

Reading Like a Historian and Adapting and Using Primary Sources**February 6-8, 2013****Biographies of a Nation Colloquium: Great Falls, MT****Danice Toyias, danice.toyias@mchce.net****Presentation Focus**

This presentation will focus on the techniques historians use when reading and interrogating primary sources. We will also use a simple approach to selecting, adapting, and using primary sources in our classrooms.

Essential Question(s)

- Why is it important to teach history and social studies in our K-12 classrooms?

Essential Understanding(s)

- History, as a discipline, has a specific focus, a specific vocabulary, a specific set of skills and strategies, and a specific set of knowledge that is created from historical study. Through teaching our students this *discipline-specific literacy* in our K-12 classrooms, we are ensuring they have the essential tools they will need as citizens when they are adults.

Discussion

Topic 1: Reading Like a Historian

Two Pillars: Sourcing a Document and Contextualizing a Document

- 1) Sourcing a Document: Begin at the end. Who wrote it, when was it written, what kind of document is it, is the author a first-hand witness, is the account based on hearsay, or is it based on memory?
 - Questions, questions, and more questions!!!! ETC.
- 2) Contextualization:
 - Locate events in time and place. When was the document written? Where was it written? When did the author live? How old were they? Where did they live? Active engagement? Passerby? Importance or Magnitude of the event? ETC.
 - Timeline!!!!

Topic 2: Adapting and Using Primary Sources

Two Steps: Select and then Modify (remember to begin with your essential question). For the activity in the book, the question was: “Where did Rosa Parks sit?”

- 1) Selecting Documents: Choose documents that convey the essence of the historical problem, they don’t have to be long—teach kids to slow down and read closely.
- 2) Modify the documents for YOUR classroom. Focus student attention by: cutting excess verbiage, include vocabulary or a word bank, key definitions, head note, adapt language. Retain as much of the original text as possible, but make it accessible for your students. Always include the original in your files and cite it so you can access it easily again (not just a web link).

Homework: Using the source you were given:

- 1) Determine an essential question (probably obtained from your sourcing exercise) that you could use in your classroom.

- 2) Contextualize your source. *For the next steps you may use the document you were given or choose a better source that contains the essence of your essential question.*
- 3) Modify the document so it is accessible to your students.
- 4) List possible lesson activities.
- 5) Describe assessment strategies.
- 6) Write your answer to the essential question.

Resources

Book:

Wineburg, Sam, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano. *Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms*. New York: Teacher's College Press, 2011.

Websites:

Beyond the Bubble: Assessing 21st Century Skills with Library of Congress Documents
<http://beyondthebubble.stanford.edu>

Historical Thinking Matters
<http://historicalthinkingmatters.org>

Reading Like a Historian (complete with 71 lessons in the US Curriculum and 15 in the world curriculum)
<http://sheg.stanford.edu/rlh>

Stanford History Education Group
http://sheg.stanford.edu/home_page

Teaching History National History Education Clearinghouse: What is Historical Thinking?
<http://teachinghistory.org/nhec-blog/24434>