes, you don’t get this, so let’s stop and let’s— ‘Things like that. It’s also conversations based on discussions in class. Really, you have got to check along the way, different ways and it can just be like a homework, assignment on classroom too. You’re like, ‘All right. They got that skill. They don’t know that.’ Again, it’s the time and being able to do that, which is overwhelming. (Kendall interview 2)

Like the other teachers, Kendall valued the informal feel of the class as an indication of learning, especially through conversations. Kendall also captured a key challenge of “time” and the “overwhelming” nature of assessment in history. This was similar to Mark’s statement of the “gajillion” different ways to engage students. The teachers all acknowledged the varying assessment methods but showed that they were overwhelmed by the many indications of what could constitute knowledge and knowing for students.

Theme 2: Learning History Requires a Safe Classroom Environment

Although personal epistemological beliefs about history concern the nature of knowledge and knowing in history, the teachers all emphasized that a safe classroom environment was a
precursor to any learning in a history classroom and safe classroom environments foster a safe place for discussions.

**Safe classroom environment as a pre-requisite to learning.** Each teacher was emphatic that no learning of history could occur without students’ basic social-emotional needs being met and strong teacher-student relationships. They stressed the effort, time, and considerations they use to make personal connections with students to build a safe classroom. Mark described learning in history as something that could occur when some of those big things of their social, emotional needs are met. They’re not hungry, they aren’t worried about big family issues or boyfriend/girlfriend issues. There’s not some of those bigger mass loaded distractions that might be out there. I think they learn best when there’s a sense of efficacy and there’s a puzzle there, where it’s challenging enough, but they also have enough background knowledge to interact with it and they’re interested in it. (Mark interview 2).

Mark felt that the emotional needs of students were a significant part in any attempt to learn history. Mark’s use of the word “efficacy” also indicated he felt the students should feel that they had the capacity to do the work he gave them, another component of social-emotional learning in his classroom that he would have to address. In Mark’s description, social-emotional learning and a cognitive challenge together helped students best learn history.

Kendall viewed the stability of a classroom as a key component to learning history and acknowledged the pride she takes in the relationships she builds with students. She boasted, “I think that’s something I’m proud of just because I think that’s good teaching and students need that and being a teenager is chaotic enough” (Kendall interview 2). Kendall elaborated on her classroom environment:

My classroom is not boring…I come in by convincing the kids that I like what I do, and that I want to be there…that I can come in and the environment is very welcoming, and it’s something that they can laugh in, and the environment is not…boring. (Kendall interview 2)
Kendall’s description framed learning history in an environment that was exciting, welcoming, and open. The language of selling the learning of history through words like “convincing” meant that it mattered to Kendall that students liked her and the class. Kendall added that she felt this was a change she experienced over her years in education. She said, “It was just more that personal connection in teaching now than in the past…Now, a lot of teaching is just having—the kids seem to know you care” (Kendall interview 5). Since history knowledge is complex and required deep thinking, students must feel comfortable taking risks to offer interpretations, stances, and ideas throughout the process of learning. Each teacher saw themselves as trusted adults for students to depend on and an essential component to teaching history effectively. The teachers felt that a central part of the classroom environment was about a feeling of comfort and respect. Rose described her strength as

the rapport with my kids and the relationships that I build with them. That creates a very rich learning environment where they feel free to share their opinions and they feel free to discuss and ask questions where they didn’t feel that comfort level, they may not be willing to do that. Then the whole classroom suffers as a result. (Rose interview 2)

The use of the phrase “rich learning environment” emphasized that she believed each student offered something other students should find valuable. Rose viewed the relationships with the teacher and the other students as important to developing a classroom climate essential to learning history. Mark echoed this sentiment by elaborating on the environment of respect:

Respect is a big one where kids can feel comfortable sharing their ideas and that their ideas will not get shut down right away. Especially as we’re all kind of formulating and thinking through things. It’s not going to come out perfect the first time we say things. I think that sort of culture and environment matters where it’s about pushing each other rather than trying to say, ‘I’m right and my answer is better’ in this or that. (Mark interview 1)

Mark saw that learning history was challenging and difficult, so the classroom environment needed to be a safe place for students to reveal their struggles in learning. The classroom
environment played a critical role in setting the foundation for the process of knowledge creation in history. Without personal connections and respect, the learning activities that support epistemological learning like discussion, historical argumentation, making connections, and interpretation would not be as impactful within a classroom.

Safe classroom environment to foster discussions to learn history. In addition to the students feeling respected and an important part of the whole, each teacher saw the classroom environment as key because they believed students learn history best when given time to discuss and process with other people. Kendall described what learning looked like to her. She said: “If the conversations are happening…and they were doing collaboration and they have to answer [a question] ...The fact that they were talking about it and they’re debating … it was good. You could tell they were learning” (Kendall interview 2). Kendall saw the importance of classroom conversations and collaboration as an integral part of the learning process in history and something she considered as an assessment of whether students were learning. This kind of busy space was necessary to process and discuss key historical topics as a process of learning in history.

Mark and Rose were just as emphatic about the importance of the whole class environment as conducive to students revealing their thought processes. Mark described it as something he valued, especially as part of his own experiences as a learner of history:

I think [student interpretation] helps make it a good learning environment for the kids. Collaborative or kind of group environment and sense where you can bounce ideas off one another, they’re sharing, there’s discussing. I’m thinking back to my professor who challenged our thinking. They’re just challenging thinking and pushing each other. I think those are all important factors. It’s hard to get that all the time in one single lesson, but I think all those things are relevant to good environments for learning. (Mark interview 1)
The significance of the classroom environment was key to learning history for Mark because of the process of discussion. He acknowledged that the vision he had of discussion did not occur every day but was something he strived toward. Mark also referenced himself as a learner of history in his efforts to emulate a learning environment that was effective for him.

Rose saw discussion as a method to better understand the connections between history and the current day, a component of her personal epistemological beliefs about teaching history. She also saw a safe classroom environment as necessary to foster the connections while learning history:

There’s a lot of discussion, there’s a lot of conversation, a lot of processing of what did somebody mean when they said something, especially understand the context in which it was written and how can we apply it to our context today, why it is still important in today’s realm. (Rose interview 2)

Rose’s description showed that she guided a thought process for students to use for the historical reasoning skill of contextualization through the conversations in her classroom, showing what to question, ask, and contextualize to create relevance to today. The teachers saw the role of conversations and discussion among classmates as essential to learning history, as it allowed for more connections, different perspectives, and more depth.

In summary, research question 2 explored personal epistemological beliefs about learning history. The teachers viewed engaging students in historical reasoning processes and a safe classroom environment as key components of learning history.

**Major Themes Related to Research Question 3**

Research question 3 asked: How do veteran secondary history teachers enact their personal epistemological beliefs? This question examined the means by which the teachers
thought about and acted on their personal epistemological beliefs. Two themes emerged through in-depth interviews of the three teachers: 1) teachers were aware of the role of enacted beliefs and 2) the teachers saw their personal epistemological beliefs as communicated to students through their passion for teaching history. These themes, and related subthemes, are depicted in Table 7 below.

Table 7

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Theme 1: Teachers were Cognizant of the Role of Enacted Beliefs

The teachers all demonstrated awareness of how their beliefs served as a filter in lesson design, classroom interactions, and reflection. The awareness of their beliefs were expressed explicitly in how they planned and also provided criteria for the success or criticism of a lesson.

Rose explained that her beliefs were enacted to serve as a filter for her thinking, thereby influencing her design and her instruction. She described:

> My beliefs about instruction definitely influences student learning, but I’m also very [explicit] with [students] of why I do the things I do and the way I do it. The flip side, if you look at your personal beliefs, also when you are overt about it, definitely influences. I think even when you’re trying not to, it comes out in your teaching. As much as we say we want to keep our beliefs and our biases, it influences how you teach and it influences the way you teach. Students who are paying attention will pick up on it. (Rose interview 5)
Rose’s acknowledged several ideas, including the “influence” of beliefs on student learning through the choices teachers make while teaching. She also suggested that beliefs have influence whether someone is aware of them or not. Her statement that “students who are paying attention will pick up on it” seemed to indicate that she sees the divorce of a teacher’s beliefs as impossible in her teaching and that they are implicitly communicated to students. Rose’s description revealed that she was aware of the intertwined nature of her beliefs used during the complex act of teaching.

Mark, similar to Rose, was conscious of how his beliefs were enacted specifically in lesson design. He stated, “Beliefs…lead into the preparation and how you design lessons, and the layers you want kids to get out of it” (Mark interview 5). Mark was aware that the decisions he enacted during his lesson design were influenced through the many types of beliefs he used as a filter. He said:

[My teaching practices reflect a stated belief but] it may not always be necessarily about history. It could be like social-emotional learning or use of Ed-tech or whatever. You’ve probably realized by now that I’m not wanting to just do things for the sake of doing it…I really need to know the why behind something myself before I do it. I’m not just going to do it for the sake of it. (Mark interview 5)

Mark’s description, like Rose, illustrated the complexity of the many interconnected beliefs that he considered when enacting beliefs in planning, instruction, and reflection. He showed cognizance of the many beliefs about teaching, not just history, but how they support each other.

Deviating from beliefs. Additionally, each teacher was conscious of occasions when their actions deviated from their beliefs, the opposite of enacting their beliefs. The teachers all identified time as one of the reasons. Mark, for example, said that his instructional practices deviated from his beliefs when
we’re getting close to a test, and knowing that there’s a time crunch there that maybe then it becomes a little bit more direct instruction than normally what I would like. I think time constraints is probably the biggest thing that prevents me from fully teaching the way I want to. (Mark interview 5)

Mark saw the pressure of time as an explanation as to his shift to direct instruction, focusing on the discrete content knowledge for students to be successful on an upcoming assessment.

Kendall’s response was very similar to Mark’s. She said:

Sometimes, there’s a practice we need to rush through stuff just to get it done. I hope I’m saying that right, that sometimes, you have to do that, and I don’t like it. I’ve done that in US [history] a lot, especially when you get closer to the semester, and you’re just like, ‘Isn’t that the first unit we’re doing?’ And you’re like, ‘Oh God, I got to finish this,’ and you go through it. (Kendall interview 5)

Kendall’s description of when she chose not to enact her beliefs was based on outside constraints like a semester end or unit timing. Her use of the phrase “go through it” implied that covering the content was sometimes the right choice for her based on these constraints. She also showed awareness of when this deviation occurred.

Rose discussed how enacting beliefs also becomes more problematic with the challenge of common curriculum maps built on assumptions about knowledge and knowing in history that might differ among colleagues. Rose thought that since teachers have varying beliefs, curriculum maps were a challenge. She said:

That’s why we can have a common curriculum in front of us, but your beliefs about education and my beliefs about education are going to influence the way we teach that. We can have the same outcome, but how our kids end up completing that outcome may be completely different, because our beliefs influence the way we instruct it along the way. (Rose interview 5)

Rose’s statement showed that she believed her enacted beliefs and those of her colleagues influenced the instruction that they provide. Since she saw beliefs as a filter for planning and delivering instruction, curriculum maps can cause a teacher to deviate from their beliefs or
ignore the curriculum map. She framed the statement with the idea that curriculum maps are a starting point for all teachers to have some common ground, but individual teacher beliefs, if not shared as a group, will influence how the curriculum map is interpreted and implemented.

Developing awareness of beliefs. The teachers all expressed increased awareness of their beliefs through the research process and saw it as a positive influence. Mark explained, “Now that we’ve taken a step back, [I realize] how much [my beliefs] really do drive a lot of my lesson planning and unit planning. Maybe a variety of sources too” (Mark interview 5). Mark’s comment showed that the process of articulating his beliefs through this research process helped him reflect on the influence his beliefs had on his practices. Kendall also saw a positive outcome from her reflection on her personal epistemological beliefs:

It’s actually a bit really interesting, to be honest with you, even just watching the video when we teach. I don’t think we’ve ever done that with anyone. We never really had to do that when we were becoming [a teacher]. It was all hours of just [a] test. That was interesting. I don’t know, just realizing that there’s a lot of stuff that I do is good, and then there’s other stuff that no. It’s just it makes you realize that it’s okay not to be perfect, and that it’s okay. You don’t have to be perfect every day. Your work’s not going to end, and the kids won’t even know. That’s my big thing. (Kendall interview 5)

Kendall’s description showed that she viewed teaching as an ongoing process of learning for the teacher. The phrase “the kids won’t even know” indicated that she viewed her teaching, flaws and all, as still strong for students even if she was not entirely satisfied with it. She was comfortable with the slow and steady evolution and enactment of all of her beliefs, including ones related to personal epistemology. The research process helped her pause and consider her enacted beliefs.
Theme 2: Personal Epistemological Beliefs Were Communicated to Students Through Passion

The teachers felt that the manner in which they enacted their personal epistemological beliefs was important, as the beliefs were essential to increase the rigor in their classroom, communicate their passion to students, and keep up high energy and engagement because they believed the study of history was important. Mark, for example, felt that awareness of his personal epistemological beliefs increased the rigor in his classroom and his expectations for student learning. He described:

If you don’t have a lot of passionate beliefs then what the kids might walk away from, it’s probably just going to be a lot more superficial and low depth of knowledge, maybe content recall kind of stuff. But if there’s something more, if you’ve got certain beliefs about like the purpose behind the skills or the content, or what we’re doing with citizenship. To me, I feel like yes, the stronger your beliefs, the higher you set bars for kids. I think if you don’t have a lot of strong beliefs then the kids probably won’t be asked to get as much out of it. (Mark interview 5)

Mark’s response acknowledges that a person’s epistemological beliefs are essential to challenge students to better understand the many complexities in history. It raised the expectation for what students could do and practice. He further described:

Yes, because what’s the point? I mean…a kid can easily say, well this has already happened. It’s not good enough to just say, ‘Because.’ Or it’s in the curriculum. If I can’t look a kid in the eye and tell them why this lesson matters and why it’s worth doing, then I don’t want to do that lesson, if I don’t believe in it. We used to do… more lessons on Manifest Destiny or the Gilded Age or this or that, and we might as well utilize the important concepts and the important ideas, and the important documents and leverage those the most and get the most out of them, rather than doing less with the important ideas and the important documents in order to cover more stuff. I think there has got to be- beliefs really do matter, because what else are you doing it for? How else is it going to take you from point A to point B or C or beyond? If there is not a good reason and purpose behind it. (Mark interview 5)
Mark’s response showed the passion he felt about the role of his enacted beliefs. He suggested that the time he has with students needed to be about the important concepts and ideas because it made a difference for students now and in their future lives beyond the classroom. This passion kept him, as a teacher, highly invested and engaged in trying new ways to enact his beliefs and motivated to keep learning.

Rose used similarly strong language about the “faith” she has to have in a lesson to teach it well. She described:

I think when I try to teach somebody else’s developed lesson that I don’t have faith in, that I don’t understand, that I don’t think— If I can’t wrap my brain around something and understand how A, it’s going to function, but B, how it is going to further— The learning of the students and allow them to make those connections, if I struggle, I know my kids are going to struggle. I have a hard time teaching something I don’t have faith in. Then it goes back to the question you have of, does your beliefs influence your teaching? It definitely comes across. Kids feel your passion. They feel your dedication to something, and they feel when you’re not passionate or dedicated to something. When you’re teaching something that’s not something you believe in, or something that is something you’re comfortable with, they pick up on that, and learning is affected as a result. I know all this, and I can all this, and yet we still all do it in the classroom because our beliefs are core to who we are. I think that when I’ve most usually deviated is when I’m giving a lesson that I don’t have full confidence in, and probably still don’t even understand how it’s supposed to work or how it’s supposed to function. Then, of course, it ends up being a failure because I set it up for failure in my own lack of confidence and understanding about it. (Rose interview 5)

Rose thought that her enacted beliefs must show the passion and “dedication” she felt for the content, which inspired students to work their hardest. It was also essential for her to mentally rehearse and visualize of a lesson sequence so she had the confidence to teach it. Kendall also saw enacted personal epistemological beliefs as key to rigor and engagement for students:

[The teachers’] beliefs [are important] not only on the material they’re doing but the way that they’ve presented. If you’re somebody that, I don’t know, if you’re somebody that sees teaching as just a job, to come in and out, that’s going to reflect that. If you’re here, excited about what you’re doing and looking forward to innovating every year, then
that’s going to reflect, definitely. Unfortunately, if you have a certain view of things, that comes across. As teachers, you have to show other sides, but sometimes, it’s hard not to. It was very hard in 2016 with the election, but we did it [laughs]. (Kendall interview 5)

Kendall’s statement acknowledged the role of enacting her beliefs in planning and instruction but also communicating high expectations to students about learning in history by her passion. The saw the teacher mindset as essential to the success of student learning.

In summary, research question 3 asked: How do veteran secondary history teachers enact their personal epistemological beliefs. The question explored the means by which the teachers thought about and acted on their personal epistemological beliefs, which were revealed in the complexity of beliefs that co-exist in the classroom. The teachers saw that their enacted beliefs were evident in lesson design and classroom instruction as a filter in instructional decisions. They also viewed enacted beliefs as a way to increase rigor related to the complexities of knowledge in history and communicated teacher passion about teaching history.

Major Themes Related to Research Question 4

Research question 4 asked: How do veteran secondary history teachers demonstrate congruency between their described beliefs and history teaching practices? This question connected the previously described beliefs with actual instructional practices. There are three themes that emerged related to this research question: 1) teachers described beliefs were most evident in lesson design, 2) during instruction, teacher actions reflected some of their described personal epistemological beliefs, and 3) teacher reflections were based on criteria related to their described beliefs. These themes, and related subthemes, are depicted in Table 8. The themes were gathered through in-depth interviews of varying formats and classroom observations of the three teachers.
Table 8
Research Question 4 Aligned to Themes

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**Theme 1: Stated Personal Epistemological Beliefs Were Most Evident in Lesson Design**

The teachers all demonstrated congruence with their described personal epistemological beliefs in their planning thought process. During the think aloud interview, the teachers articulated their lesson design and purpose. Across the three teachers, three major areas of congruency were evident: 1) use of authentic sources, 2) focus on historical reasoning, and 3) small group work.

**Use of authentic sources.** When teachers were asked to plan for the lesson that reflected their described beliefs, each teacher purposefully designed a lesson that centered on the use of authentic sources, one of their described beliefs about teaching and learning history. Rose discussed the use of seven documents to help students evaluate the leadership of Alexander the Great in her European History class. She focused on the importance of the variety of the sources so she could engage in the heuristics that students should utilize. She described, “[Students] have to write down what the source is, who is the author and when was it written. They have to do the
sourcing, and then they have to explain whether it’s credible or not” (Rose interview 3). Rose anticipated the challenges students would most likely encounter with these authentic sources. She described that students would try to

look at those purposes and from there make that judgment about credibility. In some cases, they won’t be able to get all that information. Also talking about when it’s translated, what is lost in translation, because a lot of these are translated documents. Things don’t translate directly and when time moves; things meant different things at different times. (Rose interview 3)

Even with these challenges, Rose emphasized that it was important for students to work through the process of evaluating authentic sources, a teaching practice that showed congruence with her described personal epistemological beliefs about the use of sources for thinking like a historian and students being cognitively challenged. Although Rose anticipated the student misconceptions, she did not want to warn the students ahead of time so she could better assess their skills through observing their attempts at evaluating sources early in the school year.

Mark also planned to utilize authentic sources in his lesson to build context for the activity that followed. For example, in his lesson about the election of 1800, Mark planned to use a YouTube video made from primary sources. He described:

There’s campaign commercials where they take the real language, the words that the guys printed in different plan pamphlets or whatever but then they put it to their faces and voices in the background of like Thomas Jefferson wants this…John Adams thinks that. I always like to use that as the sense of-- because another frame of reference as we go through it is how is this election similar to nowadays, how is it different from nowadays because everything’s all politics so awful nowadays. It’s pretty rough and tumble but I mean that is a touchstone of the election of 1800. How the awful things that two of them said about each other former friends and now they can’t speak for so long afterwards. That concept, that whole president versus competing is as vice president has some oddities and weirdness and incorporated with all that. Give them some that background context, watch a little bit of those videos and some of their reactions. Obviously, there’s a lot of laughter that goes into. The kids watching the concept, like this and that.
Again, I think that helps also situating and give them a visual and a frame of reference, like the heroes the language of the time period as well too. Just a little bit of a lecture burst or some direct instruction there to help their readings make a little bit more sense. (Mark interview 3)

Mark’s description about the campaign commercials demonstrated congruency to other personal epistemological beliefs. For example, when he mentioned a comparison to politics today, he saw how his lesson was relevant to students’ lives and to help them understand their own world better. He did not say how explicit he would make this connection, as the lesson’s purpose was to understand the importance of the election of 1800. Another belief in his description of the primary source video was an effort to build the context of the time period as a “frame of reference” for students to use in their historical reasoning activity, a different way to contextualize a moment in history beyond direct instruction. His idea of planning for the engagement showed congruency with the idea of building a welcoming and accessible learning environment.

Kendall also selected a lesson that featured a significant use of authentic sources as an engaging way to apply understanding of the era. Her lesson asked students to analyze advertisements from the 1950s to study culture, especially in comparison to the 1920s, which she had taught earlier in the school year. She described:

I started looking up themes of 1950s advertisements and they’re similar to 1920s, but there’s a little bit different. One is gender roles…being intertwined with that ideal American dream of the housewife… Also, ideas of television bringing in things like the suburb life… I was hoping to find different advertisements that show a lot of the terms here. They would learn about these terms through advertisements like suburbs, gender roles, [and] nuclear family. (Kendall interview 3)

Kendall’s use of authentic sources to engage students with key ideas from the 1950s reflected her belief about the power of visuals in history. The lesson did not focus on the heuristics of the sources but was a means to apply discrete knowledge and conceptual knowledge of a time period
for historical interpretation. She utilized this structure because she said students expressed that they loved the activity from the previous unit, which supported her beliefs about building community and engagement with students.

The lessons centered on authentic sources demonstrated congruency to the beliefs of each of the teachers even though they intended to use the sources for different purposes. Rose focused on heuristics to support interpretation. Mark used the sources to engage students and build context, and Kendall saw the sources as engaging students and a fun way to support their historical interpretation.

Focus on historical reasoning. In the planning and design process, the teachers designed lessons in which students engaged in historical reasoning skills like argumentation to answer a conceptual question and meta-concepts relevant to students’ lives, elements congruent to their described beliefs.

In her design, Rose planned for students to develop a claim to answer the question, “Does Alexander deserve the title of ‘the Great’?” (Rose interview 3) based on the documents they analyzed. This question, although pertinent to the time period being studied, also showed relevance across eras to the concept of leadership qualities. Rose talked about the importance of her lesson about Alexander the Great to help students consider characteristics of leadership. She described, “We talk about Alexander and what does it mean to be great versus good, moral and ethics versus the veracity of what they are able to achieve” (Rose interview 3). She continued this description by talking about how she planned to use the idea of leadership to hook the students on the learning. “I ask the question, ‘What makes a great leader’, and…students start to brainstorm different characteristics of what a great leader is…We’ll put those characteristics up on a board and what does it mean to be a great leader” (Rose interview 3). Rose centered her
lesson around a bigger idea and question to show students the relevance to their own lives by connecting to a time period from long ago.

Rose, however, planned this learning activity because she felt that she had focused on direct content instruction for too long rather than the lesson as part of a purposeful gradual release for historical reasoning. She said:

I wasn’t going to do this lesson this year, and sitting down looking at what lessons can I do for this and it’s like, ‘Okay, notes, notes, notes, gone, notes, video.’ It’s like, ‘Okay, I need to break this up, even for myself and for the kids.’ This is a lesson I actually did two years ago now, and was like, ‘Okay, this is a good one where it is an activity that the kids are working on, it’s sourcing of documents.’ (Rose interview 3)

Rose’s intent appeared to be based on student engagement rather than the deliberate building of the historical reasoning skills that she valued. This seemed incongruent with her expressed beliefs related to student interpretation but congruent with beliefs regarding teacher-directed contextualization. Her lesson design included a plan for historical reasoning, but it was not the focus of the learning sequence.

Mark also used a bigger idea to create relevance for his students. He emphasized that after the lesson about the election of 1800, the class debriefed key ideas about the peaceful transition of power. He described why this was significant for students:

The big picture connection [really highlights one of my beliefs about history]…in our context we live in nowadays…elections matter. Elections have consequences. The idea about ballots over bullets in that democracy is not guaranteed. There’s nothing out there that says the United States will stay in democracy forever. Other things that we take for granted nowadays that weren’t taken for granted back then. (Mark interview 3)

Mark planned to use the discussion on the fragility of democracy to create relevance for students and a way to understand the context of current issues they see today. Mark’s lesson design allowed for “different…thinking processes…There’s some categorization. There’s some comparison. There’s some higher level skills, some lower level skills that go into this lesson
where it’s not just all the same” (Mark interview 3). This thought process was congruent with his beliefs about the complexity of knowledge in history and the historical thinking skills that were important to him. To assess the lesson, he challenged students to respond to a choice of two prompts for which they needed to use evidence to argue. He described:

One prompt is many historians see the election of 1800 as a victory of ballots over bullets. Do you agree with that conclusion, explain why or not? Then the other one is knowing the long-term success of the United States was not guaranteed during the critical period. Why do you think this event the election of 1800 helped to the United States graduate out of the critical period, so explain your thinking there…They just respond to one of those. I think either one helps them get to those big picture ideas about why this matters and connects to that warm-up question of the day too of how does this help us prove that we are a workable established democracy? (Mark interview 3)

Mark’s questions required students to utilize evidence from sources and other activities, something congruent to his expressed beliefs. Mark’s sources, however, were two secondary sources that offered different arguments about the election. The questions the students answered required them to pick out which arguments they agreed with and address why rather than construct an argument more independently, something that was not congruent to his expressed beliefs. The students engaged in historical reasoning but perhaps not in the intended manner.

Kendall focused on a concept to create unity and purpose to the lesson: “Analyze the concept in pursuit of the American dream or even… the bigger idea about how containment dominated the 1950s American culture. So we’re really looking at culture of the 1950s” (Kendall interview 3). She formed a first draft of a question while planning to provide focus for the lesson and the interpretive student task, ideas that demonstrated congruence to her described beliefs. Kendall emphasized the need for variety in her lesson design and historical reasoning skills. This particular lesson was only one of the many types of lessons she taught. She described:

I think students learn history in many ways. I think that there’s a place for a lecture. I think sometimes students learn history because they need to hear stories and they need to
have somebody bring it all together but I also think students learn history by looking at primary source documents and drawing conclusions and making connections across time and that’s what they would be doing. (Kendall interview 3)

Kendall, as part of her lesson design, also showed congruence with her beliefs about making learning relevant to students and emphasized historical thinking skills. She said, “One of the things that I want to do is go back to the 1920s. I’m trying to look at the skill of change over time, but also comparison” (Kendall interview 3). In addition to the connection from the 1920s to the 1950s, she wanted to extend the thinking to today. She planned for students to take their learning from the 1950s to current American society by analyzing advertisements to show the themes of the culture. She described that students will be asked to “find a current advertisement and then show how that shows some of the themes, to show even though this is the ‘50s or how it doesn’t” (Kendall interview 3). Kendall’s plan sought to have students compare the 1950s and today but also to realize and analyze the messages about society reflected within current advertisements. The idea of analyzing current media created relevance for students, a plan that showed congruence with her personal epistemological beliefs. The teachers all demonstrated congruence with their personal epistemological belief about teaching history by designing activities for relevance in the lesson planning process.

Small group work. One of the described beliefs about learning history was the importance of discussion in the history classroom to process and learn. During lesson planning, the teachers all created lessons that involved small group work and discussion. This showed congruence with their personal epistemological beliefs about the importance of collaboration to learn history.

Rose planned her lesson to use pairs. Her rationale had two purposes: to engage students in the learning and to share their interpretations with one another. She described why she selected pairs:
I feel like in a group, it’s very easy for the one person to not get involved… I feel like in pairs, it’s going to encourage them more to have to work together for each document, rather that natural inclination of students of let’s just split it up to reduce the task… In this task, especially if they’re going to have to do a thesis, I really want them to be going through each document. (Rose interview 3)

It was important to Rose that students worked collaboratively on each document rather than split up the task. The intent for the collaboration was to create support and generate more ideas as a partnership to undertake a challenging historical reasoning task.

Mark saw collaborative groups as a way to share ideas and work together as a team; he described that the structure gives them experience “working in different groups” (Mark interview 3). By varying the group make-up and structure, he deliberately built relationships among students in the class. He also viewed the groups as a method of differentiation. Mark described that the pairs would work together on an article and then form a team of four. The two articles were of noticeably different reading levels. He said, “The two stronger kids are probably going to read the more challenging article. Then the other two kids will be probably more grade level appropriate article for them” (Mark interview 3). Because students read an article they could comprehend, the four-person discussion would be richer as everyone would have something to contribute and also have their learning needs met. After sharing the summary of the articles, it was not clear what else they would discuss as part of the collaborative discussion beyond the graphic utilized to organize ideas. Mark did not describe how he would teach about how they should work in the group that day.

Kendall, like Rose and Mark, saw the collaborative group structure as a way to help support student interpretation using evidence. She thought the group helped with accountability in the form of a competition with other groups. She described:
When they’re interpreting [the advertisement], they have to write it down and then I would say, if there’s one person in your group who hasn’t written it down then your table can’t get the points. Sometimes you need to have that little bit of peer pressure… They’re asking each other for questions and it’s keeping the kids accountable. (Kendall interview 3)

Kendall viewed collaborative groups as generating ideas for historical interpretation as well as a way to ensure students are taking notes about the key concepts. The group was intended to help generate and share different historical interpretations about the advertisements as well, congruent to her belief of valuing different viewpoints.

None of the teachers mentioned any instruction on helping students build skills for how to effectively work in small groups. This may be because it has already been taught or they had an assumption that students would know how to work together. This appears incongruent with ideas about purposefully building a collaborative environment.

In summary, during lesson planning, the teachers showed congruence with many of their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history. In the lesson design, the teachers showed aspects of the criterialist stance of teaching and learning history, especially through use of authentic sources, a focus on historical reasoning skills, and designing lessons to utilize discussion in small groups.

Theme 2: During Instruction, Teacher Actions Reflected Some Described Beliefs

As would be expected in teaching, an ideal lesson planned to be congruent with beliefs can change based on many factors such as changed schedules, student personalities, and unexpected challenges. What a teacher decides to do in response to these challenges, consciously or unconsciously, can reveal how different beliefs took priority or described beliefs that were not put into practice yet.
To see described personal epistemological beliefs in action, each teacher was observed conducting the lesson he or she had planned. After the observations, teachers watched 30-60 second segments of their own teaching during the video-based interview. The teachers were asked to provide reflection on a variety of topics, including how they responded to students, what they were thinking at a particular time, or how their response showed their personal epistemological beliefs. To minimize researcher bias in interpreting the classroom observations, quotations from the video-based interview in which teachers reflected on their choices are also included in this section. During instruction, teachers demonstrated moments of congruency and incongruency in three different areas: 1) questions and questioning patterns, 2) the use of small groups, and 3) deciding what gets cut when out of time.

**Questions and questioning patterns.** The teachers, during their classroom instruction, showed congruence and incongruence with their described beliefs through the types of questions they asked. The questions varied to get at different kinds of knowledge related to the content knowledge and conceptual questions in different parts of the lesson. These question variations were intended to help students master the components of what constitutes historical knowledge.

Each teacher, through discrete knowledge questioning, used multiple questions to review or reinforce context knowledge with students, often used to “stabilize content” (Reisman 2015, p. 9). Most of these questioning patterns can be described as initiate – respond – evaluate. In this type of questioning pattern, the teacher initiates a lower level question, the student responds, and the teacher evaluates the response by using a short response like “good.” Rose demonstrated this questioning pattern during the observed lessons. For example, she asked a series of questions related to content knowledge while asking students to access prior knowledge.
Okay, he strengthens the navy. We’re going to say [writes on board] strengthens and increases the navy. This relates to the other thing he does to strengthen the empire.

What is the other thing he did to strengthen the empire?

[student response] Very good. He creates the Delian League. What is the Delian League? If we can think back to last year, what tool of foreign policy will the Delian League need? An alliance. What type of alliance?

[student response] What type of alliance would the Delian League need? What were they going to support each other in the event of? What ways did they support each other?

[student response] Military, very good. (Rose observation day 1)

This exchange showed Rose asking discrete knowledge questions derived from a textbook reading while organizing it onto a web on the classroom whiteboard. The process of reorganization was intended to help model how to categorize information to make future analysis more effective. During the observed time, Rose did not mention to students why it was important to organize and make connections in discrete knowledge beyond helping to memorize it for a future test.

Rose also used the conceptual question she had planned to engage students in broader historical analysis. When she introduced the question, she asked students to define the key ideas, an important component to evaluative thinking in history. The following day, while students analyzed the documents, she said:

We need to, then, continue our investigation to answer the question, ‘Does he deserve the title The Great?’ If you remember, yesterday we put a whole bunch of words up on the board. Selfless, respected, admired, determined, courageous, intelligent. As we go through our activity for today, we are trying to answer this question with keeping those characteristics in mind. In what way does Alexander live up to those characteristics or in what ways does he not? (Rose observation day 3)

This interaction showed congruency to her beliefs about the inquiry nature of history and the importance of conceptual questions. Rose later lamented that students did not use the
brainstormed characteristics in the responses they submitted, a disconnect that disappointed her as she felt she had set up the lesson well.

Rose reflected specifically on her questioning while she watched the recording during the video-based interview. She observed:

> Questioning is the one thing I need to work on…my questions are very surface level and they’re very guiding questions. I need to move away from the guiding questions and let [students] be guiding those questions and making those connections. I feel like my questions there were very guiding to get them to that point. (Rose interview 4)

Rose continued to evaluate her own use of the initiate – response – evaluate pattern and how it may not have reflected accurate student learning because it was too guided. She self-critiqued, “You had a particular answer you wanted to hear? Correct, and so my questions led them to that answer” (Rose interview 4). Rose articulated her personal goal of working on her questioning pattern so “I can teach my kids how to be better at questioning” (Rose interview 4). She realized that her model of questioning was not the kind of questioning she wanted students to practice. Rose showed reflective awareness of this area of her teaching practice, something she perceived was not in congruence with her beliefs.

All of the teachers also mentioned how they used, or did not use, follow-up questions during their video-based interview. Follow-up questions ask students to extend their thinking or mention the evidence they used to reach a conclusion. The use of follow-up questions is an action that can demonstrate the metacognitive nature of knowledge construction to students. For example, if a student makes an assertion with little evidence, a follow-up question can communicate the importance of sharing a reasoning process to students.
Kendall attributed the use of follow-up questions to the purpose of the activity in class. In response to the exchange she had with a student who answered one of her questions during a class warm-up in which students applied information from the previous class period, she said:

> Well, it’s just interpreting the cartoons. It’s like a bell ringer. I was looking for short, simple ones. I did ask follow up questions, which I think is something that I think newer teachers have a hard time doing. Do you know what I’m saying? That’s something that over time I’ve tried to do, but I think that’s hard to do at first because you want to answer it for them. Does that make sense? (Kendall interview 4)

Kendall’s response indicated a several ideas. First, the type of response she wanted from students depended on the purpose of the activity. In this case, the bell ringer was to help students recall discrete knowledge from the previous day and not focus on other historical reasoning process. Her use of the word “just” minimized the thought process she wanted while analyzing a cartoon in this instance. Secondly, Kendall saw the ability to ask follow-up questions as a skill that developed with her own experience. Kendall’s explicit connection between her designated purpose for the activity and the type of questions she asked showed congruence with her described beliefs concerning the engagement of students and varying types of knowledge in history.

Rose mentioned her use of follow-up questions during the video-based interview. While viewing her instruction, Rose immediately recognized places in which she missed opportunities to ask follow-up questions. For example, during one exchange reviewed on the video, Rose answered her own question and elaborated after a short student response. Rose sighed when she reflected, “I should have thrown that back on him, ‘Well, you tell me. Was it good in the short term? Was it good in the long term? Explain why’” (Rose interview 4). Rose’s description expressed frustration with her own actions during instruction. When asked why she answered the question instead of the students, she said:
[I don’t know]. Time is all I can think of. It’s just that maybe there was time on my mind at that point of getting through this process because it wasn’t supposed to take that whole time period. I know that time is constantly on my brain. I don’t know why I answered that, but watching that, I’m [thinking]…why did you answer that question? (Rose interview 4)

Rose’s reflection showed self-critique of the way she used follow-up questions during her instruction, something she recognized was out of congruence with her beliefs. Her description captured the all-consuming issue of time and perception of time while teaching.

Mark was also critical of some of his use of follow-up questions during his video-based interview. He reflected on the balance of teacher talk time and student talk time:

In hindsight now that I’ve watched it, I talked longer than [the student] did, so it would probably been better off to ask a follow-up question. Part of it too, I wanted to hear lots of different ideas and make sure that I had a block of time set out in my mind about making sure like, ‘All right, what are some thoughts about this? What are some thoughts about that?’ Hear different voices, give different kids participating and then moving on, so I guess that’s probably why in the moment I went with it. (Mark interview 4)

His reflection recognized the incongruence of his belief in student voice during instruction and the amount of time he talked, which was more than the students. Mark’s reflection aligned with his beliefs about the contribution of many voices, but he realized that students did not have the time necessary to adequately substantiate their responses. Again, the idea of time pressured him to make choices he thought were not congruent nor preferred.

The teachers reflected on their questioning patterns and indicated both congruence to beliefs and contradictions to other personal epistemological beliefs. Each remarked on how the perception of time during their instruction played into their questioning patterns and the time it took to ask questions and follow-up questions. Beyond the use of questions and follow-up questions that communicated the nature of knowledge and knowing, the teachers preferred
questions and responses that helped students feel welcome and safe in the classroom over questions that related to historical reasoning.

All of the teachers utilized affirmatives to students for their participation in class. Mark, for example, responded to a student comment with “All right. Nice, I like that. This idea that he’s more for small democracy and more people involved” (Mark observation day 1). During his video-based interview, Mark said:

I guess first thing is, I always like paraphrasing a student to show them that I was listening and confirming that idea like, ‘This is correct. Am I hearing you correctly?’ Is normally my default. I always make sure students feel like that when they speak. I’m invested in what they want to say, so that’s probably my go-to there because I think I want to hear different thought process, and then be able to recapture that so other students who write like put it- help them solidify their thinking too. (Mark interview 4)

Mark’s explanation for his responses to students shows congruency with his beliefs about student interpretation and the importance of a safe learning environment. These responses may, or may not, reinforce historical reasoning or knowledge and knowing in history.

Mark also varied his responses based on his perception of the student who was responding. For one student who offered a response, Mark responded abruptly with “what about it?” (Mark observation day 1), after which the student elaborated with his reasoning. When asked about the question during the video-based interview, Mark said that he felt the student could handle a direct question to challenge to his thinking because he is usually very verbal during class.

When another student responded to a question that contained accurate discrete content knowledge but a conclusion that did not match, he responded differently. He said to that student: “Everything that you said there came out of reading. It was fact-based. It was textual, evidence-based. It sounded good. All right. Don’t be so hard on yourself” (Mark observation day 2). When
asked about this interaction, Mark emphasized he appreciated that this normally hesitant student responded and he wanted to encourage her. He reflected, “There’s a misconnect going. She clearly read. She clearly had a good idea and a good point there. Maybe it was that I didn’t explain myself well enough or she was missing what I was looking for. There was a disconnect” (Mark interview 4). In her incorrect answer, Mark saw evidence of learning and explained why he responded specifically to this student in this way. He said:

Just thinking about some of the, I guess, social-emotional piece to it too that she can be kind of sensitive and so I didn’t want her to think that she had done something wrong or stupid or whatever. Just telling her, ‘No. You had a really valid point. That was clearly rooted in the text and clearly something that you had been thinking about.’ Getting back to that and supporting her so that she wouldn’t shut down. (Mark interview 4)

Mark’s reflection showed congruence with his belief that the social-emotional needs of student were more important at that moment and took priority. He also readily considered that he may not have been clear, showing he felt responsibility for student learning.

Kendall also frequently affirmed students during classroom interactions. Like Mark, she named and paraphrased what the student had done well. For example, in one interaction Kendall said, “Good. Very good. Way to connect it to the reading, you’re right. The people married much younger…very good” (Kendall observation day 1). Many times during the observed lesson, she used phrases like “These are really impressive [responses],” “I like it,” and “very good” (Kendall observation day 1). Kendall’s interactions with students were mostly affirmative. During one of the interactions in Kendall’s video, a student provided a brief inaccurate answer to which Kendall responded positively. When asked during the video-based interview why she responded in that manner rather than correct the misconception, she said:

It was not a strong response, but I still was positive. Especially with things like these, I don’t think you should say, ‘No, that’s wrong.’ You say, ‘Well, that’s a good idea.’ Then
I went on and afterwards I asked follow up questions. That’s something that I think, you don’t want to make a kid feel like they are dumb so that they never answer the question ever again. (Kendall interview 4)

Kendall’s interactions with students demonstrated congruence with her beliefs about the importance of building a safe classroom environment to promote student engagement. She knew that students would get more confidence over the rest of the school year to participate.

Decisions on what to cut. During instruction, each of the lessons planned by the teachers extended beyond the anticipated time frame. As with much of teaching, adjustments are common and frequent. However, deciding what to cut when pressed for time may indicate which beliefs supersede other beliefs and what kind of knowledge a teacher may feel more responsible for students to learn. For the teachers, when they realized they were out of allocated time, all cut or shortened the higher level reasoning and application level student tasks to focus on discrete content knowledge mastery.

Rose’s lesson sequence ran too long for several reasons: homecoming week, varying schedules, and students not completing homework assignments. It also went longer than anticipated because the teacher-directed contextualization took more time than she had planned. When asked about the time on direct instruction balanced with application, she said that the emphasis on contextualization was critical to the purpose of the lesson. For example, Rose talked about how students often have misconceptions about the scale of time when something occurred a long time ago, something that does not allow them to humanize history, which was one of her beliefs about the nature of history. During her reflection, Rose stated,

When we start talking about things and we started at the 1700 BCE with Minoans and now we’re at 500 BCE, and next week we’re going to be in 1,000 CE, we move pretty quickly, but I wanted to slow it down and put it into context that when we talk in a body of history…
We’re talking about Athens defeating the Persians, rising to its height and falling within a 100-year time span. If we were to go back 100 years ago…World War I is ending…I mean, women haven’t even had the right to vote for 100 years.

Let’s slow that down and let’s put that into some context and really zoom in on this period in history. When we often think about ancient Greece, when we think about how much they contributed to society, it really occurred in a very short period of time. I think that when we talk in such long stretches of history, they don’t understand, they don’t see it as a zoomed in time period. I think there’s that grand global, ‘Okay, let’s make the connection to today, but let’s also understand that we are spending a whole unit really talking about 100 years of history and how impactful that society was on today in only 100 years.’ (Rose interview 4)

In this description, Rose mentioned several different beliefs about why it was important to contextualize extensively. She felt that the time spent on contextualization helped humanize history by imagining how much occurred within one person’s lifetime. She viewed that her contextualization helped students understand the significance of the time period, which was important to do before jumping to a current-day connection. All of these ideas reflected Rose’s beliefs about the importance of teacher-facilitated contextualization.

Since the contextualization process took longer than she planned, she made adjustments to the initial plan explained during her think-aloud interview. First, instead of small groups working together to analyze the documents, they worked as a jigsaw arrangement to split up the document analysis, something she specifically did not want to happen when she articulated her lesson plan. Secondly, the shortest day of the sequence was given to analyze the documents and develop a claim that answered the guiding question. This meant that students analyzed seven documents within 20 minutes and collaboratively constructed a claim in the last five minutes of the lesson. Rose’s choices may indicate that she felt more responsible for discrete content knowledge at that moment because she cut the historical reasoning. In her reflection, she said she was thinking: “In the moment, again, it’s the time and the understanding of, ‘I only have so many
days for this and I have a lot to get through in that time” (Rose interview 4). Her phrase “get through” indicated that she may have had a coverage oriented outlook at that moment, something not in congruence with her described personal epistemological beliefs.

Mark also ran short on time during his instruction as he had scheduled the end of the unit test to follow his planned lesson. Upon reflection, he said his use of multiple ways to help students contextualize and share initial thinking took longer than he had anticipated. Self-admittedly, he said when this happens, he compensates. Mark described:

[My] weakness…is I go too fast. I think sometimes I move on. I’m a fast talker, I rush. I pay attention to the clock while we’re teaching and I think, ‘Shoot, we’ve got like 12 minutes left, how do I make sure that this and this gets done?’ I might maybe truncate things a little bit during a period, be able to get to the exit slip, maybe I don’t have the entire conversation or group work fully unpack. Sometimes, I think that is a bit of a weakness and I could do a better job of making sure [before] I move on. (Mark interview 2)

In Mark’s lesson, he observed that he talked quickly and spent little time debriefing the campaign commercials and a timeline intended to build context for students. In Mark’s case, he cut some of the contextualization process to get to the articles. During small group learning, students did not have enough time to complete the entire graphic organizer intended to support the jigsaw of the articles needed for the response. Mark thought the students’ responses were not “horrible” (Mark interview 4), but they were not as thoughtful as he wished. In Mark’s case, he did not cut much of the lesson; instead he included everything but went through it quickly. Mark, although critical of the lesson for its rushed nature, did feel it was a success:

I mean, in a perfect world, that could have been more student-driven or kids developing some of the questions. What I always try to get to is like, are kids interactive? Are they doing and not just receiving? Is there a good why and a good enough reason? Am I conveying that reason for why we’re doing this small enough to attach it to a big picture idea? I think about some of my core checklists that I try to go through like we’re making a lesson. I feel like the big ones were really met…
I guess there wasn’t really any primary sources other than the campaign ads that we watched. They didn’t directly dissect those or interrogate those sources. It was more secondary base. I think we talked a little bit about the nature of being a historian [at some] point in time. (Mark interview 4)

Mark’s statement indicated that he saw success in the student collaboration, high engagement, and the relevance to students. In his self-criticism, Mark realized some of the key components of his personal epistemological beliefs were absent, including the purposeful analysis of authentic sources. Students did not analyze the primary sources and used the secondary sources as a basis for their response. Although he thought he mentioned it, Mark did not talk about the nature of being a historian during the observed lessons.

Kendall’s planned lesson also needed to be adjusted because of time. In her reflection, Kendall felt that the lesson was overall successful as well. She described:

I think [the lesson] was fine. I think rush-wise, I felt rushed because I did not get the stuff done the day before…
I would have liked to have started this, not have to review McCarthyism, and really got into this, and give them a little bit more time than up when they’re presenting the first groups. There was just not enough time. That’s what I would say, it’s time. (Kendall interview 4)

Kendall, like Mark and Rose, saw time as an obstacle to the complete success of the lesson but added that the lesson did fulfill some of her key criteria of teaching and learning history. When asked what she would have changed, she said:

I would add, well obviously, time. One of the things I had the kids do, is we did process, like connect it to today. What are some things you see today? What are the differences? I would do that more. I would take it from this and then connect it to that, even more of a connection to their lives today. How does advertisements, how it impacted people there? Well, what about today? How is it different and similar? Like, we’re talking about television, well, now we have cell phones. Things like that. I wish I could do more of that to get to the next step. (Kendall interview 4)
Kendall, if she had more time, would have had students investigate the connections and relevance to their lives beyond an informal teacher-directed debrief the following day. This may show that she saw the relevance and connection to today as an enhancement or bonus in the lesson rather than as an essential component to historical knowledge and knowing.

In summary, during instruction, the planned lesson had to be adjusted. In these adjustments, the teachers demonstrated congruence and incongruence with questions and questioning patterns, use of small groups, and cutting or truncating the lessons.

**Theme 3: Teacher Reflections Were Based on Criteria Related to Described Beliefs**

The teachers showed congruence with their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history through the reflections they had about their instructional practices. During this interview, teachers were asked to describe the moments of the lesson they believed showed congruence to their beliefs and moments that did not.

**Rose.** Rose highlighted the most effective moments as when students showed evidence of using heuristics to interpret the documents, one of her personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history. She described that moment as “just watching them go through the process and [a student] even just saying, ‘This is the most biased source’” (Rose interview 4). She elaborated on why that moment was so important. “That’s just one of those moments where I’m like, ‘Okay, they’re getting it. They understand this concept of bias. They are understanding the impact of that on credibility’” (Rose interview 4). Rose connected the interpretation activity to the ability for students to create a historical argument using sources. She described, “The fact that they went through this activity and then in their thesis statements were able to draw from the
sources, facts” (Rose interview 4). Rose’s reflection showed she used her described personal
epistemological beliefs as a way to determine success of her lesson.

Rose further emphasized that the lesson showed congruence to her beliefs about teaching
and learning history because it was interpretative and argumentative. Finally, she articulated the
congruence with her beliefs when the class discussed the broader concept of the lesson. She
described, “The conversation we had the next day in this class was, ‘What is our definition of a
great leader? Does our definition of a great leader need to change? Our understanding of a great
leader?’” (Rose interview 4). Rose thought the discussion about a concept helped students show
understanding of history as relevant to their lives.

Although Rose was pleased with the lesson, there were two areas she felt were less
successful and less congruent with her beliefs. First, although students developed claims based
on evidence, the claims were not historically defensible, as most students did not define the
meaning of “great” to write their claim. Rose said many students listed accomplishments but
ignored conflicting evidence. Rose also articulated that the lesson did not align with her beliefs
in that the structure was too teacher-centered. She described, “I think it’s not that it doesn’t align
with what I really believe, but the struggle I still have of making it less teacher-centered and
more student-centered and that transition that I am continually working on” (Rose interview 4).
Rose’s use of the word “transition” indicated she saw the move to student-centered as a process
in her own practice. She elaborated on her reflection of her own teaching:

This is of course not built around that whole inquiry student-driven process, but I think
that would be just thinking back and thinking on it every day, reflecting of how can I
shift? How can I look at tomorrow and make it more student-centered? How can I take
myself out more and put more onus on them? That’s a constant reflection I’m having
with myself. (Rose interview 4)
Rose’s reflection on her teaching showed she was aware of areas that were not congruent with her beliefs but saw changes to those aspects as areas to set personal goals. The way she framed the process as a shift that occurs day by day indicated how she viewed herself as an experienced teacher: change in her instruction will not be sudden but incremental to work toward attaining her described beliefs.

Mark. Mark, like Rose, also selected the most effective teaching moment as when students applied their learning to create an argument. He described, “The [response] question and having them take a final stand...because I think there had been a build-up...We’ve gone through some of the knowledge inputs where they have to understand the difference between Jefferson Hamilton, and the Federalists, and Democratic Republicans and build that background knowledge” (Mark interview 4). His reflection indicated he saw congruence when students were able to use evidence to support their viewpoint. However, Mark was disappointed in some of the student responses. “Most kids gravitated for the second one, ‘Is it the end of the critical period?’ None of those responses I guess were horrible, but [I wanted more depth]” (Mark interview 4). Like Rose, he observed that students did not produce in-depth responses using strong evidence that he wanted.

Mark thought, on the whole, that the lesson modeled congruence with many of his personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history. He described that it had a lot of collaboration, which was an important value for him. He also said, “I think that it wasn’t just about knowing historical facts, but it’s about applying it and connecting it to a bigger issue, bigger topic that matters in our lives, in our world nowadays” (Mark interview 4). Mark explained it aligned with other beliefs about questions and authentic sources. “It was obviously very question-driven, tried to make it authentic and give them like quality sources to look at and
interact with and think about” (Mark interview 4). Mark perceived congruence with his beliefs about broader concepts, authentic sources, and questions.

Mark also reflected on areas that did not align with his beliefs about teaching and learning history. He, as previously described, discussed how he desired a more student-centered lesson but noted that this lesson was successful. His criteria for a strong lesson, which aligned with his stated beliefs, appeared to be explicit in his thinking.

**Kendall.** Kendall, similar to Rose and Mark, identified that the most effective moment was when students were creating their own historical interpretations. She described, “I think letting the kids come up with their own ideas, and even when it might not be 100% right, saying like, ‘It’s not wrong, it’s a different view’ [was the most effective moment]” (Kendall interview 4). She valued students developing their own interpretation, even if the interpretation was not accurate, showing congruence with her described beliefs. This was incongruent, however, to the idea of defensible interpretations.

Kendall thought there were many aspects of the lesson congruent to her personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history. She elaborated, “I think [the lesson has] a lot of questioning, it’s not just me lecturing, but there is some of me direct instructing, but I think it’s the kids [driving it]” (Kendall interview 4). Kendall’s beliefs about questions and student-driven responses were evident to her. In addition, Kendall focused on the authentic sources she used. She described, “I’m a big visual person, so, looking at visuals, collaborating, talking about it… I like the ideas they come up with. I enjoy stuff like this because the students, I learn from them. [Like] I never thought of that” (Kendall interview 4). These comments indicated Kendall enjoys when students get to interpret engaging authentic sources, specifically visuals. She liked the uniqueness of student interpretation that might surprise her.
Kendall also articulated areas from the lesson that were not congruent to her beliefs. She talked about the “obvious [challenge] of time” but specifically what was omitted because of the lack of time. Kendall realized that the issue of time caused a disconnect with her belief about connecting historical topics to the bigger themes, especially change and continuity over time. Kendall reflected on the congruence of the lesson with her beliefs about active engagement, authentic sources, and student interpretation.

In summary, research question 4 examined the congruency between stated personal epistemological beliefs and instructional practices. The findings revealed that congruencies were most evident in planning, but during instruction, adjustments created some incongruences with their described beliefs. Reflections were based on criteria aligned to their described personal epistemological beliefs. Each teacher saw their growth as steady and incremental.

Discussion of Major Findings and Assertions

The current study examined three secondary veteran history teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs concerning teaching and learning history, how they enacted those beliefs, and the congruence of their beliefs to their instructional practices. The first portion of the chapter answered each research question using multiple points of data. The forthcoming section of the chapter synthesizes ideas across all of the research questions to form three assertions. These assertions are woven with the current literature in order to understand their place in the field of study and how they contribute to the literature. Based on the themes from the research questions and the frameworks of the study, the following assertions emerged:

1. Teachers’ experiences as learners and teachers shape beliefs and provide an anchor for making meaning.
2. Teachers of history view their instruction as urgent but still decide to cut explicit civic competence connections due to time constraints.

3. For the most part, teachers practiced criterialist personal epistemological beliefs but struggled describing and naming those beliefs.

Assertion 1: Teachers’ Experiences as Learners and Teachers Shape Personal Epistemological Beliefs and Provide Anchor for Making Meaning

The first finding that emerged from this study was that these teachers relied on their own experiences as learners as they made decisions about their instructional practices. These learner experiences shaped their own personal epistemological beliefs, which then changed and developed over time with their teaching experiences.

The teachers in this study often referenced their own needs and preferences as learners to inform their instructional practices – like Kendall’s use of visuals, Rose’s direct instruction, and Mark’s conceptual questions. They also commented on the classroom environments that supported them as learners. These were all strategies they individually valued and needed as learners of history and used them to prioritize, include, or dismiss strategies they emphasized with their own students, which parallels research (Feucht, 2010; Patchen & Crawford, 2011; Tabak & Weinstock, 2011) about how a student’s personal epistemological beliefs reflect the personal epistemological beliefs of the teacher. Hofer (2002) explored how personal epistemology is considered to be activated during the process of learning and influences the extent to which one can make meaning. The teachers in this study were influenced by pivotal educators who inspired them. These experiences, when the teacher participants were learners, communicated personal epistemological beliefs about the nature of history that carried into their
future practice. Research relates to experiences and models within the pre-service teacher programs (Bendixen & Corkill, 2011; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014) but not how future educators are asked to make meaning of their own experiences as learners of history within a history classroom.

The teachers in this study also indicated the developmental nature of their personal epistemological beliefs, a finding that affirms previous research (Brownlee et al., 2011; Schommer, 1994; Schommer-Aikins, 2004b). Each teacher was conscious of the change in his or her beliefs as mastery was gained over the challenge of teaching itself (Reitano & Green, 2013; Schraw & Olafson, 2008; Stahl, 2011). Kendall, Mark, and Rose moved from more passive pedagogies early in their careers like teacher-led lectures while trying to master content knowledge to more active pedagogies based on constructivist views, which reflected more sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs (Bendixon & Corkill, 2011). Kendall, for example, discussed how she opened up to other practices once she stopped having to rely on her own notes to guide a lesson. Additionally, each teacher recognized himself or herself as on a continuum of learning to make their teaching more effective and each, through reflection, thought they had not arrived at the end of the long journey: they saw their personal epistemological beliefs as evolving and self-reinforcing based on how they made meaning of their experiences.

The current study showed that the personal epistemological beliefs of veteran teachers are based on their own experiences as learners and teachers. When considering new instructional practices, they had an idea of what they wanted to do but needed to figure out the how. Each teacher discussed professional learning experiences during their career, which influenced their beliefs about and enactment of new instructional practices (Ragland, 2007; Ragland, 2015). However, the rate at which they perceive they make changes is different than when they were
novice educators. For example, Kendall saw innovation as a change over time, not taking on too much at once. Other research indicates that veteran educators can be more resistant to implementing new practices or instead dismiss new strategies (Schraw, Olafson, & VanderVeldt, 2011) because perceptions of what they have learned through teaching experiences make it more difficult to adjust beliefs and actions. Contradicting that finding, each of the teachers in the current study discussed new strategies they tried and new ideas they were open to, but there was some evidence that ideas were dismissed or would be a challenge to attempt to implement for time or lack of buy-in. The highly personalized nature of personal epistemological beliefs means the manner in which teachers filter and reflect upon their experiences as learners and educators can be significant.

The importance of how the teachers make meaning from their teaching experience is significant because they see their personal epistemological beliefs “solidify,” a term each teacher used to describe beliefs, based on their own conclusions, whether accurate or not. Although there were acknowledged discrepancies between beliefs and practices (Schraw & Olafson, 2011; Schraw, et al., 2011), the veteran teachers saw addressing those discrepancies as work to be done over time rather than something that needed to be addressed with urgency as, in their view, they were not hindering student learning. Each teacher perceived the changes they wanted to make in their practices as more methodological now that they were veterans. The strategies they chose to emphasize now were carefully selected and were seen through their own personal epistemological filter (Brownlee et al., 2011; Feucht, 2010; Fives & Buehl, 2010; Muis, 2004), which was unique for each person.

A major finding from this study showed that teachers relied on how they made meaning of their own experiences as both learners and educators to shape and enact their personal
epistemological beliefs. These experiences provided models and goals during their perceived growth in beliefs over times.

**Assertion 2:** Teachers of history view their instruction as urgent but still decide to cut explicit civic competence connections due to time constraints.

The teachers of history in this study had strong and passionate beliefs about the importance of what they teach for the benefit of society. This passion was viewed as an act of service they viewed with urgency, so they self-imposed pressure to develop many aspects of civic competence. They felt that their content was the most relevant for students today. However, with this urgency, several aspects of historical thinking were emphasized, while other aspects were not fully realized. Additionally, the development of civic competence, a long-lasting purpose of social studies (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013; Stacy, 2009; Stanley, 2005), took on new meaning for the teachers in light of the political discourse they witnessed within the country at the time. No matter their political views, the teachers felt a sense of urgency to provide students with content and skills to put situations into context based on credible evidence and communication. But even with this intense sense of urgency, they did not explicitly design for students to explore ideas or skills related of civic competence advocated for through the C3 Framework, while still including many of the facets of historical reasoning. Additionally, when time ran short, the aspects of the lesson that they perceived as most relevant to students with connections to today were cut.

In the current study, for example, Kendall, Mark, and Rose focused on historical empathy to develop civic competence, something explored in some research (Brooks, 2012; Cunningham, 2007; Kohlmeier, 2006; Virta & Kouki, 2014). The limited research into historical empathy in
the United States shows that emphasis on this historical reasoning facet is very dependent on a teacher’s beliefs about its importance (Brooks, 2012; Kohlmeier, 2006). Kendall, Mark, and Rose valued the teaching of empathy and employed empathy as a method of building characteristics of civic competence. Each of the teachers felt this was essential, but they often based this emphasis on their own instincts rather than research about effective ways to engage students with empathetic thinking. None of the teachers explicitly connected the empathy emphasized in a study of a time period with empathy to apply to people today, a component of relevance and civic competence. The teachers hoped that students would transfer the model of empathy on their own.

The focus on primary sources, substantive concepts, and meta-concepts were also used as a way to engage students in components of civic competence and a major focus of their thinking of civic competence. The teachers in this study utilized primary sources for different reasons, but the power of primary sources was evident to these teachers, which aligns with research about primary sources (Nokes, et al., 2007; Nokes, 2010; Paxton, 1997, 2002). But adding depth to past research about primary sources, each teacher in the current study saw primary sources as fulfilling different purposes: humanizing history, engaging students, or constructing history. They were also excited about using them with students to see what students would say, showing how much the teachers are engaged in the process with students. Additionally, the teachers used substantive concepts (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008) as a way to engage students with pertinent issues to develop civic competence. For example, Mark’s lesson related to the “fragile nature of democracy” and Rose’s considered “what makes a good leader” as central points of historical lessons that readily connect to conversations occurring in the politics of the time. Primary sources and substantive concepts were the clearest avenues to addressing civic competence for
the teachers in the current study. Even with these carefully designed connections through these facets of historical reasoning, the teachers made the crucial difficult decision to cut the extent of the explicit connection to today, again hoping that students saw the relevance themselves.

Interestingly, the teachers expressed interest and enthusiasm about primary sources were not matched in the mention of secondary sources. The skill of analyzing sources, especially for argument structure, is expressed in the Common Core Standards for History/Social Science and is most likely the type of source students encounters in a media-rich society as a component of civic competence. The teachers’ energy and focus was on the many uses of primary sources, a belief both described and enacted. Although some of same principles of analysis apply to both primary and secondary sources, the often subtle argumentation in a secondary source can be overlooked by students. For example, other researchers (e.g., Bain, 2008; Britt & Aglinskas, 2002; Stahl, et. al, 1996) indicated that students do not necessarily pay attention to the heuristics of a source unless there is explicit direction to do so through task design or instruction. The teachers definitely did this for primary sources but tended to use secondary sources as a base of knowledge. Mark, for example, used secondary sources in his lesson, but when he reflected on the lesson, he said, “I guess there wasn’t really any primary sources other than the campaign ads that we watched. They didn’t directly dissect those or interrogate those sources. It was more secondary base” (Mark, interview 4). His self-critique focused on his primary source usage and was dismissive of the secondary sources he included. Kendall referenced secondary sources as part of learning history in this way: “[the students] have to use primary sources, but I also think there’s a place for secondary source too, and some more too” (Kendall interview 1). Like Mark, Kendall emphasized the primary sources while acknowledging that secondary sources have a role to play. Rose extended the idea the furthest by stating, “Sometimes secondary sources are
nicer because they do take all of these different primary sources, and attempts to make a story, but it’s also understanding that it’s that person’s interpretation” (Rose interview 1). Rose did not, beyond this statement, mention how she embedded or instructed students on the analysis of secondary sources. Kendall, Mark, and Rose all still included the study of secondary sources but the focus of the historical reasoning skill development was on the interpretation of primary sources. The lack of focus on secondary sources while emphasizing primary sources, although both utilized, may indicate that the analysis of secondary source argumentation may not be a central consideration in their instruction. This may mean that the teachers were still figuring out a cohesive definition of the component of civic competence as described by the C3 Framework while emphasizing the facets of historical reasoning.

Each of the planned and observed lessons included relevance to the students’ lives to show the applicability of studying history as part of civic competence, showing it as a priority in their thinking. However, when there was a time constraint, the described aspects of civic competence through relevancy were cut. The teachers then hoped that students would make the connections on their own. This finding is surprising in that the teachers overwhelmingly contended that the relevancy of the learning and sense of urgency to make connections were the most valued part of their beliefs, but they felt beholden to spend time reinforcing more rote historical knowledge to ensure students showed mastery over discrete facts. Their actions showed they may have viewed the connections to relevant topics as extra, but their basic responsibility was mastery of the content list. This adds to the literature in that veteran teachers, who have many ideas about creating relevance for students, do not consistently do so (Fogo, 2014; Harzler-Miller, 2001; Russell, 2010). Although this was only one lesson sequence, placing
the explicit connection to students’ lives at the end of a sequence of learning when time can become problematic reveals another challenge to student learning.

This brings up a crucial point: there may be additional insight as to why teachers do not change curriculum and pacing guides to be more responsive for the time to teach historical reasoning skills (Cunningham, et al., 2004). The participants noted a sense of urgency and frustration that resulted in self-imposed pressure to expose students to as many stories, perspectives, ideas, and skills as possible. They believe that revealing to students all the different ways to examine a time period is essential; the exclusion of an era, idea, or skill might have unintended consequences for the civic lives of their students. They are more willing to deepen their study of a moment, like Rose’s focus on a 100-year moment in Greek history or Mark’s focus on the Election of 1800, and cut the explicit connections to current issues to ensure students learn a deeper view of history with the hope that students will gain important insights. They show willingness to cut back on covering every era showing that this is not really a coverage issue, illustrated by Mark’s comment about changing focus away from Manifest Destiny, but more time to add depth with stories and perspectives.

This belief of a list of necessary and essential content students must learn may indicate tension between the teachers’ described criterialist personal epistemological beliefs that focus on historical reasoning processes, perceived significant content, and making explicit relevant connections to civic competence. There is not enough time during a school year to teach a list of designated content from many perspectives, historical reasoning processes, inquiry, and civic responsibility with any sort of fidelity. If this tension remains unresolved, it may create confusion for students about the nature of historical knowledge and knowing because the pace itself will discourage mastery and depth of understanding.
Assertion 3: Teachers Practiced Criterialist Personal Epistemological Beliefs but Struggled Describing and Naming Those Beliefs

The final finding that emerged from this study was that the teachers demonstrated more sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs as shown by their conceptual knowledge in history (Twyman, et al., 2006; Yilmaz, 2008a), design of student-centered complex instructional tasks (Namamba & Rao, 2016; Schraw et al., 2011), and beliefs about teaching and learning history (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014). However, describing and naming beliefs cohesively was challenging.

One challenge this study revealed was the lack of language to be able to define personal epistemological beliefs. Each of the participants eventually described ideas that represented more sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs, but it was difficult. Kendall, for example, initially struggled to articulate knowledge.

Knowing about history. There’s different levels of that, there’s the basic facts because that in today’s society, there’s a lot of people who don’t know history. The story, but also basic facts, like, ‘That did not happen, that never happened.’ Historical knowledge is that you are finding the knowledge, maybe using those tools of historian. If you’re finding knowledge-- I guess I’m just thinking more of-- Yes, that’s a hard question. I’m thinking you know knowledge. There’s certain things you know, like I know this is a Dr. Pepper, but then historical knowledge maybe it’s more complex in some ways. It’s a little philosophical there. (Kendall, interview 1)

Based on the entire evidence, Kendall understood that knowledge in history was complex but this quotation showed that expressing those ideas was difficult for her. Kendall’s, Mark’s, and Rose’s actions and responses indicated they had more sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs, but the teachers struggled to find the language to describe personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history, the nature of historical knowledge, and a cohesive
This identified discrepancy of sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs and the language to describe those beliefs adds to the literature and has implications related to the epistemic climate of a classroom and the explicit communication of knowledge and knowing to students and colleagues. It would be difficult to purposefully communicate personal epistemological beliefs if the ideas are not completely formed. With the teacher as the curriculum gatekeeper (Thornton, 1991), individual decisions about instructional activities as well as the emphasis and focus for students were mediated by personal epistemological beliefs.

Kendall, Mark, and Rose were able to discuss learning theories within the discipline like historical inquiry, historiography, and disciplinary literacy, but they struggled to resolve how these different aspects of learning theories fit cohesively together in their instruction and are communicated to students. This knowledge of learning theories contradicted previous research that showed teachers struggled to discuss theoretical frameworks (Tillema, 2011) or conceptualize their practice (Yilmaz, 2008a). The teachers in the current study did have some conceptualization of their techniques and values but not in an integrated way that could be purposefully communicated to students in a cohesive message. Additionally, the teachers discussed most of the frameworks that related to historical reasoning but did not mention explicit methods that they use to help students make connections to civic competency skills outlined in the C3 Framework.

Interestingly, the teachers in this study appreciated the time and energy to talk about their beliefs and reflect on their teaching with the researcher. Rose and Mark remarked they rarely had the time to consider the philosophy of their craft but found the challenge of articulating and
watching the beliefs in practice impactful. Kendall appreciated watching herself on video to analyze whether what she imagined she was like was accurate. When teachers struggle to describe the theoretical frameworks (Tillema, 2011; Yilmaz, 2008a), perhaps this is due to dismissal as unimportant or actually because they are rarely encouraged or have the time to do so. Discussion on theoretical frameworks might also be seen as an impractical use of time because there is so much other work to focus on.

The struggle to describe and name beliefs was reflected in the imprecise use of language with students, as evidenced in discursive practices seen in the classroom. Maggioni and Parkinson (2008) described the epistemological moves teachers make that direct students toward what counts as knowledge or ways of obtaining knowledge. For example, in this study the issue of truth communicated unconscious assumptions to students about the stability of knowledge, “truth,” while also constructing knowledge, “your truth.” The epistemological messages being sent to students may be inadvertently contradictory or confusing through the imprecise use of language. This is also seen through the use of initiate – respond – evaluate (I-R-E) questioning patterns. Although tempered by larger conceptual questions, these patterns indicated mixed discursive practices (Reisman, 2015; Reisman & Fogo, 2016). Obviously, many different types of questions have a role in the classroom, but Reisman (2015) found that the quality of the teachers’ questions varied and often allowed students to answer while ignoring historical evidence, something both validated and contradicted in this study. Kendall, Mark, and Rose noted, even in their own reflections, the lack of follow-up questions they asked students or allowing students to carry misconceptions because other beliefs about student learning took priority. The epistemic climate and epistemic moves (Schommer-Aikins, 2004a) of the teachers were not clearly communicated to students, perhaps because they were not completely or
cohensively conceptualized. This could inadvertently reinforce students’ misperceptions that knowledge in history consists of facts or rote memorization.

The teachers in this study mentioned and practiced many aspects of current research-based strategies related to historical reasoning, including analysis of primary sources, crafting historical interpretation and argumentation, and utilizing meta-concepts and substantive concepts (Monte-Sano, 2008, 2011; Ragland, 2015; Reisman, 2012; Wineburg, 1991; Twyman, et al., 2006). Their primary concern was engaging students in authentic practices of the discipline (Engle, 2003; Martell, 2011; Misco & Shiveley, 2010; Stoel, et al., 2015; VanSledright, 2004; Yilmaz, 2008b) and simply engaging students with interesting activities and content. As a contrast, they also mentioned the importance of civic competence many times but rarely mentioned the explicit connections to develop student civic competence in practice. Beyond, a key area of researched practices was not reflected by the teachers’ metacognitive practices (Brownlee, et al., 2011).

The largest struggle with the challenge of naming and describing personal epistemological beliefs coherently became apparent in the issue of metacognition. The teachers all asked students to learn history through mostly criterialist learning activities but metacognitive strategies, techniques that reveal the thinking behind a task, were not the major focus nor much of a consideration for Mark and Kendall specifically. The cognitive demands necessary to a study of history require a skilled teacher who comprehends the epistemological underpinnings of the discipline (Bain, 2008; Yilmaz, 2008a). The practices related to epistemic cognition in history require explicit modeling, metacognition, and authentic tasks. The teachers demonstrated more sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs and used authentic tasks with students, but they did not explicitly communicate through metacognitive strategies about the complexity of
knowledge and knowing in history. This is important because the metacognitive use of heuristics, for example, is a way of constructing reasoned accounts of the past by evaluating and corroborating various kinds of evidence, both primary and secondary. Teaching heuristics – something mentioned by Kendall, Mark, and Rose – without emphasizing that it is part of the process of historical inquiry might not communicate the purpose of the process to students.

This struggle of clearly defining knowledge affects student learning, as personal epistemological beliefs have been shown to be communicated to students (Bromme, et al., 2010; Maggioni and Parkinson, 2008). If a teacher cannot clearly articulate the nature of knowledge and knowing in history, beyond their actions, they cannot explicitly express this to students. Without being able to explain the complexity and types of knowledge, it can be assumed that some students might pick up on it while others may be oblivious based on their own perceptions of the teacher actions. A student can make erroneous conclusions about knowledge in history, which would diminish the teachers’ expressed purposes for learning history.

There are further implications about clearly defining personal epistemological beliefs: teachers design assessments to measure knowledge in history and curriculum maps inherently rely on conceptions about what constitutes knowledge and knowing in history. These important decisions may be mediated by ideas and beliefs that are not coherently acknowledged and/or articulated. This becomes even more important when considering that these decisions are often made in a group of teachers who may have differing views about knowledge and knowing in history.
Conclusion

The findings from this case study of three teachers examined their personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history, how those beliefs were enacted, and the congruency of those beliefs with instructional practices. Each of the four questions produced evidence to create three major assertions regarding the development of beliefs, the urgency they feel toward civic competence, and the challenge of naming and described beliefs.

Further discussion of these findings focused on the gaps in previous research will be detailed in Chapter 5. In addition, recommendations for practice as well as possible directions for further research will be presented.
CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a discussion of the implications of the findings focused on the gaps in previous research. This discussion is based on the answers to the research questions and the three assertions that emerged from the study, as outlined in Chapter 4. A model depicting personal epistemological beliefs is then presented. Finally, recommendations for classroom practice and for future research are included.

Implications

The findings from this study contribute to the existing literature regarding the personal epistemological beliefs of veteran history teachers. The study sought to fill gaps in the literature by examining the gaps between expressed and enacted beliefs in teaching history and civic competence; extending the study of personal epistemological beliefs to veteran history teachers; and capturing personal epistemological beliefs regarding teaching and learning history.

Expressed Versus Enacted Beliefs about Teaching History and Civic Competence

A first major gap in previous research was the difference between expressed beliefs and teachers and the enacted beliefs of history teachers. Unlike previous studies that documented the knowing-doing gap (Duffield, et al., 2013; Ragland, 2007; Yilmaz, 2008a), the teachers in this study demonstrated many congruencies between what they expressed and what they enacted as
previously described, especially related to the facets of historical reasoning. Additionally, the teachers actively reflected on the quality of their instructional practices and were able to identify several areas when their practices did not align to their beliefs like Mark’s balance of talk time, Rose’s I-R-E questioning patterns, and Kendall’s application of the ideas to today. Further, the teachers saw the efforts to become more congruent as a journey they incrementally take every year. The only obstacle they lamented was time – time in a class period, time in a lesson sequence, and time in a unit of study. The study reinforces the diligent work the teachers do to continually improve and refine their instructional practices. The teachers in the current study all were aware of their ideal classroom and created a vision of what they wanted to practice, although the cohesion of all their ideas was not clear. They demonstrated awareness of instructional practices they had not mastered yet, like fully student-driven historical inquiry, which they all mentioned as lacking. It cannot be concluded based on the limitations of this study whether this phenomenon was unique to these teachers at this setting or if this is accurate for many teachers of history.

This study also offers insights regarding expressed and enacted beliefs through the lens of teacher efficacy, similar to Chin and Barber’s (2010) study that linked efficacy with enactment of personal epistemological beliefs. In the current study, Rose expressed how she needed to have confidence to deliver a lesson, indicating that she needed additional efficacy. Kendall tended to dismiss strategies that did not align to her style, which may also be an issue of efficacy. Mark talked the most about experimenting in his instruction and was not concerned if it did not go exactly as planned, as he had the efficacy to know he could work through it. Even though the expressed efficacy varied, each teacher in the study still tried different instructional practices,
showing they each are willing to take a risk to try to be more effective for the purpose of engaged and effective student learning.

Explicitly Addressing Civic Competence in a History Classroom

The current study identified an implication concerning expressed and enacted beliefs not evident in other research: as passionately as the teachers felt about their contribution to society, there were discrepancies and unrecognized gaps between their described and enacted beliefs related to civic competence. This was the area in which these experienced teachers struggled. The incongruency is noticed between the described beliefs of desired student autonomy (Weinstock & Roth, 2011) in civic competence and the teacher limiting or controlling students’ abilities to practice civic competence within the classroom setting. Also, teachers made the decision, when pressed for time, to cut the explicit connection to current day, the informed action of the C3 Framework, instead relying on a hope that students would apply it in the future. Even veteran, experienced educators with Masters degrees struggled to address civic competence explicitly and consistently within the history classroom.

One way this incongruency manifested was between the described beliefs of desired student autonomy (Weinstock & Roth, 2011) in civic competence and the teacher limiting or controlling students’ abilities to practice civic competence within the classroom setting. Often the goals of civic competence were the hope the students would apply this in the future. The issue of student autonomy can be seen through the example of the historical reasoning skill of contextualization. The teachers all recognized the importance of strong contextualization to accurately interpret and analyze primary sources. The teachers felt it was their responsibility to contextualize material for students so they could spend time interpreting documents: Mark
showed engaging videos, Rose utilized textbook readings and direct instruction, and Kendall used an article and teacher summary. These contextualization techniques show just a few of the varying techniques of a teacher for helping students set a context. However, the teachers did not articulate how or when they would help students learn how to contextualize independently, unlike other skills in which they spoke about increasing independence, like source analysis.

Limited studies of contextualization (van Boxtel & van Drie, 2012; Wineburg, 1998, 2001) and metacognition (Bromme, et al., 2010) examine the advanced knowledge and cognition required for students to access interconnected conceptual understanding to contextualize information adequately; it is not easy. This skill of contextualizing is important in a media-rich society when it is difficult to understand a current issue without appropriate contextualization processes. The teacher expressed the goal of independent civic competence but then did not support student autonomy behaviors related to this complex historical reasoning skill and a component of the C3 Framework. If students do not practice this skill in the classroom, and receive feedback, to what extent will they be able to utilize this skill as part of society?

Additionally, the expressed versus enacted beliefs relating to civic competence became clear in the crucial decisions on what to cut when running short on time. The teachers all described the value that they placed on civic competence and the relevance that they saw in the study of history. Time constraints are a reality for all educators but the teachers were willing to focus on discrete content or different aspects of historical reasoning and cut the explicit guidance in helping students take informed action on the concepts they had planned. For example, Rose’s connection to a “good leader” was intended to initiate a discussion about leadership which was then truncated to focus on discrete knowledge. The implications are that the teachers, and the curriculum map, focus on historical reasoning but do not allow the time for students to explicitly
practice skills of civic competence. Or it may be that inquiry and civic competence relevance are still seen as an extra bonus that is reserved for the end of a learning sequence, or, perhaps, until the end of the year. Since this study occurred in the fall, the teachers may assume that they would address those skills at another time, showing that it is not consistently embedded in each unit.

Although the teachers were aware of some of the gaps, like consistent discourse patterns or use of meta-concepts, they did not note the gaps related to student autonomy in relation to some of the other historical reasoning skills and civic competence. They consistently embedded historical reasoning skills in their teaching while viewing the inquiry and connection to civic competence as a lower priority, a hope that students see the connection, and/or a bonus for when there is time.

**Research in Veteran History Teacher Personal Epistemological Beliefs**

Another gap in the research related to the domain-specific nature of a teacher’s personal epistemological beliefs, especially for veteran educators. The research into math (Boaler & Greeno, 2000; De Corte, et. al, 2010; Ernest, 1991; Muis, 2004) and science teachers (Dolphin & Tillotson, 2015; Eick & Reed, 2002; Kang & Wallace, 2005) provides a rich ongoing conversation about the many implications of teacher personal epistemological beliefs in those disciplines. The research focuses on multiple instruments to capture beliefs (Dolphin & Tillotson, 2015; Luft & Roehrig, 2007; Trigwell et al., 1999; Yang et al., 2008): observational foci such as discourse patterns (Boaler and Greeno, 2000; Elby & Hammer, 2010; Lidar et al., 2005; Ryder & Leach, 2008), teacher’s consistency of beliefs (Tsai, 2002), and more. Since Hofer (2006) and Muis et al. (2006) emphasize the nature of personal epistemological beliefs is both domain-general and domain-specific, the more depth added to the personal epistemological
beliefs of history teachers adds not only to the domain-general information concerning teacher epistemological beliefs but also to the domain-specific research concerning history teachers. For example, the research in this study adds insight regarding the strengths and challenges of articulating personal epistemological beliefs and the complex ways teachers of history work to demonstrate the ways of knowing to their students through active and authentic instructional practices.

The current study shows that history teachers are highly aware of the importance of the epistemic climate of their classroom, similar to studies in other disciplines (Feucht, 2010; 2011) but not directly studied previously in history. This was illustrated through the teachers’ focus on questioning patterns and social norms to create a learning space that communicated what was important in the study of history. Although the importance of building a safe classroom environment would be true for all teachers, Mark, Kendall, and Rose all knew that the classroom environment of safety, relationships, discussion, and collaboration communicated the epistemic foundations to learn history, although they never used the term epistemic climate. Their preferred instructional practices, which communicated the nature of knowing and knowledge in history, was dependent upon this environment.

The current study also adds to the teacher belief of students as either receivers or creators of knowledge, an area of research that parallels science research concerning the personal epistemological beliefs of teachers. Brownlee et al. (2011) found that teachers with a more sophisticated personal epistemology viewed students as competent and active learners who construct their own meanings and need to be respected as learners, which was affirmed by the current study of history teachers. Mark defined this as student agency and voice, while Rose encouraged unique but defensible interpretations. Kendall expressed her excitement at the
creative insights students offer during historical interpretation. All the teachers were invested in their students learning history. These examples demonstrate the ways the teachers saw students as respected creators of knowledge. These insights add to the literature concerning the enactment of personal epistemological beliefs for all teachers and specifically teachers of history.

Capturing Personal Epistemological Beliefs

One additional gap in the previous research focused on the challenges of defining and capturing the personal epistemological beliefs of teachers (DeBacker et. al, 2008; Gaete et al., 2017) and determining the extent of the relationship between personal epistemological beliefs and teachers’ actions (Bendixen & Corkill, 2011; Brownlee et al., 2011; De Corte et al., 2010). The Beliefs about History Questionnaire was one tool created by researchers (Maggioni, et al., 2009; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014) to capture personal epistemological beliefs of history teachers. It is important to consistently revisit any tool to understand the strengths and limitations and explore its trustworthiness across multiple settings. The current study offers further insight into its use.

The statements used on the Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ) do broadly capture three stances concerning the nature of history and teaching and learning of history, further validating its use. The degree to which the teachers agreed or disagreed with a statement also helped to define some of the ideas the teachers in this study felt strongly about, like the use of strong evidence. This questionnaire is a solid step toward capturing and describing some of the key components of knowledge and knowing in history. However, this questionnaire should not be the only measure of personal epistemological beliefs, as it does not reflect the nuances of each individual. For example, in this study of veteran educators, all three teachers showed
similar scores on the BHQ but “wobbled” (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014, p. 43) in their actions related to some of the statements, indicating that the personal epistemological development of each teacher actually varied. They knew the current researched practices for history education and many of their described beliefs were enacted and congruent to the instructional practices they utilized with some notable exceptions. Additionally, the described beliefs of the three teachers, although mostly criterialist in nature (Maggioni, et al., 2009; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014), manifested differently for each person. The current study offers insight into the how of beliefs described on the questionnaire rather than just the what.

The BHQ could be useful as a reflection and discussion tool for veteran educators, but it might be difficult to capture changing beliefs when the teachers know what to indicate but do not consistently act on that belief. In a previous study (Namamba & Rao, 2016), the researchers associated criterialist BHQ responses with a preference toward student-centered lessons, an idea affirmed by the current study. The Namamba and Rao (2016) study did not explore the nature or extent of the student-centered lessons that occurred. For example, a teacher can express the importance of the study of primary sources in surveys and interviews but may not consider how often or in what ways students should use primary sources for that belief to realized. Kendall, Mark and Rose each enacted many parts of their described beliefs but struggled with timing and implementation. In particular, this can be seen when Rose described the value of primary sources but spent more time sharing content knowledge with students. Since Rose was aware of this discrepancy among her described beliefs, planned lesson, and instructional practice, it showed a preference toward student-centered practices but not full realization of those practices. It is important, then, for self-reported surveys of personal epistemology to include other types of data like open responses or interviews to ensure that the statements are truly indicative of the beliefs.
The BHQ is one way to provide language through which teachers are able to express and find the language for their beliefs.

This brings up an important question – to what extent do words matter? The teachers could not describe all the aspects of their beliefs, but they were doing criterialist lessons with their students. Since research has shown that personal epistemological beliefs are communicated to students through actions (Feucht, 2010; Patchen & Crawford, 2011; Tabak & Weinstock, 2011), is it important that the teachers can articulate their beliefs? For example, the educator each teacher wanted to emulate did not define their personal epistemological beliefs but demonstrated those beliefs through their instructional techniques and epistemic climate. Are the actions alone the most important consideration for communicating personal epistemological beliefs? If teachers were explicit and transparent about the nature of knowing in history, would the actions become even more effective with students?

Model of Personal Epistemological Beliefs

The findings of this study reveal that the veteran history teachers had sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning history. These beliefs were based on their experiences as learners and educators. Even though they sometimes lacked language to articulate the beliefs, they enacted beliefs through planning, classroom actions, and reflection. They demonstrated congruence with their described beliefs in their actions to communicate the nature of history to their students. Figure 6 depicts a cohesive or “nested” (Tsai, 2002, p. 293) model of this phenomenon based on the findings from this study of Kendall, Mark, and Rose.
Figure 6: Depiction of cohesive flow of sophisticated personal epistemological beliefs: development of personal epistemological beliefs, close alignment of those beliefs, and resulting interdependent relationship between epistemic climate and instructional practices. The manner of how a teacher makes meaning of their instructional practices and epistemic climate will then continue to shape personal epistemological beliefs.

Figure 6 depicted a cohesive flow of sophisticated beliefs, which is ideal. If there was a distance or conflict among the various types of personal epistemological beliefs, then that gap could lead to less effective instructional practices and an inconsistent epistemic climate communicated to students, negating the interdependence of the cohesive model. For example, a teacher may articulate a personal epistemological belief that knowledge is constructed but may also believe that history should be taught with an emphasis on memorization to understand basic facts. The tension between these two beliefs would result in mixed messages sent to students. An example might be telling students that they should engage in discussion but then never providing time nor instruction for conversation. The less nested the beliefs, the more discrepancies would occur.

The way teachers view knowledge and knowing, consciously or unconsciously, can create more cohesively aligned beliefs or more scattered beliefs. The epistemic climate and
instructional practices form from those beliefs which, in turn, communicates the message of what constitutes knowledge in history to students.

Recommendations

The results of this study point to recommendations for classroom practice for four educational groups: current classroom teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, and teacher preparation programs.

Recommendations for Classroom History Teachers

Based on the findings from this study, there are several recommendations for practicing history teachers to continue to refine their instructional practices to engage students with historical reasoning. First, they should reserve time to read professional literature about beliefs related to teaching and learning history and discuss these beliefs with colleagues and others. Secondly, through the use of videotape or observation, identify areas that reflect beliefs and areas to focus on. Finally, classroom teachers should challenge themselves to deeply explore the C3 Framework and engage in professional learning about effectively implementing the inquiry arc into the history classroom.

One of the findings of this study indicated that the teachers lacked a cohesive framework and language for thinking about the complexities of knowledge in history. This language gap meant that articulating the nature of knowledge in history to students could not be explicit. This also led to challenges related to the consistent use of metacognitive strategies that help students in an apprenticeship model. Reading and expanding learning about teaching history would increase awareness of their own personal epistemological beliefs; this could help find ways to
consistently communicate the nature of history to students, especially through actions, while also considering instructional practices that help to realize those beliefs. Although the job of the teacher is busy, time to discuss and reflect on beliefs could pay off in maximizing the instructional time with students rather than hoping that students figure it out. Teachers of history should also include conversations about beliefs with their colleagues. The findings of this study indicate that many policies and curriculum documents are built on assumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowing. Conversations would help the teachers reach more consistency and build a collaborative culture of shared learning. The Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ) would be an excellent tool upon which to base the conversation.

Secondly, teachers of history should routinely videotape and reflect on their practices. The findings from the current study found both congruencies and incongruences in instructional practices the teachers were able to self-identify when they analyzed their own instructional practices. Defining beliefs and then watching those beliefs in practice would help teachers to refine their craft to better nest and develop their beliefs.

Finally, classroom teachers need to challenge themselves to find ways to explicitly embed civic competence within their instruction. There are many online communities that offer support and samples of lessons aligned to the C3 Framework. Strong professional development, offered through many state and national organizations online and in-person, provides models of instruction which would help teachers conceptualize and redesign curriculum maps to include skills and concepts of civic competence. During implementation of these newer instructional practices, use of walkthroughs and engaging in lesson studies would build a culture of collaborative inquiry to be better equipped to meet the espoused goals of social studies and encourage each other to address areas that make them uncomfortable. Classroom teachers, who
see their beliefs and practices as developing over time yet view civic competence with urgency need to take deliberate action to address the discrepancies in their practices.

Recommendations for Instructional Coaches

Many districts now support the job-embedded professional learning position of the instructional coach. The instructional coach utilizes cognitive coaching strategies to help teachers refine their work and use student evidence to determine success. Based on the findings from this study, the instructional coach should include the use of “abstracting paraphrase” (Costa, & Garmston, 2015, p. 49) in her practice, which shifts the conversation to expressing and probing for unstated beliefs. For example, if a teacher is talking about assessment practices and is focused on the details but without purpose, an abstracting paraphrase helps to name and capture the belief that they are unaware of. A phrasing might be: so something you believe is that students demonstrate that they can create a historically defensible claim based on evidence. On the converse, for a teacher who describes but does not act on beliefs, a paraphrase to shift the level of abstraction to a more concrete level would help the teacher conceptualize that belief in practice. This might be a question like what would the students do to show that they can analyze a source? These coaching moves would help teachers better name, articulate, and define their own beliefs and imagine what those beliefs would look like in practice.

In addition, the instructional coach should encourage and facilitate coaching cycles and structures like lesson studies related to congruencies between beliefs and practice. The use of data and video help teachers see their current practices, which supports accurate reflection and clearer action steps. Overall, the instructional coach can focus on teacher, course, and
departmental shifts in culture to embrace civic competence as an important component of student learning which needs to be embedded into routine instruction.

**Recommendations for Administrators**

There are several recommendations for administrators both at the school and district levels related to routine conversations about beliefs, removing unnecessary bureaucratic tasks, providing strong professional learning models, and promoting curriculum creation.

At the school and district level, administrators should foster conversations about beliefs and alignment of those beliefs with instructional practices. This can be included in conversations, observation cycles, or through time provided during school improvement sessions. Providing strong professional learning, with follow-ups, will help teachers conceptualize the priorities for student learning. District level administrators, along with teachers, should clearly articulate a vision of instruction with examples of what teaching historical reasoning and civic competence should look like. Additionally, administrators should find ways to lessen or eliminate bureaucratic tasks to provide time for teachers to deeply collaborate and co-create instruction congruent to their beliefs.

Most importantly, the findings of this study indicate the need to reconsider the construction, shape, and scope of curriculum maps. First, the curriculum maps should have fewer topics. They should also include explicit mention of the philosophical underpinnings of the beliefs on which they are based. For example, mentioning and describing the personal epistemological beliefs concerning teaching history and learning history models the explicit beliefs that anchor the content, pacing, and assessments. Beyond this transparency, providing time and space for teacher autonomy within the curriculum map would allow for teachers to
pursue instructional practices congruent to their own personal beliefs. For novice teachers, this may include suggested instructional practices of how to address personal epistemological beliefs within instruction that will, in turn, help shift from naïve beliefs to sophisticated beliefs. For veteran educators, like those in this study, it may include professional learning that challenges assumptions of knowledge and knowing that have developed through their own reflective processes. This professional support should be provided over time as it takes sustained practice and reflection to make these important changes.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

Teacher preparation programs should continue to include specific models of teaching history that encourage criterialist teaching practices and provide time for pre-service teachers to reflect on their changing views of the nature of history. Beyond modeling and reflecting, this study showed these teachers already held many ideas concerning the personal epistemological beliefs of teaching and learning history based on the actions of their educators; the beliefs were embedded in their thinking. Teaching and modeling instructional strategies in the criterialist tradition without addressing pre-formed beliefs could be one of the reasons novice teachers struggle to implement what they learned in methods classes when they are in the high-pressure situation of also learning how to teach. Additionally, exploring cohesion between the facets of historical reasoning and the C3 Framework will be important to ensure that these frameworks are seen as interdependent. Addressing preconceptions of knowledge and knowing in history during pre-service learning could help teachers become more purposeful in the development of their beliefs and seeking out instructional practices that help realize those beliefs.
Limitations and Future Directions for Research

While the findings and recommendations from this study are of benefit to the field, the limitations of this study necessitate research into several different aspects of personal epistemological beliefs of veteran history teachers.

First, since this study was conducted in only one location, the culture and climate of the school and department itself may have been a contributing factor to some of the beliefs. Conducting a similar study across multiple schools and departments with different teachers who teach different demographics of students may help contextualize the participants’ personal epistemological beliefs. Selecting sites with more restrictive curriculum maps versus less restrictive maps would also add insight into the tension between personal epistemological beliefs and teacher autonomy. For example, other states have more explicit history standards, which creates opportunities to explore this phenomenon further.

Secondly, since students were not included in this study, inclusion of students’ personal epistemological beliefs as related to the teachers’ personal epistemological beliefs would further explore the nature of the beliefs communicated to students. This study focused on the congruence of described beliefs and enacted beliefs only; students’ perceptions in a similar study would add more depth to the analysis.

Additionally, increasing the observation time at various times of the school year would show how the teacher addresses their personal epistemological beliefs throughout an entire course. This study allowed the teachers to choose an instructional sequence, but it is only a snapshot of the many instructional days these teachers have with students.
Further research into the various aspects of the personal epistemological reasoning would provide more depth in the development of those beliefs. For example, specific studies related to contextualization and use of sources and meta-concepts would add depth to the challenges of teaching historical reasoning. This study focused on the facets as a whole, but there also is a need for research into the questioning patterns of teachers in history and how the questioning communicates the nature of knowledge and knowing.

This study focused on veteran educators with more than ten years of experience. A similar study with veteran educators of twenty or more years might reveal another level of personal epistemological beliefs as those beliefs, and instructional practices, have had more time to develop and deepen the insights concerning the evolution of beliefs of veteran teachers and the types of professional learning that helps sustain changes to practice and beliefs.

Additionally, more research needs to be conducted about instructional strategies that are effective for creating civic competence and relevance for students. The personal epistemological beliefs of the teachers in this study focused on the importance of history for students, but most of the techniques they employed, like those to teach empathy, were instinctive rather than grounded in research. With this in mind, an intervention study of educators who experienced strong professional learning, focused on implementation, may provide strong insights into development of beliefs, challenges of practice, and comparison as to how they answered the interview questions and the Beliefs About History Questionnaire.

Conclusion

This study focused on the personal epistemological beliefs of veteran history teachers and the congruence of those beliefs with their instructional practices. Although personal
epistemological beliefs are often considered too philosophical and impractical for the busy life of high school history teachers, the findings of this study offer greater insight into the complexity and challenges of teaching history. The study also found value in taking the time to specifically name, describe, and articulate those beliefs. Using the lens of personal epistemological beliefs helped provide clarity about the implicit and explicit communication about knowledge and knowing sent to students.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX C

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| Instructor name | Monika Boehle |

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APPENDIX D

BUILDING ADMINISTRATIVE PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH
April 29, 2018

Dear Ms. Boehle-Altergott

Re: Dissertation Project Title: Personal Epistemological Beliefs and Teaching Practices: A Case Study of History Teachers

Your dissertation study has been approved pending final IRB approval from the sponsoring university review board by Mrs. [Name], Principal of [School Name] High School.

You also agree to adhere to guidelines outlined by Mr. [Name], Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability.

Please note the following:

1. You have permission to interview and observe teachers within the district as long as the following is adhered to:
   a. The teacher(s) provide their consent.
   b. The teacher(s) are in no way removed from their classrooms.
   c. There is no interference or negative impact on instruction and student learning.

All information collected will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be utilized for the district, the participating school, and the participants themselves.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Principal, [School Name] High School
APPENDIX E

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION PERMISSION
April 12, 2018

Dear: Ms. Boehle-Altergott

Boehle-Altergott
Re: Dissertation Project Title: Personal Epistemological Beliefs and Teaching Practices: A Case Study of History Teachers

Your dissertation study has been approved pending final IRB approval from the sponsoring university review board by Mr. XXXXXXXXXX, Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability.

Please note the following:

1. As a District XXX employee, you have permission to conduct this research within Community Unit School District XXX (District), in buildings where the principal has also provided written permission.
2. You have permission to conduct research during the 2018-2019 school year.
3. Please request the data you wish to use through the XXXXXX Office of Assessment and Accountability. This office will assist in obfuscating the data set to comply with FERPA and XXXXX practices.
4. Rules for dissertation research within XXXXX by staff
   a. All research is completed on the candidate’s time.
   b. All people involved in any aspect are clearly aware this is the candidate’s research, for what purpose it is being conducted, and how any information may be used.
   c. All people involved in any aspect are clearly aware that the research is in no way connected to the District.
   d. All people involved have the right to exclude themselves at any time from the research and data set.
   e. The teachers (s) are in no way removed from their classrooms
   f. There is no interference or negative impact on instruction and student learning
   g. The resources required are created and provided by candidate and not from district resources
The Office of Assessment and Accountability will need a copy of the letter from each building with the principal’s consent for research.

All information collected will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be utilized for the district, the participating school, and the participants themselves. The District, its students, employees, and persons or entities conducting business with the District cannot be mentioned or identified explicitly or by implication in your research and any publically available media as a result of your research.

Sincerely,

[Name] 
Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability
APPENDIX F

BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE (BHQ)
Beliefs about History Questionnaire

1. It is fundamental that students are taught to support their reasoning with evidence.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

2. History is simply a matter of interpretation.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

3. A historical account is the product of a disciplined method of inquiry.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

4. Students who read many history books learn that the past is what the historian makes it to be.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

5. Disagreement about the same event in the past is always due to lack of evidence.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

6. Good students know that history is basically a matter of opinion.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

7. Students need to be taught to deal with conflicting evidence.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

8. Historical claims cannot be justified, since they are simply a matter of interpretation.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

9. Good general reading and comprehension skills are enough to learn history well.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

10. Since there is no way to know what really happened in the past, students can believe whatever story they choose.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Somewhat Agree
    - Somewhat Disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree

11. History is a critical inquiry about the past.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Somewhat Agree
    - Somewhat Disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
12. The past is what the historian makes it to be.

<table>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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13. Comparing sources and understanding author perspective are essential components of the process of learning history.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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14. It is impossible to know anything for sure about the past, since no one of us was there.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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15. Knowledge of the historical method is fundamental for historians and students alike.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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16. The facts speak for themselves.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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17. Students need to be aware that history is essentially a matter of interpretation.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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18. Reasonable accounts can be constructed even in the presence of conflicting evidence.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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19. Even eyewitnesses do not always agree with each other, so there is no way to know what happened.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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20. Teachers should not question students’ historical opinions, only check that they know the facts.

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<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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21. History is the reasonable reconstruction of past occurrences based on the available evidence.

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<tr>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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22. There is no evidence in history.

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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APPENDIX G

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS
Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible.

1. What is your gender? _______

2. How old are you? (circle) 25-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+ 

3. How many years have you taught? ______
   a. How many years have you taught history? ______
   b. How many years have you taught in this school district? ______
   c. How many years have you taught at this school? ______

4. What is your undergraduate degree in? ________________________________
   a. Where did you attend school? _______________________________________

5. What is your Masters’ Degree in? ________________________________
   a. Where did you attend school? _______________________________________

6. Did you change careers or did you go into education directly? ______________

7. Are you a National Board Certified Teacher in Social Studies? Yes No

8. Have you participated in professional learning in the past 18 months outside of required workshops? If so, what?

9. In the past 18 months, have you read current publications about social studies instruction or history instruction outside of required workshops? If so, what have you read about or what was the name of the publication?

10. Would you be willing to participate in a study history teaching and beliefs, conducted during 1st quarter? Yes No
APPENDIX H

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Consent to Participate in Study

I agree to participate in the research project entitled “Personal Epistemological Beliefs and Teaching Practices: A Case Study of History Teachers” being conducted by Monica Boehle, a graduate student at Northern Illinois University. I have been informed that the purpose of the study is examine how beliefs about knowledge and knowing in history are reflected in instruction.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I will be asked to do the following from August to November 2018, I know I will be able to select the locations convenient to me including at school or home and at times convenient to me before or after school or during the summer break.

- Take beliefs about history survey and demographic survey (approximately 15 minutes);
- Participate in three beliefs interviews (3 at approximately 1 hour each);
- Conduct one think-aloud interview in which I will be asked to articulate the thoughts that I have while I plan an upcoming lesson, a type of metacognitive interview (approximately 30 minutes);
- Videotape classroom instruction of my choice (2-4 history class periods);
- Conduct one video-based interview in which I will be asked to share my thinking at 10-15 moments from the videotaped lessons which the researcher selects (approximately 1 hour)
- Provide teaching documents (e.g. lesson plan, syllabus, assessment) related to the lessons videotaped (approximately 15 minutes to gather documents)

I am aware that my participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without penalty or prejudice, and that if I have any additional questions concerning this study, I may contact Monica Boehle at [contact information provided] or Dr. Mary Beth Henning at [contact information provided]. I understand that if I wish further information regarding my rights as a research participant, I may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at 815-753-8588.

I understand that the intended benefits of this study include a deeper awareness of my own beliefs and an opportunity to reflect on my history teaching practice. I will also contribute to the growing body of research regarding history teacher beliefs and practices which will offer insight to other researchers and educators.

No foreseeable risks are present in this study. I understand that all information gathered during this study will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms for the school and participant names. All data related to the study will be kept in a password-protected computer, password protected Google Drive, an external hard drive, or a locked file cabinet.

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Northern Illinois University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

05/16/18
Approved by NU IRB
Void one year from above date
I also understand that for transcription purposes and for increased accuracy in the data gathering process, the researcher will use a video camera to record both the audio and the video of the teacher interviews, think-aloud, and observations of instruction. The video files will be kept on an external hard drive not affiliated with the school district and kept in a locked file cabinet. The only person who will have access to the external hard drive will be the researcher. I understand that there will be identifiable features such as the teacher’s face on the video. Three years after the dissertation publication date, the video files will be destroyed.

I understand that my consent to participate in this project does not constitute a waiver of any legal rights or redress I might have as a result of my participation, and I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form.

I consent to participate in this study.

_________________________________________ _________________________
Participant Signature Date

____ I consent to the interviews, think-aloud, and observations being video recorded for data collection purposes.

____ I do not consent to the interviews, think-aloud, and observations being video recorded for data collection purposes.

_________________________________________ _________________________
Participant Signature Date

____ I consent to the interviews, think-aloud, and observations being audio recorded for data collection purposes.

____ I do not consent to the interviews, think-aloud, and observations being audio recorded for data collection purposes.

_________________________________________ _________________________
Participant Signature Date

Your Future. Our Focus.
Northern Illinois University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.
Hello Dr. VanSledright and Dr. Maggioni,

My name is Monica Boehle and I am a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction Leadership at Northern Illinois University. I am in the process of creating my proposal for my dissertation research. I plan to conduct a case study of veteran history teachers concerning their personal epistemological beliefs and their instructional decisions.

In my research, I have read several articles about the Beliefs about History Questionnaire. I would like to use this instrument in my research as a basis for an initial survey and questions during interviews. My doctoral advisor asked me to make sure that I had all the needed permissions to use this tool.

I currently have the articles citing the evolution of the questionnaire over time, including your recent work published in the Handbook of Epistemic Cognition. I have also cited other researchers who have used it.

Are you comfortable with me using this questionnaire in my research? Are there any steps I need to take in its use?

I appreciate your response -

Monica Boehle

Dear Monica

Thank you for your interest in our work. You can certainly use the BHQ in your research. Should you have any questions about the scoring of the rubric, please let us know. As you have probably seen in the literature, there are a few different ways of doing it, with various pros and cons.

I wish you all the best with your dissertation work and I am very curious about your findings!

Liliana
Liliana Maggioni, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor, Director of Teacher Education
The Catholic University of America - [redacted]
Monica, I too wish you the best in your work with the BHQ. Thanks for your interest in the instrument. Scoring the BHQ is indeed a bit tricky. So I second Liliana’s invitation to reach out to us if you have questions about the processes involved and/or what to make of what your data suggests.

Best wishes,
Bruce

Bruce VanSledright, Professor
History/Social Studies Education Research
Department of Reading and Elementary Education
Cato College of Education
University of North Caroline at Charlotte
FOCUSED LIFE HISTORY: INTERVIEW 1 QUESTIONS

In the first interview, teachers will be asked questions that Seidman (2006) refers to as “Focused Life History” (p. 17). The goal of these questions is for the teacher to tell as much as possible about himself or herself in light of personal epistemological beliefs related to teaching history and student learning in history, highlighting the development of these beliefs. The following questions will be asked:

Background Questions
1. Tell me about your background in social studies and specifically history teaching?
2. Why did you decide to teach in the social sciences?
3. Do you have any pivotal experience or memory you could describe from your past that influenced the way you teach history?
4. Can you describe any past experiences that shaped the way you think of history learners?
5. Thinking of yourself as a learner of history, what was your ideal environment? What environment is most challenging for you as a learner?

Beliefs About the Nature of History:
6. If someone asks you ‘what is history?’, what will you tell him or her?
7. What are the main characteristics of history knowledge?
8. What are the differences of historical knowledge and other knowledge?

Teaching History
9. In your view, history is best taught in which ways? Why?
10. What is the worst way of teaching history? Why?

Learning History
11. How do your students learn history best?
12. What do you think about the responsibilities of students when learning history?
13. What is the most important determinant for the success of learning history? Why?

Beliefs about History Questionnaire
14. After reviewing the Beliefs about History Questionnaire, which statements resonated with you? Why?
APPENDIX K

DETAILS OF THE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS
DETAILS OF THE EXPERIENCE: INTERVIEW 2

In the second interview, teachers will be asked questions that Seidman (2006) describes as the details of the experience. The goal of these questions is for the teacher to focus on concrete details of his or her experience with personal epistemology and instructional decisions within the context of the day to day school demands. The following questions will be asked:

Beliefs
1. In the first interview, you talked about some of your beliefs related to teaching history and learning history. What are two of your core beliefs about teaching history? Why?
2. What do you see as your teaching strengths? Why?
3. What areas do you feel are weaknesses in your teaching? Why?

School / District Contextual Description
4. Describe the environment in which you teach.
5. What are school/school district factors that support practicing your beliefs about teaching history? How so?
6. What are school/school district factors that act as barriers to practicing your beliefs about teaching history? How so?

Classroom Contextual Description
7. How does your classroom reflect an ideal history teaching environment? How does it not?
8. What is something in your history teaching that you most proud of?
9. In your setting, how do you decide what to teach and what not to teach? (knowledge)
10. How do you decide when to move on to a new topic in your classroom? (knowledge)
11. When do your students learn history best? (learning)
12. How do you know when learning is occurring in your classroom? (learning)
13. How do you know when your students understand? (learning)
14. How do you describe your role as a history teacher in your classroom? (knowledge)
APPENDIX L

REFLECTION ON THE MEANING QUESTIONS
REFLECTION ON THE MEANING: INTERVIEW 5 QUESTIONS

In the final interview, teachers will be asked questions allowing them to reflect on their own experiences from the interviews and observation. The goal of these questions is for the teacher to discuss his or her understanding of his/her experience related to personal epistemological beliefs related to teaching history and student learning in history. The following questions will be asked:

Role of Beliefs in Instruction
1. Do a teacher’s beliefs affect student learning? Why or why not?
2. What do you see as the relationship between your beliefs about history and your practices in the classroom?
   a. Are your teaching practices reflective of your stated beliefs? Can you share a specific example? What is an example of a teaching practice that does not reflect your beliefs about history?
   b. Has there been a time where your teaching practice deviates from your beliefs? If so, please describe. What led to this?
3. Have your beliefs and practices changed over your teaching career? How? Why?

Reflecting on Experience
4. Based on this experience, what would you say are some of your strongest beliefs about teaching history? Your strongest beliefs about students learning history?

Closure
5. What other thoughts or reflections would you like to share?
APPENDIX M

THINK ALOUD PROTOCOL
THINK ALOUD: INTERVIEW 3

Script to Participant: The purpose of the think aloud is to articulate your thought process while working on a complex task. I will remain silent during much of the time so that you can follow your thought process without interruption. Please try to say out loud the thoughts that normally would be silent.

Participants will be asked in advance to bring a lesson plan an upcoming lesson that they would also like observed.

Lesson Context:

1. Can you tell me which lesson you are planning for? What is the learning target? Standard? Timeframe?

2. Is this a favorite lesson plan or one that needs improvement?

Think Aloud Prompt:

3. As you think through an upcoming lesson, tell me:

   a. What are the thoughts that go through your mind? Why?

   b. How do you go about thinking through all the components that you include in a lesson plan? Why those ideas?

Post Think Aloud Reflection

4. After planning the lesson through a think aloud, are there any thoughts or reflections to share? How was the process for you?

5. Which parts of this lesson plan reflect your beliefs about history? How so?
APPENDIX N

PARENT CONSENT FORM
Your child/ward’s teacher, __________________________________, will be participating in a research study being conducted by Monica Boehle, a teacher at your school and a graduate student at Northern Illinois University. Your child is NOT the focus on this study but the teacher will be videotaped. Your child’s image might be seen by Mrs. Boehle.

The purpose of this study that your child’s teacher is participating in, is to learn about teacher’s beliefs and history instruction. This study is focused on your child’s teacher; I just wanted you to be aware of why the class was videotaped. His or her images and/or voice may be captured on the videotape. The videotaping will last approximately three weeks in September-October 2018. There should be no risks to your child in this study. The benefit of this study is to contribute to research about teachers’ beliefs and history teaching practices. I hope this study will improve the quality of instruction for all students in social studies at our high school.

Information obtained during this study may be published, but any information which could identify your child/ward will be kept strictly confidential through the use of pseudonyms for the teacher and school. All data related to the study will be kept in a password-protected computer, external hard drive, or a locked file cabinet. No identifying characteristics or names will be gathered from the students as they are not the subject of the study.

I also understand that for transcription purposes and for increased accuracy in the data gathering process, the researcher will use a video camera to record both the audio and the video of the classroom instruction. The video files will also be kept on an external hard drive not affiliated with the school district and kept in a locked file cabinet. The only person who will have access to the external hard drive will be the researcher, Mrs. Monica Boehle. I understand that there may be identifiable features such as the student’s face or voice on the video but those will not be discussed in any publications. Three years after the dissertation publication date, the video files will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child/ward, as well as his or her assent to participate will not negatively affect you or your child/ward. Your child/ward will be asked to indicate individual assent to be involved and will be free to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty or prejudice.

Any questions about the study should be addressed to Monica Boehle at [redacted] or NIU Doctoral Advisor Dr. Mary Beth Henning at [redacted]. If you wish further information regarding your rights or your child’s/ward’s rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at 815-753-8588. If for any reason you do not wish your child’s data to be included in the paper I prepare, please sign below and return this letter to me by Friday, September 7. I request that ________________________________________ will not be caught on videotape during the research study.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _______________________________________
Printed Name: __________________________________________ Date: ____
APPENDIX O

STUDENT ASSENT FORM
Your teacher, ____________________________, will be participating in a research study being conducted by Monica Boehle, a teacher at your school and a graduate student at Northern Illinois University. You are NOT the focus on this study, but your teacher will be videotaped.

The purpose of this study is to learn about history teachers’ beliefs and instruction. This study is focused on your teacher; I just wanted you to be aware of why the class was videotaped. Your image and/or voice may be captured on the videotape. The videotaping will last approximately three weeks in September-October, 2018.

There should be no risks to you in this study. The benefit of this study is to contribute to research about teachers’ beliefs and history teaching practices. I hope this study will improve the quality of instruction for all students in social studies at our high school.

Information obtained during this study may be published, but any information which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential through the use of pseudonyms for the teacher and school. All data related to the study will be kept in a password-protected computer, external hard drive, or a locked file cabinet. No identifying characteristics or names will be gathered from the students as they are not the subject of the study.

For transcription purposes and for increased accuracy in the data gathering process, the researcher will use a video camera to record both the audio and the video of the classroom instruction. The video files will also be kept on an external hard drive not affiliated with the school district and kept in a locked file cabinet. The only person who will have access to the external hard drive will be the researcher, Mrs. Monica Boehle. There may be identifiable features such as your face or voice on the video, but those will not be discussed in any publications. Three years after the dissertation publication date, the video files will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can withdraw from participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. Your decision whether or not to participate will not negatively affect you. Classroom instruction will still go on, the videotaping will just avoid you.

Any questions about the study should be addressed to Monica Boehle at [redacted] or NIU Doctoral Advisor Dr. Mary Beth Henning at [redacted]. If you wish further information regarding your rights or your child’s/ward’s rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at 815-753-8588.

I agree to participate in this research study and acknowledge that I have received a copy of this assent form.

_____________________________  _______________________
Student Signature  Date

_____ I agree to being video recorded for data collection purposes about the teacher.
_____ I do not agree to being video recorded for data collection purposes about the teacher.

_____________________________  _______________________
Student Signature  Date

Printed Student Name _________________________________

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APPENDIX P

CLASS INSTRUCTION VIDEO ANALYSIS PROTOCOL
Participant:

Date:

Video #:

Participant Stated Beliefs about History & Beliefs about Learners from Interview:

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<tr>
<th>Teacher Language - Quotes, Questions</th>
<th>Teacher Behaviors</th>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses to Students</th>
<th>Lesson Task(s)</th>
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APPENDIX Q

VIDEO-BASED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
VIDEO-BASED INTERVIEW: INTERVIEW 4 QUESTIONS

The Video-Based Interview will be based on the selected clips from the observations. Questions for this interview will be developed during the process but will focus on eliciting responses concerning beliefs in instruction (Alonzo & Kim, 2016).

Video-Based Interview Questions

1. Let’s watch excerpts from a couple of the videotapes. What was the instructional decision that made you at that point in the video? Why?

2. After watching the video clips, how much does your instruction align to your stated beliefs about teaching history and learning history? How so?

3. Consider the lesson you planned in the think-aloud. Based on the experience and the video, how do you think the lesson went? How do you know?
   a. How does this lesson show your beliefs about teaching history and learning history?
   b. How does it not show your beliefs?

Debrief Questions

4. From the lessons that were videotaped, what would you consider the most effective teaching moment from any of the lessons? Why? How do you know it was effective?