

Jihad and American Education: An Examination of Textbook Inclusion

by

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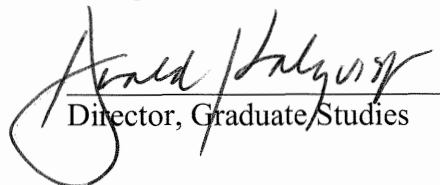
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Part I

A fundamental cultural value since the beginning of civilization has been the importance of religion in society. A unified monotheistic world under the same belief system is difficult to achieve due to a wide array of different cultural identities throughout the globe. The existence of so many contrasting yet overlapping religious ideals makes coexisting under mutual acceptance complicated, especially within public educational systems. The United States, despite its heavy Christian influence, is home to many diverse forms of spiritual worship that are categorized by society as minority belief systems. As a result of inadequate educated backgrounds, religious persecution has increased towards a group of people of the distinct belief system of Islam. Muslims have been increasingly met with prejudice by non-Islamic Americans whether it is in the workplace, schools, or the general public. In American public education, it has emerged as quite a challenge to have scholarly discussions on the religious beliefs of Islam. Furthermore, it is also difficult to pinpoint the major public influences on students' perceptions and what area(s) of their life have had the largest impact on their viewpoint of the Islamic faith. Even though it may be one main cause or combination of various influential factors, it still remains to be seen what adolescent students perceive has had or continues to play the largest role in shaping their perceptions of Islam and its followers. More importantly, what impact has the American educational system had in conveying the religious ideals of Islam within high school classrooms and have classroom discussions dealing with the societal profiles of Muslims been proactive or passive in dealing with this controversial issue? Therefore, the method in which traditional American scholarly mindsets have

approached the Islamic religion in education must be explored and compared to relatively recent conceptions of Muslims within American schools in order to shed light on an interesting modern topic with immense historical background.

Before delving into the analysis of the current educational incorporation of Islamic fundamentals, it is important to acknowledge the basic as well as the complex differences in religious ideals between Western and Middle East beliefs. Additionally, when exploring Islamic versus Christian views, the discussion of whether the belief is based on assumption or has creditability needs to be accounted for as well. The systematic approach applied is based off of “the presupposition that basic differences in the Western and Islamic worldviews impinge strongly on the ways in which their respective philosophies of education are set forth.”¹ Therefore, emphasis is placed heavily on investigating Western ideologies and how religious interpretation is primarily carried out under legislative and philosophical guiding principles. The role of religions, especially Islam, within society as a whole is crucial to understanding the American educational approach to teaching Islamic fundamentals. As a result, a conceptual historical breakdown of religion and its place in conjunction with American society is at the forefront of this ongoing debate. The complicated subject of Islam has captured the attention of teachers and professors, public policy experts, and religious organizations. Teachers are frequently at a disadvantage when it comes to conveying Islamic fundamentals due to limited textbook information as well as intimidating potential classroom discussion questions that might accompany a lesson on Muslims, especially within heavily Christian settings. Stereotypical remarks and

¹ Esposito, John and Haddad, Yvonne. *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), 138.

societal misconceptions are tough to counter when the content of school materials are based on American perceptions, curriculums that were primarily developed from a Christian mindset. Despite widely acknowledged differences, Islam shares commonalities if examined under comparative topics such as both being monotheistic, sharing similar religious figures such as Abraham, and incorporating religious codes of conduct. “Islam has as many ideological, spiritual, and geographic variations as Christianity and other world religions do.”² Therefore, the similarities can be used as comparisons for not only advanced student comprehension, but professional development for teachers as well. New initiatives under mutual respect and collaborative cohesion between scholars are necessary to alter American classroom practices when covering relevant information on Islam.

The interaction of Islamic and Christian beliefs can be traced back to the initial stages of integration between larger groups Muslims and Western Europeans dating back to the 700’s when North African Muslims, or Moors, overran the peninsula of Spain. The political make-up of early Spain was divided as a result of rivalries amongst Muslim princes but still impacted the future cultural development of Europe’s religious identity. The conquest mentality that dominated many of the world’s early civilizations strained future productive relationships. “The early conquests have been used to illustrate Islam as a violent religion, but what was being spread by the sword was not the Islamic faith itself but the political dominance of a new Islamic state.”³ This type of counterproductive mentality has plagued many relations between existing nations as a result of historical resentment. In addition to

² Johnson, James Turner. “Jihad and Just War,” *First Things*, June/July 2002, 14.

³ Donner, Fred M. “Teaching Islamic History: An Outline,” *Islam and the Textbooks. A Report of the American Textbook Council* (2003): 33.

Spain, the Arabic nations of Northern Africa had a heavily cultural influence on other locations scattered throughout the Mediterranean region. To European Christians, the Muslim presence was a source of anxiety and anger which produced a hostile view of the Islamic world. The emergence of Muslim influence militarily and religiously transformed into a mentality of apprehensive hesitation towards further understanding, an unfortunate situation that still is heavily prevalent in today's world between the two belief systems. Nonetheless, despite the cautious mindset between Christians and Muslims, it did not stop the inevitable learning curve between both civilizations. That learning curve has unfortunately twisted historical facts to justify political, social, and economic agendas. The brief historical information concerning the Moors alters depending on the original purpose for its relevance within textbook chapters and how pertinent it was to distinct subheadings.

The primary historical reference of acknowledged resentment between Muslims and Western Europeans traces back to the Middle Ages during the Crusades. Scholarly approaches have attempted to analyze the reasoning, implementation, and results of this historical time period from various perspectives. The impact of the Crusades has turned into a timeless and continual list of diagnostic approaches, a list that continues to accumulate new entries with no ending point in sight. However, the current relationship that has been publicly examined in American society regarding the Crusades and its connection to modern relations between the United States and the Middle East are misguided. As a result, scholarly analytical interpretations have been implemented to add validity to modern textbook conceptions.

Therefore, the historical comparison of the Crusades and modern military involvement between the Middle East and the United States needs to be analyzed void of the agenda-based exploitations that surround the story. The nature of the Crusades was militarily cohesive with many other wars in that each Christian movement was justified as a result of an attack on the church. The Christian influence was far-reaching with many sustainable civilizations that either bordered or were in the geographic vicinity of Muslim nations. Nonetheless, the reactionary war thought-process was evident and justified to pursue military involvement. The same argument has been carried over to justifications of *jihad*s as well, thus adding to the need for a more comprehensive analysis between the two terms. Additionally, with the influential power of the Catholic Church, the Crusades became transformed into a zealous endeavor that made the sacrifice holy. The cohesive connection between force and faith bonded as a new approach to wars, one that resulted in positive and negative prospects of success. “Crusading was seen as an act of love—specifically the love of God and the love of neighbor. By pushing back Muslim aggression and restoring Eastern Christianity, the Crusaders were—at great peril to themselves—imitating the Good Samaritan.”⁴ Therefore, the Crusades became a sort of a pilgrimage and thereby an act of penance, which persuaded many Christians that the religious sacrifice, was worth the potential price of death. To add to the religious factors of motivation for involvement, indulgences were incorporated on behalf of the church itself for crusaders. “Crusaders who undertook that burden with right intention

⁴ Riley-Smith, Jonathan, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1981), 96.

and after confessing their sins”⁵ were eligible to receive an indulgence to signify their devotion to not only the cause but the religion itself. The enticements for involvement in the Crusades included a variety of powerful public opinion motivational factors. Depending on a citizen’s place in society; Christians could consider moral, religious, social class status, personal past histories, the appeal of adventure, vengeance, ethnocentric, or theoretical visions of Europe’s humanitarian burden to volunteer for the Crusades.

The reason for Christian Europeans to embark on violent crusades under the diluted justifications of religious and military duties is skeptical. Muslims have commonly referred to Christians as “crusaders” throughout recent history and currently, but to what extent is that term correlated with the actual event in history itself? There are contrasting scholarly opinions on ulterior motives behind the Crusades, which have been generated as a result of misguided interpretations of the event itself. The movement into the Islamic territories can be linked to the terms imperialism, colonialism, and mercantilism upon further review. “Stripping the Crusades of their original purpose, Christians portrayed the Crusades as Europe’s first colonial venture—the first attempt of the West to bring civilization to the backward Muslim East.”⁶ As a result, the Crusades have been perceived from a different perspective, one that categorized the holy wars as a collective European effort to set the groundwork for future involvement in the Middle East. The historical landscape of the Crusades was intertwined with the long prospect of European assaults on the Middle East through continued imperialistic methods.

⁵ Madden, Thomas F. “Inventing the Crusades.” *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (2009): 42.

⁶ Madden, 44.

Consequently, the reaction to imperialistic measures was a nationalistic challenge to Islamic followers throughout the Middle East. The scholarly emergence of Islamic interpretations of the Crusades should be credited more for its straightforward analysis of the past event. “Undeterred by the accidents of crusading, such as the ecclesiastical apparatus of indulgence, vow and cross, Muslim authors focused on the essence of crusading: a general movement against Islam by the Latin West.”⁷ The entire Middle East was united not only through religion, but under a common disrespectful attitude towards a heavily Christian western world, one that disguised and used ulterior motives under religious zeal and reactionary justifications to engage in a holy war, or so it is delicately called. “Having less to do with historical reality than with reactions to imperialism, the nationalist and Islamist interpretations of crusade history helps many people, moderates as well as extremists, to place the exploitation that they believe they have suffered in a historical context and to satisfy their feeling of both superiority and humiliation.”⁸ Feelings of resentment are strong motivating factors if put in the right context to rally public and religious support. Radical fundamentalists have capitalized on the interpretations of the Crusades of the 11th to 13th centuries to validate measures taken in the modern 21st century. The negative attitude towards Christians that was created throughout the course of the Crusades has continued to play a role in Islamic religious affairs of state. Political engagements between Christian and Islamic nations continue to incorporate feelings of ideological resentment to this day. If educational measures are not taken to help

⁷ Chevedden, Paul E. “The Islamic View and the Christian View of the Crusades: A New Synthesis,” *History* 93 (2008): 188.

⁸ Riley-Smith, 102.

alleviate the relationship between these two religions, consequential events as a result of stereotypes will persist.

Determining to what extent the Crusades were “holy” is a strong indicator as to whether or not a commonality can be strongly established between then and now. The term “jihad” is frequently used to reference a connection with the expression “crusade”. A major similarity that is stressed is that both imply a holy war with a religious purpose, action under the direction and preservation of zealous efforts. The general meaning behind the two words is compatible but upon further review, however, the religious meanings behind the two differ when implemented in actual engagements of war. Christian versus Islamic interpretations is distinctly different when put into application and analyzed. “Christians designated the crusades a *jihad*, or holy war, indicating that Muslims understood that Christians regarded crusading as being sanctioned by God and inspired by a common religious cause.”⁹ Nevertheless, upon further review, the religious importance of the crusades overshadowed the objectives of territorial expansion, heightened cultural diffusion, and ethnocentric European attitudes. The crusades were performed with the aforementioned motives which were disguised under devoted spiritual sentiments, a message that was portrayed vividly to Muslim authors during the course of the wars. Theological objectives to engage in military actions raise skepticism due to unanswered questions. The purpose is difficult to decipher when the meaning is based on devotions of faith, not governmental reactionary commands.

A *jihad*, on the other hand, has historically had more relevant religious rationalizations under Muslim objectives. The presence of theocratic governments,

⁹ Hillenbrand, Carole. *Islamic Perspectives*, (New York: Routledge, 2000) 71.

strict daily devotion to Muslim fundamentals, and societal enforcement of spiritual elements has resulted in a larger collective following of Islamic religious ideologies. Although, it is noteworthy to point out that Islamic scholars do acknowledge the link between the terms *crusade* and *jihad*, a connection that is irrevocable on the surface meanings. “There can be no crusade without jihad, and no crusade without counter-crusade, or jihad, making for an historical continuum that is reciprocal and mutually dependent.”¹⁰ It is pivotal to observe that without this intricate and complex interplay, it is difficult to attempt to explain the tangled relationship between Islam and Christianity. Islamic interpretations vary in regard to the Christian theoretical validations. Islamic scholars do regularly concede that Muslim aggression did spur an eventual reactionary movement from Christians. Nevertheless, the implications over the course of time have produced a new viewpoint through longevity examinations. The modern Islamic theories have adjusted to include not only Europe but any predominantly Christian nation throughout the world that externally involves itself in Middle East or Islamic affairs, therefore placing the United States in the current spotlight. “The crusades were a form of imperialism, and Islam has suffered from the ‘savage hostility’ of the ‘crusader spirit’ from the eleventh century until today.”¹¹ Western nations involved in the Middle East have struggled to avoid the preconceived notions developed as a result of an imperialistic persona associated with the Christian religion regardless of whether the Western nation has cooperative, selfish, or humanitarian national agendas. Collaboration between Christian and Muslim nations is complicated to achieve when historical interactions have placed a negative public

¹⁰ Chevedden, 190.

¹¹ Translated by William E. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of ‘Social Justice in Islam’* (Leiden, 1996): 207.

profile on mutual involvement with one another. Instinctual reactions in the modern day still are frequently driven by past occurrences, which in this case is not conducive to strong working relationships.

Regardless of the purpose for Western involvement in the Middle East today, the past has dictated modern feelings of resentment. There is a large supply of scholarly Christian analysis of interactions with Islam while many accounts from the Muslim perspectives are widely ignored within education. The close-minded ideologies that rely primarily on Western accounts of history have impacted educational systems throughout Christian societies. The image of the past is certainly a factor in the outlook of contemporary Muslims towards the Western world, especially modern America. "When this image is formed by western historical writing and is reflective of western views, as is the case with the crusades, historical consciousness becomes a borrowed consciousness, no longer a products of one's own society or one's own past."¹² Deeper understanding as well as a more documented account of Islamic views is necessary for curriculum alterations that better convey Muslim history and its impact on present international relations. Exposure to Islamic scholars is challenging in the American educational system due to an overall lack of resources. Therefore, the modern analogies that are publicly discussed that overlook and commonly use historical events out of context lack actual evidentiary substance. Public opinion in conjunction with Christian historic interpretations of Islamic relations is resulting in a misguided educational reflection of Muslim information to adolescent students. The inaccuracy of the initial Christian-Islamic involvements, especially the crusades, had paved the way for an unsubstantiated current

¹² Chevedden, 199.

relationship, one that increased education and understanding could help mend over time.

A more calculated historical transition that recognizes Muslim scholarly perspectives in conjunction with Christian interpretations based on the pursuit of learning would expose alternative pathways to understanding. Additionally, the curriculum modifications that develop more religiously sensitive approaches in terms of the portrayal of instrumental Islamic figures are pivotal to maintaining respectful sensitivity. “Muslims are sensitive and view any perceived criticism on the prophet’s life or character as an attack on Islam itself.”¹³ Elucidation of the prophet, Muhammad, is a controversial topic not only when analyzing Islam, but within Muslim societies itself. The continual dispute between the main two factions of Islamic history, the Sunni’s and the Shiite’s, serves as a prime example of the intense sentiment surrounding theoretical versions of religious historical figures such as Muhammad and his role as the prophet. The Sunni’s and the Shiite’s have and will continue to wage a religious battle against one another, a conflict that is due to interpretations of the most crucial figure in Islam, Muhammad. American coverage of Islamic terms, people, events, and overall cultural celebrations is relative towards present U.S.-Middle East relations. According to a Prentice Hall textbook¹⁴, the future of Islam is dependent on the role of the caliph in Muslim society following the prophet’s death. The Sunni’s felt that the caliph should be chosen by leaders of the Muslim community. The Shiites, on the other hand, argued that the only true successors of the prophet were descendents of the Muhammad bloodline. It is

¹³ Salman Rushdie, “Yes, This is About Islam,” *New York Times*, November 2, 2001.

¹⁴ *World History: Connections to Today*. 1st ed. Elisabeth G. Ellis, Anthony Esler, Burton F. Beers. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999, 263.

important to recognize the pertinence of this continual debate that rages on without an ending in sight. The international implications are far-reaching yet, in the American textbook that this information was extracted from, offers a miniscule paragraph on its historical background and significance. The content on this subject is brief in analysis, therefore leaving many inquisitive questions unanswered and left up to student imagination. The two aforementioned religious factions are just the tip of an overall lack of American education towards Islamic history and fundamentals. “Many scholars, educators, journalists and policymakers debate the nature of Islam, the political and theological divisions within Islam, the compatibility of Islam with democracy, the relationship of Islam to American national security, the status and treatment of Muslims living in the United States, and how Islam should be presented in the public school curriculum, particularly in history and social studies courses.”¹⁵ Societal questions have arisen publicly and privately among American citizens of all ages. However, public opinion is constantly fluctuating and is difficult to measure, with the minor exceptions of sample population polls or community petitions. On the other hand, public school curriculums have the ability to convey factual information to future American adults that allows for individual arrivals at personal opinions. Dinner table conversations are productive but lack academic factual contributions that can be analyzed in educational learning environments. Furthermore, textbook content along with classroom lesson plans have to account for Islamic portrayals in an objective format. America is home to a wide-ranging diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, and heritages which makes tolerance instrumental to positive curriculum

¹⁵ Moore, James. “Teaching about Islam in Secondary Schools: Curricular and Pedagogical Considerations,” *Equity and Excellence in Education*, (2005): 279.

alterations. Educational versions of not only Islamic history, but modern day religious societal implications require contributions on behalf of Muslim academia. “Teachers should help students understand the Islamic worldview from the inside and not merely American or non-Islamic interpretations of this highly complex religion.”¹⁶ Diverse perspectives from within and without can be analyzed to arrive at more concrete conclusions. The element of learning is one that takes in a variety of primary and secondary sources into perspective. The multitude of references adds to a collaborative association that portrays a more accurate depiction of a topic, such as Islam. In order to begin an educational movement within American public schools, curriculum alterations are best approached by considering terms or topics that are consistently misrepresented in United States society.

In understanding the history and nature of Islam, the concept of *jihad* is uniquely important. The scholarly studies of the crusades have started to experience resurgence recently as a result of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001. Past versus present interpretations of the causes and effects of the crusades were thrust into the public limelight for analysis, which also exposed textbook inaccuracies within American educational systems. “The term embodies an element of friction that exists between many Muslims and non-believers—Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist—enmity grounded in Islamic desire for political and territorial power.”¹⁷ The friction implied stems from a widely accepted historical notion that has been determined to be primarily negative. Armed warfare between Muslims and non-Muslims has become the mindset associated with the term *jihad*

¹⁶ Nord, W.A., & Hayes, C.G. (1998). *Taking religion seriously across the curriculum*. Alexandria, VS: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

¹⁷ Sewall, Gilbert, “Islam and the Textbooks: A Report of the American Textbook Council,” (2003): 9.

globally. The result of this collaboration between war and religious meanings has transitioned into a scholarly perception that a *jihad* symbolizes the Muslim hope for a world united under Islamic law. On the other hand, the Muslim explanation of the term is emphasized towards individual achievements. Islamic education guides define the term “as a struggle in the cause of God, which can take many forms. In the personal sphere, efforts such as obtaining an education, trying to quit smoking, or controlling one’s temper are forms of *jihad*.”¹⁸ The designated meaning by the Council of Islamic Education attempts to dilute the international perception of *jihad* by portraying it as an esoteric form of Muslim self-improvement. However, it is bestows an inner struggle for individual peace or achievement, the definition does add that the term is justified under events in the defense of Islam itself. In the case of the Crusades in early history, Christians did launch a reactionary assault on the Muslims which resulted in the predominate definition of a *jihad* as an aggressive Islamic movement. Nonetheless, the contemporary characterizations of a *jihad* are dependent on chronological definitions but are reactionary themselves depending on the modern relationship with Islamic nations.

An additional topic that American textbooks attempt to disguise is the status of women within Islamic societies. World history textbooks have adequately adjusted to include women in history as well as to amplify female accomplishments, generally also mentioning various obstacles that were overcome along the way. The incorporation of important women historical figures and achievements is pivotal to the development of a global environment that does not reduce people’s historical

¹⁸ Council on Islamic Education, *Teaching about Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom*, 1998, 49.

contributions based on gender. However, with regards to Islamic society, “textbooks try to explain away or recast any inconvenient detail concerning the treatment of women in the Islamic world that would be considered backwards, unacceptable, or even revolting to the West.”¹⁹ Women within Islamic societies are discouraged from individual expression, a setting where a wife’s autonomy is interpreted as a sign of female disobedience and disrespect. Truthful representations of women in Muslim societies should be addressed in meaningful ways within textbooks, not disguised or hidden within paragraphs. Students have the ability to identify, as well as interpret, information as long as they are given a factual background behind the topic from educators or textbooks. For example, according the textbook developed by Glencoe, *The Human Experience*, “Islam did, however, improve the position of women. It forbade the tribal custom of killing female infants and also limited polygamy, or the practice that allowed a man to have more than one wife.”²⁰ This excerpt from an American textbook is designed to show the improvement of women’s status within Islamic society, yet it does not provide any historical background or explanations towards realistic modern social classes in conjunction with gender. The text hints towards poor treatment without divulging into the situation specifically, which leaves interested adolescents drawing their own conclusions that are primarily based on assumptions. Furthermore, the only other mentioning of Muslim women within *The Human Experience* hints towards property ownership that is permitted under situational circumstances such as inheritance or potential divorces. There is a magnitude of potential student-generated questions that may arise due to lack of

¹⁹ Sewall, 17.

²⁰ Farah, Mounir A. and Andrea Berens Karls. *The Human Experience*. Glencoe, 1999.

information, therefore having a direct impact on continued generalizations towards Muslims. The purpose of this argumentative component on women's history in Muslim society is to expose the lack of realistic educational coverage within the public schools in the United States of America. The mindsets developed throughout time between Christian and Muslim societies have led to inaccurately detailed information presently, an issue that will only plague future relations unless understanding is pursued more feverishly.

Educational initiatives are ever-changing in relevance, strategy, and implementation on any given topic at secondary levels of the American educational system. Repetitive analysis of curriculum material has the tendency to compound an idea within a student's mind that becomes permanently difficult to approach in an open-minded nature. "We live in a time when great efforts are being made to falsify the record of the past and to make history a tool of propaganda; when governments, religious movements, political parties, and sectional groups of every kind are busy rewriting history as they would wish it to have been."²¹ History textbooks are designed by publishers to convey an overall consensus on complex issues that have endless storylines that can alter a prospective depending on the information that they are exposed to. The lack of exposure to alternative mindsets can shield students from other productive outlooks on a given topic, thus solidifying a perspective, despite no consensus as to whether it is right or wrong. Moreover, the development of categorizations of people based on their religious affiliations can expose areas to improve or to expand on within the educational system. "Studies of prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination within the United States can inform our understanding

²¹ Bernard, Lewis. *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 130.

of these problems internationally.”²² The assessing of prior classroom practices in regards to the portrayal of Islamic religious ideals can help expose positives and negatives to bridge the gap that continues to suffer structurally between the Middle East and the United States of America. A historical analysis of the preparation and implementation of classroom lesson plans or approaches is pivotal to further comprehension concerning social public opinion in regard to people of Muslim descent.

The structure of the legal systems of Western societies allows for precedents to be established that enact either the enforcement or allowance of religious values in accordance with human rights. In other words, how valid are religious assertions when used to justify actions? “Western ideology assumes secularism—the separation of church (representing spiritual life) and state (representing worldly, mundane life)—a concept that is alien to Islam.”²³ It is important to point out that this philosophy is focused on the institutional level, not the individual level. Freedom of expression is recognized generally in Western multicultural civilizations but is deemed unacceptable if it infringes on social levels such as employment, access to education, housing, etc. The connection between spiritual and mundane life can seem hard to decipher in certain circumstances, especially within a classroom where discussions of social issues overlap with religious ideals. The complexity of discussing Islam within American classrooms intensifies accordingly after newsworthy or controversial stories are portrayed to a largely Christian public. The task before educators of high school and college level students can be a tumultuous

²² Lansford, Jennifer E., “Educating American Students for Life in a Global Society,” *Education Reform Vol. 2* (2002): 1.

²³ Esposito, 158.

undertaking if the materials or historical accounts are more one-sided. Public education is politically designed to adhere to the clauses of separation of church and state when presenting educational material or content. Therefore, reciprocal information regarding Islamic history and its application to modern international politics is necessary in order to enhance cultural understanding.

The purpose of academic analysis of past events in relation to current implications will continue to impact school curriculums at the local, state, national, and even global levels. Therefore, the devout religious partisanship that has been traditionally exhibited and influential on world history has resulted in educational curriculums that reflect such attitudes. Religious ideologies will continue to play pivotal roles within national cultures but resentment towards other belief systems will remain prevalent. The complexity of the relationship between Christians and Muslims reflects a misunderstood historical past that has been publicly presumed by the same textbooks that are expected to educate the future generations of America. Therefore, curriculum alterations need to be implemented to curtail a repetitive world where religion continues to separate people without building mutual peaceful acceptance.

Part II

The evolution of civilizations and the interactions among different cultures is the cornerstone of modern day international relationships. In particular, accurate depictions of one another's celebrated customs, societal terminology, and ethnic diversity are all variables that deserve strong considerations when documenting history. Within the United States, World History textbooks are used to convey large number of civilizations over many centuries within a couples hundred pages with the inclusion of charts, pictures, primary sources, and textbook indexes. Within the United States, the media spotlight has focused extensively on life in Islamic countries in the Middle East. Military involvement has intensified not only the public interest in Muslim nations, but inevitably has led to increased analysis of Islamic history to learn more about a culture that has traditionally received less textbook recognition, especially due to the Eurocentric focus of publishers. Recently, negative connotations have become commonplace within American language, thus accelerating misunderstanding between American Christians and Middle East Muslims. The main sources used to analyze the aforementioned situation consisted primarily of newspaper articles, historian's firsthand accounts, interviews, and from speeches. Furthermore, scholarly contributions included Muslim and American analysis in order to produce a well-rounded original study, one that focused principally on the interpretations of the term *jihad*. The historical development of the term *crusade*, as evident through the course of the researched historiography provided in stage one; has prompted interpretative comparisons to a *jihad*. However, the term *jihad* lacks extensive exploration and implementation in World History textbooks when

compared to the content devoted to the *crusades*. Lastly, the research was coordinated in an effort to compare the reputable primary definitions of the term *jihad* between various publications of American high school textbooks nationwide.

The complicated subject of Islam has captured the attention of educators, public policy experts, and religious organizations worldwide. The age of international terrorism has seized the media's attention due to the large demand for consistent information on a daily basis. As a result, historical discussions within classrooms have become more frequent but unfortunately rely on textbook information that may or may not be adequately representative of a *jihad*. In particular, the reactions to the events of 9/11 with the destruction of the Twin Towers and the attempt on the Pentagon have intensified a war of words without historical precedents. President George W. Bush set the tone for a misunderstanding when in reaction to the 9/11 attacks he responded, "This crusade (pause), this war on terror (pause), is going to take a while."²⁴ The "crusade" label inevitably opened the gateway to the historical Christian assault on Islam in accordance of guilt by association. It did not help that, in the initial phases of the global war on terror that it was referred to with the word *crusade*, a word that Muslims have neither forgotten nor forgiven since it was launched in 1095 and lasted two full centuries thereafter. The misrepresentation of the terms *crusade* and *jihad* throughout American education has resulted in the improper usage within conversations, even by the United States President. As proclaimed by journalist Theodore L Gatchel, terminology referring to wars for religious causes is difficult to name. In response to George W. Bush's comments, "Missing was any

²⁴ Shakespeare, Nicholas. "Locked in global conflict; Islamist terrorism emerged in the last century - and has its roots in modernity rather than tradition." *The Daily Telegraph (London)*, June 20, 2009, 19.

outrage about Osama Bin Laden's characterization of the current conflict as a "*Jihad* against Jews and Christians." Apparently, our use of "*crusade*" would precipitate a disastrous clash of cultures, but his use of the term would not."²⁵ The frequent inconsistent interpretations of these religious historical terms have resulted in resentment and the rekindling feelings of past injustices that have transformed into a modern international conflict. Publicly, these two terms have been used in a context that is not consistent or representative with what many adolescent students are learning in World History courses, depending on the text adopted by the district or state. Publishers continue to scatter information pertaining to Islamic culture while focusing on Christian endeavors worldwide. "The whitewashing of Islam becomes even more noticeable when contrasted with how history textbooks treat Christianity."²⁶ The inclusion of information is noticeably evident but still remains intact, even when American societal demand for increased knowledge on the Middle East continues to be malnourished. Instead, stereotypical usage of terminology persists in everyday conversations, thus promoting cultural stigmas to remain negative.

Recognizing that American textbooks lack religious information is not a new phenomenon. Educational environments throughout history have been reluctant to portray potentially controversial topics dealing with faith. Religious zeal has helped shape a nation uncomfortable about discussing issues of faith and has resulted in textbook publications that are hesitant to include much about belief systems. "The real explanation of the inadequate coverage of religion in U.S. history texts is that

²⁵ Gatchel, Theodore. "Naming Wars Isn't Always Easy." *Providence Journal*, September 15, 2009, 8.

²⁶ Bauer, Gary. "What are US students learning about Islam?." *Washington Post*, April 22, 2009, 9.

textbook publishers are still afraid of offending anyone, from moral majoritarians to civil libertarians.”²⁷ Incorporating religious content can be not only intimidating to publication companies, but to teachers attempting to interpret material that is limited to begin with from the student’s main reference, the textbook. The inhibitions of textbook companies has aided in the evolution of lackluster religious content in American education. A survey conducted by the American Textbook Council in 2003 revealed a similar conclusion.

“The Council surveyed seven widely adopted world history textbooks used in grades seven through twelve. In particular it reviewed textbook coverage of *jihad*, sharia, slavery, and the status of women in Islamic countries, comparing textbook content to what has been written by leading historians and Middle East scholars. The report found repeated discrepancies between world history textbooks and exacting scholarship in the field. It explained how pressure groups, both Muslim and allied multiculturalists, manipulate nervous publishers who obey educational fashion and rely more heavily on diversity experts than on trustworthy scholarship.”²⁸

The representation of Islamic religious ideals within an educational system dominated by Christian influence inevitably leads to an unfavorable balance of information. As a result, American adolescents are receiving mixed messages on the true meaning of *jihad* due to academic inconsistencies. Until historical interpretations catch up to modern adaptations or vice versa, the dilemma will continue to persist within World History classrooms.

Defining the term *jihad* is quite difficult due to the wide array of meanings in worldwide circulation. Attempting to decipher a common definition that is generated through various holy books, historical theocratic leaders, Muslim factions, or Islamic councils results in highly interpretative conclusions. Based on a survey used in

²⁷ People for the American Way. *Looking at History: A Review of Major U.S. History Textbooks*. Washington D.C.: People for the American Way, 1986.

²⁸ Sewell, Gilbert. “Islam in the Classroom : A Report of the American Textbook Council,” (2003): 105.

selective colleges by widely acclaimed Islamic scholar Jamal Elias, contradictions exist when compared to conservative renditions of the term *jihad*. “The concept of jihad covers all activities that either defend Islam or else further its cause.”²⁹ The combination of the many meanings of *jihad* has contributed to open-ended academic interpretations depending on relevancy. Scholarly interpretations have labeled the term to imply an effort to subjugate or convert non-Muslims. “Today, in government circles, in the foreign policy establishment, in the international community, among newswriters and editorialists and academics, this is how the word *jihad* is used.”³⁰ The generalized meanings of this religious term go far beyond the current classrooms; each dependant on the source of information. How can textbooks be expected to develop a concise and ingenuous definition if the global environment itself is not certain on the actual meaning? The constant misdirection due to a lack of global consensus within scholarly circles is inhibiting content material within adolescent classrooms on this topic, which will continue to persist until a collaborative effort is legitimized.

To go even further, modern-day Middle Eastern terrorist organizations utilize alternative versions of the term *jihad* as well. Al Qaeda has quite commonly incorporated this religious remark in its messages to the world, mainly the West. Speeches such as Osama Bin Laden’s remarks on July 2, 2006 reflect the indoctrination of *jihad* and its broad usage globally.

“Anyone who hopes to convince these apostates, without weapon [i.e. by peaceful means], to stop fighting the Muslims in Baghdad and its environs, is like a fool who tries to convince the wolves to stop preying on the cattle. It will never happen, and the

²⁹ Elias, Jamal J.. *Islam. Religions of the World*. Ninian Smart. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999.

³⁰ Sewell, 13.

evil actions of the infidels, the Crusaders and the apostates will not be stopped except through war. Cleave to jihad and join the ranks of the jihad fighters.”³¹

The constant repetition of *crusade* and *jihad* throughout Al Qaeda’s public remarks are countless upon even further review. International acceptance of *jihad* equaling ‘holy war’ consequently saturates public speeches by prominent leaders. The power of public opinion is limitless, which adds fuel to the debate of what a *jihad* truly is. Furthermore, the justifications for the warlike mentality of Islamic fundamentalists have been derived from sections of the Quran, most noticeably Sura 9:29. It is important to note that nowhere in the following excerpt are acts of terrorism promoted, but depending on the perspective of the reader, may be implied.

“Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture as believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, and forbid not that which Allah hath forbidden by His messenger, and follow not the Religion of Truth, until they pay the tribute readily, being brought low.”³²

The English translation above can be interpreted from a variety of angles, primarily as potential reasoning behind the endorsement of *jihads*. Nonetheless, the inconsistency of an agreed upon definition has produced textbook information that reflects a multicultural analysis of the term itself. Supplementary excerpts hint towards violent repercussions for idolaters that challenge the religious teachings of Allah throughout Holy Scriptures in the Quran. Even though the word *jihad* is not specifically used, many fundamentalists have declared it publicly to incite fierce movements against non-Muslims. Recently, on April 14th, 2010, the new leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Badi, reiterated a stance that incorporated the aggressive

³¹ Middle East Media Research Institute, "Bin Laden's Speeches 2003-2006." September 6, 2008.<http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/1872.htm> (accessed 4/27.2010).

³² Quran Explorer, "Sura 9:29." October, 2005.<http://www.quranexplorer.com/Default.aspx> (accessed March 10, 2010).

message of *jihad* to occupiers within the Middle East. “We will continue to raise the banner of Jihad and the Koran in our confrontation with the enemy of Islam. It is directed against whoever fights Islam, the Muslims, and our homeland.”³³ This interview, provided by the The Middle East Media Research Institute, dealt with Badi’s aspirations to raise the Muslim Brotherhood to new heights as a dominant political party throughout Arabic lands. He purposely makes mention of the association between a *jihad* and the teachings of the Quran. There are noticeable trends through religious, militant, and government figures with a similar grammatical usage of the word *jihad*: a struggle against non-Muslim people that interfere within the Middle East.

As a result of increased U.S. involvement in the Middle East, many textbook editors have networked by collaborating with Islamic advocacy groups to develop more religion-friendly characterizations of a *jihad* within American schooling through the creation of publisher guides. According to the Council on Islamic Education, a *jihad* means “struggle in the cause of God, which can take many forms. In the personal sphere, efforts such as obtaining an education, trying to quite smoking, or controlling one’s temper are forms of *jihad*.”³⁴ Once again, the usage of the term is interpreted from another angle, one that promotes religious and personal missions for accomplishment. This definition, however, makes sure to exclude any implications of violence or acts of aggressive atonement. The Council on Islamic Education has had a heavy influence, publicly as well as privately, towards dissolving

³³ Middle East Media Research Institute, "New Leader of the Muslim Brotherhood Muhammad Badi: 'We Will Continue to Raise the Banner of Jihad and the Koran'." April 14, 2010. <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/4125.htm> (accessed 4/27.2010).

³⁴ Council on Islamic Education, *Teaching About Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom*, 1998, 49.

the American educational portrayal of a *jihad* entailing terrorism under a 'holy war' mentality. Furthermore, groups sympathetic to the basic human rights that may be violated as a result of prejudice against Muslim followers within American society are advocates of a passive definition. The coining of new terms such as 'Islamophobia' or 'soft *jihad*' have become more commonplace throughout public messages to alter negative societal perceptions. According to an editorial by Barbara Kay in the *National Post*,

"The soft *jihad* is gradualistic and law-abiding, but no less desirous of Islamic domination of the West than its violent counterpart. Soft *jihad* strategy exploits liberal discourse and weaknesses in our legal system to induce guilt about a largely mythical Islamophobia".³⁵

This newspaper article attempts to dissuade Americans from persecuting Muslims under the mindset that Islam is an enemy of Christianity. Efforts have been coordinated on both sides of the interpretation of the definition of *jihad* to produce a change in public opinion, whether in defense or prosecution of believers in *jihad*. The problem lies in the fact that the indecisiveness between both sides has significantly contributed to a lack of solidarity amongst World History textbooks on the issue within adolescent classrooms in American education.

Still, despite efforts to alter the aforementioned societal perception, the U.S. government has been resistant to accept the more passive definition of the term *jihad*. In particular, in 1999, the Library of Congress issued the following report on *jihad* and its inclusion in global terrorism:

"An Arabic verbal noun derived from *jahada* (to struggle). Although holy war is not a literal translation, it summarizes the essential idea of *jihad*. In the course of the revival of Islamic fundamentalism, the doctrine of *jihad* has been invoked to justify

³⁵ Kay, Barbara. "Paving the way for 'soft jihad'." *National Post (Canada)*, July 23, 2008, A14.

resistance, including terrorist actions, to combat un-Islamic regimes, or perceived external enemies of Islam, such as Israel and the United States.”³⁶

The elucidation of this single term is constantly evolving and varies immensely when utilized to justify courses of action. The opaque nature of *jihad* is not only a problem within American textbooks, but throughout the world. Moreover, the U.S. Center for Army Lessons Learned has taken a similar stance when conveying the ideal of *jihad* to soldiers. “*Jihad*, in Islam, is seen as the struggle to please God. *Jihad* is the religious duty of all Muslims. There are four ways they may fulfill a *jihad*: by the heart, by the tongue, by the hand, or by the sword.”³⁷ The analysis of the alternative versions of *jihad* takes into account a combination of perceptions, both violent and non-violent actions. This was the most cohesive definition of the term that was accessible throughout the primary sources researched. The catch, however, is that the last method of fulfilling *jihad* received a substantially larger description; which should be expected for American soldiers who could potentially experience conflict with fundamentalist combatants. Nonetheless, the different versions of textbook attempts to define the term are useful in exemplifying the continued lack of intellectual collaboration.

Upon review of three World History textbooks, similarities are evident but consistency is lacking. The largest commonality was the use of the word “struggle”. The sources focused on were based on the popular versions from three of the textbook publishers; Prentice Hall, Glencoe, and Houghton Mifflin. The selection of the sample textbooks were chosen for a variety of purposes. Each publication represented

³⁶ Hudson, Rex A., et al., *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?*, Library of Congress, September 1999, www.loc.gov/rr/frd.

³⁷ United States Army Combined Arms Center, “Jihad.” September 17, 2008. <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/thesaurus/toc.asp?id=17052> (accessed 4/25/2010).

world history texts that are prominently mentioned or referenced in the sources utilized in this study dealing with the depiction of Islamic content in American secondary education. Many states, such as New York, are considered as ‘non-adoption’ states. New York cannot recommend a particular textbook, piece of software, instructional resource, etc. It is the responsibility of school social studies departments to identify and implement appropriate resources such as textbooks for district students. Therefore, the discretion of teachers is generally dependent on conference exhibits or by consulting colleagues from other districts for recommendations, thus the selection of textbooks was reliant on outside sources due to conflicting endorsement rules from state to state. In particular, one of the widely referenced World History textbooks; *Connections to Today* published by Prentice Hall was evaluated. The intriguing component of this sample is that the Council on Islamic Education is named as an editorial reviewer, which correlates with a version of *jihad* that is concerned more with devotion to Islam through personal improvements. The presence of an Islamic review resulted in a definition of the word that distances itself from the ‘holy war’ stigma.

“Some Muslims took on *Jihad*, or effort in God’s service as another duty. *Jihad* has often been mistakenly translated simply as ‘holy war’. In fact, it may include acts of charity or an inner struggle to achieve spiritual peace, as well as any battle in defense of Islam.”³⁸

This Prentice Hall edition provides a pro-Islamic sentiment that focuses on avoiding the potential violent undertones. Furthermore, it specifically points out the case of mistaken identity by attempting to convince the reader to separate themselves from the mindset of radical fundamentalist actions. To go even further, the concise

³⁸ *Connections to Today*, by Elisabeth Gaynor Ellis and Anthony Esler. Prentice Hall, 2001, 254.

reference within the glossary of the textbook is very basic and vague in its recap of the term itself. “*Jihad*: in Islam, an effort in God’s service.”³⁹ The passive tone that surrounds each mentioning of the term throughout the book is congenial and promotes positive dedication to faith. Despite the constant inclusion of the word *jihad* in Al Qaeda public remarks, President George W. Bush’s reaction to 9/11, or through the speeches under Saddam Hussein’s totalitarian regime, it is defined as a devoted religious action within this American adolescent World History textbook. Other textbooks are not as clear when it comes to conveying information concerning *jihad* to students. Still, each has applicable coverage on terrorism and Middle East conflict for the purpose of examination.

Modern World History textbooks, such as the Prentice Hall version mentioned above, are careful when it comes to shedding light on the negative perceptions surrounding *jihad* but do leave room for further investigations. This is achieved by the broad nature in which the topic has a tendency to be displayed. Case in point, in Glencoe’s *Modern Times*, it attempts to avoid including the notion that Islamic fundamentalists see *jihad* as a sacred opposition to occupying powers, especially in regards to nations such as the United States, Russia, and Israel. Glencoe publishers counter the Western cultural viewpoint of *jihad* prior to discussing it in order to preface why terrorism has become an issue in the modern world. In defense of an association between modern terrorism and *jihad*, this California endorsed textbook proclaims that there are other plausible explanations behind Islamic radical’s reasons for violence.

³⁹ *Connections to Today*, 1017.

“The causes of recent world terrorism are complex. Christians and Muslims have viewed each other with hostility since at least the time of the Crusades. Others suggest that poverty and ignorance lie at the root of the problem—extremists find it easy to stir up resentment against wealthy Western societies. Finally, some say terrorism would be rare if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be solved.”⁴⁰

The lack of contextual acknowledgement of what a *jihad* even means, let alone could imply, is not left to the inquisitive imagination of students. Instead, a variety of reasons that counter the ‘holy war’ mentality are listed in a continuous fashion after the mentioning of the term. Furthermore, Glencoe publishers focus on the role of media and its role in prompting global terrorism due to heightened publicity. Despite the constant mentioning of global terrorism through the text, the fact that many of these Muslim groups incorporate the word *jihad* or *jihadi* into public messages to the world is omitted.

Additionally, the word ‘infidels’ is non-existent in terms of reference throughout any units. At no point does the cause of religious zeal or struggle in an act in the name of god factor into reasons as to why militant fundamentalists have acted violently in the name of Islam, as evident by Al Qaeda’s public remarks.

The most pivotal turn of events in terms of research came upon review of an Advanced Placement textbook available from Houghton Mifflin published in 2005 entitled *The Earth and its Peoples: A Global History*. In comparison to the Prentice Hall (2001) and Glencoe (2006) publications, there is significantly less information portrayed about *jihad* in the Houghton Mifflin text. The ironic lack of information in the AP book, along with minimal discussions on Islamic militancy, is especially noteworthy. Yet, despite the minimal inclusion of information, *jihad* has the words ‘holy war’ in parenthesis in the glossary section. Upon further analysis, the term itself

⁴⁰ Spielvogel, Jackson J.. *World History: Modern Times*. New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2006, 268.

is included in chapters that revolve mostly around the Islamic presence in Africa, not in regards to Islamic violence within the past few decades. In particular, the content references the Islamic reform movements in West Africa but the wording of the sentence implies that a *jihad* was not a new phenomenon to Muslim culture. “The reformers followed a classic Muslim pattern: a *jihad* (holy war) added new lands, where governments enforced Islamic laws and promoted the religion’s spread among conquered people.”⁴¹ A ‘classic Muslim pattern’ precedes the use of *jihad*, which implies that prominent Islamic religious and government figures believed that it was prudent to tolerate non-believers. The publication continually hints at but never specifically mentions *jihad* again throughout the rest of the book. Nonetheless, evidence can be interpreted in passages that correlate with previously researched definitions of the term. Case in point, when briefly discussing militant Islam, the text states that “it has encouraged hostility to the seductions of the modern world and a rekindling of the Islamic struggle against non-Muslim infidels.”⁴² The implications of a ‘holy war’ are palpable within this excerpt from the books context, especially with the use of the words ‘struggle’ and ‘infidels’. Houghton Mifflin specifically makes mention of the idea of a ‘holy war’ periodically in reference to Islamic aggression, therefore a distinct connection can be made toward the inclusion of *jihad*. Additionally, it is noteworthy to point out that this World History textbook is based primarily off contributions from European and American scholarly organizations. At

⁴¹ *The Earth and Its People: A Global History*. Third ed. Richard W. Bulliet Pamela K. Crossley Daniel R. Headrick Steven W. Hirsch Lyman L. Johnson David Northrup. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005, 627.

⁴² *The Earth and Its People: A Global History*, 893.

no point does the publication indicate any educational input from Islamic groups or foundations.

A range of definitions from reputable sources such as religious leaders, educational councils, journalists, and government or militant organizations yielded similarities as well as differences when categorizing what the term *jihad* means. Parallel interpretations focused on devotion to causes that entailed a struggle for God. An effort that was non-violent in which private accolades were possible as a result of commitment to Islam and its teachings. This meaning was portrayed more frequently in American textbooks, thus prompting educational content that approached the topic in a more positive way to adolescent students. On the other hand, public speeches and militant interpretations have stressed *jihad* as a fierce response to ideological attacks on Islam from the perspective of Middle East citizens or descendants. In America, the aggressive side of the term has prompted public policy efforts to approach modern terrorism or to prepare soldiers for potential conflict within the Middle East as well as when dealing with homeland assaults. There is an evident lack of international compromise on the true essence of what a *jihad* is. The continual implementation of the word for contrasting purposes has contributed to an American environment that has inadequately conveyed its meaning to adolescent students in World History courses. Therefore, uniformity is essential in order to aide in eventually establishing mutual understanding between American and Muslim cultures.

Part III

Professional Development Itinerary:

- (1) Prior to presentation, have technology cart set-up for PowerPoint on projector.
Additionally, complete a run-through to make sure that there are no glitches or technological surprises.
- (2) Start the presentation with prompt questions for the teachers in the room. What do you look for in a textbook when replacing an older version? How do you approach the selection process? What factors indicate that the textbook is not an option for your curriculum?
- (3) Commence the presentation by stressing the educational purposes of my professional development presentation. Stress that both purposes pushed me in a direction that exposed positive and negative aspects of my textbook selection processes of the past.
- (4) The turning point in my research came when my own interests in Middle East culture exposed inconsistencies in the textbooks that I had been using within my classroom.

The current textbook did not accurately account for analyzing religious terminology from Islamic perspectives.
- (5) The following four misconceptions were the most common inconsistent societal portrayals historically about Islam.
 - a) Muslims are traditionally violent people
 - b) Islam oppresses and forcefully restricts women
 - c) Islam is intolerant of other faiths
 - d) Muslims don't believe in Jesus or any other prophets

Sources: Islamic Circle of North America, The Muslim Students' Association of the United States and Canada, and The Institute of Islamic Information and Education.

- (6) As a result of the aforementioned general American assumptions toward Islam, the question remains as to how people formulate such perceptions and what are they based on? As a high school social studies teacher, I cannot fully answer this question but I can help give students the tools to formulate an educated perspective on such matters when encountering discussions on the topic.
- (7) Highlight the term *jihad* as a primary example of textbook inconsistencies. Discuss the three textbook definitions studied by briefly outlining the differences between each. Each publisher varied in the analysis of the term *jihad* as well as its impact on history.
- (8) Reliance on textbook information without investigation can result in inaccuracies. Depending on the curriculum content and high school topic, the flexibility of topics can greatly vary.
- (9) Near the end of the presentation, prior to conclusions, stress societal impact of nationalistic bias of textbook information on generational attitudes. Teacher responsibilities go beyond the textbook on debatable subject content in order to give students the tools they need to make educational approaches to topics.
- (10) Discuss the conclusions drawn after reflecting on the validity and reliability of textbook information. Stress that teacher responsibility is the most fundamental tool in assuring that our students get the most up-to-date information in an accurate method from textbooks.

- (11) After conclusions, ask faculty for questions, concerns, additions, etc. Make sure to convey that I am by no means an expert on textbook validity and reliability, rather only an avid history nerd.

PowerPoint Presentation:**Slide #1**

Are you teaching valid and reliable
content information?

RELIABILITY OF TEXTBOOK CONTENT

Slide #2

Out-of-date Text is Most Common Culprit



- Old materials are quite evident by appearance
- However, the question remains as to whether teachers can recognize faulty or inconsistent content if the text is noticeably older

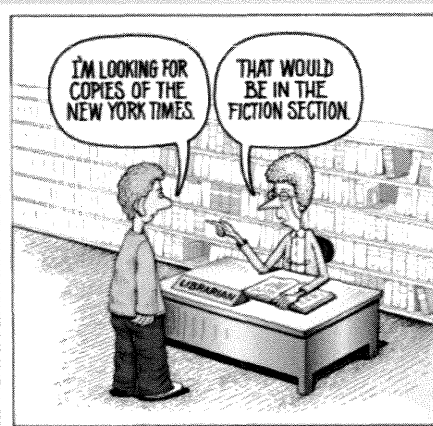
Slide #3

Educational Purposes:

- (1) Textbooks are not classified as primary sources, therefore prior author/publisher/nationalistic bias is possible

Slide #4

Bias is in the Eye of the Beholder



Slide #5

Educational Purposes:

- (2) Qualitative versus quantitative curriculum content can correlate with textbook relevance to subject
 - Ex - Causes of Sunni/Shiite Conflict vs. Multiplication Tables
 - Ex – Symbolism in Fictional Stories vs. the Periodical Table of Elements

Slide #6

Quantitative Mode

- **Assumptions**
 - Social facts have an objective reality
 - Primacy of method
 - Variables can be identified and relationships measured

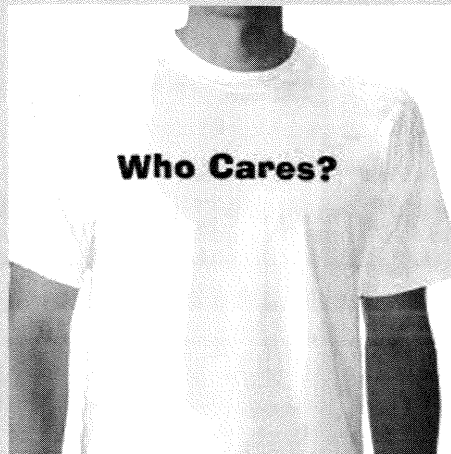
Slide #7

Qualitative Mode

- **Assumptions:**
- Reality is socially constructed
- Primacy of subject matter
- Variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure

Slide #8

Big Question Is...



Slide #9

Diversity Cares



- According to the CIA Factbook (2009), 0.6% of the U.S. population practices the Muslim faith
- This percentage equals 1,843,273 individuals

Slide #10

Glencoe/McGraw-Hill *World History:*
Modern Times (2006)

- **Assurance of Non-Bias**
- As with all components of *Modern Times*, great care has been taken to ensure that assessment instruments and procedures are nondiscriminatory in regard to gender, race/ethnicity, and student disability.
- Note: Non-bias is assured for the **reader's** personal status, not the **author's** preconceived notions anywhere

Slide #11

Finding Motivation To Research...

- *We all lead busy lives but remember why you choose this profession and subject level*
- A sincere interest in literature?
- An intriguing figure/event in history?
- An experiment that produced a fascinating result that was 'cool'?
- Solving a problem that no one else could?

Slide #12

My Incentives

- (1) I'm a history nerd...plain and simple
 - The History channel is 2nd only to ESPN on a nightly basis
- (2) High interest in past, present, and future U.S.-Middle East relations

Slide #13

Incentives...

- (3) Islam: A justification or excuse for violent ramifications throughout the region against occupying forces?
- (4) Are U.S. representations of Islamic terminology accurate?
 - In other words, how is information about the fundamentals of the Muslim world being conveyed to our children?

Slide #14

Common American Misconceptions

- Muslims are traditionally violent people
- Reality: Islam literally means 'submission to God' and is derived from a root word meaning 'peace'



Slide #15

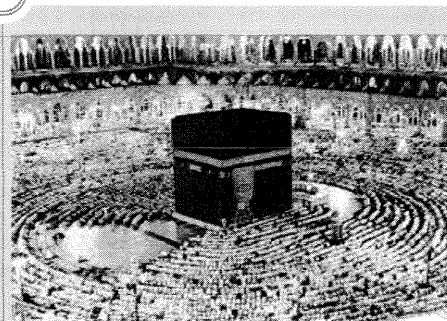
Common American Misconceptions

- Islam oppresses and forcefully restricts women
- Reality: Islam sees a woman, whether single or married, as an individual in her own right, with the right to own and dispose of her property and earnings

Slide #16

Common American Misconceptions

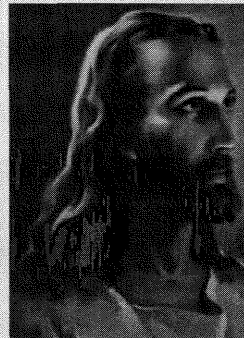
- Islam is intolerant of other faiths
- Reality: Freedom of religion is laid down in the Quran itself: "There is no compulsion (or coercion) in the religion (Islam)."



Slide #17

Common American Misconceptions

- Muslims don't believe in Jesus or any other prophets
- Reality: Muslims respect and revere Jesus. They consider him one of God's greatest messengers to mankind.

Slide #18

Textbook Misconception Research

- ***Jihad***...but what does it mean?
- First impressions?
- Most reply that it is a holy war or an Islamic version of a Christian crusade
- Inaccuracies socially have resulted in inconsistent scholarly textbook analysis

Slide #19Textbook *Jihad*

- Range of definitions are wide when compared between common World History textbooks
- (1) Devotion to Islam through personal lifestyle improvements
 - (Prentice Hall *Connections to Today*, 2001)

Slide #20Textbook *Jihad*

- (2) Sacred opposition to occupying powers
 - (Glencoe-McGraw-Hill *World History: Modern Times* 2006)
- (3) A 'holy war' that promotes the religion's spread among conquered people
 - (Houghton Mifflin *The Earth & it's People* 2005)

Slide #21

Conclusions

- Textbook information cannot be taken strictly as FACT
 - If that was the case, teachers would choose textbooks solely on illustrations, practice questions, etc. As a result, publishers would go unquestioned by the scholarly world.

Slide #22

Conclusions...

- Prior knowledge of content material is essential to identifying inaccurate textbook analysis
 - Author(s) bias is increasingly evident as teacher professional development increases.
 - Therefore, relevant professional development is reliant on teacher devotion, not the Superintendent/Administrators responsibility to provide content-based seminars.

Slide #23

Conclusions...

- Students are reliant on us providing them with the tools to push themselves to higher levels of thinking, not regurgitated textbook information that has 'gray' interpretations
 - For the record, I taught '*jihad*' inaccurately the first three years because I **assumed** that the textbook was correct without any inquiries into what the terms meant to the Islamic world.

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