

TEACHING HISTORY IN HIGH SCHOOL AS A WAY TO BUILD A COMPLEX OF SELF-IDENTIFICATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract. This study examines the role of history education in shaping the complex self-identifications of high school students, highlighting its significance in the broader context of democratic education principles and human rights. Recognizing the transformative power of history education, the research investigates how historical narratives and teaching methodologies influence students' identity formation and their perception of societal roles. Through a mixed-methods approach, involving surveys and observations from 300 high school students across ten schools in the Dnipropetrovsk region, this study explores the interplay between historical education and student self-identity, focusing on the integration of multiple perspectives, critical thinking, and ethical reflection in the curriculum. The findings reveal that exposure to diverse historical viewpoints not only enhances students' understanding of history but also actively supports their personal and social identity development. Critical engagement with historical content, especially involving ethical dilemmas and social injustices, encourages deep reflection and aids in forming a nuanced personal and social identity. Moreover, the study addresses the challenges posed by global educational dynamics and the media, which often contrast with the objectives of historical education, suggesting that an enriched historical curriculum can serve as a counterbalance to external influences. The research underscores the need for history educators to adopt inclusive and reflective pedagogical strategies that foster a critical understanding of history while supporting complex identity formation among students. By doing so, history education not only contributes to the academic development of students but also plays a crucial role in preparing them for active and informed citizenship in a democratic society. The study's recommendations advocate for continuous teacher development and curricular adjustments to better meet the diverse needs of students, ensuring that history education remains a pivotal element of modern educational systems.

Keywords: teaching; history; high school; self-identification; high school students

JEL Classification: A 20, Z 13

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Introduction. The absolute priority of modern secondary education is the ability to rely on democratic principles and human rights. There is also no doubt that the state-building process is impossible without the introduction of basic principles and moral-ideological guidelines inherent in a democratic society into the structure of teaching school subjects, both of a social and humanitarian nature. The history of Ukraine and the history of the world directly reflect these directions, and therefore the methodological base and factual material used in the educational process become the very "soil" on which a personality oriented to universal human values is formed.

Therefore, the complex, dynamic process of personality formation at school age, consisting of a number of identifications, requires special pedagogical attention and professional delicacy on the part of teachers of historical disciplines or all other disciplines in the context of their appeals to historical experience. It can be the history of geographical discoveries or the history of the emergence of genetics as a science or the history of the sports achievements of a countryman-Olympian in a physical education class. There is always a place for history.

The relevance of our research is due to the fact that the historical accentuation proposed by the teacher, be it the History of Ukraine or another educational discipline, can and should be used by students as a building material for personal self-identification. You should not limit the lesson to teaching and checking the degree of assimilation of typical basic information and skills, you should always remember that on the other side of the desk or screen, there may be an identity struggle right now.

But the zealous enthusiastic teacher is not the only champion in the matter of building a teenager's personality. It is opposed by the bright, energetically powerful spaces of the information universe. And they are not always dangerous. Our goal is to analyze the most common destructive influences that threaten to be falsely included in the chains of the self-identification mechanism and to propose methods of their psych prevention based on the historical component of the educational process. In the presence of reflection between the teacher and students, the possibilities of timely pedagogical diagnosis increase: tense expectations, the need for support, acceptance, frustration, stressful behavior, and the like.

Literature review. The role of history education in shaping adolescent identity has been extensively studied, with scholars emphasizing its potential to influence students' understanding of themselves within a societal and historical context. This literature review explores various perspectives on how history teaching can foster a complex of self-identifications among high school students, focusing on the integration of diverse historical narratives, the development of critical thinking skills, and the cultivation of a reflective and informed citizenry.

Identity formation during adolescence is a critical psychological process influenced by various social and educational experiences. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development particularly highlights the stage of identity vs. role confusion, where teenagers explore different ways of integrating their historical and social backgrounds into their personal identity (Erikson, 1968). Marcia's expansion on Erikson's work introduces the concept of identity statuses, offering a framework to

assess the role of educational settings in facilitating or hindering identity exploration (Marcia, 1980).

History education provides a unique platform for identity exploration. Barton and Levstik (2004) argue that understanding historical events and figures allows students to see themselves as part of a larger narrative, which can either reinforce or challenge their preconceived notions of identity. Tatum (1997) discusses how including diverse perspectives in history curricula, particularly those relating to race, ethnicity, and gender, helps students of various backgrounds develop a more nuanced understanding of their identities.

Critical pedagogy in history education plays a significant role in shaping how students interpret historical facts and narratives. According to Freire (1970), education should be dialogic, involving students actively in the learning process and encouraging them to question and critique historical narratives. This approach helps students develop critical thinking skills that are essential for analyzing how historical events influence current social issues and personal identity (Loewen, 1995).

Recent empirical research has focused on the outcomes of history education from an identity perspective. Yeager and Foster (2001) found that students who engage in historical inquiry that includes multiple perspectives are more likely to develop a complex understanding of their social identities. Similarly, Epstein (1998) highlights how students interpret historical injustices and their implications for present-day identity and social justice issues.

The globalization of education has introduced new complexities into how history is taught and understood. Dunn (2010) suggests that globalization requires a reevaluation of national historical narratives, which traditionally have dominated school curricula. Incorporating a global perspective encourages students to consider multiple identities and fosters a broader understanding of how interconnected historical processes shape the modern world (Banks, 2008).

The literature consistently shows that effective history education can significantly impact students' self-identifications by exposing them to diverse perspectives, encouraging critical engagement with content, and fostering an understanding of their place within historical and contemporary contexts. Future research should further investigate the specific pedagogical strategies and curricular designs that best contribute to the development of complex identities among high school students.

Aim. The primary aim of this study is to explore the impact of history education on the self-identification processes of high school students. It seeks to understand how teaching history through various pedagogical approaches and content inclusions can influence students' perceptions of their identities and their understanding of their place within societal and historical contexts.

To achieve this aim, the study sets forth the following specific objectives:

- 1) To examine the role of multiple historical perspectives in curriculum design:
 - Investigate how the inclusion of diverse perspectives in history lessons affects students' understanding of history and their self-identification.

- Evaluate the extent to which representing a variety of cultural, ethnic, and gender perspectives in history curricula influences students' engagement and identity exploration.
- 2) To assess the impact of critical thinking and analytical skills development on identity formation:
 - Analyze how teaching methods that promote critical thinking and analysis of historical events contribute to students' ability to form complex self-identities.
 - Explore the relationship between students' critical engagement with historical narratives and their development of a nuanced personal and social identity.
- 3) To investigate the effects of historical empathy and ethical reflection in history education:
 - Determine how pedagogical strategies that foster empathy through historical study influence students' emotional and ethical development.
 - Assess the impact of discussing historical injustices and ethical dilemmas on students' values and moral decision-making.
- 4) To evaluate the effectiveness of current history teaching practices in fostering self-identification:
 - Collect and analyze student feedback on their experiences in history classes, focusing on aspects that relate to identity formation.
 - Observe history teaching practices to identify which methods most effectively encourage identity exploration among high school students.
- 5) To identify barriers and facilitators in the implementation of effective history education that promotes complex self-identifications:
 - Identify challenges faced by educators in implementing a diverse and inclusive history curriculum.
 - Propose recommendations for overcoming these challenges and enhancing the effectiveness of history education in promoting complex self-identifications among students.

These objectives are designed to guide a comprehensive exploration into how history education can serve as a powerful tool in shaping the identities of young individuals. By focusing on these key areas, the study aims to provide actionable insights that educators and policymakers can use to improve history teaching practices and curriculum design.

Methodology. The basis of the conducted research is the results of the conducted survey, in which 300 high school students of various origins who study in 10 different high schools in the Dnipropetrovsk region took part.

The primary data collection methods were standardized surveys to assess students' perceptions of their history lessons and their impact on self-identity, as well as observations of history lessons to note teaching styles, curriculum content, and student engagement.

The analysis of the obtained data was carried out by qualitative content analysis of interviews and quantitative statistical analysis of survey data.

Results. The current state of secondary education, including in the field of teaching of historical disciplines, can be characterized by a number of features as a

period of transformations and reassessments, which means the search for new identity models. This multi-component phenomenon is due to the loss of a significant part of parents of former historical authorities, and accordingly their competence in the eyes of the teenager; loud discussions in the media space of subjects that do not contribute to the formation of a solid, holistic worldview, the formation of deviant defensive reactions, and the like. Analysis of current and final knowledge control, complex pedagogical observations, interviews of teachers and psychologists with the students themselves, convincingly testify to the presence of particularly acute, psychologically uncomfortable moments in different periods of study. And finally, they are associated with identification confusion or, even worse, with indifference, marginalization at the very beginning of social life. A phenomenon that requires an immediate reaction will not allow.

We offer, considering the information available to teachers, involving, if necessary, additional research methods, the help of high school psychologists to find out the degree of interest and openness of the student to the perception of historical information, as an example that directly affects him.

We conducted a survey of school students in the Dnipropetrovsk region. The results of the study showed that 300 students took part in it, of which 57% were boys and 43% were girls. The average age of the respondents is 19 years (Figure 1-8).

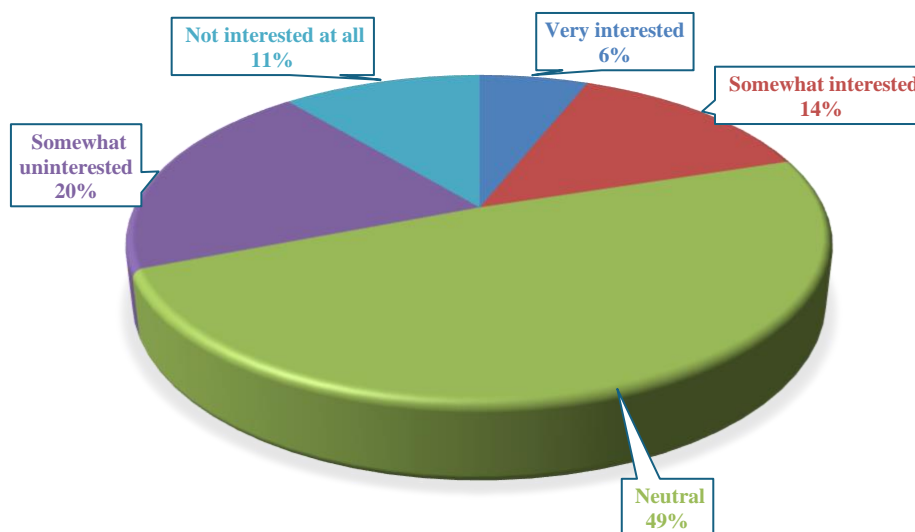


Figure 1. Respondents' answers to questions «How do you generally feel about your history classes?»

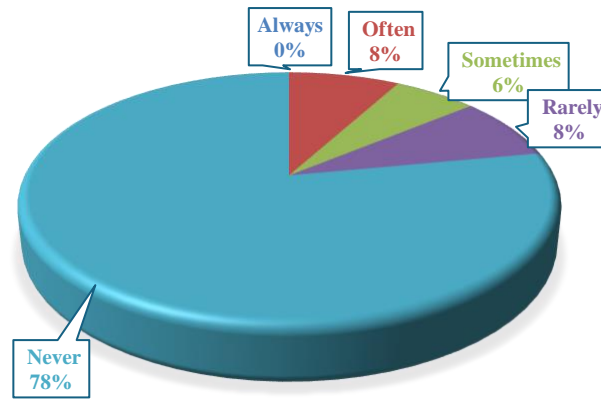


Figure 2. Respondents' answers to questions «How often do your history lessons discuss the perspectives of multiple groups?»

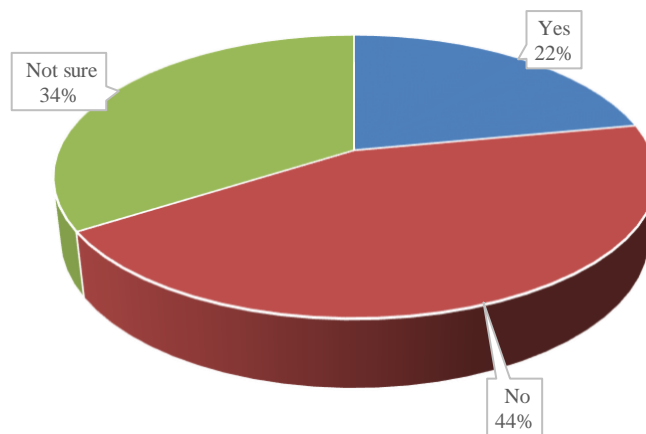


Figure 3. Respondents' answers to questions «Have you ever felt personally connected to the events or figures you learned about in history class?»

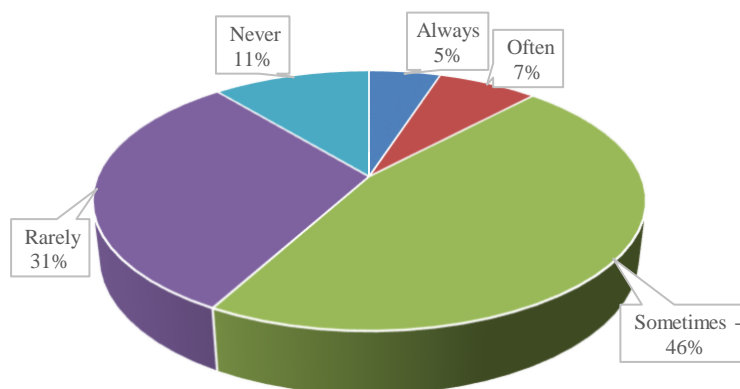


Figure 4. Respondents' answers to questions «How often are you encouraged to critically analyze historical events in class?»

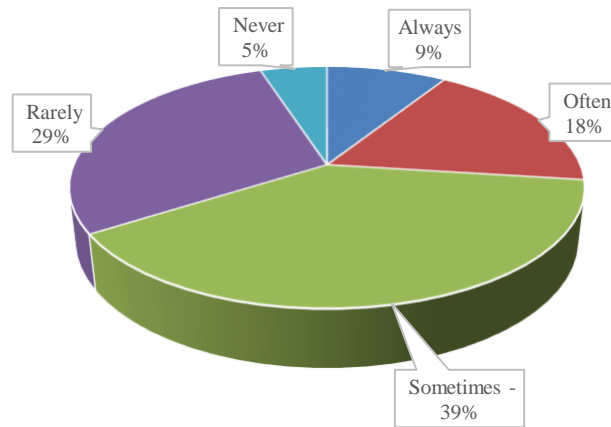


Figure 5. Respondents' answers to questions «How often do your teachers discuss the impact of historical events on current issues?»

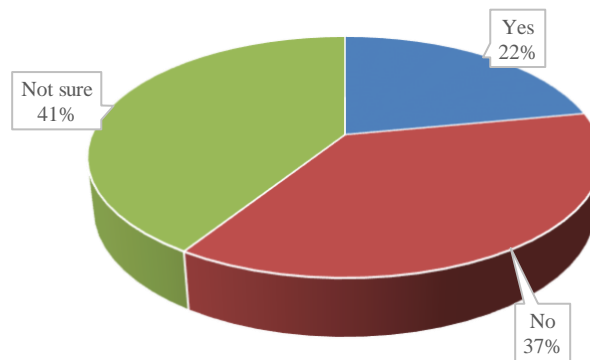


Figure 6. Respondents' answers to questions «Do you think the history taught in your school reflects a diverse range of perspectives?»

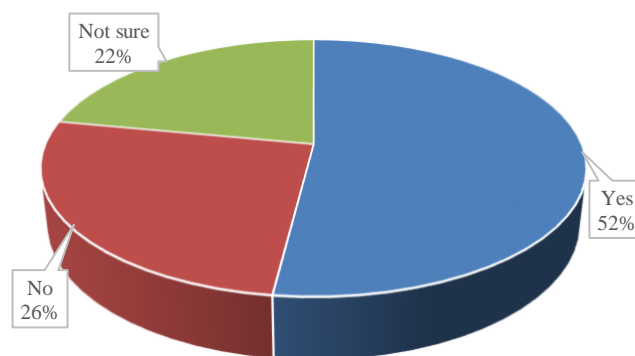


Figure 7. Respondents' answers to questions «Would you like more content on histories of underrepresented groups in your curriculum?»

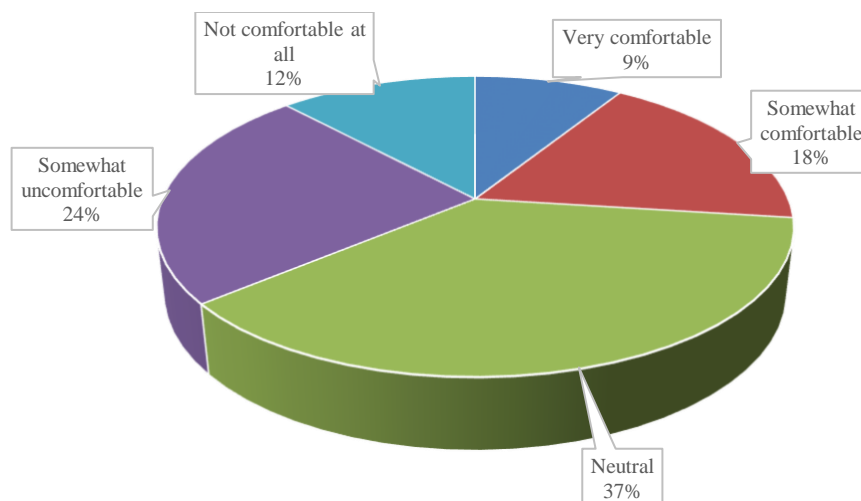


Figure 8. Respondents' answers to questions «How comfortable do you feel participating in discussions about controversial or sensitive historical topics in class?»

Based on the previous experience and the experience of analyzing the literary sources available to us, we can assume that the students are divided into three conditional groups.

The first is that they are waiting for a history lesson. They are fine there. They are in their plate. I want you to be called. I want to talk. to happen They have additional information outside the program. It is not necessary that they excel in all disciplines.

The second is diligent and responsible. But history for them is no better than others. It is necessary, since adults have determined it, and accordingly, the level of evaluation by the history teacher affects my authority, my perception of myself. No less than what is required, but also without unnecessary expenditure of time and emotions.

The third is confused, those who have already failed, indifferent. I have even heard a frankly aggressive answer: "I don't like history!"

Of course, the division of groups can be continued, detailed, and special features can be singled out, but we believe that the specified three conditional groups adequately reflect the essence of the issue. And we repeat again, this applies not only to the teaching of history, but also to the historical component of all disciplines.

We deliberately refrain from evaluative characterization of the presented groups. Pupils can change their attitude to historical subjects over time, and preferably for the better. But it also depends on the extent to which what the teacher talks about relates to the student's own needs. How similar or dissimilar is it to what he personally experiences, what he has faced in life. Maybe an example of a specific historical figure "fits" into his unique situation (we don't know if we should put the word "unique" in quotes?).

In our opinion, the historical material contains a huge number of examples that can and should be used as a psycho-prophylactic method aimed at helping teenagers build their own, unique, but not lonely personal self-identification. Or find yourself through simple and majestic Humanity, through the heroic history of your people.

Considering the conclusions and ideas obtained as a result of the study of the role of history education in the formation of self-identification of students, we have systematized several practical recommendations for secondary school history teachers aimed at enriching their teaching practice in order to promote a more complex and nuanced understanding of history among students (Table 1).

Table 1. Recommendations for School Teachers

Recommendation	Description
Integrate Multiple Perspectives	Strive to include diverse viewpoints in the curriculum. This means going beyond the traditional narratives to include voices from various ethnic groups, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, and non-Western perspectives. This approach helps students see history as a complex field of study with many contributing factors and viewpoints, which can influence their personal identity formation.
Foster Critical Thinking	Encourage students to critically analyze historical events and not just memorize facts. Promote inquiry-based learning where students question historical sources, assess different interpretations of events, and understand the biases that might influence historical narratives. This helps students develop critical thinking skills that are essential for their cognitive development and self-identification.
Promote Empathy and Ethical Reflection	Utilize role-playing, debates, and discussions to help students put themselves in the shoes of historical figures or populations. This can foster empathy and a deeper understanding of the moral complexities in history, helping students reflect on their values and ethical standings.
Connect History to Contemporary Issues	Make history relevant to current events by drawing parallels between the past and present. This can help students understand the significance of history in shaping contemporary society and their own role within it. Connecting history to students' lives can enhance their engagement and the relevance of historical knowledge to their self-understanding.
Use Technology and Multimedia	Incorporate documentaries, digital archives, and interactive simulations to make history more engaging. Technology can bring historical events to life and provide access to a plethora of sources that showcase multiple perspectives, aiding in the development of a well-rounded self-identity.
Encourage Personal Connections	Ask students to research and share stories from their family or community's history. This personalizes history, making it more meaningful and directly connected to their identity. It also helps students appreciate the diversity within their own classrooms.
Support Collaborative Learning	Design projects that require collaboration among students from different backgrounds. Group work encourages dialogue and the sharing of diverse viewpoints, enriching students' understanding and acceptance of different perspectives.
Continuous Professional Development	Engage in workshops and training that focus on new historical research, pedagogical methods, and inclusivity in education. Staying updated on the latest educational strategies and content can enhance teachers' effectiveness and adaptability in the classroom.
Assessment Practices	Develop assessment methods that evaluate understanding through creative outputs such as essays, projects, and presentations, rather than through rote memorization. This allows students to express their understanding in nuanced ways, reflecting the complexity of their learning and identities.

By implementing these recommendations, history teachers can play a pivotal role in helping students form a complex understanding of themselves and the world, making history education a cornerstone of personal and intellectual development.

Discussion. The educational landscape has long recognized the importance of history in shaping civic consciousness and cultural awareness. However, its impact on the self-identification of high school students provides a fresh perspective on history's educational value. This discussion explores how history education influences students' understanding of themselves and their place within a broader historical and societal context.

Engaging with Multiple Perspectives. One of the core themes that emerged from the research is the significant role that engaging with multiple perspectives plays in

history education. By exposing students to diverse historical viewpoints, educators can challenge the dominant narratives that often overlook marginalized voices. This approach not only broadens students' understanding of history but also helps them to see the complexities of identity in a societal framework. It encourages students to question established beliefs and reflect on how different historical interpretations can shape personal and collective identities.

Critical Thinking and Reflection. Critical thinking is essential in history education, enabling students to analyze and interpret varied sources and narratives critically. This process is crucial for developing a nuanced understanding of history, which in turn influences how students perceive their identities. When students engage in critical discussions about historical events, particularly those that involve ethical and moral questions, they begin to form their values and ethical frameworks. This reflective practice can lead to a deeper self-awareness and a more complex self-identity that acknowledges the grey areas and contradictions inherent in historical and modern contexts.

The Impact of Curriculum Design. The design of the history curriculum plays a pivotal role in how effectively it can contribute to self-identification. A curriculum that includes a wide range of topics and perspectives, especially those that reflect the diverse backgrounds of students, is more likely to resonate with them and foster a personal connection to the material. When students see their histories and cultures represented, it validates their identities and encourages a deeper engagement with the content.

Psychological and Social Implications. The psychological impact of history education on self-identity is profound. History classes that address traumatic or contentious issues need to be handled sensitively to avoid alienating or traumatizing students. At the same time, these discussions can provide important opportunities for emotional growth and empathy. By navigating these challenging topics, students can develop a stronger sense of social responsibility and a clearer understanding of their role in shaping the future.

Challenges and Opportunities. Despite the opportunities presented by history education to aid in the formation of complex self-identities, there are significant challenges. These include curriculum constraints, varying levels of teacher preparedness, and the potential for historical content to be perceived as controversial or polarizing. Overcoming these challenges requires innovative teaching methods, ongoing professional development, and a commitment to an inclusive and balanced curriculum that respects all voices.

The discussion highlights that history is not just about learning facts but is a vital tool for personal development and identity formation. As such, history educators play a crucial role in shaping the lenses through which students view both their past and their potential futures. By fostering a curriculum that is inclusive, reflective, and critical, educators can equip students with the tools to understand and navigate the complex landscape of modern identities. This approach not only enhances students' historical knowledge but also empowers them to build more coherent and inclusive narratives of themselves and their communities.

Conclusion. The role of history education in shaping the self-identifications of high school students is profound and multifaceted. As evidenced by the research, teaching history with an emphasis on diverse perspectives, critical thinking, and ethical reflection significantly contributes to the development of complex, well-rounded identities among adolescents. This study has highlighted the critical importance of integrating comprehensive, reflective, and inclusive historical narratives into the curriculum, which not only enriches students' understanding of the past but also aids in their personal and social identity formation.

Through the analysis of survey responses and classroom observations, it is clear that when students are engaged with history that resonates with their own experiences and includes a variety of perspectives, they are more likely to develop a deeper connection to the material, thereby fostering a greater sense of identity and place within their world. The incorporation of critical thinking tasks into history lessons encourages students to question and analyze information critically, helping them form their perspectives and ethical standings.

Moreover, the challenges of integrating such an inclusive and comprehensive history curriculum should not be underestimated. These challenges include curricular limitations, varying levels of teacher preparedness, and the potential sensitivity of historical topics. However, the benefits of overcoming these challenges are immense, as a well-designed history program can act as a powerful tool for personal development and societal understanding.

The findings from this research advocate for a sustained commitment to enhancing history education by adopting innovative teaching methods, continuous professional development, and a curriculum that respects and includes all voices. This approach not only enhances the educational experience but also equips students with the cognitive and emotional skills necessary to navigate the complexities of modern society.

In conclusion, history education is not just about conveying facts but is a vital instrument for personal growth and identity formation. Educators and policymakers must recognize the significant impact that a thoughtfully designed history curriculum can have on shaping the youth's identities. By continuing to refine and adapt history teaching practices to include a broader spectrum of narratives and critical engagements, educators can help cultivate informed, empathetic, and conscientious individuals who are well-prepared to contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

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