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The Impact of Teaching Racial History in American High School Social Studies: Pilot Study Evaluating Inclusion of the Japanese "Yellow Peril" in the Curriculum

*Jason Barrows**

The paper presents the findings of a pilot research study designed to assess differences in academic achievement and self-understanding of American identity among high school students introduced in their social studies classes to the history of racial injustice that Japanese American immigrants and citizens experienced in the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, known as the "Japanese yellow peril." This history was presented to the students through the portrayal of Japanese Americans in contemporaneous West Coast newspapers. The pilot study sought to answer the research question: To what extent does integrating a supplemental module lesson addressing the concept of the Japanese yellow peril into the curriculum of an Indiana high school social studies class impact the students' academic achievement and understanding of themselves as Americans? As a new approach in American studies, the supplemental module lesson, created in alignment with the Indiana Academic Standard, aimed to illuminate the history of the Japanese yellow peril before introducing students to the issues related to the temporary internment of Japanese Americans (a majority of whom were US citizens) during World War II. The study findings suggest that students' learning about these historical issues more fully enables them to connect them to current events and gain a holistic view of American political policies' impact on Japanese Americans and other minority groups.

*Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine

1. Introduction

This paper examines the broad question of the educational value of a new approach to American studies that incorporates education about historical racism in the United States in a dynamic and interactive manner into high school social studies curriculums. It does so by presenting the research findings from a 2019 pilot study conducted in collaboration with colleagues in an Indiana public school social studies class. During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, Asian American immigrants and citizens to the United States faced xenophobic racism and discrimination, known as the "yellow peril." The research study evaluated the educational benefit of a supplemental curriculum module addressing the yellow peril in the specific context of such discrimination against Japanese Americans, prior to classroom discussion of the internment of Japanese Americans, many of whom were American citizens, during World War II.

The paper begins by examining the need to incorporate the history of this discrimination, referred to here as the "Japanese yellow peril," into social studies curriculums. It provides an overview of key areas, including 1) the historiography of the Japanese yellow peril; 2) the importance of including it in high school social studies textbooks and classes; 3) the slow progress in incorporating Japanese American history into textbooks; 4) the need for research as to how best to include Japanese American studies in social studies classes; and 5) the rationale for conducting this pilot study in Indiana. The discussion then shifts to the pilot study itself, including detailed explanations of its specific research question, its methodology, findings, and limitations, and areas for further research.

Finally, the paper explores the potential broader implications of the study's finding that integrating dynamic education about the Japanese yellow peril in social studies curriculums has a significant positive impact on student academic achievement. Implementation of such new approaches to American studies could deepen students' understanding of the impact of historical injustices on current social dynamics, enhance their ability to understand themselves as Americans and to participate in an increasingly multicultural society, and incline them to become more informed and empathetic students and citizens.

2. The Need for Including The Japanese Yellow Peril in High School Social Studies Curriculums

2.1 Historical Scholarship on the Japanese Yellow Peril

Racism and discrimination against first-generation Japanese immigrants have been a recurring aspect of numerous phases of European and American diplomatic history. During the mid-nineteenth century, the concept of the "yellow peril" reflected a broader Western anxiety about the rise of non-Western powers and was deeply intertwined with the colonial and imperialist ideologies of the time, especially in Europe.[1] On the American West Coast, however, the yellow peril was a racially charged concept that first arose due to fears of Chinese immigration. Chinese laborers who arrived during the California Gold Rush and the construction of the transcontinental railroad were perceived by white settlers as an economic threat, which led to rising xenophobia and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first US law restricting immigration based on race.[2] This sentiment later shifted to Japanese immigrants, especially after Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, which heightened fears of Japanese expansion along the West Coast. This anti-Japanese sentiment, in turn, resulted in school segregation, diplomatic tensions, and institutionalized discrimination. This marked the advent of a broader racial discourse with lasting effects on Japanese immigrants—first generation Japanese Americans known as "Issei"—and their descendants including second generation Japanese American citizens known as "Nisei," as well as subsequent generations. It also had a profound impact on race relations in the United States as a whole.[3]

Over the past century, the publication and analysis of official documents, memoirs, and other records have been central to historical research, particularly in the context of the Japanese yellow peril ideology. A great deal of information about immigration to the US can be found in successive volumes of American Immigration Service sources covering both immigration from China as well as from Japan.[4] They provide detailed figures at critical points and more exact information than a corresponding US commission report regarding immigration and its impact on US foreign relations, which offers a more voluminous account of the subject and its implications.[5] I consider the significance of these sources comparable to that of President Theodore Roosevelt's papers and letters.[6] Additionally, other scholars' works draw upon numerous and varied other original

sources. Payson Treat includes two chapters containing documents relating to immigration cases in his seminal 1932 work *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Japan, 1853-1895*.[7] As far as more recent scholars, Charles Wollenberg draws attention to the *Aoki v. Deane* case to highlight the anti-Japanese sentiment that led to school segregation and diplomatic tensions.[8] Yuji Ichioka grounds his research in a variety of primary sources, including personal letters, community records, and government documents, and explores factors such as economic hardships, limited opportunities in Japan, and the allure of better prospects abroad that led to Japanese immigration to the United States.[9] Roger Daniels meticulously documents the various forms of institutionalized discrimination faced by Japanese immigrants, including exclusionary laws, land ownership restrictions, and segregation.[10]

Another notable book is a 2024 anthology edited by Eiichiro Azuma and Kaoru Ueda that honors the legacy of Japanese scholar Yasuo Sakata, a leading historian of early Japanese America and transpacific migration who has worked extensively both in the US and Japan, and invites a new generation of scholars to build upon his work.[11] The anthology provides relevant factual information based on a collection of documents, which includes original and translated essays that cover a range of topics, from international relations and trade to issues of nationalism, education, and citizenship, all to stimulate further research based on primary sources, a method promoted by Sakata.

These excellent studies on the Japanese yellow peril focus on Japanese immigrants moving to America for the prospect of a better life, and the ensuing anti-Japanese sentiment that led to school segregation, diplomatic tensions, and institutionalized discrimination in the US. They depict a compelling narrative of the struggle and perseverance of the Japanese immigrants and their descendants as well as shed light on the complex dynamics of racial politics in California and the enduring impact such prejudice has had on the Japanese American community. They also highlight Japanese Americans' contributions to American society and their efforts to advocate for their rights and improve their social standing. Unfortunately, however, most of this research has been written for the scholarly world, and as set forth in the next section below, very little emphasis has been placed on providing information at the high school level, where it can be a valuable resource for high school students to learn and understand the experiences of Japanese Americans and their contributions to American society.[12]

2.2 Fostering Cultural Understanding: The Value of Integrating Minority Histories into High School Social Studies Education

Over the last two decades, numerous research studies have investigated the educational value of reflective thinking—defined as the active and careful evaluation of beliefs and knowledge in relation to evidence, consequences, and personal experience—and consistently demonstrated that it enhances student achievement with respect to understanding of minority groups in American history and society.[13] Therefore, when teaching students about minority groups, fostering peer interactions that cultivate reflective thinking is essential to achieving success, particularly in terms of increasing cognitive understanding.[14] Lev S. Vygotsky, renowned for his contributions to the field of psychological development in children, emphasizes the importance of intellectual growth through the process of interacting with others in a socially interactive environment.[15] This entails the exchange of information in a verbal format between peers, particularly when it involves providing explanations, which has been found to trigger cognitive restructuring, promote reflective thinking, and enhance comprehension.[16] Beyond these academic advantages, collaborative learning about minority groups in peer-group tasks has been shown to boost self-confidence, improve students' attitudes, and foster healthy relationships with their school and classmates.[17]

Conversely, research indicates that the traditional teaching of White-male history in conventional classroom settings, which ignores the differences between the students' backgrounds and their ethnic traditions, may result in students developing negative perceptions of their fellow students and other people more generally based on differences in ethnicity, gender, or race.[18] Understanding the historical and cultural backgrounds of different ethnic groups, regardless of gender or race, has been observed to help level the playing field, and promote mutual respect among students.[19]

However, little attention has so far been given to students' learning about the Japanese yellow peril at the high school level. The absence of relevant information in current social studies textbooks contributes to this inadequacy.[20] Facilitating student inquiry into the historical injustices faced by Japanese Americans, who were uniquely subjected to large-scale relocation and temporary incarceration after the attack on Pearl Harbor, is crucial to providing students with a broad based education and enhancing their ability to engage in reflective thinking.[21] Therefore, as a new approach in American studies, incorporating historical information and details

regarding the treatment of Japanese immigrants when they first arrived on the American West Coast into high school textbooks and classes, is of foremost importance. The content of the textbooks and classroom teaching should include a comprehensive discussion of the historical facts and details regarding the Japanese yellow peril in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, prior to the temporary internment of Japanese American citizens during World War II. Such inclusion is critical because it provides students with an understanding of the historical racism that created the conditions for the internment possible, enabling students to comprehend all the underlying causes for it.

2.3 Slow Progress in Incorporating Japanese American History into High School Curriculums

The teaching of multicultural education to high school students and the study of Japanese American history are relatively new developments, that are continuing to evolve. As pointed out by Azuma, there is a need to include the still "untold 1930s" era of Japanese American history in curriculums and the need to "promote Japanese American studies in general" remains.[22] One of the major problems has been how to include as much cultural variety as possible in the textbooks. Progress in improving the content of textbooks dealing with Japanese Americans and creating informed and open-minded citizens has been slow in coming.[23]

This reluctance to rewrite the nation's textbooks to include Japanese American history and experience appears to derive from the fact that there were few Japanese Americans who were involved in the protests from various activist groups from the early 1950s to the late 1960s. During this important period, most other minority groups, but not Japanese Americans, were able to benefit from having parts of their history added to the textbooks.[24] However, it was not until the 1970s that the experiences of Japanese Americans began to be included in textbooks, after Japanese American parents raised concerns about their absence, specifically the omission of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The Japanese Americans, who spearheaded this campaign in the early 1970s challenged this exclusion at the state level across the country. Their efforts eventually led to legislative decisions that called for the insertion of wartime internment in the curriculum in many states.[25] Notably, these advances emerged after ethnic separatism became the key feature of minority protest. As a result, in comparison with Black American, Mexican

American, and Native American peer movements, Japanese American—and more broadly, Asian American—movements remain less advanced in its demands for inclusion in school curriculums.

2.4 The Need for Research into Best Approaches to Incorporate Japanese American Studies into Social Studies Classes

Numerous empirical studies have underscored the effectiveness of using structured learning activities in teaching history about minorities to students.[26] However, little attention has been given specifically to such teaching at the high school level in social studies classes. Research indicates that incorporating reflective thinking into lessons about controversial issues involving different ethnic groups as an educational objective in high school not only enhances students' autonomy but also prepares them for successful lives and democratic citizenship.[27] Consequently, there is a pressing need for further research focusing on learning about minority conflicts in United States social studies classes at the high school level. This is crucial since the classroom can be an environment where students can get the most exposure to individuals who come from different minority groups.

In 2022, the State of Indiana mandated that social studies teachers incorporate the experiences of Asian American immigrant groups upon their arrival in the United States and the contributions that Asian Americans have made to American society into their curriculum.[28] When I conducted the pilot study in 2019, and still today, social studies textbooks have often failed to adequately address these topics, providing only minimal coverage or lacking meaningful details. For instance, in the McGraw-Hill Social Studies textbook, the information about the yellow peril is succinctly stated, "Although Japanese residents never amounted to more than 3 percent of the state's population, White Californians ranted about a new yellow peril and feared being drowned in an Asian sea."[29] The Bedford Social Studies textbook notes, "For example, the San Francisco school board, responding to nativist fears of a yellow peril, ordered the segregation of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students. Japan angrily protested."[30] Both the McGraw-Hill Social Studies textbook and St. Martin's Social Studies textbooks only touch briefly on the concept of a "new yellow peril" in reaction to Japanese immigration, without providing any meaningful explanations or addressing the existence of two distinct types of yellow peril ideologies during the early twentieth century, one directed against

Chinese Americans and the other directed against Japanese Americans.

The lack of comprehensive supplemental materials compounds the challenge, requiring schoolteachers to independently seek relevant information and examine deeper into these subjects. There are common misconceptions, such as the belief that the temporary internment of Japanese Americans after the attack on Pearl Harbor was solely for their safety and that of the United States.[31] Furthermore, it is crucial for students to understand that anti-Japanese sentiments had been deeply rooted in the Pacific West since the mid-1860s, and that for many Whites on the West Coast, the attack on Pearl Harbor provided a pretense for them to displace Japanese Americans from their land and property during World War II.[32]

In collaboration with colleagues, I developed a pilot research study to be conducted in an Indiana public high school social studies class to investigate the potential benefits of incorporating new methods for teaching Japanese American studies into the curriculum. In accordance with the Indiana Academic Standard, we created a supplemental module lesson, whose purpose was to reveal the history of racial injustice and racism targeting Japanese immigrants before introducing the issues related to the temporary internment of Japanese American citizens during World War II to the class. This lesson plan examines the widespread hatred of Japanese Americans among the White majority population along the West Coast both before and after the attack on Pearl Harbor. As discussed in Section 2.1 above, original documents offer valuable insights for understanding the historical period, so we incorporated contemporaneous West Coast newspapers as a teaching tool in the module. Using newspapers also underscored the role of the press in shaping public opinion.

The educational approach the pilot study employed seeks to educate students in an engaged manner about issues from the past so that they can connect them to current historical and political events and gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of American political policies on Japanese Americans and other minority groups in the United States more broadly. This new approach in American studies about Japanese immigrants and their descendants could help foster a better understanding for students about what it means to be an American.

2.5 The Rationale for Conducting the Pilot Research Study in Indiana

Prior to 1986, the Indiana Department of Education and most local Indiana school districts, known as school corporations in the state, did not

have much interest in Japan. However, in 1986, Subaru announced plans to build its first North American assembly plant in Lafayette, Indiana. This decision was influenced by several factors, including Indiana's central location, its excellent transportation network, and its favorable regulatory environment. When the Social Studies Proficiency Guide was re-written in 1986~87, the Indiana Department of Education and the General Assembly of the State of Indiana provided significant funding incentives to local public-school corporations to undertake initiatives to encourage the introduction of Japanese language, culture, and history courses in Indiana secondary schools.[33] With the backing of the state, the local school corporations began to create such courses. By early 1990, "A Progress Report to the Citizens of Indiana on Education" stated that there had been "[s]ignificant increases in high school student enrollment in Japanese language and culture classes."[34] In just four short years, Indiana's high school courses in Japanese language, culture, and history soared to fourth in the nation. Only Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii had more high schools teaching Japanese language and culture. *Fortune* magazine also reported in its October 1990 issue on nationwide interest in Indiana's language and culture programs.[35]This was a major accomplishment considering that Indiana is located in the Midwest, which is often seen as more geographically and culturally distant from Japan and less associated with focusing on East Asian languages or cultures as Pacific Rim states with larger Asian populations, such as California, Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii.

Indiana school corporations received federal grant money to improve the quality of instruction in Japanese programs which were deemed to be critical to the US economy, and Indiana also began hosting Japanese teachers to promote understanding about Japan throughout the state.[36] These Japanese teachers visited Indiana schools where Japanese language and culture were taught. In 1995, Toyota announced its decision to build a new manufacturing facility in Princeton, Indiana, and in 2006, Honda announced plans to construct a new manufacturing plant in Greensburg, Indiana. Japanese investment in Indiana, spearheaded by major automotive manufacturers like Subaru, Toyota, and Honda, as well as the corporate giant Hitachi, has significantly contributed to the state's economic and educational development. Even today, according to statistics from the Indiana Economic Development Corp., more than 300 Japanese companies operate across Indiana.[37] As a result, the Indiana Department of Education has several programs and initiatives in place to support and expand

Japanese education, driven by local schools, state policies, and support from local organizations.

3. The Pilot Research Study

3.1 Research Question

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate potential differences in academic achievement and the comprehension of what being an American means among high school students who were introduced to the historical portrayal of Japanese immigrants in West Coast newspapers prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent implementation of the temporary internment of Japanese American citizens during World War II. Consequently, the study sought to answer the following research question:

To what extent does the integration within the social studies curriculum of a supplemental module lesson addressing the concept of the Japanese economic yellow peril have an impact on academic achievement among US high school students?

3.2 Methodology

The Participants

This pilot study was conducted in an Indiana high school district with a sample size of 21 participants (n=21). It is generally recommended that the range for a pilot study is typically between 12 to 40 participants before proceeding to a larger-scale trial.[38] The chosen number of participants, 21, was considered sufficient for efficiently identifying potential problems with the supplemental module lesson. Striking a balance between cost and time efficiency, this pilot study aimed to uncover major problems that could inform subsequent, larger-scale studies. Thirteen males and eight females, with limited or no prior knowledge about the Japanese economic yellow peril, received instruction utilizing the supplemental module lesson.

A significant factor in selecting a high school in Indiana for the pilot study was the fact that Indiana has been a leader in supporting and expanding Japanese language, cultural, and history education programs. In addition, the target population of the study was Whites in the Midwest so that the pilot study could evaluate the effectiveness of the supplemental module about the Japanese economic yellow peril with students who were not Japanese American, other Asian American, or otherwise racial or ethnic

minorities and thus less likely as a whole to have prior understanding of the issues involved. Indiana is demographically 84.8% White, similar to the Midwest as a whole, which is approximately 82.6% White. The racial and ethnic composition of the high school's social studies class closely mirrors those demographics, with 85.7% of the class being White.[39] As explained more fully below in Section 3.5, developing a much larger follow-up research project with more diverse student populations from across the US, including the West and East Coasts, could yield more refined results and findings and additional insights.

After creating the supplemental module lesson, the author consulted five individuals: two social studies schoolteachers from the local district and three staff from the Indiana Department of Education. The schoolteachers together had more than 55 years of combined teaching experience. All consultants, well-versed in educational best practices, provided essential background information, including statewide curriculum regulations, test results data, and academic standards. Both schoolteachers reviewed the lesson plans for the supplemental module lesson, and the fieldwork was conducted in one of the teacher's classrooms from March 4-7, 2019. Students' selection for participation in the U.S. social studies program was based on the material's pertinence to their courses. Consent for participation in this study was sought and obtained from both students and schoolteachers.

The author developed the field test package, which included a four-page supplemental module on the Japanese yellow peril, as well as the pretest and posttest questions. Students completed two short-constructed response tests—an initial pretest and a subsequent posttest on the fourth day. After devoting the first day's class to the yellow peril supplemental module, students then studied topics such as the attack on Pearl Harbor, the issue of the temporary internment of Japanese Immigrants and Japanese American citizens, and the atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The objective was to assess achievement based on the class activities. Student participation in classroom activities was voluntary, and student responses were kept anonymous.

Instruments

In developing the supplemental module lesson for this pilot study, the author focused primarily on aligning with the requirements set by the Indiana Department of Education for schoolteachers and students engaged in multicultural education within the social studies classrooms.

Additionally, the supplemental module lesson drew inspiration from relevant social studies textbooks currently used in the students' course, ensuring alignment with both the Indiana Department of Education standards and those of the United States Department of Education.

The creation of the supplemental module lesson reading content and the complexity of language difficulty were designed to adhere to the recommendations provided by the Indiana Department of Education. A short-constructed response pretest and posttest were developed to enhance content validity. These tests, utilizing data from the United States Department of Education, the Indiana Department of Education government proficiency test database, and the teachers' exam database, were instrumental in establishing class equivalence. The short- constructed response pretest and posttest essay questions were designed to foster reflective thinking. They prompted students to identify cause and consequence relationships, infer information, and draw conclusions based on the supplemental module lesson. These questions were deliberately designed to avoid mere fact recall. Accordingly, the pre and posttest essay questions were appropriate instruments to measure the effectiveness of the supplemental module lesson.[40]

The short-constructed response questions were designed to require complex and abstract reflective thinking for students to earn high scores. However, partial credit could be awarded based on the quality of their responses. The supplemental module lesson concluded with a short-constructed response posttest, serving as an assessment to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the coursework. The objective of this approach was to assess the effectiveness of the supplemental module lesson, which encouraged reflective thinking and comprehension, as opposed to mere memorization.

Treatment Procedures

On the initial day of the study, students were introduced to the supplemental module content (based on the Indiana Department of Education recommended standard) that focused specifically on the Japanese yellow peril. The supplemental module lesson was distributed to students at the beginning of the class. At the start of the session, the schoolteacher outlined and specified the academic objectives, clarified tasks and goals, and provided an overview of the procedures for the learning activity.

A short-constructed response pretest was administered to evaluate students' prior knowledge of the subject. Following the pretest, a traditional

whole-class instruction approach was utilized for the first 10 minutes of class, characterized by textbook-centered and teacher- directed approaches. After the first 10 minutes of class, while the classroom maintained a quiet and orderly atmosphere, group interaction was encouraged, fostering student-centered discussions with the aim of achieving common goals for the class lesson. Students were actively encouraged to participate in discussions about introduced concepts, ask questions, summarize their understanding, and clarify each other's perspectives.

Students/Teachers' Tasks

Assuming the role of a facilitator, the teacher guided group discussions, provided relevant information, and intervened only when students required guidance in reaching the learning objectives. Students, on day two, returned to their regular textbook lessons, focusing on the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent political pressure on President Roosevelt to relocate 120,000 Japanese individuals, many of whom were American citizens, to inland internment camps despite lacking evidence of any threat. The instruction on the third day centered around the Pacific War, concluding with the atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, leading to the Japanese government's surrender.

Evaluation under the Criteria of the Indiana State Academic Writing Standard Assessment Consortium

On the last day, a short-constructed response posttest, derived from the supplemental module lesson, was administered to evaluate student achievement after the lesson. The test question centered around the statement made by US Army General John DeWitt, who oversaw the internment for the federal government: "A Jap's a Jap. It makes no difference whether the Jap is a citizen or not."[41] This question was modeled after a comparable examination created by both the Indiana Department of Education and the United States Department of Education. This framework enabled students to demonstrate their mastery of the coursework, which included the supplemental module lesson.

The pretest and posttest short-constructed responses were scored in accordance with the standards set forth by the Indiana Department of Education Academic Writing Standard Assessment Consortium. The academic writing consortium's criteria were categorized into three primary factors and sixteen specific areas to evaluate performance in the written responses for both the pretest and posttest. These criteria,

which encompassed evaluating all essential aspects of the writing task, emphasized assessing the students' ability to demonstrate an understanding of the lesson materials by explicitly referring to classroom activities as the basis for their answers, rather than focusing solely on spelling and grammatical correctness. Consequently, student-written responses were not penalized solely for grammatical errors, nor were they awarded high scores solely based on organizational quality. Raters evaluated each essay on a range of criteria, including treatment, focus, organization, correctness, and style, while taking into account their overall impression before assigning a score. The final score for each essay underwent two rounds of assessment and discussion by the raters to ensure consistency and accuracy in the assessment process. Evaluations and final scores of individual essays are not published here.

3.3 Supplemental Module Lesson: Short Constructed-response Writing

Subject: United States Social Studies
Question Type: Short-constructed response writing: Scored are graded using a rubric.
Constructed-response Questions:

Q1: Given your understanding of the historical and present circumstances of immigration in America, what is American identity?
Q2: How can immigration play a positive role in enhancing and enriching the cultural diversity of America?

Score and Description: Based on the Indiana Academic Writing Standard Assessment Consortium for the State of Indiana Department of Education.
Complete: (response)

To earn full credit, students must recognize that the United States has always been a nation shaped by immigration, which has enabled the country to become a global leader, benefiting from the infusion of diversity from the immigrants that motivate Americans to excel. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this immigration-driven diversity can sometimes lead to unwarranted fears and biases against newcomers. In addition, students should develop a deep understanding of historical issues, like the Japanese yellow peril, and link them to the historical and political narratives of the time. This connection will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between American political policies and their impacts, which extend beyond Japanese Americans to include various

minority groups across the United States. Additionally, it encourages reflection on the concept of the essence of being an American.

Partial: (response)

To earn partial credit, the students must provide a valid explanation for at least one significant reason or offer examples illustrating the positive or negative impacts of immigration. This might include discussing concerns about job loss due to increased competition, even though the response may need a more precise and comprehensive answer to the given question.

Inappropriate: (response)

Students will not earn points for their responses if they are incorrect, irrelevant, or inappropriate. The response must demonstrate a clear understanding of how immigration can yield both positive and negative effects.

A recognized response may include the following key points:

1. An acknowledgment that the United States has a long history as a nation of immigrants.
2. An acknowledgment that tensions related to racism and discrimination, making distinctions between those who arrived earlier and more recent arrivals immigrants.
3. A recognition that a significant source of friction revolves around concerns regarding job displacement due to increased competition.

Overall, immigrants play a vital role in propelling the United States to excel globally by bringing increased diversity and competition and by providing the driving force that motivates Americans to strive for excellence. However, these benefits can only be fully realized if internal divisions are addressed and if the American people can overcome their economic and racial prejudices against immigrants.

Student Response/Score and Description

High Proficiency: Student Responses Example #1

"As for the first question, I think that American identity is a combination of different cultures, customs, and perspectives that are influenced by the different groups of immigrants who came to the United States searching for the American Dream. This is why I think America is considered to be one of the best places to live in the world.

One good point about immigration is that because the different groups of people are from diverse backgrounds, immigration plays a positive role by introducing new ideas and perspectives to the nation. This is why America has such high innovation and economic growth. A bad point is job competition and racism and bias against a group because of

misunderstanding about the culture or costume and of course, they look and talk differently. Also, immigrations who come from poor countries need help to settle in America and this costs a lot of money and has a negative effect on public funding."

Score and Description:

In this example, the student response excels in providing a detailed and comprehensive explanation of how immigration can impact American society. The inclusion of specific examples effectively illustrates both the positive and negative aspects of immigrants' contributions, so they received full credit.

At Proficiency Response: Student Responses Example #2

"The US has always been a country of immigrants. However, that has come with racism+discrimination by those that arrived before vs. those arriving after. A large part of this friction has focused on loss of employment due to competition. The racism was real, but often grounded in financial fear. However, immigration has leads to a diverse, and competitive, drive Americans to do+be better… if they can overcome their financial+racist fear of immigrants."

Score and Description:

In this example, the student responses were awarded partial credit for indicating that immigration can bring positive contributions, such as enriching American culture, while also acknowledging that immigrants can cause tension because of job competition, leading to issues of racism. However, the initial sentence in the response, "The US has always been a country of immigrants." remains excessively unclear and fails to address the question.

Below Proficiency or Inappropriate: Student Response Example #3

"Americans have unique heritage they can come from variety of cultures." and

"They should avoid passing stereotypes and falsehoods. Should tell good things about immigrants (will do 'dirty' jobs, etc.)"

and

"We think whites are best."

Score and Description:

The first response was not credited as it did not express what American identity is in a clear and effective way. The second response was not credited as it only focused on a single immigrant group. The third response completely sidestepped the question.

3.4 Data Analysis and Results

In order to examine the research question regarding the equality of the pretest (M=4.81, SD=2.58) and performance scores (M=6.29, SD=2.10) in the supplemental module lesson, a dependent sample t-test was conducted. Before proceeding with the analysis, an assessment of the normal distribution assumption for the difference scores was conducted. This assumption was deemed valid, as the estimated skewness and kurtosis levels were discovered to be −.15 and −.47, respectively. These values were within the acceptable limits for a t-test, as indicated by the criteria established by Posten (1984)[42] (skew <|2.0| and kurtosis <|9.0|). It is worth noting that there is a significant positive correlation relationship between the two conditions, determined to be $r(19)=0.82$, $p<0.05$, indicating that the scenario is well-suited for applying a dependent sample t-test. The null hypothesis, which suggested that there was no significant difference in the mean student test score levels of the students who received lessons from the supplemental module lesson, is rejected, t (40)=2.02, p<.05. Hence, the posttest mean exhibited a statistically significant increase compared to the pretest mean. Cohen's d was calculated to be .63, indicating a medium effect size in accordance with Cohen's (1992) guidelines.[43] In accordance with Loftus & Masson's (1994) guidelines,[44] Figure 1 presents a graphical representation of the means and adjusted 95 percent confidence intervals.

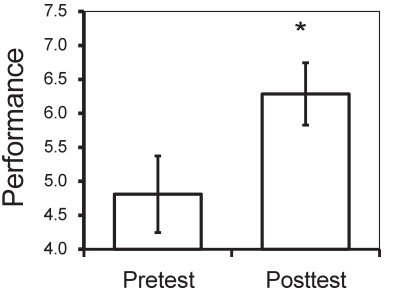

Fig. 1. Data is presented as mean±SD. *Performance scores and 95% C.I.s, p<.05 for comparison of Pre/Posttest conditions. Data are presented as mean±SD. Achievement Results (n=21)

Test Scores and Results

To investigate the genuine correlation between students' performance on the supplemental module lesson short-constructed response pretest and posttest, the academic performance and learning scores from the Indiana Academic Standard database were used as a control group for Indiana students. This approach aimed to ensure comparability between the pretest and posttest groups, offering a more comprehensive understanding of what students gained from the supplemental module lesson in relation to their knowledge and abilities compared to other students across the State of

Indiana. Group-level computations of students' short-constructed response pretest and posttest results were conducted, and these group scores were subsequently compared with the scores obtained from the database of the Department of Education.

The determination of the mean scores involved analyzing the percentage of students achieving proficiency in the short-constructed response at the state level. This evaluation scale, divided into two segments, assessed whether each student performed at a "Proficient" or "Below Proficient" level. The Indiana Department of Education achievement levels for US history are categorized into two percentiles: the lower-performing group (0 to 69th) and the higher-performing group (from 70th). According to the Indiana Department of Education standards, a mean test score of 70 percent or above is deemed "Proficient." In comparison, any score of 69 percent or below is considered "Below Proficient or Inappropriate." This clear categorization allows for a more nuanced understanding of student performance.

The achievement results from the Indiana Academic Standard data show that, 22.6 percent ($n=1089$), $p<.05$ of students achieved proficiency level or higher.[45] In the case of students who participated in the pilot study, 33.3 percent ($n=21$), $p<.05$, performed at or above the proficient level, as detailed in Figure 2. This study reveals a noteworthy increase of 10.7 percent compared to Indiana's overall assessment scores after implementing the supplemental module lesson. These findings imply that students who participate in the supplemental module lesson have a modest enhancement

Achievement Results- The proportion of students achieving proficiency in social studies is defined as those scoring 70 percent or higher.	
Local School Students	**Posttest 33.3%**
Exam Results	**(n = 21), p < .05**
State of Indiana	**Indiana Students 22.6%**
Total Students	**(n = 1089), p < .05**

Fig. 2. Indiana Academic Standard exam results compared to local district students' exam results

in the classroom, demonstrating a statistically significant impact on students who underwent the supplemental module lesson.

A plausible explanation for the efficacy of learning is associated with students actively participating in the learning process through consistent and meaningful verbalization tasks. Various types of interaction were observed, such as extensive interaction, encompassing actions such as encouragement, explanation, clarification, probing, questioning, and summarization. Students also demonstrated intensive interaction through focused behavior, high motivation levels, and face-to-face communication postures while interacting with the teacher during the learning process.[46] This approach is anticipated to enhance learning by boosting students' effort, interest, and motivation. By promoting active student participation, fostering collaborative learning, and encouraging students to reflect on their interactions with peers and contemplate the kind of society to which they aspire to contribute.[47]

3.5 Limitations

The study has two primary limitations. First, although the study's significant findings support the effectiveness of this new educational approach in American studies, the results cannot be considered conclusive due to the pilot study's format and the limited sample size of 21 participants. However, a pilot study is a small-scale preliminary study that aims to evaluate the feasibility, validity, and reliability of a research design, method, or intervention. Pilot studies help improve research questions, identify potential problems, and assess the resources and risks associated with a larger study. Therefore, pilot studies are not intended to be conclusive or definitive; they are only a preparatory step for more comprehensive and rigorous research approaches.[48]

Nevertheless, the results above highlight significant contributions to social studies education by emphasizing the importance of integrating the history of the Japanese yellow peril ideology and the experiences of Japanese Americans into the curriculum. These insights can help students understand the complexities of racism and its lasting impacts on U.S. society. Expanding this study into a full-scale research project with a larger, more diverse sample and comparing it with data from other regions of the US, such as the West Coast and East Coast, could yield more meaningful and generalizable results and findings, which, in turn, could help educators foster more informed and empathetic students capable of critically engaging

with diverse historical and social issues.

Second, due to COVID-19, the Indiana Department of Education granted schools an exemption from the mandatory annual assessment for the 2019 school year. As a result, participation in the assessments was voluntary. The data provided by the Indiana Department of Education in this study is not a comprehensive assessment and should be approached with care in its interpretation.

Despite the limitations of our research, the knowledge gained from this project contributes to the body of literature investigating the efficacy of collaborative learning. We hope these insights encourage teachers to persist in examining and documenting the implications of incorporating the lesson about the Japanese yellow peril in their classes. Moreover, the study indicates that implementing the supplemental module lesson more broadly could have a statistically significant beneficial effect for high school students, which would thereby instill confidence in the potential of this new approach in American studies.

4. Conclusions

The research presented above makes a significant contribution to the academic field of social studies education by highlighting the intricate connections between the history of racism and ethnocentrism and its lingering impact on contemporary education. Although a pilot study, the research suggests that including the detailed accounts of the experiences of the Issei and their descendants, particularly through the lens of the Japanese yellow peril, provides a valuable opportunity to expand high school social studies curriculums to incorporate a more comprehensive understanding of racial dynamics in the United States. This includes the critical necessity to examine yellow peril ideology within the context of US history, emphasizing the ways in which fear and xenophobia shaped national policies and social attitudes. The racism and discrimination faced by Japanese Americans underscore the importance of examining these issues not only historically but also in terms of their ongoing relevance. Incorporating these narratives into educational reforms, particularly through social studies programs, empowers students to critically analyze the socio-political forces that have perpetuated racism, and thereby fosters a more informed and empathetic student body.

Furthermore, the research begins to address a significant gap in the American high school social studies curriculum by providing students

with an engaging education about the Japanese yellow peril, employing the use of contemporaneous West Coast newspapers' portrayal of the Issei during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The effectiveness of the supplemental module lesson in the pilot study provides preliminary evidence demonstrating of its capacity to enhance academic performance and facilitate discussions on controversial topics, such as systemic racism, discriminatory practices, and the misuse of the Pearl Harbor attack as a pretense for the Japanese American internment. If research were to bear out the results of the pilot study, it would provide concrete evidence to encourage educators to adopt this new approach in American studies by delivering comprehensive instruction about early Japanese immigrants and the Japanese yellow peril before introducing topics such as the internment. By integrating these lessons, educators could improve student achievement and foster a deeper understanding of historical injustices and their impact on current social dynamics.

In conclusion, this pilot study points to the enormous potential benefits of teaching about the historical treatment of Japanese immigrants and the role of the press in shaping public opinion in social studies classes to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and multicultural student population. The insights gained from this historical background could serve as an effective instructional approach, aligned with the goals of the Indiana Department of Education and similar agencies in other states, to develop knowledgeable and responsible students who can actively participate in a multicultural society. By incorporating lessons on the Japanese yellow peril ideology and its broader implications, educators could help students connect historical issues to contemporary political events, thereby fostering a deeper appreciation for the connections between United States policies and their impacts on Japanese Americans.

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