

WHAT ASPECTS OF HISTORICAL EMPATHY DO GIFTED EIGHTH GRADE SOCIAL  
STUDIES STUDENTS DISPLAY?

by

GERI SPERRY COLLINS

(Under the Direction of John D. Hoge)

ABSTRACT

Historical empathy is examined in this study as an aspect of historical understanding that gifted social studies students possess. Identifying those students that show an exceptional aptitude for historical empathy involved coding student essays according to an established definition of historical empathy. The identified students were then interviewed and the results are recorded in this paper.

An analysis of historical empathy is given through the review of literature presenting a broad description of the many characteristics of the subject. This is a generic qualitative study which enables the recording of aspects of historical empathy that are discovered in both the essays and interviews of the student participants. The coding system created for this study can be used in further research to examine historical empathy as it is displayed by different groups of individuals and the implications revealed by such research.

INDEX WORDS: historical empathy, history, empathy, contextualized thinking, perspective taking, understanding history

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## DEDICATION

...to Jess Collins, my husband, who has been my editor and has read every word of this paper. His expertise with the English language has allowed this paper to be completed. His support has given me the right push when I felt like giving up.

...to my children, Cate, Alex, Geoff, Chris and Taylor who have gone without a mother at times to allow me to work, study and complete classes.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

History has traditionally been considered an important subject in the school curriculum. Debates about the importance of history are inevitably tied to lay and professional people's conceptions of the purpose of history education. These concepts range from instruction that emphasizes the memorization of facts for the purpose of cultural assimilation to calls for history instruction that fosters not only a deep understanding of the past and the development of historical empathy, but also the intellectual skills used by historians. Still others believe that it is a mere examination of dates and events, which need to be remembered and retrieved at appropriate times. Others consider it to be the cornerstone of all social studies. As Whelan (2001) states, "History, in other words, is the only social studies subject open to the whole range of human experience and its development through time. It is distinctively disposed, therefore, to draw upon and synthesize knowledge, values and ideas from all other fields of study. For this reason, it is also the most natural and best suited discipline around which to organize the social studies curriculum" (p. 55).

VanSledright (1998) describes typical school-based history instruction, which he viewed as impoverished:

Curriculum guidelines for the study of history in these school districts ask students to be able to describe events leading up to particular watershed historical occurrences, to recall

key military, political and economic leaders, to account for the circumstances that caused this or that key episode in nation building. To support this sort of historical thinking, students are asked to read history textbooks that contain the ostensible facts and details arranged in expository prose. Tests student take are designed to assess progress on the development of this type of thinking (p. 2).

By “impoverished” VanSledright characterizes the view of teaching just the facts of history and not exploring the depth of historical inquiry. He continues by describing in depth historical inquiry, “At a minimum, these acts of thinking include (a) questioning, understanding, and using historical evidence to contextualize the past and develop imaginative and empathic capacity (b) wrestling with the assignment of historical significance and the judgment of historical agency, and (c) evaluating change and continuity and progress and decline” (p. 11). This attitude is echoed by Levstik and Barton (2001),

[E]very historical account is selective—someone decides which events are important enough to include in the story. Deciding which events to include and which to leave out forms one of the most basic aspects of historical interpretation...The facts themselves cannot explain why the war took place; explaining the war is a matter of interpretation...The events of the war remain the same, but events of history can be firmly established, their meaning—their arrangement in a narrative—is always a matter of interpretation...there is no single, unchanging story of history. Such ambiguity is regarded as an inevitable, productive, and desirable part of the search for historical knowledge (p. 5-6).

Thus ambiguity is viewed by Levstik and Barton as the starting point for successful acquisition of historical knowledge. As students begin to question historical accounts, they open the door to

a variety of possible views into events of the past, which take them well beyond a mere consideration of simple facts. This understanding implies a depth that requires students to step beyond learning just the facts and the ability to analyze all perspectives of a situation. Jones (1990) believes,

that in addition to having (1) knowledge, including critical and creative faculties; (2) motivation to learn and confidence about themselves as learners; and (3) tools and strategies for acquiring, evaluating, and applying knowledge; successful learners also have (4) insight into the motives, feelings and behavior of others and the ability to communicate this understanding – in a word, empathy (p.19).

Jones places a high value on empathy and reveals his belief that learning must have elements of empathy in order for it to occur. When applying empathy to the study of history, students must become aware of the situation in which historical events happen, and why the people involved act and react the way they do. The term used to identify this process is called historical empathy.

From these two basic ideas, importance of history and historical empathy, this study was developed. The investigation examined what aspects of historical empathy gifted 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies students displayed. Further, the study determined levels of historical empathy reached and how students manifest historical empathy through their reflections and writings.

### Problem Statement

The objective of this study was to identify, carefully describe, and report the aspects and levels of historical empathy that gifted 8<sup>th</sup> grade students display. The significance of the study is two fold. First, revealing the ability of students to acquire historical knowledge that allows them

to understand the reasons events happen and the way those events help to shape the world in which they live gives direction to the teaching process. Understanding student capacity for historical thinking broadens a teacher's awareness of the possibilities that the classroom can be a laboratory for creating critical thinking individuals. This awareness can lead teachers to produce curriculum that asks students to evaluate, analyze, imagine, and determine how history relates to the present, thus making it more than just events and facts to be memorized. Second, critical thinking is a major educational goal in all academic disciplines. If this skill is recognized and enhanced in one discipline, it can be transferred to others. History does not exist in a vacuum but is related to all academic content and skills used by history students.

#### Definition of Terms

Historical empathy is defined as a way of processing historical knowledge that includes all the perspectives of past events and allows a person to view history with as much understanding as possible. Davis (2001) states, "It arises or develops from the active engagement in thinking about particular people, events, and situations in their context, and from wonderment about reasonable and possible meanings within, in a time that no one can really know" (p. 3). This term identifies a process of thinking that views history from its different perspectives and renders authentic historical understanding. A person identified as historically empathetic can understand the opposing sides of an historical issue, chronicle the events and analyze the effects of the actions taken by the individuals involved.

Giftedness is a label given to individuals who have been identified using testing and observations. "Giftedness is a biologically rooted concept, a label for a high level of intelligence that results from the advanced and accelerated integration of functions within the brain, including

physical sensing, emotions, cognition and intuition” (Clark, 1989, p. 7). Giftedness in educational terms refers to students who think holistically, enabling them to process information at an accelerated pace.

Further study by Tannenbaum (2003) expands the definition to include five areas that must be present in order for giftedness to occur.

The five elements that contribute to the critical center mesh that accounts for gifted behavior are (1) superior general intellect, (2) distinctive special aptitudes, (3) a supportive array of nonintellective traits, (4) a challenging and facilitative environment, and (5) chance—the smile of good fortune at critical periods of life (p. 47).

Classes within the school setting are designed to accommodate this pace as well as the students’ abilities to comprehend higher level material. These classes strive to create “a challenging and facilitative environment.” However, a student’s whole environment is a contributing factor to the success of any gifted student. Tannenbaum (2003) believes that students with a foundation of intellect and artistry must also have opportunities that nurture those attributes allowing them to become gifted adults (p. 45).

### Delimitations

This study did not involve the examination of average or below average students’ abilities to be historically empathetic. However, this is not to suggest that these students do not possess these abilities just that, that population was not considered.

The study did not focus on historical education outside of the classroom structure such as environmental-home based, religious-based or media-based instruction.

### Limitations

This study is limited to a group of ten gifted students who were enrolled in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Creeklane Middle School, an urban middle school near a large southern metropolitan area. The students were members in one of the classes of the researcher who also served as their teacher. They had a prior connection with the interviewer/teacher before the study began. All are identified as “gifted” and are between the ages of 13 and 14.

### Summary

Development of this study comes from a concern to examine the depth of understanding that history students possess. The concern originates within my own classroom as I work with students and observe their different attitudes toward the subject. This concern reverberates in Wineburg and Whelan’s acknowledgement of the importance of history and VanSledright’s description of “impoverished” instruction. A further concern for in depth instruction was expressed by Jones, Levstik, and Barton. How history is taught and received creates the foundation of understanding that students use to determine their view of the world. If the foundation is weak, the building blocks must be improved, but before we improve them, we must be able to identify what they are. The coding system created from the Foster definition is a way to identify historical empathy in students’ work and can be used in expanded studies of this subject. Aspects of historical empathy provide sound building blocks of historical understanding, and thus knowing what aspects of historical empathy students display is a first step in discovering how to improve the building blocks to achieve a strong foundation of historical understanding.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History is a subject loved by some, hated by others and misunderstood by many. Yet, it is a part of everyone's life and is one cornerstone of most school curriculums. Its importance and significance will be explored and debated far beyond this research, but it is necessary to examine these issues when investigating historical empathy. Accordingly, this review of literature examines recent research on history instruction and gifted students.

#### History and Its Significance

The importance of teaching history has been a matter of contention and the focus of extensive research. Whelan (2001), as stated earlier, believes that history is important because “its locus of inquiry is the complex relationship between the past and present...the knowledge of the past can enlighten the present, much the way knowledge of a cause can enlighten its effects. Things are the way they are, in other words, in large part because they were the way they were...the present is a product of the past” (p. 45).

Additional support for studying history was given by Ashby and Lee (1987) when they state, “there seems to be the basis here of a claim that the dispositions and strategies learnt in history lessons have an immediate importance outside history; history is not inert and arid, but affects the whole way in which we see the world – past, present and future” (p. 64-65). This

same idea is expressed by Wineburg (2001), “the study of history is so crucial to our present day and age, when issues of diversity dominate the national agenda. Coming to know others, whether they live on the other side of the tracks or the other side of the millennium, requires the education of our sensibilities. This is what history, when taught well, gives us practice in doing” (p. 23-24). Rusen (1998) believes that the first job of history instruction is to give meaning to facts and he condemns history instruction that teaches facts as though they were one-dimensional truths that exclude every other possible point of view. He states, “If a student does not comprehend that ‘truth’ is a matter of interpretation and that truth is at least many-sided, a fundamental element in his history education is lacking” ( p 3). Again Whelan (1997) states, “historical study involves complex cognitive processes of deciding what these sorts of facts mean...History, then is as much a creative, synthesizing activity as an inductive or deductive, research driven study” (p.507-508). The contentions that arise are related to the depth and methods of instruction that are employed in classrooms. Here Wineburg suggested that history “when taught well” is a useful way to the development of our sensibilities. Rusen (1998) adds “Knowledge about the past, we must conclude, does not automatically produce historical awareness...The study of history should be a serious, conscious and systematic way of thinking, instead of a passive and naive consumption of stories told by someone else. A way of thinking which should be acquired and developed to a more perfect level” (p. 2). These sensibilities can be found in the definition for historical empathy as stated in Foster’s definition.

### Historical Empathy

Historical empathy is not a new subject of discussion; it has been analyzed at length in many different forms. These forms include studies about contextualized thinking, understanding

history, empathizing with the past and perspective taking (Wineburg, 2001; Lee, 2001; Brenneman, 2001; Grant, 2001, Skolnick, Dulberrg, Maestre, 1999). These authors advocate an in depth approach to learning history and their attitude is reflected in Riley's (2001) challenge for teachers to "[provide] students with a useable framework, such as historical empathy for investigating and constructing an historical interpretation, [which] is superior to offering them a thinned version of an historical event where their only role is that of a believer" (p. 163). This attitude is expanded by Leinhardt, Stainton, and Virji (in press) stating, "[teachers] own commitment to and place in history came out strongly as they spoke about the historian's need for self-understanding. They often repeated the view that they needed to assume the skin of the people being studied" (p.17). Skolnick (et. al. 1999) expands this by stating, "Perspective-taking is key to historical understanding. Learning history is about learning to understand the people in the past...when students see people like themselves in the history they study, they are more likely to envision themselves as active agents empowered to move history forward" (p. 3). It is apparent that the multifaceted nature of the discipline leads to differences in opinions about what needs emphasis, what voices need to be heard, or how the curriculum should be taught. What is not at issue is the idea that historical empathy is a desirable goal of history instruction that enhances students' understanding and ability to deal with their current situations. "The ability to 'walk in another's shoes' (perspective-taking) is fundamental to students' motivation to learn history and to the resolution of current social tensions that are rooted in history. These are the habits of mind and heart that we can foster in our classrooms (Skolnick et.al, 1999, p. 4).

Grant's (2001) research that compares two styles of teaching history demonstrates this point. One teacher presents all the instruction in "story-telling" style while the other one uses interactive simulation, discussion and discovery style. The study reveals a difference in the

students' understanding of history, which is directly related to the two styles. The latter style promotes a more thoughtful and substantive view of history while the former merely adds to the students' suspicion that history has little value (p. 102-103). The results presented in Grant's study have strong implications for the practice of historical empathy. The one teacher's technique of allowing the student to actually be placed in an historical situation through a simulation and then reflect on the experience, gives students insight into what it is like for people in the past living in those kinds of situations. Her willingness to present all different perspectives and allow the students to voice their evaluations of what they encountered is a mainstay in the ideas present in historical empathy. One student, Melissa, credits the instruction with sensitizing her to 'both sides' in the struggle over civil rights. Here is Grant's interpretation of Melissa's comment.

'She [her teacher] didn't blame anyone per se, she just showed us who did what, and she's pretty fair to everyone.' Melissa seems to see middle ground where constraints like race, class and gender matter, but matter in no exclusive or predetermined ways.

Melissa's perspective is intellectually complex, and by avoiding a simplistic dichotomy, she holds a potentially powerful position from which to empathize with others (p. 101).

The points raised here are echoed by Whelan (1997) with his admonition that history content is important, but that teaching must give meaning to content or it does not teach. He states, "students studying history [should] be put in positions to exercise their judgments about a wide variety of issues involved in making sense of our manifold, collective experiences" (p. 509). The development of historical empathy in students asks them to do precisely what Whelan suggests. "[History] is quintessentially about people, people who, like us, have needs and dreams, who work and have families and memories, who build communities, have conflicts, take

actions and come together to solve problems. Students need to see themselves in history, because they need a personal bridge to the past and active, concrete ways of learning, we propel student into the human drama and dilemmas of history” (Skolnick, et.al., 1999, p. 2). The ability to understand the actions and decisions of historical people enables students to make judgments about those actions and evaluate their meaning for today. The methods that are used to create an environment that promotes this type of historical thinking move far beyond empty facts strung together for memorization and regurgitation on a test.

You seek to understand *why* the other person might think or act as he or she does and try to explain it from his or her point of view. Perspective-taking carries with it the power of explanation, so critical to historical understanding and to problem solving... . [E]mpathy is a goal in itself...[and] a motivator. Empathy can also propel students to grapple with issues of fairness, a riveting issue for students in their own daily lives. Thus, empathy and perspective-taking, feeling and thinking, work together. They are two parts of a process that lead to social and historical understanding... . [I]n the process of trying to glimpse another’s reality, we ask questions, we challenge our assumptions, and we develop a more empathic stance toward other people who share our world (Skolnick, et.al., 1999, p. 5-6).

Other approaches to this subject involve the mindset of the students and taking that into consideration while presenting historical matter. VanSledright (1998) relates that “the ideas and images students bring to the learning context vary more than they are similar...and their historical-thinking ‘positionalities’ depend on local sociocultural context, memory, and experience, and diverge considerably” (p. 8). He also believes a teacher can use his/her students’ mental positions as the foundation for building advanced historical thinkers (p.8). He strengthens

this opinion stating, “by this I mean it has become increasingly difficult to envision the learner as a blank slate...onto which are written the putative lessons of the historical past by directive teachers and standard history textbooks” (p. 9). Seixas (1997) categorizes students as having either a ‘subjective’ or ‘objective’ view of historical significance. Subjective students’ expressions are dominated by personal interest, while objective students’ personal interest and social location disappear in their assessment of historical significance. He states, “Our own understanding of their understandings can then become a starting point for history instruction.” (p. 22). Once again, the matter of the student’s position is being examined. The use of historical empathy requires that the student ascribe significance to events as he/she examines different perspectives to uncover a more complete picture of history and points out the need for teachers to be aware that all students are not on common ground when they approach this discipline. However, if allowed to employ historical empathy techniques, students can build a framework from whatever orientation, either subjective or objective.

Some researchers believe that historical empathy as described by Ashby/Lee is unattainable. VanSledright (2001), says, “I believe that the emphasis on historical empathy is misplaced in several respects. Working from the foregoing analyses, historical empathy cannot be achieved in any fully direct, unmediated way. In this sense it is a relative achievement, not possible in any complete sense, and hardly predictable. If it surfaces at all, it arises from a transaction between [the] inquirer and the historical artifact” (p. 64)

VanSledright uses the term “Contextualization to Self-Understanding [stating] The concern here is with the thinking process itself, with obtaining specialized strategic competence, and the role it plays in teaching and learning the capacity to reflect on the assumptions we make about the past and about ourselves” (p. 65). This idea is the same concept found in all six aspects

of the Foster definition, so the conflict arises over the idea that historical empathy is a level that can be obtained permanently. However, it is not a possession but a thinking process that must be employed each time historical investigation is undertaken.

Finally, Lee (2001) discusses the nature of history as being ‘counter-intuitive’. The complexity involves substantive knowledge and second order concepts; the nature and status of historical accounts, evidence, understanding and explanation, change and time; and “[i]n history the past is not ‘given’, and cannot therefore be a touchstone truth. If we are to know about it, we have to work at it, and none of the ways of working involve direct access to the past, in which we can hold up what we are saying against the real past to see if it matches up. The inferential discipline of history has evolved precisely because the real past cannot play any direct role” (p. 4). Lee claims this is precisely what stops some students from understanding the importance of history. Their need to have concrete information to validate past situations creates distrust in the conflicting accounts of history. Lee states,

It is only when students begin to operate with a concept of *evidence* that history can resume again. If they understand that historians can ask questions about historical sources that those sources were not designed to answer, and that much of the evidence used by historians was not intended to report anything, then they are freed from dependence on truthful testimony. If they also understand that much of what historians are interested in could not have been ‘eye-witnessed’ by anyone...then history becomes an intelligible, even powerful, way of thinking about the past (p.6).

Because this way of thinking is not natural for students, Lee sees this evolution as being a progression of ideas in history. Moving students through the progression is a matter of extending their understanding gradually and Lee warns that it is not a tactical plan with a guarantee of

success, but may allow teachers to facilitate the students' thinking process, and even redirect that process if necessary. Lee states, "Research suggests that students do not find it easy to understand the ways in which history approaches the past... Whatever else it does by way of acquainting them with different kinds of past, history education in schools should give students an intellectual apparatus for handling history. No one else will [sic]" (p.22). Lee concludes that students are not "blank slates" waiting to be filled with knowledge, but arrive in the classroom with their own historical baggage that influences their view of history. Wheeler (2004) seems to agree that student attitudes must be addressed and that "[e]mpathizing with historical characters pulls student out of a presentist mindset so that they can begin to analyze the past in historical context. But it also serves a broader social purpose. Students who develop historical empathy will be better able to imagine the situation of someone different from him/herself" (p. 2).

### Gifted Students

There is much controversy over the term "gifted" because it has been used to identify a select population of students as "special". The implication of the term leads to the converse that all other students are not gifted and therefore not special. However, for lack of a better term, research has provided evidence that there are indeed "gifted" people. They have differences that can be identified and characterized.

Giftedness encompasses both the genetic and environmental aspects of ability. Clark (1988) states "it is not only genetic endowment that results in giftedness; it is also the opportunities that environment provides to develop these genetic programs that will allow some children to enhance their abilities to the point of giftedness... The growth of intelligence depends

on the interaction between our biological inheritance and our environmental opportunities to use that inheritance” (p. 7).

The gifted individual is reported to have increased brain growth in three areas which allows for advance or accelerated development of brain function (Clark, 1988). This brain development can be considered synonymous with higher levels of intelligence. According to Messer (1983), intelligence is how much a person is able to learn and more specifically how much one can learn about bodies of knowledge.

Therefore, Clark (1988) identifies giftedness as a genetic endowment added to environmental opportunities. Intellectual growth occurs as biological inheritance and environmental opportunities interact. “While genes provide us with our own unique menu, the environment makes the actual selection within that range of choice” (p. 10). This supports the views that were expressed in Chapter 1 by Tannenbaum’s (2003) definition describing the five elements that must be present for giftedness to occur.

### Learning styles of the gifted

There is research that supports the belief that gifted students have similarities in learning styles (Dunn, 1993). Spinner (1992) does make a clear distinction between learning style and intelligence and states that “people with different learning styles can have equal intelligence. Every person has a preferred learning style” (p. 10).

The gifted students indicate a need for independent study, more simulations of real life, discussions, more field dependent activities, and preferred less structure to the classes according to Maker (1982). These theories are supported by Greggs and Price (1979) research which reports the “gifted [students] were less teacher motivated, more persistent, [they tended to] like

some sound in their learning environment when studying or concentrating, [but]did not like auditory learning and preferred to learn alone” (p. 61). Further study by Griggs and Dun (1984), reports gifted students resist conformity and are self-motivated favoring independence and little structure. In addition, gifted learners prefer manipulative and active experiences to lectures, discussions and tapes and more small group instructional opportunities as opposed to large group times (Price, Dunn, Dunn, and Griggs, 1981).

As has been stated earlier, historical instruction must move past a pursuit of only factual information to deeper levels of clarification that lead to understanding why particular events happen and how the participants react. Historical empathy involves thinking beyond the factual information to more abstract material, reasoning abilities to see different perspectives that give insight into actions of people in the past and identifying the historical problems so that the solutions can be analyzed. Gifted students, Sword (2003) explains, “can reason more rapidly and accurately with complex abstract material. This exceptional reasoning ability enables gifted children to be more perceptive and insightful, grasping essential elements of situations quite quickly. Insightfulness leads to unusual approaches to problem finding, problem solving and ‘interesting’ solutions” (p. 1). Another aspect of historical empathy is concerned with understanding the difference between the past and the present which makes it necessary to view historical events in the context of the time period. Again Sword (2003) reveals gifted students’ traits conducive to this thinking process.

For gifted children, nothing is as simple as it seems so precision is needed to help sort out relationships and to enable decision making. [G]ifted children see clearly that the answer depends on the context – they see endless shades of grey, not black and white.... As

analytical thinkers, gifted children excel at critical examination – they can take things apart in their minds and see all the intricate ways that things could be improved (p. 1-2).

These levels of historical inquiry are not exclusive to gifted students, but can be applied to all history instruction. Once again, the objective is to develop those abilities of historical empathy in all history students and to apply them to present situations that call for critical analysis and problem solving. Tomlinson (2001) very aptly suggested, “instruction should be student-focused in ways that ask each student to create, argue with, analyze, reconstruct, look at multiple perspectives on, use, reflect on, and communicated about the precise ideas and skills on which teacher intended them to focus. The power of listing, copying, and absorbing pales by comparison to the power of doing” (p. 5).

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to conduct this study. The theoretical framework is reviewed first since it lies at the core of my approach to this investigation. The problem statement and the research questions are examined next for clarity of purpose and direction. A description of the participants is included to give some insight into who the participants are beyond how they respond to questions and essays. The context in which the research was conducted gives the participants' frame of reference in regard to their comprehension of history and its importance. Next a description of how the data was collected reveals the setting used and the coding system employed. Finally, the subjectivity and trustworthiness of the study are discussed.

The methods of generic qualitative study according to Merriam (1998) "simply seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (p.11). She continues by describing the findings that result from this method as both description and analysis. "The analysis usually results in the identification of recurring patterns that cut through the data or in the delineation of a process" (p. 11). These methods can be employed through the use of personal journal entries, interviews and critical analysis of both. Generic qualitative studies are not a problem solving ventures but are ways of describing aspects of phenomena. Eyring (1998) says

Instead of the researcher choosing one angle of vision from which to view a phenomenon, there is an attempt to understand experience through the lenses of those describing the experience—while recognizing one’s own perspective and the influence of that perspective. Because experience is complex, the researcher must fluidly shift his or her focus from the experience itself, to the ground shaping the experience, and then back to the experience. As phenomena are viewed from these many different angles, a richer picture is seen (p. 141).

A generic qualitative approach can achieve this view of multiple perspectives, which can lead to the aspects of historical empathy displayed by gifted students and advanced reflections of students’ responses to particular historical questions.

In order to identify the aspects of historical empathy Foster’s (1999) definition was used to create a coding system (see Appendix A). The definition identifies six aspects that are the basis of the coding system.

Historical empathy....is the process that leads to an understanding and explanation of why people in the past acted the way they did....involves an appreciation of historical context and chronology in evaluation of past events....is reliant upon a thorough analysis and evaluation of historical evidence...involves an appreciation of the consequence of actions perpetrated in the past....demands an intuitive sense of a bygone era and an implicit recognition that the past is different from the present....requires a respect for, and appreciation of, and a sensitivity toward, the complexity of human action and achievement (p. 18-24).

An additional coding system developed by Ashby and Lee (1978) was used to analyze the students' essays and interview transcripts. Asby and Lee's system presents five levels of historical empathy with five being the highest level.

Level 1 – The 'Divi' Past...the inability of the pupil to recognize that people in the past often could not know -- either in general or in the details of the situation in which they were called upon to act -- what the pupil now knows and takes for granted. Add to this pupil's inability to envisage the inherent complexity of human institutions and interactions, and the past becomes a catalogue of absurd behavior (p. 68).

Level 2 – Generalized Stereotypes – pupils use “actions, institution, etc., understood by reference to a ‘conventional’ or stereotypical account of people’s intentions, situations, values and goals.” They give an example of how students used belief in God as an okay explanation for the actions of the people in the event. “The assumption is that *any* religious person who believes in God will as a consequence accept almost any absurdity if it is done in the name of religion (p. 72).

Level 3 –Everyday Empathy -- there is a genuine attempt to reconstruct salient features of the particular situation, and this is coupled with a general awareness of the kinds of ways in which people might react, and frequently with some form of personal projection: what would it have been like for me if *I* had been there? (p. 74).

Level 4 – Restricted Historical Empathy –Actions, institutions, etc. understood by reference to evidence of the specific situations in which people found themselves, with the recognition that these cannot necessarily be characterized as we now may characterize them, partly because we may know things people in the past did not or could not know, and partly because their beliefs, goals and values were different form ours (p. 78).

Level 5 – Contextual Historical Empathy – There is an attempt to set the problematic action or institution in a wider context of beliefs and values, and often an attempt to link it with the material conditions of life (p. 81).

Using both Foster’s definition and Ashby and Lee’s levels to identify historical empathy allows for interpretation of the data collected and a clear picture of what aspects are displayed by gifted 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### Theoretical Framework

Historical empathy involves the ability to understand the actions of participants in historical situations. The purpose of this study is to observe the aspects of historical empathy displayed by gifted 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. In order to identify these aspects, a generic qualitative study is used along with principles of hermeneutics because of the need to use text to introduce historical situations.

A generic qualitative study is descriptive and is attentive to how things appear without making judgments or predisposed valuations. A hermeneutic methodology is interpretive and allows for an explanation of phenomena (van Manen, 1990, p. 180) such as historical empathy. The goal of this research is to identify the phenomena of historical empathy in gifted 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. According to van Manen:

If we realize that every phenomenological text is only one interpretation of a possible experience then the text...remain rich and compelling. They offer us sensitive descriptions and interpretations of possible life experiences (however tentative or localized these accounts may be). Thus the ambition of interpretive phenomenology is quite modest and yet important for everyday life: it aims to explore the many possible ways that we may experience and meaningfully understand our world and our relations

with others; hopefully these efforts contribute to a more reflective living (van Manen, 1996, p. 39-64).

Although van Manen is describing interpretive phenomenology these sentiments are important to this study as I seek to explain the phenomena of historical empathy using a generic qualitative study (Merriam, 1998).

Additionally, hermeneutics enhances the study because it relates to the way text is interpreted. Crotty (1998) explains, “Texts are not just antique or foreign curiosities. They are means of transmitting meaning – experiences, beliefs, values – from one person or community to another. Hermeneutics assumes a link between the two that makes the exercise feasible” (p. 91). Crotty further expands this by sharing Schleiermacher’s view of “reading text is very much like listening to someone speak...they are able to put themselves in the place of the speaker and recognize what the speaker is intending to convey. There is a place, then, for a kind of empathy in the speaker-listener interchange” (p. 93). The ability to understand not only the words but also the intent of the author is also part of the theoretical perspective, which describes some of the same attributes of historical empathy. One of the most basic rationales for the development of historical empathy is that the students will be able to understand the motivations and intentions of persons in the past. Part of that insight can be gained from those who write history. Crotty (1998) expresses this idea when he describes how to approach the text empathetically.

A first way to approach texts might be described as *empathic*. This is an approach characterized by openness and receptivity. Here we do more than extract useful information from our reading. The author is speaking to us and we are listening. We try to enter into the mind and personage of the author, seeking to see things from the author’s perspective. We attempt to understand the author’s standpoint. It may not be our

standpoint; yet we are curious to know how the author arrived at it and what forms its basis (p. 109).

Crotty extends this idea to include a *transactional* mode, which allows the reader to move beyond mere interaction with the author and become an interpreter. “Out of the engagement comes something quite new. The insights that emerge were never in the mind of the author. They are not the author’s text. They were not with us as we picked up the text to read it. They have come into being in and out of our engagement with it” (pp. 109-110). Historical empathy has elements of the transactional mode which allow students to engage in historical inquiry and extract from it not only what the author intended, but also how they as students relate to what is presented. This interpretive hermeneutics perspective provides the opportunity for students to approach history using both their own understanding while learning the perspectives of the makers of history.

The focus of the study is on the description of the particular aspects of historical empathy that are displayed by a sample of gifted 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and the interpretation of those aspects in relation to the definition of historical empathy. Historical empathy implies the ability to understand the impact of actions of historical people and at the same time comprehend the reasons behind the actions taken. Given the nature of these aspects, a generic qualitative study is used. It encompasses the very nature of this method and offers accounts of “experienced space, time, body, and human relations as we live them” (van Manen, pp. 183-184).

### Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Research literature supports the need for the study of history instruction that moves students beyond the mere collection of facts and events. It identifies and describes historical

empathy and its relationship to teaching history. Riley (2001) states, “These tools or constructs of empathy include teaching context, selecting sources or evidence for examination, presenting multiple perspectives and helping students to construct a reasonable explanation of a particular historical event” (p. 160). How to identify historical empathy is the reason for this research. Foster (1999) has given a detailed definition of historical empathy, which includes six aspects that are indicators of this phenomenon. Ashby and Lee (1987) have created levels of historical empathy that can be used to determine the progress students achieve as they encounter historical situations. Questions that are addressed in this study relate to the aspects and levels of historical empathy student display and achieve, respectively. How students manifest historical empathy in their oral reflections and the journal writings are also examined.

Using both indicators for a foundation, this study focuses research on the aspects of historical empathy that gifted students display. The study includes a closer examination of the levels created by Ashby and Lee by reporting the differences in achievement that one student may accomplish when examining an historical situation. VanSledright (2001) points out the ability of a student to be at two levels simultaneously, which he sees as problematic when identifying students’ progress toward being historically empathetic (p. 56). The identification of historical empathy using the Foster definition adds another dimension to the research as it reveals students’ ability to verbalize their understanding of historical events. Finally, students’ manifestations of historical empathy are examined through journal writing and interviews.

### Selection of Participants

The focus for my study was my 8<sup>th</sup> grade gifted social studies students. These students are considered “gifted” using the Georgia State Board of Education guidelines for gifted students

(see Appendix B). Students were selected by four criteria: motivation, creativity, mental ability, and achievement. These criteria involved their grade point average (motivation), their score on Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (creativity), their score on the Cognitive Ability Test (mental ability), and their score on the California Achievement Test (achievement). The criteria are set by the State, but the actual instruments used are determined by the individual county (see Appendix B for copies of the instruments used in Fulton County). My 8<sup>th</sup> grade class was part of a public middle school and was comprised entirely of gifted students. I was the regular classroom teacher for these students and gained access for research purposes through proper channels. Permission was received from the parents/guardians of each student. Both the principal of the school and the county central office were informed and gave permission for the study (see Appendix C).

A group of ten participants was selected from five classes of twenty students to participate in the study. The study involved all five classes responding in journals. The selection of the ten participants was based only on their journal responses and how they rated according to the definition established and the Ashby/Lee levels. To ensure scoring was accurate and unbiased, the journals were evaluated using both coding standards by a second scorer who did not know the students. Also, a number was used on the journal entries and the entries were typed, which added another layer of separation between me in my role as a teacher and my role as a researcher. Selection for interviewees was made comparing both evaluations and choosing those that ranked highest. Race and gender were not factors being evaluated. All the students that participated were identified as gifted.

The interviews were used to determine: how these students view historical empathy; what they think is different today from the past; what cause and effect has to do with an historical

event; how the participants in history affect the outcome; and how they believe historical empathy helps someone learn history (see Appendix D for the interview protocol). The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and were conducted outside of the classroom time.

Participation in the study required the students' permission and the permission of their parents/guardians. These were obtained through letters of explanation about the study and the use of the information gathered (see Appendix E). Participants were assured of confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms. Great care was taken to allow students the opportunity to express themselves. Students were told they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to do so. Table 1 shows the pseudonyms, ethnicity and gender of the participants in the study. The majority ethnicity of the participants is Asian and there are only two male participants.

Table 1. Participant Information

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Gender</u>
Annie	Asian Indian	Female
Lilu	Korean	Male
Raven	Asian Indian	Male
Joe	Caucasian	Female
Kitoshi	Caucasian	Female
Shen	Chinese	Female
Keaide	Chinese	Female
Lily	Caucasian	Female
Lori	Caucasian	Female
Sophie	Chinese	Female

### Description of the Context for the Study

This study was conducted in a middle school based in a large metropolitan area in the northern section of one of the wealthiest counties in the state. The population consists of affluent, professional, white-collar, two-working-parent households. The population is ethnically diverse consisting of a majority of Caucasians and Asians with a small percentage of African Americans. Six of the participants are second generation Americans and have experienced cultural diversity within the confines of their own home. The middle school has a 1,300+ student body that reflects the ethnicity of the area.

Each participant is part of a history class that is designated for gifted students. The state requires that gifted classes have no more than 21 students, which helps to establish rapport between teacher and student. The students, for the most part, are willing learners and self motivated, as well as competitive. Their abilities allow them to move through the curriculum at a faster pace than most regular students. Classes are designed to promote discussion and students are encouraged to state their opinion.

The curriculum units taught during this study followed my typical teaching methods and covered the American Colonial period and the American Revolutionary war. Each unit lasted 2 ½ weeks, and the students read sections of their text, *The Georgia Studies Book: Our State and Nation*, had discussion about each and took a unit test on both.

The American Colonial Unit began with a simulation which examined the causes of the death rate in Jamestown, England's first colony. The student groups were given primary source information regarding the conditions of the colony, and they had to determine what they thought caused the 80% death rate for the first 20 years of the colony's existence. Each group gave a presentation stating their hypotheses. After reading "England Comes to North

American” and “The Founding of Georgia,” two sections of their text, discussions were conducted allowing students to question and analyze the content. The students were then tested on the information from the readings and the discussions.

The American Revolution unit began as student groups were given events of the time period, and they tried to put them in chronological order using cause and effect as their guide. After they had completed their arrangement of the events, a discussion followed allowing them to add dates to the events which gave them the chronological order. Next, the whole class brainstormed the word “protest” which defined and described its meaning. This activity led to an examination of the American Declaration of Independence as a form of protest. Each individual student was allowed to pick a subject to protest and then presented his/her protest as a culminating activity to the unit. Their protests could be a speech, a letter to the editor of a paper or an official, or a song. The students could do this individually or as a group. All were encouraged to make a protest signs, but it was not required. This assignment was done simultaneously as they completed work from the text book. Students read “The American Revolution and Georgia Statehood” from their text which was followed by discussions that allowed them to question and analyze the content. The students were then tested on information from the readings and the discussions.

Discussions in the classroom involved students answering questions orally after reading sections of the text to themselves. Much of the discussion was questioning the students and letting them explain the situations from the knowledge that they gained from the reading. Clarification was given when needed, and students’ opinions were welcome.

### Data Collection

Data collection was comprised of journal entries and interviews. Thus the participants' ability to display historical empathy was manifested in both written and oral language. The journals of all 95 students were examined for evidence of historical empathy using a coding system based on Foster's (1999) and Ashby and Lee's (1978) definitions. The journals asked for explanations of why particular events happened, who was involved and how the people involved influenced the event (e.g. "How did American colonialism develop?" "What were the causes of the American Revolutionary War?") These journals revealed the ability of students to understand the political ramifications of the administration of a colony, its effect on the colonist and the reasons that this situation existed. The selection process determined those that ranked highest on both the Ashby and Lee levels and the Foster definition codes. After examination of the coded journals by the teacher/research and the second coder, ten individuals were selected to interview. The interviews are also central to the discovery of regularities that might be found in the different participants' responses and to the analysis that will lead to the advanced reflection of the research process.

The interviews centered on participant's understanding of the aspects of historical empathy. These included questions about actions of the people in the past, historical context, chronology, analysis of historical evidence, cause and effect, differences between the past and present, and the complexity of human action and achievement. Each student was interviewed after school using a predetermined protocol (see Appendix D). The interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. The students were able to read the transcribed interview and provide clarification and/or elaboration.

### Data Coding and Analysis

Analysis of the data was accomplished in two stages. Each journal entry was read and coded any time that the student displayed one of the aspects of historical empathy noted on a the matrix (see Appendix F). This matrix was used to determine the selection for the interviews. Miles and Huberman, as reported by Creswell (1994) suggest a plan for representing the information in matrices...a spatial format that presents information systematically to the reader. These displays show the relationship among categories of information, such as informants, site, demographic variables, time ordering of the information, role ordering, and many other possibilities (p. 154). This same process was used with the Ashby and Lee levels as the journals were read. Creswell (1994) introduced this stating, "Identify the coding procedure to be used to reduce the information to themes or categories. Flexible rules govern how one goes about sorting through interview transcriptions, observational notes, documents, and visual material. It is clear, however, that one forms categories of information and attaches codes to these categories. These categories and codes form the basis for the emerging story to be told by the qualitative researcher" (p. 154). This same process was used to analyze the interviews. Once again, another matrix was constructed to note the aspects that are seen in the interviews (see Appendix F). The questions that were asked in the interview reflected the definition of historical empathy provided by Foster (see Appendix D). Each student's responses were categorized according to the same two instruments used in the journal analysis and this was used as the basis for writing the descriptive narrative of the study.

The reflections were from my inspection of the narratives that appeared in the students' journals as well as the interviews I conducted. I looked for aspects of historical empathy of participants using these criteria to identify characteristics. Students exhibited several different

levels at different times during the interview, so each question was coded with a level. This allowed for a more complete analysis of the students' answers.

### Establishing Trustworthiness

The issues that need to be taken into consideration when reporting the findings from this study involve reliability and validity. When dealing with reliability Silverman (1993) states, "For reliability to be calculated, it is incumbent on the investigator to document his or her procedure and to demonstrate that categories have been used consistently" (p. 188). This study's procedures have been outlined and can be used in other situations to determine the historically empathetic student in any classroom. The Foster code and the Ashby/Lee levels can be used to categorize the responses of any student when asked to analyze an historical event. The use of a second coder also revealed the usefulness of the coding system developed to evaluate the journal entries. The inter-coder calculations were 96% on the Ashby/Lee levels and 98% on the Foster aspects for the Colonial journals. As for the American Revolution journals, there was a 90% agreement on the Ashby/Lee levels and a 98% agreement on the Foster aspects. Further, the protocol for the interviews could also be used and adjusted for participants according to age differences. Reliability, according to Silverman (1993), is achieved if "Categories [are] applied in a standardized way, [and if there is] standardization of transcript conventions" (p. 188). These things can be achieved to a certain extent if care is taken. However, it must be understood that limitations must be stated for this to take place. Creswell (1994) cautions that "Like the issue of generalizability, the uniqueness of a study within a specific context mitigates against replicating it exactly in another context" (p. 159). Yin (1989) believes that for qualitative studies to be replicated in other settings a detailed protocol is advisable. In this study, all categories were

identified and used to determine the aspects of historical empathy displayed by the participants. The interviews were coded using the same criteria, and only then a description of the findings reported.

Validity was the other issue to be considered. This issue involved both internal and external validity. Merriam (1988) suggests that internal validity judges the information's accuracy. Here the idea was to triangulate by having two or more sources of information plus the feedback of those participating. The convergence of information sources was used when two rating systems determined the different incidences, when participants displayed historical empathy both in the journal writing and the interviews. Validity was also addressed with the involvement of the independent coder. The last component allowed the interview participants to read his/her transcript and then make comments to clarify, correct the wording or explain his/her answers.

External validity refers to the "generalizability" of a study. Once again Merriam (1988) points out the purpose of qualitative research is not generalizability but to report particular situations and interpret them. "This point aside, however, limited generalizability might be discussed for the categories or themes to emerge from the data analysis for the data collection protocol used by the researcher" (Creswell, 1994, 159). The generalizability was addressed in regard to using the coding systems and the interview protocol to construct a study using participants in different situations. It must be noted however, that other situations would also include different teachers, settings, ages, and levels to mention a few problems with generalizability of a study. However, there is a completely different take on the issue of validity. Schwandt (1997) states it this way

Validity is understood as a test of whether an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers....Defenders of this view hold that one can have good reasons for accepting an account as true or false, yet an account is always fallible ....validity of an account is relative to the standards of a particular community at a particular place and time. The validity of an account or interpretation is judged in terms of the consensus about words, concepts, standards and so on in a given community of interpreters (p. 169).

With this understanding of validity in mind, and the other view of validity understood, this study addressed the issues in reporting the phenomena with an aim to be trustworthy and authentic while striving to have the voice of the participant heard and evaluating the data they presented.

The dual coding system, two coders, two journal entries, and a coded interview gave validity to this research. The anonymity of the selection of participants removed bias of the researcher and established legitimate avenues to authentic results. The separate coding of the two journal entries ensured a genuine unbiased assortment of participants, and the coded interviews added a stratum that reinforced the results of the journal entries. The interviews also gave voice to the participants, allowing them to express their thoughts on a number of issues that revealed their level of ability in the area of historical empathy. Understanding that some participants were better writers and some were better speakers, the use of written and spoken means in combination produced a well rounded research structure.

## Chapter 4

### FINDINGS

This study explored what aspects of historical empathy were displayed by a purposive sample of 10 gifted 8th graders. Data related to their ability to display historical empathy were gathered from journal entries and in-depth, open-ended, one-on-one interviews. Foster's (1999) six-part definition of historical empathy and Ashby and Lee's five levels of historical empathy were systematically applied to the writing samples and interview transcripts using qualitative data analysis techniques.

#### People Action

When studying history and examining the actions of the people involved, questions arise about what motivates those actions. The process of unraveling the intent behind the actions and then being able to explain leads to an understanding of people's actions. Understanding why people act the way they do is not an automatic ability. As the definition states, it is a process and is a key element in the development of historical empathy. This capacity often is the foundation to understanding history. All of the students displayed this aspect in their writings and their interviews. Sophie explains this quite well stating,

*I think empathy means that you can feel the person's feelings as your own and understand like why they did some things or what happened to them.*

She reveals even more understanding in her writing,

*To pull mighty England out of its debt, they issued the Sugar Act to the colonists. Afterwards, they issued the Quartering Act and the Stamp Act. These came as blows to the American colonists, and these also struck a match inside some of the people's hearts. They disliked all the taxes. How is it they, the ones who were paying these taxes, have no say in the decision of having them, just because they were an ocean away? Yet England could do that. The king could do that. Yet finally, after much protesting, the Stamp Act was repealed. This might have caused a sigh of relief among the colonists, but the Townshend Act was soon passed to take the place of it. This drove the colonists off the edge.*

Sophie explains both sides of the situation and is able to pin point the reaction by both parties involved. She also makes a distinction between agents of change and reaction in the following statement,

*Probably, Britain [reacting], because when the states decided...I mean the colonies [agents of change] decided to revolt against them they were just reacting.*

Annie's description of the Boston Tea party gives another example of understanding people's actions,

*Yeah, okay, like in the Boston Tea party and stuff they dumped tea in the harbor and then they had to pay for it, and they passed more acts...the British passed more acts and that made the colonist angry and that's one of the reasons for the war and stuff.*

Raven explains Oglethorpe's actions for wanting to settle Georgia.

*During the seventeen hundreds, Britain was having problems because of poverty. The streets were crowded with many poor people. Many people who couldn't repay debts*

*were sent to prisons called debtors' prison. In fact, one of Oglethorpe's friends, Robert Castell, was in debtors prison. Oglethorpe wanted to settle some of the land in North American to put some of the poor people here [Georgia].*

These examples reach Level 3 Everyday Empathy, because “there is a genuine attempt to reconstruct salient features of the particular situation, and this is coupled with a general awareness of the kinds of ways in which people might react” (Ashby & Lee, 1987, p. 74). It is apparent these students understand why people act and the reasoning used to make decisions that cause the actions.

Other students are able to explain People Action but only after prodding with suggestions and additional questions. This example of the exchange shows Lori's thought process as she comes to reveal her understanding of the event.

Interviewer: Can you give an example of something that happened in the past that affects us today?

**Lori:** [long pause] *I don't know.*

Interviewer: Do you have a slave today?

**Lori:** *No.*

Interviewer: Why not?

**Lori:** *Because...the uhm...lots of people were against it and that's one of the causes of the Civil War.*

Lori also achieves Level 3 Everyday Empathy with the added encouragement but did not elaborate. Lilo also has problems understanding the questions and did not develop his answers completely.

Interviewer: How are people agents of change?

*Lilu: When...I'm not sure.*

Interviewer: Okay think about something historical...and think about how people in it...what they did and what happened because they did what they did?

*Lilu: The British soldiers were scared and they shot in the Boston Massacre.*

Interviewer: Okay, what would have happened if they hadn't shot?

*Lilu: Then the people wouldn't have died.*

Here Lilo is not willing to speculate past the one event as to what the effect of this event might have caused. He later expresses the fact that it really had no effect because: *Maybe something else might have happened [to cause the Revolutionary War]*. Quite simply, Lilo sees the incident only as people actions that resulted in death and does not connect it to the events leading to the American Revolution. The subsequent remark that something else would have happened reflects the lack of significance he placed on the one event. However, he still reaches Level 3 Everyday Empathy, because he realized that the one event was only one part of the whole story.

People Action was evident in the ten student interviews and journals. Lilo and Lori, while showing evidence of understanding people's actions, were not as explicit in their understanding of the broader situation. People Action appeared strongest in Annie, Sophie and Raven. Their grasp of the situations and the resulting actions showed their ability to understand why people acted and reacted in ways that shaped significant cornerstones of American history.

### Context & Chronology

Chronology gives sequence to events and makes history seem concrete. It gives order that does not have to be explained or understood, because there is no question about what happened first. Context is not so concrete and adds an element of perspective to the order of events. Both work together to give a comprehensive view of the past.

Chronology is much easier for students to understand and appreciate. Every student defines chronology and their answers to the questions, “What is chronology?” range from

***Lilu:** It’s the order of dates and stuff.*

***Lori:** Like the order of things that...like the order of events.*

***Joe:** It’s the order in which things happen.*

to very precise answers

***Shen:** In the order of like the certain dates. From the like from the earliest date to the most recent.*

***Annie:** The order in which something happens. A series of things.*

***Sophie:** Its important especially for history because you can...its all bout chronology...like if you know when it happened then before what and after what then you can understand a lot about it just by looking at that.*

Their understanding of the importance of chronology is also very easily expressed. All think that it is important and give similar reasons for its importance as illustrated by the following examples when asked “Is chronology important?”:

***Lily:** Yeah, because if something happened before something else and it caused that and you say it happened after that’s kind of messing things up.*

Annie, however puts the importance on historical chronology by stating,

*Well, like I said it depends on the terms in which you are talking about, if your talking about what I did this morning, it doesn't matter if I brushed my teeth or washed my face first; but in history well kind of yeah, 'cause then we know, understand why things happened and how they happened and then we can understand it better.*

Chronology is displayed in each of the journals as they recount the events that lead to American colonization and the American Revolution. In the following account, Joe explains,

*American Colonialism developed over time. The colonies began as economic experiments from many different countries, and in the course of war, conflict and hardship, eventually evolved into the Royal Colonies of Great Britain.*

In her opening paragraph for the journal about the American Revolution, Lily gives a very good chronological account,

*There are many causes leading up to the Revolutionary War. Colonists were upset with the way Britain was ruling them. When they tried to protest the strict government, Britain only ignored them. The colonies were forced to take rebellious acts. As a result, Britain instituted the unforgivable [intolerable] acts. This pushed the colonists over the limit, and they declared their independence from Britain. When the king ignored them, they were forced to go to war to achieve freedom.*

Chronology is logical and was easily grasped by each student in my sample. The logic stems from the sequential events that create a structure that can be viewed from the student's perspective and is the starting point, or frame of reference, to build understanding of historical event. First they see the order then they can move from their perspective to those of the participants as the story unfolds revealing the different attitudes of each person.

Context is another tool used to explain and understand history, but it is not as easy for students to explain. In many of the interviews the contextual importance of an artifact had to be explained in detail to the students, but once they understand they can verbalize the meaning.

**Raven:** *The importance of the contextual part of an artifact is that you need to know where it came from or else it could be...when you are...for example if you have found a fossil you need to know whether it came from Africa or from below the ocean or where because if you don't know where it came from you might misinterpret it and you know...you might not know exactly where it came from.*

**Joe:** *Umh...like from the context of an artifact you can like...it will help you determine like what it is and what it was used for and stuff...Like the man in the field...[if] It was just a person in the field and if they found him in the field they would assume he'd like worked in the field but he actually could have worked in the school.*

**Kitoshi:** *In a place where its [an artifact] found you can like figure out more about this artifact or its time period or something...You can find an artifact and its place where it is found you can see how deeply its buried and what was around it...like if you found a pottery shard in the foundation of a building then you might know that it was a certain time period from the way it was made or from the place that it was in...[So what does it tell you about the people] that they were settled.*

Keaide, however needs no prompting and relates the importance of context of the different fragments of facts as she reveals the following:

*Oh, that's like your old dead teacher in the farm. Well, since we...like since a person...if they're not part of an event they can only guess on what happened, so they have to use the clues around it to sort of tell you and so like the civil war we were not alive in the*

*period but we can take a fact that there were lots of tariffs in that time and also that the Northern states didn't have slavery and the Southern state did and we can kind of piece them together to say that they might have caused the civil war.*

She continues to divulge her understanding of context as it relates to physical artifacts by stating,

*Like if you found an arrowhead outside like the post molds, if you found an arrowhead around there, then you would probably think that, that house was like the home of a warrior who used arrowheads a lot.*

Interviewer: And the fact that where it was gave it meaning?

**Keaide:** Yes.

The majority of the students reached Level 3 – Everyday Empathy as they describe Context & Chronology. Keaide reached Level 4 – Restricted Historical Empathy. She is able to relate different pieces of evidence within the context of the time period and understand the importance of that context. Her understanding of tariffs as they relate to the causes of the Civil War demonstrates her ability to use abstract concepts in context to give meaning to those concepts. She is also able to report the significance of the placement of artifacts as they relate to their surroundings when she talks about the arrowheads and the post molds. Keaide knows that artifacts tell a story and if they are rearranged or misplaced the story can mislead those that study the artifacts. She is able relate both concrete items and concepts in context which provides purpose to the facts that are analyzed and evaluated. Understanding why historical facts are significant relates to the context in which they are found.

### Historical Evidence

Analysis of historical evidence goes beyond recitation of facts and dates. It means that students must analyze evidence to evaluate the significance of the facts. Knowing the facts and dates is the entry level. Further investigation leads to the analysis and evaluation, and the students who ask “why” are the ones who take the steps toward an in depth revelation of historical knowledge and understanding. Clearly, the students participating in this study were far beyond the entry level moving quickly towards a depth of historical knowledge. Kitoshi and Keaide give examples of this knowledge in their journals.

***Kitoshi:** Life was difficult for new colonists. Many died as a result of the hard journey and rough living conditions once they reached the so-called colony. They often had to start totally from scratch, building homes and planting crops. Not all colonies were successful, but many prospered. Thus, the colonization of America began.*

***Keaide:** So what did this history lesson tell us about the causes of the Revolution? As Hercule Poirot, the famous detective, would say, let us be methodical and start from the beginning, meaning the French-and-Indian War. You could say that it was an indirect cause of the Revolution. Of course, taxation without representation as well as mercantilism had caused the unhappiness of the colonists a while before. The French-and-Indian War and its results simply raised the discontent to its highest level, and the Americans decided to take action. From then on, one thing led to another, and the American Revolution began.*

Lily adds another plane when she broadens the impact of the colonial period into the present.

***Lily:** Thanks to American colonialism, the new world was settled and developed. The results of this process are still impacting the world today. Colonialism started with a man*

*searching for China, and brought about the formation of several countries, including our own. Colonialism in America developed throughout time, from exploration, to colonization, to the formation of nations. Without it, the world would be very different.*

Lori comments on the significance of the Civil War:

*I think like when after the civil war like when slavery was ended. It was life changing for a lot of people both good and bad. For the South it was bad because there was less money. For the North it was good because they were paying attention to the constitution and about "all men are created equal".*

She is able to understand that there were good and bad sides to an issue that affected the whole nation. Sophie demonstrates her understanding of the significance of history by stating,

*Past events...their sort of...it really depends like some of them are lessons so we don't repeat ourselves...like especially when...you know slavery and injustices against African Americans and you know...we learn not to do that ever again because its inhumane.*

Again Sophie reveals interest in history stretches beyond just the facts.

*I probably like to study...I think maybe the American Revolution because there are so many things that happened during then. Everybody just thinks that the colonies didn't like Britain any more and they just wanted to revolt but there's a lot more to it so it always interests me.*

Her interest is in learning the reasons why the revolution happened and evaluating those against the background of significant historical events.

The students' evaluations of historical evidence reflect the attitudes that are described in Level 3 – Everyday Empathy, as they are able to recount relevant features of historical situations and the impact that had on the actions of the people involved. Lily, Lori and Sophie move into

Level 4 – Restricted Historical Empathy, as they move past the particular incident relating the consequences to present day. Each one shows the ability to look back and, with the knowledge of today, relate the impact the situations have on today's world.

### Cause & Effect

Historical empathy does not allow for viewing events in isolation. Rather, an understanding of cause and effect is key to all the aspects of historical empathy. Consequences are a direct result of past actions and must be valued as prominent features of historical understanding. Sophie gives a very good definition by stating,

*History is like dominos, there's cause and effect one after another repeating. One thing causes another so another thing happens because of the thing and so on.*

Others express it with similar words:

**Lilu:** *When something happens it will cause something else to happen*

**Raven:** *When one phenomenon triggers another phenomenon and it basically triggers a domino effect.*

**Joe:** *Like the relation between events that happen.*

**Shen:** *When one event makes something else happen because of it.*

**Lily:** *Cause and effect is where something happens and it triggers something else to happen, it's like the domino effect like where you push one and the others fall down which is really fun, by the way.*

Annie expresses her understanding of cause and effect by relating how she thought Gandhi's assassination affected India.

*Gandhi's being shot in India, I would change that so having him not being shot so that maybe he could have kept India, Pakistan and Bangladesh together as one whole country. I'm Indian, so, I would just like that.*

Others give examples of historical events that showed cause and effect.

*Lilu: The revolutionary was...when we won it, it gave us our independence and we are living in a free country.*

*Joe: My jeans weren't clean so I wore something else.*

Interviewer: Okay now relate that to historical cause and effect].

*Joe: Because the Seminoles helped the escaped slaves the...what are they called...the slave owners were mad...like they didn't like the Seminoles.*

*Lily: Like the different effects of the civil war...like causes of the civil war, like slavery affected the civil war and then the geography affected the civil war so a lot of things came together to make the civil war.*

The idea of multiple causes is also addressed by Raven when writing about the causes of the American Revolution.

*The colonists in America weren't very 'joyful, because they first of all had to pay taxes, and second of all, they didn't get any representation in the parliament (England's government)! So American colonists decided to protest to King George III about these topics.*

Keaide relates this aspect to the importance of history. She relates the cause of racial problems to the fact that there was slavery.

*I think that its important because like I said it help you learn and then also it will like help you understand why some things are happening now for example, segregation. If we*

*didn't know about slavery we would wonder why there was segregation now, or in the '50s or whenever it was.*

These examples demonstrate how the students can relate to events that still have an effect in today's world. This indicates their attainment of Level 4 – Restricted Historical Empathy in regards to cause and effect.

Historical investigation centers on cause and effect, and as students move past the fact finding process into the reasons for actions they begin to see patterns of cause and effect. This is a major component of historical empathy and the students are able to relate their understanding of this aspect effectively.

#### Recognition of the Past

It is often said that hindsight is 20/20, so as historical investigation begins, the attitude of superiority of the present must be addressed. Comprehending that life today is different than that of the past is paramount to the understanding of how it was for those historical figures. Analysis becomes less judgmental for students in this study as they recognize the actions within the context of the limitations of a particular time period. Shen understands the differences of a thirteen-year-old child's life in the 1800's. She states,

*They help with the farming if they lived on a farm or if they were rich they went to school and if the parents wanted to they could arrange marriages for them. They would be learning their responsibilities ...like cooking for the girl or taking after the farm or plantation. Slave children...may be sold or start work in the field more.*

Shen remarks about the significance of the American Revolution and again shows her understanding of the past and the present.

*Because if that [the Revolution] didn't happen then we would probably still be like a part of England or Britain and that would change a lot of stuff. Like we wouldn't have all the same rights and we would sort of be like a Britain but on the other side of the ocean.*

Keaide states this very pointedly.

*Historical empathy would, I guess, be understanding like the lives and events of people who lived like a long time before you did...at least or like, at least their lives are different from yours.*

In response to knowing about her country's history, Keaide states,

*Well, I was born in Tennessee...so technically I am an American...so if I didn't know the history I would wonder why there are so many like people of different ethnicities in America...because if you didn't know a lot of people immigrated you would think that if would be all like Caucasian people or like the British people and we'd all stay that way but if you know that its immigration it would make sense.*

The recognition of the need to understand the past to explain the present reveals Keaide's ability to decipher the differences between the two.

In response to explaining what unit of history she would like to study, Kitoshi said,  
*Probably like medieval time of the Renascence 'cause I just think things that went on then were kind of cool...Like...I like the idea of knights and jousting and castle and stuff even thought it's not really as hyped up as they said it was.*

Interviewer: Okay, it's not as romantic as they said it was?

**Keaide:** *Yeah.*

Interviewer: What about women's part in all of that, what do you look at there?

*Keaide: Aha...it's kind of interesting 'cause they didn't have many rights but didn't always seem like when you learn it that they really wanted any. Like it seems that they were happy just like parading around in dresses and like doing the needle work and stuff.*

Interviewer: Okay, let me ask you this, have you read anything that a woman reported during that time period?

*Keaide: No. We really don't know what they thought.*

Keaide recognized the differences in the past, but was puzzled by the lack of resistance that the women seemed to exhibit. However, she admitted that she had not received any evidence of medieval women's opinions.

The awareness of how the differences of the past teach us about the present was expressed by Joe. She responds to what she believed to be the most important historical event.

*Umh...I guess slavery because it taught us a lot about like acceptance and stuff. Like slavery and prejudice together. Just 'cause now we know it wasn't right and stuff...and so like I guess we would like be more...I don't know. To be...like just because someone looks different from us they're not like a terrible person or anything or they are not below us.*

Lily is able to relate to actual physical differences as she explains medieval times,

*I really like medieval time because I just think...I mean they didn't have what we had today. They didn't have electricity and they had the chamber pots that...I feel bad for the people that had to empty them and I think that it is really interesting just to see how they got by without all the stuff we take for granted today.*

Lily discloses plainly her understanding of the past as it relates to the present. All the students are able to express their recognition of the past very easily in their interviews; however this is not

an area that is apparent in their journals. Students were able to attain Level 5 for this aspect of historical empathy. Level 5 is Contextual Historical Empathy – There is an attempt to set the problematic action or institution in a wider context of beliefs and values, and often an attempt to link it with the material conditions of life. Each student expresses points that speak to conditions in the present world that were different in the past. Joe speaks about acceptance of all people where as Lily reveals present day people’s lack of awareness of the things “that are taken for granted”. As the students speak they uncover their knowledge of history and its importance to them as well as others.

### Complex Human Action

On the surface history does not appear complex. It is facts, events, and dates. The complexity of history reveals itself through understanding the influence of human involvement. There must be an awareness of the interconnection between actions that are taken and the achievements that are gained. Respect and appreciation for this complex arrangement adds to the ability to understand historical events. Annie explains this well.

*[History is] The record of the past...And the feelings and emotions involved in it and other things...Understanding and sympathizing with people in the past and why certain things happened like why they fought in certain wars and/or just stuff like that.*

*Ann Frank was a hero ‘cause she was really young. She died when she was 16 and she survived through a lot of hardship and she stayed strong through it. She didn’t like give up and like even though she didn’t survive to the end she like through her diary she taught a lot of people what happened and how it happened, how bad it was so that*

*today...like now we know what it was like and why we shouldn't let people just take over the world because of stuff like that.*

Annie continues to reveal human action as she states,

*Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi [are my heroes] because they fought for their rights and their people's rights. They did it in a peaceful way without trying to hurt other people and they achieved what they wanted and it took a lot of hard work and dedication and they did a lot and they went through a lot just to achieve what they believed in.*

Annie's respect and appreciation for these two men's achievement is unmistakable. Her sensitivity to the awareness of the difficulty in accomplishing their task is not concealed as she relates the gentlemen's concern for others.

Raven recognizes the impact of people's decisions in his comments.

*People make changes by making decisions in their life and they react to situations and basically every single thing that happens if something good happens they are happy and if something bad happens then they are like sad.*

Kitoshi suggests the complexity of the causes of the American Revolution in the introduction to her journal entry.

*There were several factors involved in the cause of the American Revolution. However, the main cause was the displeasure of the British colonists. There were many specific reasons that the colonists were unhappy. All of those were the causes of the Revolution.*

Shen conveys her appreciation for the contribution that all people make when achieving a goal when she answers the question about her hero.

*Maybe like the everyday soldier in Iraq...because not every body gets noticed but they are still doing their part...Well they [the every day soldier] like don't go in for the money or anything they just go because they are part of the US and they want to help.*

The respect that Shen has for the everyday soldier is reflected in her understanding the necessity of their participation and their willingness to help. Keaide echoes the same sentiment.

*I think an agent of change might be when you're choosing to participate even though you don't have to...like it might have been a lot easier for abolitionist to have just like stayed in Canada or wherever they were, but some of them might have gone down and actually helped the slaves run from their masters. So, if you are just like participating in the events you might still be living in Canada but agree to house the slaves who escaped there.*

In this comment Keaide realizes the complexity of decision making as people weigh the consequences of their actions.

Lily demonstrates people's willingness to take a stand for their beliefs even when it is dangerous.

*I think the most significant historical event is probably the revolutionary war because it's where we took a stand and said we're not going to let England push us around anymore. And this was really important because it showed that people could be strong when they stick together.*

Sophie concludes her journal entry by showing the intricacies of the causes of the American Revolution.

*What caused the Revolution? It wasn't caused by solely one thing. As mentioned before, it was a domino effect, because history is all a domino effect. One thing causes another.*

*The French and Indian War left England in debt, so they issued taxes. The colonists did not like the fact that they were not represented in the taxation decision, so they revolted.*

*All these causes led to the major ending: The American Revolution.*

In regard to Recognition of the Past, the students advanced to Level 5-Contextual Historical Empathy having displayed the ability to understand and articulate the complexity of human actions. They demonstrated a respect and appreciation for the action taken by historical characters and many times related the effects of these situations to the present showing their understanding of “the problematic action or institution in a wider context of beliefs and values” (Ashby and Lee, 1978, p 81).

### Summary

All ten students display aspects of historical empathy. The six aspects of the Foster definition are identified in the journal entries for each student and the Ashby/Lee levels vary. The interviews added clarity to the students’ abilities to be historically empathetic while providing a way for those that are more verbally inclined to use a more comfortable form of expression.

Foster’s six part definition is a collection of individual attributes of historical empathy with overlapping combinations of characteristics that work simultaneously. Many times one statement displays several of the same aspects of this definition. Sophie’s example of Historical Evidence could also be an example of People Action and Complex Human Action.

Areas easily recognized in the students’ responses are People Action, Chronology and Context, Historical Evidence, and Cause and Effect. Each of these areas is more a concrete concept, which can be analyzed effectively by students. For example, Cause and Effect is an

underlying foundation of the historical investigation and begins the mystery that intrigues students. Shen demonstrates this by saying, “*Yes. It’s [history] interesting and you don’t like know everything.*” Their interest is also rewarded as they begin to understand the cause of actions and can relate them to the present. Once again the areas overlap and Recognition of the Past is integrated with Complex Human Action.

The Ashby and Lee (1987) levels are more concentrated than the expanded Foster (1999) definition and move in a continuum from one level to the next. Each level contains some of the six identified aspects with the last level incorporating all six aspects. The levels attained by the students begin with Level 3 Everyday Empathy. This level contains four of the aspects: people action, historical evidence, context and chronology and cause and effect. Level 4 Restricted Historical Empathy contains those aspects in Level 3 as well as Recognition of the past. Level 5 Contextual Historical Empathy adds complex human action. Level 5 is reached in some instances, but generally the students move between Level 3 and 4. These levels are considered very high indicators of historical empathy.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The point of origin for this study is the importance of history in the curriculum. The problem is not if history should be included, but how history is presented in the classroom. Riley (2001) warns, “the problem with working in the affective domain is that teachers often use history to inculcate compassion or other similar feelings within students rather than offer them a useful framework with which they can conduct individual inquiry. Inquiry begins by formulating questions (problems) that necessitate study” (p. 154). Her proposal supports the idea that history instruction generates uncertainty, which leads students to investigate for themselves to find answers to assuage the uncertainties. The framework Riley suggests allows students the freedom to question, confront and debate issues that impact the present as well as define the past. This thought is the motivation behind this study. What do students actually gain from historical inquiry? Being able to determine a student’s depth of historical understanding can benefit teachers as they plan curriculum and strategies. To identify the historical understanding I used both Foster’s (1999) definition of historical empathy and Ashby and Lee’s (1987) levels of historical empathy. My aim was to reveal the aspects of historical empathy that gifted students displayed. I used gifted students because I teach American History to 8<sup>th</sup> grade gifted students. The scrutiny of students’ historical understanding exposed the presence of specific aspects of

historical empathy and divulged their ability to use history as a tool for understanding the knowledge acquired.

The significance of history is stated and restated throughout this paper. Engaging in historical investigation insinuates a process of moving from one plane to another. Historical empathy integrates both the significance of history and the process of moving beyond the first plane of facts to the depth of historical perception. Although historical empathy assumes many identities such as contextualized thinking, understanding history, empathizing with the past, and perspective taking (Wineburg, 2001; L33, 2001; Brenneman, 2001; Grant, 2001; Skolnick, Bulberrg, Manestre, 1999), it is a viable process of legitimate historical inquiry. The implications of this knowledge give credibility to methods of teaching history that enhance the process that historical empathy invites. The students in my study, given the opportunity, can interpret the mysteries of the past and find meaning in historical figures' actions of their predecessors. In fact, if they are allowed to inspect the reasons behind the actions, they become aware of other perspectives and the similarities that exist in the present.

The results of this study illustrate gifted student's ability to "grapple" with historical issues, analyze the appropriateness of the issue, and make a determination of the impact of that issue both historically and for the present. One area most troubling to these students is that of slavery. Their sense of fairness always comes to mind, such as, they understand the economic advantages of slavery but are outraged at the idea of enslaving another human. This is a dichotomy of understanding the why but not being comfortable with the how of an historical situation.

Interviewer: If you could change one historical event, what would it be and how would you change it?

*Lori: Probably, I'd change like either the holocaust or slavery. I don't know how I would change it though.*

*Sophie: Past events...their sort of...it really depends like some of them are lessons so we don't repeat ourselves...like especially when...you know slavery and injustice against African American and you know...we learn not to do that ever again because its inhumane.*

The understanding of what happened and the desire to not allow it to be repeated is evidence of the discomfort that these students feel about situations they view as “inhumane”.

The holocaust is also an area which evokes consternation. These students have much knowledge about the holocaust and in some instances would like to change history by eliminating it altogether. One student names Anne Frank as her hero and in her explanation shows why Anne Frank's contribution is important:

*Annie: Anne Frank was a hero 'cause she was really young. She died when she was 16 and she survived through a lot of hardship and she stayed strong through it. She didn't like give up and like even though she didn't survive to the end she like through her diary she taught a lot of people what happened and how it happened, how bad it was so that today...like now we know what it was like and why we shouldn't let people just take over the world because of stuff like that.*

Annie demonstrates the importance of knowing history even when it is unpleasant and using it to make the present and the future better.

The students examined issues of race, war, patriotism, governments, families and women's status, and they are able to understand the context of a time period and its effect on the people of that period as well as its historical influence. All but one of the students directly

comments on the subject of race. Three of the students name Martin Luther King, Jr. as a person that they admire and even elevate him to hero status. Gandhi is also noted as two students' hero. Both groups admire the stand that each man took against racial discrimination.

***Raven:** My hero personally is probably Mhumdus Gandhi because...he was a freedom fighter for India because he was the one who brought freedom to India against the British...he really inspired me because ...he really fought not outward, but he fought inwardly by not following any of the rules and he was a really, really good protester and that is why he inspired me in a lot of ways.*

***Lori:** I think like...Martin Luther King, [Jr.] would be one because like he went against like all the odds and made a real impact on everybody's life.*

War, patriotism, and government overlap as these students talk about the appropriate or inappropriate nature of wars and the impact of those wars. All the students comment on war and have varying opinions. The conflict of supporting what has happened recently and the understanding of how wars cause change are reflected in these comments:

***Kitoshi:** I think that like just recently, like invading Iraq, I don't think we should have done that but mostly just 'cause...like I think it's a good thing they caught one of the people they were after but now our troops are still over there but it seems kind of useless because they are dying but the situation I think is under control so it's kind of...*

***Sophie:** a lot of wars changed a lot...everything around like the Revolutionary War and like World War II it just brought shock to the world and terror and they are not really good significance, ...but they are significant because they changed the lives of so many people and they also turned thing around. So like the Revolutionary War we wouldn't*

*have America if they had never revolted and World War II we would never have know such terror basically.*

Interviewer: Human destruction?

**Sophie**...*Yeah...So anything that really changes live...impacts them a lot [is a significant historical event].*

Kitoshi is ambivalent about America's involvement in Iraq seeing both the good and bad parts of the war, while Sophie views any war as life-changing and therefore impacts the world.

The observations about family and women's status are mentioned several times when talking about children of the 1800's. Lily is very pointed about discrimination, but attributes it to the time period.

**Lily:** *...girls didn't go to school as much as the boys did...they sort of just hung around and like...well not hung around but they did stuff...they like cooked and cleaned and that other stuff which is discriminatory, but that's okay. Not really, but still. And then boys...some of the boys went to school if like their parents were richer and the other boys just helped around on the plantation and stuff like that...or if they were in the North they helped their parents or dads do stuff.*

Sophie comments on the gender difference and the economic differences of the children in this time period.

**Sophie:** *They, probably depending on gender...guys probably went to school and you know they were getting ready for college and stuff. And girls probably stayed at home and learned how to take care of the stuff. [All children?] No, some of them had to work in the field and stuff to help out their family. Or if they were slaves then they had to do that as well.*

These remarks disclose students' knowledge of the time period and their understanding of the significance of the events.

Further, they recognize the need to study history and the effect that history has on events happening in today's world. All the students in this study respond positively when asked if history is important and give similar answers to the two listed below:

***Lori:** I think its important so we can learn from our mistakes and see what was good that we did in history, but...so that we can know that its okay to do that again, but to see what's bad so that we don't do that again.*

***Annie:** They [past events] affect them [the present] a lot, because when something happens it like...when it starts it doesn't exactly start at a place but continues into the future and I don't know, but it can build up and they cause changes.*

***Sophie:** It think it is important to study history because, as we said it teaches us about things that happened before so we won't make the same mistake twice and it kind of helps you understand how thing came to be.*

Each student alludes to the importance of history in preventing the repeat of past mistakes and some, like Sophie and Annie, sees it as giving them understanding about the present. Each student excels differently, but all demonstrate the ability to be historically empathetic. The students display all the aspects of the Foster definition and reach the highest level of the Ashby/Lee instrument. The articulation of their understanding illustrates their ability to be historically empathetic, and though not all the students reach the highest levels, all do display aspects of historical empathy. Educators remember that historical empathy must be nurtured and practiced to fully develop.

Given the results of these students, the implication is that other gifted 8<sup>th</sup> grade students can indeed develop historical empathy to gain understanding and insight in historical investigation. The use of the coding instrument is a valuable tool in exposing the areas of historical empathy that the students display and can be useful in future research on this subject. The instrument can be applied to any situation where historical instruction is being analyzed without exception to age, intellectual levels or environmental situations. The process can also be applied to any period of historical instruction.

### Discussion of the Process

The process began as I taught American History to my five 8<sup>th</sup> grade gifted classes consisting of ninety-five students. The curriculum is comprised of prehistory to present day America, and the students in the study received instruction regarding the development of the American colonies and the American Revolution. All ninety-five students wrote an essay at the conclusion of these two units. I believe other units of history could be used to begin this process after instruction is given about the particular historical period.

The coding system is a matrix using the six aspects of Foster's definition and the Ashby/Lee Levels of Historical Empathy (see Chapter 3). The matrix for the Journal essays (see Appendix K) is very helpful in discovering those students that exhibit high levels of historical empathy. In order to add validity to the research, a second coder was enlisted. Use of the matrix was discussed and explanations were given for each aspect of the Foster definition plus the Ashby/Lee levels. We both used the matrix and then compared the results (see Appendix F). The coding took place at separate times and then the results were discussed. A number was given to each of the ninety-five students which was used with a pseudonym on the essays to hide the

students' identities. The use of the coding instrument permitted student selection before their identity was revealed. This added another layer of objectivity. Ten students with the highest scores were selected to be interviewed.

As the identities of the students were revealed, I was very surprised by one student in particular and pleased with several that I would not have picked from their classroom participation. The results of our coding were charted (see Appendix G). The second coder and I discussed changing the matrix to allow for using the Ashby and Lee levels for each of the six aspects of the Foster definition because students displayed historical empathy at different levels for each aspect. Having one level for the whole essay did not give a true picture of the intensity of a particular aspect, and so, by adding the levels to each aspect a more complete understanding of the students' abilities would be revealed.

Interviews were scheduled with each of the ten students after permission was given by the students and their parents or guardian. The interviews were conducted in my classroom and were recorded on audio tape only. I transcribed the interviews and then allowed the students to read them to make corrections if needed. There was only one correction and it was the spelling of a city in China. I found the students very interested in the transcripts and they seemed to read them completely. This procedure proved very interesting and was enjoyable to me. The students were excited although initially timid when responding. Most students became more confident as the process continued.

There were some instances where I found the teacher/student relationship inhibited the students' responses, but the need to be right and to please the teacher became a minimal factor in this research. Each participant in this study is my student. The advantages and disadvantages

were anticipated, but not fully understood until the interview process. The comments below give insight into some of the disadvantages of being the participants' teacher.

### Annie

I noticed Annie was shivering at the beginning of the interview—

Interviewer: Are you cold?

*Annie: No, just scared*

Interviewer: You're scared? I promise I won't bite your head off.

At the end of the interview—

Interviewer: I'm not that terrible am I? You're not that afraid of me are you?

*Annie: Oh, I was just afraid that I would mess up.*

Interviewer: There was no messing up, Sweetie, this was your opinion.

Even though the questions did not ask for a right or wrong answer the students felt it was very important that they were right. They knew that they were not being graded, however, it seemed important for them to have the right answer. I try to help my students think for themselves and show them that their opinion is important. Often I have to remind them of this fact as was evident in the following exchange.

### Joe

(This was in the middle of the interview)

Interviewer: Okay, do you think it is important to study history, Why or why not?

*Joe: You have asked this question so many times. Ummm...*

Interviewer: This is not what I want to hear, this what you think!

*Joe: Okay*

Interviewer: And I don't care how you respond to this, it doesn't reflect on anything in the way I think about your or your grade or anything.

*Joe: Okay*

I do not think she really believed me. Once again the idea of being right was very important to the students. However, this situation was only perceived in half of the interviews and most of their reluctance was alleviated before the interviews were concluded. The composition of the questions asked and assurances by me helped to relieve the fear that most students expressed.

At the beginning of the interview Shen told me she was scared, and I asked her why. She told me she was afraid she didn't know the right answers to the questions I was going to ask. Once again this feeling was expressed, but this is how the interview ended.

Interviewer: You're not scared any more are you?

*Shen: No (laugh)*

Interviewer: I thank you very much. See it wasn't too hard was it?

*Shen: No*

Interviewer: Do you like history?

*Shen: Yes. It's interesting and you don't like know everything*

Here Shen expressed the enjoyment of studying something that was challenging because she did not know "everything". It was interesting to hear the different reasons why these students liked history. Shen's reaction was another example of how students view what history is and why these students displayed the aspects of historical empathy. All these students had previous instruction in American history but were willing to explore the subject again to add to their understanding and knowledge.

An advantage to the teacher/student relationship was the ease of talking with someone a student knew. Shyness of the participants could alter the answers and familiarity with the interviewer can lessen the discomfort a student might feel. I already had established rapport with each of the students in this study and there was an appreciation by the students for being selected. The familiarity generated a less formal environment in which to question students, and the non-threatening nature of the questions created an atmosphere where students could respond without being concerned about their answers. Here, an exchange with Sophie shows the ease of our conversation.

Interviewer: Explain the contextual importance of an artifact and give an example.

*Sophie: Contextual?? Oh...the context...let's see...like if you found something...a...if you found day a spoon...a wooden spoon at an archeological site...you could probably conclude that there were probably little settlements or something here or they must have camped here.*

Interviewer: So the spoon...what if the spoon was somewhere else?

*Sophie: Somewhere else? Like where?*

Interviewer: In a pasture? (laugh)

*Sophie: Cows must have used spoons. No (laugh)*

We both enjoyed the joke and the interview contained elements of mutual pleasure at sharing ideas. At other times students felt comfortable enough to express controversial subjects when given an opening. Annie took the opportunity to speak out when given the chance at the end of the interview.

Interviewer: Okay, very good. Is there anything you want to say about historical empathy or anything you think or would like to speak out about?

**Annie:** *Yeah, we shouldn't have fought Iraq.*

Interviewer: We shouldn't have fought Iraq. Could you tell my why?

**Annie:** *Because we had no proof that they had weapons or that they were using them.*

*Yeah, okay, North Korea? They were saying we have weapons, we have weapons and they wanted our attention and we would give it to them. I think we should have fought over there. We had no proof that he was doing anything and especially....if you want to fight them a least give the real reasons don't use the weapons because there weren't any.*

Annie seemed to be waiting for the opportunity to say this. She did not hesitate and brought in facts about North Korea that had not been discussed in class. Her willingness to share this with me, I believe, was because of familiarity with me and the environment of ease that existed before the interviews began. This is one of the students who wanted to get all the answers right.

However, even with that mind-set, she was still willing to state her own opinion.

I had anticipated that the interviews would last about an hour, but there was only one that lasted that long with most lasting about forty-five minutes. Some students had to be coaxed into answering verbally. The one student I mention being surprised about, did not expand in answering much past “yes” or “no” to the questions. At the end of the interview I asked him about this situation.

Interviewer: Okay, is there anything you want to add to this interview?

**Lilu:** *Not really.*

Interviewer: Not really? You don't like to speak out do you? Would you rather write than talk?

**Lilu:** *I would rather write.*

Interviewer: I know, because you wrote very well. Okay, anything else then?

**Lilu:** No.

Some of the comments express the students' feelings about history. The majority of the students enjoyed history and choose to read historical material in a non-academic setting during their free time. This may be a factor in their ability to be historically empathetic.

Kitoshi

(At the end of the interview I asked her if she liked history.)

**Kitoshi:** *It's one of my favorite classes just 'cause it's good to learn about...it can help you in life.*

Interviewer: Can you tell me how it helps you in life?

**Kitoshi:** *Umh..like what I said before about laws, if I didn't know why they were formed then I might not follow them because I wouldn't feel there was a reason, but since I know that there's a reason behind the madness (chuckle) then.*

Interviewer: Then it makes it easier for you to follow them?

**Kitoshi:** *Yeah...and like voting and stuff, I know it's important instead of just no one voting and our government destroyed and falls apart.*

Interviewer: Did you know that before this year?

**Kitoshi:** *I think I knew, but I didn't understand it as much because I wasn't mature enough to get the whole idea..*

Lori

(This was at the very end of the interview.)

Interviewer: Do you like history?

*Lori: I like history most of the time. I don't like dates and trying to remember them. If you don't have to remember things you don't want to know. I don't want to read the bad stuff. I like to read from the winning side.*

I thought this was a very interesting reaction to the study of history. Students seemed to want to have a right and wrong aspect to everything. The ambiguity of history's different perspectives made them uncomfortable as they began to understand how different people reacted to situations and the impact of those actions. Historical empathy invites a process of questioning ideas that have been established as truth and viewing them from all sides to create an inclusive picture.

I found the students to be excited as they anticipated the interviews and were very willing to participate. It was a very pleasant experience for me and I believe, for my students, as several of them thanked me for interviewing them.

#### Further Research

This process was very revealing. I believe the matrix is a tool that could be used to investigate the depth of historical understanding in any history classroom. The interview procedure added a second dimension to the analysis of student understanding and historical empathy. The students in this study displayed all six aspects of historical empathy and some were able to reach the highest of the Ashby and Lee levels. This research was a fundamental investigation of student historical empathy and raised many questions that could be answered by further research.

After having identified students that are historically empathetic, an explanation of why they are historically empathetic could be researched. This could involve exploration of their history education both formal and within their family structure. Questions could be formulated and added to the interview protocol, which would reveal the explanation. An examination of their parent's attitudes could also be used to determine the exposure they receive outside of the classroom. Parents' ability to be historically empathetic could be examined using the essay and interviews, as well.

Another area of interest would be to examine different teaching styles to determine those that would nurture the development of historical empathy. It could begin with observations in history classrooms. This model is similar to the one that was done by Grant (2001) with the addition of journals and interviews. Interviews with the teacher could also help to establish their attitudes toward history and how it should be taught. Having this information could help to clarify the direction that the teacher took in the classroom.

The aspects of historical empathy that history teachers display might also be an interesting study. Using the journals and adjusting the interview protocol to accommodate for their educational level, one could research what aspects of historical empathy history teachers display. Observations of their teaching could then be analyzed in conjunction with their ability to be historically empathetic. An added element could be to identify their teaching style during the observations in their classroom, which would address questions about the significance of history instruction, and how it is taught.

Still further comparison research could be done between students that are not included in the gifted identification guidelines and those that are. The objective would be to identify ability of all students to be historically empathetic. Both the essays and the interviews could be used

with the matrix being employed as the instrument for measuring their ability to be historically empathetic.

Gender, ethnicity, age or socioeconomic status could be compared to determine if any differences existed between each group using this same structure. All this would have implications to the understanding of what students take from the classroom and the environmental impact of what students bring to the classroom. Each could be compared and analyzed to record the significance.

Historical empathy is far from being completely examined and is an open area of research that can be explored on many levels using varied participants. It can help to clarify and define history's purpose, significance and necessity.

### Summary

The impact of history on any individual is a product of their education. What is presented is usually established by school curriculum and parental inculcation. Why it is presented depends on the significance that is attributed to the subject. How it is presented determines the extent of importance that an individual will place on it. The participants in this study demonstrate the impact of their own historical education, and each one has attained historical knowledge beyond simple facts, events, and dates. Their aptitude enables them to explain the contextual importance of facts and understand the complexity of cause and effect. Examination of the actions and reactions of people in the past facilitates their problem solving skills. All these attributes are aspects of historical empathy and are evident in the responses reported here.

The significance of students being historically empathetic relates to the importance of history and the need to create an atmosphere that permits critical thinking in history education.

History is far more complex than timelines and famous men. History's intricacies can be a key to open doors that allow students to view the very essences of human endeavor. In those glimpses there are possible similarities to the present that give answers that may solve some of today's problems. Developing historical empathy equips students with the tools needed to examine history with the depth that is critical to achieve the goal of historical understanding. History can teach only if instruction moves beyond the surface and leads students to question, examine and challenge difficult issues that confront us today as they did our predecessors. In the words of one of the students in this study when asked about who her hero was she stated:

***Keaide:** Aha...well I might think ....Harriet Tubman because she risked her life every time, someone tried to get her to stop but she kept on going because she could relate to others and so she wanted to do everything she could to help no matter what the consequences were to her.*

Students learn to relate to historical figures that helped change America as well as the world and want to emulate those people so that they too can “do everything she could to help no matter what the consequences were to her”. This is the essence of historical empathy...what better lesson can a student learn?

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## APPENDIX A

## CODE FOR THE FOSTER DEFINITION OF HISTORICAL EMPATHY

### Code for the Foster Definition of Historical Empathy

**PA:** People Action – process that leads to an understanding and explanation of why people in the past acted the way they did.

**CC:** Context & Chronology – involves an appreciation of historical context and chronology in evaluation of past events.

**HE:** Historical Evidence – is reliant upon a thorough analysis and evaluation of historical evidence.

**CE:** Cause & Effect – involves an appreciation of the consequence of actions perpetrated in the past.

**RP:** Recognition of the Past –demands an intuitive sense of a bygone era and an implicit recognition that the past is different from the present.

**CH:** Complex Human Action – requires a respect for, and appreciation of, and a sensitivity toward, the complexity of human actions and achievement.

APPENDIX B

FULTON COUNTY'S ELIGIBILITY

Fulton County's Implementation of Georgia's Eligibility Rule (77)

Fulton County's Steps to Implement Multiple Criteria in Middle School (78)

Data Collection Instrument (80)

**Fulton County's Implementation of Georgia's Eligibility Rule  
State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38**

- Information shall be gathered in each of the four categories.
- At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a **nationally normed** test.
- Any data used to establish eligibility in one category shall not be used to establish eligibility in another category.
- Any piece of information used to establish eligibility shall be **current within two years**.
- The Talented and Gifted Program will only administer standardized mental ability and creativity tests once every two years.
- Data gathered and analyzed by a source outside the school system shall be used **only in the mental ability category**. It shall be supported by two of the three remaining categories. One of the three remaining categories must be a nationally normed test.

Data Category	Procedure One	Procedure Two
	Student must qualify in three of the four categories.	Student must have a qualifying score in the <b>mental ability AND achievement categories</b> .
<b>Mental Ability</b>	<b>K-12</b> =96 th percentile composite OR appropriate component score on a standardized mental ability test	<b>K-2</b> 99 th percentile composite score on a standardized mental ability test <b>3-12</b> =96 th percentile composite score on a standardized mental ability test
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>K-12</b> =90 th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a standardized achievement test <b>OR</b> <b>K-5</b> above level continuous achievement as determined by the system <b>OR</b> <b>6-8</b> cumulative average =90 on a scale of 1-100 in an above-level core academic course <b>OR</b> <b>9-12</b> cumulative average =85 on a scale of 1-100 in an honors or advanced placement course	<b>K-12</b> =90 th percentile Total Reading, Total Math, or Complete Battery on a standardized achievement test
<b>Creativity</b>	<b>K-12</b> =90 th percentile composite score on a standardized test of creative thinking <b>OR</b> Superior product/performance with a score =90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators, indicated in <b>K-5</b> , products from teacher directed lessons, or <b>6-12</b> , winner of district level academic competition	
<b>Motivation</b>	Superior product/performance with a score =90 on a scale of 1-100, as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators, indicated in <b>K-5</b> , products from teacher directed lessons, or <b>6-12</b> , winner of district level academic competition <b>OR</b> <b>K-5</b> above level continuous achievement as determined by the system <b>OR</b> <b>6-8</b> cumulative average =90 on a scale of 1-100 in an above-level core academic course <b>OR</b> <b>9-12</b> cumulative average =85 on a scale of 1-100 in an honors or advanced placement course <b>OR</b> <b>8-12</b> cumulative average =85 on a scale of 1-100 over the last two years in core academic areas	

MIDDLE MIDDLE MIDDLE MIDDLE MIDDLE MIDDLE  
MIDDLE

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**STEPS TO IMPLEMENT MULTIPLE CRITERIA  
- INSTRUCTIONS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS -**

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**A. SCREENING:**

**Each Teacher Completes CISS Form:**

1. Screening may begin on November 11, 2002, and all testing must be complete by February 7, 2003. Each school will select the two-weeks within the above time frame to screen students. It is recommended that middle schools screen and test before the winter holiday.
2. Each teacher records the names of all students on the Characteristics Instrument for Screening Students (CISS) form whom consistently exhibit superior ability in one or more of the characteristics. A "☐☐" should be placed under any characteristic(s) for which a student consistently exhibits superior ability. Special Area teachers should keep one CISS form for each grade level and submit those forms to the appropriate grade levels at the end of the two-week screening.
3. At a team meeting, the students are discussed. The team will complete ONE CISS form for the team, listing those students who have been documented as having a least five of the 10 characteristics. A student's name must appear in a minimum of five of the categories in order to be taken to TAG eligibility team (TAG-ET).

**B. Eligibility Team: First Meeting**

1. **Grade Level Representative on the Eligibility Team**- collects and submits the names of students not in TAG and have been documented as having a least five of the 10 characteristics:
2. **Eligibility Team Chair**
  - **divides list of students among the Eligibility Team Members**
3. **Eligibility Team Members** – gather supporting information on assigned students
4. **REFERRAL:**
  - a. **Appropriate If:**
    - **Student's name in a minimum of five categories listed on CISS Form**
    - AND ONE PIECE OF THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**
      - **Documented performance:**
        - ◆ earning an "A" in an advanced/above-level class
        - ◆ outstanding work products/performance (see pg. 20)
      - **Testing History:**
        - ◆ a mental ability score at the 96%ile
        - ◆ **two** achievement scores: a minimum of an 85%ile and a 90%ile in two of the three areas: Total Reading, Total Math, and Complete Battery

**Eligibility Team:**

- **completes the top portion of a DCI** for all students referred for testing
- **Send** Parent Notification of Consideration/Consent for Evaluation to parents
- **TAG teacher** or designee administers tests **after** consent is received



APPENDIX C

SYSTEM PERMISSION LETTERS

Principal Permission Letter (82)

Fulton County Permission Letter (83)

# RIVER TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Vicki M. Denmark, Ph.D.  
*Principal*

10795 Rogers Circle • Duluth, Georgia 30097

770-497-3860 • Fax 770-497-3866

Nancy C. Burns  
*Assistant Principal*

Mary Ann Bush  
*Assistant Principal*

Gregory B. Cunningham  
*Assistant Principal*

October 15, 2002

Dear Ms. Maggert

Ms. Geri Collins, a teacher at River Trail Middle School, is in the stage of conducting research for her doctoral dissertation at the University of Georgia. Ms. Collins will need to use 10 students from her 8<sup>th</sup> grade Georgia Studies classes to collect data. Ms. Collins will not use the students' names nor will she identify the students in any way in her study. Additionally, she has taken the precaution to give the students pseudonyms so their identification will not be linked to River Trail Middle School or to her classes.

I completely endorse Ms. Collins' research and support her research approach to the problem in which she is collecting data. I know Ms. Collins to be extremely professional and capable in all aspects of her work at River Trail Middle School. I hope that you will approve her request to conduct research at our school so that she may complete her dissertation.

Thank you,



Vicki M. Denmark, Ph.D.  
Principal



**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
LINDA P. BRYANT, *PRESIDENT*  
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JULIA C. BERNATH  
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GAIL DEAN  
FRANK C. LAMBERT  
KATIE REEVES

T. MICHAEL PAYNE, PH.D., *INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT*

November 1, 2002

Geri S. Collins  
6286 Wilmington Way  
Flowery Branch, GA 30542

Dear Ms. Collins:

Your request to conduct a research study in the Fulton County Schools has been reviewed. We are pleased to inform you that you have been granted permission for this study. Approval means that a school may choose to participate in this study; however, it is not mandatory that they do so, as the choice remains a local option.

**No identification of Fulton County Schools (students' names, teachers' names, etc.) is to be included in your findings. Also, all confidentiality of records must be maintained.** Once this study is completed, please send to me at the address below a copy/summary of the completed study. If I can provide additional information, please contact me or my assistant, Jennifer Arnold, at (404) 305-2160.

Sincerely,

Connie R. Maggert  
Coordinator of Research & Evaluation

ja

APPENDIX D  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Interview Protocol

1. What do you think empathy means?
2. What do you think history means?
3. What do you think historical empathy is?
4. What is chronology? Is it important, why or why not?
5. What do cause and effect mean? Give some historical examples.
6. How are people agents of change and when are they only reacting to a situation? ( an example could be used from their journal entry)
7. How do past events affect the present? Give an example.
8. Explain the contextual importance for an artifact and give an example.
9. What do you think thirteen year old children did in the 1800's?
10. Do you think it is important to study history? Why or why not?
11. How would you be different if you did not know about your history or your country's history?
12. Who do you think of as a hero and why do you consider them to have this status? If this is a modern person, ask for a comparison to an historical figure.
13. Who do you think of as an historical hero and what made that person a hero?
14. What do you like to read and why do you like to read it?
15. What historical subjects do you like to study and why?
16. If you could change one historical event, what would it be and how would you change it?
17. What do you believe is the most significant historical event and why?

APPENDIX E

PERMISSION FORMS

Parental Permission Form (87)

Minor Assent Form/Journals (89)

Minor Assent Form/Interviews (90)

## Parental Permission Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to allow my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to take part in a research study titled, *What aspects of historical empathy do 8<sup>th</sup> grade gifted social studies students display?*, which is being conducted by Ms. Geri Collins, from the Social Studies Department at the University of Georgia (706-542-7256) under the direction of Dr. John Hoge (706-542-4416). I do not have to allow my child to be in this study if I do not want to. My child can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have the information related to my child returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

- The reason for the study is to determine what aspects of historical empathy gifted students display.
- Children who take part will be able to analyze their ability to understand history on an in-depth level. The researcher also hopes to help students identify this ability and the significance of the knowledge. The ability to be historically empathetic allows students to understand history beyond just the dates and events that are presented in the study of history. Many gifted students possess this ability which allows them to understand the “why” behind the dates and the reasons people acted the way they did. This leads to a clear picture of the results of certain actions and how actions may result in consequences that are justified considering the situation of the people of that time.
- If I allow my child to take part, my child will be asked to write essays about particular historical situations. Each student that writes an essay will receive extra credit and any student not there the day of the essay writing may choose to write an essay or not. The researcher will not allow these essays to have a negative effect on the students’ grades. This will take place in September and October of 2003. The essay writing will take place in a regular class period and will relate to the subject being taught. From the essays, using a coding system on historical empathy, the researcher will select ten students to interview face to face. The interviews will be held in October or November of 2003 with each of the ten students selected. These interviews will take place before or after school, which ever is more convenient for the student and parent. The interviews will last about one hour and the interviews will be audio taped. The researcher will be transcribing the interviews and a copy of the transcription will be presented to both parent and student for their perusal. A copy of the study will also be available to participants to read.
- The research is not expected to cause any harm or discomfort. My child can quit at anytime. My child’s grade will not be affected if my child decides to stop taking part.
- Any information about my child will be held confidential. No student’s name will be used in the study. Each student will be given a pseudonym to use throughout the study and there will

be no way of linking students real name to the pseudonym. This provides complete confidentiality to the student and parent. The researcher will be the only one that knows the identity of the interviewed student's information besides those that are interviewed. The information used in the study will not be able to be identified except by the researcher and those that participated in the study. All data including the taped interviews will be kept in a secured location.

- The researcher will answer any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at 770-967-4384. I may also contact the professor supervising the research, Dr. John Hoge, Social Studies Department, 706-542 –4416.
- I understand the procedures describe above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to allow my child to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Geri S. Collins

Telephone: 770-967-4384

Email: [jgcollins@mindspringl.com](mailto:jgcollins@mindspringl.com)

Signature

Date

Name of Parent or Guardian

Signature

Date

I agree that you may use excerpts from both my child's essays and interview which can be used for academic publications.

I agree \_\_\_\_\_ (please use initials)      I do not agree \_\_\_\_\_ ( please use initials)

I have read the above description and give my consent for the use of excerpts as indicated above.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

For additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant please call or write: Dr. Christina Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone: (706)542-3199; E-mail Address: [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)

**Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.**

Date

### Minor Assent Form

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in my research project titled, *What aspects of historical empathy do 8<sup>th</sup> grade gifted social studies students display?* . Through this project I am learning about how gifted students analyze history.

If you decide to be part of this, you will be asked to write two essays for which you will receive extra credit. Your participation in this project will not affect your grade negatively in any way. I will not use your name on any papers that I write about the project. However, because of your participation, you may gain a better understanding of history. I hope to learn something that will help me improve teaching history.

If you want to stop participating in this project, you are free to do so at any time. You can also choose not to answer questions that you don't want to answer.

If you have any questions or concerns you can always ask me to call my teacher, Dr. Hoge at the following number: 706-542-4416.

Sincerely,

Geri S. Collins  
Social Studies Department  
University of Georgia  
770-497-3860 (River Trail Middle School)  
E-mail: [collinsg@fulton.k12.edu.usa](mailto:collinsg@fulton.k12.edu.usa)

---

I understand the project describe above. My questions have been answered and I agree to participate in this project. I have received a copy of this form.

---

Signature of the Participate/Date

For additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant please call or write: Dr. Christina Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone: (706)542-3199; E-mail Address: [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)

**Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Minor Assent Form

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in my research project titled, *What aspects of historical empathy do 8<sup>th</sup> grade gifted social studies students display?* . Through this project I am learning about how gifted students analyze history.

Because you participated in the first part of this research project and you have displayed your ability to be historically empathetic, I would now like to invite you to participate in the second phase of the research. If you decide to be a part of this, I will ask you some questions regarding history and your ideas about what you understand as you study history. These questions will be asked orally by me in an interview that will last about an hour. The questions center only on how you view history and your answers will have no impact on your grade. The interview will be recorded but only our voices. I will give you a copy of what we said and you will be allowed to clarify anything you want. I hope to learn more about how you process historical information so that it will help me teach history.

If you want to stop participating in this project, you are free to do so at any time. You can also choose not to answer a question that you don't want to answer.

If you have any questions or concerns you can always ask me to call my teacher, Dr. Hoge at the following number: 706-542-4416.

Sincerely,

Geri S. Collins  
 Social Studies Department  
 University of Georgia  
 770-497-3860 (River Trail Middle School)  
 E-mail: [collinsg@fulton.k12.edu.usa](mailto:collinsg@fulton.k12.edu.usa)

I understand the project describe above. My questions have been answered and I agree to participate in this project. I have received a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Participant/Date

For additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant please call or write: Dr. Christina Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone: (706)542-3199; E-mail Address: [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)

**Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.**

## APPENDIX F

## CODING MATRICES

Matrix for coding journal entries for each class (92)

Matrix for coding the interviews (93)





APPENDIX G  
STUDENT JOURNAL ENTRIES

215- Annie  
October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003  
2<sup>nd</sup> Period

### What were the causes of the American Revolution?

There were several causes of the revolution. They included the taxes the British imposed on the colonists and the restricted trade with only Britain. The colonists were also angered by acts like the Stamp, Townsend and Quartering Acts. Continued offenses toward the colonists, such as no representation in the British Parliament from Britain made them angry enough to revolt. But there was more than just this anger behind the war. If the colony got its freedom from Britain, the rich plantation owners would not have to pay their debt to Britain. For all these reasons, the American colonies, under the leadership of the Continental Congress, decided to revolt against the mightiest country in the world at the time, Britain.

One of the main causes of the American revolutionary war was the ridiculous taxes on the colonists to pay ff debt from the French and Indian war. First, the Sugar Act, which put a tax on sugar, was passed. The next year, parliament passed the Quartering Act, which said colonists had to keep soldiers in their house and provide them with room and board for no compensation, and the Stamp Act, which said that ever legal document had to have a government stamp, which had to be paid for, on it. The colonists boycotted so in the year after, Parliament repealed these Acts. The Americans were kept at bay, but not for long. In England, the minister of Finance, Townsend, thought of a plan to get more money for Britain. He dreamed up an Act that would provide revenue by taxing tea, coffee, wine, paint, and several other things. This Act, along with the denial of legal trade with other countries such as Spain, or France made the colonists angry. Furious, the Sons of liberty decided on having a little Boston Tea Party.

When people of the Sons of Liberty decided to get on three merchant ships and throw all the tea on it into the Boston Harbour. One dark night a group of "Indians" went to those ships and threw the tea out. When the British heard, they passed what the Patriots called the Intolerable Acts. The harbor was closed, the citizens of Boston had to pay for all the tea and were not allowed to have meetings.

Angry about all these things along with unfair taxes ("No taxation without representation" - Patrick Henry), the colonists united and revolted against Great Britain.

215-Annie

The beginnings of American colonialism started when the Spanish were exploring and claiming America. The Spanish explorers discovered Florida and the Carolinas. They claimed the whole of North and most of South America. The Portuguese disputed that claim, so the Roman Catholic Pope settled that by dividing the Americas. He made a line going north to south, dividing the New World. It was called the Line of Demarcation. As then they did not know how large the Americas were, the line gave Spain far more land than it gave Portugal.

The French and English did not believe that that was fair because they did not get any land in the New World, so they sent explorers to claim land for them. The countries disputed how claiming land was fair, for often one claimed land that already was claimed by another country. They finally decided that for one country to own an area, they had to colonize it. Thus, American colonialism began

The Spanish began to colonize Florida, then named La Florida for the abundance of flowers. They built St Augustine which got burned down twice, once by Native Americans, and once by the English.

The English, Threatened by Spanish colonialism, began to colonize the area which is now known as the Carolinas. They built Charlestown in North Carolina as a royal colony. Once it was prospering, the English worried about a Spanish attack and slaves who were running away to Florida and getting their freedom once they converted to Roman Catholicism. So, in England, a man called James Oglethorpe proposed a new colony. A colony that would not only serve as a place to send debtors and the "working poor", and help England's economy, it would also serve as a buffer for Carolina. A last, unofficial reason was that the people could have freedom in the new land.

Raven [313]

## How Did American Colonialism Develop?

American colonialism: an interesting topic. But how did it develop? That is what I will be discussing in the following paragraphs. American colonialism is a very vast topic starting from the discovery of Newfoundland by Leif Erickson to the settlement of Jamestown to the settlement of Carolina and Georgia by the famous James Oglethorpe. But who are these people? How do these discoveries affect us?

Europe colonized most of the Americas. The main countries that were involved in colonizing these areas were France, Spain and Great Britain. In the end, however, Great Britain conquered almost all of North America (excluding Mexico). It all started when Christopher Columbus of Geneva, Italy wanted to sail the seas west of Europe to find a shorter route to the Indies. He asked the King of Portugal for help, but was turned down. Next, he went to Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain for help. Being at a war at the present time, Queen Isabella asked Columbus to ask later. After the war passed by, Columbus asked again for support. Columbus also stated that any land discovered would belong to Spain [by the first right of discovery]. So, Columbus was given three ships: the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria. Soon enough, Columbus gathered a good crew and sailed the seas. During this voyage, however, Columbus's crew didn't see any land for a long time. But Columbus wouldn't turn the ship around. Some of the crew got desperate enough that they planned to throw Columbus overboard and tell Ferdinand that Columbus slipped. But Columbus told the crew that if they didn't see land in a few days, he would turn around. The days passed by, and they saw a piece of wood in the sea. Columbus explained that land had to be near, for wood doesn't go far away from land. The next day, they saw sea gulls. Columbus explained that sea gulls weren't seen far away from shore. The next day, land was seen. Columbus got on land and explored it. They saw 'Indians' there. Columbus named the people Indians because Indios is Latin for men of God. Columbus tried to get gold and riches, but didn't get any. Like this, Columbus made many more voyages and thus discovered South America as well.

During the long years in between, many more explorers explored this region. Some of them included Giovanni de Verrazano of France, Ponce de Leon of Spain and John Cabot of England who discovered and explored lots of the land in this area. In the 1500's, many settlers left Great Britain to settle some of this explored land. These people left and landed in the present day state of Virginia. They settled in a swampy area, made a 'mini-fort' and lived there. The people who settled here named the area Jamestown in honor of King James, their king. However, things weren't going well for these people; there was much starvation going on. Much of the land was used for tobacco, which is unhealthy for you. Many diseases killed these settlers. Winters were very severe and harsh. During this period in Jamestown, three out of every four settlers died.

Somewhere in the early seventeen hundreds, James Oglethorpe of Great Britain was born. Even though he was the youngest of ten children, he proved to be the most famous of them all. During the seventeen hundreds, Britain was having problems because of poverty. The streets were crowded with many poor people. Many people who couldn't repay debts were sent to prisons called debtors prison. In fact, one of Oglethorpe's

Raven [313]

friends, Robert Castell was in a debtors prison. Oglethorpe wanted to settle some of the land in North America to put some of the poor people here. King George II listened to Oglethorpe's argument and decided it was okay to settle this area, for John Cabot had explored this area. This gave Great Britain the first right of discovery. So, Oglethorpe went and settled this area and named it Georgia in honor of King George II. There were many rules in this settlement. There were 21 trustees, or people who take care of other people's property on their behalf. The trustees were also supposed to make sure that the rules were never broken. There were three main rules: no alcoholic beverages other than English beer, no slavery and no land inheritance. As the years passed by, relations with Spain and Britain heated up and caused many conflicts such as the Battle of Bloody Marsh and the War of Jenkins Ear. Relations with France weren't also very friendly. This caused the French and Indian War. During this war, Spain sided with France. However, Britain won this war, for the Indians were on their team. During this war, Spain lost Florida, their main settlement, and France lost everything, which included Canada and everything east of the Mississippi River. But France still kept New Orleans. So, Great Britain claimed all this property.

This is how colonialism started during the early periods. However, colonialism might have not ended yet for we might still colonize islands and other places...

*Raven*

Cyborg  
#313

## Causes of the Revolutionary War

During the 1770's, there was much conflict and heated argument between the American colonies and England. It even went so far that there was a humongous war that erupted! But before I can tell you that story I have to tell you *this* story.

In the early 1770's, the French and Indian War had ended, leaving England with lots of debt. To pay this debt, England placed many taxes on the American colonies such as the Sugar Act, Stamp Act and the Townshend Act. The Sugar Act taxed sugar, the Stamp Act taxed all printed-papers and the Townshend Act taxed many materials such as glass, paint, paper and wood. The colonists in America weren't very 'joyful', because they first of all had to pay taxes, and second of all, they didn't get any representation in the Parliament (England's government)! So, American colonists decided to protest to King George III about these topics. They even made the saying 'No taxation without representation'. King George just ignored the protests. As time progressed, protests became more severe and extreme. In one instance, many people in the crowd threw rocks, sticks and tomatoes at the British guards in the streets. The guards panicked and opened fire on the crowd, killing five people and wounding some. This came to be known as the Boston Massacre. Another instance was the Boston Tea Party of 1773. The Sons of Liberty went aboard British merchant ships in Boston harbor, dressed as Iroquois Indians and threw aboard over ten thousand pounds of tea. The English were so angry that they closed Boston Harbor until the tea was paid for, made sure that there were no more towns-meetings in Boston, gave Boston no representation in Parliament and strictly enforced the Quartering Act, which stated that British soldiers could be housed in Boston. These 'rules' were known as the Intolerable Acts.

Later as conflicts started heating up, George Washington of Virginia had won the Battle of Lexington and Concord (1773). This marked the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Meanwhile, a troop of soldiers led by Quamin (?) captured Savannah. Royal Governor James Wright returned to Georgia (he was captured, but escaped in a merchant ship). During this period, Georgia was divided into three parts: the loyalists (also known as Tories), the patriots (also known as Whigs) and neutrals. The loyalists were on England's side, the patriots were fighting for freedom and the neutrals were on no one's side. Later on during the Revolutionary War, a Polish Nobleman named

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Count Casimir Pulaski led an attack to recapture Savannah, but failed. Later on in 1776, representatives of every colony signed the Declaration of Independence.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Franklin had gone to France as an ambassador to ask France to help the Americans with the war. Luckily, Washington had won another battle, so France sent troops to help the Americans. Finally, the last battle started. It was the Battle of Yorktown. Fortunately, the battle was won giving freedom to America.

In conclusion, because of England's taxes and no representation, the Revolutionary War, also known as the shot heard 'round the world, started. If England hadn't taxed the Americans or had at least given them representation, the Revolutionary War wouldn't have even been there.

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Joe Schmoe  
#315

### **Causes of the American Revolutionary War**

There were many causes of the American Revolutionary war. Colonists were upset with Britain for several reasons, and no longer wanted to be a part of their empire. This caused them to revolt, and the American Revolution began.

In 1763, the French and Indian War ended, leaving Britain in debt. The Sugar Act was passed in 1764 to try to bring in revenue for Britain, followed by the Quartering Act and Stamp Act in 1765. The colonists were taxed for sugar and paper, and were forced to house British soldiers. The colonist began to boycott, and in 1766, the Stamp Act was repealed.

Then in 1767, the Townshend Act was passed. This act placed taxes on many things the colonists needed – coffee, tea, sugar, paper, paint, glass, lead, etc. The colonists were displeased, and in 1768, the Massachusetts Circular letter called for unified resistance – the boycotting resumed.

The Boston Massacre occurred in 1770, and caused an independence movement throughout the colonies to begin. The Committee of Correspondence met in 1772, which sent a

Joe Schmoe

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petition to the king. But it didn't do any good – he simply declared the colonies were in a state of revolt.

On December 16, 1773, the Boston Tea Party occurred. To punish the colony, Britain placed what came to be known as the Intolerable Acts upon Massachusetts: 1) The harbor was closed until the tea was paid for; 2) \_\_\_ ; and 3) Massachusetts colonists were forced to feed and house British soldiers.

The colonists were furious. In 1774 and 1775, the First and Second Continental Congress met to form a plan of action. The following year, the Declaration of Independence was signed, but not before the fighting began. The Battle at Lexington and Concorde in 1775, the 'shot heard 'round the world', had already marked the beginning of the American Revolution.

People today cannot agree on the exact cause of the American Revolution. Some say it was the Intolerable Acts, other claim it was the Britain's debt, still others say it was a whole sequence of events. What was the true cause? Its up to you to decide.

Joe Schmoe  
#315

### **How Did American Colonialism Develop?**

American Colonialism developed over time. The colonies began as economic experiments from many different countries, and in the course of war, conflict, and hardship, eventually evolved into the Royal Colonies of Great Britain.

Countries such as Britain, Spain, and France began creating colonies in a competition for power. They believed that colonies in the newly discovered American continent would bring them wealth, a place to begin again for the poor and outcasted, and a new home for many of the groups that wanted religious freedom or even separation from their home country. Britain utilized its 'rights of first discovery' to claim much of the eastern coast of the continent, while Spain colonized La Florida, and France settled parts of Canada and land west of the Appalachian Mountains.

While the colonies focused on their own welfare at first, they soon became well-established and turned their attention elsewhere. Spain, Britain, and France soon became power-hungry, and began concentrating on controlling the American continent. Many wars broke out, and Britain was eventually victorious. France was forced to give up its claims to Canada and all land east of the Mississippi River (excluding New Orleans), while Spain surrendered Florida.

Britain now dominated much of the American continent, and began creating Royal Colonies. Though there was no longer a threat of French or Spanish invasion, they still faced the problem of Indian attacks. Consequently, the Proclamation of 1763 stated that Britain was to form four new colonies (one in the Caribbean, one in Canada, and East

and West Florida), and that all land west of the Appalachian Mountains was reserved for the Indians. Britain could now focus on its colonies and their well being.

Colonies in the 'New World' began as experimental settlements that experienced many wars and conflicts. They eventually evolved into the Royal Colonies of Great Britain that ultimately became the United States that we know today.

615 Lily Marie

American colonialism was a process that developed over several years. The process started with the years of exploration, where European nations began to sail to what is now the North and South America. These countries, which included Spain, England, and France, continued colonization by sending settlers to the new world. These settlers built colonies to support the mother country. Once complete, American colonialism became a foot in the door for the countries that now occupy the Americas.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed west, looking for an easier route to China. What he found instead was far more valuable. Christopher Columbus had landed on a new continent by accident. The discovery of the new world caused a great excitement to many European countries. They all wanted a share in the newly found territory. Spain, France, and England funded more expeditions to the Americas. Each time new lands were explored, the nation who founded the trip claimed using right of first discovery. All these new discoveries brought trouble to Europe as well as power. The nations claiming land began to fight over who owned what. It was decided that, in order to own land, the country had to be able to settle it, and so, colonization began.

A colony is land on foreign soil, governed by a mother country. The colony would send raw materials home to the country, and the nation would send back finished goods. This economic system was called mercantilism. It was soon discovered that the new world contained many valuable resources. Gold, silver, and other precious items were found. This made the interest in the new world increase. More and more colonies were started, and soon they colonies began to fight. Wars in Europe affected the colonies. Battles broke out between Spain in Florida, and England in Georgia and Carolina. One of the most significant wars occurred between France and England. It was called the French and Indian war, because the Indians sided with France. Spain eventually sided with France as well, but not early enough to affect the outcome. England was victorious, and in punishment for losing, France relinquished Canada, and Spain lost Florida. It became so that England controlled most of America.

Thanks to American colonialism, the new world was settled and developed. The results of this process are still impacting the world today. Colonialism started with a man searching for China, and brought about the formation of several countries, including our own. Colonialism in America developed throughout time, from exploration, to colonization, to the formation of nations. Without it, the world would be very different.

615  
Nicole Evans

There are many causes leading up to the Revolutionary War. Colonists were upset with the way Britain was ruling them. When they tried to protest the strict government, Britain only ignored them. The colonies were forced to take rebellious acts. As a result, Britain instituted the unforgivable acts. This pushed the colonists over the limit, and they declared their independence from Britain. When the king ignored them, they were forced to go to war to achieve freedom.

Britain kept a tight hold on the American colonies. It allowed the colonies to trade only with England. Britain also imposed several taxes on the colonists, such as the Stamp Act, the Sugar Act, and the Townshend Act. The colonists argued that they were not part of Parliament, and therefore shouldn't be taxed as such. Several of the taxes were repealed, but the colonists were still unhappy.

In protest of the taxes on tea, the Sons of Liberty, led by John Adams, did what was known as the Boston Tea Party. The group of freedom fighters snuck aboard a British ship carrying tea, and dumped all the crates overboard. When the king found out about this, he imposed what the colonists called the unforgivable acts. He shut down Boston Harbor until the tea had been paid for, he did not allow the Massachusetts colony to elect government officials, and he forced all the colonies to house British soldiers. People can only be pushed so far, and the colonists had had enough.

The delegates attending the second continental congress decided to declare their independence from Britain. They agreed that the document be written by Thomas Jefferson, and thus the Declaration of Independence was born. The paper was written,

edited, and written again until the delegates decided it was perfect. The petition was sent to the King, who promptly ignored it. The colonists were angered by this deliberate oppression of their rights. They agreed that the cause was worth fighting for, and the Revolutionary War began.

Britain kept a strict hold on the colonies, which, in the end, brought about their independence. Britain wouldn't let the colonies trade freely, and they taxed them without allowing them representation in the government. England punished them harshly for rebelling, and ignored their choice of freedom. The colonies declared war on England, and the revolution occurred.

619-Lori Liu

How did American Colonialism develop?

American colonialism developed once America was discovered and explored by European countries. The Europeans came over on their boats looking for a quicker route to India and "stumbled" upon America. Once the news got back to Europe about this new land, it was like the gold rush to Alaska, except in this case it wasn't a gold rush but a land rush, to America. Many countries wanted a piece of the new land all for themselves. They wanted the riches and goods in this "fresh and new land" even though America was just as old as Europe.

Explorers soon were sent to see the land. Once the land was discovered and explored, it gave their home country the "right of first discovery". Many countries began to want to settle in this new land. They sent many settlers over to settle the land that was explored by their country. Many different colonies were formed, sadly not as many survived. The weather was different, crops were different, and then there was the constant threat of an attack from Indians or other countries colonies. Treaties were formed to try to "help" stop attacks between countries but too often the treaties were ignored and attacks quickly became a threat to colonies.

Once settlers actually colonized America, American colonialism was developed. Colonialism means to colonize an area or to have an area colonized. This means that America was colonized not when it was simply explored but when it was settled by settlers. This is how American colonialism developed, when it was explored and then developed by the European countries.

Dyeco Yeko

619

What are the leading causes of the American Revolutionary War?

There are many causes for the American Revolutionary War, but there are only a few leading causes. The American Colonies wanted freedom from Britain. According to the colonies, they were ruled unjustly. The colonies could only trade with British ships, they had to pay many taxes on things such as paper, paint, glass, wine, and many other things. Finally, the colonies couldn't put up with it, they wanted to trade with other countries besides Britain, they didn't want taxes, but mainly the American colonies wanted freedom for Britain.

People expressed their feelings differently, some people, like the Sons of Glory, had outbursts of anger and ended up doing outlandish things such as throwing tea off of a British ship. Other people boycotted things that were taxed, like tea, paint, glass, and paper. Mainly, there were three groups of people, the ones who supported British rule, the ones who wanted to be free from British rule, and then there were the ones who were neutral and could go either way.

Then, a group of people came together. This group of people wrote the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson wrote up the Declaration of Independence, others in the group helped to edit and revise it. In the end, the Declaration of Independence was sent to Britain. Soon after the American Revolutionary War began.

This is the main cause of the American Revolutionary War, the colonies want of freedom from British rule.

709 Lili  
How did American colonialism develop?

American colonialism developed with the countries that were power hungry. These countries sent people to find a different route to Asia. Instead, they found the "New World". They began to send explorers to explore this newly found land. After that, they started sending people to colonize the "New World". They soon had disagreements so they started wars.

Christopher Columbus was one of the first people sent to try to find a different route to Asia. They wanted to find a route going west because that way, they would be able to get the goods from Asia. Instead of finding a route to the west, they found the "New World". Many countries began to send explorers to explore and claim the newly found land. Spain and Portugal made an agreement to split the newly found land. Later, England started exploring so Spain and Portugal got mad. England, Spain, and Portugal began to colonize.

France claimed Canada so the other countries started to claim parts of the "New World". England colonized in the east. They started a colony called James Town. Spain found Florida and called it La Florida. Spain made a fort in Florida called St. Augustine. James Town started to fall because of many reasons. The death rate in James Town was 80%. After all this, James Oglethorpe decided to colonize in Georgia.

James Oglethorpe decided to start a colony that will be like a paradise. He asked the King to start a colony in Georgia. He convinced the King with some reasons. He had rules for the people in the new colony. The people in the colony can't be black, own no slaves, not catholic, drink no rum, can't be a lawyer, and many other reasons. The people

in the colony thought of Oglethorpe as a father. The colony succeeded, but soon the rules were broken.

American colonialism started with exploration and colonization. These countries had wars with Indians and the other countries. Oglethorpe's colony was different from what Oglethorpe wanted it to be. Many colonies fell, and the countries gave up land. Later on, America got its independence and was a country. That is how American colonialism began.

709 Zxcutmkeikdppoemksji  
What are the causes of the American Revolutionary War?

Unhappy colonists in the colonies caused the Revolutionary War. They could not trade with any country but Britain. They also had taxes on the things they buy. Soon, people began to smuggle goods from other countries. The British soon passed acts that made the colonists pay high taxes, need stamps to buy goods, and house and feed British soldiers. The colonists soon began to boycott the things from Britain.

They soon made a group of people who were against the British. These people mad because the British were treating them bad. The British supporters were called still supported the British. There were also had people who supported whoever was better. The Boston Massacre also took place so people really did not like the British. They soon had the Boston Tea Party where the people against the British dumped the tea into the water. The British made a few rules that the people had to follow. These rules were called the "Intolerable Acts".

They soon divided into three groups. The Whigs were the people who wanted to not be under British rule. The Tories supported the British. There were also neutral people who supported whoever were better. These three groups had disagreements and arrested each other. Soon, they started the war. They had many battles and the British won a lot and took over many cities. The colonists still fought and did not give up.

The colonists won because a big British military surrendered to George Washington. They had a treaty and Spain got some parts of Florida. The most important thing was America getting its independence. That is how the Revolutionary War started and ended.

711 Cailet

### How did American Colonialism Develop?

Many factors were involved in order to create the American colonies. One of them was the discovery of the Americas. In order to create a colony you must have a foreign land to put the colony on. In the time that the Americas were discovered, there were no new countries that were not colonized already. When this new land was found, it was by accident. This surprising discover led to many wars, but most importantly, colonialism.

At first many people believed this new land to be Asia! From Marco Polo's descriptions of gems, spices, and gold this seemed amazing. A new route to Asia, a new route to wealth! This soon proved untrue. The people that inhabited the land were not wealthy, In fact they barely wore any clothe! Trips of man explorers soon found no glory or riches in this new, but they did find natives and empty lands.

This foreign land bore promises of riches and new sources of wealth for each country. More land for crops, possibly different crops, more exports from colonies, and in all, money. Yes, greed for money, and power over more lands drew people to come and prosper on this new land. This land could be used for many things, like getting rid of the poor or to some it held promises of miracles of Fountains of Youth.

In a race between European countries, countless explorers were sent to this new land to uncover more facts about this place. In these explorations, areas sutible for colonies were noted. Soon Spain, France, and England started sending in people to populate this land.

Unfortunately, this game of power had no rules. Soon fight and skirmishes broke and the countries made accusations against each other. Each country tried to colonize as many places as possible. Some colonies failed, some flourished, and some disappeared. Fights ensued this made taking over lands. Spain and England fought over south east portion of the new land. The French and Indian War came about. Eventually Spain withdrew from Florida and England had control over the east coast of the new land.

Many more then these factors mentioned were needed in order for American colonialism, but colonialism came and some of the reasons why are listed above.

Aborshen

#711

What are the causes of the American Revolutionary War?

The causes of the American Revolutionary War were many. One of them was dislike of taxation without representation. England was in debt so they needed money, and the fastest way to get money was to tax the colonies in the New Land. This caused England to impose a series of unfair taxes on the Americans, such as the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, and Townshend Act. Also many large landowners did not wish to pay taxes to the Motherland. This dislike of taxes caused the Boston Tea Party, which gave Massachusetts many unpleasant consequences, which were called the Intolerable Acts.

Another source of unfriendliness between the two was exclusive trade with only England. The colonies were supposed to only trade with England, but that would have positive gains for America. Because of that, the colonies despised the fact that they were only supposed to trade only with England. Of course, though the colonies were already trading with others so that did not really matter, but basically the colonies thought England was highly unfair to them. Then, to solve this problem, they broke all ties to England. Making their own country would allow them to create their own laws, which they thought were fair. This way a new country could be based on what they thought was fair, and just, not England. Unfortunately, England refused to let go. The King of England declared the colonies in a state of treason. Treason called for war so England went to war with the new country of America.

the law was still there.

Then there was also the Boston Massacre. Patriots and loyalists were already making their selves known, but due to the Quartering Act, there were British soldiers in the colonies. One day in Boston some Patriots started making fun of British soldiers. Afterwards a British soldier claimed to have heard someone to order them to fire, and fire they did. Five Americans were killed and many people were disgruntled.

If all of these causes were traced back, you could see that they end with the French and Indian war. The French and Indian War put England into debt, which caused the taxation without representation. The French and Indian War gave England all those colonies that they were being unfair to. If that war had never happened, than the American Revolutionary War might not have happened.

But now this causes the question to be asked, what caused the French and Indian War? These links of cause and effect may go on forever, but almost everything is an indirect cause of everything. In this case the French and Indian war is an indirect cause of the American Revolutionary War.

713 Sophie

## How Did American Colonialism Develop?

American colonialism was the cause of the United States we live in today. The word “colony,” by definition means an area that is settled in on foreign soil. So, how did it all start? Why did other countries come in the first place? Some say Columbus decided to go for a swim and landed upon dry land for the first time in a long time, and dubbed it for Spain. What really happened, though? Starting with the adventures of Marco Polo, American colonialism unraveled itself after years of trying to find Asia.

Marco Polo went to Asia on foot with a caravan, and led people towards the first sighting of the marvels in Asia. He kept a journal throughout his travels, and later turned his documentation into a book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*. As more and more people began to get interested in finding a quicker and easier way to Asia, many different routes were tried. As far as trying goes, it all fell under traveling east, because of the widely accepted theory that the earth was flat. Most failed, or the voyages were too lengthy or too dangerous. The race for the new route to Asia was on.

Christopher Columbus of Portugal had different ideas. He knew that this world could not possibly be flat, and so, he believed this world was round. So, with this belief, he decided to sail west, because he did not know there were two continents blocking his way. Rejected from Portugal, he went to Spain for help. They acceded. With his three ships, he sailed under Spain’s flag, and bumped into North America. When he got there, he found natives that could possibly be those of Asia. According to the widely accepted theory, he dubbed them Indians because he thought he was in the country of India. According to a different theory, he dubbed them Indians because in his letters to his brother-in-law, (which were in Latin,) he called them “men of God;” otherwise put as *in dios*. With his success in finding “Asia,” he sailed back to Spain and told of this marvelous finding.

Soon enough, Europe found out that it was not, in fact, Asia, but a foreign continent after examining the failure in finding items, such as spices that were native to Asia. A cartographer decided to call this land “America,” after Amerigo Vespucci.

From then on, Europe started to marvel this “New World” that was so foreign and without boundaries. Land that was not claimed by anyone was there. Natives that were weaker than them were there. Now, the race for exploring and claiming parts of the new world was on.

Spain took its pick in exploring Florida, claimed it, and named it “La Florida.” The first flag had been planted on American soil. Now, other countries started to race faster towards America. France was next, going into Canada and other parts of America. Finally, England, the most significant country to settle America, came and created colonies that became failures and successes, impacting American colonialism the most.

As more and more colonies formed, America became swamped with people from other countries. Over the course of history, 227 years have passed since the day the American colonies of England decided to revolt against its motherland. The world in United States that we know of today came to be.

713 Sophie

#### What were the Causes of the American Revolutionary War?

The American Revolution was a war for justice and freedom. It was a war fought by shabby soldiers mashed together quickly, and in which it was fought against one of the most powerful naval army during that time. Why would anyone want to do such a crazy thing? Exactly what were the causes of the American Revolution? It all happened in a domino effect in which one event lead to another and finally, it caused the American Revolution.

Before any part of the war began, it started off with England in debt because of the French and Indian War. To pull mighty England out of its debt, they issued the Sugar Act to the colonists. Afterwards, they issued the Quartering Act and the Stamp Act. These came as blows to the American colonists, and these also struck a match inside some of the people's hearts. They disliked all the taxes. How is it they, the ones who were paying these taxes, have no say in the decision of having them, just because they were an ocean away? Yet England could do that. The king could do that. Yet finally, after much protesting, the Stamp Act was repealed. This might have caused a sigh of relief among the colonists, but the Townshend Act was soon passed to take the place of it. This drove the colonists off the edge. The small fire inside the hearts of the colonists grew into a bonfire. The Massachusetts circulation letter went around asking for joint rebellion. Finally, the Boston Massacre occurred in 1770. This shook the nation, and the Committee of Correspondence formed. The Sons of Liberty went ahead and then caused the Boston Tea Party. This, obviously, made the king angry because he went ahead and issued the Intolerable Acts. They were, as follows: a. the Massachusetts port would be closed until all the tea was paid for, b. Massachusetts was not allowed to choose their own representatives, and c. all the colonists were ordered to house and feed British soldiers.

With this unfairness in hand, the First Continental Congress met, with the exception of Georgia, considering that it was such a young colony, and it still depended on England. In 1775, the Battles at Concord and Lexington occurred, nicknamed the "Shot Heard 'Round the World." This is often indicated as the starting point of the American Revolution, because the first battle between American and British soldiers had occurred. The Second Continental Congress met, this time, with Georgia. Finally, in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed. By then, the Revolution had already started, but this was the official seal on the breaking away from England.

What caused the Revolution? It wasn't caused by solely one thing. As mentioned before, it was a domino effect, because history is all a domino effect. One thing causes another. The French and Indian War left England in debt, so they issued taxes. The colonists did not like the fact that they were not represented in the taxation decision, so they revolted. All these causes led to the major ending: The American Revolution.

The Causes of the American Revolution  
Number 818 Kitoshi

There were several factors involved in the cause of the American Revolution. However, the main cause was the displeasure of the British colonists. There were many specific reasons that the colonists were unhappy. All of those were the causes of the Revolution.

First of all, colonists could only trade with the British. This was not good because the colonists were not getting as much money and trade that they possibly could. The British were forcing them to miss out on many opportunities.

Secondly, the colonists were being taxed a lot. After the French-Indian War, Great Britain had lost a large quantity of money. To make up for this loss, they taxed the colonists. Normally this would not have been so bad, but the colonists were not being represented in the British legislature. They were not being given the opportunity to make important decisions about their new home and they did not like this at all.

Taxes, and Acts that imposed taxes, such as the Sugar Act and the Townshend Act (taxed sugar, glass, lead, paper, tea, wine, and coffee) were not met well in the colonies. A tax on tea was counteracted with the Boston Tea Party, where the Sons of Liberty threw thousands of packages of tea into the Massachusetts Bay Harbor. Unfortunately for the colonists, their shows of hostility and defiance were met only with more taxes and Acts, like the Quartering Act where the colonists had to house British soldiers, and the Stamp Act, a tax on printed paper.

It is certain that there are more causes to the Revolution than at first seem evident. These causes were just the beginning of a war that would stun the world and lead to the creation of the United States of America.

#818 Kitoshi

### **How Did American Colonialism Develop?**

American colonialism was a slow process. It started when the nations of Europe wanted to extend trade with China and the Indies. They funded expeditions on ships to find a quicker way to the Indies. One of the first explorers to go looking for the Indies was Christopher Columbus. His ideas, rejected by Portugal, were appealing to the Spanish who quickly set up and financed his expedition. When Columbus stepped ashore after a long and difficult journey he thought he had landed somewhere in the Indies. However, he had not discovered a new route as he had first believed, but rather, an entire new continent altogether.

Soon after that the European powers realized they would need to name and explore this "New World". It might hold new riches and opportunities for the countries that controlled it first. It was quickly dubbed America. Spain created San Salvador and La Florida. Before long, France had explored present-day Canada and claimed the Midwest. Not wishing to be left out, Britain came soon after with rights of discovery from John Cabot.

Inevitably, land boundaries were disputed over by the main countries. It was finally decided that in order to fully lay claim to the land, it would need to be successfully colonized. The Catholic Pope drew the Line of Demarcation, splitting America between Portugal and Spain. Portugal, unsatisfied and believing they were being cheated of what was rightfully theirs, caused the Pope to revise the line. However, Great Britain pushed in and claimed the eastern coast of North America.

Life was difficult for new colonists. Many died, as a result of the hard journey and rough living conditions once they reached the so-called colony. They often had to start totally from scratch, building homes and planting crops. Not all colonies were successful, but many prospered. Thus, the colonization of America began.

Keaide, #822, 8<sup>th</sup> Period

### The Causes of the Revolution

The colonies were in a state of rebellion; the king was not pleased. No sir, not at all. Even though the thirteen “states”, as they now called themselves—ridiculous, the very idea!—had in fact sent a petition to King George III, monarch of England. It declared them independent nations, but independent nations who would still prefer to be friendly with England. As if he would agree to that!

So what caused those disobedient “Americans” to decide to break it off? There are many reasons why. Let us go back to 1763, right after the French-and-Indian War. True, Great Britain and the colonies had been the victors, and indeed, the Spanish had given up Florida. The cost of war, however, was in no way small. Britain was left in debt, and needed some way to rebuild their finances. The colonies would make it up, of course. After all, Britain had just fought a war to aid them. They should be glad to return the favor. With this thought in mind, Britain passed the Sugar Act, to help build up the revenue.

Unfortunately for Britain, the Americans were not pleased. When in 1765 the Quartering and Stamp Acts were passed, a year after the Sugar Act, dissatisfaction with the mother country rose. All the discontent and protests, along with the numerous boycotts, caused Britain to repeal the Stamp Act. The next year, however, the Townshend Act was passed, and even more items were taxed. The worst part of it all, to the Americans, was that they had no say in the taxes; strictly speaking, the colonists were British citizens. In spite of this, the British could search American homes without warrants and convict citizens without trials. This angered the Americans. They also protested mercantilism: they could only trade with Britain, when other countries would also be willing to trade. A smuggling business evolved from this.

Then, in 1770, the Boston Massacre occurred. Five people were killed and many more wounded. The Americans were outraged and began the Committee of Correspondence to encourage the colonies to unite against England. In 1773, the Sons of Liberty dumped over 15,000 pounds of tea into the Massachusetts Harbor—the Boston Tea Party. This caused England to pass the intolerable acts. This made America all the angrier. They decided to have a Continental Congress, and they did. They had another congress a year later. Then, in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed.

So what did this history lesson tell us about the causes of the Revolution? As Hercule Poirot, the famous detective, would say, let us be methodical and start from the beginning, meaning the French-and-Indian War. You could say that it was an indirect cause of the Revolution. Of course, taxation without representation as well as mercantilism had caused the unhappiness of the colonists a while before. The French-and-Indian War and its results simply raised the discontent to its highest level, and the Americans decided to take action. From then on, one thing led to another, and the American Revolution began.

#822- Keaide

### How did American colonialism develop?

When Columbus came upon the island of San Salvador in 1492, he had no idea what he was initiating. As soon as he claimed the island for Spain, American colonialism was born. Columbus thought that he could find a westward route to the Indies, where silks and spices were traded plentifully, and so he set about finding a sponsor. Portugal denied his request, but King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain decided he might have something with that idea. So when he reached the island, he and the European powers all believed that his mission had succeeded, and indeed, Columbus believed he had found a new route until his death. However, it soon became clear that it was a whole 'New World', and so the race began.

God, glory and gold. These were the sources of Spain's motivation to grasp land in the New World. Great Britain wanted to put the economic system of mercantilism into practice, and France would not be left behind. Of course, they didn't get the craving for new terrain right from the start. At first, they were simply satisfying their curiosity. Columbus and the Spanish, of course, discovered San Salvador and its surrounding islands, and sparked the interest in the "Indies", later known as the West Indies. John Cabot explored the coast of North America, later giving England its right to first discovery. The French explored much of Canada and North America. All that they found was agreeable, and they decided they wanted to lay claim to it.

But who would get which parts? The pope of the Catholic Church decided to settle that himself. He drew a line of demarcation, dividing the New World between Spain and Portugal. Later on, the line was moved westward slightly to favor Portugal, but in the end Portugal still only received the present-day country of Brazil for its territory—the eastern tip of South America. England, however, wasn't a Catholic country, being Anglican, and didn't like that the Pope had divided the New World just between Spain and Portugal without their say-so. And when England and France claimed land that Spain had already taken for itself, Spain wasn't inclined to agree with them. England said that Cabot had given them the right of first discovery, and therefore they could get the territory, but France and Spain didn't settle for that. Eventually, they worked out a policy:

If a country wanted to claim an area in the New World, they couldn't just call it and consider it theirs. They had to send people over and actually colonize the land, showing that it was settled and property of the home country.

With an agreement on this, the countries began to send people to a new, hard life in the Americas. The passage over the ocean wasn't the easiest, and a number of people died. However, the colonists still looked forward to their new beginnings. Several colonies, forts, and missionaries were built along the east coast, and not all were successful. The colonists of Roanoke disappeared, and Jamestown had a very high death rate. Still, the colonies that prospered fulfilled the wishes of their home countries. And so began the Age of Colonialism for Europe and the Americas.