

## LOCAL HISTORY AS TEACHERS' CURRICULAR SPACE FOR PROMOTING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THAI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Wasan Sapphasuk<sup>1</sup>, Omsin Jatuporn<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

This paper focuses on how secondary social studies teachers implement local history education and their creation of a curricular space for promoting active citizenship in secondary school students. By drawing broadly on postmodern perspectives on curriculum and pedagogy, local history education under the sphere of social studies curriculum was examined through the lens of the instructional paradigm in order to challenge some of our assumptions about curriculum design. The achievement and employment of various awarenesses are emphasized in postmodern curriculum theory which supports the study of local history from multiple perspectives and allows teachers to take advantages of multiple local contexts found in the school areas. Thus, the results revealed that the teachers represented their role as curriculum leader and demonstrate sophisticated understandings of history education. They designed lessons around local history topics and included multiple perspectives with hope their students would be equipped with critical worldviews. In classroom practices, they had strategies to teach local history in meaningful, contextualized and challenging contexts, some planned extensive lessons to address multiple perspectives to local history throughout their curriculum. Insights gained have shed light that teachers have a curricular space for promoting active citizenship through local history education in social studies classrooms.

Key words: Social studies, Local history, Citizenship education, Curricular space

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Local history education is stipulated in the scope of history standards and grade level indicators under the umbrella of national history prescribed in the social studies curriculum of Thailand's national curriculum. The goal of local history education is therefore to promote an understanding of our past and preserving our cultural heritage. It could also be expected to make the learning experiences more interesting, authentic and contextualized for students (Rittidet, 2011; Sasiwongsaroj, 2013). Moreover, it also has

the advantage of broadening the curriculum by allowing for more diverse perspectives to be included within it by shifting history teaching from national and political history to social and cultural history which situated in the places where students spent their lives (Marino & Crocco, 2012).

Despite the potentialities emerged from the inclusion of local history into the school curriculum and teaching, local history education is indeed one of controversial complicated issues which social studies scholars have been concerned and criticized about the goal of studying local history and the concept of what

---

<sup>1</sup>Wasan Sapphasuk is currently pursuing Doctor of Philosophy in Multicultural Education at Chiangmai University, Thailand. His main interests include curriculum studies, critical multicultural education and social studies education, E-mail: wasan\_sapphasuk@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Omsin Jatuporn is currently working as a lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations and Development at Chiangmai University, Thailand. His main interests include critical curriculum studies, cultural studies and cultural politics in education, E-mail: omsin.j@cmu.ac.th

Received: June 5, 2019; Revised: July 12, 2019; Accepted: July 25, 2019

knowledge in the curriculum should be addressed. This is because history education has been perceived as a venue for citizenship education; this goal is challenged by controversial debates in many countries around the world (Kinloch, 2001). The development of citizenship cannot be achieved merely by having a separate unit on the subject or by devoting more time to a study of the political organizations, although this is both necessary and directly helpful (Phillips, 2003). What is desirable in addition is the presentation of lessons, teaching methods as well as materials in social studies education that will help to develop in young citizens a mental horizon that extends beyond their own community, the country and the region (Levstik, 1997). Therefore, local history education is no exception. It might be stated that local history teaching and learning under the social studies curriculum has been influenced by the discourse of globalization, global citizenship education as well as the spirits of multicultural education. These influxes raise the issues of what history teachers can provide for students that will empower them not only to understand and engage the world around them but also to exercise to kind of courage needed to change wider social reality when necessary. The important issue is how history as a school subject can be used to enable students to understand and appreciate the local and global communities (Brophy & Van Sledright, 1997; Harris & Rae, 2006). In light of this, the social studies scholars have proposed that young students should “practice” history rather than simply learn about history from textbooks and “do” history in K-12 classrooms (Barton, 2008; Levstik & Barton, 2011). In addition, history reform groups have also advocated that local history teaching and learning should promote citizenship and social responsibilities which contributed to the goal of social studies curriculum (Danker, 2003; Levstik, 1997). Even though recent research reports have not yet provided any

clear evidences and empirical data about the relationship between local history education and citizenship education, leading social studies scholars pointed out that meaningful history lessons and local history education could contribute towards active citizenship, and historical knowledge and skills can help students become active citizens (Danker, 2001; Marino & Crocco, 2012).

Current scholarship in social studies and history education suggests that the last stage in implementing local history education for developing active citizenship requires shifting our attention from what is being taught to how history is being taught in public schools (Journell, 2011). In addition, local history education allows teachers to take advantages of the multiple local contexts found in the areas which public schools are located since students come to classrooms with their personal histories, and many of their experiences may stand in contrast with the major historical narrative appeared in their textbooks and school curriculum. Students and teachers engaging with multiple narratives in history classrooms can be widely seen in Anglo-American education contexts (Bernhardt, 2009). Such classrooms would allow for evidence-based discussions of beliefs, foster tolerance for different perspectives, and create chances for students to challenge traditional point of views (Englund, 2006).

Taking the current situation of mainstream history education in Thailand into account and with a mixture of nationalistic and royal-nationalistic ideology immersed within socio-political construction of hegemonic knowledge, reforming social studies curriculum and pedagogy for history education in Thailand is, inevitably, a contentious task. In addition, people who critically challenge the status quo will be labelled as non-patriot for the nation, religion and monarchy. However, it is imperative for educators to develop curriculum and pedagogical practices with multiple and pluralistic

perspectives of the past and present (Chen, 2008). In light of this, social studies scholars propose that teachers could only achieve open classroom instruction if they are willingly to adjust their authority role as knowledge transmitters and shift to that of curricular-instructional gatekeepers as agents responsible for teaching local history within a context of national history curriculum perpetuated by royal-nationalist ideology (Gergen, 1995; Thornton, 1991).

Having discussed the needs for creating a curricular space in the local history classrooms, teachers thus need to address and deal with these issues in the level of curricular decision-making and classroom practices. A curricular space in classroom is very important for teachers (Bernhardt, 2009; Englund, 2006) because this public space is mediated for addressing the multiple perspectives in history as well as the contemporary discourses in history education that shift beyond the language of nation-building by extending the connections between education and the changing role of the nation-state in a globalized world (Phillips, 2003). In addition, I argue for a more representative ethos of multiple narratives which focus the pluralistic nature of Thai historiography. Thus, citizenship as a type of social and public space in which “knowledge, meanings and identities are discursively shaped” (Pinson, 2007, p. 354) is conceptualized in this sense and competing narratives have the potential to act as greater unifying agents than assimilating behind one agreed upon a version of hegemonic historical narrative (Journell, 2011). Henceforth, I decide to find out what social studies teachers in public secondary school settings are doing to address the local history education and their role as curriculum leader who can demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of education as a political and social enterprise and be cognizant of the ideologies, biases, political agendas and hegemonies affecting what is taught, how it is taught and by whom it is taught in every classroom and have

substantial spaces for promoting active citizenship through local history education in Thai social studies classrooms.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objectives of this study are to figure out how secondary social studies teachers implement local history education and their creation of a curricular space for promoting active citizenship in secondary school students. More specifically, this study aims to address the following questions:

1) How do teachers’ own beliefs and practices about local history influence their social studies curriculum and classroom practices?

2) How do teachers create a curricular space in order to build active citizenship through local history education in social studies classrooms?

### Theoretical Framework

This section explains the epistemological framework underpinning this approach. I am theoretically informed by the postmodern curriculum theory and the conjunction with local history education. In light of this, postmodern curriculum theory (Doll, 1993) and local history education will be briefly discussed. Insights gained from my review of the literature in these scholarships are integral to the overall research project.

#### Postmodern Curriculum Theory and Local History Education

Similar to another field in social studies education, local history could be viewed and studied from multiple perspectives. Therefore, this premise has led to various methods for approaching local history. In light of this, the meaning and scope of local history described in research reports in Thailand could be defined as the study of the past of some significant local units, developing as a community, in its context and compared with such other units (Sasiwongsaroj,

2013). Local history in this sense is considered as the traditional concept of local history which limits to illustrating important national events in particular locality or local associations with nationally important people (Aktekin, 2010). In this research context, local history has achieved far higher status. I employ the concept of local history from Carol Kammen's *On Doing Local History* to scope the definition of local history (Kammen, 2003). She defined the meaning of local history at first by explaining that local history is the study of past events, or of people or groups, in a given geographic area and then later on she expanded the meaning of local history which includes the study based on a wide variety of documentary evidences and places in a comparative context that should be both regional and national (Kammen, 1995). Such study ought to be accomplished by a historian using methods appropriate to the topic under consideration while following general rules of historical inquiry: open mindedness, honesty, accountability and accuracy. More significantly, the study of local history has necessitated revisions of universal interpretations of the past, challenged stereotypes and meta-narratives, offered insights into the contributions and participation of small communities in large events (Aktekin, 2010; Kammen, 2003).

In order to meaningfully link local history education with public schools, there is perhaps no more central structural element than curriculum, and if we are to transform our educational institutions to be truly learner-centered, then we must address curriculum design. Thus, I decide to examine the social studies curriculum through the lens of the instructional paradigm in order to challenge some of our assumptions about curriculum design. I employ postmodern curriculum theory as an organizing principle for a curriculum design (Slattery, 2006) based on the connectedness of students and teacher as an open system whose impetus is disturbed leading to chaos which is considered as the

fertile space welcoming the possibility to change our thinking and look at a paradox understanding that contains its own solutions (Varbelow, 2012).

Based on postmodern curriculum theory, scholars provoke thoughts and generate concerns about existing curricular practices and assumptions rather than provide a how-to framework for curriculum inquiry (Slattery, 2006) and the achievement and employment of multiple awarenesses are emphasized (Doll, 1993). Therefore, local history could be viewed and studied from postmodern perspectives which have shifted from an acceptance of one story to the recognition that events have multiple interpretations depending on the point of view of the participants. Curriculum design seen from the postmodern perspective is a significant departure from the traditional conception of curriculum as dispensing a single reality or perspective of knowledge to learners. However, this kind of perspective has regularly been argued by critics who held the assumptions of traditional curriculum. As Levstik (1997) notes, encouraging students to view history from many different perspectives is not simple. This approach can spark resistance from parents and the general public who supported facts and evidence-based social studies education. Danker (2003) also noted that focusing on the local community is one way to disarm the skeptics, because the focus on local events and the contributions of local history to the narrative of the nation has highlighted the significance of local history in the social studies curriculum and becomes an active way for promoting citizenship education.

### 3. METHODS

In this study, I employed a case study design (Stake, 1995) blended with ethnographic methods of inquiry – non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, document and artifacts analysis – to reveal and analyze how secondary

social studies teachers implement local history education and their creation of a curricular space for promoting active citizenship in secondary school students, both in terms of what they thought and said about it and in terms of their real pedagogical practices. The study focused on how teachers' practices in local history education were related to their own beliefs and practices about teaching and learning local history. The research design was emergent, with theory thoroughly grounded in the data. Data collection and analysis proceeded simultaneously.

During 5 months of ethnographic research that took place between the academic years of 2014 to 2015, I worked with five participants, who taught in five different public secondary schools which are under the jurisdiction of the Office of Basic Education Commission, the Ministry of Education in Thailand. Suphat, one of the participant teachers, was the only social studies teacher I knew in a professional context, as his undergraduate friend at the same teacher education program at a public university in Thailand. From his recommendations, I selected the teachers who stood out for their commitment to issues of social constructivist pedagogy and citizenship education. Participant's backgrounds and professional teaching experiences are relatively varied, as some are from traditional teacher education programs while others are recently graduated from teacher education programs that are specially designed to equip pre-service teachers with critical and social-justice oriented approach.

The use of non-participant observation or observer as participant was one of ethnographic techniques I used in addressing teachers' own beliefs and practices about teaching and learning local history. Glesne (1998) defined non-participant observation as the second point of participant observation that ranges across a continuum from mostly observation to mostly participation. Situating my role as a non-participant

observer, I remained primarily an observer but had some interaction with study participants. I interacted with students and teachers, but for a semester I was primarily an observer, taking notes from the back of the classroom. I did not teach; give advice; or assist teachers, students, or administrators.

The context of the study affected my position on the participant observer role because I am not secondary school social studies or history teacher who has expertise in both history contents knowledge and pedagogy. I could never, without more deception than I could justify, be full participant in my study of how secondary social studies teachers implement local history education and their creation of a curricular space for promoting active citizenship in secondary school students. However, in order to maintain the dependability of my research, I had informal conversations ranged from 40 minutes to 50 minutes with participant teachers outside regular class schedule to strengthen my interview findings and asked participants to elaborate on their views of local history education in a writing journal to reflect their ideal pedagogy. All interviews were recorded in Thai; I then transcribed and translated them into English. I also kept systematic notes, carefully-labeled transcriptions and extensive coding lists.

From the data, I identified themes which I refer to as processes. In this regard, process denotes dynamic, living and non-static entities and process has both a beginning and an end. Grounded in this notion and postmodern perspective taking, curriculum can be viewed as an educational path that leads students toward a particular conception of the good life – a fact that educators engaged in curriculum and pedagogical work may overlook. Educators may not be critically aware of the deep-seated educational beliefs that inform their practices or may lack a conscious moral compass for their work (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000). I utilized the processes

to construct the metaphors for teaching and learning. As the finding in the following sections presents, the metaphors for teaching and learning represents how secondary social studies teachers implement local history education and their creation of a curricular space for promoting active citizenship in students.

#### **4. FINDINGS**

The findings of this study indicated that teachers' own beliefs and practices in local history did influence what and how they taught local history under the social studies curriculum and classroom practices. Furthermore, teachers had strategies to teach local history in more meaningful, contextualized and challenging contexts, and some planned extensive lessons to address local history based on critical perspectives throughout their curriculum. In order to discuss the ways in which the participant teachers implement local history education and their creation of a curricular space for promoting active citizenship in secondary school students, I borrowed the metaphors for teaching and learning to discuss the results of the study. The metaphors for teaching and learning were used to talk about issues concerning teachers, students and members of the public as well as broader issues in education. In other words, this kind of metaphor focused on teachers and students, curriculum, teaching, assessment and other aspects of schooling and education.

In this research, the three clusters of metaphors I will explore in descriptive details included transmission, facilitation and catalyst metaphors. Badley and Hollabaugh (2012) stated that the transmission was the dominant class of metaphors for teaching and learning while educators and teachers used the language of facilitation, guidance and coaching to inspire teaching and learning. Students will take responsibility of their own learning and teachers will provide guidance when needed. Finally, the catalyst metaphor

suggests that students will learn best when facing cognitive dissonance, and where the teacher's job is to create the dissonance.

#### **Transmission Metaphor for Teaching and Learning**

Transmission metaphor represents traditional scenes of students sitting in rows with desk in front of them as well as one teacher lecturing at in front of the class. The knowledge from the teacher will pass down to the students. Even though contemporary discourse in curriculum and teaching is shifted from "teacher-centered" to "learner or student-centered" and the transmission metaphor carries strong negative connotations for some, teaching by lecture, rote learning and memorization are still necessary for some forms of curricular and school knowledge. While the majority of curriculum practices shared in the interviews could not clearly categorize into this metaphor, few planned lessons and teaching methods used by the participants could be classified into this category.

During one lesson, Worawan, one of the social studies teachers who taught local history, used the film "The legend of Suriyothai" which portrayed the life of a female historic figure battling on the elephant in front of the Burmese army and sacrificed herself to save the life of king Maha Chakkraphat and the Siamese kingdom, as a way to transmit what female should do for her husband and for the sake of peaceful happiness of others and society. In another lesson, she took students on bicycle around the historic sites including temples, miniature stupas, Buddha images as well as old buildings and pointed out in such a way that students would internalize the great stories of the kings, forefathers and noblemen in the ancient Siamese kingdom. These heroic figures had fought against the invasion of the neighboring kingdoms such as Myanmar or Burma and Cambodia or Khmer who were considered as the enemy of the nation at that time. The teacher also further elaborated about the

contribution of these national heroes towards the growth and prosperity for the country today.

Even though the delivery of knowledge or information in both teaching and learning situation was considered as “the transmission of knowledge” directly and intentionally to students, both lessons still incorporated alternative methods to the traditional classroom metaphor. She used authentic materials such as historic films, places and objects to engage students’ learning and motivation. Case studies of important figures in national history such as King Chulalongkorn and the young princes who later on became the supreme ruler of modern government system were also brought to discuss about their contribution to the country and national policies and its consequences upon modern Thailand. Some topics of national history and local history in which periods, peoples, places as well as settings were difficult for students to make the connection, so the teacher, as clearly demonstrated in this case, is the powerful vehicle to provide the meaningful contexts for learning which relied heavily on the constructed imagination (Mukdawijitra, 2013). In terms of the significance of students’ historical understanding, she noted that “*learning history is an ongoing process in which children construct historical meaning the same way they construct meaning when they read and write. They make sense of whole text by devising and confirming predictions and they construct historical understanding by placing events and ideas into a meaningful context*”.

Considering this case into account, the transmission of knowledge connotes the pedagogical approach in a way that direct or lecture-based teaching is the major pedagogy to teach history, focusing on facts such as names, dates and places. However, Worawan used an alternative pedagogy as she realized that lecturing and debriefing about the situations should be meaningfully addressed but that lecturing about history is not effective.

## **Facilitation Metaphor for Teaching and Learning**

Several of the lessons planned purposefully by teachers fall under the facilitation or guidance metaphor. Badley and Hallobaugh (2012) describe situations where learning comes primarily from within students but teachers seek to put in place optimal conditions for that learning like those included in facilitation metaphor. Three participant teachers designed individual lessons or units around local history topics and included critical perspectives with hope their students will be equipped with critical worldviews based on local history and contexts.

For example, the local history lessons in history class of Rattana revolved around these issues. She designed meaningful learning activities that help students understand local history from multiple perspectives. In light of this, after a day of study visit to historical sites and old buildings in a nearby local community and were assigned to conduct project-based local history based on students’ interest, they later came back to school in the afternoon. On the next day, oral history technique was used as curricular tool for obtaining multi-dimensional perspective of history. Rattana demonstrated an insightful understanding of the study of local history by using oral history interview. She stated that oral history is social by nature. It is the history from the bottom up and conferred importance to the lives of everyday people and their experiences. In her lesson, she explained to students that ordinary people have histories and personal narratives waiting to be told. Students also have their own histories. Project-based local history helped students develop a more positive-self image through personal empowerment.

Rattana organized the study visit and meaningful experiences for her students, creating a space in which they could directly experience another perspectives based on political and socio-cultural diversity and began to develop

broader views of history and how history of “others” exist in the local community (Noel & Colopy, 2006). She commented that “*in the history classroom, local history provides students the opportunity to travel to other places to encounter people of other multicultural cultures which are embedded in local community such as Chinese and Muslims. It is the trip that make history fascinating and intriguing and take students to different places to meet people they might never have an opportunity to meet in their lives. Taking students on this journey means getting their attention and help them develop a global perspective. Such a perspective helps them develop a sense of being a citizen in the community, the country and the world.*” If students could not get into that fundamental understanding, it would have been impossible to discuss the history and that function to reproduce social injustices in our society.

Other than facilitating authentic learning activities, designed to build historical understanding in her students, Rattana tried to cultivate historical empathy in her students (Levstik & Barton, 2011). In so doing, she pointed out that history can be studied and interpreted by taking various perspectives. She introduced students to Thai historians and their critical perspectives and philosophical arguments about Thai historiography. In addition, she assigned students to do oral history projects and provided supplementary readings in local history to add concepts about oral history in the classroom (Aktekin, 2010). Rattana described her own beliefs and practices about history education as follows:

*“I can see that many students were interested in oral history project assigned to inquire local and community history. These students have been staying in this community since they were young but they knew a few history of their community as well as the story of local people. I assigned them to interview veterans in their community for their social studies class as*

*part of the veteran history project. Students worked in groups with a community mentor to interview, transcribe and create a veteran approved oral history of their experience in the World War II. In connection with their writing, they also studied the history of different wars in class. The study of the war became something they could connect to through their connection with veterans who had lived it. I could see that this project created pride in students for the academic work they were doing. I could see a sense of ownership and I was sure that students took great care of anything a community member shared with them which were knowledge or artifacts for their projects.”*

Rattana meaningfully provided many opportunities for her students to develop broader perspectives of people and contexts in history as well as to help students mediate knowledge of national history and local history together. She facilitated her students, but allowed them space, and the experience itself appears to be more powerful than a formal lecture could be. This emphasis in her teaching is directly related to her past experiences in northeastern village when she was studying in college of teacher education. She witnessed a community where the relationship between the elderly people and younger generations were significantly bound together by sharing the same local history and oral traditions, and the impact of these experiences was reflected meaningfully throughout her social studies curriculum.

Suphat, another participant, also infused teaching about local history and historical empathy into many of his Thai history learning units. He used printed materials such as pictures, newspapers, essays and historical archives and unprinted materials including videos and films to help students grasp some of the complicated ideas about history. He designed his history lessons by allowing students to evaluate photos, artifacts and maps from the local community that illustrated change over



time. The concept of change was observed in various perspectives including businesses, architectures, physical features, education, transportation, employment, technology and religion (National Center for History in the Schools, 1994). He had students identified and described the changes regarding to various characteristics of the local community. Then he connected that idea to historical thinking and skills by providing his students direct learning experience and facilitated a discussion that allowed students to think historically about the relationship among the events and proceeded to conclusion (Danker, 2001).

In his Siamese revolution and progressive era units, he discussed how people and local government organizations were developed to address the local matters and issues during the Siamese revolution. Students were given the opportunity to research the public health organization, which can be traced back to its historical establishment in the 1840s, to see what this organization was and contributed to the past and contemporary society. This place has its significance in Thai history because Dan Beach Bradley, an American missionary, had introduced important improvements into the country especially in terms of health services.

Suphat, together with his colleague specializing in Thai history, had given brief information about this place. They explained that Siam at that time was subject to many superstitions and practiced traditional medicine which had little or no scientific foundation. Dr. Bradley was allowed by the king to inoculate people against smallpox. Once he had proven its success, the king had him inoculate all the personnel of the civil service. It marked the introduction of public health methods to the nation. Dr. Bradley performed the first modern surgery in Siam and established leper colonies. He constantly advocated reforms and introduced western sciences and technology for the benefits of Siamese people during that time. Then Suphat asked students questions such as “Does that give

you a thought about what you are living healthy today? He further challenged them, “What are the ways you can help people in our society as you are a Thai citizen?” He then pointed out that Dr. Bradley, as a doctor, had opened the possibility of Thai public health that truly makes a difference.

He also designed experiential-based lessons, such as during the World War II and the Depression curriculum unit. Students were asked to go out without certain things such as snacks in between meals or communication technology for a few days. He explained that, during that era, the deprivation of basic necessities for living was due to the great depression caused by the World War II and therefore people had to sustain their lives by helping one another based on their living basis. In so doing, Suphat not only wanted them to consider what it is like to go without, but also to build character in helping students learn how to deal with not having everything they wanted. He challenged his students by asking the questions, “Can you actually find ways to live under the shortage?” and “What did you learn from this situation and how can you apply to use in your daily life? Based on the interview, he hoped that students will find some joy in simplicity and discover that face-to-face relationships and real conversation might be more significant than virtual relationship appeared in online communications. Suphat himself grew up in a single-parent home and lived in the very poor condition, just above the poverty line. He faced the possibility of being homeless because his mother, as a traditional farmer, could not afford to send him for formal schooling; therefore it is not surprising that many of his local history curriculum units help students understand how local history contributed to the promotion of students’ citizenship understanding and the study of local history can help us see the possible solutions to the contemporary problems.

Clearly, Rattana and Suphat purposefully guide students to discover local history from a variety of perspectives,

and about cultivating students' citizenship understanding. It is interesting to note that what both participant teachers have emphasized is not only problem-solving and critical-thinking skills but also social studies literacy (Hirsch, 1987). Social studies literacy derives from the notion of cultural literacy which is broad in scope, goes beyond the delivery of information, and does not pit one area of study against the other. It attempts to achieve academic and civic literacy. In this aspect, social studies literacy is not confined to specific subjects such as geography, civics or history but is learned within global and multicultural context of thematic integrated studies. Taking students on an issue around the Siamese history in modern era and the World War II helps them not only examine their own locality but address the issue of place in history. This is a cause and effect relationship that local history learning does not take place in isolation from socio-cultural and historical contexts of the nation (Danker, 2003; Marino & Crocco, 2012).

Taking social studies literacy into account, Nirada, another participant teacher, also designs a smaller, but purposeful lesson designed to help facilitate students' historical thinking about the World War II and its consequences toward humans by citing an example of the bridge on the river Kwai context in her history class.

In her history class, she managed the class in a way that students did an exercise on what did the world and Thailand look like when facing the consequences of the World War II. Then they watched a film which depicted the story relating to the construction of the river Kwai railway. The film narrated that the railway was built during the World War II following the Japanese army's plan to facilitate the transport of provisions and strategic weapons from Thailand to Burma. Students learned that the railway, which has come to be known as the railway of death, claimed the lives of nearly thirty thousand prisoners of war. They were used as

construction workers, and almost all perished from starvation and malaria. Students started having a conversation about the consequences of the World War II which destroyed the lives of humans involved in situations both directly and indirectly, and regardless of their races, religions and cultures. They eventually realized that they could not change the history and thus learning history would be valuable lessons for living in the diverse society which various perspectives, beliefs or ideologies must be fairly treated and acknowledged. Students agreed that history itself could not make money, so it should have been connected with the tourism industry. The fact that Kanchanaburi province as the provincial border on the west side of Thailand and the Burma and its well-known historical sites has been attracting a large number of Thai and foreign tourists to visit Kanchanaburi for commemorating the construction of the railway of death and the bridge of river Kwai.

This activity opened the dialogue for Nirada's students to consider what important events in world history such as the World War II and the consequences toward many countries around the world including Thailand were. Similar to Rattana and Suphat, she created an exercise that helps students visualize a reality that they were oblivious to, and through that exposure, expanded their worldviews a little. However, she did not simply tell the information. She rather gave students an opportunity to consider their prior knowledge and then, when those ideas are in contrast with the story portrayed through historical film, she asked some open-ended questions to help them process their new knowledge (Gergen, 1995). At one point, Nirada discussed about a study visit to Kanchanaburi province where she recognized a history concerning war, military and oral history told by people residing in the community, so it is not unexpected that she wanted her students to learn history to understand and respect

oneself and one's own culture, but also understand that the other person respected his/her own self and culture and thus agreed to be tolerant of each other.

### **Catalyst Metaphor for Teaching and Learning**

Sutha fell under the third metaphor for teaching and learning: the catalyst. In catalyst metaphor, Badley and Hollabaugh (2012) proposed that teachers are to insert pedagogical grains of sand and thereby irritate their students' thinking. Teachers in this role consciously weave challenging questions which are complicated to find clear-cuttingly right or wrong answers into the curriculum and instructional plans. He asked difficult and thought-provoking questions to his students with purposeful vision that they will question the society and the world in which the ready-made, singular and undisputed hegemony of history they have always consciously known and challenged their existing worldviews.

Sutha, in one of his history lessons, tried to get his students to understand the concept of "understanding yourself and understanding your neighbors," which referred to the story of King Naresuan's battle to Burmese King. In Thai history textbooks, King Naresuan was depicted as one of the greatest Thai military leaders who emerged to declare Ayutthaya's independence and to defeat the Burmese in several battles and skirmished, culminating in the victory of Nong Sarai, when he killed the Burmese Crown in combat on elephant back. King Naresuan was always a representative of famous historical figure who liberated Ayutthaya from Burmese rules (Mukdawijitra, 2013). Sutha, a Master's graduate in history education, tried to challenge the status quo of history education from teaching history for cultivating a sense of patriotism to teaching history for better understanding. He explained that teaching only the heroic Thai version of King Naresuan would not foster

better understanding of our neighbors who have their own version of history as follows:

*"So, I tried to get them understand that history which is taught in classes, both then and now, is not history. It is a mythical narrative to deliver country's ideology as the same way the screening of a Thai-Burma war film was offered over and over again. In reality, Burmese people are proud of the period of Byinnaung when they were strong. And Thai people are proud of the reigns of Kings Rama I, II and III when Siam was at the height of its power. So, King Naresuan is such the case. In a Thai movie released two years ago and promoted by the military government just after the May 22, 2014 coup d'etat-The Legend of King Naresuan. The military rulers had expressed concern about how the younger generation did not know about historical heroes; one of them is King Naresuan. He was believed to be the king who declared Siam's independence from Burma in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore this movie was promoted by the Ministry of Education and many schools had corresponded with the mandated policy by providing free tickets for students to see the movie."*

Sutha wanted his students to realize about why they have to understand the state ideologies which highlighted citizens sacrificing their lives for the good of the country. He asked very challenging questions to students about historically based movie "Did this movie present history accurately" and "How much are the characters represented real people or as simple stereotypes?" In addition, he brought a variety of secondary sources for students to study about King Naresuan. Students began discussing about what they have previously known which annoyed their held beliefs. Some students seemed more puzzled and irritated when they gradually learned that King Naresuan did not just defend for the freedom of Ayutthaya. Rather, he actively attacked Burma by carrying war into the Irrawaddy

basin in order to maintain the stability of Ayutthaya (Mukdawijitra, 2013). In so doing, Sutha completely challenged a lot of their tightly-held beliefs in hopes that some students will have contradictory thinking and question their ideas and that their own lives might be transformed in some ways. He believed that Thai education especially in terms of history education is all about injecting state ideologies into the youth rather than cultivating citizenship understanding and spirit of democracy through meaningful history education.

As the case of Sutha has pointed out, this kind of reflective and critical pedagogy can help students analyze how the dominant society legitimates or justifies its norms and values. At the same time, young citizens can also see the possibility of alternative cultural knowledge and practices, ways of thinking, and socio-cultural orders. Such knowledge “would function to help students and others understand what this society has made of them in a dialectical sense and what it is they no longer want to be, as well as what it is they need to appropriate critically in order to become knowledgeable about the world in which they live” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1981, p. 132). Helping students as well as teachers and educators to acquire critical knowledge as a tool of analysis means helping them to develop critical literacy, which will enable them to raise questions about the nature of knowledge and its justification, modes of discourse, and curriculum and learning organization that “reduce learning and social practices to narrow technical dimensions” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1981, pp. 132-133). Only this kind of pedagogy is a strong foundation for building active citizenship in young citizens.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The social constructivist and social reformation approach in the new social studies curriculum has made local history important again in Thailand because local

history has been used and supported by research reports and scholars as a way of developing active citizenship. In so doing, the aims, methods and purposes used in the teaching of history can contribute towards both the understanding of issues and the questioning, skeptical mentality required for active citizenship in a plural democracy.

In this research, social studies and history teachers are active in promoting active citizenship through local history. At this point, scholars pointed out that teachers cannot ignore the charge to prepare students for the standardized tests. Thus, teachers have to find out the effective and engaging methods to prepare citizens who value diversity, equality and social justice (Danker, 2003; Levstik, 1997). In so doing, teachers must take a closer look at the local community history as a means both to strengthen students’ understanding of national history by linking thematic curriculum topics to local narratives (Danker, 2003) and to interweave that content seamlessly with the tenets of citizenship education (Danker, 2001). By employing postmodern curriculum theory into this study, it gave us a concept that local history is people’s history and it consisted of multiple interpretations which value the teachers’ personal experiences and perspectives.

Teachers, therefore, have influenced the way they planned local history lessons and entire social studies curriculum around socio-political, cultural and historical aspects of local history. They recognized and acknowledged the importance of broadening their students’ perspectives of local history. More importantly, they challenged their students’ to question hegemonic knowledge and status quo which were considered as mainstream history in Thai society and opened spaces for students to acquire critical perspectives with vision that their students will be equipped with critical worldviews and became part of civic participation in order to create more democratic societies in Thailand.

## REFERENCES

- Aktekin, S. (2010). The place and importance of local history in the secondary history education. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*, 6(1), 86-105.
- Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. A. (1981). *Education under siege*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Badley, K. & Hollabaugh, J. (2012). Metaphors for teaching and learning. *Metaphors we teach by: How metaphors shape what we do in the classroom*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.
- Barton, K.C. (2008). Research on students' ideas about history. *Handbook of research in social studies education*. New York: Routledge.
- Bernhardt, P. (2009). Opening up classroom space: Student voice, autobiography, and the curriculum. *The High School Journal*, 92(3), 61-67.
- Brophy, J., & Van Sledright, B. (1997). *Teaching and learning history in elementary schools*. New York, NY: Teachers' College Press.
- Chen, H.L. (2008). A critical reflection on the reform of the high school history curriculum in Taiwan. *Social Education in Asia: Critical Issues and Multiple Perspectives*. Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publishing.
- Danker, A.C. (2001a). All history is local: Using the familiar to teach and learn core knowledge topics. *The New England Journal of History*, 57(2), 84-91.
- Danker, A.C. (2001b). Keepers of tradition, agents of change: Social studies teachers and multicultural education. *International Social Studies Forum*, 1(1), 45-60.
- Danker, A.C. (2003). Multicultural Social Studies: The local history connection. *The Social Studies*, 94(2), 111-117.
- Doll, W. (1993). *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Englund, T. (2006). Deliberative communication: A pragmatist model. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 38, 503-520.
- Gergen, K. J. (1995). Social construction and the educational process. *Constructivism in education* (pp. 17-39). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Glesne, C. (1998). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Allyn & Bacon.
- Harris, R., & Rae, A. (2006). Making history meaningful: Helping pupils see why history matters. *Teaching history*, 125, 28-33.
- Henderson, J.G., & Hawthorne, R.D. (2000). *Transformative Curriculum Leadership*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Hirsch, E.D., Jr. (1987). *Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Journell, W. (2011). Social studies, citizenship education and the search for an American identity: An argument against a unifying narrative. *Journal of Thought*, 46(3-4), 5-24.
- Kammen, C. (1995). *The Pursuit of Local History: Readings on Theory and Practice*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
- Kammen, C. (2003). *On Doing Local History*. 2d ed. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
- Kinloch, N. (2001). "Parallel catastrophes? Uniqueness, redemption and the Shoah", *Teaching history*, 104, 8-14.
- Levstik, L. S. (1997). "Any history is someone's history": Listening to

- multiple voices from the past. *Social Education*, 61(1), 48-51.
- Levstik, L.S., & Barton, K.C. (2011). *Doing history: Investigating with children in elementary and middle schools*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Routledge.
- Marino, M.P., & Crocco, M.S. (2012). Doing local history: A case study of New Brunswick, New Jersey, *The Social Studies*, 103(6), 233-240.
- Mukdawijitra, Y. (2013). Southeast Asia in Thai school textbooks. *Expert meeting: Promoting intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace in Southeast Asia through shared histories*. Bangkok: UNESCO.
- National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS). (1994). *National standards for United States history: Exploring the American experience*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA.
- Noel, A.M., & Colopy, M.A. (2006). Making history field trips meaningful: Teachers and site educators' perspectives on teaching materials. *Theory and research in social education*, 34, 553-568.
- Phillips, R. (2003). *Past Forward: History, citizenship and identity*. London: Historical Association.
- Pinson, H. (2007). Inclusive curriculum? Challenges to the role of civic education in a Jewish and democratic state. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 37, 351-382.
- Rittidet, P. (2011). Local youth historical research for students based learning reform, Northeast Thailand. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 224-227.
- Sasiwongsaroj, K. (2013). The central region amid a wave of changes: A synthesis of research projects on local history of the central region by youth historians. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University*, 30(2), 107-132.
- Slattery, P. (2006). *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Stake (1995). *The art of case study research*. London: International Educational and Professional Publisher.
- Thornton, S. J. (1991). Teacher as curricular-instructional gatekeeper in social studies. *Handbook of research on social studies teaching and learning*. New York: MacMillan.
- Varbelow, S. (2012). Instruction, curriculum and society: Iterations based on the ideas of William Doll. *International Journal of Instruction*, 5(1), 87-98.