

Teaching the “Comfort Women” in Secondary History Classrooms

*Setting the Record Straight: Primary Sources and Evidence on
“Comfort Women” Issues*

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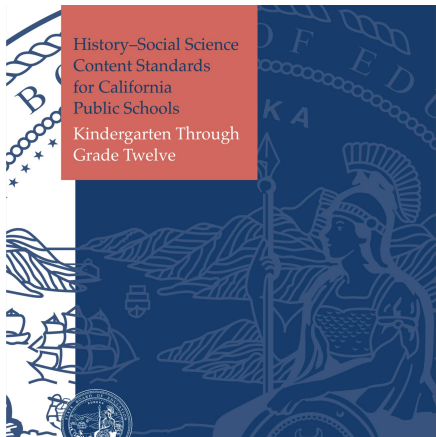
Collaborating with teachers to make history relevant and empowering for students.



The history geography project is a team of practitioners.

We support K12 history and ethnic studies public school teachers and bridge the K16 continuum. For those unfamiliar with that term K16 reflects a collaboration between K12 and higher education

Everything we do is centered in social justice and equity. We are all people of color and we know how empower history can be when you see your community and your stories and how disconnected it can feel when you do not.



10.8 Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II.

1. Compare the German, Italian, and Japanese drives for empire in the 1930s, including the 1937 Rape of Nanking, **other atrocities** in China, and the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939.

California History-Social Science Content Standards, 1998



I've been tasked to help our audience understand the ways that public educators and history educators engage students in learning about the Comfort Women

On the screen you see an excerpt from the 1998 California History Social Science standards. These content standards serve as a guide for history teachers in regards in what they are to teach. The standards were adopted in the midst of a hostile political climate that pitted progressives against conservatives in what has been called the History Wars.

My larger points are 1) despite the politicalization of these standards the final draft asked that 10th grade World History Teachers teach about the atrocities of World War II-including, but not limited to the Rape of Nanking

“Comfort Women” is a euphemism that describes women who were forced into sexual service by the Japanese Army in occupied territories before and during the war. Comfort Women can be taught as an example of institutionalized sexual slavery; estimates on the total number of Comfort Women vary, but most argue that hundreds of thousands of women were forced into these situations during Japanese occupation. On December 28, 2015, the governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea entered into an agreement regarding the issues of Comfort Women. Two translations of this document can be found at

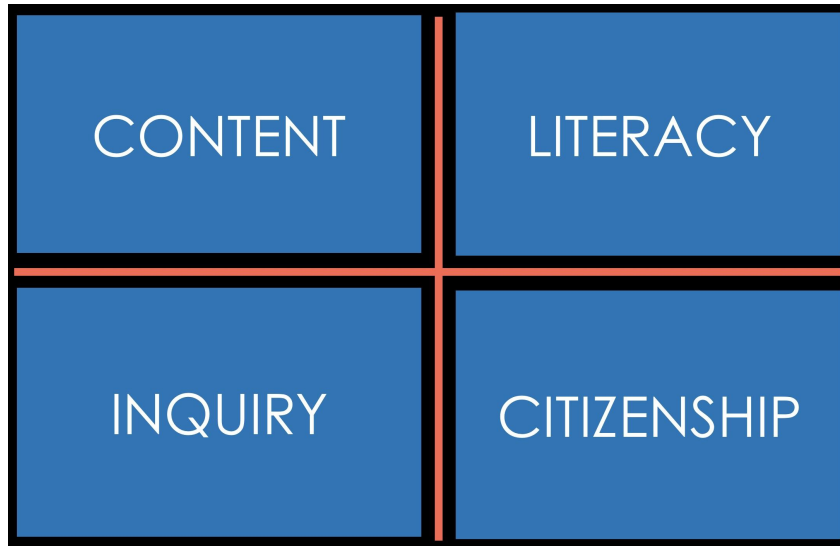
http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000364.html (accessed June 29, 2017) and http://www.mofa.go.kr/ENG/press/ministrynews/20151228/1_71575.jsp?menu=m_10_10 (accessed June 29, 2017).



The California History-Social Science Framework,
2016

In 2016 it was determined that a new framework was needed for history social studies. The framework serves as an update to the 1998 standards-it de-emphasizes conveying content and instead asks history teachers to teach through historical inquiry in an effort to build historical thinking and literacy skills.

You'll notice here, that as part of this update, the Comfort Women were added as a topic to teach.



*California HSS Framework; Four
Instructional Shifts. 2016*



This graphic represents the instructional shifts found in the CA HSS Framework. Again, the goal is that history teachers take a more holistic approach to teacher history.

1. The Content is more inclusive than the 1998 standards. The Framework integrates the FAIR Act which asks teachers to include the stories of women, minorities, indigenous, the disabled, and LGBTQ. Please note, that this is law and is a requirement. Much of our work is focused on providing training to teachers so that they have the content knowledge needed to teach these stories, but also have the tools necessary to create safe and inclusive classrooms
2. The HSS Framework is inquiry driven inviting more of a focus on critical thinking
3. Literacy is conceptual and skill based. A major emphasis is on the teaching of primary documents-this is a point that is also echoed in the California Common Core
4. The HSS Framework asks HSS teachers to engage students in citizenship or civic engagement

Ethnic Studies

- How have race and ethnicity been constructed in the United States and how has it changed over time?
- How does race and ethnicity continue to shape the United States and contemporary issues?

Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses many subject areas including **history**, literature, economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science. It emerged to address content considered to be absent from traditional curriculum and encourage **critical engagement**. As a field, Ethnic Studies seeks to **empower** all students to **engage** socially and politically and to **think critically** about the world around them. It is important for Ethnic Studies courses to document the experiences of **people of color** in order for students to construct **counter-narratives** and develop a more complex understanding of the human experience. Through these studies, students should develop respect for cultural diversity and see the advantages of inclusion.

The California History-Social Science Framework, 2016



The CA HSS Framework also includes a chapter on Ethnic Studies as defined here. I helped to co-author this portion of the CA HSS Framework.

When we take these three important documents together what we see is that history teachers have been asked to teach Comfort Women and other atrocities of WWII and are asked to take an inquiry based approach that makes use of primary sources. Finally, teachers can (and I argue should) teach history as a means to help students think critically about the present.

Historical Thinking Concepts



Historical Significance	<i>What's important to know?</i>
Evidence	<i>How do we know what we know?</i>
Continuity and Change	<i>How do we make sense of the flow of history?</i>
Cause and Consequence	<i>Why do events happen and with what impact?</i>
Historical Perspectives	<i>How can we understand the people of the past?</i>
The Ethical Dimension	<i>How can history help us live in the present?</i>
The Activist Dimension	<i>How can history help us work towards equity and justice?</i>



Third

We work with teachers to get them to shape their teaching, lessons, and courses around 7 concepts.

Why is this important? What resulted in change? How does this moment shed light on contemporary issues?

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This is historical literacy: Sourcing, inferences, corroboration, and asking questions of the source

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This concept is the most popular in history classrooms, but unfortunately its positioned more with cause and effect via graphic organizers. Instead the goals is for students to see connections and trends and figure out why

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Another very popular place that most history teachers are comfortable teaching from and a concept that can be used to frame a unit on WWII atrocities

Historical Significance	<i>What's important to know?</i>
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Here we emphasize counternarratives which are the stories of people who are often left out of the past. LGBTQ, women, indigenous, people of color, and stories from our communities

How can we understand the experiences of the Comfort Women?

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The ethical dimension is asking us how knowing about the history and experiences of the Comfort women can help us make sense of the present

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While the Activist Dimension (in the tradition of activist-historians such as Howard Zinn and present day historians such as Dartmouth S Matt Garcia and UCLA Kelly Lytle Hernandez) This concept asks students to think about the ways that they can use history and research to create a more ejusti and equitable society?

Counter-narratives

This type of account challenges the Dominant Narrative. These are the stories of people whose experiences are not often told including: people of color, women, LGBTQ, and the poor.



Language

Trust and Community

Trauma-informed

Sensitivity



K12 Classrooms are their own ecosystems. They can be places of liberation, creativity, and community. In the worst case scenarios they are oppressive and unsafe. It is important for me to say that a teacher must have created a safe and inclusive classroom in order to teach this topic with the care and respect that it deserves.

This means that teachers must be aware how they talk about sexual abuse. They must be aware that often there are victims of sexual abuse in their classrooms.

When teaching about sensitive topics like Comfort Women, I recommend that teachers take a trauma-informed approach. This means thinking deeply about this topic and providing learning opportunities.

I do not recommend that teachers 1) overstimulate students with imagery or accounts that contain graphic images or references. One source can serve that purpose. 2) I do not recommend that teachers use bad inquiry questions that can be answered with yes or no. Questions such as "Do the Comfort Women deserve justice?" or "Should we support the Comfort Women?" are not only poor historical inquiries they also have the potential to create classroom discussions that pit students against one another and allow for some students to answer in the negative. I'm sure you can see the kinds of problems that can result from asking questions like this about sensitive topics like the Comfort Women. 3) I do not recommend that teachers engage in historical role plays such as a mock trial. Asking students to reenact the trauma of others can be disrespectful and also cause additional trauma to students who have been sexually

victimised. 4) I do recommend that teachers, when possible, include examples of resistance and resilience. 5) I do recommend that teachers do provide students with learning opportunities that allow them to engage in movements to support victims of sexual abuse.

How do we heal from crimes against humanity?

- Tribunals
- Acknowledgement
- Activism
- Comfort Women

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Here is an example of a well-thought out unit by a local teacher. The unit is part of a larger unit exploring World War II and emphasize the concepts of evidence, historical perspectives, and the activist dimension.

How can we confront the atrocities of World War II?

What atrocities occurred during World War II?

What evidence do we have of resistance to atrocities during World War II?

How was the experience of the Comfort Women related to the war?

How can we make sure these stories are remembered?
How can we work towards equity and justice for victims of sexual violence?



How can we confront the atrocities of World War II? (Activist Dimension) not remember, not understand, but confront-resist, tackle, stand up to, stop, halt-opposite of avoid

Who were the Comfort Women? How are their experience similar to the experiences of other victims of war atrocities? (Vietnam, Conquest, Operation Babylift, etc.,) (Historical Perspectives)

How was the experience of the Comfort Women related to the war? (Historical Perspectives)

How do we confront and heal? (Ethical and Activist Dimensions) - Ethnic Studies

Praxis Story Plot

Telling our stories - AAPI, Atlanta

Wednesday Demonstrations

Sex Trafficking and abuse in our communities

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Connecting to larger issues

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Empire & Nationalism & Dehumanization: *What evidence do we have that Imperial powers dehumanized their ??? (Evidence) (Cause & Consequence)*

Rape of Nanking/The Holocaust-consequences, upstanders and resisters

Evidence: *How do we know what we know about the past?*

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Guidepost 1 | History is interpretation based on inferences made from primary sources. Primary sources can be accounts, but they can also be traces, relics, or records.  |
| Guidepost 2 | Asking good questions about a source can turn it into evidence. |
| Guidepost 3 | Sourcing often begins before a source is read, with questions about who created it and when it was created. It involves inferring from the source the author's or creator's purposes, values, and worldview, either conscious or unconscious. |
| Guidepost 4 | A source should be analyzed in relation to the context of its historical setting: the conditions and world views prevalent at the time in question. |
| Guidepost 5 | Inferences made from a source can never stand alone. They should always be corroborated-checked against other sources (primary or secondary). |

Evidence Guideposts (The Big 6 Historical Thinking Concepts, Seixas & Morton, 2013)



But the actual construction of these local history courses requires archival work. It actually requires us to look for “archival silences” or for voices not being included in the larger narrative.

My dad loved Thee Midnighters. He cruises Whittier. I cruised Whittier. When I was growing up a hip hop group called “A Light Shade of Brown” had a song called “On a Sunday Afternoon” the song talks about cruising whittier, and gathering at the park to enjoy a cookout, or what we refer to as “Carne Asada”. LatCrit and Ethnic Studies helps me understand that my stories and the stories of other Latinx who have lived in whittier for generations or who are first generation count.

Where do we look? How do we document?

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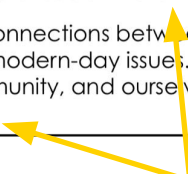
How do we confront and heal? (Ethical and Activist Dimensions) -

Telling our stories - AAPI, Atlanta

Wednesday Demonstrations

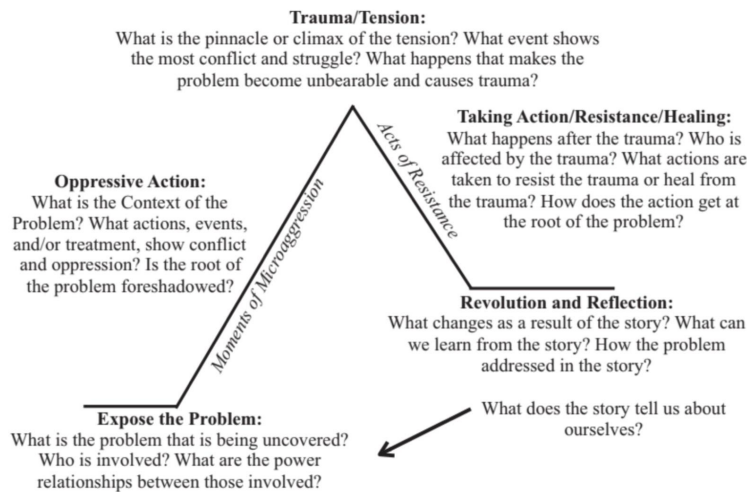
Sex Trafficking and abuse in our communities

The Activist Dimension: *How can history help us work towards equity and justice?*

- Guidepost 1** It is important to understand why a particular historical event being studied, and how it relates to a modern day problem that needs to be exposed.
- Guidepost 2** Historical events should be contextualized in order to understand the oppressive action underlying them.
- Guidepost 3** The experiences of historical actors in the event being studied are important to understanding the underlying oppressive action. Furthermore, examples of agency and resistance by oppressed groups should be emphasized and are vital to building critical hope.
- Guidepost 4** History does not always provide answers to modern day problems, but it can inspire informed action if the successes and shortcomings of social movements and legislation are analyzed.
- Guidepost 5** History is a means to establish deeper connections between the past and present. This extends beyond simply understanding modern-day issues. This deeper connection asks us to be reflective about the world, our community, and ourselves so that we are working towards a more just and equitable society.
- 

The Big Six+1 (Seixas & Morton, 2013; Diaz, 2020)





The Ethnic Studies Praxis Story Plot, Curammeng, Lopez, & Tintiangco-Cubales, 2016



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The second piece of research that has had a tremendous impact on how we are approaching this work is the Ethnic Studies Praxis Story Plot. Side note: this scholarship is a thing of beauty. Its the perfect mixture of scholars, theory and practice/application. You can read this article and get an overview of the major theories informing ethnic studies

The ESPSP is a helpful framework for telling stories. Because Latinx Critical Race Theory or LatCrit centers storytelling and counternarrative we find this particularly useful for the communities that we serve.

Provide folks a moment to review-ask question

How was the experience of
the Comfort Women related
to the war?

What atrocities occurred
during World War II



Japanese Prisoners of War, photographed by U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer Charles H. Hatfield,
September 3, 1944, National Archives photo no. 111-SC-230147.



I want to conclude with some examples of how students (played by me) have engaged with some of the primary documents from the archives.

History Educators Chante Monte-Sano from the Michigan University developed a primary source strategy called IREAD. We adapted that strategy so that students can also annotate photographs, political cartoons, and art



Japanese Prisoners of War, photographed by U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer Charles H. Hatfield, September 3, 1944, National Archives photo no. 111-SC-230147.



Here the student is asked to consider the point of view from the photographer by using sourcing to help them with their analysis. Students are also asked to pay special attention to key details. Here the student is contrasting the faces and expressions of the women to the soldier. They are curious about who this soldier is, the hunch is that it is an American soldier based on some context clues found in the sourcing and on the photo.

More importantly, the student has noticed that one of the comfort women appears to be pregnant.

How was the experience of the Comfort Women related to the war?
What atrocities occurred during World War II

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Authority 765078

SMR: SECRET.

Perspective → NETHERLANDS FORCES INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (NEFIS) ← *mil* 85664

NEW ZEALAND INSURANCE BUILDING
334-338 QUEEN STREET, BRISBANE

No. AI2/7915/G. 3 *810; T-JAVA-3311 (p.7)* 31 OCT 1944 *7*
ENCLOSURES: 3 *(219) 301 - (p.7)* TEL. U 7076
U 7077
U 7078

SUBJECT: Interrogation Reports. *(219) 4401 - (p.10 + 11)* DATE: 28th October, 1944. **SECRET**

9478
10/12
2-11
interrogation NOV 14 1944. *6*

Compilation of NEFIS Interrogation Reports
Nos. 366 - 378, 404 - 407 and 410 - 417 (Not Issued Separately).

Attached is Compilation of NEFIS Interrogation Reports
Nos. 366-378, 404-407 and 410 - 417 (Not Issued Separately).

2. Information contained in this report is based solely on
interrogation of evacuees and should be evaluated accordingly.

3. It is requested that care be taken in the distribution of
the information contained therein. If the whole or any part
of this report is reproduced, no indication may be given of
names and localities concerned, to avoid compromising relatives
of evacuees and exposing them to enemy reprisals, and to prevent
closure of important sources of information. Copy No. 41

 NEFIS Interrogation Report, Java 1944

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My final example is an analysis of a Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service report from 1944.

Prostitution: It is stated that in '43, a Javanese named Amat, who lived in Gelangan village, Magelang (Mid-Java)

8556418

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Authority 765078

-17-

selected young girls from the villages of Gelangan, Boyeman and Toekangan for use of the Japanese. These girls were taken to former 7th Bn barracks in Magelang, where Amat lived and acted as guard over them.

During '43 at Solo (Mid-Java), it was observed that many impressed village girls were at the massing hotel for the use of Japanese officers. It is stated that a Chinese in Solo (Mid-Java) was issued with a permit from Kempe's authorising him to select girls from the villages through the Assistant Wedanas. The girls were enticed by offering them work at 1.00 per day in Solo; once there they did not return.

An informant from Amboeloe (Djember, East Java) states that in '43, village girls were selected and taken to restaurants and hotels for the purpose of prostitution, after first being medically examined. These girls did not return to their villages.

Looting: In Mar '42, many people from Bantam, Serang and Pandeglang followed the Japanese troops into Batavia to loot the shops. Informant saw many Chinese shops which sold cloth and sarongs with their doors and walls smashed in. The Japanese made no attempt to stop the looting, which lasted from 0300 to 1000 hrs; many Japanese soldiers took part in the looting.

Similar stories of looting by villagers and Japanese soldiers were reported on the arrival of the Japanese at Pascoercean, Radioen and Ngandjoe (East Java).

observations
intelligence

girls

taken

to hotel

as prostitutes

for Japanese

How can we make sure
these stories are
remembered?



"Stolen Chastity" by Duk-gyeong Kang (a survivor



Dr. Shawn Ginwright is spearheading work in Ethnic Studies. He argues that classrooms could and should be spaces for hope and healing. His CARMA framework states that art and culture can be tools for hope and healing.

We often see victims of atrocities from war engaging in this healing process via art. We see this in the art that came out of World War I, the art of the survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki . We even see it the recent performance by the Chinese American teenage rock band from Los Ageneles-the Lisa Lisas who sing about their experiences with racism amid the COVID 19 pandemic. We also see art as healing here see it hear, in "Stolen Chasity"



You'll see the students analysis here, again using the IREAD strategy