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## Beyond words: Inquiry-based professional development centered round historical photographs

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This paper provides a thick description of three in-service social studies teachers' participation in a thirteen-month professional development initiative called *Beyond Words* that centered round innovative visual curriculum materials, second-order historical domain knowledge, and Lesson Study-type collaboration. The teachers experienced, as learners, several inquiry-based strategies that featured historical photographs from the Library of Congress's digital catalog. They also participated, as teachers, in educative discussions to explore the underpinning tenets of *Beyond Words* (i.e., applying skills associated with visual literacy and thinking historically to interpret aesthetic texts, weighing contrastive visual evidence to develop a complex understanding of the past, and beginning to address a compelling public issue). This qualitative investigation answers *To what degree can "Beyond Words help in-service geography teachers design and implement powerful instruction centered round historical photographs?"* With explicit guidance, the teachers designed and implemented a research lesson that featured compelling historical photographs, visual literacy and historical thinking skills, and students making claims about an issue of public concern. Throughout *Beyond Words*, the teachers demonstrated a spirit of open-mindedness and a willingness to experiment with unfamiliar ideas; however, at the end of the program their views about social studies instruction were largely restatements of conventional conclusions.

Image: A primer for a historical photograph used in *Beyond Words*

### Recent Publications:

1. Callahan, C. (2017). Asynchronous virtual conversations as social studies professional development. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies*, 12(2), 27-42.
2. Callahan, C. (2015). Creating or capturing reality? Historical photographs of the Progressive Era. *The Social Studies*, 106(2), 57-71.
3. Callahan, C. (2014). Designing digital resources to effectively scaffold teachers' learning. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, 23(4), 309-334.

### Biography

Cory Callahan, Ph.D., Auburn University, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama. Dr. Callahan taught secondary students for 14 years, practicing the craft of social studies instruction the way he promoted it in presentations, workshops, and scholarly writing. Dr. Callahan then became a teacher-educator to advance a research program that includes educative curriculum, inquiry, aesthetic texts, and international education. Dr. Callahan has encouraged a more dynamic relationship between research and practice through opportunities afforded him by a National Technology Leadership Initiative Fellows Award, a Jacobs Educator Award, and a Gilder Lehrman's Alabama History Teacher of the Year Award.

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