Mission us and historical empathy: A qualitative case study of sixth-grade students' experiences

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MISSION US AND HISTORICAL EMPATHY: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES

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James Richard Maxlow
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MISSION US AND HISTORICAL EMPATHY: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF
SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES
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MISSION US AND HISTORICAL EMPATHY: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the potential development and use of historical empathy in sixth-grade students while using the colonial-era historical education game Mission US and its associated learning activities. A collective case study was developed to describe and interpret students’ experiences. The gathered data included the students’ written and audio-recorded work from Mission US assignments, students’ interviews, and a teacher interview. Data elements were coded with their corresponding characteristics of historical empathy as outlined by Foster (2001). Additionally, emergent thematic areas among the data were identified. The data analysis revealed that many students engaged in Foster’s characteristics of historical empathy throughout their experiences. However, the more complex the characteristic, the less likely it was to be expressed in the data. Additionally, the data coding revealed that students understood most of what the game attempted to teach, including the motivations the game’s historical characters had amidst the colonial conflict. The findings suggest that students gained or improved historical empathy skills during the course of their experiences with Mission US but that most students did not reach full mastery of the process. Additional experiences with historical education games, including other Mission US modules, may help students to reach
mastery so long as the games can be adapted to leverage historical empathy as an
approach to learning.

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MISSION US AND HISTORICAL EMPATHY: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES
Chapter One: Connecting History Education, Historical Empathy, and Digital Gaming

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) recently commented on the state of social studies education in the United States, having stated:

The last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first have seen a marginalization of social studies curriculum, instruction, and assessment at all grade levels. In many state houses, in departments of education and in school districts across this great nation, education for citizenship has taken a back seat to education for career and college. (A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy, 2008, para. 2)

These sobering words from the nation's largest social studies education association paint a grim picture for the social studies' current place in our educational system. In the perfect storm of high-stakes assessment, increasing accountability to federal and state governments, troubling reading and mathematics achievement comparisons to that of other countries, and increased calls for STEM-based career instructional tracks, school districts in this country are faced with the dilemma of determining which subjects to sacrifice in order to place greater emphasis on high-priority areas. The NCSS also noted:

[...] many American children are receiving little or no formal education in the core social studies disciplines: civics, economics, geography, and history. That
such a situation has evolved is untenable in a nation that prides itself on its history, its
system of government and its place as a leader in the global community. (Social Studies
in the Era of No Child Left Behind, 2007, para. 2)

The National Coalition for History (NCH), a non-profit history advocacy
organization, illustrates how some of that de-emphasis occurs by tracking federal and
state legislation that can have an impact on the teaching of history by schools and other
types of organizations. Recent education-specific developments tracked by NCH include
the de-authorization of the Teaching American History grant program, which funded
history education in schools and a 49% funding reduction to the National Endowment for
the Humanities, which provides all manner of grants to organizations seeking to promote
history learning, among other subjects (Archives By Month, n.d.). A proposed re-
authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education act would transition federal
funding for schools into a block grant program, eliminating earmarks for specific subjects
or programs—thereby placing states and school divisions in the position of determining
whether to allocate funds exclusively for accountability-laden subjects such as reading
and math, or to spread the funding among a wide range of subjects.

As an organization engaged in advocacy for the social studies, however, the
NCSS resists the sea change of de-emphasizing history and other social studies, believing
that “the core mission of social studies education is to help students develop the
knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to become effective citizens”
(Creating Effective Citizens, 2001, para. 6). Furthermore, they champion the notion that
all students should become educated “on the people, history, and traditions that have
shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world” (Creating Effective Citizens,
2001, para. 9). Their emphasis on the importance of history education to our students’ lives is clear. The National Council for History Education (NCHE), a professional organization dedicated to the improvement of history education in the social studies in particular, echoed those citizenship values in claiming that historical thinking “leads [students] towards engaging with and understanding the contemporary world and serves as a foundation for life-long, productive learning and active citizenship” (History’s Habits of Mind, n.d., para. 1). Nearly a dozen major history education and professional organizations, including the NCSS, the NCHE, the American Historical Association, and the Organization of American Historians, support National History Day each year (What is National History Day?, n.d.). This program allows more than half a million students to become engaged in the learning and sharing of history across the country, clearly illustrating the view of thousands of educators, historians, and policy advocates that history should remain an essential part of our national effort to educate our children.

If we take as givens that a) social studies education, and history education in particular, are key components of building an intellectually healthy and productive citizenry, and b) time and resources dedicated to such education are being reduced in our school systems, then what can the advocates of history education do in response? One possible approach is to push back against the dwindling emphasis and strive to establish such education on an equal footing to reading, mathematics, and the sciences. Another possibly more manageable approach, however—one that can be based solely on the actions of educators themselves rather than on the complex political negotiations of educational leaders or policy-makers—is to improve the education offered during that dwindling time and amidst those dwindling resources. Striving to achieve better learning
outcomes in the midst of limited time and resource availability may contribute more to our society, in the long run, than fighting a battle for more time and more resources.

The nation will probably not focus its energy, advocacy, or resources on history education to the same extent and with the same anxious passion with which it addresses the issues of reading, mathematics, and science achievement, especially when confronted with the comparisons of U.S. students' achievement to those from across the globe. The situation need not be hopeless, however; we need not quietly accept that history education remain an afterthought as time allows. We can instead leverage what we know about effective pedagogy and learning resources to improve educational outcomes in history. We can begin to transform our education efforts to make history learning relevant, exciting, and ultimately a worthwhile endeavor for all our students.

**Historical Empathy as a Strategic Approach**

If we are to strengthen our U.S. History education efforts, we need to determine the most useful instructional strategies in the field. One strategic approach to history learning that may be worth exploring is challenging students to develop their *historical empathy*. Historical empathy is defined in multiple ways, but the definitions share a common notion: It is a process by which we come to understand the reasons historical agents acted as they did in the specific contexts of historical situations (Brooks, 2009; Cunningham, 2009; Endacott, 2010; Yilmaz, 2007). To develop historical empathy is to come to know why people did what they did. Empathy focuses not upon determining the value of historical actors' actions nor the magnitude of their impact on the historical record; it is instead a lens through which we can examine an individual or group by analyzing the extant evidence of their lives (Lee & Shemilt, 2011). The what, when,
who, and where of history are still important for learning, yet historical empathy, by
definition, seeks answers from the historical record to questions of why (Brooks, 2009,
2011; Colby, 2010).

Successful development of historical empathy in students may offer several
benefits to learning (Brooks, 2009; Endacott, 2010; Lee & Shemilt, 2011). Seeing
history as the result of complex interactions of individuals and groups rather than
collections of dates, places, and events can contribute to deep understanding and critical
thinking (Brooks, 2011; Kohlmeier, 2006). In fact, when students’ apply thinking and
moral judgments derived from their lives in the present to decisions made by historical
actors in the past, that application may sometimes interfere with students’ contextual
understandings. Historical empathy, if well-applied, can help students avoid such
judgments by instead focusing on understanding why the historical actors made their
decisions given the contexts in which they were surrounded and the prevailing beliefs of
the time (Colby, 2010; Lee & Shemilt, 2011). Effective historical inquiry requires that
modes of thinking and judgment based in the present be restrained in order to develop an
accurate understanding of history’s actors in their own times (Colby, 2010; Endacott,
2010; Kohlmeier, 2006).

Contextual complexity itself can be an end-goal of understanding engendered by
historical empathy (Brooks, 2011; Colby, 2010; Kohlmeier, 2006; Lee & Shemilt, 2011).
In ideal applications of historical empathy, such skills may be transferred to students’
understandings of their own identities and actions in current contexts, adding another
potential benefit to this approach (Brooks, 2009; Kohlmeier, 2006). At a minimum,
however, the deep thinking promoted by educational approaches rooted in historical
empathy may result in high levels of knowledge transfer and knowledge retention (Kohlmeier, 2006; Waring and Robinson, 2010).

Historical empathy—an approach that combines traditional gathering and analysis of historical facts with reasoned analysis of historical actor motivations—may be beneficial to student learning. George Washington is dead. April 9th, 1865 has come and gone. The Tule Lake War Relocation Center in California is now a national monument. The Selma bus boycott ended long ago. But understanding the *whys* of that president, of that date, of that place, and of that event may help us to shape our current and future world. Knowing why the people involved in those dates, places, and events acted as they did may help us encourage or discourage behaviors and beliefs in ourselves and in others, benefitting from historical successes or avoiding the repetition of historical tragedies (Kohlmeier, 2004). Helping students to develop historical empathy may be a way to make historical learning proactive, investigative, personally relevant, nuanced, and long-lasting (Lee & Shemilt, 2011).

**Games and Their Educational Advantages**

While the development of historical empathy in students may be one promising strategic approach to build authentic historical understanding, the use of gaming in the classroom may be another. Games utilized in educational contexts can offer powerful learning advantages over strictly didactic instruction (Prensky, 2010; Watson, 2010). In games, players explore metaphorical representations of the world with defined boundaries, wherein task accomplishment and reward are governed by rules of play and specific methods of interaction (Gee, n.d. a). In this sense, gaming mirrors the educational process of knowledge and skill development within students. If we are willing to
entertain the notion that both the traditional education model and gaming offer a learning process to which individuals adapt while broadening and deepening their intellectual development and skill acquisition, then we may begin to see greater educational value in the act of game-playing itself (Prensky, 2010; Rice, 2007).

Games appeal to players for multiple reasons. Those interested in task accomplishment and reward are well-served by games. Those interested in exploration, in various degrees of abstraction, can find compelling interest in games. Those who find comfort in the structure of rules and of defined means of interaction, or in the nature of cause and effect relationships, can see their preferences addressed with games (Betrus & Botturi, 2010; Gee, n.d. a). At the same time, some games allow for players to define their own rules, to decide upon their own methods of interaction with metaphoric representations, and to make nuanced choices about their own tasks and rewards to be sought (Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Gee, n.d. a). In this manner, players with many different learning styles and interests can be accommodated through the use of various types of games. Such accommodation feeds motivation and engagement within players and therefore establishes deeper connections between players’ minds and the games’ metaphors and outcomes (Betrus & Botturi, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007). Games can also reinforce the notion of identity and action within the context of an individual’s interaction with the external world: players perform an action, the metaphoric representation of the world responds in kind, and the player must then perform another action in turn. Engaging in a game can be more than just an exercise in cause and effect—it may be an encouragement to see oneself as an agent of change in the world (Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Gee, n.d. a; Hutchinson, 2007).
It is tempting, as a result, to integrate the use of games into educational structures and approaches. If student interest is served, if engagement is kept high, if self-direction and responsibility for choices are engendered, if task accomplishment becomes increasingly complex and/or rewarding, and if the nature of cause and effect are explored all through the use of a game, then intuitively it seems appealing to leverage those benefits in a school-based learning environment. In a sense, gaming parallels the learning structure of a traditional school. Games can empower the player to take actions to achieve a personal benefit in the context of defined rules and processes; schools may empower students to take action to achieve a personal learning benefit in the context of defined rules and processes (Betrus & Botturi, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007).

**Role-Playing Games and Historical Empathy**

If research suggests that both game-playing and the development of historical empathy in students may be valid and valuable strategies used separately, it may be worthwhile to explore whether game-playing itself can support the development and use of historical empathy. In particular, role-playing games may be a fruitful avenue for working through issues of perspective, identity, agency, and worldly context in the minds of players (Atkinson, 2010; McCall, 2011). Devlin-Scherer and Sardone (2010) and Hutchinson (2007) agreed that role-playing games may well address these essential components in ways that engage and motivate learners. They noted that the general benefits of gaming mentioned previously (e.g. student choice and being a change agent) can be more successful when leveraged in the context of specific content and strategic techniques already in use in the classroom.
In a role-playing game, the character’s identity is transposed onto the player, and the player takes on various ideological, contextual, or behavioral character aspects. The player attempts to act in the game world as he or she imagines the character would act based on the available evidence provided about the character in the game. The player may also bring his or her own perspective to the table, merging personal beliefs, values, and habits with those of the character. The player often faces decision points with small- or large-scale consequences. In either case, the player attempts to react to the events of the game world by using an understanding of the character (Atkinson, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011).

As noted, historical empathy involves the development of an understanding of the motivations and contexts that affect individuals’ and groups’ decision-making in history (Brooks, 2009). Therefore, a role-playing game that challenges a player to understand the complexities of the character’s actions, and to make decisions based on those understandings, may indeed foster skills that, when transferred to historical inquiry, bolster historical empathy in students (McCall, 2011). But can role-playing games challenge players in that manner? Hutchinson (2007) and Marsh (1981) agreed that certain role-playing games foster progress through stratified goal attainment for the player by rewarding accuracy of context-based behavioral understandings and applications. They also noted that such games regress player progress or punish the player for acting in contradiction of those understandings, or for not reaching those understandings in the first place. While those components alone are not sufficient to help the player develop understandings, they are nonetheless necessary for the development of those understandings (Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011). Role-playing games may
function as means to develop skills in players whose results might be applied to the
development of historical empathy.

Another concept necessary for students' historical empathy development may also be addressed by role-playing games: notions of agency in the world (McCall, 2011). To understand agency is to understand that individuals act upon the world around them, and that such actions are influenced by various motivations and contexts. Action upon a metaphorical world through the lens of a character is at the heart of a role-playing game. A role-playing game demands that the player take action in a multitude of situations in order to progress through the defined goal attainment structure (Atkinson, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007).

Hutchinson (2007) and Marsh (1981) stated that role-playing games reward the accuracy of understandings of a player's character and taking action thereon—in other words, the accuracy of understanding a character's perspective. In addition, some role-playing games feature not only the player's character but other non-player characters as well. By populating metaphorical worlds with these other characters, game designers create conditions in which the player must interact with other perspectives (Atkinson, 2010; Marsh, 1981). In fact, in some role-playing games, success is contingent on coming to understand other characters well enough to make appropriate decisions while interacting with or around them (Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011). Gaining practice with understanding many perspectives may develop skills transferrable to understanding the perspectives associated with historical contexts, further contributing to the development of historical empathy (McCall, 2011).
Digital Gaming and the Middle School Social Studies Classroom

To what extent is the use of digital gaming in classrooms promoted as an effective approach to history learning? A review of the Web-based resources, recommendations, and policy statements of three leading history education organizations reveals no specific endorsements of the use of digital games in social studies curricula. The National Center for History in the Schools catalogues hundreds of lessons, resources, and links for history teachers, but references only one game—Abraham Lincoln’s Crossroads (U.S. Era 5, n.d., para. 4). The NCHE, whose self-purported purpose is to lead the teaching and learning of history, makes no mention whatsoever of gaming in its resource links (http://www.nche.net/). The NCSS has released a position statement wherein it extolls the use of technology in the context of learning, particularly in the nature of accessing information through online databases and archives, as well as connecting learners across cultural boundaries, but it offers little to no guidance on specific uses of digital games for curricular and pedagogical ends. For middle school students, NCSS recommends using activities such as role-playing, simulations, and mock trials in order to develop ethical awareness, notions of identity, and understanding of others’ perspectives, but does not offer recommendations for doing so via digital role-playing games (Technology Position Statement and Guidelines, 2006). To its credit, NCSS has contributed to the online role-playing game called Mission US, albeit in a non-specified fashion (Mission US Partners, n.d., para. 1). The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), in contrast, offers a multitude of publications, online discussion areas, and webinars related to the use of gaming in education—and in some cases in social studies in particular. As an advocate
for the integration of technology into teaching and learning, it makes intuitive sense that ISTE would suggest digital gaming as a means to achieve educational ends.

While no unified effort to promote the use of digital gaming in middle school social studies classes appears to exist among such advocacy and educational leadership organizations, there are many instances of pioneering uses of gaming in education. Researchers, authors, and editors such as Gee (n.d. a), McCall (2011), Hirumi (2010), and Prensky (2010) promote the use of digital games in instructional practice through collections of annotated Web resources, books, studies, and articles. Foundations and corporations such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Gates Foundation contribute funding to the development of digital games for education and for social studies in particular (McCall, 2011; Mission US, n.d.). Historical and cultural societies commission their own games, such as the role-playing games The Jamestown Online Adventure, Darfur is Dying, and Salem Witchcraft Hysteria (McCall, 2011; Watson, 2010). Even commercial video game companies find their entertainment products leveraged for classroom instructional use, such as the series Civilization, Age of Empires, and Total War (Lee & Probert, 2010; McCall, 2011; Watson, 2010). The seminal role-playing game The Oregon Trail is perhaps the best-known and widest-used digital game in social studies classrooms (The Oregon Trail, n.d.; Watson, 2010).

Students' exposure to history instruction may well be diminishing in our school systems, and hence the futures of the citizenry and our country may be at risk. Historical empathy and digital gaming may be two promising approaches to addressing these
concerns by helping to improve the education that occurs in our history classrooms. But in what way might we investigate the complex interplay among those approaches?

The Study

Uncommon approaches and new resources may be explored and researched in order to make our educational efforts in the field of historical learning more successful. The development of historical empathy in students is one such approach that may raise their levels of understanding by helping them to investigate and analyze the *whys* of historical agents’ actions. Building historical empathy involves substantive explorations into the motivations of individuals and groups and of the contextual events in which they lived and acted (Brooks, 2009; Colby, 2010; Foster, 1999). Games, with their player-directed action, stratified task-accomplishment and reward, and frequent action-specific feedback, may be a powerful means to build and maintain motivation and engagement throughout a series of learning tasks (Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Gee, n.d. a; Hirumi, 2010; McCall, 2011). Role-playing games in particular may support the historical empathy approach to history instruction by bringing together perspective exploration and contextual decision-making. The nature of digital role-playing games in the classroom may be the key to bringing together strategy, content, and student motivation to learn (Atkinson, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007).

This study explored the potential development of historical empathy in middle school students during use of a particular digital role-playing game, *Mission US*. *Mission US* is a game specifically designed to help students explore the various perspectives of historical and fictional individuals. Mission 1 of *Mission US*, used in this study, focuses
on the timeframe directly preceding the American Revolution (Mission US: For Crown or Colony?, n.d.). Players take on the role of a young printer’s apprentice who becomes embroiled in the escalating tensions of Patriots, Loyalists, and others at the time of the Boston Massacre. Mission US, along with its supporting primary sources, learning activities, and teacher guides, may offer students an opportunity to engage in the kind of historical empathy that can lead to deep understandings of complex historical motivations. In this study, the potential development of historical empathy in middle school students was explored using Mission US’s teaching and learning strategies and content. The study explored the following question: To what extent does a classroom experience with Mission US reveal evidence of students’ potential development and use of historical empathy?
Chapter Two: Literature Review

This study examined the experiences of students with respect to historical empathy while using a digital role-playing game in a middle school U.S. history classroom. As such, literature related to historical learning, historical empathy, gaming in education, and role-playing games is relevant. What follows is a synthesis of those issues and the various ways in which they interplay.

Solutions for Improving the Teaching and Learning of History

If our aim is to improve historical learning, it may make sense to consult historical learning advocacy organizations for their recommendations on strategies and resources that might improve the teaching and learning of U.S. History in our schools. As self-styled proponents of quality history and social studies learning, such organizations may have valuable instructional insights to offer.

The National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS), an effort of the University of California Los Angeles, claims to “make the best thinking about U.S. and World History understandable for teachers and their students” (About NCHS, n.d., para. 1). NCHS leads professional development experiences for educators, curriculum development, and resource indexing. They have been leaders in the effort for the creation of national history standards and have contributed many teaching units and professional development modules to the field. NCHS recommends that students not only develop knowledge of dates, places, events, and historical figures, but also that students engage in historical thinking as a core part of learning. Such thinking includes the examination of
primary sources through the process of historical inquiry, thinking about the assumptions and contexts related to such sources, and attempting to understand various competing interpretations of historical events and source documents. NCHS also recommends that students take into account “the historical context in which these records were created and comparing the multiple points of view of those on the scene at the time” (Historical Thinking Standards, n.d.).

The National Council for History Education (NCHE), an outgrowth of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools from the 1980s, considers its core purpose to be “leading the teaching and learning of history” (Strategic Plan, n.d., para. 1). To focus their work, they have also adopted “History’s Habits of the Mind,” which outline the thought processes that students should be challenged to engage in when learning about history (Core Purpose, n.d.). Key elements in the habits include developing understandings of how things change over time, how individuals and groups alike shape history through their actions, and how context interplays with cause and effect developments. Critical reading and inquiry, as well as maintaining the distinction between historical evidence and historical assertion, are stressed by NCHE. Furthermore, they advocate that students recognize how historical actors’ motivations affected history and that students should “perceive past events and issues as they were experienced by people at the time, to develop historical empathy as opposed to present-mindedness” (Core Purpose, n.d.).

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is the largest organization devoted to social studies education in the United States. They advise and cooperate with policy-making bodies, other educational organizations, and school districts themselves
NCSS publishes well-respected peer-reviewed journals such as *Theory and Research in Social Education* (from their College and University Faculty Assembly), *Social Education* and *Social Studies and the Young Learner*. They have a network of more than 100 affiliate organizations across states and have established 24 position statements on the teaching and learning of social studies in schools (About National Council for the Social Studies, n.d.). Recently, they participated in a massive multi-organizational effort to develop the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. C3 aims to:

a) enhance the rigor of the social studies disciplines; b) build critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills to become engaged citizens; and c) align academic programs to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies. (College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, n.d., para. 1)

Among other recommendations, C3 emphasizes that students should evaluate historical sources, develop claims using supporting evidence, and communicate conclusions. These kinds of tasks will help prevent the marginalization of the social studies and will aid in the motivation of students to learn (College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, n.d.). In addition, NCSS offers a list of instructional practices that are specifically appropriate for middle-school classrooms. They emphasize opportunities for student inquiry and creativity, along with cooperative learning and self-expression. They assert that the exploration of differing viewpoints and "moral dilemmas" can be a benefit to students, noting "a judicious examination of these issues helps students integrate knowledge and skills to build a personal value system"
NCSS also recommends that middle-school students develop a historical perspective or "sense of the past" (Social Studies in the Middle School, 1991, para. 45). Two notable strategies recommended are the engagement of students in role-playing exercises and the use of computer simulations (Social Studies in the Middle School, 1991, para. 24-29).

While each maintaining their own notions of effective approaches for history teaching and learning, these three advocacy organizations all recommend some common elements for successful learning: Students should be provided opportunities for critical thinking and historical inquiry; students should analyze historical evidence; and students should develop understandings of multiple perspectives (Core Purpose, n.d.; Historical Thinking Standards, n.d.; Social Studies in the middle School, 1991). These elements may be nurtured through the development of historical empathy as a strategic practice in history classrooms.

**Historical Empathy**

The development of historical empathy among students is a strategic approach to the learning of history (Brooks, 2009). For decades the scholarly community has provided multiple competing definitions and interpretations of historical empathy, but researchers that recently reviewed relevant literature have agreed that one common core exists in the various interpretations: historical empathy is about understanding the motivations and contexts that influence the decision-making of historical actors (Brooks, 2009; Cunningham, 2009; Endacott, 2010; Yılmaz, 2007). Brooks and Endacott in particular found that the literature emphasizes an understanding of perspectives of
individuals and groups that interplay with external contexts and internal motivations, thereby resulting in the actions that we consider to be key elements of history.

Historical empathy is not strictly equivalent to the psychological idea of empathy, wherein we feel what others are feeling, but rather that we can understand (but not necessarily agree with) the motivations and perspectives that people held that determined their individual actions amidst larger historical backdrops (Brooks, 2009; Colby, 2010; Foster, 1999). Brooks, Colby, and Foster stressed the why as an essential component of learning history. Lee and Shemilt (2011) noted the attachment of certain scholarly stigmas to historical empathy due to various interpretations that devalue the term empathy when applied to history. They reported that empathy engendered a selective application of sympathy and understanding that was not applied equally to all sides in historical conflicts, and further that it de-emphasized rigorous artifact and record analysis. Foster (1999) stated that historical empathy should not be confused with historical imagination, the latter featuring the absence of inquiry and analysis. Lipscomb (2002) echoed that caution, noting that historical imagination not associated with genuine historical inquiry will amount to nothing more than guessing on the part of the students. Davis (2001) acknowledged the reality of those perspectives, however, calling historical empathy “imagination restrained by evidence” (p. 3).

It is clear that significant disagreement about the meaning of historical empathy exists. As Brooks (2009) noted:

Scholars continue to dispute the precise nature of historical empathy. At the same time, debate persists concerning the extent to which empathy in historical work is even possible and the skills and understandings required in order to display it.
Because a number of issues related to historical empathy remain contested, and new vocabulary is frequently introduced for conceptual clarification, it is essential that future research on the subject fully engage the extant literature. (pp. 231-232)

Barton and Levstik (2004) stated that historical empathy is not merely a question of whether students understand the perspectives of historical actors, but rather whether students can understand and also show caring with respect to those perspectives. In Barton and Levstik’s terminology, students must develop interest in the past; care about the consequences of historical decisions; care about historical actors in unfortunate or trying conditions; and be motivated to positively affect the present based on feelings about the past. This comingling of understanding and emotional responses goes beyond many researchers’ notions of historical empathy, firmly merging cognitive and affective reasoning with emotion itself.

From one perspective, historical empathy is an understanding to be reached by students, not a process, and therefore the development of historical empathy is dependent on the chosen historical actors, time periods, and contexts. It can only be achieved given sufficiently available evidence and sufficiently restrained historical imagination (Lee & Shemilt, 2011). From another perspective, however, historical empathy is a process; it is a skill that, when developed, can be applied to any given historical actor, time period, and context if sufficient evidence is available. Foster and Yeager (1998) outlined the development of historical empathy as a four-step process. They argued that the process begins with the introduction of a historical event for consideration, proceeds through the development of student awareness of how the time period and context interplay, follows with inquiry into and examination of multiple perspectives related to the event, and leads
to the development of a narrative that will allow conclusions about history to be made by students. As a skill, it can be exercised with greater dexterity and success with practice over time (Colby, 2010). Colby clearly favors the process interpretation of historical empathy, having stated thusly:

Historical empathy enables students to enter the foreign world of the past—to the extent that retrieval is possible—and to demonstrate understandings from the viewpoints of the historical agents. Students assume the roles of researchers through the engagement of historical inquiry, including the investigation of a plethora of secondary and primary sources. Students then act as inquisitors, formulaters, and philosophers, who own complex, evolving perspectives of historical events, people, and time periods. (p. 71)

The lack of scholarly agreement on whether historical empathy is an end or a skill/process, and the degree, if any, to which emotion should play a part, may be such profoundly divisive issues that they could contribute to the lack of universal adoption of teaching methods associated with historical empathy in classrooms. This may engender enough confusion as to render the strategy unappealing to some educators. The strategic recommendations by the previously noted historical learning advocacy organizations do not make a clear case as to whether historical empathy should be developed as a skill/process or as a context-dependent end nor whether students should be encouraged or dissuaded from making emotional connections to historical actors (Core Purpose, n.d.; Historical Thinking Standards, n.d.).
Historical Perspective-Taking

A complicating factor in understanding historical empathy as an approach to teaching and learning is that it is sometimes conflated with the *historical perspective-taking* approach. In fact, in scholarly publications, the two terms are sometimes equated (Dulberg, 2002; Yeager & Foster, 1998). The distinction between them, however, is worth noting to provide greater clarity in understanding historical empathy. Historical perspective-taking may be thought of as the process by which a learner or historian attempts to understand what may have been in the minds of multiple historical actors—thoughts, feelings, and decision points—so as to understand the similarities and differences between various perspectives (Ashby & Lee, 1987.) This is also true of historical empathy, yet historical empathy goes further by exploring the external influences that subsequently interact with the actors’ minds to produce actions. In brief, historical empathy searches for the why of actions by adding context. Historical empathy considers more nuances and a broader swath of historical evidence (Foster & Yeager, 1998.)

Historical Empathy and Student Learning

The intentional development of historical empathy in students can lead to historical understandings of significantly greater depth than those reached through didactic instruction (Brooks, 2009; Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Lee & Shemilt, 2011). By coming to understand the motivations of individuals and groups, students can begin to frame complementary and competing perspectives in the contexts of dates, events, and places (Brooks, 2011; Kohlmeier, 2006). Students can see how individuals’ and groups’ actions are the result of external forces that both mesh and clash with internal beliefs.
Students can differentiate the nuances of human behavior in history, thereby avoiding stereotypes and surface-level reactionary judgments. It may be an important intellectual leap for students to make that historical actions that disturb or appall us today may have been a result of complex reactions to complex contexts. The remaining evidence of historical actors' lives can never reveal all of the complexities of thought, emotion, and context (Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Lee & Shemilt, 2011; Stripling, 2005). Knowing exactly how another person’s knowledge and beliefs influenced their actions is impossible (Lipscomb, 2002). Interpreting actions in context as illustrated by the evidence, however, can result in more realistic and truthful understandings (Colby, 2010; Endacott, 2010; Kohlmeier, 2006). As Lipscomb (2002) stated, “[S]tudents [successfully engaged in the process of historical empathy] could go beyond mere imagination to reach meaningful conclusions” (p. 53).

The development of historical empathy can immerse students in the varied and detailed perspectives of individuals and groups, resulting in complex rather than simple understandings—and it is that very notion and appreciation of complexity that can lead to greater critical thinking in students. This critical thinking applies not only to the understandings of historical agents, but of the students themselves (Brooks, 2011; Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Kohlmeier, 2006; Lee & Shemilt, 2011; Stripling, 2011). Geneser’s (2005) investigation of 5th-grade students that studied the lives of children from the first French colony in Texas supported this, as the students were able “to construct their own meanings about each occurrence and thus make personal connections to the historical era because of their strong identification with the characters” (p. 133). Ideally, students will come to see that their own beliefs and actions are quite
contextually-based, are complex, and cannot be explained reasonably without critical analysis (Brooks, 2009; Kohlmeier, 2006).

Improved critical thinking, in turn, can lead to longer retention of knowledge and a greater ability to transfer knowledge to novel situations (Kohlmeier, 2006; Waring & Robinson, 2010). If we assume that we study history not strictly to gain knowledge of the past but also to leverage that knowledge for the benefit of the present and the future of our lives and society, then the ability to transfer historical understandings to modern contexts is important. That is where the development of historical empathy as an approach may offer a clear advantage over rote memorization of names, events, dates, and places.

Huculak (2001) found that the use of historical empathy as a strategic practice in an 11th-grade classroom resulted in greater fact retention among students studying the decade of the 1920s in the United States, and that the effect was greater on students with previously lower achievement levels. Huculak attributed this to the rich context for exploration that historical empathy practices provide, including the assumption of identities resulting from analysis of primary sources and other historical records. Furthermore, attitude surveys showed that students acknowledged increased engagement with the material. Much like Foster (1999) and Lipscomb (2002) warned, however, Huculak suggested that her students sometimes had difficulty successfully distinguishing between contextual details and “their own unsubstantiated opinions” (p. 92). Similarly, Stripling (2005) warned that teachers should mediate the historical empathy process because students may have a tendency to firmly attach themselves to the historical perspective that most closely matches their internal belief system, implicitly retarding the
understanding of multiple perspectives. The lack of understanding of competing or complementary perspectives is a sign that students have not truly achieved historical empathy.

Geneser’s (2005) study produced the complement to Hucalak’s notion—the 5th-grade students were continuously motivated to learn about historical actors when engaged in the development of historical empathy. They also expressed interest and connection to the past and how it contrasted with their modern lives. Going further, Geneser identified growth in historical thinking skills among the students, including comprehension, research, analysis, and interpretation. Geneser concluded that the development of historical empathy as an approach can effectively support instruction tied to national social studies standards and need not exist as a stand-alone approach.

Criticisms of Historical Empathy

The development of historical empathy as a means to improve student learning of history is not without its critics. Given the comingling of understanding a historical actor’s perspective in context and the actor’s emotions at play, some critics note that historical empathy encourages students to attempt to imagine rather than deduce what was happening in the actor’s mind. Imagination is not learning, according to such critics, and therefore historical empathy is not an exercise in learning. There is also the danger that unsophisticated students will simply imagine what they would have done in a given historical situation rather than exploring why the historical actor took the noted action—which again ignores history and puts the focus on the students’ perspectives rather than on the actor’s perspective in context (Foster, 2001). Some argue that to engage in historical empathy without frequent use of historical analysis may result in little more
than exercises in imagination divorced from historical reality (Lee & Ashby, 2001). Lee and Ashby's (2001) counterpoint to their own claim is that students should always utilize historical evidence, particularly primary sources, whenever engaging in historical empathy, and in doing so their own perspectives and biases can be mitigated (Lee & Ashby, 2001).

A related criticism is that the development of historical empathy is so complex that it cannot be achieved by anyone not steeped in the components of rigorous historical inquiry, namely professional historians. Historical empathy requires deep understandings of the interplay between numerous factors including social, political, personal, psychological, and other concerns that affect human decision-making, and therefore a rich knowledge of each of those fields is necessary. This criticism holds that such knowledge is not held by students, nor even likely by their teachers, and cannot be provided by curricular materials; only professional historians are suitably knowledgeable to engage in historical empathy (Davis, 2001).

The lack of focus on historical empathy in history textbooks is also a challenge. History teachers exhibit heavy use of history textbooks, which frequently contain only one perspective on historical actors and events; this narrow presentation of history can interfere with students' exploration of multiple conflicting perspectives. Singular presentations of history in textbooks also tend to be taken at face value by students and therefore they retard the notion that history can be complex, nuanced, contested, and controversial—all elements needed for development of historical empathy (Doppen, 2002; Foster, Morris, & Davis, 1996; Gordy & Prichard, 1995). Doppen recommends that
teachers instead rely on multiple primary sources when teaching history to avoid such over-simplification.

Even if a sufficient amount of knowledge could somehow be provided to students to understand a particular actor and event deeply, critics further argue that the development of historical empathy requires practice refined over many iterations. A first attempt at engaging in historical empathy may well be fruitless; only continual practice can eventually lead to a modicum of success with the process. History curriculum in the schools is not equipped to foster frequent practice, however; nor are teachers, who likely engaged in little to no exercises of historical empathy in their own preparatory programs, equipped to facilitate such practice (Davis, 2001; Doppen, 2002).

As noted previously, evidence suggests that students who develop historical empathy may achieve at higher levels on assessments of historical knowledge (Brooks, 2009; Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Lee & Shemilt, 2011). Students may show more advanced levels of critical thinking (Brooks, 2011; Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Kohlmeier, 2006; Lee & Shemilt, 2011; Stripling, 2011). They may also demonstrate greater mastery of historical thinking skills (Geneser, 2005). However, what can we say about assessing the development of historical empathy itself?

**Historical Empathy and Assessment**

Foster and Yeager’s (1998) four-step process represents a delineation of the steps students should follow when exercising historical empathy, but it is not a graduated and nuanced assessment of historical empathy itself. Colby (2010) agreed that historical empathy is a process in which students can grow in sophistication over time, but did not offer an explicit measure of that sophistication. Lee and Shemilt (2011), in contrast,
viewed historical empathy as dependent on the context of that being studied—the particular historical actors, timeframe, and events—and therefore a single assessment of historical empathy may not make sense.

Instead of attempting to assess historical empathy directly, one might take the approach of assessing its potential effects. After all, if an end-goal of U.S. history education is building historical knowledge and transferring it to novel situations, then one might suppose that we can judge the value of the historical empathy approach based on the historical thinking skills that it may engender. Many researchers concluded that students engaged in historical empathy tend to reach deeper historical understandings than in lecture-only environments (Brooks, 2009; Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Lee & Shemilt, 2011). More still concluded that the use of historical empathy methods in classrooms leads to greater knowledge retention and transfer (Geneser, 2005; Huculak, 2001; Kohlmeier, 2006; Waring & Robinson, 2010). Increased critical thinking is another area noted by researchers as supported by the historical empathy approach (Brooks, 2011; Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Kohlmeier, 2006; Lee & Shemilt, 2011; Stripling, 2011). Given all the research into the potential effects of historical empathy in classrooms, it may be reasonable to apply assessment not to historical empathy itself, but rather to its potential outcomes.

If we are interested in the outcomes of the development and use of historical empathy in classrooms, in what ways might we leverage pedagogical techniques and instructional resources to move students towards those outcomes? How might the development of historical empathy unfold over time in classrooms? Types of activities that can assist with this are discussed next.
Activities to Develop Historical Empathy

Certain instructional activities may promote the development of historical empathy in students. Doppen (2000) and Klages (1999) found that guided inquiry questions provided to students in the context of primary source analysis increased understandings of why historical actors did what they did. Students can discuss these questions with peers using think-aloud activities that refine communal understandings of perspective, bias, and legitimacy of evidence (Doppen, 2000; Kohlmeier, 2006). From a broader perspective, providing a variety of research resources, primary or otherwise, tends to increase the complexity and insightfulness of narratives that students constructed to explain historical events and actions (Yeager, Foster, & Maley, 1998). Klages also found that primary source usage, specifically that of oral history interviews, was fundamental in the development of historical empathy among students.

Stripling’s (2011) study agreed with this, finding that primary source access and analysis are essential to the development of historical empathy, and furthermore that secondary sources are also needed to provide contextual information not necessarily present in the primary sources. The inclusion of multiple historical sources in an exercise of historical empathy is important because they offer multiple perspectives for student exploration and analysis (Klages, 1999; Riley, 2001; Stripling, 2011; Yeager et al., 1998). Stripling cautioned, however, that teachers should facilitate the process of students differentiating between the accuracy, veracity, and biases of different kinds of sources as students may have a tendency to treat all sources as equally valid. Structured debates may also help to flesh out the expressed perspectives of historical actors by students, as Jensen (2008) found. Kohlmeier’s (2006) study of a 9th-grade history class found that
combining primary source analysis with Socratic Seminars (a type of structured group
discussion) meaningfully improved students' abilities to simultaneously empathize with
historical actors and defend their historical interpretations with relevant evidence. As
Kohlmeier noted:

By sharing their interpretations with their classmates who often disagreed, the
students had the opportunity to create a richer, more complex representation of an
historical event than they could have created individually. I feel strongly that
without this public discussion and sharing of their ideas, they would not have
improved in their capacity for historical empathy to the degree I observed. (p. 52)

Grant (2001) studied the use of simulations in historical perspective development
and found them to be more successful in helping students reach deep and nuanced
historical understandings than lecture-only implementations, potentially because they
may engender a sense that history is complex and subject to interpretation more than
lecture-only instruction. Brooks' (2008) study revealed conflicting results of using
writing assignments as a means to develop historical empathy—first-person writing
assignments by students promoted inference-making but retarded contextualization, while
third-person writing assignments retarded inference-making but enhanced factual
accuracy. Brooks and Klages (1999) and Kohlmeier (2006) recommended student-
constructed written narratives, if well researched and supported by evidence, as a means
to deepen historical empathy among students. Klages stated that, in general, active
learning strategies such as inquiry and discussion are better suited to the development of
historical empathy than passive learning strategies such as lecture or textbook readings.

No matter the approach taken by teachers, however, Kohlmeier noted that frequent
practice with exercises in historical empathy are important to enhancing the sophistication levels of students' understandings.

The National Center for History in the Schools advised that students should examine the perspectives present in historical narratives while at the same time triangulating them with other available data points (Historical Comprehension, n.d.). The National Council for History Education promoted the notion that students should match the intentions of historical actors with their actions (Core Purpose, n.d., para. 2). More specifically, the National Council for the Social Studies advised educators that students should grapple with historical controversy by way of exploring multiple divergent perspectives on given events (Curriculum Guidelines for Social Studies Teaching and Learning, 2008).

The utilization of fictional media in the development of historical empathy may also be a worthwhile strategic approach. The reading of stories of fictional characters who find themselves participating in historical events may contribute to deeper student understandings of realistic perspectives of historical actors. Such characters can be used to present perspectives to students in an engaging and personal way. Historical accuracy may be compromised when fiction is involved, however, and so such an approach should not be used in such a way that divorces the learning from historical evidence (O'Brien, 1998; Tunnell & Ammon, 1993).

A multitude of definitions of, perspectives on, and implications of historical empathy abound in the literature. Given the wide range of disparate views, it may be beneficial to adopt a specific view on historical empathy in order provide a clear and singular lens through which to examine and think about students' experiences.
Adopting a Theory of Historical Empathy

This study leveraged Foster's (2001) presentation of historical empathy in historical learning as that lens. Foster expounded five primary characteristics of historical empathy as an approach to historical learning and eight recommendations for classroom instantiation. Foster offered a rich set of classwork identifiers, student behaviors, teacher practices, and contextual factors that allow teachers to frame an understanding of the students’ actual development. The presence of these factors in Foster’s theory provides a clear advantage for those seeking evidence that historical empathy is being developed or used classrooms. Student experiences that seem to transcend the reach of Foster’s theory should not be ignored if and when they emerge, however, because no single theory may account for the breadth and depth of human learning experiences. The complexity of students’ learning and how that complexity becomes evident in classrooms may yield understandings of historical empathy that Foster did not envision.

Characteristics of historical learning via historical empathy. In Foster’s (2001) view, students engaged in the exercise of historical empathy must necessarily seek and reach an understanding of why historical actors acted. Coming to know how the internal and external forces that influenced an actor combined to produce an action is coming to know history itself. This is ultimately the reason to engage in the development of historical empathy in the first place.

A second aspect in Foster’s (2001) theory involves students developing a rich contextual understanding in support of the historical inquiry. Students should become familiar with both the facts and influences of the time period in question and how those
factors helped shaped the decision-making of historical actors. A student not well versed in context would be missing a critical piece necessary to explaining the why of history mentioned previously.

Furthermore, students who explore historical actors’ motivations and the contextual factors surrounding them should do so by examining a variety of historical sources and a variety of perspectives on those sources. Historical empathy should not involve imagination, Foster (2001) noted, but instead evolve out of critical views of multiple primary and second sources—often sources that clash with or contradict each other. Examined perspectives should not be unified and communal, as one might find in a history textbook, but nuanced, conflicting, and potentially controversial. It is the critical analysis of these conflicting perspectives that can help bring students closer to understanding historical actors’ decisions.

In addition to critically examining others’ perspectives on historical actors and contexts, Foster (2001) recommends that students critically examine their own perspectives during the inquiry. Students must understand that their own upbringings, experiences, beliefs, and personal contexts can influence their judgments about the past. The effective development of historical empathy requires that students consider the subjective nature of their own perspectives so they can isolate the viewpoints of the historical actors from their own. Unknowingly projecting one’s own perspective into that of the actor being studied defeats the purpose of historical inquiry.

Finally, Foster (2001) posits that students truly engaged in historical empathy should come to accept that knowledge of history is not exact, timeless, unchanging, nor complete. Fully reconstructing the mind of a historical actor through critical examination
of historical sources is impossible. New information can yield changes in perspectives, as can new experiences of the investigator. Historical knowledge might better be described as historical *speculation*, and students should become comfortable with the fluid and tentative nature of historical inquiry based on extant evidence.

**Recommendations for classroom use.** Facilitating the development of historical empathy by students in a classroom is neither a simple nor quick task. According to Foster (2001), however, teachers can use a systemic approach that scaffolds students through the process during a historical inquiry. To begin, teachers should ensure that the selected situation for historical inquiry is sufficiently controversial, confusing, or interesting for the students. These kinds of situations may naturally attract the students’ curiosity or critical opinions, which can help sustain their motivation throughout the inquiry. Before proceeding immediately to the minds of the relevant historical actors, however, students should first gain an appreciable understanding of the context of the situations, including the facts, figures, politics, social trends, and other influences.

This appreciable understanding, as well as the more detailed inquiry into the minds of the historical actors, should come through the examination of multiple primary and secondary sources. Attempting historical inquiry divorced from historical sources is quite plainly not historical inquiry, and therefore Foster (2001) urges teachers to provide access to as many kinds of sources, and of such depth, as is developmentally appropriate for the students. These sources may be unedited or may be excerpted or annotated by the teacher as appropriate for the students’ cognitive levels. Merely providing such sources is not sufficient, however. Students should also be taught how and be expected to ask critical questions about the sources, such as those exploring bias, motivation, and
accuracy. Sources should also be compared to and contrasted against one another to identify a diversity of perspectives.

In facilitating each of the previous recommendations, Foster (2001) also notes that teachers should help students proceed from simple to complex critical analysis. Students may have little experience in the nuances of historical inquiry, and so scaffolding students from more basic to more complicated questioning and discussion strategies can help move students forward. Simple identification and classification of sources, for example, may be the first step on a trail that eventually leads to independent selection and evaluation of sources and the perspectives therein. Putting all the source examination together, Foster then recommends that students develop, in writing, their understanding of the *whys* of the historical actors’ actions. This may be understood as the synthesis of the entirety of the inquiry, combining fact, context, and perspective into a cohesive narrative that is supported by the available evidence. If students can effectively reach this step, they have manifested, to one degree of quality or another, a certain level of historical empathy.

Creating the narrative is not the final step that Foster (2001) presents, however. Returning to the notion that historical conclusions should be considered to be tentative and subject to revision, the researcher suggests that students should be given the opportunity to discuss each other’s narratives so as to further refine their perspectives and understandings. Questions concerning the evidence students examined, how that evidence shaped the conclusions, and how the students’ own perspectives influenced the narratives can be openly discussed in the classroom or between the teacher and student
directly. This type of discussion can provide further clarification and may even lead to a complete revisiting of the narrative.

Lastly, Foster (2001) offers direct and particular advice to the classroom teacher: Be adept at coordinating student experiences throughout the learning process. Facilitating and scaffolding students from the basics of contextual exploration, through the critical examination of resources, all the way through the development of a historical narrative and the discussion thereof takes patience, planning, flexibility, commitment, and attention to detail. Teachers can combine didactic processes, collaborative work, independent investigations, and other pedagogical methods to create a cohesive and navigable path for students through the historical learning via historical empathy approach.

The development of historical empathy in students may function as a successful strategy for historical learning. The use of gaming may aid the learning process as well. This is explored in the following section.

**Games as Instructional Tools**

Gaming can be loosely characterized as the structured interaction by the gamer with a metaphorical representation of a world under a given set of rules, boundaries, and methods, all for the purpose of stratified goal attainment (Betrus & Bottturi, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Gee, n.d. a). Player input results in game feedback in repetitive, cyclical, or spiraling natures. Progression through games generally reveals more details of the metaphoric representations, or makes the representations, interactions, and rewards more complex, or ultimately moves the player to the final, over-arching, highest-reward goal (Betrus & Botturi, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010). These
actions and results can be interpreted as a process similar to that of traditional schooling for students—wherein the acquisition of content and skills and the performance on assessments becomes increasingly complex—and therefore gaming may be a comfortable and complementary process in which students can engage in the classroom (Gee, n.d. a; Prensky, 2010; Rice, 2007). Gee (n.d. a) likened the process of learning to play a game and becoming successful at it to learning in a field such as biology, which is replete with rules, information, context, and goal accomplishment.

Gee (n.d. a) stated that there are several instructional benefits to gaming, including the development of a sense of agency in the world, understandings of cause and effect relationships, differentiation of both content and process, and the building of motivation in students. Several researchers agreed with those notions. Atkinson (2010), Hutchinson (2007), Squire (2008), and Devlin-Scherer and Sardone (2010) concluded that the nature of direct control that gamers exercise over the metaphorical worlds can help to build a sense of agency in the game because the cause and effect results of a gamer’s actions are explicitly evident in the game world. Cause and effect understandings promoted by games may in fact translate as skills that can be applied outside of the gaming worlds (Atkinson, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011). Furthermore, a game platform itself opens enormously varied possibilities for presenting students with complex problem situations that feature diverse roles, ample resources, and multiple potential choices of action that could never be realistically provided in the real world, all without the real world’s dangers, costs, and time constraints (Echeverri & Sadler, 2011). Kirriemuir and McFarlane (2004) remarked that games may help players develop problem-solving techniques in such virtual environments, but cautioned that
more research is needed to determine if such skills may be regularly transferrable to the real world.

Customization in games—often related to characters, potential choices of action in various contexts, the environments themselves, and the choice of which goals to pursue—also tend to foster differentiation that can aid the learning of individual students (Betrus & Botturi, 2010; Gee, n.d. a). This differentiation coupled with goal accomplishment options may improve student motivation and engagement in the learning tasks (Auman, 2011; Betrus & Botturi, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Hirumi, 2010; McCall, 2011; Hutchinson, 2007).

Gaming in a classroom environment may lead to greater knowledge construction by students, as Foster (2011) noted. Additionally, the use of gaming as an instructional tool may be more beneficial to student learning than lecture strategies in some contexts (Prensky, 2010; Watson, 2010). Going further, Gee (n.d. a) stated that gaming engenders players' commitment to the gaming world, in part due to the interactive feedback game worlds offer players as well as the encouragement of risk-taking and therefore experimentation. This commitment, Gee noted, contributes to successful learning and should be emulated in classroom contexts. If one equates the learning process in the mind to a simulation machine, wherein we mentally play out scenarios based on our experiences and knowledge to various outcomes before taking action, video games in particular function as an instantiation of that metaphor. Players experiment, attempt different approaches to overcoming obstacles, adapt future actions based on past experiences, and are rewarded for matching correct bits of knowledge and process to specific contextual problems (Gee, n.d. b). Squire (2008) also noted that gaming
traditionally is centered upon the doing, or what can be done, in a designed world. This contrasts heavily with what Squire noted as traditional schooling that focuses more on knowledge of subject areas.

Gaming as a locus for socialization and learning among peer groups may be an important area for further research. Kirriemuir and McFarlane (2004) contended that gamers who use gaming as a motivation for context-based communication and communal problem-solving with other gamers are actually engaged in sophisticated socialization and group learning strategies beyond the realm of the game world itself. Whether the game itself offers in-game communication and collaboration features, gamers will often seek out peers with whom to co-construct their understandings of the game world and how to best navigate its challenges. Echeverri and Sadler (2011) agreed, noting that one primary recourse that a player may choose when faced with a significant obstacle in a gaming world is to seek out the advice of another player. This collaborative learning tendency may well be tapped when using gaming in a classroom environment.

All of these potential benefits, taken together, tend to support the argument that gaming can be a successful and valuable instructional practice and, in fact, should be used in schools (Betrus & Botturi, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011; Prensky, 2010; Rice, 2007). Certain researchers caution, however, that gaming in school environments should be accompanied by other pedagogically-appropriate tactics, supplemented with non-gaming resources, and be but one component of a larger, intentional instructional plan on the part of the teacher to address varying student needs (Lee & Probert, 2010; McCall, 2011; Watson, 2010). Moreover, it should be noted peer-reviewed research into the application and effects of specific games in classroom contexts
is somewhat sparse. One fundamental cause of this is that the peer-review research process may take such a long time to complete that a game may be considered no longer current or in popular use by the time of publication. Advocates for gaming in schools may also find their message conflated with radical school reform proposals that denigrate traditional education, and therefore non-peer-reviewed claims should be taken as possible leads for future research rather than accepted at face value (Kirriemuir & McFarlane, 2004).

**Role-Playing Games, Learning, and Historical Empathy**

Role-playing games may be specifically well suited to developing historical empathy in students. Games may provide opportunities for students to support, exercise, and build the component sub-processes of the development of historical empathy (Atkinson, 2010; McCall, 2011). Essential components such as identity, agency, cause and effect, and perspectives can each be addressed through such games (Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007).

A role-playing game can be defined as a game in which the player intentionally assumes some combination of the personality, action tendency, knowledge, appearance, and beliefs of a fictional or real individual. Through this assumption of identity, the player attempts to act as he or she imagines that individual would act in a given context (Atkinson, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011). One of the earliest games to be recognized as a role-playing game is *Dungeons & Dragons*, a paper-pencil-dice tabletop game that has since crossed over into many different types of media (Dungeons & Dragons, n.d.). More recently created examples include the series of video games that fall under the *World of Warcraft* umbrella (Blizzard Entertainment, n.d.).
In general, a role-playing game would reward the player for acting as closely as possible to the presupposed character of the individual, and would retard the player's progress for acting differently than the presupposed character of the individual. In other words, the player is offered greater rewards for displaying more complex and "accurate" representations of the individual's thought processes. Successful representations may require that a player understand why the individual would act a certain way in a given context (Hutchinson, 2007; Marsh, 1981). This is entirely at the heart of historical empathy, and therefore a role-playing game may help students develop and practice the complex task of understanding motivations and actions of individuals (McCall, 2011). It is not, however, a given that merely playing a role-playing game creates the understandings needed for historical empathy (Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011); rather, a role-playing game may provide the progressive task accomplishment, reward, and feedback that can motivate a player to seek out more accurate understandings that are needed (Watson, 2010).

The development of an understanding of agency is another element served by role-playing games. In the assumption of a role, players do not sit in stasis; they must make choices and act upon and react to the metaphoric representation of the world in the game. Players must use what they know about their assumed identities to reshape the world to their characters' advantages or causes. Rather than passive audience members, players become active participants in such shapings (Atkinson, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007). Therefore, in exercising an assumed identity, a student using a role-playing game may learn that historical agents act in accordance with motivations and interact with the world around them (McCall, 2011).
Such interactions lead to explicit and implicit consequences within the game to which the player's character must further react. In this manner the player develops an understanding that actions and events almost never happen in isolation, but rather that each interplays in a complex web of cause and effect (Atkinson, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011). Because the development of historical empathy requires that a student know how an historical agent shaped and was shaped by the external world, this practice with cause and effect in a role-playing game may contribute to notions that decisions have consequences.

Role-playing games generally feature other player- or non-player-characters in the metaphoric representations of the worlds in which they are set. These characters may align themselves with the player's character, align themselves against the player's character, or exist to enrich the diversity and complexity of the world. They each exhibit a specific set of motivations and actions that can occur in response to or independent of the player's character (Atkinson, 2010; Marsh, 1981). In effect, they offer a variety of perspectives that do not necessarily mirror the player's character's own perspective, and the player must recognize, understand, and appropriately react to these other perspectives in order to be successful in the game (Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011). Such understandings mirror one of the core aspects of historical empathy defined previously—that analyzing the perspectives of historical actors based on their contexts and motivations can lead to a deeper understanding of history.

Because games offer metaphoric representations of the world and have inherent limitations on their interaction methods, rules, actions, and consequences, they are reductionist by nature. It is therefore worth noting that a game, and a role-playing game
in particular, cannot fully represent the rich complexity of our actual world or of its individuals (Atkinson, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Hutchinson, 2007; Marsh, 1981; McCall, 2011). Mastering or completing a role-playing game does not necessarily result in a mastery-level understanding of a real or even fictional individual, and therefore we should not assume that the use of a role-playing game alone in an instructional context will necessarily result in the adequate development of historical empathy in students (Lee & Probert, 2010; McCall, 2011). This is especially true with a “scripted” role-playing game in which the dialogue and interaction that a player’s character has with other characters and the metaphorical representation of the world are created exclusively by the game designers, limiting the player to a finite amount of choices (McCall, 2011).

A role-playing game can increase engagement, inquiry and experimentation with ideas, stimulation for students with diverse learning preferences, and student agency and self-direction—but these occur only under the right circumstances (Atkinson, 2010; Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2010; Lee & Probert, 2010). A scripted game, while limiting student choices, can provide the benefit of exposure to deeper and more accurate content than a more open-ended role-playing game might provide (Atkinson, 2010; McCall, 2011). If the core elements of identity, agency, cause and effect, and perspectives can still be explored, even in a scripted environment, then students may well still improve their ability to engage in historical empathy. Such use may contribute meaningfully to the instructional process when combined with other elements such as primary source analysis, didactic and inquiry-based instruction, cooperative exploration of ideas, construction of products, and writing exercises (Lee & Probert, 2010; Watson, 2010).
Aside from the independent affordances that role-playing games may offer in the development of historical empathy and student learning, we may also see that they can specifically aid some of the major characteristics outlined in Foster’s (2001) theory of historical empathy. Because designers construct them, role-playing games can represent historical events of significance by way of the artistry, inventiveness, and knowledge of their creators. This can help satisfy Foster’s notion of providing a rich contextual background of events in which historical actors played parts, though this presupposes that the designers approach their depiction of the events with an eye towards accuracy.

Additionally, role-playing games may contain presentations of primary and secondary historical sources and may challenge the players to leverage understandings and analysis of that evidence in order to develop the perspectives of their characters (McCall, 2011).

**Digital Games in the Context of Social Studies**

What recommendations concerning digital gaming in the social studies do the leading social studies educational organizations have to offer? Having already been recognized as advocates for rich, complex, and comprehensive social studies teaching and learning strategies, do they advocate for digital gaming as a strategy or even as a resource? Such recommendations do not appear to be voluminous. Although the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) has a Games section in their resource collection, only one game is referenced: *Abraham Lincoln's Crossroads*, a scripted decision-making game based on key elements of Lincoln’s presidency (Abraham Lincoln’s Crossroads, n.d.; U.S. Era 5, n.d.). The National Council for History Education makes no policy, advocacy, curriculum, or professional development reference to gaming in education ([http://www.nche.net/](http://www.nche.net/)). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)
crafted a position statement extolling the use of various technologies in the context of social studies learning as long as it occurs within the context of contributing to effective teaching and learning practices, including the use of computer simulations (Social Studies in the Middle School, 1991; Technology Position Statement and Guidelines, 2006). Amidst all of its policy statements and publically searchable resources, it makes no specific mention of gaming as an instructional tool (Technology Position Statement and Guidelines, 2006). A search of its members-only articles, guides, and conference agendas, however, reveals that, at a minimum, its membership promotes the use of digital gaming in the context of learning social studies. Also of note is that NCSS is listed as a Mission US partner on the Mission US website (Mission US Partners, n.d., para. 1).

While it is clear that these three organizations have not come out explicitly in favor of digital gaming in history or social studies education, it is not necessarily the case that they are explicitly against its use, either. NCHS linked to an online game and NCSS contributed, in some fashion, to the development of another. In terms of explicit endorsement, however, we can examine the resources and publications available through the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) website. ISTE has established a special interest group for gaming and simulations and hosts game-referencing blogs on its social networking website. It features articles on gaming in classrooms in its periodicals for educators and its social network has members that promote books on educational gaming, including one of the first written for use in teacher development programs at the university level. ISTE has hosted webinars from its members and field experts as well. It is clear that as an organization, ISTE endorses the
practice of using digital games to assist the learning of students in various contexts (http://www.iste.org).

Which digital games may then be suitable for integration into a social studies learning environment? Watson (2010) wrote of digital games that “the possibility of transporting students to different environments and situations and allowing them to take on different roles and viewpoints via the games’ simulations” is a key instructional strength (p.177). This notion may well illustrate a connection between what digital games can offer and what effective learning in the field of social studies, and history in particular, may require. If, as noted previously, digital games can contribute positively to student engagement, motivation, transfer of learning, and content knowledge, then a survey of digital games available for social studies learning can be beneficial.

A large variety of commercial games can be adapted to various aspects of social studies instruction and learning (McCall, 2011; Watson, 2010; Lee & Probert, 2010). The Civilization series by Firaxis Games is perhaps the most widely used commercial game in history and social studies classrooms (McCall, 2011; Weir & Baranowski, 2011). In the Civilization games, players control the development of nation-states throughout history by making political, economic, agricultural, cultural, military, and other decisions that then interplay with cooperating and competing nation-states. In doing so, students may come to understand history as the complex interactions of individual, group, and nation actors on a world stage. Given that students are in charge of decision-making, the games do not mimic actual history, though they do offer enormously rich historical resources such as documents, interviews with experts, resource catalogues, and other historically accurate materials that students can consult when making their way through
the game. Squire, DeVane, and Durga (2008) found that players of Civilization III developed an increased interest in history and sought out non-gaming resources to learn more. Other popular series include *Birth of America*, *Total War*, and *Europa Universalis*, each of which puts students into the position of guiding nations through chaotic historical time periods (McCall, 2011). Such games in this genre have been designed with private consumers in mind, rather than specifically for classroom use, so they may require teachers to be intentional about lesson and activity design to ensure that students learn desired content or understandings (Watson, 2010; McCall, 2011; Lee & Probert, 2010, Weir & Baranowski, 2011). Cost and technical requirements are two primary elements that may limit the feasibility of use of commercial games in classrooms, though some such games are available at reduced rates for educators (McCall, 2011).

Choices for social studies teachers are not limited to commercial games, however. A variety of educational and philanthropic foundations, universities, civic groups, and other organizations have created free digital games for learning history and other social studies (McCall, 2011; Watson, 2010). While not enjoying the commercial-game advantages of variety and higher production budgets that often result in more realistic graphics and sound, more advanced means of interactions, greater length, and more nuanced learning experiences, free games can still be valuable because those advantages do not necessarily translate into greater engagement or learning on the player’s part (Watson, 2010). *Discover Babylon*, created by the Federation of American Scientists, helps students play the role of a historian investigating ancient Mesopotamia (Discover Babylon, n.d.; Watson, 2010). *Darfur Is Dying*, developed by the University of Southern California, the International Crisis Group, and others, is a game designed to help players
understand the historical Darfur conflicts and to build ideas for humanitarian and political aid (Darfur is Dying, n.d.; McCall, 2011; Watson, 2010). The Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium’s *The Oregon Trail* game is considered a foundational role-playing game of the genre in which students come to understand the historical context of mid-1800s westward movements (McCall, 2011; The Oregon Trail, n.d.; Watson, 2010). 

*The Jamestown Online Adventure* is a simple web-based game that puts the decision-making power of the early Jamestown settlement in the hands of students, customizing the outcomes based on students’ decisions (McCall, 2011; The Jamestown Online Adventure, n.d.). In contrast, *Salem Witchcraft Hysteria* by National Geographic greatly limits the player’s choices, imitating the helplessness experienced during Salem’s historical witchcraft trials (McCall, 2011; Salem Witchcraft Hysteria, n.d.). *Muck and Brass* as well as *Who Wants to Be a Cotton Millionaire?*, both by the British Broadcasting Corporation, offer decision-making opportunities to students learning about the Industrial Revolution in England (McCall, 2011; Muck and Brass, n.d.; Who Wants to Be a Cotton Millionaire?, n.d.).

**Mission US.** *Mission US*, developed by New York Public Media’s THIRTEEN and co-funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Humanities, features distinct modular learning experiences that can be used in the teaching and learning of U.S. History. One module, Mission 1, allows students to experience the perspectives of different factions in Boston leading up to the Revolutionary War. *Mission US* was developed in a non-profit effort “designed to improve the understanding of American history by students in grades 5 through 8” (Mission US Mission 1 Educator Guide Overview, n.d., para. 1). The team of game
designers, in consultation with various historians, archivists, and history educators, has created not only the game itself but a multitude of instructional approaches, tools, and resources meant to accompany the use of the game in classrooms. Primary historical documents, writing prompts, standards correlation indexes, teacher planning guides, and other resources are provided so that the actual use of the game in the classroom takes place within a larger detailed, focused, and intentional teaching effort (Mission US Mission 1 Educator Guide Overview, n.d., para. 2). Moreover, the modules of Mission US allow the student to take on the identity of a youthful character embroiled in a chaotic, dramatic historical backdrop wherein they student must make sense of the nuanced motivations of numerous non-player characters in order to both survive and thrive in the metaphorical world (Mission US For Crown or Colony?, n.d.; Mission US Flight to Freedom, n.d.).

Mission 1 of Mission US, the module used in this study, tasks the player with assuming the role of Nat Wheeler, a young printer’s apprentice in Boston during the time period leading up to the Revolutionary War. Assuming this identity, the player interacts with Patriots, Loyalists, merchants, soldiers, and bystanders, learning about each perspective. The player is presented with numerous choices regarding which causes to aid, characters to side with, and actions to take. The events of the game unfold based on these choices (Mission US For Crown or Colony?, n.d.). In that manner, it may be that the player can develop an understanding of how personal perspectives and contexts play a part in decision-making against historical backdrops; in other words, it may be that Mission US can help in the development of historical empathy within players. By leveraging the supposed benefits of digital gaming—engagement, motivation, and
differentiation, among others—with the supposed benefits of role-playing games in particular—agency, notions of cause and effect, and complex perspective-based understandings, among others—and the strategic practice of the development of historical empathy, then perhaps playing the game can help improve a student’s learning of U.S. History when combined with a strategic teaching and learning plan.

Mission US and Foster’s theory of historical empathy. The Mission US gameplay mechanics, artistry, presentation of history, and associated non-game learning activities align well to the components of Foster’s (2001) theory of historical empathy. The first-person nature of the game explores the various factors that affect the decisions of both fictional and real historical actors (Mission US For Crown or Colony?, n.d.). The game’s attention to historical detail, with rich character narration and representation of factual historical events, helps build the context for students to examine. Numerous genuine primary sources are embedded in the gameplay, and a diverse collection of characters present multiple conflicting and complementary points of view. In having the power to make decisions throughout the game, students have an opportunity to question how their own perspective shifts them towards one path or another.

In addition to all these in-gameplay facets, the corresponding student learning activities feature opportunities to examine and evaluate sources, to state and explain opinions, and to reach defensible conclusions based on source evidence (Mission US Mission 1 Educator Guide Overview, n.d.). Discussion, writing, and presentation options are all present and can be modified for the appropriate developmental levels of students. Ultimately, the overall student learning goal of Mission US neatly mirrors the rationale
behind the use of historical empathy: "[to] develop historical thinking skills that increase historical understanding and critical perception" (Mission US Learning Goals, n.d., p. 1).

Empirical Evidence and Digital Gaming in Social Studies Teaching and Learning

Given the relative multitude of both free and commercial digital games that could be adapted for social studies classroom use, the question naturally arises: What impact, if any, can they be shown to have on student learning? While numerous studies appear to pursue similar questions in the fields of mathematics and science, social studies lags behind. Despite this dearth, some such studies do exist.

Foster's (2011) study of knowledge and skill acquisition and transfer among 26 4th- through 6th-grade students that used the game *Rollercoaster Tycoon 3* showed impressive results. Knowledge and skills related to economics in the social studies improved at significant levels between pre- and post-tests; moreover, students were able to transfer the knowledge and skills to assessment items outside of the context of the game experience. This transfer helped bridge the gap between game-specific learning and greater conceptual learning. Of note is that the use of the game in the study was the first exposure to the economics in the social studies concepts for the students. In contrast, Keeble (2008) studied 57 4th- and 5th-grade students that also used *Rollercoaster Tycoon 3* to learn economics concepts and found no significant learning gains as evidenced by pre- and post-assessments. Notably, however, no debriefing or follow-up discussion was used in the classroom context, possibly contributing to the lack of knowledge gains.

In another mixed-methods study with nearly 500 participants, Wang (2010) found that knowledge acquisition of the 2nd and 3rd centuries in Chinese culture and politics was
significantly higher for Taiwanese players of the game *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* compared to non-game players. Wang also found that such players indicated a higher motivation to learn history than the non-game players. Also finding higher levels of student interest in history, Smitherman, Ring, Jones, and Nasseh (2007) examined use of the game *Revolution*, a role-playing game set in Colonial Williamsburg, with 47 middle and high school students. The researchers found increased levels of engagement among participants, though no significant learning gains were observed, potentially due to the very short exposure the students had to the game.

Wood (2011) studied the effects of teacher-led reflections and multi-player experiences on 128 high school students using the game *Making History 2.0* in World History classes. *Making History 2.0* allows players to control various nations leading up to and including the time period of World War II; players must make choices in politics, economics, military actions, and diplomacy and watch the results unfold. Wood determined that students that played in teams, rather than alone, and that engaged with the teachers in reflective feedback sessions score significantly higher on historical reasoning ability post-tests than their classmates that did not. Lee and Probert (2010) used the game *Civilization III* with a class of 12 11th-grade students in a U.S. History class. They found that students engaged in multiple approaches while playing, changing their overall tactics each time they wanted to pursue a different set of outcomes. Through collaborative discussion, the class as a whole determined the approaches and made the major decisions. Activities and outcomes in the game were designed by the teacher to meet specific U.S. History standards, and students expressed favorable comments on this
method of learning history. Further, the game provided rich discussion starters among students for tangentially related fields such as economics, diplomacy, and geography.

In relation to student-to-student interactions, Ludgate (2008) studied 10 students from around the world that used the online virtual environment game *Quest Atlantis*. Ludgate found high levels of interaction between students, and more specifically collaboration for common tasks, by analyzing the chat logs between students. These students interacted both socially and within the context of accomplishing missions within the game, all without specific prompting from outside educators.

The game *Mission US* itself has been studied quantitatively in middle school classrooms. More than 1,100 7th- and 8th-grade students were involved in a study to gauge the impact on student performance of the use of *Mission US* Mission 1 by teachers compared to traditionally-taught classrooms (Center for Children and Technology, 2011). Examined areas of student performance included (a) knowledge of Colonial America, (b) knowledge of multiple perspectives in the Revolutionary War period, and (c) understandings of underlying causes of the Revolutionary War. As measured by pre- and post-assessments, students in the classrooms that used *Mission US* as one of their learning activities over a two- to five-day period demonstrated significantly higher achievement in all three areas compared to their traditional-classroom counterparts. Those assessments consisted 20 items "derived from the U.S. History National Assessment of Educational Progress" (p. 1). Fifteen questions centered on historical knowledge of the time period and five centered around document analysis and the perspectives therein. Additionally, a large majority of teachers indicated they were likely to use *Mission US* when teaching other groups of students in the future.
As this brief summary of empirical literature covering digital gaming in social studies contexts shows, there are no uniform conclusions yet to be drawn. Some studies show that digital gaming can contribute to improved student knowledge; some show that digital gaming can foster increased collaboration levels among students, or improved engagement and motivation. Some can substantiate no such conclusions. Other studies conclude that teachers play a vital role in determining the efficacy of digital gaming. No definitive recommendations for the field as a whole can yet be made, however, given the paucity of evidence.

**Where We Can Go From Here**

The development of historical thinking processes in students that involve the exploration of multiple perspectives of people of the past stands as an approach recommended by history education advocates for improving historical learning. The development of historical empathy, itself a manifestation of the understandings of such perspectives, may well be one critical approach needed that can result in enhanced historical learning. But how can teachers help students develop historical empathy?

Digital gaming is touted as a means to improve learning through higher motivation and structured progression through increasingly complex problems, all in a fun and engaging manner. Even more, role-playing games are naturally suited to the assumption and exploration of identity that is essential to understanding perspectives. There are all manners of digital role-playing games specifically designed for use in social studies broadly and in history in particular.

What remains is to bring everything together—to use digital role-playing games in history classes while attempting to develop historical empathy in students as a means to
improve historical learning. This study explored students’ experiences in potentially
developing historical empathy during the use of the Mission US online role-playing game
and its associated learning activities.
Chapter Three: Research Design and Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential development of historical empathy in middle school students during the use of the game *Mission US*. While participating in the *Mission US* learning activities, in what ways, if any, did middle school students develop historical empathy?

**Research Question**

A qualitative inquiry’s question(s) should act to establish the general boundaries of the inquiry’s focus, data generation, and data analysis (Glesne, 2006). This study sought to explore the following specific question: To what extent does a classroom experience with *Mission US* reveal evidence of students’ potential development and use of historical empathy? With a question to be explored established, a researcher should then specify the overall research design and its primary characteristics, backed by the reasoning behind each of the choices involved in the design (Glesne, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

**Research Design**

In preparing for a rigorous inquiry, a researcher should consider fundamental understandings of reality, focus, and methods. He or she should create reasoned explications of those understandings in order to subsequently develop a coherent and practical plan for data generation and analysis. One such fundamental understanding to consider is the nature of the intended inquiry itself (Glesne, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).
Qualitative inquiry is a way of looking at the world for the purposes of understanding and interpreting, rather than explaining or predicting (Glesne, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Stake, 1995). Concisely stated, a qualitative researcher seeks to learn. But going further, a qualitative researcher engages in inquiry not to firmly establish scientific laws, theories, or generalizations, but instead to illuminate the lived experiences of participants so that the people of the world may reach a deeper and more contextualized understanding of what is happening around them. Reaching those understandings is the end goal in some instances. In others, using those understandings as a motivation and means to redress societal inequities is the end goal. In either case, qualitative research has certain characteristics. Qualitative research is more naturally than artificially constructed in its investigations and its conclusions are more likely to emerge and be interpreted than to be deduced and revealed. It embraces the contexts and perceptions of both participants and researchers. It leverages multiple ways of generating data and analyzes those data through interpretation rather than deduction or calculation. All of this contrasts with quantitative inquiry, which seeks to explain, categorize, and deduce objective truths by way of examination and experimentation with processes that result in data that can be analyzed numerically. (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

This study was qualitative in nature. I sought to understand students’ experiences in a learning environment as they relate to the use of Mission US. I wanted to learn if and how particular students make use of historical empathy to learn about history and what they themselves think about that. In order to investigate those areas, I used multiple ways of generating data—from gathering student work, to recording student reflections, to interviewing students and a teacher, and to observing classroom activity directly. Data of
each type were particular to individual students and fully open to interpretation—and
interpretation is exactly what I used to make sense of the generated data. Interpretation is
the key to bringing to light what the students and teacher have experienced over the
course of my inquiry. I did not seek to generalize what I learned to all classrooms around
the world. Instead, I wanted to add the interpreted experiences of this class to the larger
body of knowledge of historical empathy to better inform future inquiry. In sum,
qualitative inquiry is the type of inquiry that was most closely aligned with my goals.

Inquiry carries with it certain assumptions about the nature of reality, humans' interactions with the world around them, and the nature of truth and understanding. A paradigm can be defined as the totality of those assumptions (Glesne, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Answering the following questions helps the researcher determine his or her paradigm. How do I know something to be true and what does truth mean? What is reality and how do we come to understand it? What role, if any, do human perceptions play in building understandings? Rossman and Rallis (2003) presented four primary paradigms to categorize answers to those questions: positivism, critical realism, critical humanism, and interpretivism. Shorthand characterizations of these four paradigms follow. Adherents of positivism seek to explain the world in objective terms for the purposes of generalization and prediction in a relatively stable society. Followers of critical realism seek to explain the world in objective terms in order to change an oppressive society for the better. Devotees of critical humanism seek to describe individuals and their experiences subjectively in order to change an oppressive society for the better by facilitating the development of their own understandings of their conditions and the subsequent actions needed to overcome the oppression. Adherents to
interpretivism seek to describe individuals and their experiences subjectively in order to provide richer and more nuanced understandings of the world. Generally speaking, Rossman and Rallis associated positivism with quantitative inquiry, and interpretivism, critical humanism, and critical realism with qualitative inquiry, though not exclusively so, given that there are spectra of beliefs surrounding the underlying assumptions for each and all of the paradigms, rather than clear and finite delineations among them. A researcher may combine qualitative and quantitative data generation and analysis methods in any of the four paradigmatic approaches.

Interpretivism, as presented by Rossman and Rallis (2003), combines the beliefs that (a) reality is socially constructed between and among people and nature, (b) truth is plural, subjective, and based on perceptions, and (3) human belief and action can be understood but not predicted or generalized outside of very specific contexts. Interpretivist researchers seek not to change participants and the social structures they inhabit, but rather to bring an interpretation of their experiences to the wider world—hence the term interpretivism. Participants will likely be changed in some ways by the inquiry process, given the interactions between themselves and the researcher, but change is not the goal—at least insofar as change for the purpose of societal improvement. Changes are implicit, however, because to interpret is to change and refine perception, and within an interpretivist paradigm, perception is reality. Furthermore, the end result of an interpretivist approach is not an objective description of participants’ perceptions and contexts, but instead is a subjective interpretation by the researcher of those perceptions and contexts—because an interpretivist believes there cannot be objective descriptions of what humans believe about the world and their place in it.
Interpretivism is the paradigm within which I approached this inquiry. I was interested in interpreting students' perceptions about their experiences with Mission US and historical empathy. Ultimately, those perceptions are the reality for the students. I sought to share those interpretations with the world so that my take on the experiences of these particular individuals could become known and relevant to a larger audience that may care about historical learning. I did not expect that the participants would necessarily improve their social condition as a result of this inquiry, though I did hope their reflections would play a meaningful part in their future development.

Researchers must also decide how they will narrow their investigation of their study’s questions with respect to particular participants and/or contexts. Inquiry can be performed with an individual, with groups, with organizations, with processes, or with any combination of the preceding. One way to focus an inquiry is to perform a case study. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), case studies provide rich, in-depth explorations of a particular individual, group, event, or process. By studying the detailed experiences of the case participant(s) intensely, a greater understanding of a larger phenomenon becomes possible. Another defining characteristic of case studies is that they are constrained by or bounded to specific contexts (Stake, 1995). Yin (2003) noted that they explore the interplay between a phenomenon and its context—an interplay that is not always clear and distinctive. In some case studies, Yin claimed, the aim is to generate understandings for specific contexts that the reader might be able to use to help understand other cases that share similar contexts. Case studies do not attempt to generalize results from one or more individuals to a larger population, however. Instead, they examine a detailed and contextually bounded manifestation of a phenomenon being
studied. Using a variety of data sources, case studies seek to describe, while offering contextual perspective for the reader (Glesne, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Stake, 1995).

This study utilized a case-study design. The particular case, identified as the class itself, was composed of multiple 6th-grade students and a teacher. I referred to this in terms of a collective case study as named by Stake (2000) because there were multiple individuals of interest, each of which had his or her own perceptions to add to the greater whole. A case study was appropriate to this research design because I aimed to explore the experiences of a specific 6th-grade class engaged in Mission US use without attempting to generalize the results to similar 6th-grade classes in other contexts. I sought to illuminate how students were engaged by curriculum, setting, content, and learning activities, and how the development of historical empathy would or would not follow.

Glesne (2006) and Rossman and Rallis (2003) offered the notion that a case study involving multiple individuals, as this study did, can provide an opportunity to look for patterns related to the phenomenon being studied across specific personal contexts. This study looked for such patterns among the various students' experiences while they were potentially developing historical empathy.

Within an interpretivist paradigm, we can be even more specific about whom we study and what about their lives forms the target of our inquiry. One may classify the target into one of three categories: ethnographies, socio-communication studies, and phenomenologies (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Ethnographies are concerned with the culture of a group of people. They examine the interactions between people as they are influenced by shared and disparate beliefs, values, and traditions. By examining those
interactions, a researcher engaged in ethnography seeks to bring forth how perceptions are influenced by culture and expressed through culture (Glesne, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

A second category is the socio-communication study. Such studies seek to describe how people communicate with each other and what parts that communication plays in their perceptions of the world. To attempt a socio-communication study is to attempt to describe and interpret the explicit and implicit meanings carried by communication. Spoken and written data form the backbone of socio-communication studies, but other forms of non-linguistic communication data can also be relevant (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

A phenomenological study is used to identify and illuminate the meanings of participants' experiences with a phenomenon. Phenomenological researchers seek to describe and interpret the lived experiences of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Interviews and written or spoken reflections are common types of data that can help express the meanings of those lived experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Phenomenological data can be presented categorically, in which potential meaning is dissected, classified, and interpreted through a set of themes that are often related to a preselected theoretical framework, or data can be analyzed in a more open-ended way, resulting in the telling of the participants’ stories in narrative forms (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

A phenomenological approach was well suited to the aims of this study. I sought to explore, describe, and analyze the interaction between particular students and a teacher with Mission US resources through the lens of the potential development of historical
empathy. The phenomenon was the *Mission US*-derived historical empathy process as a means to learn about colonial-era tensions in Boston. Foster’s (2001) theory of historical empathy, described in Chapter Two, guided my understanding and interpretations of the generated data in the sense that it framed the data-coding process of the interviews, students’ work, and students’ audio reflections. Not all generated data fit neatly within the confines of Foster’s theory, however, and therefore additional categories outside of the boundaries of Foster’s historical empathy characteristics were also used in the coding process. By combining the data analysis based on coding with Foster’s theory and coding based on emergent themes, a rich, thick description of the participants’ experiences was brought to light.

In summary, the design of this study was a qualitative inquiry based in the interpretivist paradigm. The students and teacher were the participants in a collective case study that explored patterns of meaning across individual perceptions of experiences with *Mission US* and historical empathy. The lived experiences of the students were analyzed both within the confines of a theoretical framework as well as through emergent themes.

**Research Context**

This study took place in Apple Public Schools (a pseudonym) in Virginia. At the time of this study, this urban school division served between 20,000 and 50,000 preschool through 12th-grade students of diverse ethnic categories and family-income levels. The largest racial and/or ethnic subgroups of students was 55% Black, 29% White, and 10% Hispanic. The division served 12.5% of its students through its Special
Education programs and 8.2% through its Talented and Gifted programs. Nearly 47% of its students were identified as Economically Disadvantaged.

**Research site.** Orange Middle School (a pseudonym) was chosen for this study of 6th-grade students. In Apple Public Schools, 6th- through 8th-grade students transition from the single-teacher model of elementary school to the teacher-per-course model of high school by way of middle schools. The fewer-than-1000 students at Orange Middle School were served by small teams of teachers of the core subjects that collaborate on instruction for their shared students. Orange Middle School had numerous exclusive mathematics, science, and technology elective courses compared to other middle schools in the division. Such courses include Forensics, Digital Imaging, and eGaming with *Scratch* and *Alice*. The school’s focus on the integration of technology throughout its courses and its need to improve the history learning and achievement of its students contributed to its selection as the school in which this study took place.

In Virginia, knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire at each grade level and/or course are established in the Virginia Standards of Learning (Standards of Learning (SOL) & Testing, n.d.). Students’ learning is assessed using these standards through a variety of state-created tests. Orange Middle School’s students’ pass rates on the 2011-2012 U.S. History to 1865 assessments – the most recent state assessment available prior to the study – fell below the division and state results overall and in all but two subgroups, as shown in Table 1 (School, School Division, and State Report Cards, 2013). While improvements in mathematics and English achievement have become the primary foci of the division and the school, social studies achievement was also targeted. One manner in which this is manifested at Orange Middle was in its extended-day
learning program, referred to here as the Orange After Day (AAD) program for confidentiality purposes. The AAD program was an after-school intervention for students who earn scores on state assessments that are near but not above the proficiency level in any of the four core areas: mathematics, science, social studies, and English. The implementation of innovative teaching and learning methods in the area of the social studies was one key facet of the program.

Table 1
2011-2012 Middle School U.S. History to 1865 Assessment Pass Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Orange Middle</th>
<th>Apple Public Schools</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified Disabilities</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The U.S. History to 1865 state assessment of 6th-grade students encompasses a broad swatch of historical events, people, and contexts. On what topical window does Mission US focus amidst this larger curricular area?

Curricular context and the Orange After Day program. One of the curricular areas in which the school division aimed to improve student achievement was U.S. History. At the 6th-grade level for U.S. History, students are expected in particular to come to understand the perspectives of life in colonial America and the issues and motivations that led to the American Revolution, among other topics. These expectations match well with the curricular objectives established in Mission US and therefore 6th-grade students were selected to participate in this study. The Apple Public Schools' curriculum, however, allotted only 3-4 class periods to cover the topical material to
which *Mission US* corresponds. In accordance with informal policy in the school division, teachers had little-to-no leeway to extend topical coverage beyond the amount of time specified in the division-issued curriculum pacing guides. Culling gameplay, activities, and resources from the *Mission US* experience to make it fit within a narrow 3-4 period window would have significantly reduced the fidelity of its approach to building historical empathy; therefore, studying the game’s use in a standard 6th-grade history course in Apple Public Schools was not a suitable approach.

Instead, the AAD program was chosen as the context in which to perform the study. In AAD, students were identified for inclusion in the program based on particular achievement weaknesses in various core subjects. Such weaknesses were identified through a combination of standardized assessments and teachers’ recommendations. The AAD program ran approximately two hours per day after normal school hours, three days per week, from October through May. Teachers at Orange Middle School applied to teach in the program. Those teachers, in consultation with an Instructional Technology Coach, a program coordinator, and other faculty created the curriculum used in the AAD program. Any given AAD student could have been involved in mathematics, science, English, or social studies instruction while in the program; each student’s subject-based experience was determined by his or her primary learning need. In developing the curriculum, AAD teachers were required to avoid merely repeating the instructional techniques and content from the Apple Public Schools’ curriculum and instead were challenged to develop alternative and innovative experiences for the students while also ensuring that the relevant Standards of Learning were addressed adequately. It is in that teaching and learning environment that this study took place. *Mission US*’s curricular
content was designed with tight alignment to the National Standards for History Basic Education (Mission US National Standards Alignment, n.d.). Additionally, this topical content aligned well with Virginia’s own U.S. History standards (Standards of Learning Documents for History & Social Science—Adopted 2008, 2008; United States History Content Standards for Grades 5-12, n.d.). Furthermore, because the AAD teachers were encouraged to use innovative, engaging, and fun activities in the AAD program, the usage of a digital game provided an attractive option for teachers seeking to improve their students’ historical learning. Gee (n.d. a), Prensky (2010), and McCall (2011) agreed that key affordances of using games to improve learning include their “fun factor” for students and their relative novelty as teaching tools.

**Research Participants**

Having established the design and context of the inquiry, a qualitative researcher should then explicate details concerning a study’s participants. I selected a class of 6th-grade students and their teacher from a public school and school division to participate in the study. For confidentiality purposes, the school was referred to as Orange Middle School and the division was referred to as Apple Public Schools. The class contained one teacher and 16 students. I informed parents of the students of their option to have their children participate or not participate in the study by way of an Informed Consent Form. I likewise informed students of their option to participate or not participate by way of an Informed Assent Form. For any given potential student participant, both the parent and the child must have agreed or the student was not included for participation in the study. I also informed the teacher of his or her option to participate by way of an Informed Consent Form. Sample versions of the forms can be found in Appendix C, Appendix D,
and Appendix E. All 16 students and the teacher agreed to participate. However, students who would have chosen not to participate in the study would not have faced any penalty nor would they have received an inequitable educational experience.

During the study, I observed the students multiple times, collected work samples and audio-recorded reflections, and interviewed the students. Every effort was made, however, to keep all student names and identifying details known only to me and to the classroom teacher as the data were generated, stored, and analyzed. I promised confidentiality to the participants and to the students’ parents and guardians, and maintained it in the published documents. Upon the successful publication of the study, I destroyed all records that matched student- and teacher-identifying details to quotes, descriptions, and analysis.

Having identified the participants in the study, the next consideration was the role that I played as the researcher. Planning a clearly defined researcher role is important, as the researcher faces the uncertainty of how a study will actually unfold once it begins (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

**Role of the Researcher**

In a qualitative inquiry, it is impossible for a researcher to maintain an objective distance from participants in a way that avoids influence—every researcher has a presence, and that presence affects the study and its participants in multiple unpredictable ways (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Stake, 1995). Instead of attempting to divorce oneself completely from participants, the qualitative researcher instead acknowledges and embraces the opportunities for learning that interactions with
participants and their contexts can provide. That opportunity is one that leads to richer understandings of participants’ perceptions, and is therefore one to be valued.

In this study, my role as a researcher was expressed in several stages. I co-designed specific student learning experiences with the teacher based on Mission US resources. That task meant that I helped to set up opportunities for development of the historical empathy that I sought to explore. I also maintained a presence in the classroom on each of the six days that were used for the teaching and learning. While I did not participate in the teaching itself nor interact with students in individualized ways while they were engaged in the Mission US curriculum, I nonetheless observed their speech and actions, recording data that I considered it to be relevant. My on-the-fly judgment of relevance was informed by my own background, knowledge, and biases. Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) noted that striking the right balance between generating all possible data versus exercising personal judgment to selectively generate only data that appear to be relevant at the time is a dilemma that all qualitative researchers must face. One assumption that lies behind that dilemma is that a researcher can sometimes only know in hindsight whether certain data were relevant after the chance has passed to collect them. Immersing oneself in the world of the participants, however, can help inform decisions about relevance (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003), and therefore my six-day observation period was an important way in which I refined my ability to recognize the relevance of data in the moment. Information about the nature and methods of the data generation can be found later in this chapter.

After the conclusion of the six-day experience, I switched roles from an observer to an interviewer. The nature of interviewing meant that I was highly engaged with
students and the teacher verbally. I encouraged them to speak, rephrased their answers, and sought clarification and elaboration. This required a rapport with students and the teacher that cannot in any way be described as impersonal or disassociated (Glesne, 2006; Stake, 1995). Further explanation of the interview process is addressed later in this chapter.

In summary, I maintained a high degree of involvement with the participants in this study. My own beliefs, knowledge, rapport-building skills, and professional execution of the research plan influenced the data generated and my subsequent analysis. Such is the nature of qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1995).

Data Generation

Rossman and Rallis (2003), Stake (1995), and Yin (2003) stated that case studies, which inherently seek to explore and describe the complexities of life, feature multiple data types, sources, and methods. Data types are the forms that data can take. Examples in qualitative inquiry can include interviews, researcher observations, and surveys. Data sources are the specific participants, processes, artifacts, or environments from which the data types originate. Examples in qualitative inquiry can include classroom students, legal codes, and hospital rooms. Data types and sources, taken together, provide for detailed insights to be made regarding nuance, context, perspective, and circumstance. Methods to generate data specify the ways in which the researcher, participants, processes, artifacts, and environments interplay specifically for the purpose of generating data to be analyzed and interpreted. There are no generalized limitations on the types and sources of data, nor the methods used to generate them, in a case study approach. The data and the methods may be qualitative, quantitative, or both. Stake (2000) noted that a
case study is more about what will be studied than data types, data sources, and methods used to generate them because the types, sources, and methods are not necessarily constrained *a priori* when designing such a study.

In this study, I combined student and teacher interviews, students' audio-recorded reflections, and students' work to construct a rich description that represented my data-based interpretations of participants' experiences with *Mission US*. The diversity of data types contributed to the expressions of those experiences through multiple perspectives. Glesne (2006) and Rossman and Rallis (2003) considered these types of data to be common in qualitative case studies. The sources themselves were the students, the teacher, the classroom, and the curricular activities associated with *Mission US*. The types and sources, along with the data generation methods, are described more fully later in this chapter.

**Implementation timeline.** Shortly after the acquisition of the teacher's consent form (as seen in Appendix E) in mid-fall, curricular planning sessions among the teacher, AAD coordinator, and me were held, during which we collaboratively developed the instructional plan for the use of *Mission US* and its associated learning activities. This plan included learning objectives sequencing, activities, and assessments, the latter two of which are available in appendices G through L. I finalized parental consent and student assent forms (as seen in Appendix B and Appendix C) and sent them to parents, explaining the study and their option to have their children participate.

Students began their participation in the overall AAD program in early-to-mid-October. I collected signed consent and assent forms prior to the starting date of the *Mission US* experience, which the school division determined. The *Mission US*
experience ran for six consecutive program days, scheduled on Tuesday through Thursday of two consecutive weeks. I was not directly involved in the teaching and learning that occurred during the six days, though I acted in the role as specified earlier in this chapter. The teacher handled all post-planning instructional matters, including facilitation, scaffolding, monitoring, and assessment, over the course of the Mission US classroom experience.

Day One of the use of Mission US in the classroom began with the teacher explaining how and why the students would be using the game and its activities over the course of two weeks. Additionally, the teacher introduced me to the students and briefly explained the purpose for my presence and what I would be doing—reaffirming what was already declared by way of the assent forms previously seen by the students. The teacher then provided a brief demonstration of how to play the game and student gameplay began. During the gameplay, the teacher monitored students' progress and responded to students' questions. Outside of gameplay, students completed non-gaming assignments from within the Mission US curriculum under the teacher's direction. During the full six-day Mission US classroom experience, I conducted daily classroom observations. Following those, I interviewed several students, interviewed the teacher, and collected students' work samples from the teacher.

Classroom observations. During each of the six days, I observed and recorded notes in the classroom. These observations noted specific student actions and verbalizations while engaged in Mission US activities as well as student-teacher interactions. In particular, I looked for evidence of Foster's (2001) characteristics of historical empathy as described in Chapter Two. The generation of these data were not
limited by Foster's theory, however. Instead, my own perceptions of learning, engagement, and activity by the students and what my own personal perspective on relevance revealed also drove the data generation. This subjective nature of observation on the part of a researcher is an unavoidable, and in fact desired, facet of qualitative case-study inquiry (Stake, 1995). I withheld my own direct interaction with students until the interview process began, though they were continuously aware of my presence in the classroom and the purpose behind it.

**Student audio reflections.** At the end of each of the two weeks of the *Mission US* gameplay, students used audio-recording software on classroom computers to respond to one of two prompts. The first week’s prompt was:

This week, you have learned about many characters in the game, each with different views on the happenings in Boston. Choose TWO characters and try your best to summarize the characters’ views on each of the three topics listed next to the character. Use the note-taking area to help organize your thoughts before you record. What does [X] think about the British? What does [X] think about buying and selling various goods in Boston? What does [X] think about protests and violence when people have different opinions?

The second week’s prompt was:

This week, you have learned about many characters in the game, each with different views on the happenings in Boston. Choose TWO characters and try your best to summarize the characters’ views on each of the three topics listed next to the character. What does [X] think about conflict between Patriots, Loyalists, and the British? What does [X] think about who is responsible for
violence in confrontations? What does [X] think about the best way to live for the future?

I collected these recordings and transcribed them to be used in my reconstructions of the students’ experiences.

**Student work samples.** Throughout the six days of gameplay, various writing and other document-based assignments engaged the students. The teacher chose these assignments with me collaboratively during the curricular planning phase of the study. For example, we chose to assign to students the writing prompt concerning whether colonists’ attitudes towards British taxes were reasonable or unreasonable. A few days after the student interviews, I met again with the teacher so that I could gather all student work. The nature of these assignments, selected from the *Mission US* Educator Guide, were that of “hard scaffolding” as understood by Saye and Brush (2002; 2004). Hard scaffolding refers to the use of prompts to intentionally elevate students to higher levels of thinking by causing them to question their previous assumptions and knowledge bases over time. In particular, the *Mission US* activities leveraged the multiple and often conflicting perspectives that students explored via in-game characters, creating the scaffolds students needed to navigate the complex and nuanced nature of historical inquiry. Without that kind of scaffolding, Saye and Brush (2002) argued, students are not well prepared to deal with the ill-structured nature of social problems and investigation.

**Student interviews.** Shortly after the *Mission US* classroom experience, I interviewed six students individually. Not all students were interviewed due to practical concerns of time and access within the boundaries established by the school division—six interview opportunities represented the compromise between the desire of the school
division to aid the research and the need for the instructional program to move forward in the Orange After Day program. The length of the six student interviews ranged from five minutes to eight minutes. Students were queried on their engagement and their overall sense of historical empathy with respect to the characters and topics covered by Mission US. The goal of the interviews was to establish more data points, with respect to the potential development of historical empathy, for interpretation. The engagement portion of the interview prompts aided in establishing how well the students embraced the game as a learning experience and therefore helped to establish the value of the observational data generated. I audio-recorded these interviews and then transcribed them verbatim to prepare for data analysis. The teacher and I together selected the students to be interviewed based on their observed engagement levels with the Mission US activities; selection for varied levels of observed student engagement was a paramount consideration.

The interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format in which I posed a pre-defined question to the student and encouraged a rich response. After each question, I verbally rephrased students' responses to ensure a clear understanding of their perspectives as a member-checking strategy, offering the students chances to correct any misrepresentations of their responses that I gave—though no student offered to change their responses or add to them. Once the member checking of a particular question subsided, I moved on to the next pre-defined question. This type of interview, in which questions are pre-defined and pre-ordered and in which the interview asks follow-up questions as needed for clarification or elaboration, is referred to as a standardized open-ended interview (Patton, 2002). Patton noted that this type of interview helps the
researcher remain focused on a particular topic of interest rather than leading to much more wide-spread narratives of participants' lives. Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated such a technique can be useful when multiple participants are being interviewed. I audio-recorded all student interviews for later verbatim transcription and analysis. Practical limitations with respect to further access to students, however, prevented me from later providing each student a written summary of the interview for review as a final member-check. The interview questions are found in Appendix A and the full interview transcriptions can be found in Appendix M.

**Teacher interview.** Shortly after the conclusion of the Mission US classroom experience, I interviewed the teacher. The interview provided insight into the teacher's reflections about her students' experiences with Mission US for the purposes of triangulating the data generated from the students and lasted approximately eight minutes. The questions mirrored the questions that I asked the students and focused on perceptions of student engagement and their potential development of historical empathy. As with the student interviews, during the conversation I rephrased the teacher's response to each question as a member-checking strategy, allowing the teacher to elaborate or correct my phrasing as desired. This interview again followed Patton's (2002) standardized open-ended approach. I audio-recorded this interview and later transcribed it verbatim to prepare for data analysis. After the transcription, I provided the transcription to the teacher to give her a chance to restate or change her responses as an additional means of member checking. She did not request any changes. The interview questions are found in Appendix B and the full interview transcription can be found in Appendix N.
Table 2 summarizes the implementation timeline and data generation in particular.

Table 2
Implementation Timeline and Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-fall</td>
<td>Consent form collected from teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curricular planning with teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent and assent forms finalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent and Assent forms delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start of AAD for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent and Assent forms collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid- to late-fall</td>
<td><em>Mission US</em> experience runs for six consecutive AAD days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students record audio reflections at the end of each three-day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>engagement with <em>Mission US</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher observes each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-fall</td>
<td>Individual interviews with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student work collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview with teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-interview member-checking with teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generation is only a piece of the puzzle of understanding participants’ experiences. What methods might a qualitative researcher use to analyze and interpret the generated data?

Data Analysis

Yin (2003) noted that case study data analysis can be particularly problematic in that there is no consensus of the most effective methods to use. The analytic approaches of each particular case should be rooted in a meaningful decision about how the techniques will help the researcher explore the inquiry questions, as well as having applicability to the nature of data the researcher will generate and collect. One approach recommended by Yin is relying on theoretical propositions. This means that the researcher that begins with a framing theory as a means to understand and guide the
inquiry should likewise use that framing theory to analyze the data. Rossman and Rallis (2003) also put forth this recommendation, though they were more explicit about allowing the data analysis to transcend any boundaries that may have been established by the framing theory.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) further recommended that data analysis in a case study should ultimately result in a thick description of the case—a description that includes details of place, time, events, people, and communication. To accomplish that, a researcher may combine categorical data analysis with details of the interactions. Categorical analysis involves breaking the data down into components that can be identified with themes or ideas—such themes and ideas may well originate with the framing theory, though they need not. By performing such categorization, or coding, connections between and among participants’ perceptions and contexts can emerge for further interpretation.

In order to reach an understanding of the meanings of the participants’ experiences during the Mission US classroom experience, I used a phenomenological approach, as described earlier in this chapter, which permitted me to combine the coding of data sources by way of an existing theoretical framework as well as through emergent themes. Both combined to form of a thick description of the case—the interplay among the participants, the learning context, and the Mission US experience.

Data coding. Glesne (2006) used the term thematic analysis to describe the approach of coding data based on either a priori or emergent themes and categories—while emphasizing the notion that coding should be both a progressive and recursive process. Rossman and Rallis (2003) called this procedure categorical analysis, whereas
Stake (1995) simply referred to it as the search for patterns. All four researchers noted, however, that a one-pass coding will not necessarily result in a rich understanding of what is revealed by the data. Instead, multiple passes that may involve combining, adding, and removing codes may be beneficial in reaching deeper understandings. Yin (2003) noted that all generated data should factor into analysis when possible so as not to ignore evidence that might indicate rival interpretations to the framing theory, and therefore I coded all individual pieces of all five generated data types in this study categorically in the manner described next.

The students' work, students' audio recordings, the student interviews, and the teacher interview were coded first using the five categories of Foster's (2001) theory of historical empathy as a means of historical learning. The five codes represented (a) the interpreted nature of the students' understandings of historical actors' decisions, (b) historical contexts, (c) critical exploration of sources, (d) exploration of personal perspectives, and (e) acknowledgment of the fluid and tentative nature of history. Such coding suggested if and how students used historical empathy as a means to learn history, and the types of evidence that tended to support such a suggestion.

The five characteristics inherent in Foster's (2001) theory did not suffice as the sole set of categories with which to unitize and identify themes in the data generated, however. Segments of the data could not be neatly categorized under that theoretical understanding, and so the addition of new codes while the data were being analyzed became necessary. I generated these extra codes in an emergent fashion, based on what the data seemed to reveal relative to the focus of the inquiry. This allowed me to embrace all of the data, rather than excluding data that did not match my a priori
classifications, thereby allowing me to explore the possibility that the participants experienced something beyond or in contrast to what Foster defined. Rossman and Rallis (2003), Stake (1995), and Yin (2003) emphasized the importance of using analytic techniques that allow for such alternative interpretations to emerge. The separate coding passes using both a priori and emergent codes provided greater opportunities for the meanings of the participants’ experiences to be understood. The results of all of the coding have been presented in Table 3 through Table 9.

Notes about transcription, coding, and in-game connections. The Mission US game and associated assignments challenged students to complete writing exercises and audio reflections. Additionally, I interviewed some students and the teacher. In order to maintain confidentiality for all of this work, I transcribed the collected written works into an electronic format using random letter identifiers as stand-ins for students’ names. Likewise, I transcribed the audio reflections and interviews verbatim with the corresponding letter identifiers. All transcriptions represent the exact vocabulary and grammar of the original works and include no corrections or alterations.

For coding purposes, I broke the transcriptions of written material into discrete complete sentences or what students represented as sentences – even if incomplete – based on the students’ use of punctuation. I segmented the audio reflections into sentences based on conversational pauses rather than punctuation. The reasoning behind using sentence-level segments as opposed to paragraph-level segments is that students tended to respond to discrete prompts or bullet points within prompts with one sentence more often than not. I assigned each of these sentence or sentence-like segments up to
five *a priori* codes representing Foster’s (2001) characteristics and up to four emergent codes representing my additional thematic areas.

For the interviews, I maintained the responses for individual questions as discrete segments rather than breaking each response up into individual sentences or sentence-like segments. This is because students’ responses to the interview questions tended to be longer and more fluid than their written responses. I then assigned the *a priori* codes to those segments and followed up with the emergent codes as well. I did not code the member-checking portions of the interview transcripts because they provided no divergence from or embellishment to the original responses.

Some response segments explicitly illustrated a suggested correspondence to one or more of Foster’s (2001) characteristics or the emergent thematic areas. Others suggested no correspondence if read in isolation. A short response of “Yes” offered no coding opportunity when divorced from context. However, some such segments did suggest correspondences when interpreted through the context of the material present in the *Mission US* game upon which students based their responses. I based the nature of those correspondences, and therefore the assignment of those codes, on my own interpretations of either the explicit or implicit *Mission US* connections to the sentences or sentence-like segments. In all cases, any given response segment may or may not have been assigned a relevant code; some segments could not be successfully associated with either Foster’s characteristics or my emergent codes and therefore received no coding whatsoever.

I initially planned to code my observational notes as well, intending to capitalize on the verbal interactions between students and the teacher as the students progressed.
through the game by treating those interactions as another rich source of evidence. However, in practice, students did not engage in verbal exchanges of consequence while playing. Their attention was focused exclusively on the game; with headphones on so that they could hear the game speech and sounds while reading and making their in-game choices, the students did not ask questions or make comments of any relevance to the coding process. Occasionally, a student would ask a work-related question such as, “How much do I have to write?” but such comments revealed no insight into whether they were developing historical empathy. For that reason, I excluded the observational notes from the coding process entirely, though they are included in Appendix F for reference.

Full transcriptions of the student written work, audio reflections, and interviews, as well as the teacher interview, can be found in appendices G through N. These include coded versions of the assignments “Part 1 Review Questions,” “Part 2 Writing Prompt,” “Part 3 Audio Reflections,” “Part 4 Review Questions,” “Part 5 Audio Reflections,” and the “Closing Quick-Write.” Six coded student interviews and the coded teacher interview follow.

Researchers seeking to establish a high quality plan of inquiry to follow should lay out a detailed plan consisting of the research design, participants, context, data generation, and data analysis. The quality of that plan with respect to research best practices and ethics, however, should be considered as well (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). If an inquiry is judged to be of low quality or unethical, it is the responsibility of the researcher to repair the quality and ethics problems or to abandon the inquiry entirely. But how can the quality of an inquiry be judged?
Trustworthiness

Various quality criteria for qualitative inquiry have been created or synthesized by researchers, including Guba and Lincoln's (1989) *trustworthiness and authenticity*, Stake's (1995) *triangulation of data*, Glesne's (2006) *trustworthiness*, and Rossman and Rallis' (2003) *trustworthiness*. Not every author nor pair of authors, however, addressed every major component of a research plan and its implementation, and therefore to attempt to compare and contrast the various criteria sets may not result in fruitful conclusions about the comparative value of a given set in relation to the others—in some cases they are disparately assessing the quality of different pieces of the puzzle. There are significant areas of overlap in some of the criteria sets, but each author or pair of authors began with a specific paradigm in mind that prevents the criteria of each from necessarily being applicable to all types of qualitative inquiry, including my own. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1989) approached qualitative inquiry from a critical standpoint, and hence their quality criteria cannot be applied effectively to this study.

For the purposes of this study, I explicated and adopted Rossman and Rallis' (2003) version of trustworthiness, rather than choosing to blend the quality criteria from multiple sources. Having adopted one of their paradigmatic understandings of reality and the inquiry process, namely interpretivism, it made sense for me to adopt the quality criteria that are based upon their paradigmatic framework. Two additional advantages of Rossman and Rallis' criteria set are its integration of multifaceted ethical concerns as well as a consideration of the usefulness of an inquiry. Such considerations are not found in all of the noted alternative sets of quality criteria but seem noteworthy given that
qualitative inquiry inescapably entwines the researcher with the lives of participants, thereby making ethical behavior a relevant issue.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) characterized the trustworthiness of a study as the degree to which it is both competently and ethically enacted. The competency component refers to the truth value of what is reported, the rigor of the methods, and the usefulness of the study. The ethical component refers to the standards of conduct the researcher chooses to employ based on his or her moral principles.

**Competency.** The truth value is the first sub-component of competency in Rossman and Rallis’ (2003) quality criteria. As noted previously, truth in the interpretivist paradigm represents a construction of reality by way of the subjective perceptions of humans and will, in fact, be particular to each individual. There are no objectively held truths in an interpretivist paradigm. To judge the truth value of a qualitative inquiry is to assess how well the researcher reports participants’ views—does he or she represent them honestly and fully? Yet because a researcher also naturally and unavoidably filters participants’ views through his or her own, he or she should openly report his or her own views and how they interact with the views of the participants.

In this study, I employed multiple recommended strategies from Rossman and Rallis (2003) to enhance the truth value of the inquiry. The data were generated over the course of several days rather than one. This provided more opportunities for participants’ views to be expressed and captured in various forms. Additionally, the fact that the data were made of up multiple sources and types helped me triangulate them to support or refute particular interpretations that I crafted over the course of the study. Member checking the data also helped to uncover the complexity of participants’ experiences.
Further, explaining both my role in the research as well as my background helps readers of the study to judge how my own views may have interacted with those of the participants.

The second sub-component of competency that Rossman and Rallis (2003) offered is the rigor of the methods employed in the inquiry. A rigorously conducted qualitative inquiry should yield results that a reader could understand as reasonable, given explications of the inquiry’s methods, data, and interpretations. Reasonable results should follow clearly, coherently, and logically from the data. Such a study would be considered to have been rigorously conducted. In contrast, a study whose results seem not to flow from the data, or whose data were not competently generated, or whose methods were not properly explained and justified, would not be considered as rigorous.

One strategy of Rossman and Rallis (2003) that I used to demonstrate the rigor of this study was to clearly explain all major facets of the inquiry, including the theoretical framework that guided my interpretation of the data. Noting the specific data generation process—its timeline, the people involved, and the specific actions taken to acquire it—also helped illustrate the rigor of the study.

The third sub-component of Rossman and Rallis’ (2003) notion of competency is the usefulness of the study. Their definition is not offered from a critical paradigm in which researchers, participants, and even readers would be motivated to enact positive changes in oppressive societies. Instead, they define usefulness as the extent to which the results of the inquiry could add to the collection of knowledge that others might leverage in similar contexts. If one comes to understand results tied to a very specific context with very specific participants, that understanding may also be applicable to other very similar
contexts and participants. The applicability is not expressed in probabilistic terms as it might be in quantitative studies, but rather by way of analogy, comparison, and contrast.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) recommended two primary strategies for enhancing the usefulness of a qualitative inquiry. First, as mentioned previously, thoroughly and clearly explaining all major facets of the inquiry can allow readers to reach detailed and nuanced understandings of the researcher’s approach. Such understandings can then be used in comparison and contrast to other inquiries. Additionally, providing rich descriptions of participants, their experiences, and their contexts contributes further to the ability of readers to make meaningful and complex comparisons to other participants and their own specific contexts in the future. This study used both strategies.

Ethics. The other half of Rossman and Rallis’ (2003) quality criteria set is ethics. Ethics refer to the guiding moral principles that form the basis of one’s decisions and actions. In a research context, a researcher must make decisions and act in ways that will unavoidably affect the lives of the participants. In Rossman and Rallis’ view, therefore, the researcher has a responsibility to consider the basis and implications of decisions made and actions taken. Although the authors did not endorse a particular ethical code or a guiding ethical framework, they did assert that, above all, the researcher must not exploit participants under any circumstances.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) identified three common areas of ethical concern that a researcher should be prepared to reason through using whichever set of moral principles he or she chooses to adopt. One is the paired notions of privacy and confidentiality of participants. Privacy in the research context refers to personally identifiable details of participants’ lives such as their names, specific jobs, or specific roles in society. A
researcher must decide if, how, and why to protect the privacy of participants; additionally, the researcher may choose to involve the participants themselves in those ethical decisions. Confidentiality in the research context refers to access to and use of information about the participants by people other than the researcher himself or herself. A researcher must decide if, how, and why to protect the confidentiality of the information about participants, including the practical considerations of the ability of the researcher to protect it in first place. In confronting these dilemmas, the researcher must not only decide what to do but must take action to live up to their decisions, including forthrightly communicating their ethical stances to potential participants prior to implementing the study itself.

In this study, I committed to destroying all personally identifiable details of the students and teacher that were generated over the course of the study as early as was possible for effective data analysis. This included concealing the names and identifiable characteristics of the school and school division as well as all names in my observational notes, the students' work samples, students' audio-recorded reflections, and interview transcripts. I also informed all potential participants that the data and results of the study would be published publically but that the document would contain no such personally identifiable details.

A second common area of ethical concern put forth by Rossman and Rallis (2003) are the paired notions of consent and deception of participants. In the research context, consent from individuals to become participants in a study means that they become informed to the extent that they (a) understand the study's purpose and audience, (b) understand what type of participation they are committing to do, (c) can and do agree to
participate without coercion, and (d) can end their participation at any time without reprisal or negative consequence. By becoming adequately informed, a potential participant can make a reasoned, voluntary choice to participate... or not to participate. A refinement to the notion of informed consent is needed when considering individuals identified as not being able to consent on their own. The informed consent of children (referred to as informed assent in such a context) is generally considered to be ethically insufficient for participation, for example, and therefore needs to be accompanied by the informed consent of their parents or guardians. In this study, both informed assent by the students and informed consent by the parents or guardians were requirements for participation, as was informed consent by the teacher. The mechanisms to acquire assent and consent in this study were letters written to the parents or guardians, students, and the teacher explaining the nature of the study, aims, processes, stances on privacy and confidentiality, and rights related to participation and withdrawal. Samples of these are found in Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E.

Deception refers to the degree to which elements of the study are not explained to participants. This may involve a researcher summarizing points for participants instead of providing full details. It may involve presenting only re-formatted and processed data rather than data in its raw forms to participants for member-checking. It may involve, more cautiously, hiding certain details not for convenience or participants’ ability to understand but to promote the progress of the study itself insofar as full disclosure might make the goals of the study completely unattainable. As with the other ethical dilemmas, there are no universally correct choices for the decisions a researcher will face with respect to the deception of participants. Rossman and Rallis recommended, however,
that above all, the researcher should do no harm to participants. The benefit of a certain level of deception should be thoughtfully weighed against the potential impact on the participants and on the field of knowledge itself.

In communicating with potential participants and their parents, I informed them of why and how I would be performing the inquiry and what steps I would take to protect privacy and confidentiality. I do not believe, however, that the intricate details of Foster's (2001) theory of historical empathy were relevant to participants in this context, and so I did not provide the full theoretical framework nor research base that forms the support of the inquiry. In that sense I made an ethical judgment on the deception dilemma involving both relevance and convenience. I did not engage in the concealment of any information that I felt to be relevant to participants, however, nor any misrepresentation for the sake of advancing the study.

The third general area of ethical concern that Rossman and Rallis (2003) proposed is the paired notions of trust and betrayal. In a qualitative inquiry, the researcher must become involved in the lives of the participants. This involvement can take various forms—explicit observations of participants in natural contexts, in-depth interviews with participants, collection and examination of personal and private letters or journals, or full engagement in participants' daily work or home lives, to name a few. In all cases a level of trust must be established between the participants and the researcher. The participants increase their social vulnerability in some sense by sharing personal experiences and details of their lives, yet they expect that the researcher will live up to the promises made prior to, during, and after the study. Deciding precisely what it means to honor the trust placed in them by participants means the researcher must consider the responsibilities and
restrictions that trust requires. This is an ethical consideration that again has no universal answer, but must nonetheless be addressed. The flip side of trust is betrayal. Under what circumstances, if ever, should a researcher break a promise made to participants? At what point does maintaining a promise cause more harm than breaking it would? In what ways will participants’ lives be affected by the departure of the researcher from them? In opening their lives to the researcher, what dependence level, if any, is created, and what is the consequence of ending that dependence? The very essence of qualitative inquiry that requires that a researcher enter the lives of participants makes all of those questions relevant and sometimes difficult to answer. An ethical researcher must be prepared to apply his or her moral principles to finding those answers.

In this study, the students, teacher, and parents or guardians all trusted that I would do no harm in examining the class’s use of Mission US. They trusted that I would maintain my promises to them regarding privacy and confidentiality as well as their right to withdraw or not participate in the first place without penalty. They trusted that they could take me at my word that I intended to do this research for the benefit of the field of history education. I had and will continue to have a professional and ethical responsibility to fulfill the trust they placed in me. Situations that might arise that would cause me to consider breaking any part of that trust are not predictable, but I was and am nonetheless prepared to carefully evaluate my choices of action should they indeed arise.

Considered in their totality, Rossman and Rallis’ (2003) criteria for assessing quality are a valuable and necessary set of considerations for the researcher to examine and address in planning and implementing an inquiry. Thoughtful and effective use of the criteria can lead to greater insight into participants’ lives, can increase the truth and
usefulness of results, and can protect the intimate personal investment that participants make with the researcher. But what of the nature of the researcher himself or herself?

**Background of the Researcher**

As a researcher, I am a career educator whose experiences have ranged from teaching mathematics to middle school students to teaching technology integration to elementary school teachers to guiding and developing preschool through 12th-grade technology integration coaches. My own post-high school education has focused heavily on mathematics, science, and computer science, complemented by graduate work within the field of curriculum and educational technology. While having a background in such technical subjects, I also have a passion for the social studies and their potential to improve the world at large. Even during middle school mathematics classes I routinely found ways to merge mathematical perspectives into student discussions concerning relevant social and historical issues.

In combining an educational upbringing that featured a heavy technology component with a passion for history education, I became impressed with the effort by THIRTEEN, the New York public media organization that oversaw the production of *Mission US*, to design an educationally meaningful, historically relevant, youth-engaging game centered on late-colonial America. *Mission US* impressed me with its capable weaving of historical fact with historical fiction and its rich artistry and engagement factors that were, at the same time, tightly woven into a curricular-based approach to student learning. *Mission US* appeared to me to be a potential tool to guide young learners through the potential development of their own historical empathy and so I sought to study students’ experiences while using it in today’s educational climate.
My passions for both the integration of technology into teaching and learning and for social studies education acted as an asset to me as I pursued this study, for they helped keep me motivated, focused, and dedicated to the success of the project. For the same reason, however, I was careful to guard against biasing my results. If the data should have indicated that students or teachers perceived negative experiences while going through this particular implementation of Mission US, then I would have had to readily admit so in the discussion of findings. Analyzing the varied interview data, audio recordings, work samples, and observational data by way of coding helped mitigate potential misinterpretation of the results. Additionally, in a collective case study completed using a phenomenological approach, the researcher recognizes the impossibility of completely divorcing oneself from the participants. In this study, I did not take on the role of a teacher in the classroom, and instead focused on generation and collecting data day-to-day and interviewing students and the teacher.

Conclusion

This study sought to illustrate the experiences of a particular middle school class with respect to its students’ potential development of historical empathy while using the game Mission US. Their potential development of historical empathy, their reflections about that development, and their teacher’s reflections on that same development were explored using a collective case study approach. I generated data consisting of audio reflections and written work over the course of the six-day implementation of Mission US in a 6th-grade after-school program. Following that implementation, I generated student and teacher interview data. Foster’s (2001) theory of historical empathy in historical learning guided my interpretation of data. Additionally, the data were categorized by
way of emergent themes. These analyses resulted in a thick description of the class's experiences with *Mission US.*
Chapter Four: Results

As I explored my research question, I gathered several types of data to which I applied \textit{a priori} and emergent coding processes. These coding processes helped determine the extent to which the students’ classroom experience with \textit{Mission US} revealed evidence of their potential development and use of historical empathy, if any. Beginning with the use of Foster’s (2001) characteristics of historical empathy as described in Chapter Two as an \textit{a priori} code set, I categorized components of the students’ written work, audio reflections, and interviews, as well as the teacher’s interview, into five thematic areas. Those areas are (a) the interpreted nature of the students’ understandings of historical actors’ decisions, (b) historical contexts, (c) critical exploration of sources, (d) exploration of personal perspectives, and (e) acknowledgment of the fluid and tentative nature of history.

As Rossman and Rallis (2003), Stake (1995), and Yin (2003) noted, allowing codes to emerge as the coding process proceeds, rather than adhering exclusively to \textit{a priori} codes, may allow for alternative interpretations of the data outside of the boundary of the guiding theoretical framework. To that end, as I spiraled through the \textit{a priori} coding process, I identified four additional thematic areas with which I classified the data. These thematic areas appeared to undergird much of the collected evidence and therefore seemed a natural additional lens through which to interpret the data. They
served as an organizing tool for me to better understand the students’ written and spoken words and the teacher’s spoken words within the context of historical empathy.

The first of these is (f) what historical people wanted. Many of the students’ written and verbal responses to prompts made references to the in-game characters’ wants for their lives or for their society—desires such as peace, freedom, representation in government, redress of grievances, etc.. Student references to such desires suggest they have insights into the characters’ motivations—which is a key component of historical empathy.

The second emergent thematic area is (g) why historical people fought. These types of responses from students centered on the characters’ motivations for conflict and violence in the game. The game itself revolves around the conflict between Patriots, Loyalists, and the British and so it is reasonable to frame student responses under that umbrella. As with (f), students may have insights into character motivations when expressing such responses. These two areas combined—desires and conflict motivations—form the bulk of the textual and plot-based narrative in the Mission US game.

The third thematic area is (h) what students correctly understood in the Mission US game. By placing responses in this category, I sought to identify what facts, developments, and ideas students successfully took away from the game. For example, when a student noted that Paul Revere’s engraving of the Boston Massacre did not show any actions the colonists may have taken to provoke the British soldiers, the note suggests the student correctly concluded that historical evidence can sometimes be incomplete or slanted towards one point of view—a point the Mission US game attempts to teach and that likewise a key point of historical empathy.
The final of the four emergent thematic areas is the converse—(i) what students misunderstood in the *Mission US* game. Under this categorization, I attempted to identify the misconceptions that students took away from the game; in other words, areas where the game failed to successfully teach a particular student. In one example, a student responded that Nat Wheeler, the player's own character, was the first to protest against the British. The game shows, however, that protests had been occurring before Nat ever arrived in Boston and continued even while Nat stayed out of the conflicts.

The use of these emergent codes helped complement the application of Foster's (2001) characteristics of historical empathy as exhibited by the students because the codes provided an alternative perspective on how well *Mission US* contributed to students' understandings. For example, while Foster noted that students coming to understandings of historical actors' decisions is a key step in developing historical empathy, these emergent codes helped reveal just what specifically about the *Mission US* characters' decisions students understood. The results of both the *a priori* and emergent coding processes follow.

My review of the data began with high-level summaries of the frequencies of both Foster's (2001) codes and the emergent codes I developed. I chose this process to illustrate how often students may have been engaged in developing historical empathy and to gauge how well they understood the game's depictions of events. Following that, I explored patterns among the data more thoroughly, searching for more specific implications from the students' experiences. Those analyses follow.
Frequencies of Characteristics of Historical Empathy

A simple beginning consideration for the accumulated data is the frequency that each of Foster’s (2001) five characteristics of historical empathy appeared among each response segment from all evidence types and all responders. Knowing the proportion of responses coded with a particular characteristic of historical empathy compared to the total set of responses can suggest whether the game engendered that characteristic in students’ minds or whether it was an incidental occurrence. A characteristic that shows up with a high frequency among a set of responses may suggest that the game directly led students to develop and exercise that aspect of historical empathy. Conversely, a low frequency for a characteristic may suggest that students only tangentially exercised that characteristic, if at all; in such an instance, we might conclude that the game did not actually engender that particular characteristic.

Table 3 illustrates the frequencies that the five characteristics revealed in the response segments. We see a high frequency of Foster’s (2001) first characteristic—students understanding the characters’ decision-making—present in the responses. There are lower frequencies of the other four characteristics. I classified just over half of all response segments under Foster’s second characteristic—responses having to do with students understanding the historical contexts in which the characters found themselves. The third characteristic—critical exploration of historical sources—was coded in slightly less than one-third of all responses. In fact, there is a “downward trend” in the frequencies of the characteristics, if one considers the characteristics to be a progressive sequence—a point addressed later in this chapter. It is worth noting, however, that none of the five characteristics reached the 100% frequency level when counted among all
responses because some segments could not be assigned a code at all, as mentioned previously.

Table 3  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Segments</th>
<th>Characteristic Occurrence Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may be that examining the frequencies of Foster’s (2001) characteristics among the different types of evidence can yield further insights into how well the Mission US experience helped students develop and exercise historical empathy. Some type of evidence may correspond with an assignment type that more strongly promoted the development or expression of historical empathy due to the depth of response it engendered, for example. I categorized the evidence into three types—written work, audio reflections, and interviews—and then tabulated the frequencies of the characteristics among them. Table 4 illustrates this. Here we see that each type of evidence lent itself to illustrate one or more characteristics more strongly than the others. For example, students referenced an understanding of the characters’ decision-making in all of their audio reflections, while the third characteristic—critical exploration of sources—appeared most frequently in their written work.

Table 4  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evidence</th>
<th>Response Segments</th>
<th>Characteristic Occurrence Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Work</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Reflections</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One may also investigate whether individual students exhibited more or fewer of Foster’s (2001) characteristics over time compared to their classmates as they progressed through the Mission US game and the associated assignments. I considered that line of investigation appropriate given that one interpretation of the characteristics is that they represent a series of steps from the mostly factual to the mostly interpretive or from simplicity to complexity and nuance—a sort of cognitive progression for students learning history. Foster and Yeager (1998) and Colby (2010) viewed the development of historical empathy as such a process of discrete cognitive tasks. If the evidence for a given student showed all of Foster’s characteristics, it would suggest that student did indeed develop and exercise the full spectrum of historical empathy over the course of the Mission US experience. Conversely, if the evidence for a given student never displayed all five characteristics, it would suggest that the student ultimately did not truly develop historical empathy, although they may have made progress towards doing so under the process interpretation.

In order to examine this, I collated the data for the subset of students who completed all of the written work and audio reflections and whom I subsequently interviewed. Students that did not supply all of the work and/or were not interviewed did not have full data sets to analyze. Three students supplied all of the work and were interviewed: students F, G, and H. Tables 5, 6, and 7 illustrate the frequencies that the five characteristics appeared in those students’ response segments over time. Student F provided responses that manifested each of Foster’s five characteristics, suggesting the student may indeed have achieved some level of historical empathy. Student G’s responses did not manifest the fifth characteristic which may suggest that G did not fully
develop historical empathy, though the frequencies of the other four characteristics are notable under the progressive sequence interpretation of the characteristics. Student H’s responses lie somewhere between F and G’s in terms of expressing all five characteristics across multiple data sources.

Table 5  
*Frequency of Foster’s Characteristics by Evidence for Student F*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Response Segments</th>
<th>Characteristic Occurrence Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1 Review Questions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2 Writing Prompt</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3 Audio Reflections</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4 Review Questions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 5 Audio Reflections</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Quick-Write</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interview</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6  
*Frequency of Foster’s Characteristics by Evidence for Student G*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Response Segments</th>
<th>Characteristic Occurrence Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1 Review Questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2 Writing Prompt</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3 Audio Reflections</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4 Review Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 5 Audio Reflections</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Quick-Write</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interview</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7  
*Frequency of Foster’s Characteristics by Evidence for Student H*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Response Segments</th>
<th>Characteristic Occurrence Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1 Review Questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2 Writing Prompt</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3 Audio Reflections</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4 Review Questions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 5 Audio Reflections</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Quick-Write</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interview</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We can see from this high-level perspective that all of Foster’s (2001) characteristics appeared in the data and that students demonstrate more of the characteristics (a), (b), and (c) than (d) and (e). This is almost universally true regardless of the student or the type of evidence. We now turn to what the data reveals with respect to the emergent thematic areas.

**Frequencies of Emergent Thematic Areas**

We can examine the frequency that each of the four emergent thematic areas appeared among each response segment from all evidence types and all responders just as we did with Foster’s (2001) characteristics of historical empathy. *Mission US* is a game that features conflicts—physical conflicts, conflicts of interests, and conflicts of ideologies. The game frequently presents these conflicts as the result of the interplay between what characters desire and the context of situations in which they find themselves. For example, the conflict that results in the death of Christopher Seider is a result of Patriots that want to be free of British tariffs, Loyalists that want to implement the Crown’s laws, and protests as a mechanism for social change. Therefore, we can explore how well students came to understand both desires and conflicts within the game in an effort to reveal how well students understood the *whys* of historical actors’ decisions—which is the core component of historical empathy.

The more often that students’ responses referenced the themes of (f) characters’ desires and (g) characters’ motivations for conflict, the more it is suggested that students developed and exercised historical empathy over the course of the investigation. Furthermore, looking at responses that indicated (h) the students understood what the *Mission US* game tried to communicate versus (i) what they did not understand, can help
us to determine what specific historical knowledge students took away from their experiences.

Table 8 illustrates the frequencies that the four emergent thematic areas appeared in the response segments. We see from this first table that more responses appeared in the evidence related to characters’ motivations for conflict than did for their desires. This may suggest that the game did a better job of teaching about the colonial conflicts than it did the desires of colonial characters. Additionally, we see that the overwhelming majority of students’ responses indicate that they understood the historical content that the game was trying to communicate.

Table 8  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Emergent Thematic Areas</th>
<th>Thematic Area Occurrence Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Segments (f)</td>
<td>(g) (h) (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348</td>
<td>25% 41% 88% 4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can it be said that different types of evidence tended to be associated with different thematic areas? When speaking, did students tend to show more or fewer instances of any thematic area than when writing? These questions can be explored by examining the frequencies of the thematic areas per evidence type. As I did with Foster’s (2001) characteristics, I divided the evidence into three types—written work, audio reflections, and interviews—and tabulated the frequencies of the thematic areas among them. Table 9 shows the frequencies that the four thematic areas appeared in the various types of evidence. The frequencies suggest that the interviews most readily revealed students’ understandings of what the characters wanted, the written work most readily revealed students’ understandings of why the characters fought, and all three types of
evidence revealed that students understood what the game was trying to teach. The student interviews tended to reveal less about what students understood than the written work and audio reflections. One possible explanation for this is that the interview prompts were focused far more on the students themselves—in comparison to the assignment prompts that focused on the events and characters in the game—and therefore students were less likely to mention specifically what they learned from the game, preferring to focus more on their own thoughts and perspectives.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evidence</th>
<th>Response Segments</th>
<th>(f)</th>
<th>(g)</th>
<th>(h)</th>
<th>(i)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Work</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Reflections</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previously, I raised the question regarding whether the evidence suggested that individual students progressed through Foster’s (2001) characteristics as they worked through the assignments and participated in the interview. This is a relevant question if one views the characteristics as a naturally progressing developmental sequence as did both Foster and Yeager (1998) and Colby (2010). The four emergent thematic areas that I chose, however, do not represent a learning sequence. All four areas revolve around what students specifically came to understand by way of the Mission US game and the associated activities. Due to the design and structure of the game, potential student discoveries of the whys of the characters’ actions were regularly spaced throughout and understanding the ideas the game presented toward the end was no more or less difficult to do than at the beginning. There was not a progression from the mostly factual to the
mostly interpretative or from the simple to the complex. For those reasons, I did not investigate if individual students’ responses exhibited more of the emergent themes over time.

What we see overall from this high-level view is that the evidence supplied by students suggested four ideas related to the development and use of historical empathy. First, the *Mission US* experience engendered Foster’s (2001) characteristics at varying frequencies out of the total volume of responses. Second, under the interpretation that the characteristics represent a progressive developmental sequence, the experience engendered the characteristics in descending frequencies—as the complexity of the characteristics increased, their presence in the evidence decreased. Third, students tended to understand more about characters’ motivations for conflict in the game than characters’ desires. Lastly, students tended to understand far more overall from within the game than they misunderstood.

**Examining Common Patterns Among the Data**

In seeking to answer the research question—To what extent does a classroom experience with *Mission US* reveal evidence of students’ potential development and use of historical empathy?—we can move past the high-level examination of the evidence and look deeper for patterns in the data that may suggest more nuanced and more complex notions than mentioned previously. I examined the data related to individual characteristics enumerated by Foster (2001) to see how the *Mission US* game and its associated assignments challenged students to engage in the specific practices associated with historical empathy. I also looked similarly at the emergent thematic area data.
**Frequent understandings of characters’ decisions and actions.** Returning to Tables 3 and 4 for insights, my coding of the data shows that 82% of all of the response segments were associated with Foster’s (2001) first characteristic of historical empathy—students seeking and reaching an understanding of internal motivations guiding why historical actors acted as they did. What were those actors’ motivations? What were their viewpoints on issues? How did those viewpoints sway the actors to take one course of action over another? The high frequency of such coded responses suggests here that *Mission US* pushes students to understand characters’ motivations and perspectives. For example, when challenged with the assignment prompt, “If you have sold an ad to Constance, you were told by Mr. Edes to return the money to her. Why does he refuse to print her ad?” students must draw upon what the game has taught them in order to write an accurate response. Student P wrote, “Because Mr. Edes believed that if he printers her ad he will be judge because people will believe he is not a patriot.” The real-life Benjamin Edes was an ardent Patriot, having been a member of the Sons of Liberty and the publisher of the Boston Gazette, a Patriot-supporting newspaper of the time. Student P correctly identified that, as a Patriot himself, Edes would not want to support the business of people he considered to be Loyalists. One such loyalist was Theophilus Lillie, who resisted the Sons of Liberty’s attempts to ban the import and selling of British goods and commissions an ad in the game. Student P understands how ideology and reputation were matters of concern for Benjamin Edes and therefore why he would tell his apprentice (the player’s character) not to print an ad from the Lillie family.

Another example of understanding characters’ motivations can be found in Student D’s verbal response to the prompt, “What does Constance Lillie think about
protests and violence when people have differing opinions?” Student D recorded, “She doesn't think anyone should die because of their opinions and that makes sense.” *Mission US* goes to lengths to show that between the fervent Patriots and Loyalists sat people in the middle ground, like Constance Lillie, who saw no need for violence. As Patriot and Loyalist demonstrations and protests became increasingly violent, including the incident that resulted in death of child Christopher Seider and later the Boston Massacre, Constance expresses her desire in the game to see both sides scale back the violence, despite her Loyalist heritage. Student D recognizes the viewpoint that holding strong opinions shouldn't necessarily lead to violent tragedy.

Student E also made informed speculation about characters’ motives. In responding to the prompt, “Later, the Sons of Liberty planned a funeral march for Christopher. Why did they do that?” student E wrote, “I would be worried cause it's a funral but sons wants to cause more trouble and the last time someone got shot.” Here we see the student sharing an understanding that, to their mind, a public funeral march carries a message about the wrongness of the death but may also be intended to rouse public sentiment against the Loyalists. The student connected the funeral march to the earlier protest that resulted in Seider's death.

The teacher also commented on students coming to understand the notion that people in history, whether famous or not, made decisions not unlike the decisions made by people we may know:

I think that, especially after the death of Christopher Seider, and seeing and talking to Paul Revere and Phyllis Wheatley, the history became ‘real’ to them. They realized that these were real people in real situations, sometimes making
similar choices to the ones they had to make in daily life, and all of the sudden what they had been studying for the last month became real. It was interesting to hear them discussing the people in the game after class was over each day. You could tell that they were ‘real’ to them, and when they discussed the opinions that they had about them, they would back them up with evidence from their actions or what they had in the character summary.

Not every student came to understand all of the characters’ motivations, however. When confronted with the very first prompt of the very first assignment, “Why were you sent to Boston to be a printer’s apprentice rather than one of your brothers?”—a narrative plot point settled clearly within the first few minutes of gameplay—student J did not reach the correct conclusion. Student J wrote, “because I had to get other Elders in boston to buy advertisement so that I could behave to do art and print art out.” In fact, the player’s character wanted to earn money to contribute to his family back on their farm. Despite such infrequent misunderstandings, overall the students seem to have a strong grasp of characters’ motivations—or as the teacher noted, “I think and hope that they 'get it' more—they're going to remember more later on because they understand more about why people did what they did in that period.”

**Frequent understandings of context.** Table 3 also reveals that more than half of all response segments featured Foster’s (2001) second characteristic—students understanding how context interplays with and affects characters’ motivations and decision-making. While not as prevalent among responses as the first characteristic, this characteristic nonetheless came through clearly in the majority of student work. In response to the prompt, “Write 3 sentences in the box about whether you think the
drawing below by Paul Revere shows what actually happened at the Boston Massacre and why you think that” (which was accompanied by Revere’s famous engraving), student H wrote, “I think that the picture captures the peripheral of what happen. But, I don't think that he actually is right.” This implies that the student is aware of a larger context that Revere did not depict—that colonists in the crowd were throwing snowballs at the soldiers, brandishing sharpened sticks, and verbally taunting the soldiers. Student H followed with, “I saw that young colonists were throwing snowballs, playing with snow and then, it hit a British soldier and he took that as a cue to fight.”

The context of young Christopher Seider’s death is also reflected in students’ responses. A major writing prompt for the students begins, “In the game, you learned that a young apprentice, Christopher Seider, was shot and killed during a protest against a merchant loyal to the Crown. Who do you think was responsible for his death?” Student M wrote:

I think it was the boys and the angry mans fault. I think this because the boys shouldn't of been making trouble at the store, and the man shouldn't of pulled out the gun. But the man cause I think this because this is still murder. I think this because someone has died because of a fixable situation.

Student M knew from the game that the protest at Ebenezer Richardson’s house by Patriots followed Richardson earlier trying to disperse a protest at Lillie’s shop. For that, a crowd collected and threw rocks through Richardson’s windows. Ultimately, Richardson fired into the crowd and fatally wounded Seider. Student M’s idea of the “fixable situation” implies that the student believed the conflict could have been resolved differently, which necessitates that the student knew the contextual reasons behind the
conflict in the first place. The teacher again offers relevant commentary, suggesting in reference to the Seider writing prompt:

They may not have all said the same thing, or had the same experiences, but they all had an opinion- and it completely hooked them in, realizing that THIS was a boy like them, who had died in a cause and become part of history- and was this right? Would they have taken the same actions? It really got them thinking.

In some instances, students became aware of contextual factors, but then misinterpreted those factors as causes of events for which they were not actually causal. For example, the same student H that pointed out the contextual absences from Revere’s engraving later wrote, “The redcoats and patriots fought on the lawn when the redcoats were hit with snowballs because they killed Christopher Sider.” This statement was made in response to, “What role does violence play in the conflict between the Crown and the colony?” Contextually, the student correctly indicates that the gun violence in the confrontation followed snowball throwing by colonists, but incorrectly attributes the death of Seider to the soldiers, when in fact Seider was shot by the customs worker Ebenezer Richardson, a fact known by the colonists.

Table 4, which shows the response segments segmented by type of evidence—written work, audio reflections, and interviews—necessarily reflects the high frequencies of the first two of Foster’s (2001) characteristics. One would naturally expect this, because when combined, evidence types constitute the total response segments referenced in Table 3. But even the individual profiles of student F’s, G’s, and H’s responses in Table 5, 6, and 6 additionally illustrate that 37 out of 42 groupings of responses by assignment show that half or more of the responses are associated with
students’ awareness of motivations and contexts. Taken as a whole, the above data strongly suggest that Mission US and its associated assignments pushed students to develop and use the first two characteristics of historical empathy.

**Infrequent critical exploration of sources.** The data tell a different story for Foster’s (2001) third characteristic. Foster wrote that students should not only critically examine primary and secondary sources in their historical inquiry, but also that the sources should ideally be complex, nuanced, and conflicting in order to challenge students to see historical actions and contexts from multiple perspectives. This aligns well with the National Center for History in the Schools’ recommendation that students should examine primary sources in the course of historical inquiry and should consider competing perspectives related to those sources (Historical Thinking Standards, n.d.). Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that significantly lower frequencies of this characteristic appeared in students’ responses.

Mission US actually presents a large number of historical sources to students throughout the game—including authentic colonial newspaper clippings, a transcript of “The Liberty Song”, Revere’s engraving, a diary entry regarding the death and funeral of Christopher Seider, etc.. Each of these carries its own perspective on events depicted in the game; however, less than one-third of all students’ responses critically commented on such sources. Why might this be? What might this indicate about how well the Mission US experience challenged students to exercise the critical examination of historical sources?

Our first clarification should be to understand that students need not actually pay close attention to historical sources in order to complete the game. When students are
presented with a newspaper clipping, a diary entry, or a song, and then prompted to take an action in the game, usually their choices are gradually narrowed by the game until they are funneled back onto the intended narrative path. For example, students can review a leaflet decrying the importation of British goods while trying to decide if they should accept a potential newspaper advertisement from a Loyalist. If they deny the advertisement, they continue along their narrative adventure. If they accept the advertisement, they are chastised by their employer, Benjamin Edes, in a manner that explains his Patriot perspective, and they are then placed onto the same narrative adventure as the one resulting from not accepting the advertisement. In this manner of presentation, a student could ignore the historical source entirely and still end up in the same narrative location later on, though the student may have been exposed to an additional perspective as in the above example. The fact that historical sources in the game can result in explanatory narrations with few implications of consequence to the character's fate may be considered a weakness in the game's effect on historical empathy.

The second clarification should be to understand that not all of the assignment prompts explicitly challenged the students to critically examine historical sources. We can see this most starkly by exploring Tables 5, 6, and 7, representing three students' responses on each of the individual assignments. Prompts for Parts 1 through 3, found in Appendixes G through I, show that students were asked about events and perspectives for which they could analyze historical sources in the game, but for which they did not have to analyze historical sources in the game. Students F, G, and H more often than not did not make any critical references to such sources when responding. In fact, student F did not make a single such reference within the first three assignments. This may suggest
that students did not give much weight to historical sources heavily in forming their own understandings of the characters and contexts of the game—which, if we take Mission US to be an intentionally designed teaching tool, would mean it did not frequently engender Foster’s (2001) third characteristic.

When students did reference historical sources, the data tend to show that they accepted most of them without critically examination. In the Closing Quick-Write assignment, found in Appendix L, more than half of all of the students’ written responses referenced historical sources in some fashion—even though the prompts did not require them to. In response to the second portion of the prompt, “Why would people who enjoyed the benefits of being part of the richest, the most powerful, and the freest Empire in the world, risk their lives to revolt? Why do I think this?” student G wrote, “They may have thought it was unfair about maybe how the british set the rules and probably thought the taxes were too high.” It is likely that this conclusion was reached because the student remembered that one of the newspaper clippings presented in the game emphasized the unfairness of the British government crafting the tax laws that governed the colonists. But student G did not challenge the assertion of unfairness or reference other evidence in support of it.

In another series of examples, a common thread can be seen among the many responses to the prompt, “What did the Governor of Massachusetts think of the funeral march?” Here, students referenced knowledge of Governor Thomas Hutchinson’s diary entry on Seider’s death. Nine of the twelve responding students correctly identified Hutchinson’s position of being against the funeral march based on the diary entry. However, no student critically examined that position in any way; instead, they merely
summarized it with statements such as, "The govnor said they didn't care just wanted to cause trouble over it" and "He said they shouldn't march cuase that what started in the first place." No student commented on the Governor's ideological leanings, his Loyalist bent, or his philosophical distance from the rebellious ideas spreading through Boston. Accepting historical sources without critical analysis does not fulfill Foster's (2001) third characteristic of historical empathy.

At least one example of this characteristic can be seen, however. The initial prompt in Part 4, found in Appendix J, specifically challenged students to critically examine Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre. This explicit reference resulted in students focusing their responses on the historical source provided; in fact, all of the responses' critically engaged that source, and each student was able write some representation of understanding that there were multiple ways in which the conflict could be viewed. Many students pointed out the lack of the depiction of colonist provocations and commented on contextual precursors to the conflict. For example, student B stated, "The corwd was yelling and screaming. They were also throwing snow balls. Then the solders shot some of the towns people." Student H expressed doubt with respect to the engraving:

I think that the picture captures the peripheral of what happen. But, I don't think that he actually is right. I saw that young colonists were throwing snowballs, playing with snow and then, it hit a British soldier and he took that as a cue to fight. I saw the British soldiers and they did yell but, never threaten I think they just acted mad and wanted to scare them but, then one soldier was mad and started shooting.
As a whole, the data suggest that students were not frequently pushed to critically examine historical sources but instead chose to accept different sources at face value. Students showed variability in the engagement with and recollection of sources, but there were few instances of students attempting to see the sources from different perspectives. In this manner, Foster's (2001) third characteristic is not demonstrated to a high degree.

**Infrequent exploration of one's own biases.** We can be even less generous when considering how well Mission US engendered Foster's (2001) fourth characteristic—the examination of one's own perspectives and biases and how they interplay with interpretation of the actions of historical actors. I coded only 15% of all students' responses with that characteristic. Only eleven of the twenty-one individual sets of assignment responses from students F, G, and H—the three students that completed all the assignments and were also interviewed—implied any reference at all to the students having their own mitigating or framing perspectives. Nearly all of the prompts for all of the assignments could be answered directly without students referencing themselves in an objective or even subjective manner.

Only the final question of the student interview, found in Appendix M, explicitly challenged students in this area: "Did any part of your own life help you understand the game, or the characters, or perspectives, or did you not relate it to your own life?" Students G and H used the prompt as an opportunity to explore their own perspectives. One particularly poignant response from student H was:

I actually did because sometimes I feel like I'm in battle with myself, really, or other people because some things take me to push myself and some things don't,
so I feel like this whole game represents parts of my life taking into the big, you know, number one. Like there is conflict.

This may suggest that the student made comparisons to their own life while engaged with the player’s character’s experiences, which in turn would be a useful tactic for exploring how their own experiences affected their understanding of the history presented in the game.

In addition to students G and H, two other of the six students that were interviewed referenced their own perspectives with, “When people are around but they tellin' different things, like at school, you can't always believe cause people won't all be with you, but against you” and, “It was just about the colonists and the British. We don't have that. But I felt bad when the boy who died.” The two that did not reference their own perspectives claimed outright that their lives did not interplay with their understandings of the game at all.

Despite the directness of that particular interview prompt, the vast majority of students did not take that opportunity to thoughtfully examine their own perspectives through the Mission US experience by way of responses to the multitude of other written and interview prompts. We might therefore infer that Mission US does not push students towards this somewhat sophisticated aspect of historical empathy.

**Minimal understandings of historical uncertainty.** The final of Foster’s (2001) five characteristics is that students will reach a conclusion that historical understandings are nuanced, fluid, subject to change with new evidence, and inherently based on speculation. What can we say about the Mission US experience with respect to engendering this characteristic among students? Table 3 reveals the stark reality: a mere
3% of all student response segments indicated some awareness of that aspect of historical inquiry. Only nine out of 348 responses were coded with that characteristic—leaving little doubt that *Mission US* as it was presented and used failed to lead students to that characteristic with fidelity.

We can note, however, that one particular assignment—the Part 4 Review Questions found in Appendix J—supplied five out of those nine responses. This assignment presented Revere’s engraving of the Boston Massacre and challenged students to interpret what is and what is not depicted in the scene with the prompt, “Write 3 sentences in the box about whether you think the drawing below by Paul Revere shows what actually happened at the Boston Massacre and why you think that.” Five of the eight students that constructed responses to this prompt indicated some level of understanding that this piece of historical evidence did not tell the whole story, leaving out important contextual elements that might have resulted in different perspectives on the event had they been included. For example, student D wrote, “But Paul Revere did not include that they was yelling Hugh White's name. Also he didn't include that they was throwing snowball to start it.” Student C wrote, “Part of it is true because the British was shooting at the Americans because the Americans mad at the British then British shoot at American. They American was mad at the redcoats in they throw snowball and they skits.” Other students pointed out the depiction fails to include any physical or verbal provocations that the colonists may have contributed.

It should be noted that these provocations are depicted in the game itself, and so students are comparing a genuine historical source (the engraving) with a deliberately constructed animated sequence that ultimately may or may not be historically “accurate.”
But because the entirety of the game is deliberately constructed to present multiple perspectives on historical events, and because the engraving itself may be thought of as a deliberate attempt to promote Revere's particular viewpoint, we can either accept them both as a whole and note that students were exercising Foster's (2001) fifth characteristic based on the presentation they had to work from, or we can toss everything out in totality. I choose the former because I believe the skill of determining historical inquiry to be fluid and perspective-laden can be developed no matter the level of esteem in which particular pieces of historical evidence may be held. What matters is that students exercise critical thought when examining the sources.

It is then suggested that when Mission US directly challenges students to compare and contrast a primary source with other sources—in this case the engraving and the game's depiction of events—they may be more likely to understand and acknowledge the tentative and incomplete nature of historical conclusions. We are left to speculate whether more students might have more frequently reached that conclusion had more of the prompts been set up in that manner.

Characters' desires. Table 8 reveals the frequency of student responses that were connected in some way to the desires of characters. Only one-quarter of all responses addressed that category. The prompts themselves did not frequently ask students directly what different characters wanted. For example, as we have seen previously, the Part 4 prompts related to Revere's engraving were heavily focused on pushing students towards critical source analysis but did not ask what the soldiers or Patriots may have desired. Another example is the series of prompts for Part 2, most of which task students with explaining who is at fault for Christopher Seider's death. As
most responses tended to directly address the specific prompts without supplying additional information or insight, we can see how a dearth of prompts asking about characters’ desires might impact the data.

Some prompts did tend to foster desire-based responses from students, however. In response to the prompt, “If you have sold an ad to Constance, you were told by Mr. Edes to return the money to her. Why does he refuse to print her ad?” student F replied, “He doesn't want to help people that arent patriots,” while student J wrote, “because her uncle was Thremicall lillie. And Mr. Edes did not want to be friends with him he is for England.” Both of these students correctly connected Edes’ desire to avoid contributing to the Loyalist or British causes. Another example is the prompt, “Later, the Sons of Liberty planned a funeral march for Christopher. Why did they do that?” which resulted in student H offering, “I think the Sons of Liberty did not like he was killed and wanted to show they were angry.” Student K’s phrasing was, “Some wanted to be sad but some wanted to send a message to redcoata.” These type of “Why does he?” or “Why does she?” prompts more regularly moved students towards desire-based replies.

The audio-reflection prompts found in Part 3 and Part 5 also indirectly encourage students to explore characters’ desires with such prompts as, “What does [X] think about buying and selling various goods in Boston?” and “What does [X] think about the best way to live for the future?” To the former, student E replied of Solomon Fortune, a fictional character representing freed slaves operating commercially in New England, “He just wants to work and build money.” Student H’s reply concerning the same character was, “What I think Solomon's thoughts about buying selling goods in Boston is that he does his job and he doesn't want to sell any goods right in front of British
soldiers.” Both of these students adopted the accurate interpretation that Fortune wanted to pursue commerce unimpeded. Such “What does [X] think” prompts again moved students towards desire-based replies, though not as frequently as the “Why” prompts. In some instances, however, students volunteered a character’s desire divorced from even such implicit prompts. When student C was asked in the interview, “Did the characters’ actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them?” C replied, “It was confusin’ a little bit. But the dude, the free man, Solomon, he wanted to do, he didn’t want to fight, his job was the ship, he wanted to do that.”

A few prompts directly addressed characters’ desires. During the interviews, students were asked, “What did the British want to have happen in the game? What did the colonists want to have happen?” As expected, all of the student responses to this prompt resulted in some explication of desires by students—which contributed to the Interviews being the most frequent source of such responses as Table 9 shows. Student G summed up the entire colonial conflict with the response, “The colonists wanted to make sure they can get freedom, and less taxes, while the British wanted ‘em to pay their taxes and still wanted to control the colonists.” Similarly, student D said, “The British want the townspeople to pay taxes. For tea. The Americans wanted tax free. They didn’t want the king to be in charge. The newspapers were against the king.” For the most part, however, Tables 8 and 9 show that students did not spend a large portion of their replies explaining characters’ desires.

**Characters’ motivations for conflict.** A higher frequency was found with respect to characters’ motivations for conflict, however. Table 8 shows that nearly half of all responses were coded in that way. The *Mission US* game relies heavily on conflict
to tell its story. Examples of these conflicts include the physical—the Boston Massacre, the death of Christopher Seider, and the protests over taxation—as well as the ideological—the economic battles waged among the business interests in Boston, the local rule vs. foreign rule debate, and the player’s character’s own internal conflict over joining the violent protests vs. protecting his own safety and social peace. Each of these type of conflicts are important mechanisms that the game uses to teach historical events, contexts, and perspectives.

Students tended to reveal more accurate understandings of the motivations for these conflicts than they did for characters’ desires. For example, in responding to prompts related to who was responsible for Seider’s death based on how it unfolded, student E wrote of Ebenezer Richardson, “He was angry they [the rioters] didn’t leave it [Richardson’s attempt to enforce tax laws] all alone.” Student C wrote, “They was angry [about Richardson’s work].” These plot-based prompts gave students opportunities to explain characters’ motives.

Another kind of prompt directly questioned students about motivations for conflict. The Part 3 Audio Reflections asked, “What does [X] think about protests and violence when people have different opinions?” Writing about Paul Revere, student H replied, “Also he support the ideas of protests and violence. He supports the ideas of fighting for some things.” Student E gave a slightly more specific version, responding, “He is against British and British soldiers. He hates taxes.” The Part 5 Audio Reflections added a twist of responsibility to the violence issue, asking “What does [X] think about who is responsible for violence in confrontations?” Student N said of Constance Lillie, “Why did the guards kill innocent people in the state? She didn’t want
that” while student G wrote about Solomon Fortune, “He also thinks everyone is responsible.”

**What students understood.** Table 8 reveals the vast majority of students’ responses to prompts indicated that they understood the plot points, context, and character thoughts that the *Mission US* game attempted to teach. Nearly nine out of every ten responses indicated, to some degree, an accurate view of the semi-historical semi-fictional world in the game. Some of these views were stated simply as character motivation summaries such as student L’s terse version of the player’s character’s reason for moving to Boston—“He wanted to learn to be a printer to make money in Boston.” Others correctly summarized the main idea of primary source documents in the game such as student I’s statement of Governor Hutchinson’s diary entry on Seider’s death and the Patriots funeral march—“The govnor said they didn’t care just wanted to cause trouble over it.” Still others combined plot event recall with plausible speculations about unclear events much like student H’s view of the Boston Massacre—“I saw the British soldiers and they did yell but, never threaten I think they just acted mad and wanted to scare them but, then one soldier was mad and started shooting.”

Table 9 shows a high frequency of accurate understandings in the students’ written work and audio reflections, but also shows a lower frequency in students’ interviews. One commonality between the written work and audio reflections is that students more often than not wrote or recorded single-sentence (or sentence-like) answers to each prompt wherein they did not acknowledge themselves as learners. In contrast, they spoke more voluminously per each prompt in the interviews and tended to embellish their responses more with comments about their own learning. Some of these
embellishments were declarations of their difficulty in understanding, though the accuracy of the direct response portions of these comments remained high. I expand upon this facet of the data in the following section.

**What student did not understand.** Table 8 shows that only a small percentage of students' responses revealed a misconception or misunderstanding from the game. Some such misunderstandings show that students did not accurately process certain characters’ explanations for their behaviors or beliefs. For example, when replying why the player’s character needed to move to Boston and become an apprentice, student J wrote, “because I had to get other Elders in boston to buy avertisement so that I could behave to do art and print art out.” This student has comingled the character’s initial apprenticeship task with a misrepresentation of what printers do, all the while not supplying the clear answer to the question—an answer that the player’s own character tells the player directly within the first few minutes of gameplay.

In another instance, student C wrote of Constance Lillie, declaring, “I think Constance like the British because she got a shop almost close to the British.” This was in response to the prompt, “What does Constance think about the British?” This student made a spurious connection never communicated or implied by the game itself. Similarly, when student N was asked if the soldiers threatened the townspeople during the Boston Massacre confrontation, the reply was, “It wansent fair to the people to trying to pay the tea tax.” It is impossible to know if the student thought up a yes or no response, but what we can say again is that the student made a connection that was neither declared, nor implied, nor even prompted by the *Mission US* experience. This
falls in line with Stripling’s (2005) warning that some students will elevate perspectives that they agree with and will disregard competing perspectives.

The majority of students’ responses that were coded as students not understanding some aspect of the Mission US game were found in the six student interviews, as Table 9 shows. The question, “Did the characters' actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them?” prompted four of those responses—a question designed to directly challenge students’ understandings. Responses coded as (i) ranged from student C’s “It was confusin’ a little bit” to student D’s “Mostly did not make sense” to student N’s “No. Confusing.” Even so, students sometimes expanded upon these misunderstandings by showing that they did understand some things correctly. For example, student C added, “But the dude, the free man, Solomon, he wanted to do, he didn't want to fight, his job was the ship, he wanted to do that.” In the context of the game’s fictional presentation, this is entirely correct. O’Brien (1998) and Tunnell and Ammon (1993) stressed caution when using fictional narratives as a means to develop historical understandings among students because it can compromise historical accuracy. However, the few misunderstandings that students exhibited in the data did not appear to materially impact their overall understandings of characters’ actions and the contextual interplays.

Reflecting upon both the high-level and detail-oriented analyses of the data from the viewpoint of both Foster’s (2001) characteristics and the emergent thematic areas, we can again turn to the four ideas I presented earlier. The Mission US experience did not uniformly engender each of Foster’s characteristics and as the complexity of those characteristics increased, their presence in the evidence decreased. Additionally,
students' understandings of motivations for conflict appeared more readily than understandings of characters' desires and student understood far more than they misunderstood.

**Limitations of Data Generation and Analysis**

Despite the fact that I consider this study to have successfully answered its research question through the use of thick description of the students’ experiences, there are limitations that must be considered. One limitation is related to the data generation approach. All students worked on written and audio-recorded *Mission US* assignments that formed a substantial portion of the data collected. However, of the sixteen student participants, only three were present on all days of the study and therefore completed each assignment. The other thirteen students failed to attempt or to complete one or more of the assignments. Additionally, for the sake of not heavily disrupting the educational environment, I interviewed only six students. This means that the collected data was not uniformly balanced across all student participants. Conclusions drawn may well have been different had more students been present each day to contribute more to the pool of data because additional data may well have altered my perceptions of the students’ experiences. Perceptions are at the heart of the interpretivist paradigm used in this study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The other limitation is related to the lack of exploration of the students’ background experiences. I acknowledge that the participants' backgrounds were not brought to light throughout the course of this inquiry. As the researcher, I do not know what prior experiences the students may have had with gaming in their social studies education nor what other pedagogies they experienced or were most comfortable with in
prior learning. I do not know the extent of their familiarity with the time period depicted in *Mission US* nor whether they previously developed some level of historical empathy related to other historical contexts. It may well be that the answers to these kinds of questions could reveal new or different interpretations of the participants' experiences with *Mission US*, but as it stands I can only analyze the students' experiences that I came to know in our limited time together.
Chapter Five: Discussion

The data analysis revealed many instances of students using characteristics of historical empathy as presented by Foster (2001)—each of the five characteristics appeared multiple times in the data. The more complex the characteristic, however, the less frequently it appeared in the data. Additionally, students understood the vast majority of the game’s content, having little trouble grappling with characters’ actions, event timelines, and perspectives in the game. Misunderstandings were limited in scope and frequency. In both their written and spoken responses to prompts, students tended to comment more frequently on the historical actors’ motivations for conflict than on the actors’ primary desires.

Alignment with Historical Empathy Research

This study explored the potential development and use of historical empathy by students via the Mission US experience. It is therefore reasonable to ask: How well do the results of this study align with previous research in the area of historical empathy? First, we can explore how well the Mission US experience fits with the prominent definitions of historical empathy. We can then consider how it leverages recommended techniques for using historical empathy as an instructional approach. An additional concern is whether it is vulnerable to some of the criticisms of historical empathy. Finally, we can reflect on whether the kinds of tasks that challenge students in Mission US are of a nature that can lead to successful historical learning.
**Definitions of historical empathy.** The common element of multiple definitions of historical empathy in the literature is that it is concerned with understanding the motivations and contexts that affect decisions made by people in history (Brooks, 2009; Cunningham, 2009; Endacott, 2010; Yilmaz, 2007). These motivations and contexts are considered to have influenced the perspectives of historical actors and therefore the decisions they made. The data from this study suggest that *Mission US* engaged the students with grappling with those ideas. Students frequently understood both characters' desires and their motivations for conflict—the two key character elements presented in the game. Students also overwhelmingly understood the contextual points presented in the game: conflicts, timelines, event sequences, and cause and effect relationships.

Barton and Levstik (2004) expanded that common definition of historical empathy to include the notion that students should actually come to care about the historical actors and their decisions and be motivated to improve present society based on what the students themselves feel about the past. Students' responses did not reveal any indications of that notion. Barton and Levstik's view clearly aligns with a critical humanism paradigm and carries an intense obligation for action that *Mission US* did not engender in students.

Historical empathy as an understanding is contrasted by historical empathy as a process. Lee and Shemilt (2011) favored the former—that history empathy is inherently tied to specific historical actors, time periods, and contexts and not a skill to be developed. Colby (2010) and Foster and Yeager (1998) favored the latter, stating that historical empathy is a progressive sequence of tasks that students can become better at with practice. In this study, students certainly came to understand the *whys* that the
particular historical actors depicted in the game, as the data analysis in Chapter Four revealed. At the same time, the data suggest that students more frequently demonstrated certain tasks associated with historical empathy by Foster (2001) than they did others—wherein the simpler cognitive tasks in Foster’s model appeared more frequently in their responses than the more complex tasks. This may suggest that students engaged with the formative building-blocks of historical empathy—which Atkinson (2010) and McCall (2011) suggested is an advantage of using historical role-playing games for learning—but may not have readily reached a full expression of historical empathy as Foster would have described it.

From those two perspectives, the data fits either understanding of historical empathy as a specific understanding or historical empathy as a process. Because the teacher and I did not challenge students to engage in historical empathy with other actors or contexts, I cannot determine if the students developed historical empathy for this game only or if they began developing a skill that they can use in any number of future experiences.

**Techniques for using historical empathy.** Researchers offer many suggestions for instructional activities that can be used to guide students towards historical empathy. Tunnell and Ammon (1993) and O’Brien (1998) suggested that using fictional media that combines historical events and actors with fictional characters can engage students by presenting perspectives to them in deliberate and personal ways. *Mission US* is designed to do exactly this; the player’s character is entirely fictional. Nat Wheeler makes his way through a world inhabited by a mix of genuine and fictitious actors that serve to illustrate for students a multitude of perspectives on the colonial conflicts from the era.
Doppen (2000) and Klages (1999) offered the use of guided inquiry questions as a means to help students analyze primary sources and therefore reach understandings of historical actors’ motivations. Students who engage with the Mission US assignment prompts are repeatedly challenged in this manner; they are asked to justify their conclusions with evidence from the game and to draw upon observations of characters’ behaviors and statements. Kohlmeier (2006) suggested that students should be given chances to discuss their responses to such guided inquiry questions with their classmates in order to enhance their understandings. Jensen (2008) offered a similar notion that students should be challenged to debate the competing perspectives of historical actors. In this study, however, the teacher and I did not select Mission US assignments that required student discussion and debate and therefore I cannot reach conclusions about such techniques.

Yeager, Foster, and Maley (1998) concluded that students should be exposed to a large variety of primary and secondary sources in order to construct rich explanations of historical actors’ actions. In Mission US, students are shown such sources in abundance. Newspaper editorials and advertisements, personal letters, a diary entry, a Patriot song, eyewitness testimony from court documents, and more are presented in context to help students understand multiple competing perspectives. This approach is supported by Stripling (2011), Klages (1999), Riley (2001) and Foster and Yeager (1998) as an effective means to promote historical empathy.

Finally, Foster (2001), Brooks and Klages (1999), and Kohlmeier (2006) recommended that students should write narratives that explain and explore historical actors’ motivations for decisions and how context interplayed with those motivations.
Foster considers this to be one of the final steps of using historical empathy for learning in a classroom. For this study, the teacher and I did not task students to develop such narratives. The prompts we chose and used were narrowly tailored and not expansive enough for students to synthesize the depth and breadth of their experiences. Under Foster’s viewpoint, therefore, students may not have reached a full expression of historical empathy in this context.

**Criticisms of historical empathy.** Historical empathy is not universally accepted as an effective or desirable approach to history learning. One criticism is that historical empathy encourages students to use imagination rather than analysis while learning. Lipscomb (2002) and Lee and Ashby (2001) suggested that historical empathy can tempt students to fill in their lack of detailed knowledge with imagination rather than seeking clarification through analyzing historical evidence. In that sense, they claim, historical empathy becomes nothing more than supposition that places the students’ own perspectives at the forefront. I suggest that *Mission US* does not fall victim to this, at least in totality, because some of the prompts to which students responded were carefully worded to challenge students to present the characters’ perspectives as revealed by the game and the historical evidence. For example, part of the Part 4 Review Questions ask students, “Did the crowd provoke the soldiers? What I saw and heard in the game makes me say this” and “Did the soldiers threaten the townspeople? What I saw and heard in the game makes me say this.” It is certainly possible that in some responses students were using their imagination rather than strictly relying on the evidence presented, but we can say that the design of *Mission US* leans towards the “imagination restrained by evidence” side of the criticism, as suggested by Davis (2001, p. 3).
Lee and Shemilt (2011) suggested that the empathy portion of historical empathy is looked upon unfavorably by some researchers who suggest that it engenders sympathy for historical actors on one side of a conflict more than another. Did the data suggest that students tended to favor one side of the colonial conflict over the other? We can turn to the Part 2 Writing Prompt and Part 4 Review Questions for insights. In the former, students are asked about the death of Christopher Seider—who was responsible and what the motivations for the funeral march were. The breadth of responses from students, as explored in Chapter Four, show that students range from blaming the protesting crowd to the Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson to a combination of both. Further, many students commented that the funeral march could also have been an incitement to further conflict as well as a peaceful expression of mourning. In Part 4, students seek to explain the causes of the Boston Massacre. They cite actions on both sides—taunting, stick-brandishing, and snowball throwing on the protestors’ side and quick-tempered overreactions on the British soldiers’ side. These two sets of responses suggest, therefore, that students did not feel an overwhelming sympathy or understanding for a particular side in relation to the other.

A third criticism relates to proficiency. Doppen (2002) and Davis (2001) stated that historical empathy is a challenge for students and that they can only become reasonably proficient at it with continued practice. Students’ experiences in this study were limited to one application of historical empathy as an instructional approach. We see from the data that, at least under Foster’s (2001) view of the process, students may not have achieved a full expression of historical empathy, even if they made progress toward doing so. In that sense, Doppen’s and Davis’s criticism may be accurate.
Without further challenging these same students to develop and use historical empathy in other learning experiences, we cannot say how much their proficiency with the approach might be affected.

A final criticism of historical empathy as an instructional approach is that it is far too complex to be implemented with fidelity by anyone other than professional historians (Davis, 2001). In this view, students (and their teachers) that lack deep understandings of social, psychological, political, and other issues that affect decision-making of historical actors cannot possibly reach accurate and nuanced conclusions about the *whys* of those actors. Simply stated, historical empathy is strictly for professional scholars. There is nothing inherent in *Mission US* or this study that can refute such a criticism; one either accepts the premise as true or rejects it as false. Clearly this study agrees with the idea that historical empathy is not restricted to professional historians, as do Foster (2001), Colby (2010), and others.

*Mission US* and historical learning. Geneser (2005), Brooks (2009), and Colby (2010) found that using historical empathy as an instructional approach can lead to greater student learning than lecture-based methods. This may be because students can add historical actors' perspectives to their existing understandings of dates, places, and events in a way that deepens knowledge and introduces nuance as suggested by Kohlmeier (2006) and Brooks (2001). When challenged to explain the actions of historical actors by way of internal motivation and external contexts, students can reach more realistic understandings of history (Colby, 2010; Endacott, 2010; Kohlmeier, 2006). If we accept, based on the data, that this *Mission US* experience for students moved them through the process of historical empathy as Foster (2001) described it to some degree,
then we might infer that students did reach realistic understandings of the colonial tensions of the era in question. Inference is not evidence, however. The teacher and I did not assess students’ historical knowledge in a summative way. Instead, the students’ responses to the numerous prompts acted as formative measures that illustrated their thinking processes, their perspectives, and their conclusions as they proceeded through the six-day study. From that lens, many of the students reached specific understandings of why there was conflict between Patriots, Loyalists, and the Crown and learned many reasons why each side took the actions they did.

Historical empathy engenders complex rather than simplistic thought—nuanced complexity rather than rigid certainty. Students that exercise historical empathy are therefore engaged in critical thinking that is essential to learning (Brooks, 2011; Colby, 2010; Geneser, 2005; Kohlmeier, 2006; Lee & Shemilt, 2011; Stripling, 2011). Huculak (2001) stated that using historical empathy as an instructional approach can help students with knowledge retention; Kohlmeier (2006) and Waring and Robinson (2010) agreed and added that students could more ably use that knowledge in new situations. Geneser’s study concluded that students’ historical thinking skills grew as a result of their use of historical empathy and that students’ interest in historical inquiry rose. Again, we can make an informed speculation about student learning in this study—students may well remember their conclusions about the colonial era conflicts and may in future instances apply their knowledge when studying conflicts in other time periods.

What specific aspects of the Mission US experience contribute to positive learning experiences for students with respect to historical empathy? How might it need to be adapted for richer success? What implications might these aspects hold for other
developers of historical learning games? These questions are explored in the following section.

**Mission US, Game Development, and History Education**

*Mission US* shows how role-playing, interactivity, the integration of historical sources, visual and aural aesthetics, and a commitment to storytelling can come together to form an effective and engaging historical learning tool for students. It balances freedom and choice with directed narrative paths as well as historical accuracy with historical fiction. It approaches historical learning as an end goal, not an afterthought, and progresses towards that end goal by complementing gameplay with thought-provoking and rigorous learning activities. It even provides numerous pedagogical options and recommendations to teachers for its use in a variety of contexts. All of this helps make *Mission US* a powerful way to implement Foster's (2001) notions of historical empathy in classrooms.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of *Mission US* is the extensive collection of classroom resources provided via the associated website. The design team created a vast collection of documents to prepare students and teachers before gameplay as well to support diverse learning needs through a large selection of learning and assessment activities to be used outside of the game. For example, the "Essential Questions" and "Top 5 Things to Know Before You Play" documents provide the students with important ideas and background knowledge regarding the historical timeframe leading up to the *Mission US* narrative—which fulfills one of Foster's (2001) recommendations for classroom use of historical empathy. Teachers themselves can prepare by examining the documents "Educator's Primer on the Historical Period" and "Timeline of Historical
Events Before, During, and After Mission 1.” From a pedagogical lens, teachers can read about various implementation models in the “Models of Instruction” document.

Instructionally, the provided activities emphasize critical thinking, document analysis, vocabulary development, and writing skill development. Activities are organized to correspond with different parts of the gameplay. For example, the Part 1 activities challenge students to translate “The Liberty Song” to modern English, to work on vocabulary via cloze passages, and to make comparisons between the characters’ situations and students’ own lives by way of writing prompts. Other activities prompt students to have an in-class discussion on rights and freedom, to interpret the words of the Declaration of Independence, and to produce a multimedia presentation around any of five different perspective-laden topics connecting colonial life with modern times. Many of these activities fulfill the recommendation of the National Council for the Social Studies (1991) that middle-school students should explore differing viewpoints and moral dilemmas during the course of their history education. Other activities leverage prompts related to analyzing and responding to primary source documents, which Doppen (2000) and Klages (1999) claimed contribute to students understanding the whys of historical actors’ decision-making.

One shortcoming in the Mission US instructional resources may be the low number of explicit opportunities that students are provided to discuss and defend their historical interpretations with their classmates. Foster (2001) recommended that students have such opportunities in pursuit of the full development of historical empathy. Additionally, Kohlmeier (2006) noted in her study of a 9th-grade history class that having class discussions of that nature improved students’ development and use of historical
empathy. Teachers who adopt Mission US as an instructional approach may do well to supplement students’ experiences with more discussions as only one such activity has been designed by the Mission US team. However, the individual reflection activities present in the resources can easily be adapted to be used as discussion prompts.

Another area for adaptation that may need to be considered is to have students play the game together rather than individually. Research from both Wood (2011) and Echeverri and Sadler (2001) suggested that students can be more successful in both gameplay and post-gameplay assessments when allowed to play in teams. The Mission US “Models of Instruction” document offers paired gameplay as one option for teachers to consider; teachers would need to determine the best way to ensure that paired students are still getting benefits from the associated activities and assignments.

Additionally, there are no existing activities within the Mission US experience that facilitate the writing of personal narratives by students. Foster (2001) recommended that students engage in a reflective writing process in which they detail how their thinking about the historical actors and events changed over the course of the historical inquiry. Such reflection may well prompt students to further refine their understandings of historical actors’ motivations and the contexts that influenced them. More importantly, however, it may help students to reach the most complex of Foster’s characteristics—understanding that one’s personal perspectives are heavily entwined with historical inquiry and that historical knowledge is fluid and tentative as they currently exist. Teachers seeking to move their students to those understandings would need to supplement the Mission US curriculum with a heavily scaffolded process to enable students to build towards the construction of those personal narratives.
The total package for educators that is the *Mission US* experience may form a solid foundation for using historical empathy as a way to teach students about colonial tensions in the 1700s. It allows students to wrestle with perspectives, motivations, conflicts, and contexts that challenge them to understand history in new ways. This study revealed that students were highly engaged with the *Mission US* content and exhibited Foster’s (2001) characteristics of historical empathy. Following Foster’s recommendations for the development and use of historical empathy in classrooms, *Mission US* interested the students, prepared them with background knowledge, and offered students chances to examine primary and secondary historical sources. *Mission US* helped scaffold students’ thinking from basic to complex questioning and analysis through its varied assignments and prompts and challenged students to develop their ideas and perspectives in writing as both Foster (2001) and Saye and Brush (2002) recommended.

*Mission US* may need to be supplemented or adapted as described previously, but it gives teachers a valuable foundation from which to begin. Developers of other historical education games would do well to adopt *Mission US*’s best feature—its collection of instructional documents designed for classroom use—in their efforts to make their own games more effective and more appealing insofar as giving students opportunities to develop historical empathy in classrooms.

I have heretofore suggested that the *Mission US* experience can be a powerful way to engage students in the development and use of historical empathy, which in turn can lead to substantive historical learning by students. A question that naturally follows
is thus: In what ways can school principals promote and support the use of *Mission US* and historical empathy as an instructional approach among their teachers?

**Educational Leadership and the Implementation of *Mission US***

In order to make sense of a principal’s contributions to the instruction that occurs in teachers’ classrooms, I will adopt and explicate a framework for understanding instructional leadership. With such a framework, we can explore the specific tasks that an effective principal might engage in for the purpose of promoting and supporting the use of *Mission US*. DiPaola and Hoy (2008) developed an integrated model of instructional leadership that is well suited to such exploration.

**The DiPaola and Hoy model.** The three roles of supervision, evaluation, and professional development form the integrated core of DiPaola and Hoy’s (2008) model thusly:

The focus of supervision is informal, supportive, collegial, and driven by the goal of improvement of teaching and learning. In some contrast, evaluation is formal, judgmental, and hierarchical, yet driven by the same objective: to improve teaching and learning. Supervision and evaluation, however, are both wedded to professional development—a key mechanism through which teachers improve their instruction and ultimately increase student learning. (p. 26)

In DiPaola and Hoy’s (2008) view, supervision involves the design of activities that will ultimately improve teaching and learning and therefore student achievement. It also involves creating environments in which teachers can be effective, can increase their own learning, and can safely experiment and innovate with new practices. All of this
requires that principals act as supportive colleagues of teachers and that principals recognize the direct impact on students' learning that teachers have.

The evaluative role is defined as one in which the principal wields authority to assess the competency of teachers and therefore to affect retention, promotion, and dismissal possibilities. This role carries responsibilities for the safe and effective operation of an entire school building, not just an individual classroom, and therefore it can sometimes clash with the supervisory aspects mentioned previously. An effective principal can balance these two roles in ways that benefit both individual teachers and the school (and therefore the school's students); a lack of balance may disrupt the school's climate and negatively impact student learning (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

The professional development role for principals attempts to put into practice solutions identified for problems that the supervisory and evaluative roles may reveal. Principals have a responsibility to orchestrate the professional learning of their teachers in ways that will ultimately result in improved student learning. This may involve designing or coordinating training sessions, coaching or mentoring relationships, collegial teaming, curriculum analysis, or any number of other approaches. Through all aspects, principals must act in the same development-minded manner with their teachers that they expect their teachers will act with their students (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

*Mission US and supervision.* Creating an environment in which teachers can leverage new or uncommon instructional practices without fear of failure or formal admonition, presuming they are implemented with the improvement of student learning in mind, is a key responsibility of the supervisory role that DiPaola and Hoy (2008) suggested. We have seen that the use of historical empathy as an instructional approach
is both uncommon and subject to criticism (Foster & Yeager, 1998; Colby, 2010). Adding the use of educational gaming to instruction creates an even rarer approach (Hutchinson, 2007; McCall, 2011). Principals that desire to promote the use of Mission US in classrooms as a vehicle for teaching history should therefore communicate to teachers their support for the innovation required in both words and in actions. They can enhance the collegial climate (and therefore reduce teachers’ fear of admonition) by acting as a collaborative partner, learning about historical empathy, instructional gaming, and Mission US alongside the teachers. They can publically recognize teachers among their colleagues for taking innovative risks and can highlight the student learning successes that follow from innovative approaches. DiPaola and Hoy ultimately saw the supervisory role as a facilitator or caretaker of teacher learning—learning that is essential for an uncommon, experimental approach like Mission US. Principals should thus enact steps that emphasize a culture of healthy professional exploration and development.

The effective allocation of sufficient resources, including time, is another key element of the supervisory role of a principal (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Principals can create structures that allow teachers the freedom to explore the Mission US approach within and beyond the confines of their allocated instructional planning opportunities. The vast collection of instructional resources that accompany the Mission US game can save teachers time insofar as obviating the need to develop their own curricular materials, but teachers with little experience with historical empathy or instructional gaming would need more time to acclimate themselves to those approaches. Principals may address this by shifting other responsibilities that teachers may have or arranging for the assistance of other staff to temporarily take over traditional instruction while the teachers engage in
professional development with the Mission US experience. Allocating sufficient existing computer resources for Mission US use is another task that principals may need to use their influence or authority to enact for the benefit of the students.

**Mission US and evaluation.** The evaluative role of principals in school buildings can be challenging for those principals that see themselves as exclusively on the side of promoting teacher excellence through a collegial culture (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). This is because evaluations tend to be summative in nature and can result in high-stakes consequences for teachers, including retention or dismissal. DiPaola and Hoy emphasized, however, that evaluation itself can and should be directly tied to efforts to improve teaching and learning. It is from that aspect that we can explore how evaluation can play a role in implementing Mission US.

Evaluation may involve recognizing and diagnosing an instructional problem in a classroom in a formal sense. A teacher may not be effective with particular teaching approaches and therefore student learning may be negatively impacted, all as revealed through tools such as a principal’s classroom observations, student achievement data, or teacher self-reflections. Determining the best way to formally address and fix the instructional problem is an evaluative responsibility that falls to the principal (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). From the perspective of this study, one may imagine an example in which students failed to learn historical content successfully due to a teacher’s didactic instructional approach. A principal exercising an evaluative role might formally prescribe a change in the instructional approach to one that leverages historical empathy by way of Mission US. Merely prescribing change is not sufficient, according to DiPaola and Hoy, however; their integrated model suggests that the principal would then have a
responsibility to arrange the professional development needed for the teacher to improve the student learning outcomes.

In addition to using evaluation as a bridge to required professional development, another mechanism by which principals could connect evaluation and Mission US is to use the student work generated through the Mission US assignments as the basis to measure student learning or to demonstrate teacher effectiveness. Under certain formal evaluation systems, teachers are required to build portfolios of student work that represent the teacher’s impact on student learning during the course of the evaluation period (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Principals that balance the supervisory, evaluative, and professional development roles could suggest to teachers that the collection of essays, multi-media projects, short-answer components, and reflections generated by students engaged with the Mission US experience could act as a diverse and illustrative set of material to showcase teacher competency and innovation. Doing so would simultaneously fulfill the need to have authentic documentation of student learning for evaluation purposes and promote a culture where innovation in instructional approaches is encouraged.

Mission US and professional development. DiPaola and Hoy (2008) saw professional development as the manifestation of the principal’s responsibilities to both supervise and evaluate. They stated that in either of those two roles, the effective principal must design and implement learning opportunities for teachers that improve professional practice and therefore improve student learning—informally in the case of the supervisory role and formally in the case of the evaluative role.
Foster (2001) advocated that teachers take a systematic approach to implementing historical empathy, one that encompasses thoughtful and detail-oriented planning, appropriate scaffolding of instruction, and flexibility to adapt to emergent student needs. Lee and Probert (2010), Watson (2010), and McCall (2011) echoed those recommendations with respect to the use of gaming in instruction. A principal seeking to establish the use of Mission US in classrooms should therefore take into account her teachers’ competency levels in those areas in order to design and implement relevant professional development opportunities. Those opportunities can take many forms, including learning sessions, support staff pairings, curriculum analysis exercises, and examination of student work (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

For planning purposes, teachers could be given a chance to reach their own informed understandings of how Mission US integrates student engagement, analysis and commentary on historical sources, a powerful historical fact/fiction balance, and reflection in order to help students develop historical understandings. This may be arranged by a principal bringing in an expert in the field or a fellow teacher that already implemented Mission US to facilitate an exploratory learning session with teachers. Teachers could then explore the pedagogical recommendations, historical source supplements, and diverse learning activities available from the Mission US curriculum in order to choose from among them in a way that best addresses their particular students’ learning needs. Additionally, this is the time in which planned instruction could be deliberately scaffolded to account for the increasing complexity of thought that effective historical empathy requires of students. Principals may support this by tasking
instructional coaches or content specialists to collaboratively work with the teachers
during the planning process.

Helping teachers to be flexible during the implementation of *Mission US* could be
accomplished by principals arranging for ongoing co-teaching in the classroom by
support staff or by ensuring that teachers’ planning partners regularly gather to examine
student work and assess student progress while the use *Mission US* is in-progress. Being
able to adapt and alter instruction fluidly is a skill that individual teachers may struggle
with; pairing teachers with master teachers or other expert mentors is one way that
principals can provide professional growth in that area (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

Ultimately, implementing the recommendations of Foster (2001), Klages (1999),
or Stripling (2011) for the use of historical empathy in classrooms or the
recommendations of Watson (2010), McCall (2011), or Prensky (2010) for the use of
gaming for educational outcomes relies on the direct interactions of teachers with their
students. The competencies of teachers in those areas, however, directly affect student
learning, and therefore principals have a responsibility to establish a culture for
professional learning in their schools. That culture is built through a balance of
principals acting as supervisors, as evaluators, and as professional developers (DiPaola &
Hoy, 2008).

**Future Research**

With continued emphasis from federal and state agencies on reading and
mathematics achievement, school divisions may be pressured to further reduce the time
spent deeply exploring history with students (A Vision of Powerful Teaching and
Pedagogical approaches such as the one used in this study that take longer periods of time relative to quicker fact presentation and recall approaches may not find widespread use in classrooms. However, in contexts where there is time and support to implement approaches like this, how might the study of using gaming to develop historical empathy expand?

One area to be considered is to revisit Mission US itself. The game module used in this study was the first developed under the Mission US umbrella—"Mission 1: For Crown or Colony?" However, at the time of publication, there are three additional missions available. "Mission 2: Flight to Freedom" explores the experiences of a runaway slave in the 1850s (Mission US Flight to Freedom, n.d.). "Mission 3: A Cheyenne Odyssey" follows the maturation of a Cheyenne boy on the central plains in the late 1800s (Mission US A Cheyenne Odyssey, n.d.). "Mission 4: City of Immigrants" features an adolescent Jewish Russian immigrant finding her way in 1907's New York (Mission US City of Immigrants, n.d.). The yet to be released "Mission 5: The Hardest Times" will explore farming life in the 1930s Dust Bowl and Great Depression. Any or all of these modules could be used in middle and high school classrooms to further explore their effects on the historical empathy of students. As the experience of the game development team grows, as the games become longer and better enriched by primary source documents, and as the characters and their experiences become more contextually diverse, one wonders if the games can become more effective at pushing students towards the final few characteristics of Foster's (2001) historical empathy interpretation—characteristics that the participants in this study displayed infrequently through the use of Mission 1. Lee and Shemilt (2011) stated that historical empathy is specifically tied to
the historical actors, events, and contexts being studied, and so exploring other students’ experiences with the other missions might yield fruitful parallel insights.

Additionally, could the same students that participated in this study revisit *Mission US* in their high school years in a way that explores whether students’ academic sophistication and cognitive growth affects the development of historical empathy? Perhaps these same students, armed with more fully-developed reading skills, more comfort with higher-level thinking, a greater awareness of historical contexts, and a more defined sense of identity, would more readily exhibit Foster’s (2001) characteristics when challenged again with *Mission US* and its associated assignments. From Colby’s (2010) perspective, challenging the same students with more opportunities to develop historical empathy might well lead to greater successes in the long-term because students would refine their skills over time.

Alternatively, one could consider the question of what types of social studies games are better than others with respect to developing historical empathy in students. Do complex society-building games such as *Civilization* facilitate historical empathy better than character-specific role-playing games such as *Mission US*? Does the relative cultural familiarity or unfamiliarity between the gamer and the game’s context affect the game’s effectiveness—e.g., does a British school child develop historical empathy more effectively or less effectively when playing *Muck and Brass* compared to *Darfur is Dying*? These kinds of questions and more could be explored in future research that would greatly expand the field of knowledge associated with gaming, social studies education, and historical empathy.

**Conclusion**
There are several parting thoughts that I hold as a result of this study. First, I am confident that the students’ experiences with *Mission US* were engaging, meaningful, and enjoyable. They eagerly progressed through the game during each class session and dutifully attempted to complete their written assignments. They would discuss the game between class sessions and would ask their teacher regularly when the next gaming opportunity would occur. After the conclusion of the study, many asked their teacher if they could play two of the other *Mission US* modules on their own both in school and at home. This illustrates Watson’s (2010) point that role-playing games can motivate players to seek greater understandings through gameplay.

Second, I am convinced that the setup of the *Mission US* experience—gaming enriched by primary historical sources followed by thought provoking and reflective assignments—did indeed contribute to the development of historical empathy in the students. Students were not only challenged to make decisions as the lead character, they also had to base those decisions on the interplay between what they wanted, what the other characters wanted, and the surrounding contexts. I believe that students came to know, at some level, why most of the characters acted as they did. The students developed an understanding of how interrelated tensions in the colonial period eventually sparked civil unrest and violence. On the other hand, I also believe that not all the students reached Foster’s (2001) full conception of historical empathy as the manifestation of five particular behaviors. Evidence of the complex thought needed to understand how one’s own personal perspective colors historical inquiry and how historical conclusions are tentative, subject to revision, and highly fluid was not frequently apparent in the students’ written or spoken words. Perhaps this is a direct
result of *Mission US* or its assignments, or the result of the students’ ages or cognitive sophistication, or the result of other unknown factors. What I can suggest confidently, though, is that students grew in their understandings of the *whys* of historical actors and how contexts interplay in the colonial period. If I am correct, my view aligns with Brooks (2009), Colby (2010), Geneser (2005) and Lee and Shemilt (2011) stating that students reach deeper historical understandings through engagement in historical empathy compared to didactic teaching approaches.

Third, I believe that there is a rich and untapped field of knowledge to be explored in the area of gaming and history education. If we desire that our students acquire the complex skills needed to engage in historical inquiry with passion, thoughtfulness, and rigor, I believe that we should leverage approaches that hook students through innovative multimedia methodologies. Video games may well function as the bridge connecting interest with inquiry (Gee, n.d. a). We should continue to expand our research base in this area—not for the sake of the knowledge alone, but also to better equip our educators with tools and methods that improve student learning.

Lastly, I believe that as a researcher I have been profoundly affected by this inquiry. Watching students confidently testify to a judge what they saw and heard leading up to the Boston Massacre... observing students cringe at the news that Christopher Seider, a real-life boy in colonial Boston, had died in a riot... seeing students faces light up as they made Nat Wheeler’s final life-changing decision at the end of the game—these experiences showed me that students do indeed have passions for historical learning no matter how we might traditionally think otherwise. The passions manifest when the students can absorb and wrestle with the learning in engaging, interactive, and
story-like ways. Technology can provide such experiences if we commit ourselves to developing them with the sort of educationally rigorous and historically conscious methods used by the team responsible for Mission US. Seeing it all come together and result in students growing and using historical empathy makes me proud to have been a part of these students’ experiences and eager to use tools like Mission US with other students in the future.
Appendix A: Individual Student Interview Questions

Engagement

How engaged were you while playing Mission US?

Did you play Mission US outside of class? If so, why? If not, why not?

How engaged were you while doing the various writing assignments and other non-game-playing activities?

Historical Empathy

What were some of the disagreements between and among the colonists?

What did the various sides hope to accomplish?

How easy or difficult was it to understand the motivations the characters held?

Did the characters’ actions always make sense given their motivations and what was happening around them? How could you tell?

Why do you think the characters believed what they did and acted the way they did?

Did any aspect of your own life help you to understand the perspectives or actions of the characters?
Appendix B: Teacher Interview Questions

Engagement

How engaged were your students while playing Mission US?

How engaged were your students while doing the various writing assignments and other non-game-playing activities?

Historical Empathy

How well did your students come to understand the motivations held by the various characters in Mission US?

How well did your students make sense of the ‘big picture’ of the game and the historical issues with which the characters dealt?

How would you describe your students’ levels of historical empathy, with respect to the late Colonial America time period, at the conclusion of this project?
Appendix C: Sample Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Parents/Guardians of Students Enrolled in the OPS Orange After Day program to Join the Mission US Research Project

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:
- Information Sheet (to share information about the project with you)
- Certificate of Consent (for a signature if you agree that your child may participate)

Part I: Information Sheet

My name is James Maxlow, and I work with technology in Apple Public Schools (OPS). In trying to provide the best educational services to your child, I hope to team up with your child’s teacher to use an educational video game called Mission US to help your child learn about American history. This project is a research effort I am leading under the supervision of the College of William and Mary as well as OPS. I hope to publish the experiences of the students and teacher with the game for other school divisions to learn from.

I believe that we can improve student learning and achievement through the use of educational games. I believe this project will benefit your child as well as school divisions across the country and so I hope you will accept this invitation. Because this is a research project supervised by a university and because its results will be published for the public to read, I must ask your permission to allow your child to participate. You have the right to grant permission for your child to participate or to refuse permission.

This project will occur in the Orange After Day program at Orange Middle School. I hope that using the Mission US game will be a great experience for the students. Your child’s teacher will work with students for approximately two weeks using the game as a learning tool. While that is happening, I will be in the classroom taking notes on what I see. I will also take notes on the writing assignments that students complete to go along with the game. I will also listen to audio-recorded reflections students make each week. Finally, I will interview six individual students at the end of the two weeks about what they learned and how engaged they were. The six students will be selected to represent a range of engagement levels with the game—from students that showed a high level of engagement to students that showed a low level of engagement. Your child may or may not be selected for an interview, but there will be no negative consequence for not being selected.

When I write about what happened and what students thought about the project, I will describe actual events and use actual quotes from students. I pledge to exercise confidentiality with respect to student information, however. No student’s name or identifying details will ever be published—every effort to keep students’ names known only to me and to the classroom teachers will be made. For example, I might write this in the
published material: “Student #8 said that he thinks the game is very engaging.” Any copies I have of students’ work or audio-recordings will be destroyed after the final report is finished.

You have the right to take time to consider my request, to talk with anyone you wish about it, and to ask me questions about it. If you do not understand anything about this invitation, I will be happy to speak with you about it and further explain the project as well as to answer any questions you may have. You also have the right to refuse permission for your child to participate. If you refuse, your child will still receive the full benefits of the Orange After Day program.

If you agree to let your child participate, then your child still has to decide whether to agree or refuse. I can only begin if both you and your child agree. Also, if you and your child agree at the start and then change your mind, you can take back permission anytime. Please think about this invitation, and, if you agree, fill out the form below and return it to your child’s Orange After Day teacher.

Contacting Me
If you have questions or comments about this invitation, you and your parent or guardian can contact me anytime by phone. You and your parent or guardian can also meet with me at the OPS Administration Building if you would like, or speak to the supervising professor.

James Maxlow [Contact info]
Mark Hofer, Ph.D., supervising professor, College of William and Mary [Contact info]

Part II: Certificate of Consent

“I have been asked to give my permission for my child to participate in the Mission US research project at Orange Middle School. I have read the Information Sheet. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions I may have had are now answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily for my child to participate in this research project. I understand I can receive a copy of this signed form if I request one.”

Parent/Guardian Name (printed): ____________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Name (signed): ____________________________________________

Date: ___________________________ I request a copy of this signed form: ___
Appendix D: Sample Informed Assent Form

Informed Assent Form for Students Enrolled in the
OPS Orange After Day program to Join the Mission US Research Project

This Informed Assent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet (to share information about the project with you)
- Certificate of Assent (for a signature if you agree to participate)

Part I: Information Sheet

My name is James Maxlow, and I work with technology in Apple Public Schools (OPS). I want to help provide the best education to you and your classmates, and therefore I want to team up with your teacher to use a video game called Mission US to help you learn about American history. Your parent or guardian has also received a permission form asking that you be allowed to participate. In order for me to work with you and your teacher on the project, you and your parent must both agree. The reason that I need to ask your permission is because the project will be supervised by a university and because I will write a report about what happens for the public to read.

We can learn a lot by using video games and so I hope you will accept this invitation. You have the right to join this project and the right not to join. You and your parent or guardian must both agree in order for you to participate. Nothing bad will happen if you choose not to participate with the project.

This project will occur in the Orange After Day program at Orange Middle School. I hope that using the Mission US game will be a great experience for you. Your teacher will work with your class for two weeks using the game. While that is happening, I will be in the classroom taking notes on what I see and hear. I will also take notes on the writing assignments that your class completes to go along with the game. I will also listen to audio-recorded reflections you make each week. Finally, I will talk with six students at the end of the two weeks to hear what was learned and how engaging the game was. You may or may not be selected for an interview, but there will be no negative consequence for not being selected.

When I write the report about what happened with the game, I will describe actual events and use actual quotes from you and your classmates. I pledge to exercise confidentiality with respect to your information, however. Your name will never be published—every effort to keep your name known only to me and to your classroom teacher will be made. For example, I might write this in the report: “Student #8 said that he thinks the game is very engaging.” Any copies I have of your work or audio-recordings will be destroyed after the final report is finished.

You have the right to take time to consider my request, to talk with anyone you wish about it, and to ask me questions about it. If you do not understand anything about
this invitation, I will be happy to speak with you about it and answer any questions you may have. You also have the right to turn down the invitation. If you turn it down, you will still receive the full benefits of the Orange After Day program.

If you agree to participate, then your parent or guardian still has to decide whether to agree or refuse. I can only begin if both of you agree. Also, if you agree at the start and then change your mind, you can take back permission anytime. Please think about this invitation, and, if you want to participate, fill out the form below and return it to your Orange After Day teacher.

**Contacting Me**
If you have questions or comments about this invitation, you and your parent or guardian can contact me anytime by phone or by asking your Orange After Day teacher to contact me or the supervising professor.

James Maxlow [Contact info]
Mark Hofer, Ph.D., supervising professor, College of William and Mary [Contact info]

**Part II: Certificate of Assent**

“I have been asked to participate in the Mission US game research project at Orange Middle School. I have read the Information Sheet. I have had the chance to ask questions and have talked with my parent or guardian about it. I agree to participate. I understand I can receive a copy of this signed form if I request one.”

**Student Name (printed):** ________________________________

**Student Name (signed):** ________________________________

**Date:** ___________________________ I request a copy of this signed form: ___
Appendix E: Sample Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Teacher in the
OPS Orange After Day program to Join the Mission US Research Project

This Informed Assent Form has two parts:
- Information Sheet (to share information about the project with you)
- Certificate of Consent (for a signature if you agree to participate)

Part I: Information Sheet

My name is James Maxlow, and I work with technology in Apple Public Schools (OPS). In trying to provide the best educational services to your students, I hope to team up with you to use an educational video game called Mission US to help your students learn about American history. This project is a research effort I am leading under the supervision of the College of William and Mary as well as OPS. I hope to publish the experiences of the students and teacher with the game for other school divisions to learn from.

I believe that we can improve student learning and achievement through the use of educational games. I believe this project will benefit your students as well as school divisions across the country and so I hope you will accept this invitation. Because this is a research project supervised by a university and because its results will be published for the public to read, I must ask your permission to participate. You have the right to choose to participate or to refuse to participate. There are no negative consequences to you for refusing.

This project will occur in the Orange After Day program at Orange Middle School. I hope that using the Mission US game will be a great experience for the students. You will work with students for approximately two weeks using the game as a learning tool. While that is happening, I will be in the classroom taking notes on what I see. I will also take notes on the writing assignments that students complete to go along with the game. I will also listen to audio-record reflections students make each week. Finally, I will interview six individual students at the end of the two weeks about what they learned and how engaged they were. The six students will be selected to represent a range of engagement levels with the game—from students that showed a high level of engagement to students that showed a low level of engagement. Any given student may or may not be selected for an interview, but there will be no negative consequence for not being selected.

When I write about what happened and what students thought about the project, I will describe actual events and use actual quotes from you and the students. I pledge to exercise confidentiality with respect to your information and the students’ information, however. No participant’s name or identifying details will ever be published—every effort to keep your and the students’ names known only to me will be made. For example, I
might write this in the published material: “Teacher A said that he thinks the game is very engaging.” Any copies I have of students’ work or audio-recordings will be destroyed after the final report is finished.

You have the right to take time to consider my request, to talk with anyone you wish about it, and to ask me questions about it. If you do not understand anything about this invitation, I will be happy to speak with you about it and further explain the project as well as to answer any questions you may have. You also have the right to refuse participation.

If you agree to participate at the start and then change your mind, you can take back permission anytime. Please think about this invitation, and, if you agree, fill out the form below and return it to me.

Contacting Me
If you have questions or comments about this invitation, you can contact me anytime by phone. You can also meet with me at the OPS Administration Building if you would like, or speak to the supervising professor.

James Maxlow [Contact info]
Mark Hofer, Ph.D., supervising professor, College of William and Mary [Contact info]

Part II: Certificate of Consent

“I have been asked to participate in the Mission US research project at Orange Middle School. I have read the Information Sheet. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions I may have had are now answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate in this research project. I understand I can receive a copy of this signed form if I request one.”

Teacher Name (printed): __________________________________________

Teacher Name (signed): ___________________________________________

Date: ___________________________ I request a copy of this signed form: ___
Appendix F: Observational Notes

11/14/13
All students finished part 2 of the game.

11/14/13
The students worked on their Part 2 Writing Prompt for the remainder of the period; 9 of the 12 students finished.

11/14/13
Most students did not craft their responses in paragraph formats; instead, they wrote one or two sentences per question in the prompt.

11/14/13
One student asked of the writing assignment, "Why do we have to do this?" and the instructor replied, "Because it's part of the learning; you're not just playing a game, you're also showing what you're learning".

11/19/13
Eleven 6th graders were present in the classroom (computer lab).

11/19/13
The instructor reminded students what happened in the game in Part 2 from the previous week and told students they would be audio-recording their answers to questions after Part 3.

11/19/13
Several students exclaimed positively when hearing about the audio-recording.

11/19/13
Two students who were absent from the previous session were started on Part 2 of the game by the instructor; the remaining students began Part 3.

11/19/13
The students remained nearly silent throughout the gameplay; the instructor wandered between the students to watch their progress.

11/19/13
As students finished one by one, the instructor talked them through writing down their ideas in response to the Part 3 Audio Reflections before recording.

11/19/13
After writing, the students were shown by the instructor and by the researcher how to use the Audacity software on the computer to record their reflections and save them to a file.

11/19/13
Five students, after listening to their reflections, asked and were granted permission to re-record them.

11/19/13
Seven students completed part 3 of the game and their audio reflections.

11/21/13
Eleven 6th graders were present in the classroom (computer lab).

11/21/13
The instructor reviewed a few words from the vocabulary students would encounter in part 4 of the game, and told them they would have to answer review questions at the end.

11/21/13
Two students completed their audio-reflections from the previous session.

11/21/13
The students remained nearly silent throughout the gameplay; the instructor wandered between the students to watch their progress.

11/21/13
One student asked, "Why can't we record our answers instead of writing?"; the instructor replied, "Because you should develop your writing skills, too, not just your talking skills".

11/21/13
Eight students completed part 4 of the game and their review questions.

11/21/13
Four students completed part 5 of the game and their audio reflections.

11/21/13
Four students completed part 5 of the game but did not have time for their audio reflections.

12/05/13
Eight 6th graders were present in the classroom (computer lab).
12/05/13  The students remained nearly silent throughout the gameplay; the instructor wandered between the students to watch their progress
12/05/13  Two students completed their Part 5 Audio Reflections
12/05/13  Six students concluded the game, four of which asked if they could play the ending again so that they could make different choices for the main character; the instructor allowed them to do so
12/05/13  Three students began their Closing Quick-Write
12/10/13  Ten 6th graders were present in the classroom (computer lab)
12/10/13  The students remained nearly silent throughout the gameplay; the instructor wandered between the students to watch their progress
12/10/13  Three students finished their Closing Quick-Write
12/10/13  Five students concluded the game but did not have time to begin their Closing Quick-Write
12/12/13  The researcher interviewed six students one on one in a counselor's office next door to the classroom (computer lab)
12/12/13  The researcher interviewed the instructor in the classroom
Appendix G: Transcription and Coding of Part 1 Review Questions

1. Why were you sent to Boston to be a printer's apprentice rather than one of your brothers?

2. What do you learn from Royce about his political opinions?

3. If you have sold an ad to Constance, you were told by Mr. Edes to return the money to her. Why does he refuse to print her ad?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stud.</th>
<th>Ques.</th>
<th>Response Segment</th>
<th>Foster</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>My mother did not have a lot of money to pay for me.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>We were also running out of space in the house.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>He hated the red coats.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Her uncle is a not a patriot.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Because when I get older I can pay for my own land.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>He hate the red coats.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Her uncle is against patrots.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>First of they did not have enough food.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>And second of all his older brother went to war to fight against France.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The hates kings red cost.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>My mom did not have enugh food so I had to go to make money</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>My older brother went ot war to fight against France.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>That was a paritrot never trust a redcoat.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Redcoats are bad and he should fight them secretly</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Because my father and mother told me to.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Royce hates britsh and england and the king.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mr. Edes insists that merchants should not import British goods enough though that is how I make my living.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>His brother was working the farm.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>His oathe brouthe he never came home to talk ran off to fit.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hes for amarcans but hate the British.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>He doesn't want to help people that aren't patriots.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>His brother ran off to fight the french.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>He calls the british soldiers redcoats.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>She's the niece of Theophilus Lillie. He's breaking an agreement and all good patriot must oppose him.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maybe he was the oldest and had to go out and get a job to be an apprentice were people buy papers</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>He thinks they put taxes on us to scare us and he says that he will play tricks on them because they don't know what they are doing.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The ad that Constance gave was all about her dog and Mr. Edes didn't want to print one because he thought he was going to be questioned and two she went behind her uncles back.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>because I had to get other Elders in boston to buy advertisement so that I could behave to do art and print art out.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>That Elders could not have slaves in Boston and that the redcoats will kill them and I know that. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>because her uncle was Thremicall lillie. And Mr. Edes did not want to be friends with him he is for England (a) (b) (f) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>He is not sure he'll like the life but wants to try. (a) (f) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>That he was not a red coat. He has a secret job that is very private. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Because her uncle is not a patriot and he does not like the magazines. (a) (b) (f) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>He wanted to learn to be a printer to make money in Boston (a) (b) (f) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor with no family and mean - a member of the patriots (a) (b) (g) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>He is not sure if he’ll like it. He wants to learn but likes his family. (a) (f) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>He said he was with the colonies. (a) (b) (g) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>He refuses because constances uncle was breaking an agreement. (a) (b) (f) (h) (c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Because one of this brothers was fighting in the French war and the other one was taking care of the farm. (a) (b) (f) (g) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>He doesn't like anything about England he dosn't even like the King. (a) (g) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Because she was one of the shopkeeper Theophilus against patriots. (a) (b) (f) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Your oldest brother has been lost for 10 years in a war (a) (b) (g) (h)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your other brother is working on the farm and you need money for your family by doing work in a city.

He is eager to take part in all actions against the Crown including mild violence.

Because Mr. Edes believed that if he prints her ad he will be judge because people will believe he is not a patriot.
Appendix H: Transcription and Coding of Part 2 Writing Prompt

In the game, you learned that a young apprentice, Christopher Seider, was shot and killed during a protest against a merchant loyal to the Crown. Who do you think was responsible for his death? Was it Ebenezer Richardson, the man who shot Christopher? Was it the organizers of the protest? Was it Christopher's fault for protesting? Or was it a terrible accident? Later, the Sons of Liberty planned a funeral march for Christopher. Why did they do that? What did the Governor of Massachusetts think of the funeral march?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stud.</th>
<th>Response Segment</th>
<th>Foster</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The man had no right to shoot the boy.</td>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I think it was an accident even.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>They protested.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>He did not like it.</td>
<td>(a) (c)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>I think is the boys fault because they was making trouble with the man.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>And man told them to go home but they didn't.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>It was a accident because the man unde'nt take it no more that why he shot gun one of them.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>They was angry.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>It's the protests fault because if they wouldn't never led them there noone wouldn't got shot or hurt.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>It doesn't matter if he was mad but they made him mad.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>They wanted more protests.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>He didn't want it.</td>
<td>(a) (c)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>I think it's the angry mans fault.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>I also think someone got on his nerves there.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E The angry man might take a gun every where he goes so he can have protection.

E The angry man saw all the grownups and boys.

E The angry man has no business to step in the store/house and pull out a gun.

E I don't know anyone that will shoot people because he's mad.

E They deserve to do a protest.

E If that's what they want to do let them do it.

E I would be worried cause it's a funeral but sons wants to cause more trouble and the last time someone got shot.

E He was angry they didn't leave it all alone.

F So I thank it is the boys fault, that was not what he should had did.

F But on the other hand the mand did shout the boy.

F I thank it was an askedent, because the man just stared shooting.

F He wasn't just aiming for one person he was just shooting and it hit him for not doing any thing.

F I realy don't thank he ment to do that to the boy.

F The boys parints would have wanted funeral I don't know why other people there.

G In a child is hurt the person who fault it is, is the boys because if they didn't show the boy wouldn't have gotten shot.

G It is also the angry man's fault because he shouldn't have shot anyone just because he ways mad.

G I do think a crime was commited because the angry man
shot a boy.

G I think it is against the law to shot people, especially for no reason.

H I think that it was the protesters fault but, also I think that it is the angry mans fault.

H I think that it is the protesters fault because they got the man mad in the first place and this relates to Christopher Seider.

H The protesters were outside and were getting on every body nerves.

H This relates to Christopher Seider because he was a random citizen that was out doing a deed and the protesters were outside protesting and got a man crazy mad because they wouldn't stop and he was mad and wanted to shoot the protesters but, shot Christopher Seider.

H I think that this was a terrible accident because if the protesters weren't there and then the man wouldn't be mad then poor by stander Christopher Seider would still be alive.

H If the person that the man killed was an adult I guess it wouldn't be so bad but, still would still be considered as wrong.

H I think the Sons of Liberty did not like he was killed and wanted to show they were angry.

H Because if I was angry that a boy died I would want people to know he should not have.

H The governor said it made an impression and I think he was also sad but they weren't even his family so the Sons of Liberty shouldn't have been there.

I I think it was the mans fault because the people was fussing and so the man got mad and shot the young child.

I I think it was a accident because he got mad and startd
shooting because he got nervous and started shooting.

I Because they think they can do anything and shoot any old person because they are real nice and so they think they rool them. (a) (g) (h)

I They marched to show they was angry but also a funeral is sad so they should not be angry then. (a) (g) (h)

I The govnor said they didn't care just wanted to cause trouble over it. (a) (c) (h)

J I think that the reason why the boy got shot was because the group of boys were yelling and the angry man came out of his building. (a) (g) (h)

J So the man thought they were going to hurt him so he went upstairs and shot. (a) (g) (h)

J The family and they friends wanted to protest like the boys did cause they should not have got shot. (a) (f) (g) (h)

J He wrote he thought they are faking to make the king look bad but I don’t know about that. (a) (c) (h)

K I think it is the boys fault because they took it too far. (a) (d) (g) (h)

K But then agian the adults started it by shooting. (d) (g) (h)

K I think it was a terible accident! (d) (g) (h)

K They boys are to little to understand what they are doing. (d) (g) (h)

K They probably just want to protest like the others. (d) (f) (g) (h)

K Some wanted to be sad but some wanted to send a message to redcoata. (a) (f) (h)

K He said they shouldn’t march cuase that what started in the first place. (a) (c) (h)

L I think that it was the boys fault because they should had never had joined the protest. (a) (d) (g) (h)
L I think it was a terrible accident because the man was trying to protect his shop.

L He was also trying to protect his home too.

L They made a plan to be angry and to tell Crown shoting the boy was wrong for protesting.

L He said they did not even want Christopher back to life.

M I think it was the boys and the angry mans fault.

M I think this because the boys shouldn't of been making trouble at the store, and the man shouldn't of pulled out the gun.

M But the man cause I think this because this is still murder.

M I think this because someone has died because of a fixable situation.

M I can see his family wanted to tell people they miss him and he sholdnt have died.

M He was against it.
Appendix I: Transcription and Coding of Part 3 Audio Reflections

What does [character] think about the British?
What does [character] think about buying and selling various goods in Boston?
What does [character] think about protests and violence when people have different opinions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stud.</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Response Segment</th>
<th>Foster</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>He does not like the British.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>He is not a British dude.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>He thinks it's bad because the money on his paycheck.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>The money they take from the goods gets from his paycheck.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>He does not like the British.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>He does his job while the British take all his money I would not want that.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h) (c) (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>The British takes his money so no, he does not like doing his job in Boston.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h) (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>He does not like it because he is a very peaceful dude.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>I think Constance like the British because she got a shop almost close to the British.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>I think she like buying and selling because she got a shop.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>I think she does not like the protests and opinions.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>I think Paul don't like the British because he is against the British.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>I think Paul do like buying and selling things</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
but he do not like to pay taxes of the king. (c)

C Paul I think he do like protesting but if it is the British he don't. (a) (b) (i)

D Constance Now as for Constance, she doesn't have a side her uncle just won't tolerate her speaking with patriots. (a) (b) (h)

D Constance She doesn't mind as long as it can help her with something. (a) (h)

D Constance She doesn't think anyone should die because of their opinions and that makes sense. (a) (d) (h)

D Constance She thinks everybody shall live their lives. (a) (h)

D Paul Paul Revere does not like the British because he is a patriot and he thinks it's unfair. (a) (b) (h)

D Paul He likes buying and selling various goods because he has to eat. (a) (b) (h)

D Paul He does not like that a non-patriot killed a patriot. (a) (b) (h) (c)

E Paul He is against British and British soldiers. (a) (h)

E Paul He hates taxes. (a) (b) (h)

E Paul He is okay with violence it's against the king or British. (a) (b) (g) (h)

E Solomon Solomon Fortune doesn't like the British because they mess up his job. (a) (b) (h)

E Solomon He ships the goods to other places. (a) (b) (h)

E Solomon He just wants to work and build money. (a) (f) (h)

E Solomon He doesn't worry about violence. (a) (h)

F Paul Paul does not likes the British because he is (a) (h)
not one.

F Paul He also thinks that shipping things like goods are good but he does not like the redcoats. (a) (b) (h)

F Solomon Solomon is a sailor that does not like the British. (a) (h)

F Solomon He also doesn't like giving things to the British but he likes patriots. (a) (b) (h)

G Constance Constance sometimes agrees with the British. (a) (h)

G Constance She thinks the Sons of Liberty should not be interfering with the merchants. (a) (b) (f) (h) (c)

G Constance Constance little fears the violence of protesting crowds. (a) (h)

G Paul Paul hates how the British is in Boston. (a) (b) (h)

G Paul He opposes tax and Paul supports crowd action in order to overthrow the Crown's control. (a) (b) (f) (g) (h) (c)

H Paul I believe what Paul thinks about the British they are lousy and disgraceful and don't need to press tax on people. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

H Paul He thinks that buying and selling goods in Boston is he supports it and is not, is fond of some other things. (a) (b) (f) (h)

H Paul Also he support the ideas of protests and violence. (a) (g) (h)

H Paul He supports the ideas of fighting for some things. (a) (g) (h)

H Solomon I believe that Solomon's thoughts about the British are that they cruel and unfair. (a) (b) (h)

H Solomon What I think Solomon's thoughts about buying selling goods in Boston is that he does his job (a) (b) (f) (h)
and he doesn't want to sell any goods right in front of British soldiers.

H Solomon I also think about Solomon's thoughts about the protests and violence is that it is chaos and that these people need to just bring peace almost. (a) (b) (f) (h)

L Paul He hates the British because he is blue patriot. (a) (b) (g) (h)

L Solomon He hates the British. (a) (i)

L Solomon He is against politics and taxation. (a) (b) (h) (c)

L Solomon He think that protest and violence is wrong and I agree. (a) (d) (h)

M Constance Constance Little has no problems with the British. (a) (h)

M Constance She helps her uncle sell various goods in Boston. (a) (b) (h)

M Constance She fears protests and violence. (a) (h)

M Paul Paul doesn't like the British. (a) (h)

M Paul He does buy or sell various goods in Boston but no to taxes. (a) (b) (h) (c)

M Paul He supports protests and violence. (a) (g) (h)
Appendix J: Transcription and Coding of Part 4 Review Questions

1. Write 3 sentences in the box about whether you think the drawing below by Paul Revere shows what actually happened at the Boston Massacre and why you think that.

2. Did the crowd provoke the soldiers? What I saw and heard in the game makes me say this.

3. Did the soldiers threaten the townspeople? What I saw and heard in the game makes me say this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stud.</th>
<th>Ques.</th>
<th>Response Segment</th>
<th>Foster</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No! The townspeople did not shoot back.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The solders were shooting the towns people.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Most of them died.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c)</td>
<td>(g) (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The corwd was yelling and screaming.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>They were also throwing snow balls.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Then the solders shot some of the towns people.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The solders walked by the towns people.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Then the dog ran past Constants.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Constants grabbed Thimble.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Part of it is true becouse the British was shooting at the Americans becouse the Americans mad at the British then British shoot at American.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c) (e)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>They American was mad at the redcosts in they throw snowball and they skits.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (c)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C 2 They redcosts shoot them. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

C 3 I think that redcost was trying to devend themself but the American has skits then redcost shoot them. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c) (d)

D 1 The shooting part was true. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

D 1 But Paul Revere did not include that they was yelling Hugh White's name. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c) (e)

D 1 Also he didn't include that they was throwing snowball to start it. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

D 2 I heard the Americans yelling. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

D 2 Also I saw the Americans throwing snow and saw that they had sticks and thorchs. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

D 3 They was garading the doors and a angry mob of townspeople was threading them. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

D 3 All the redcoats did was defending themselves. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c) (d)

E 1 I think the picture was kind of happened. (c) (d) (h) (e)

E 1 He was alive when it happened. (h)

E 1 In his picture they weren't throwing snow balls. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

E 2 I saw that the crowd was throwing snow balls at the soldiers. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

E 2 I heard gun shots and yelling (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

E 3 Soldiers setting up in a line shooting. (a) (b) (g) (h)
| E 3 | I heard gun shots. | (a) (b) (c) | (g) (h) |
| F 1 | Throw sow balls in game but not in pict. | (a) (b) (c) | (g) (h) |
| F 1 | Redcoats all over the place. | (a) (b) (c) | (h) |
| F 1 | Pict dose not look real. | (c) |
| F 2 | I saw it hapint and I also herad it. | (a) (c) (h) |
| F 2 | The red couts where threating the other. | (a) (b) (c) | (g) (h) |
| F 2 | Also throw snow balls at the redcouts. | (a) (b) (c) | (g) (h) |
| F 3 | I said yes, becaus when they where doing it they had adtud. | (a) (b) (c) (d) |
| F 3 | They where pushing the end of the gun so they was moving back. | (a) (b) (c) | (g) (h) |
| G 1 | What Paul Revere draw was true. | (a) (b) (c) | (h) |
| G 1 | The soldiers did shoot the crowd. | (a) (b) (c) | (g) (h) |
| G 1 | Also the massacre did happen where you could see the church bells. | (a) (b) (c) | (h) |
| G 2 | I saw that one of the people in the crowd were yell at the soldiers and the soldiers were trying to keep them back. | (a) (b) (c) | (g) (h) |
G 3  I didn't see or hear the soliders say anything. (a) (b)  (h)
   (c)

H 1  I think that the picture captures the peripheral of what happen. (c) (d)  (h)
   (e)

H 1  But, I don't think that he actually is right. (c) (d)

H 2  I saw that young colonists were throwing snowballs, playing with snow and then, it hit a British soldier and he took that as a cue to fight. (a) (b)  (g) (h)
   (c)

H 3  I saw the British soldiers and they did yell but, never threaten I think they just acted mad and wanted to scare them but, then one soldier was mad and started shooting. (a) (b)  (f) (g) (h)
   (c)

N 1  The town people had an argument between the court. (a) (b)  (g) (h)
   (c)

N 2  It wasn't right to kill inicent people tho the crowd threw stiks at the guards. (a) (b)  (g) (h)
   (c) (d)

N 3  It wansent fair to the people to trying to pay the tea tax. (a) (b)  (i)
   (c) (d)
Appendix K: Transcription and Coding of Part 5 Audio Reflections


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stud.</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Response Segment</th>
<th>Foster</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Now as for Constance, she said no one should just hand over their lives for opinions.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>She thinks the Sons of Liberty are responsible because they are the ones that taunt them.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>All the redcoats was were defending their selves I would too.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>As she was moving away to stay away from violence, Nat came along with.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nat thinks the patriots should not taunt the British because it would lead to harm.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>He thinks the Sons of Liberty are responsible for all conflict between the redcoats and them.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nat thinks he should live in London away from all the violence.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Constance Little she hates the British and they like her uncle.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>She fears the violence of protest crowds.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Her future is a shopkeeper.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nat Wheeler thinks the British hate apprentices and he hates the British soldiers.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>He doesn't like violence.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>And his future is to be an apprentice.</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Thoughts/Opinions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Ms. Constance Little she also thinks that they should be separated and that the redcoats started all the drama.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Ms. Little will spend her time with Nat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nat thinks that they need to be separated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>He thinks that the redcoats started all of the drama.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nat wants to spend his time and get married to Little.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nat thinks they should talk it out without the violence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>He also thinks everyone is responsible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Nat Wheeler wants to be married to Constance and live in Boston.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>Solomon doesn't want to be involved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>He thinks it's both people's fault.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>Solomon wants to go sailing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Constance thinks about the conflict between patriots, loyalists and the British is wrong and that many people are hurt because of the conflict and that someone has to pay and explain.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Constance thinks that the British is responsible and that all this conflict is a nuisance to everybody but she thinks that it's the British' fault.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Constance</td>
<td>Constance thinks the better way to live is to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
live your life, live it good, and leave the past behind and do good with your money and your life so you won't get in trouble.

H Royce Royce Dillingham thinks that the conflict between the patriots, the loyalists, and the British is very dumb. (a) (h)

H Royce He thinks that the British is very responsible because he thinks if they haven't taxed the colonists this wouldn't have happened because the colonists were just playing the snow and the British took it as a threat so now it started this whole massacre. (a) (b) (g) (h) (c)

H Royce And so Royce thinks it's just so dumb and they shouldn't have attacked the colonists. (a) (b) (h) (c)

H Royce And Royce thinks the better way to live is to live your life and don't look back and to choose who you want to be with. (a) (h)

N Constance Constance peace and dignity for the state by not having a war between each other. (a) (b) (f) (h) (c)

N Constance Why did the guards kill innocent people in the state? She didn't want that. (a) (b) (f) (h)

N Nat Not to fight. (a) (f) (h)

N Nat It wasn't right but keeping your village safe and fight for what's yours I would do that. (a) (b) (h) (d)
Appendix L: Transcription and Coding of Closing Quick-Write

1. Why would people who enjoyed the benefits of being part of the richest, the most powerful, and the freest Empire in the world, risk their lives to revolt?

2. Why do I think this?

3. How do big changes – like a revolution against a government – happen?
   • Who first protested against the British? Who remained loyal? Who was neutral?
   • What did colonists mostly agree about? What did they disagree about?
   • What causes a shift in people’s opinions – is it events, arguments, persuasion, propaganda, or a combination of many factors?

4. Why do I think this?

5. Is violence ever justified?
   • What different kinds of protest do the colonists engage in?
   • What role does violence play in the conflict between the Crown and the colony?
   • How did colonists argue about violence at the time?

6. Why do I think this?

7. Do the colonists practice what they preach?
   • What principles do the Patriots say they are fighting for?
   • Who in colonial society do the Patriots’ principles apply to? Who do they not apply to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stud.</th>
<th>Ques.</th>
<th>Response Segment</th>
<th>Foster</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The people would enjoy the benefits of being part of the richest and revolt because they want to get more and more money, gold, and other items without taxes from the British.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h) (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I think this because they were trying to protest the king and fight redcoats so they don't have to pay taxes.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h) (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Also wanted to stop paying for British tea when it was expensive but I think you should pay the price for something or not buy it.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h) (c) (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nat Wheeler was the first to protest against the</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(i)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
British.

F 3 Theophilius remained loyal. (a) (b) (h)

F 3 Solomon was neutral. (a) (b) (h)

F 3 Colonists mostly agreed about not paying British tea. (a) (b) (h) (c)

F 3 They disagreed about paying taxes or not. (a) (b) (i) (c)

F 3 Persuasion causes a shift in people's opinions because they will often go on with what others say so they can still be friends. So you can't always tell what happen. (e)

F 4 I think this because a lot of people in the game just agreed on what others say because the other people tell him or her to do so. (a) (i)

G 1 The people didn't like how the rulers were and the taxes. (a) (b) (h) (c)

G 2 They may have thought it was unfair about maybe how the british set the rules and probably thought the taxes were too high. (a) (b) (h) (c)

G 3 A) Royce Dillingham B) Hugh White C) Solomon Fortune (a) (b) (h)

G 3 All said they didn't like taxes. (a) (b) (h) (c)

G 3 Some wanted to fight others didn't. (a) (b) (f) (h)

G 3 My family can persuade me to change my opinion by arguing or talking to me. (d)

G 4 Royce kept calling the british redcoat so he was first to protest. (a) (b) (h)

G 4 Hugh White remain loyal because he worked for (a) (b) (h)
the king.

Solomon Fortune was neutral because he didn't care and he continue to what he did to make money.

No and I would never fight soliders.

Boston tea party.

Boston massacre.

After someone died they started to think about violence or still believe that there should not be no violence.

Violence never solves anything.

Patriot fought to try to be free from the king and be in charge of themselves.

They want to become independent and not follow a kind and they don't want to pay taxes for tea and things.

They want more riches by protesting and not paying taxes and not buying from shopkeepers that weren't patriots.

Well, I think this because someone who has money and riches wants more of that so, they don't be calmn down they fight against the power aka king, I would not follow a king either

Mr. Edes was the first to protest against the British.

Both Lillie and Nathaniel were faithful to what they saw they went besides that to not one side or the other.

Colonists agreed that they don't want to pay taxes.
They disagreed on how to become independent. (a) (b) (h)

I think arguments because different accusations about things can change a point of view. (d)

One is to become independent and another is to try and not pay taxes are what they said different opinions on. (a) (b) (f) (h)

The violence that took place in Boston was the Boston Massacre which took place with British gunning down young, innocent, colonists. (a) (b) (h) (i)

I think that violence is never justified because some people lead to violence and some people work out differences and be mature. (d)

They are fighting for freedom, no tax and more money by not buying from shopkeepers and marching at funerals. (a) (b) (g) (h)

The redcoats and patriots fought on the lawn when the redcoats were hit with snowballs because they killed Christopher Sider. (a) (b) (g) (h)

The Boston massacre showed the fighting plus there was a protest at Christopher's funeral that wasn't supposed to be allowed. (a) (b) (g) (h)

I think they do because they didn't buy from shopkeepers and tried to not pay taxes and also that they argued with redcoats. (a) (b) (f) (h)

Some people ideas are not valid like you should not have an opinion if you don't know things.
# Appendix M: Transcription and Coding of Student Interviews

<table>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Foster</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>How engaged were you when you were playing the game Mission US?</td>
<td>Uh, I liked it, the game. I like coming to class to play it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>How engaged were you while you were doing the various writing assignments, after the gameplay?</td>
<td>I liked the writing assignments a little bit. Uh, it was awesome when I did recorded the answers with the microphone. Those I liked.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>In the game, there were colonists, that agreed about some things and disagreed about other things. What were some of the things that they were arguing about in the game? What were some of the topics?</td>
<td>They disagreed about tax. About buyin'. Cause the dude didn't like buyin', no, didn't like payin' the king taxes. It was money but sometimes they try to fight.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (g) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>What did people think about the red coats?</td>
<td>They didn't like havin' them around. They feel like the soliders bossin' them around. The massacre, it, they tried to bully, they wanted soldiers to fight. But the picture only showed shootin'. Not snowballs and sticks.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (g) (h) (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>What did the British want to have happen in the game? What did the colonists want to have happen?</td>
<td>The British wanted buyin' and sellin', the taxes. The British want to be in charge. The king. The Americans wanted patriots. But didn't want a king.</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(f) (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>How easy or</td>
<td>I get cause the red coats had snowballs</td>
<td>(a) (b)</td>
<td>(g) (h)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Difficult was it to understand the motivations that the characters held? Motivations are reasons why someone does something. And sticks thrown at them, and I would fight back. And the boy that died, they was angry at his funeral, so that cause I would be sad but also mad if a boy died from soldiers.

**C** Did the characters' actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them? It was confusin' a little bit. But the dude, the free man, Solomon, he wanted to do, he didn't want to fight, his job was the ship, he wanted to do that.

**C** Did any part of your own life help you understand the game, or the characters, or perspectives, or did you not relate it to your own life? No.

**D** How engaged were you when you were playing the game Mission US? It was fun. It was exciting how I got to go around Boston with my own character. And at the end I could choose what he would do in his life after Boston.

**D** How engaged were you while you were doing the various writing assignments, after the gameplay? It was fun cause I got to talk about the game.

**D** Did you have a favorite writing assignment? The one where I had to write about my recording in part four. I like writing about the people.

**D** In the game, there were colonists, that agreed about The Crown Rules. And about the red coats being in Boston. Like, they didn't want them around.
some things and disagreed about other things. What were some of the things that they were arguing about in the game? What were some of the topics?

D What did the British want to have happen in the game? What did the colonists want to have happen?

The British want the townspeople to pay taxes. For tea. The Americans wanted tax free. They didn't want the king to be in charge. The newspapers were against the king.

D How easy or difficult was it to understand the motivations that the characters held? Motivations are reasons why someone does something.

Hard cause they just wanted to work but I couldn't buy the stuff they wanted at the shops, at the British shops. But Constance wanted peace so that I understood.

D Did the characters' actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them?

Mostly did not make sense. About they were always pickin' fights with the red coats when the red coats were doin' they job.

D Did any part of your own life help you understand the game, or the characters, or perspectives, or did you not relate it to your own life?

When people are around but they tellin' different things, like at school, you can't always believe cause people won't all be with you, but against you.

F How engaged were you when you

Uh, I liked it. I looked forward for it each day. It was different from, like,
were playing the game Mission US? stuff in classes, in other classes. Cause it was fun, educational. It had posters and letters from history that we could read.

F How engaged were you while you were doing the various writing assignments, after the gameplay? I didn't like those.

F You didn't like those. Why didn't you like them? Cause I don't like to write.

F In the game, there were colonists, that agreed about some things and disagreed about other things. What were some of the things that they were arguing about in the game? What were some of the topics? About paying for taxes, about paying for British tea. And the king and the redcoats. That they didn't like them. But some didn't want violence.

F What did the British want to have happen in the game? What did the colonists want to have happen? For the colonists to keep paying money. They wanted more money for tea and stuff. They wanted the king to be in charge.

F How about the colonists? What did they want to have happen? More money on their own. The colonists themselves wanted to be in charge.

F How easy or difficult was it to understand the motivations that Easy. Cause it was where I could see what they're talking about. They would, they would tell why, they would explain why. Though
the characters sometimes they said opposite things. Motivations are reasons why someone does something.

F Did the characters' actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them? I don't know what Royce was doing. He, he didn't do but stir up trouble. Nat tried to do what was right, but I was making the choices, so it was me, but Constance and Solomon, wanted to stay out of fighting cause they didn't think people should die.

F Did any part of your own life help you understand the game, or the characters, or perspectives, or did you not relate it to your own life? Just thinkin' about the game. Not my life.

G How engaged were you when you were playing the game Mission US? It was interesting. I wanted to play it over and over again. When I was done I played it, I played the different endings.

G We played it several times in class, but you always had to stop at a certain point. Did you want to keep going? Yes.

G How engaged were you while you were doing the various writing assignments, after the gameplay? I didn't like 'em very much, but other ones I did, like the one you had to, um, write about the boy.

G In the game, there were colonists, The colonists didn't agree about how the taxes were and how they couldn't
that agreed about some things and disagreed about other things. What were some of the things that they were arguing about in the game? What were some of the topics?

**G** What did the British want to have happen in the game? What did the colonists want to have happen? The colonists wanted to make sure they can get freedom, and less taxes, while the British wanted 'em to pay their taxes and still wanted to control the colonists.

**G** How easy or difficult was it to understand the motivations that the characters held? Motivations are reasons why someone does something. Some of it didn't make sense, like, um, for Royce he just wanted to, um, fight the British. But I don't know what he did as a job or nothing.

**G** Who did make sense to you in the game? Constance Little, cause she didn't want no violence.

**G** Did the characters' actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them? Yes. I understand how when the people come up throwing snowballs, and the soldiers, um, start decide to shoot, cause they weren't supposed to do that, they're soldiers.

**G** Did any part of your own life help you understand the game, or the characters, or perspectives, or get a lot of freedom. And some wanted to fight red coats.
did you not relate it to your own life?

H How engaged were you when you were playing the game Mission US? Well it was pretty addictive because I like history, but sometimes I don't like history cause all the madness happens and stuff, so I liked the game because, you know, it had me going through, you know, Boston and stuff, and then I don't like it because, you know, the whole big massacre thing. The painting helped but it wasn't fair cause the colonists, they didn't, they weren't do anything in the picture.

H How engaged were you while you were doing the various writing assignments, after the gameplay? Well, I like writing so I write very much and very fast, so, I use very, I would say, you know, my writing is good, pretty good, and some teachers say I should be a writer, but you know, I have other...

H Was there a particular writing assignment for this game that you liked more than the others? Um, the big essay we had to do, you know. Because, um, I kinda understand it, you know, about everything, so, yeah.

H In the game, there were colonists, that agreed about some things and disagreed about other things. What were some of the things that they were arguing about in the game? What were some of the topics? Well, the disagreements between the colonists was some people fought for something, this thing, and some people fought for that thing, and then, it would be colonists on this side that would, you know, be protesting of tax, and on this side would be protesting of independence, but even though they're both colonists, you know, they're fighting for different things, so it would be conflict.

H What did the British want to have happen in the The British wanted, um, more, you know, more, um, ruling over the colonists, and the colonists wanted
game? What did the colonists want to have happen?

H  How easy or difficult was it to understand the motivations that the characters held? Motivations are reasons why someone does something.

Well, colonists, they motivated to, like I said, be independent, and not have to pay taxes. So I think it would be easy to understand the motivation because when I want to, because when I get a job, you know, I want to keep, I don't want to, you know, give away money for taxes, so.

H  Did the characters' actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them?

Well, when I was on the, the boat, the ship, the boat ship, so, with, um, with Solomon, the person who works on the ship, his actions were kinda, you know, sneaky and snide, because he, you know, he got me what I needed, but it was kinda sneaky because the British soldiers were like right there and he was kinda helping me out but in a sneaky way. And I know Constance, I know she, she wanted peace and her uncle was with the British, but she liked Nat, you know. She tried to help Nat be safe. And the person who wrote, um, wrote the poem, about Christopher, about the boy, that interesting but I don't know if it was real.

H  Did any part of your own life help you understand the game, or the characters, or perspectives, or did you not relate it to your own life?

I actually did because sometimes I feel like I'm in battle with myself, really, or other people because some things take me to push myself and some things don't, so I feel like this whole game represents parts of my life taking into the big, you know, number one. Like there is conflict.

N  How engaged were you when you were playing the game? What did the colonists want to have happen?

I liked it, cause, um, well, cause I like learning history, about how the colonists wanted to fight for their city
game Mission US? against the army.

N How engaged were you while you were doing the various writing assignments, after the gameplay? I liked 'em, cause it helps me, like, it lets me tell about ideas, what happened back then. Because it's not clear. People told different things. So I have to tell.

N Did you have a favorite writing assignment out of all of them, or one you didn't really like? Uh, I liked all of them. They were kinda fun.

N In the game, there were colonists, that agreed about some things and disagreed about other things. What were some of the things that they were arguing about in the game? What were some of the topics? About, they might like disagree, about not violence, and they city can turn out to be good, but taxes, they didn't want to pay or anything.

N What did they say about the red coats? That having them, they were dangerous. Didn't want them, and stuff.

N What did the British want to have happen in the game? What did the colonists want to have happen? The colonists, freedom, they all, like, wanted freedom. The king wanted to be in charge. That's what they supposed to do - follow his rule. They didn't want that cause they wanted to be free.

N How easy or difficult was it to understand the motivations that against the army.

I mean, if they want to be free they could move out of Boston cause that's where red coats are. I don't know why they stayed and got in fights. Solomon
the characters stayed out of it cause he just wanted to work with the ship.

N Did the characters' actions in the game always make sense, given what was happening all around them?

No. Confusing. (i)

N Can you give me an example of one time that it was confusing?

Cause like one thing, first they try to figure out, like how to solve, who killed somebody. At the massacre. I didn't know what happened. The game didn't say but people said different things in the court. (a) (b) (e)

N Did any part of your own life help you understand the game, or the characters, or perspectives, or did you not relate it to your own life?

It was just about the colonists and the British. We don't have that. But I felt bad when the boy who died. (a) (d)
Appendix N: Transcription and Coding of Teacher Interview

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<th>Emergent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How engaged were your students while playing Mission US?</td>
<td>Even the lowest academic students were engaged- and were working collaboratively with each other to solve the puzzles, which they don’t often do naturally. I think the best evidence for student engagement is that the students would come up to me in the hallway or the cafeteria and ask when we were playing the game next. I don’t think that happens to often with regular classwork.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So you are saying they have been more engaged than with other schoolwork?</td>
<td>Yes, definitely.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How engaged were your students while doing the various writing assignments and other non-game-playing activities?</td>
<td>Honestly, they weren’t as engaged as with the game (some students flat out don’t like writing with pencil &amp; paper). I think that if the writing part could have been digital as well (like the Inspiration writing process or even just a MS Word quick write), there would have been more engagement. That being said, there was one part of the writing that completely engaged every student. Once they were asked to write about the boy who was killed, and the parallel to their life, every student had something to say. They may not have all said the same thing, or had the same experiences, but they all had an opinion- and it completely hooked them in, realizing that THIS was a boy like them, who had died in a cause and become part of history- and was this right? Would they have taken the same actions? It really got them thinking.</td>
<td>(a) (b) (d) (g) (h)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They made a connection to their personal</td>
<td>For the most part, yes. I don’t think they really know what it was like, but they did their best to try and relate the history to their own experiences or at least ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
lives with that particular writing prompt? Or tried to?

How well did your students come to understand the motivations held by the various characters in Mission US?

I think that, especially after the death of Christopher Seider, and seeing and talking to Paul Revere and Phyllis Wheatley, the history became ‘real’ to them. They realized that these were real people in real situations, sometimes making similar choices to the ones they had to make in daily life, and all of the sudden what they had been studying for the last month became real. It was interesting to hear them discussing the people in the game after class was over each day. You could tell that they were ‘real’ to them, and when they discussed the opinions that they had about them, they would back them up with evidence from their actions or what they had in the character summary. This is what we’ve been teaching them as SOL testing strategies, but it wasn’t like they were doing this as ‘proof-text’- it was more like to help someone understand a friend.

You’re saying they leveraged some learning skills they had to help each other understand the whys of the characters?

Yeah.

How well did your students make sense of the ‘big

I believe that if we look at the benchmark test scores of the students who participated in Mission US vs students who didn’t, overall we’d see these students do better on the Colonial Period questions that relate to issues that were
covered in the game— and, while testing isn’t the only measure of success, it is one measure of success. I think that these students have a much deeper understanding of the Colonial Period. Before it may have been a straight memorization of facts, some understanding of a timeline, whereas now they actually understand more of the dynamics that went into that period.

They've wrestled with some ideas that aren't as simple as before, you're saying?

I think that, in general, students at this age haven't had much experience in ‘hands on history’ other than a field trip or two to Jamestown / Williamsburg. They haven’t been immersed in the history of that era through movies or books / novels- to them the Civil War followed directly on the heels of the American Revolution and there’s no difference between the time of the colonists at Jamestown or Williamsburg- whereas there was almost as much time between America’s Independence and Bicentennial as Jamestown’s founding and 1776. To me, the students who participated in this project ‘get it.’ They see the depth of history in the colonial period, make the connections, but also start to see the connections between history and NOW. This was also a very worthwhile program, if only because it helped them personify history. That also made it ‘real’ to them. I’ll be encouraging other History / SS teachers to try the other MISSION US events.
So you think that students know more about the nuance of history, about the connections between the past and the present?

This transcript was subsequently provided to the teacher for review and as an opportunity to restate or change responses. The teacher did not request any changes.
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