



Opportunities & Rationale for Asian American Representation in 4th Grade Social Studies TEKS

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Abstract

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

Introduction

The fight for inclusion is not new. Although not successful on a national scale, a group of Chinese-American teachers lobbied state educators in California to push for representation of minoritized groups beyond the sidebars of textbooks (Lee, 2017). Omnipresent white hegemony is exemplified in an analysis conducted by Christine Sleeter of California’s curriculum, in which she found that, of the people identified as “recommended to be studied”, 77 percent were white, 18 percent African American, 4 percent Native American, 1 percent Latino, and zero Asian American ([Sleeter, 2005](#)).

Purpose

The aim of this project was to analyze representation of diverse perspectives in the fourth grade social studies TEKS. Our focus was on the inclusion of Asian American narratives.

Materials & Methods

The use of a structured vignette analysis “permits individual vignettes to describe distinct experiences while connecting these stories through recounting the context and revealing new strategies developed to cater for the researchers’ growing cultural awareness” (Pitard, 2016). This six-step framework (context, anecdote, emotional response, reflexivity, strategies, and conclusive comments) is essential for adding multiple perspectives and layers of awareness to the conclusions ([Pitard, 2017](#)).

After sharing our connections to this topic, we engaged in reflexivity to counter our bias. We found that there is a precedent to our perception of Asian American narratives being silenced. One article we connected to over the course of this analysis was written by Ellen Lee ([2017](#)). Titled “Why are Asian Americans missing from our textbooks?”, it shared a predictable story of an Asian American student who rarely (unless tokenized) saw people of her background represented in the course content - at least until an Asian American history class she took at the university level.

Results

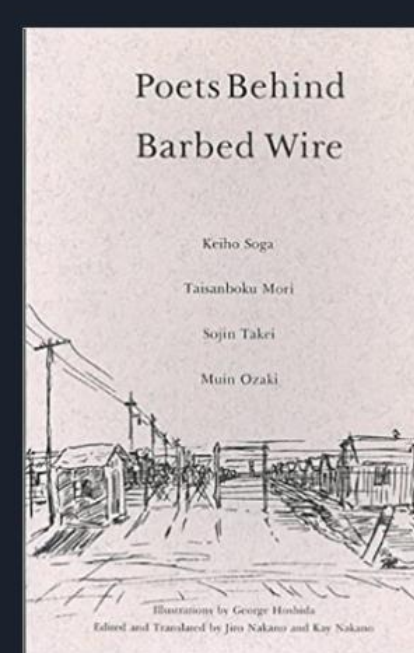
The reader will notice that these [TEKS](#) currently do not mention the narratives of Asian Americans. In order to combat this, Sarah and Amy first researched significant Asian American events and individuals from Texas history. Once the facts were gathered, we sifted through the TEKS in the fourth grade social studies curriculum and found areas where Asian Americans could be incorporated or not specifically mentioned where they could have been.

Our conclusive remarks centered upon the inclusion of a fully designed lesson titled “How People Respond to Conflict: A Look at Crystal City Internment Camp.” Educators have the power to change the centering of hegemonic narratives for their students and help see themselves in the curriculum.

Selected Materials

Poem

*Torawaruru
Toki wa kitarinu
Ame no yoi
Kokoro sadamete
Kutsu no oto kiku*




*The time has come
For my arrest
This dark rainy night.
I calm myself and listen
To the sound of the shoes.*

— Sojin Tokiji Takei

5:00

GROUP WORK

- You will be completing a jigsaw activity to learn more about how Uno, Shibayama and Arthur responded to conflict.
- Your group will split up to learn about each of the people and then come back together to teach one another.
- You will draw a chart in your journal to fill out during this activity.



Conclusions

As future educators, we need to consider representation and the effects that hegemonic narratives can have on our students. To that effect, this process is easily replicated. Essentially, we can represent various narratives through the current curriculum by modification and taking our student’s education into our own hands.

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