Representations of Native Americans in Elementary School Social Studies
A Critical Look at Instructional Language

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Introduction

In a fourth grade classroom in the Pacific Northwest, a teacher and her students are reviewing one of the most infamous events in U.S. history: "The Trail of Tears," the forced resettlement of the Cherokee people from Georgia to Oklahoma—known by the Cherokee as "*nu na hi du na tlo hi lu i*" or the "Trail Where They Cried." After several teacher prompts, students cite the Indian Removal Act as the reason why the Cherokee were forced to move west of the Mississippi River. Seeking more information, Jeanette probes her students as she points to the Cherokee Nation's ancestral homeland in parts of North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama:

Jeanette: And what was special about that land? There's tons of land. What was so unique about that? Joel.

Joel: If you dug, like, deep enough, you could find, like, gold? Like a gold mine?

Jeanette: [They] discovered gold.

Ashley: Is that, like, the only reason why they [the Cherokee] had to move? Just because they [European-Americans] wanted to be rich?

Jeanette: That was why.

Ashley: Well, that's a dumb reason!

Students: (laughing)

Jeanette: I agree.

Ashley's blunt comment evoked student

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laughter and the mild agreement of her teacher. The conversation continued with similar exchanges before students engaged in two culminating activities: (1) a written summary of The Trail of Tears and (2) a "pictograph expressing how the Cherokee felt."

During this 15-minute review one important learning objective was apparent: to have children empathize with the Cherokee Nation's point of view. This was certainly accomplished as demonstrated by Ashley's incredulous comment and by similar responses by her peers as discussed below. What was missing, however, was a space for children to critically analyze and problematize the basic cause of the displacement of the Cherokee. Jeanette, consciously or unconsciously, used questions inviting feelings of empathy for the *Other* but missed the opportunity to further explore historical reasons for unjust treatment, such as land theft.

The vignette above illustrates how Jeanette constructed—via language and representation—a way to interpret Western history, detached from a critical perspective. It is her speech that guides the discussion; her words and her silence frame and construct the "story" of The Trail of Tears. As Weedon (1987) explains,

Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed. (p. 21)

The purpose of this article is to draw attention to the language used by fourth and fifth grade teachers during social studies instruction and to discuss the implications of how this language frames non-dominant groups, as in this case. Via the discussion of segments of instructional conversations, we point to the pervasive use of language that perpetuates stereotypes and biased representations of Native American history.

To frame the analysis, we discuss three different perspectives. First, we summarize the literature on *Otherness*, particularly, how the *Other* is constructed (1) through language, (2) in Western history, and (3) in classroom discourse. Second, we share information about the Critical Language Awareness movement rooted in the United Kingdom. This body of work is concerned with the relationship between language and social context, particularly educators' awareness of how ideology and power structures inherent in language play out during daily school routines.

In addition, we highlight the National Social Studies Standards' focus on helping students construct a pluralist perspective based on diversity. We argue that by carefully examining the talk that transpires in classroom discussions, we can have a window into how knowledge, identity, social positioning, and value systems are constructed by teachers and students. The paper ends with a list of specific suggestions for educators and teacher educators regarding language awareness, primary sources, and the importance of using balanced and comprehensive historical perspectives.

How the *Other* Is Constructed through Language

One way in which we use language to define and construct our world is in how *we* refer to people whom *we* perceive to be *different* from ourselves or the group with which *we* identify. Often we use a simple either-or dichotomy marked by the use of tale tell pronouns like *we-they*

or *us-them* (Eriksson & Aronsson, 2005). This positioning of identity and noticing of difference, or *otherness*, is well established (Davies & Harré, 1990; Gudykunst, 2004; Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006; Rogoff, 2003; Sampson, 2008, 1993; Sollors, 1986; Ting-Toomey, 1993). As Yep (1998) comments on his own experience:

> For many Euro Americans, I am "a person of color." This view of marginality, of "*otherness,*" is one of isolation, invisibility, alienation, and deprivation. *Otherness* represents the undesirable, degraded, exiled, suppressed, deviant, disenfranchised, and incongruous elements of the "ideal order." (emphasis added; p. 83)

Being labeled, treated, or talked about as *Other* is to be excluded from something. The *Other* can be as exotic as a Finn living in Peru, as fantastic as Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, or as mundane as a comparison of physical attributes, choice of attire, or regional dialect. It is important to realize that in the United States, as well as in many other English-speaking parts of the world, power rests in the hands of the dominant group: White, middle-class, heterosexual, and usually male (McCarthy, 1996). Everyone else becomes the *Other*— and a more exotic *Other* the further they are perceived to be from the dominant norm.

Cultures and groups identify and use norms, or what groups consider to be *normal*, in order to construct, maintain, and differentiate their identity from other groups and/or to exclude outsiders or *Others*. Often such norms are so ingrained in a group, so taken for granted, that a group considers the norms to be obvious to any *normal* person (Verkuyten, 2001). In effect, it is as if the group's point of view is invisible to the group itself. The group believes its perspective is objective —a kind of "God's-eye view from Nowhere" (Sampson, 2008, 1993, p. 84)—and fails to recognize that its perspective is only one among many equally valid viewpoints.

How the *Other* Is Constructed in Western History

The construction of the *Other* can be traced back through the history of Western civilization. McGrane (1989) provides a compelling account beginning with the Renaissance and continuing through the twentieth century (see Table 1). In his book McGrane discusses how the *Other* was constructed and reconstructed as Western societal focus and identity shifted: from outside of Christianity—to outside of civilized or enlightened people—to living outside of time. As the reader will notice, this analysis

Table 1 — Western Construction of the Other through History (summarized from McGrane, 1989)		
Historical Era	General Focus	Conception of the non-European *Other*
Renaissance	The Christian Church exerted power and control in all walks of life. Western civilization revolved around what the church considered good and proper actions, thoughts, knowledge, etc. Groups outside the Christian Church were viewed in relation to Christianity: already saved, could be converted (and hence saved – the potential Christian), or beyond all hope of salvation.	◆ The non-European *Other* as non-Christian Other was seen as being under the direct control of Satan and original sin. ◆ "*Other*-as-Child" ◆ *Other* as Savage (barbarian)
Enlightenment	Acquiring and developing knowledge about everything became the dominant driving and organizational force behind Western civilization. A dichotomy existed by which people were categorized as those who were enlightened or knowledgeable (civilized) vs. those who were ignorant or superstitious (primitive).	◆ The *Other* as Savage giving way to the Domesticated *Other* ◆ The non-European *Other* was constructed as ignorant, superstitious, unenlightened, uncivilized, and primitive.
19th Century	Western scientific thought and organized conceptualizations of time rose to the foreground. Geology, anthropology, and evolution became influential in their depiction of all things in relation to great expanses of time.	◆ The non-European *Other* was viewed as primitive in comparison to Western civilization but evolutionarily positive – like ourselves in an earlier (primitive) era. ◆ The non-European *Other* was no longer viewed as outside of humanity but as a living fossil of unrecorded European history (prehistoric).
Early 20th Century	The effects of anthropological research and thought are felt in that culture is now used to explain and describe the differences noticed in the Other.	◆ The non-European *Other* is thought of as simply being different because of culture.

is not new; other historians and anthropologists have arrived at similar conclusions (see, for example, Geertz, 1973; Greenblatt, 1991; Rogoff, 2003; Wolf, 1982).

How the *Other* is Constructed in Classroom Discourse

Recent studies by Eriksson and Aronsson (2005), Palfreyman (2005), and Yoon (2008) point to the insidious construction of difference or *otherness* in classrooms by teachers who seem unaware of how their language use contributes to such constructions. For example, in their study of booktalk sessions in a Swedish elementary school, Eriksson and Aronsson (2005) found that teachers implicitly or explicitly talked about "us Swedish children" when discussing books set in environments for-

eign to the students (p. 719). *Otherness*, in this case, was accomplished by foregrounding differences, setting up a series of contrasts between *us* and *them*.

Classroom discussions, particularly teacher talk, influence and shape the beliefs, ideas, values, and understandings of students. According to Cazden (1988), "[w]e have to consider how the words spoken in classrooms affect the outcomes of education: how observable classroom discourse affects the unobservable thought processes of each of the participants, and thereby the nature of what all students learn" (p. 99). In other words, children from traditionally underrepresented groups may feel very disconnected from a discussion of American history if they do not see a link to their own story. Adrienne Rich captures the overwhelming feeling of distress that narratives

like this one have on students in a powerful quote: "When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing" (Rich, 1986, p. 119).

By carefully examining the talk that transpires in classrooms, we can have a window into how knowledge, identity, social positioning, and value systems are constructed by teachers and students. These constructions, fortunately or unfortunately, can become powerful pillars upon which societal norms are built. Bourdieu (1977) makes clear his belief that schools actually reproduce societal norms, values, and conditions by inculcating in students the ideologies embraced by members of the dominant group—usually in charge of education. In today's society

> power is predominantly exercised through the generation of consent rather than through coercion, through ideology rather than through physical force, through the inculcation of self-disciplining practices rather than through the breaking of skulls…. It is an age in which the production and reproduction of the social order depend increasingly upon practices and processes of a broadly cultural nature. Part of this development is an enhanced role for language in the exercise of power: it is mainly in discourse that consent is achieved, ideologies are transmitted, and practices, meanings, values and identities are taught and learnt. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 219)

This vital role of language in issues of power, equity, and societal construction lead us to Critical Language Awareness, an approach that looks at teachers' language through a critical lens.

Critical Language Awareness

The Language Awareness (LA) movement has its roots in the United Kingdom beginning in the early 1980s (Andrews, 2007; Granville, 2003; Janks, 2000). In its most basic form, "[l]anguage awareness refers to the development … of an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language" (Carter, 2003, p. 64). Over the years two distinct foci have developed under the language awareness umbrella: Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) and Critical Language Awareness (CLA; for a partial review, see Svalberg, 2007). In this article, we will limit our discussion to Critical Language Awareness.

Critical Language Awareness is primarily concerned with the relationship between language and social context. Proponents believe that "language use is not neutral" (Carter, 2003, p. 64) and that the "nontransparent aspects" of language

influence and are in turn influenced by: (1) representations and positioning of identity, (2) society, (3) politics, (4) relationships of power, and (5) ideologies constructed by and conveyed through language (Bolitho, et al., 2003; Carter, 2003; Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič, & Martin-Jones, 1991; Fairclough, 1992; Janks & Ivanič, 1992). This understanding of language has implications for teacher education and practice.

Teachers who embrace CLA: (1) acknowledge the implicit and explicit ideologies and power structures inherent in language, (2) understand that the use of such language, even unintentionally, can and does legitimate and reproduce social inequalities, and (3) strive to become agents of long-term change in society (Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič, & Martin-Jones, 1990). Teachers who demonstrate CLA are not only cognizant of the ideologies that shape language but are also aware of and exercise great care in their own use of language (Clark, et al., 1990). Consider the words of Lake (1990), a member of the Cherokee and Seneca tribes, to the teacher of his son, Wind-Wolf: "What you say and what you do in the classroom, what you teach and how you teach it, and what you don't say and don't teach will have significant effect on the potential success or failure of my child" (p. 53).

Critical Language Awareness is a melding of philosophy, ideology, knowledge, skill, and self-awareness in the critically conscious practice and sustained use of language in the every day routines of school—including the teaching of content-area material (Clark, et al., 1990; Clark & Ivanič, 1999).

> …[G]iven that power relations work increasingly at an *implicit* level through language, and given that language practices are increasingly targets for intervention and control, a critical awareness of language is a prerequisite for effective citizenship, and a democratic entitlement. (emphasis added; Fairclough, 1995, p. 222)

Within this context, one of the most recognizable areas of education for citizenship and democracy is in the field of social studies.

National Social Studies Standards

Multicultural education goals and social studies standards in the U.S. try to address the need to mitigate and transform perceptions and constructions of *otherness* by educating students to be "'student-citizens,' young people who will soon assume the role of citizen" with global and pluralist perspectives (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d.-b, para. 25).

> Students should be helped to construct a *pluralist perspective* based on diversity.

This perspective involves respect for differences of opinion and preference; of race, religion, and gender; of class and ethnicity; and of culture in general. This construction should be based on the realization that differences exist among individuals and the conviction that this diversity can be positive and socially enriching. Students need to learn that the existence of cultural and philosophical differences are not 'problems' to be solved; rather, they are healthy and desirable qualities of democratic community life. (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d.-b, para. 30)

If the "primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d.-a, para. 4), then we must provide students with diverse perspectives, resources, and opportunities to critically discuss the trajectory of different cultures and groups not as representatives of "dead and buried" cultures (e.g., as if Native Americans were extinct), or as unskilled laborers (e.g., "new" immigrants), or as undesirable settlers (e.g., the Chinese Exclusion Act). Students benefit from learning about different cultures and groups not merely as part of a chronological history of the United States through statistics and charts but as the stories of different groups of people—past and present—including conflicting accounts of their trajectories.

While in recent years textbooks and curricula have been deliberate in updating materials to avoid stereotyping and the construction of *otherness*, not all educators have been able to make that shift during classroom discussions (see Eriksson & Aronsson, 2005; Hollingworth, 2009; Palfreyman, 2005; Yoon, 2008). Using the combined lenses of the construction of the *Other*, Critical Language Awareness, and social studies goals, the following analysis seeks to address the following questions: What is the nature of the interaction in three upper elementary classrooms during discussions of Native Americans? How are teachers in these classrooms using language to refer to Native Americans during social studies instruction? What opportunities were given to students to critically explore the historical treatment of Native Americans?

Context of the Study

This work is part of a larger ethnographic (see Hornberger in Cumming, et al., 1994), sociolinguistic (Bloome & Clark, 2006; Erickson, 2006; Green & Wallat, 1981) and multi-site (Eisenhart, 2001)

study that sought to unpack the different language *registers* (a variety of a language used for a specific purpose in a particular context) used by teachers during content-area instruction in fourth and fifth grade classrooms in southwest Washington (Ernst-Slavit, Mason, & Wenger, 2009).

Each participating classroom included at least five English language learners of varying levels of English proficiency. Participating teachers had at least five years of teaching experience, as well as advanced specialization in English as a Second Language (ESL) education, and were highly regarded by teachers and administrators. (See Table 2 for additional information about the teachers in this study. All participant and location names are pseudonyms.)

One or both authors observed content-area instruction over the course of one week. Each set of classroom observations ranged from 16-22 hours. Data collected included video and audio recordings, field notes, still photographs, teacher interviews, and pertinent written materials, such as handouts, worksheets, and student work.

For this article we focus on segments collected in one fifth grade and two fourth grade classrooms during social studies instruction. The topics centered on Native Americans: (1) the formation of colonies in the *New World* and the relationship between colonists and the Native Americans; (2) the role of Sacagawea in the Lewis and Clark Expedition; and (3) the experience of the Cherokee Nation on the Trail of Tears.

Examples of the Other in Social Studies Classrooms

We ask the reader to consider the depictions of Native Americans as the *Other* constructed by 4th and 5th grade students and their teachers in the following segments. How are members of the non-dominant culture represented? How are students encouraged to think, feel, and talk about Native Americans? How is the impact of one group's actions on another discussed or avoided?

"Hostile Savages" Constructing the Other as Uncivilized But Potentially Useful Trading Partners

In the following segment, Kirsten is continuing a colonial era social studies unit, in which teams of student *colonists* would eventually apply for a *New World* colony charter from the King of England, represented by the male teacher in the adjoining classroom. Students, in four-to-five member teams, each have specific tasks to complete as explained in a teacher-created handout. In an attempt to make the project more authentic, all students were required to select and use an *English* name. Additionally, the text of the handout itself was printed in a cursive font, reminiscent of handwriting of a bygone day. Here, Kirsten is reading aloud from a section of the handout titled "Task One: Political Structure."

Segment 1

Kirsten: There must be adequate protection for the inhabitants from attack by hostile savages, but you will also have to oversee friendly trade with the natives to ensure their proper treatment. We want the Indians to help us and not be our enemies. What will you do to make this happen? You will need to address that in your paper. Are you going to have Native Americans around you? If so, are they going to be friendly or not?

Take a moment to count the number of different nouns used to refer to Native Americans (e.g., savages, Indians). Consider the connotations of the words selected and what the implications of those words suggest.

The use of "hostile savages" constructs Native Americans as dangerous, unpredictable, and uncivilized *Others*. The phrase "friendly trade with the natives" views the *Other* from a commercial or capitalistic perspective. Native Americans may have something needed (i.e., a useful commodity) or may want to trade for things they want. The use of the phrase "proper treatment" constructs the *Other* as a powerless child in need of protection. Finally, an unrealistic dichotomy is established by

the words "friendly or not." Relationships between diverse groups of people and nations rarely distill down to such simplistic either-or dichotomies. Such depictions do not convey the reality that diverse peoples must consciously and diligently work to understand and value one another.

What may not be apparent in this colonial project is what has been excluded as a choice. Students only had the opportunity to approach this historical moment in the role of European colonizers. It was not an option for students to represent a tribe or sovereign nation of Native Americans. Once again, this absence represents a missed opportunity for students to fully explore more complicated historical events and in doing so, continue to develop complex understandings of social interaction between groups.

Finally, the teacher attempts to make the project authentic by recreating the conditions and language of the Colonial era. However, there was no evidence that the language used to describe Native Americans was problematized or that the perspectives and ideologies of the colonizers were critically explored, an observation particularly puzzling in a school with a Native American name.

"Do You Remember What a Slave Is?" Constructing Sacagawea as a Serviceable Other

During the week of observation in Keely's classroom, she and her students started a new unit on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The excerpts below are part of a longer instructional conversation focusing on the status of Sacagawea as a slave, while at the same time highlighting the pivotal role she played in the survival of the Expedition. While drawing a previously traced image of Sacagawea, Keely introduced this important figure in U.S. history in an almost storylike manner.

Segment 2

Keely: His wife served as a translator. Not only that, Sacajawea helped (beginning to trace over the light pencil already on the butcher paper—forming the garment worn

Table 2
Information on Participating Teachers and Schools

Teacher	Degree	Specialization	Years of Experience	Current Position	School	District
Jeanette	Master's Degree	Completed ESL coursework	10 years	Mainstream teacher 4th grade	Cedar Woods Primary School	Misty Forest School District
Kirsten	Master's Degree	Completed ESL coursework	24 years	Mainstream teacher 5th grade	Tomanawas Elementary School	Mountain Meadow School District
Keely	Master's Degree	Completed ESL coursework	6 years	Mainstream teacher 4th grade	Larkspur Elementary School	Mountain Meadow School District

by Sacajawea)—everyone find food and survive the winters. She showed them how they could capture food, how they could fish, and the berries they could eat—

Joel: She was very smart.

Keely: She was very smart. She played a very important role in the expedition.

* * * *

Keely: Sacagawea… was a Shoshone, Native American girl and she was taken from her family one day, um, during a raid by another tribe who were stealing their horses. So, at 16, actually she was 14 at the time, she was kidnapped by another tribe and taken. And she became a slave for that other tribe. Do you remember what a slave is?

Students: Yah.

Keely: Okay. What's a slave?

Ashley: Someone who, uh (many hands raised).

Keely: Uh, Max?

Max: Someone that, uh, um, works for another person and [xxx].

Keely: Yah. Um, were they usually treated really nicely?

Students: No.

Keely: No, not usually.

Joe: Sometimes they were though.

Keely: [xxx] times they were. So, at 14 she was taken and her job as a slave was to sew clothing for other Native American women in the tribe. That was her job. Well, when she got a little older, the chief of that tribe decided to sell her or trade her for goods to Charbonneau, the fur trader.

* * * *

Keely: She helped them locate food—roots along the way: special roots that they could use as medicine. William Clark served as the doctor on the trail, so William Clark and Sacajawea teamed up a lot, because she was able to show him roots and things that they could use as medication to treat people who got ill along the trail.

* * * *

Keely: So, one of the jobs, we know that she helped find food. She also served as a translator, because she could communicate with the Native Americans. She, uh, when she was doing her sewing for the other tribe, she was [xxx] beading [xxx] clothes, where they take the little beads and [xxx] looked really nice.

After briefly mentioning Sacagawea's baby, Jean Baptiste or Pompe, the lesson continues with an extended description of the contributions and characteristics of another member of the expedition, Seaman, a Newfoundland dog. It was unfortunate

that Sacagawea, the slave upon whom the expedition depended for food, medicine, seasonal survival skills, and communication skills, and Seaman, the dog, were presented as almost equally useful members of the Expedition.

In looking at the segment above we see a large list of ways in which Sacagawea was an asset to the Expedition. Taken together, they construct an image of Sacagawea as what Sampson (2008, 1993) refers to as a "serviceable" *Other*, an *Other* "constructed so as to be of service to the dominant groups' own needs, values, interests and points of view" (p. 4).

A brief discussion of Sacagawea's status as a slave also occurs. The teacher asks her students to recall what they know about slaves. Students respond with an incomplete and inaccurate depiction of a slave as someone who "works for another person" and who may or may not be treated well. Rather than clarifying or expanding upon this understanding, the teacher continues with the story of Sacagawea. The opportunity to hold a critical discussion of how a person was transformed into a commodity, to be purchased and sold, was lost. Additionally, as a slave woman used to service "the needs and desires of …men," Sacagawea was constructed as man's *Other*, "serviceable to man" (Sampson, 2008, 1993, p. 6).

"Would that be Illegal Today?" Constructing the Other as a Pitiable, Conquered People without Rights

The next segment occurs a few minutes following the opening vignette. Jeanette is reviewing the forced resettlement of the Cherokee people from the southeastern portion of the U.S. to the Louisiana Territory (the Trail of Tears).

Segment 3

Jeanette: What were they [the Cherokee] promised when they moved west of the Mississippi?

Diana: It was land.

Jeanette: They were promised free land, weren't they? They were promised land. Give up your land here, and we're gunna give you some land over there. Okay… Do you think they were very happy about that?

Students: No.

Jeanette: Give up your house here …give up your house here and everything you know here, because we said so.

Arthur: Huh No way (loud voice).

Marisol: [xxx] kind of mean.

* * * *

Jeanette: Jenny had a really good question and I don't think a lot of us heard it.

Jenny: Wouldn't it be, like, a crime, if, like, they [the European-Americans] made them [the Cherokee] move all the way over there and then they promised them a whole bunch of stuff that they never gave?

Samantha: Actually—yah.

Adrian: You should go to jail for it.

Students: (multiple overlapping comments, then hands beginning to raise.)

Jeanette: What do you think, Mark?

Mark: Would that be illegal today if they did that?

Jeanette: Well, I would like to think so… Unfortunately, governments do things, ours and others, do things that maybe people think are wrong or that maybe some people think are okay … and you have to look inside you when you're deciding what's right or what's wrong—what you would think. What do we think about this particular ….

Students: Wrong. Cruel (loud voices).

Jeanette: I agree. Okay. Shhhh. What kinds of feelings do you think the Cherokee were having as they were making their thousand-mile trek on foot—because no cars—and they get to the end and there's nuthin'? I want to hear more than just "sad." I want more than one-word answers here. How do we think they felt?

In the first section of the transcript, Jeanette encourages her students to consider the feelings of the Cherokee when they were forced to leave their home territories. Students respond by expressing their moral outrage at the treatment of the Cherokee in two ways. First, students respond emotionally—empathetically—as prompted by their teacher's request. Later, students begin to question the legality of the actions committed by the European-Americans and in that way go beyond just an affective response. By emphasizing and insisting upon an emotional response (i.e., pity) to the Cherokee's treatment, the opportunity to explore deeper, critical understandings of history, informed by diverse perspectives, was missed.

While expressing empathy is valuable in exploring and creating relationships between differing groups of people, by concentrating on the Cherokee's feelings, the teacher's repeated requests for an emotional response prevented a deeper discussion about the critical issues surrounding the Trail of Tears. In addition, by presenting the Cherokee as subject to the laws of the European-American leaders but without enforced rights under those same laws, the

review of this event portrayed the Cherokee as a conquered people, as weak and pitiable *Others* (Eriksson & Aronsson, 2005).

This identity was reinforced by calling upon students to imagine how the Cherokee felt—to feel sorry for or pity them because of what happened to them. What happened and accountability for what happened were wholly disconnected from a recognizable, identifiable, concrete source (e.g., Andrew Jackson, United States). With hindsight, it is easy to claim the moral high ground and denounce the actions of our European-American ancestors while simultaneously constructing ourselves as "caring and empathizing" (Eriksson & Aronsson, p. 735).

Conclusions

By attempting to present the historical treatment of Native Americans as a story well-told, but without providing opportunities to critically analyze such treatment, educators may in fact be masking dominant ideologies and contributing to the reproduction of societal norms. In contrast to the stated goals of social studies standards, students are denied the opportunity to wrestle with the difficult topics that would develop their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970, 1993) and help them become ethical and moral beings in an interconnected world.

Instead, the classroom discussions we have presented explore history from a *safe* moral distance across time, obscuring the culpability of our European-American ancestors and the role each of us has in current social justice issues.

If U.S. educators are truly committed to nurturing a "*pluralist perspective* based on diversity" in students (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d.-b, para. 30), then contrary to the beliefs of some educators (Hollingworth, 2009), it is never too early to begin exploring complex and multifaceted issues with students (Morgan, 2009). As the transcript segments illustrated, we clearly have a lot of work ahead of us. Not even teachers with specialized linguistic and cultural preparation (i.e., English language learner coursework and certification) are immune to the implicit nature of ideologies cunningly entwined in the language of the classroom.

Suggestions for Practice

Analyzing Teacher Talk

As educators we can improve our teaching by analyzing our language via the use of video recordings. Video recordings can be done by simply placing a camcorder in a corner of the classroom. To avoid students getting distracted by the camcorder, start the camcorder before students enter the classroom and turn it off once students leave. We suggest having the camcorder in the classroom for a few days before the actual videotaping begins.

When viewing classroom videos, focus on different aspects of language use, such as:

(a) How are whole-class discussions constructed (e.g., Are students challenged to think about, construct, defend, and revise their own ideas)?

(b) What kinds of questions are asked (e.g., *display*, requiring a brief right-or-wrong answer; *open-ended*, which allow students to provide extended and personalized responses)?

(c) Is sufficient wait-time provided for students' thinking after a question is raised? In our observations of classrooms, the average wait time after a question is between one and two seconds.

(d) What kind of feedback is provided? For example, are we responding to students' questions with evaluative replies (e.g., "great," "right," "excellent," or "not really," "no, not quite," "almost"), which can limit student thinking instead of prompting students to support their answers logically (e.g., "Can you give us an example?" or "Why do you think that?") or request further clarification (e.g., "Tell me more." or "What do you mean by____?").

(e) How are we referring to individuals, groups and cultures different than our own? Are we using words like *those* or *these* to refer to different groups? Are we *othering* groups by using the *us-them* dichotomy as in the Eriksson and Aronsson study (2005)?

There are many other aspects to observe when viewing tapes of our teaching such as, are we calling on boys and girls equally? Are we giving all our students a chance to speak? Are we encouraging students to ask questions? To lead the discussion? How are we bringing in different perspectives? (For additional information about discussions in content-area classrooms, see Flynn, 2009; Salinas, Fránquiz, & Guberman, 2006; Zwiers, 2008.)

Using Primary Sources

Primary sources include artifacts, authentic documents, photos, recordings, transcripts of interviews, or other sources of information created during or close to the event or time period studied. In today's electronic era, primary sources can be retrieved from digital collections, often containing substantial historical works. See for example, the Library of Congress (http://www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html), university data centers such as the Labriola National American Indian Cen-

"*Well, they look pretty undocumented to me.*"

Cartoon by J. B. Handelsman, reprinted with permission.

ter at Arizona State University (http://lib. asu.edu/labriola), and Native American archives such as the Cherokee Nation (http://www.cherokee.org/Culture/History/TOT/Cat/Default.aspx).

It is important to realize that twentieth-century history can be studied using primary sources. As with topics such as immigration, World War II, and the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, Native American historical and current events can be explored via the knowledge and experiences of community or family members who lived through those times. Through exposure to and analysis of oral history interviews, video memoirs, and face-to-face interviews, students learn to ask meaningful questions, draw conclusions, and reflect on possible solutions and consequences. Primary sources allow history to come alive.
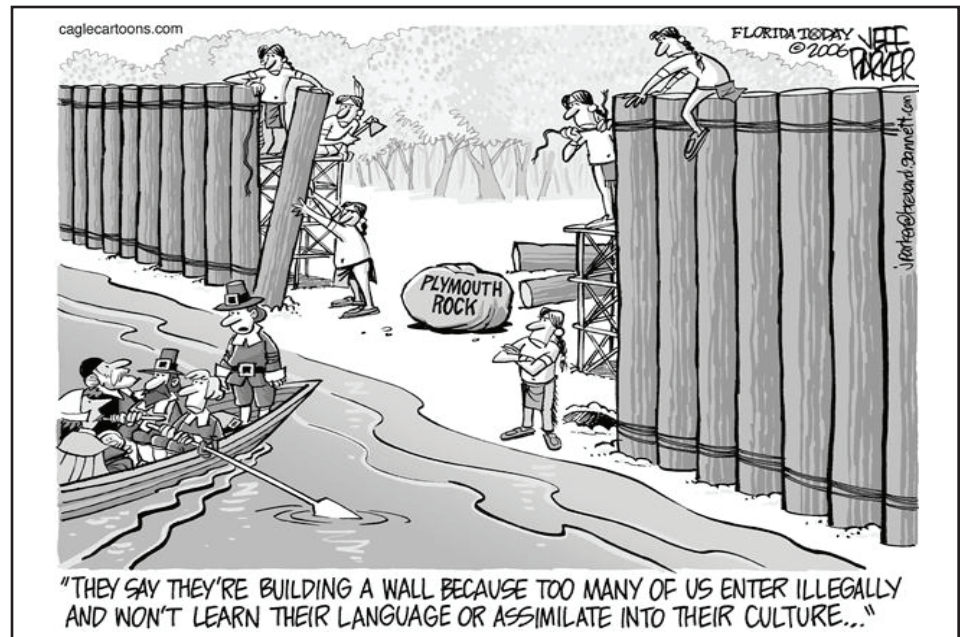
Using Contrapuntal Pedagogy

Contrapuntal pedagogy involves reading and accessing mainstream and non-mainstream texts (e.g., films, novels, poems, plays, newspaper reports) so that students have the opportunity to compare and contrast diverse perspectives, as well as realize how mainstream literature creates particular narratives of a society's history (Singh & Greenlaw, 1998). By using contrapuntal pedagogy teachers and students engage in inquiry and critique about how colonialism and imperialism have historically shaped and continue to shape mainstream knowledge about Native Americans.

This pedagogical practice creates space for the knowledge and perspectives of marginalized people to be present. It allows for diverse perspectives to be critiqued, compared, contrasted, and constructed in the classroom (DeJaeghere, 2009). One simple but effective example is the use of political cartoons, such as the two included with this article.

Providing Balanced and Comprehensive Historical Perspectives

Use timelines or graphic organizers to provide historical perspectives, to illustrate how cultures are born, evolve, and overlap in relation to other cultures in the same region or across the globe. This kind of comprehensive historical perspective will help students understand that life in the *Americas* did not begin when the first Europeans arrived but that there were a myriad of cultures already well established with rich and ancient histories (Good, 2009).

The story line in most school textbooks places Native Americans in the early history of colonial times, yet does not discuss their lives before Columbus. Most text-

"THEY SAY THEY'RE BUILDING A WALL BECAUSE TOO MANY OF US ENTER ILLEGALLY AND WON'T LEARN THEIR LANGUAGE OR ASSIMILATE INTO THEIR CULTURE..."

Cartoon by Jeff Parker, reprinted with permission

books do not discuss where Native Americans lived, how their political structures worked, how they built their homes... nor how and what they hunted and gathered (Hawkins, 2002, p. 16).

In addition, timelines that extend from the past to the present day will assist students in debunking the notion that Native Americans are historical artifacts no longer present in our nation. It will also allow them to critically analyze the trajectory of different tribes in relation to issues and events (e.g., pilgrims, colonies, westward expansion, establishment of reservations, tribal sovereignty, hunting and fishing rights) and conflicts.

As Macedo stated so eloquently, "one cannot teach conflict as if, all of a sudden, it fell from the sky. The conflict must be anchored in those competing histories and ideologies that generate the conflict in the first place" (Freire, 1970, 1993, p. 24).

Teaching and Learning Critical Language Awareness

Teacher educators can enhance their preservice and inservice courses by teaching CLA. A focus on CLA starts with an acknowledgement of the political and social nature of language. In today's global village, a critical awareness of the role that language plays

Table 3
Elements to Include in a Critical Language Awareness Course
(quoted from Clark, et al., 1991, pp. 48-49)

Issue	Sub-Issue
1. Social awareness of discourse	(a) How particular instances of spoken and written discourse are shaped by, and help shape, their social context.
	(b) How such instances both affect relations of power and dominance and contribute to their reproduction or transformation.
	(c) How the specific linguistic choices which speakers and writers can make can be significant in these terms. (p. 48)
2. Critical awareness of diversity	(a) Why some languages, or language varieties, are valued more highly than others and seen as more legitimate for prestigious sorts of purpose.
	(b) How current valuations of varieties, including the standard, have come about historically. (p. 49)
3. Consciousness of, and practice for, change	(a) How change in language results from social struggles and changing power relations.
	(b) What possibilities exist for change in current circumstances and what constraints there are.
	(c) How purposeful language practices can be oriented to achieving change. (p. 49)

in classrooms is a *sine qua non* not only for better understanding the students we teach but, more importantly, to avoid marginalizing their cultures and languages.

Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič, and Martin-Jones (1991) suggest three important areas to explore in teacher education courses: social awareness of discourse, critical awareness of diversity, and consciousness of, and practice for, change (pp. 48-49). Table 3 includes examples of specific questions to address when dealing with each of the three subtopics.

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