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Aligning Asian History with California State Standards and the Common Core

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I. Introduction

This paper will examine recent shifts in the K-12 History/Social Studies curriculum in the United States, with an emphasis on the implications of the newly implemented Common Core standards in California.¹ It will begin with an overview of some of these shifts and then discuss a few case studies with a focus on the incorporation of Asian history into the changing curriculum based on my experiences as a faculty member in the History Department at California State University Fullerton (CSUF). Since 2003 I have also served as the department Credential Advisor whose duties include advising History majors about the History and Social Science coursework they should take as undergraduates in preparation for entering the single-subject teaching credential program upon graduation. While the CSUF History faculty do not oversee student teachers in that program itself, I do have regular contact with faculty from the Department of Secondary Education in order to keep abreast of changes in the local public schools and teacher credential requirements.² Most recently in the Fall 2015 semester I attended a session that was part of the accreditation visit to CSUF by The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) where we provided information about the various departments' roles in supporting teacher preparation and education.³

In my capacity as Credential Advisor I also take part in the credential program admissions interviews to assess the applicants' suitability for teaching at the secondary level (grades 6-12), particularly regarding their level of subject matter competency. As part of the 23-campus California State University system, historically CSUF traces its roots to the teacher training institutions of the 1960 California Master Plan.⁴ It still retains this primary emphasis on teaching and teacher preparation, especially as compared to the Ph.D. granting research oriented focus of the University of California campuses such as UCLA and Berkeley. Lastly, this paper will examine the implications of these

¹ For an overview of these changes, see <http://www.corestandards.org/> (all websites accessed 8 January 2016). A useful discussion of the Common Core Standards, released in 2010, can be found in Andrew Porter, Jennifer McMaken, Jun Hwang, and Rui Yang, "Common Core Standards: The New U.S. Intended Curriculum," *Educational Researcher* 40:3 (April 2011): 103-116.

² These requirements are set by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/default.html>

³ <http://www.ncate.org/Standards/UnitStandards/tabcid/123/Default.aspx>

⁴ http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/uchistory/archives_exhibits/masterplan/guide.html. See also John A. Douglass, *The California idea and American higher education: 1850 to the 1960 master plan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

changes resulting from the Common Core curriculum for History/Social Studies education more generally, as well as teacher training for secondary schools at the post-Baccalaureate level.

II. Common Core

A. Historical and Political Context

The Common Core State Standards Initiative emphasizes the development of literacy and analytical thinking in the areas of History/Social Studies as well as scientific and technical subject matter. The approach of this initiative can be summed up as follows:

The Common Core asks students to read stories and literature, as well as more complex texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas such as science and social studies. Students will be challenged and asked questions that push them to refer back to what they've read. This stresses critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills that are required for success in college, career, and life.⁵

This approach is a clear break from the model of rote memorization and standardized test taking associated with The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Indeed, much of the momentum to adopt these new Common Core standards came from a dissatisfaction with NCLB and a sense that standardized tests did not adequately measure student learning or contribute to a practical, meaningful mastery of the subject matter.

NCLB itself was a 21st century iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), a federal law authorized to support education nationally at the K-12 level.⁶ It was part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty and as such, was integral to the Johnson administration's civil rights campaign and desire to improve funding and equity for poorer school districts.⁷ In a similar vein, The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2002, received bipartisan support from coauthors including Democrat Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts and Republican John Boehner of Ohio.⁸ Within several years of the passage of NCLB a national coalition had formed to develop a more standardized Common Core curriculum with an emphasis on "college and career readiness."

⁵ <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>

⁶ For an overview of federal education policy in the 1960s, see Harvey Kantor, "Education, Social Reform, and the State: ESEA and Federal Education Policy in the 1960s," *American Journal of Education* 100:1 (Nov. 1991): 47-83.

⁷ Julie Roy Jeffrey provides a critical assessment of ESEA in her *Education for Children of the Poor: A Study of the Origins and Implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978).

⁸ In 2004 Frederick M. Hess and Michael J. Petrilli examined the political context of NCLB in their article, "The Politics of No Child Left Behind: Will the Coalition Hold?" *The Journal of Education* 185: 3, Accountability Issue (2004):13-25. A rosier view was put forth by Senator Kennedy himself in his piece "The No Child Left Behind Act: Fulfilling the Promise," *Human Rights* 32:4 (Fall 2005): 16-18, 25.

B. “Workforce ready” curriculum

One of the key elements of the Common Core is its emphasis on the notion of a “workforce ready” curriculum. This point was very much at the center of discussion of the Common Core at a recent workshop for department chairs held at my home institution, CSUF. I attended this workshop in my capacity both as Vice Chair of the History Department and as Credential Advisor. Department chairs were encouraged to attend this workshop so as to understand the new ways students would be learning at the secondary level before entering CSUF as undergraduates. The “workforce ready” curriculum was explained as a development that would prepare students at the secondary level for jobs that could provide a living wage. Furthermore, this curriculum was meant to provide opportunities for promotion in viable careers, as opposed to dying industries, in the increasingly globalized American economy. Related to this point, the workshop also brought attention to the thoroughgoing incorporation of technology in all disciplines ranging from mathematics, to science to English and Language Arts. During the CSUF credential program admissions interviews, this emphasis on technology is also readily apparent. Candidates are generally asked to talk about one kind of technology they have seen used effectively during their hours of classroom observation in the credential program pre-requisite classes.⁹

Several of the presenters at this CSUF workshop pointed out the specific ways that the Common Core addressed the rights of all students to engage with complex texts, including students with special needs, English learners and those living at the poverty level and below. This is another area where credential program candidates are expected to show a familiarity with such issues as diversity during the admission interview process.¹⁰ Many of those aspiring to be teachers share stories about their own socio-economic background and speak highly of teachers who went out of their way to help them overcome obstacles of language and other cultural barriers. This is often a motivation for them to serve as a similar kind of role model in schools in their home community. Thus, among CSUF faculty and students, there are echoes of the social justice ideals of the Johnson administration that explicitly address the intertwined issues of racial politics and the increasingly large income gap in American society.¹¹ At the workshop, one of the professors from the area of Science Education was particularly

⁹ Student must take the following four classes before entering the credential program: The Teaching Experience: Participation (includes 45 hours of classroom observation), Adolescent Development, Developing Literacy in Secondary Schools, and Diversity in Secondary Schools.

¹⁰ This aligns with the stated mission of the California Commission on Teaching Credentialing, namely “To ensure integrity, relevance, and high quality in the preparation, certification, and discipline of the educators who serve all of California's diverse students.” <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/default.html>

¹¹ For another recent take on what should be emphasized in the current curriculum, see James A. Beane, “A common core of a different sort: Putting democracy at the center of the curriculum: The values and skills associated with life

passionate about addressing the needs of students who were homeless or came from migrant families throughout California and were uprooted from various locations and thrust into new classroom settings on a regular basis. She was optimistic that the Common Core standards provided the tools to meet such challenges and offered pedagogical strategies to avoid using socio-economic disparities as an excuse to literally “leave these students behind.”

Another distinctive aspect of the curriculum shared with us was the emphasis on something called a “growth mindset” that eschews labels like “struggling students.” This may also be compared to the equally problematic label of so-called “smart kids” who, when they encounter material that they struggle with, may resort to unproductive behavior like cheating.¹²

The workshop material highlighted the Common Core focus on literacy and the development of critical thinking skills and noted the heavier emphasis on non-fiction texts (70%) across disciplines, as opposed to works of fiction.¹³ Anecdotally, recent conversations with students as young as nine years old in the third grade of elementary school reveal a basic understanding of this division between genres and a familiarity with choosing works of non-fiction or fiction for school assignments and independent reading. In my capacity as Credential Advisor and through exchanges with faculty associated with the CSUF Department of Secondary Education, specifically in the area of English/Language Arts instruction, I have seen how this emphasis on non-fiction is not always embraced enthusiastically. It is particularly problematic when this focus on non-fiction, technical material, and informational texts comes at the expense of students developing an appreciation of literary forms such as poetry and other forms of creative expression central to an education grounded in the humanistic tradition of the liberal arts.¹⁴

III. Case Studies

in a democratic society should constitute the core of the curriculum,” *Middle School Journal* 44:3 (January 2013): 6-14.

¹² On the relation between academic performance and cheating, see Kristin Voelkl Finn and Michael R. Frone, “Academic Performance and Cheating: Moderating Role of School Identification and Self-Efficacy,” *The Journal of Educational Research* 97:3 (Jan. – Feb. 2004): 115-122.

¹³ This emphasis on nonfiction and the implications for the development of reading skills more generally is addressed by Anna M. Phillips in her article “Nonfiction Curriculum Enhanced Reading Skills, Study Finds,” *New York Times* (11 March 2012). <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/12/nyregion/nonfiction-curriculum-enhanced-reading-skills-in-new-york-city-schools.html>

¹⁴ For an interesting discussion of related issues and a number of useful links, see Amanda Christy Brown and Katherine Schulten, “Fiction or Nonfiction? Considering the Common Core’s Emphasis on Informational Text,” *New York Times* (13 December 2012). http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/13/fiction-or-nonfiction-considering-the-common-cores-emphasis-on-informational-text/?_r=0

A. College and Career Readiness

This next section will focus on a series of writing workshops conducted for History/Social Studies teachers in the Santa Ana, California school district in 2015. At that time, I was asked to be part of a panel of faculty from the CSUF College of Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS) that included representatives from the disciplines of Political Science and History in the subject areas of American Government, U.S. History, World History, and Historical Methodology. For over a decade now, the director of the Fullerton International Resources for Secondary Teachers (FIRST), Connie DeCapite has worked closely with H&SS faculty to facilitate K-16 partnerships and provide professional development opportunities for secondary school teachers geared toward a more internationally-oriented curriculum. FIRST is a California State Subject Matter project and as such is part of a network of regional sites offering programs “that explicitly address the Common Core Standards and the History/Social Studies Content Standards while promoting the integration of English Language Arts and ELD teaching strategies.”¹⁵ More specifically, FIRST is one of seven sites of The California International Studies Project (CISP) whose mission is “to prepare students to work, live and be informed, active citizens in a world where conditions, peoples, and distant events may have a critical impact on their lives and those of others.”¹⁶

For this particular writing workshop, DeCapite asked faculty members to focus on strategies to spark interest among high school students in their writing assignments and to address various processes including the organization of ideas and how to support claims with evidence. While my subject matter area of specialization is modern Japanese history, I regularly teach a class at the undergraduate level called “Historical Thinking” which introduces History majors to a variety of methods and theories specific to the modern discipline of history. As a relative latecomer to the discipline of history, my undergraduate major was Japanese language and my interdisciplinary Master’s degree was in Asian Studies. Even with a Ph.D. in History, my broader Area Studies training has fostered an acute awareness of the disciplinary distinctions that I have tried to share with my students in combination with an introduction to a variety of world history topics such as public history in Japan, as discussed in further detail below.

One of the key goals of the exchanges with the teachers from Santa Ana was to share with them strategies and teaching experiences that would help them prepare their high school students for coursework they will eventually encounter in college in the California State University system. In this sense, this professional development workshop for high school teachers was the flip side of the coin of the Common Core workshop conducted for CSUF department chairs discussed above. The Historical

¹⁵ <http://first.fullerton.edu/>. ELD stands for English Language Development and is geared towards “English learners” or students whose first language is not English.

¹⁶ <https://csmp.ucop.edu/cisp#>

Thinking class readily lent itself as a topic of discussion, since it is often the first upper-division class History majors take at CSUF, after having taken most of their General Education classes at a nearby community college. After teaching this 300-level class for several semesters since coming to CSUF in 2002, the most useful change I have made is to provide students with more explicit guidelines for their midterm examinations in terms of how they should structure a comprehensive essay that covers the various methodologies we have discussed over a period of about seven or eight weeks. In many ways, these guidelines mirror the “key ideas and details” included in the Grade 9-10 Common Core standards which read as follows:

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
3. Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.¹⁷

For History majors, it is always important to start with clarifying the distinction between primary and secondary sources and to emphasize the importance of using primary source evidence as the basis for a discussion and analysis of the past and change over time. Regarding dates and origins, students are expected to always refer at least to the century and continent, and as the semester progresses, specify the decade and country associated with particular methodological approaches such as British historian E.P. Thompson’s “history from below” of the 1960s. For many years, I have used *Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory* as the main textbook for this course which includes excerpts from texts like Thompson’s “The Making of the English Working Class” along with explanations by the editors to contextualize the author’s ideas.¹⁸ In this case, students are introduced to Thompson’s ideas after having reviewed the basic concepts of historical materialism and class struggle associated with Karl Marx.

As noted above, I also assign a number of articles in my Historical Thinking class that will expose students to issues of historiography outside the American or European contexts. In my presentation to the teachers in Santa Ana, I used Kerry Smith’s discussion of a Japanese war museum in Tokyo¹⁹ as way to address some of the Common Core standards related to “craft and structure” which require students in Grades 9-10 to do the following:

¹⁷ <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/>

¹⁸ Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, eds. *Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

¹⁹ Kerry Smith, “The Shōwa Hall: Memorializing Japan’s War at Home,” *The Public Historian* 24:4 (Fall 2002): 35-64.

1. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
2. Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
3. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

For every assignment in the Historical Thinking class students are provided with a study guide that includes a list of terms and vocabulary words they should be able to define and elaborate on regarding the particular historical context, significance, and usage in the assigned text. For the Smith article, in addition to bringing their attention to terms specific to the Japanese context such as Yasukuni Shrine or Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), I also include more general words like “war orphans” to make sure students can expound upon the “political, social, or economic aspects” associated with Japanese children who may have been orphaned in Manchuria as a result of Japan’s particular trajectory of immigration and imperialist expansion in China in the early 20th century, or perhaps lost their parents in the firebombings of 1945 in cities like Tokyo and Osaka. Such an exercise clearly reflects the central tenets of the Common Core Standards stated above calling for students to “be challenged and asked questions that push them to refer back to what they’ve read.”

Smith’s article also lends itself to a discussion of a text’s structure and the author’s emphasis of key points such as “victim consciousness” as it relates to issues like the atomic bombings and the sacrifices made by the Japanese people themselves, both during wartime and in the aftermath of rebuilding from the devastation of defeat. Smith introduces groups like the Japan Association of Bereaved Families (*Izokukai*) and the Society for the Making of New School Textbooks in History (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai*) led by right-wing nationalists such as Nishio Kanji as a way to explore issues like the controversies over how to portray the nature and significance of Japanese expansionism in Asia in the 20th century.

Regarding point number three above related to comparing the points of view of two or more authors, examining Smith’s historiographical overview of wartime memory in Japan is a good way to guide students in combing the footnotes and paying attention to the cited primary and secondary source material. For example, he begins by mapping out the “end-of-the-century effort to enoble the war” with a reference to the “neo-revisionists” who “have developed a visible and well-funded public presence, demanding a wholesale re-evaluation of what they describe as the nation’s masochistic approach to its own history” and then cites the Japanese-language evidence of this published by Nishio Kanji, as well as a useful English-language secondary source on the topic by Gavan McCormack in a volume about censoring history edited by Laura Hein and Mark Selden. After elaborating on the issues specific to the Japanese political scene, Smith also cites James Young’s work *The Texture of Memory*:

Holocaust Memorials and Meaning to establish a framework for an exploration of how memory works in Japan following the collapse of its empire in 1945.²⁰

B. Emerging pedagogy and examples from Asian history

While the Santa Ana workshop focused more specifically on strategies for writing and organization, other FIRST workshops over the last decade or so have also included materials which are well suited for lessons aligned with the Common Core standards. During this time, there has been a significant increase in the Korean population in Fullerton and the surrounding Orange County region, particularly in the nearby city of Irvine. Both Fullerton and Irvine have Korean-led Parent Associations to address the specific needs of these communities. In Irvine, Korean parents have been particularly active in fundraising and organizing to support cultural events and the dissemination of information about Korea to teachers and community members.²¹ In one workshop, I presented an overview of the Korean War (1950-1953) to teachers in the Irvine public schools. While some of the teachers came to augment their content knowledge because they taught World History, some teachers from other subject areas attended merely because they had increasing contact with Korean students and parents and wanted to have more basic knowledge about Korean history, culture, and customs.

My overview of the Korean War aligned well with the Grade 11-12 Common Core standards regarding “integration of knowledge and ideas” which prompt students to do the following:

1. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g. visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
2. Evaluate an author’s premise, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
3. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.²²

Before getting into the specifics of the military conflict that started on June 25, 1950, I provided a brief overview of the history of the colonial period (1910-1945) and explained the establishment of two separate states on the Korean peninsula in 1948. In the course of putting together materials for my presentation, another teacher (a Korean-American who had years of experience at the secondary level and was currently working on a doctorate in education) had prepared a PowerPoint slide show to complement my lecture notes, including an image of Kim Il Sung in the 1930s when he was a resistance

²⁰ Smith, 40.

²¹ http://www.ikpa.us/bbs/board.php?bo_table=01_1&wr_id=20. This website explains that the “Irvine Korean Parents Association (IKPA) is a non-profit organization established in 1997 by Korean parents of public high schools in Irvine. IKPA works with Irvine Unified School District and the Irvine Public Schools Foundation to bridge between teachers, students, parents and schools.”

²² <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/>

fighter against the Japanese in Northeast China. However, next to Kim's face was the predominantly red flag of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). While the bold color made a very effective, strong visual impact, I took issue with this pairing and insisted that it was anachronistic to use this nationalist symbol when discussing the colonial period since the DPRK was not founded until 1948.

I also shared with the teachers the experience in my undergraduate Korean history survey class at CSUF using Richard Kim's novel *Lost Names* about the colonial period and brought to their attention the author's comments where he notes that many readers assume that his fictional account is based on real events.²³ When used in conjunction with a more standard textbook and collection of primary sources, students can engage with a compelling dramatic narrative that in turn fosters a closer reading of the evidence provided by historians and social scientists from other disciplines like political science.²⁴ While the characters in Kim's novel are more like composites of actual historical figures, it is a worthwhile exercise to compare his portrayal of them with the more conventional documentary evidence from the other assigned readings. In this way students can develop an appreciation for the role of historical imagination and reflect on the ways that historians are sometimes forced to make inferences about the nature of historical events and processes in cases where there is a dearth of reliable or convincing evidence.

Because of my specialty in postwar Japanese history, I also discussed the effects of the Korean War in Japan, as a way to model the integration of information from diverse sources. For example, I explained how Japan was still under Allied Occupation and the authority of General Douglas MacArthur when *Akahata*, the organ of the Japan Communist Party was shut down in June 1950 because its editorial stance did not pass muster with the American censors.²⁵ From the perspective of domestic Japanese politics, it is also important to note that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, a stalwart Cold War ally of Washington D.C. and Wall Street, called the Korean War a "godsend" for the Japanese economy. More familiar to most Americans is the so-called "Japanese economic miracle" so closely associated with the success of the automobile industry by the 1970s, with its roots in jeep repairs and other related industrial developments and procurements tied to the Korean War.²⁶ Less well known are

²³ Richard Kim, *Lost Names: scenes from a Korean boyhood* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998).

²⁴ In my survey course, Themes in Korean History, I have used with much success Michael J. Seth's *A History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) and Ch'oe Yongho, Peter H. Lee and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition, Volume 2: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

²⁵ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999): 437.

²⁶ Michael Schaller, "The Korean War: The Economic and Strategic Impact on Japan, 1950-53," in William Stueck, ed. *The Korean War in World History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004): 147.

anecdotes related to the ethnic Korean minority in Japan (*zainichi Chosenjin*) such as those of Kim Chonsam who worked with the Japan Communist Party and volunteered to use his own body “to stop the trains transporting weapons for the Korean War” in a conflict that had wrought so much destruction in his ancestral homeland.²⁷ This particular example also offers unique insight into the complexities and diversity of the global Korean diaspora in an area of California where the rise of the ethnic Korean population can be traced back to changes in American immigration since 1965 as well as movements from urban centers of the Los Angeles metropolitan area to more suburban communities, most prominently in the wake of the Rodney King riots of 1992.

IV. Implications

A. Challenges

As can be seen from the examples above, there are a number of ways that university faculty and secondary school teachers can collaborate in creative and productive ways to address the requirements of the Common Core standards. However, as with any new, comprehensive shift like this one, there is also a certain degree of skepticism and wariness that this too may be another passing fad on the educational landscape. Another grave concern is the predicament of unfunded mandates that leave school districts in a position of being forced to make changes but without the necessary financial support to do so. As noted above, in order for meaningful change to take place in individual classrooms, teachers must be provided with the training and resources to make substantial changes in lesson planning and implementation. As one middle school teacher in the Oakland Unified School District, Katherine Suyeyasu has noted, many teachers received their own education in an age when “textbooks presented history as a static body of knowledge devoid of all traces of historical thinking.” Reflecting on her own experience as a student, she notes that “Too many of my teachers treated history as a body of facts and students as bodies to fill with those facts.”²⁸ While the Common Core standards do prompt students to discern between fact and opinion and encourage students to develop skills that will allow them to cite factual information accurately, the emphasis is much more on the critical thinking skills of integration and evaluation, as opposed to merely memorizing and regurgitating.

B. Opportunities

As seen through the examples of Shōwa Hall and the Korean War discussed above, a focus on multiple perspectives provides students with opportunities to explore the various meanings associated with the past and consider the implications for the present day as well. While teachers like Suyeyasu

²⁷ Kenji Hasegawa, *Waging Cold War in 1950s Japan: Zengakuren's postwar protests* (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2007): 83.

²⁸ <http://teachinghistory.org/issues-and-research/roundtable-response/25352>

acknowledge the challenges presented by the Common Core, she also is encouraged by the prospect of learning that “while history may begin with facts, it does not end there. The excitement and rigor of learning history lies in the interpretation – how one makes sense of the facts.”²⁹

In the CSUF teacher credential program, the shift to the Common Core has provided opportunities for student teachers to sometimes act as mentors to their master teachers, in large part because the new standards are their starting point and they do not have to unlearn old patterns. They are in a position to bring their creativity and innovative thinking to the classroom experience in a collaborative way that can at times be helpful for both the students and veteran teachers. While not in any way underestimating the value that hands on experience and maturity bring to the teaching profession, the Common Core standards can be an entrée for both more and less experienced teachers to work together to meet the challenges of the new curriculum. On a practical level, in some areas the need for substitute teachers has skyrocketed as teachers are called out of the classroom to attend Common Core professional development training. In response, the State of California has recently authorized a renewable emergency permit that allows students who have completed 90 units of coursework to work as a substitute teacher for 30 days. This has thus allowed students interested in a career in teaching to get a certain kind of practical experience in the classroom. In some districts, daily pay rates have increased as well as an incentive to attract qualified candidates.

In my experience interviewing applicants for the credential program, one issue that has arisen with some frequency is the lack of preparation in what can be called “Historical Thinking” among students who have either been trained primarily in other disciplines or else are attracted to history primarily as a form of glorified storytelling. While a compelling historical narrative is important, some students need remedial work to fully grasp the importance of interpretation and evaluation as central elements to the discipline of history. To conclude, as Sarah Drake Brown of Ball State University in Indiana has commented,

Preparing history teachers who are capable of seizing the Common Core as both an opportunity to teach disciplinary reading and as an occasion to hone interpretive skills through formal writing demands that teacher preparation programs make student thinking in history visible and provide candidates with opportunities to observe and assess such thinking.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ <http://teachinghistory.org/issues-and-research/roundtable-response/25351>