

A Review of Social Studies Textbook Content Analyses Since 2002

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A content analyses study of social studies textbooks was completed in 1993 by Rahmia Wade. She found the problematic way in which researchers examined texts noting they relied too much on personal perceptions and opinions of social studies topics and failed to cite additional sources to support their claims. The investigation further asserted social studies textbook analyses lacked interrater reliability and data quantification. In many cases, the authors of these works were comparing textbooks to other textbooks, rather than to standards, and were not examining all the texts used in a particular discipline. Based on these findings, Wade questioned the effectiveness of these analyses for improving social studies education. This project replicated Wade's study. A random sample of social studies textbook analyses published between 2002 and 2012 was considered and the author found that they have changed little since Wade's article. Suggestions are offered for those interested in conducting textbook analysis with a focus on how to make such studies more relevant for classroom teachers. These suggestions include: analyzing both the textbooks and standards simultaneously, analyzing the entire textbook, and providing student centered lesson ideas.

Keywords: *textbook analysis, content analysis, critical theory, teacher education, social studies education, social studies textbooks*

Introduction

The large number of published textbook content analyses suggests these studies are one of the cornerstones of social studies research. In addition to the many published examples of such studies, there are also numerous examples of social studies textbook analyses conducted by researchers outside the field of social studies education, primarily those concerning history. Two of the most cited of these are journalist Frances Fitzgerald's (1979) *America Revised* and sociologist James Loewen's (1995) *Lies my Teacher Told Me*. While there have been many research studies examining Kindergarten-12 textbooks, there has been little research critically analyzing textbook content analyses and offering suggestions about how the findings of each analysis can be used in the typical K-12 social studies classroom or a college level social studies methods class.

Wade's 1993 article, published in *Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)* proved to be an exception. She reviewed 25 content analyses of social studies textbooks published from 1982 to 1992 and discovered many limitations. She noted, for example, researchers relied too much on their own perceptions and opinions of social studies topics and failed to cite additional sources to support their claims. This research further asserted social studies textbook analyses lacked inter-rater reliability and data quantification. In many cases, the authors of these works were comparing textbooks to other textbooks, rather than to standards, and were not examining all the texts used in a particular content area. Based on the analyses

read, Wade suspected researchers were analyzing only selected passages that supported their arguments, not the entirety of the texts. Researchers also offered little discussion about where these books were actually being used (i.e., states; school districts, etc.). She concluded the primary weakness of textbook content analyses was they “produced remarkably similar conclusions...almost every researcher finds the topic chosen for study has not been given adequate attention or is presented in a biased, stereotypical or otherwise inaccurate manner” (p. 248).

Wade (1993) offered many suggestions about how textbook researchers and reformers could improve their analyses. She suggested authors question the value of their research from the start and work collectively with classroom teachers, curriculum committees, and national organizations to develop better textbooks. More importantly, she proposed textbook critics widen their views and offer more studies “focused on understanding the effects that textbook learning has on students” in classrooms (Wade, 1993, pp. 249-250). She proposed researchers additionally consider the broader societal purpose of schooling in society and “the ideological basis behind the use of textbooks in schools” (pp. 249-250).

Contrary to Wade (1993), I believe all textbook analyses in and of themselves can be important to the field of social studies education. As these texts are often used as the primary source of knowledge and understanding about the social studies, they offer important points for readers to consider when thinking about the content (e.g., Alridge, 2006; Apple, 2006; Loewen, 2010). While it may be difficult to determine to what degree these studies have improved how textbooks are written, they most certainly have influenced the thinking of some classroom teachers, teacher educators, textbook authors, and researchers.

While I disagree with Wade’s stance on the importance of textbook analyses, I agree with the notion content analyses have significant limitations. While reading them for various research projects, I found several of her critiques addressed elements present in textbook analyses written today. Though social studies education has changed greatly since Wade’s article, due to the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the recent adoption of the Common Core Standards (CCS), many content analyses do not reflect the impact these changes have made on the writing of social studies textbooks.

I began my trek into higher education as a textbook reviewer and critic. My dissertation and subsequent research and publications were based on the content analysis of state history textbooks (Roberts, 2009, 2011; Roberts & Butler, 2012). In retrospect, my findings were similar to those of others. Over time, I better understood the challenges of writing a textbook. My views about how we should analyze texts and what we should do with our findings have changed (Roberts, 2013). I still believe my past research, as well as other textbook content analyses, is important and should be taken into consideration by the major players in education including textbook publishers, authors, teachers and teacher educators. Those involved in higher education and textbook analyses, however, can do more to make these studies relevant to those stakeholders we hope to learn the most from them.

This paper will offer a comparison of Wade’s findings and my analysis of recently published textbook analyses. Based on the results, I make suggestions to those interested in

conducting textbook content analyses about how they could increase the relevancy and practicality of their studies for teachers.

Theoretical Perspective

This paper is based on critical theory. As Michael Patton (2002) claims, the purpose of critical theory is to "...not just study and understand society, but rather to critique and change society" (p. 131). In the overall literature of social studies textbook content analysis, it can be argued researchers hold dominant ideologies when writing about the problems of the books they have analyzed. As Wade (1993) suggested, many seem to believe from the start of their studies the topic(s) they are researching are not receiving the proper attention they deserve. Though using the term *dominant ideologies* can be problematic, critics of social studies textbooks likely hold such ideologies by bringing their own beliefs and biases into their examinations. These biases should be emphasized. In analyzing published textbook analyses and comparing them to Wade's and my own understandings of the process, I used elements of critical theory to frame the investigation. Critical theory also served as a guide in my development of the suggestions for adapting the way we conduct textbook content analyses.

Method

A qualitative content analysis was used in tandem with self-study approaches to evaluate the topic of textbook analysis and to help develop suggestions about how to write them more effectively. As Douglas Ezzy (2002) described, content analysis can be considered the "most deductive of all forms of data analysis," and believed it should be used when "a preexisting theory is tested against empirical data" (pp. 82-83). Self-study is defined as "the reflective, critical examination of the self's involvement both in aspects of the study and in the phenomenon under study" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 240).

I reevaluated my own work in this study since two of my textbook analyses were used in the sample. To do so, I adapted self-study method to analyze and describe my processes in developing an updated approach for conducting textbook analyses based on my experiences as textbook critic, textbook author, classroom teacher, and teacher educator (Roberts, 2013).

As this study was a replication of Wade's (1993); my primary data source was her method. I used a convenience sample, as Wade did, of social studies textbook content analysis written since 2001 (the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act). I selected two that I had used for literature reviews in my past works that were written since 2001 and the others based simply on the order in which they appeared in an Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) search. I only analyzed works that focused on content analysis of social studies textbooks. I altered Wade's study with a purposeful sample because I wanted to determine what educational journals outside of social studies education had published works relative to social studies textbooks. I reviewed eight works published in social studies specific journals and 15 from non-social studies journals (although all were education specific). I also included two book chapters from the recent peer reviewed book *The New Politics of the Textbook: Critical Analysis in the Core Content Areas* (2012) in my sample. My selection of the book chapters was due to the fact that one of my own studies was included in the book and I wanted to compare mine to another chapter from the text.

To gain a better sense of the quality of each study, I used Wade's (1993) evaluative system of 13 categories she determined to be the major elements of content analysis (pp. 235-237). These categories included:

- **Topics of Research:** These are the topics that are the focus of the textbook analyses. Carl Siler points out that most of the topics of social studies content analysis are "themes, groups, and historical events" (as cited in Wade, 1993, p. 235).
- **Primary Purpose of the Study:** This category is the main reason the author(s) chose to conduct the analysis and what they did in their analysis. According to Ole Holsti, there are usually three purposes for conducting textbook analysis: comparing changes in textbooks over a period of time (longitudinal studies), comparing two or more textbooks in the same time period, or comparing textbooks to a specific content standard (as cited in Wade, 1993, p. 235).
- **Framing of the Study:** In this category Wade (1993) argued in order for a study's findings to be useful to the educational community, the authors should make connections to both the literature of textbook analysis as well as the literature on the topic of study, content analysis methodology, or literature on social studies education (p. 235).
- **Type of Sample (text):** In this category Wade categorized textbooks under study according to grade level and, discipline for upper grades (e.g., U.S. History, World History, etc.)
- **Choice of Sample (text):** In this category Wade categorized how the author chose the text for analysis (i.e., a top selling book, used in a particular state, etc.). According to Holsi, this category is important because "bias or error in the sampling design can render an otherwise well-designed study invalid (as cited in Wade, 1993, p. 236).
- **Categories for Analysis:** According to Wade (1993) "it is important [in a content analysis] to define the categories and whenever possible to include a source outside the researcher, such as an expert in the field, to validate their appropriateness" (p. 236).
- **Type of Sample (unit of analysis):** According to Wade this category is based on what researchers use as data to study their topic (e.g., words, sentences, paragraphs, etc.).
- **Choice of Sample (unit of analysis):** This category describes how the unit of analysis was chosen. Wade noted researchers debate whether random or purposeful sampling is the most appropriate.
- **System of Numeration:** Wade based this category on the procedure of counting units in a content analysis (e.g., tallying the frequency, counting appearance of units, noting the intensity of the units).
- **Reliability:** According to Wade, the best (and least used) approach to establish reliability in textbook analysis is through the use of inter-rater reliability.
- **Reporting of the Findings:** According to Wade (1993), she considered any reference to numbers as quantitative and any descriptions of the text as qualitative (though many studies use both). She also categorized a study's finding as being either "subjective" or "thorough qualitative analysis." She claimed that a subjective finding had "unclear" unit and process of analysis and used "vague words such as most, rarely, and usually" (p. 237). In turn, thorough qualitative analysis included "depth and detail in reporting the

findings...and a clear explanation of how the texts were analyzed” (Wade, 1993, p. 237). Wade found both subjective and thorough analyses included passages from the texts.

- **Conclusions:** According to Wade (1993) she included this category for analysis in order to “determine points of convergence and disagreement in findings among textbook content research studies” (p. 237). She argued that this category helped to determine the validity of the studies.
- **Recommendations:** According to Wade (1993) she looked for analyses that discussed the educational significance of the study and provided recommendations for what teachers should do or what would be helpful for textbook authors to include.

Through examining the sources I developed suggestions for a more effective content analysis that might help teachers, teacher educators, and textbook authors as they sought to relate the textbook’s content and presentation to the NCLB and Common Core standards based expectations. I included findings from my two prior textbook content analysis studies to develop these suggestions for more effective social studies content analyses (Roberts, 2013; Roberts & Colleague, 2012).

Findings

Based on Wade’s (1993) evaluative system, I found little has changed in the way researchers conduct textbook analyses. Many of the same weaknesses Wade identified were still prevalent in recent studies. Brief discussions of my findings follow in which I compare my results to Wade’s discuss how my own critiques fared when evaluated using Wade’s categories.

Topics

The majority (76%) of article topics in Wade’s study were: themes (e.g., nuclear war, propaganda, etc.), groups (e.g., women, African-Americans, etc.), and historical events. In my sample, the topics of study were similar; 96% of the articles focused on themes, historical events, and groups. In my review, Native Americans, the tragic events of 9/11, and the Holocaust received the most consideration. I reviewed one article that focused on the textbook portrayals of a specific individual, Martin Luther King, Jr. My two articles aligned with the findings in that they were about the portrayals of presidents in state history textbooks.

Primary Purpose of the Study

The majority of articles Wade reviewed were “interested in comparing how a small number of widely used textbooks addressed a given theme, group, or event” (p. 238). Her study revealed the vast majority (68%) compared the text of two textbooks, with 12% presenting longitudinal studies of changes in textbooks over time. Interestingly 12% of the articles also compared textbooks to a particular standard. In my examination I found all textbook studies written after 2001 were comparative in nature and compared more than two books. Fifty-six percent compared textbooks currently being used, 52% were longitudinal in nature, and one compared two books written in the 1950s. None of the articles focused on comparisons to a specific social studies standard or set of standards though a few made reference to state or national standards. Of my publications in the sample, one was longitudinal and one was a comparison of recently adopted state history textbooks to those that were being used in non-adoption states.

Framing the Study

All of the articles Wade examined framed their study with references to the literature about the topic being examined (e.g., women, nuclear war, etc.) and 21 (84%) mentioned the literature about textbook research. This finding was similar in my examination in which all of the articles framed their study with literature about the topic being examined (e.g., the events of 9/11, the Holocaust, etc.) and 24 (96%) of the articles also framed their study by citing other textbook analysis. Of the articles I examined, four cited FitzGerald (1979), 11 cited Loewen (1995), and five cited Wade (though many did not meet her suggestions for better textbook analysis). Both of my works framed the study by citing literature on both the topic and textbook research.

Type of Sample (Text)

Sixty percent of Wade's sample examined secondary texts while 44% examined elementary level texts. U.S. history was the focus of most of the articles at 40% followed by World History (16%). Both Economics and Geography were the focus of 12% of the articles while Government was only studied in one of the works. My sample included an analysis of textbooks from multiple grade levels or disciplines, thus presenting a more complex sample. Of the studies, 12% examined only elementary level texts, 44% examined only high school texts. Sixteen percent focused on middle grades textbooks (grades 6-8), and 32% examined textbooks from multiple grade levels. In terms of content, 44% analyzed only U.S. history textbooks, 8% only world history, 12% examined the textbooks from different countries, and 12% focused on state history texts. One book compared a state history textbook to one written for U.S. history. Textbooks from several disciplines were examined by 24% of the studies. One of my works examined elementary and middle level state history textbooks while a second examined all three.

Choice of Sample (Text)

A "great majority" of the studies Wade examined provided some justification for their choice of specific texts (p. 240). She revealed the majority of the analyses' authors claimed the texts were "major, widely used, or current," and noted the books were on state adoption lists or used in the researcher's home state (p. 240). According to Wade, two studies gave no justification at all. She added, "none of the studies attempted to choose a random sample of texts or examine all texts in a given discipline" (p. 240). In the studies I examined, the results were similar. The vast majority of the studies (64%) claimed the books were either "popular," or "written by large textbook publishers," or "widely used." The adoption process was cited by 20% as the reason for their selection of the texts, while one article cited both reasons. Reasons other than the books being popular or adopted were offered by 12%, for example, I selected the books for my analyses because they were either adopted or used in the states that met my criteria. In response to Wade (1993), I attempted to examine all books that were being used in the states based on the discipline of state history.

Categories of Analysis

One of the most "serious shortcomings" of textbook analyses according to Wade (1993) was the lack of "...clearly defined and validated categories for analysis" which Wade claimed made it too easy for researchers to "make subjective judgments about the texts under review" (p. 241). Specifically Wade looked for categories of data analysis based on the author defining

categories prior to the findings sections of the articles. She wanted these categories to be based on a source outside of the researcher's own thoughts (i.e., an expert on the topic the researcher was studying). In all, she found 44% of the textbook analyses did not list any categories and 56% listed categories before the findings sections. Of these only 36% defined these categories or used some expert source as validation (p. 241). Using the same analysis, I found similar results. Of the studies I examined, 64% listed categories before the finding sections while 36% did not. In contrast to Wade's findings, I found 40% of the studies that listed categories also attempted to use some source as validation for the development of them. Categories were listed before the findings section in 16% of the studies while 8% listed and defined their categories (see Table 8). Only one my articles in my sample, Roberts (2011) followed Wade's (1993) recommendations; it was specific in detailing the aforementioned categories. The second article, Roberts and Butler (2012) did not meet these recommendations.

Type of Sample

In an examination of specific units of analyses used by researchers in their studies, Wade found 68% of the articles did not specify the unit of analysis. Of those, 12% used individual words, 12% used sentences, 0% used paragraphs, 4% used page columns, and 12% used text passages on the topics. Only one study used three units of analysis. I found a slightly different pattern in recent textbook analyses. Regarding mentions of a specific type of sample, 32% used text passages, 12% used paragraphs, 8% used sentences, 8% used individual words, and 4% used multiple units. Thirty-six percent, however, failed to mention their specific type of sample. One of my articles, Roberts (2011), specified the unit being used, paragraphs, while the other, Roberts & Butler (2012), did not.

Choice of Sample

In terms of the method researchers used to select the data sample for their analyses, Wade (1993) claimed it was "unclear if the researchers read all of the texts under study or if they chose passages selectively to support their arguments" (p. 242). In Wade's sample, 68% did not provide information about how data were chosen and 32% explained that they used a purposeful sample. According to Wade, such purposeful sampling usually involved analyzing the text passages on a given theme, group or historical event (p. 242). Most authors in my sample made specific mentions of reading or scanning the entire text or using the index, table of contents, and glossary to find where the topics of their study were located. In all, 64% specified what they used in their analyses with 12% mentioning reading the texts in their entirety and 24% providing no information. Once again, one of the articles, Roberts (2011), offered an explanation on how the data was chosen, while the other Roberts and Butler (2012), did not.

System of Enumeration

According to Wade (1993), 76% of the studies she analyzed did not offer the reader a system of enumeration through a numerical count or the frequency of the data units examined. Though many did offer percentages, Wade claimed the use of the enumeration systems, primarily in the forms of tables or figures would help provide a "clearer understanding of the text content" (p. 243). In her study, only 20% of the articles offered information about the frequency of the unit, and only one article detailed the unit's appearance.

This pattern was similar in my analysis. Most researchers have not followed Wade's suggestion for more quantitative measures in textbook analyses. In all, 64% of the articles did not provide a system of enumeration. Twelve percent of the articles offered a table concerning the appearance of the unit and 8% included a table concerning the frequency. Eight percent of the articles and book chapters provided multiple systems of enumeration, and 8% offered the results of statistical analyses of significance (see Table 10). One of the articles, Roberts (2011), met Wade's recommendation by offering a system of enumeration, while the other, Roberts and Butler (2012), did not.

Reliability

Another factor of concern for Wade (1993) was the lack of data regarding interrater reliability in the studies. She found only 16% of the studies mentioned the data was analyzed using this "important" procedure (p. 243). In turn, Wade criticized the studies for their lack of detail that would assist in the replication of the study; only 32% of those analyzed could be replicated by other researchers. Once again, my analysis mirrors Wade's findings with regard to interrater reliability. Only 16% of the works I analyzed specified the use of interrater reliability. My findings concerning the replication of the study were quite different. Using Wade's subjective analysis, I found 68% of the authors had provided enough information for a researcher to replicate their studies (see Table 11). Neither of my articles mentioned interrater reliability. Additionally, I believed that one of my articles; Roberts (2011) offered enough data for replication.

Reporting of Findings

While more than 56% of the studies Wade reviewed included passages from text to support the author's arguments, very few "provided a thorough qualitative or quantitative treatment of the data (p. 244). According to Wade she found that only 24% of the studies included a detailed qualitative accounting and 24% offered detailed quantitative accounting of the findings. As mentioned previously, she concluded this was a major weakness in these studies as "...readers cannot be sure that the findings of these studies represent anything other than the author's bias or subjective impressions (pp. 244-245). Once again, my results were similar to Wade (1993). For quantitative and mixed methods studies, 32% reported percentages, or numbers of text in the narrative; 4% counted and reported units of analysis solely in the narrative, and 32% reported units of measurement in both tables and in the narratives. Based on Wade's own subjective measure 76% of the articles I examined appeared to be "subjective" in nature, while 24% seemed to have the thorough qualitative methods Wade was seeking. Unlike Wade's study, the vast majority (92%) of the articles I examined included direct quotes from the text in their findings sections. Concerning my works in the sample, Roberts (2011) offered several tables and figures presenting quantitative data, while Roberts and Butler (2012) provided only direct quotes to support our themes.

Conclusions of Analyses

One of the important limitations to textbook analyses is that no matter the topic these types of analyses provide readers with a similar conclusion (Wade, 1993). As Wade stated (1993) "almost all of the researchers (88%) concluded the topic under study was not given the attention it deserves" (p. 245). Other common themes she found in her analysis were that the

textbooks “avoided controversy” (56%), provided a “stereotypical or biased presentation of the topic” (40%), or were “written in such a way that it interfered with student comprehension of the material” (Wade, 1993, p. 245). To a lesser extent, 32% of the studies claimed the texts contained factual errors. Twelve percent of Wade’s studies mentioned there was actually less bias than in previous studies on the topic. I found evidence of even more similarities in the conclusions of textbook analyses carried out since Wade’s (1993) study. In my sample, 84% of the studies claimed there was limited coverage of the topic or related topics under consideration while 92% mentioned author bias in their conclusions. A description of ascribed factors that may lead to impeding student comprehension was found in 84% of the sample while 76% offered explicit or implied accusations of factual errors, and 64% discussed how the text avoided controversy with their deceptions. Perhaps Loewen’s work, *Lies my Teacher Told Me* (1995), has prompted researchers to look for these practices in textbooks. On the other hand, 48% of the studies (primarily those with a longitudinal focus) mentioned that the textbooks analyzed were less biased or showed some other manner of improvement compared to those written in the past. Both of my articles followed this pattern by mentioning most of Wade’s categories although Roberts and Butler (2012) did not discuss limited coverage.

Recommendations of Analyses

According to Wade’s (1993) the category of analysis concerned the recommendations sections of each of the studies. In all, she examined the individuals and groups the researchers were addressing and what they actually recommended based on their findings. Of the researchers, 80% addressed teachers explicitly. This was followed by 36% of the articles addressing a group of “others” (i.e., curriculum committees, school districts, NCSS, etc.), 28% were directed to textbook publishers and authors, 12% to teacher educators, and 8% to researchers while 8% of the articles offered no explicit recommendations (p. 246). It should be noted that Wade found the low number of articles written for researchers and teacher educators interesting as she claimed “...these individuals are frequent readers of the journals in this study” (p. 246). Overall, Wade (1993) found that most of the recommendations the authors made were for teachers to “supplement inadequate text with creative teaching methods and supplementary materials,” though she points out that “some authors neglected, however, to provide specific suggestions about what teachers should do to compensate for problems in the texts” (p. 246). Once again, I found many similarities to Wade’s results in recent textbook analyses. The majority of the studies I reviewed (72%) were also geared toward teachers, followed by 32% addressing others. In my sample, however, more authors made recommendations to textbook publishers or authors (64%), researchers (32%), and teacher educators (20%) while only one (4%) article made no explicated recommendations. Both of my articles made recommendations to multiple audiences.

Discussion and Implications

Though addressing textbook authors or publishers and researchers is important, as Wade (1993) pointed out, the intended audience of the texts is often classroom teachers. Over 80% of the articles addressed in Wade’s study, and 72% in mine, addressed teachers specifically. Based on Wade’s findings and comparing them to the recent literature on textbook analysis, as well as to my own experience, I identified additional suggestions to researchers that may make these

studies more worthwhile and effective for teachers. These include: (1) analyze both the textbook and state standards simultaneously, (2) analyze the book as a whole, and (3) provide specific student centered lesson plans based on findings to provide teachers with examples.

Analyze both the Textbook and Standards Simultaneously

As the 2010 Texas textbook controversy demonstrated, state and national standards often dictate what information textbooks will include, not the other way around (Anderson & Metzger, 2011; Marino & Bolgatz, 2011; McKinley, 2010; van Hover, Hicks, Stoddard, & Lisanti, 2010). Through personal experiences as an author of a state history textbook, I was told in order for my book to be adopted; I needed to keep the state standards in the forefront of my mind as I wrote. The standards were the basis for my decisions about what to include or to omit from my textbook (Roberts, 2013). Similar to what Wade discovered in 1993, the vast majority of the recent textbook analyses I examined failed to consider the state or national standards textbook authors were required to write, especially those writing texts for adoption states. These state standards were, at worse, not mentioned or, at best, mentioned in passing, especially in those analyses written after 2001 and the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. Due to the well-documented and established relationship between standards and the creation of textbooks, it is imperative for researchers to start reviewing them in tandem (e.g., Anderson & Metzger, 2011; Apple, 2006; Fitzgerald, 1979; Loewen, 1995). Studying standards and textbooks together has the potential to make textbook analyses more relevant for classroom teachers as standards are what teachers tend to be the most concerned about when lesson planning (Anderson & Metzger, 2011; Apple, 2006, Wade, 1993). Textbook analyses should offer insights on how the evaluated texts meet, or do not meet, the state's social studies standards. By including discussion of standards in the textbook analyses, researchers may persuade teachers to move away from the textbook and to seek additional sources to help their students better understand topics that are both a focus of the standards and of interest to textbook researchers.

Analyze the Entire Textbook

In one of the many commonalities between our studies, Wade (1993) and I both found textbook analysis is usually a topic-driven method. Researchers chose a topic of interest and, more often than not, at the conclusions of their studies found the topic has not been discussed in a manner that the researcher believed is appropriate. Unlike Wade (1993) who argued that researchers should analyze all textbooks written for a given discipline, I would suggest it is time for researchers to move from topic-driven studies and examine one book as a whole, similar to the book reviews found in the top journals in the field. If these studies are to be more effective for their primary audience, researchers should provide information about which sections of widely used textbooks are useful as resources and which sections of the book are weak or biased. Teachers could apply this knowledge in the use or avoidance of sections or chapters of textbooks or to better understand how to use the book's strengths and weaknesses as a source for inquiry based activities.

One of Wade's (1993) primary critiques of textbook analyses was that researchers tend to make suggestions based on their own bias or subjective impressions. I found similar author suggestions. While it was common for researchers to begin their studies with a review of literature about prior textbook analyses, as well as the topic of interest, in their recommendations

they provided very limited suggestions about the key information that should be placed in textbooks. Though some researchers have done this, all should offer teachers, their primary audience, with several specific works that will help them better understand the topic of interest.

Provide Student Centered Lesson Plans

As Wade (1993) discovered few authors provided specific suggestions to teachers about what they “should do to compensate for problems in the text” (p. 246). In the article analysis I conducted, most of the researchers offered some recommendations about what teachers could do to combat the bias or limitations found in their studies. These recommendations, however, ranged in their specificity. Some authors offered a few paragraphs while others provided up to a few pages of suggestions. Some noted the need to help teachers understand how to use the information in their studies, but claimed that this was beyond the scope of their articles (Wade).

I believe the most important shift we can make in textbook analysis is to begin moving from the theoretical focus of these studies to developing more practical guides for teachers. In order to make these studies more effective for their intended audience, there is a need to provide quality, detailed lesson ideas. While there are already some approaches to doing this (e.g., Loewen, 2010, Stanford History Education Group, n.d.), suggestions and recommendations in textbook analyses should include a focus on practical information for teachers explaining how they can use the bias, factual errors, limited coverage, and avoidance of controversy found in the textbooks to help them create hands-on, inquiry based lessons that focus on analysis and combating textbook bias. Step-by-step lesson plans developed by the researcher, or as Wade (1993) suggested, a collaborative effort between the researcher and classroom teachers are necessary for these studies. Lesson plans will help fill the gaps and combat the issues researchers keep finding in textbooks since our works may or may not impact textbook authors and publishers who are writing them.

Conclusion

The evidence from this study indicates the approach researchers take in conduct textbook analyses has changed very little over the past 20 years. Revisiting Wade’s (1993) work can help us consider how the implications of her study can make textbook analyses more relevant to important stakeholders in social studies education. It is time to use Wade’s recommendations to alter the way we conduct content analyses. In today’s standards-based environment, researchers may want to consider examining textbooks as a whole and not simply by specific historical topic or topics. They should understand textbooks are guided by standards, not vice versa, and study both in tandem. They should analysis the entire text not just specific passage to back up their claims. Finally, and most importantly, researchers should develop lesson plans to help their intended audience (teachers) bring their finding directly to the social studies classroom.

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