



## ***ILCHE Newsletter First Quarter 2014***

### **Welcome from ILCHE's New President**

It is a genuine pleasure to serve as President of the Illinois Council for History Education. Thank you to our past Presidents, Diane Puklin and Paul Horton, for their service and leadership. We have an exciting year ahead of us as we begin many initiatives to support history teachers across the state of Illinois. In addition to our [annual conference](#) at the end of February, we will be providing no-cost professional development workshops for school districts, partnering with pre-service programs to mentor young teachers, and sponsoring social events to facilitate collaboration amongst colleagues across the state.

As I enter my thirteenth year of teaching history, I am well aware of the challenges that we face as a discipline. With the implementation of Common Core standards, history has been increasingly marginalized as school districts attempt to “measure up” in English and Math. Nevertheless, we have an important role to play in the development of students as readers, writers, and thinkers. This begins with having great teachers in the classroom. As [Eric Foner](#) has recently argued, “I’m less interested in pedagogical approaches than the training of the teacher, the ability of the teacher, the knowledge of the teacher, and the teacher’s ability to inspire students by conveying his or her own enthusiasm for the subject.” Here is where I hope the ILCHE can make a difference. In providing content-rich professional development opportunities for teachers, I believe our organization can help make the history classroom a space characterized by wonder, investigation, and growth.

I look forward to a challenging year, one filled with great promise. Thank you for your continued support of history education. Please let me know how I may help you carry out your important work with students. Feel free to email me at [pinosd@nths.net](mailto:pinosd@nths.net).

All the best in 2014!  
Dean Pinos

### **ILCHE Annual Professional Learning Day**

**Date:** February 28, 2014, 8:00 AM-2:00 PM

**Location:** Illinois Math and Science Academy, Aurora, IL

**Registration Fee:** \$35

**Link to website:** [History Professional Learning Day](#)

### **New Frontiers in History Education**

In collaboration with the Illinois Council of History Educators, IMSA is proud to offer a special History program. The opening Welcome session will be followed by four concurrent sessions from which teachers from 6th grade through high school may choose. A special Luncheon Presentation will be given by [Dr. Ann Durkin Keating](#), who will bring Chicago history to life as she discusses her latest book "Rising up from Indian Country: The Battle of Fort Dearborn and the Birth of Chicago," which was released last August.

Flash drives containing digital copies of all available session materials will be given to participants upon completion and submission of their evaluations of the program at the end of the day. Click on the following link for a description of the full schedule, to register for the conference, and to find directions: [History Professional Learning Day](#)

## **NCHE Annual History Teacher Conference**

**Dates: March 20-22, 2014**

**Location: Albuquerque, NM**

**Link to website: [NCHE National Conference](#)**

### **New Frontiers**

Each spring, the National Council for History Education holds a national conference. When possible, NCHE chooses a conference site which parallels the anniversary of a significant event in American and World history. The national conference is a place where everyone who loves to teach and learn history can come together and share. NCHE encourages conference proposals that illustrate collaboration and history education.

### **Featuring:**

- Fun and Interesting Enrichment Excursions to Museums and Historic Sites
- More than 70 Breakout Sessions and 3 Keynote Speakers,
- Join more than 500 Teachers, Historians and University Faculty for Three Days of the Best in History Education!
- Connect with Teachers from Across the Country who Share your Passion for History.

### **Two ILCHE members are presenting at the national conference ...**

**Presenter: Dean Pinos (History Teacher at New Trier High School, ILCHE President)**

**The Balkans: Bridge to Other Worlds or Continental Divide?**

Description: This session will examine the Balkans, a region that is, for many, "in Europe" but not "of Europe." Following a discussion of the geography of the region, we shall look at how the Balkans has become synonymous with ethnic conflict, economic backwardness, and a lack of democratic institutions and sensibilities. A younger generation of historians is attempting to rehabilitate this often-overlooked part of the continent and to develop a new vocabulary to discuss its past, present, and future. We shall dissect and evaluate these new methodological approaches. Resources for teaching about the region will be provided.

**Presenter: Steve Buenning (History teacher at William Fremd HS, ILCHE Board Member)**

**Title: African Muslims and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**

Description: African Muslims played important roles in the transatlantic slave trade. Online primary sources, including information from the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database (Emory University), will be employed to help students learn about both the "big picture" and the personal stories of African Muslims caught up in the largest forced migration in human history.

## Constructing Text Sets to Support Students' Historical Inquiry

Jacquelynn S. Popp, University of Illinois at Chicago (ILCHE Board Member)

Johanna Heppeler, Leyden High School District, (ILCHE Board Member)

Michael Bolz, University of Illinois at Chicago

Project READI History Design Team

The following piece was written by the above authors in preparation for future submission to a history practitioner journal (hence the length of the piece). Feedback for edits on the paper is welcome!

*When I first started teaching Advanced Placement United States history, I relied heavily upon the College Board's packaged text sets for use in class. However, over the years, I have developed a more thorough understanding of the role sources play in historical inquiry, and have therefore made it a regular practice to put together text sets that cohere to address a central inquiry question and that lend themselves to helping my students think historically about the specific content. Historical content drives many of the decisions I make about texts. However, concern for developing historical skills factors considerably in my decision making as well. With each text I select, in particular primary sources, I consider the text features, which help facilitate the introduction or deepening of particular historical thinking skills. Weighing the needs of my learners with the content demands of an advanced placement course directs my instructional design choices. Many of the packaged text sets assume student mastery of critical historical thinking skills. Generating my own text sets afford me the opportunity to intentionally introduce, practice or assess mastery of a particular historical thinking skill.*

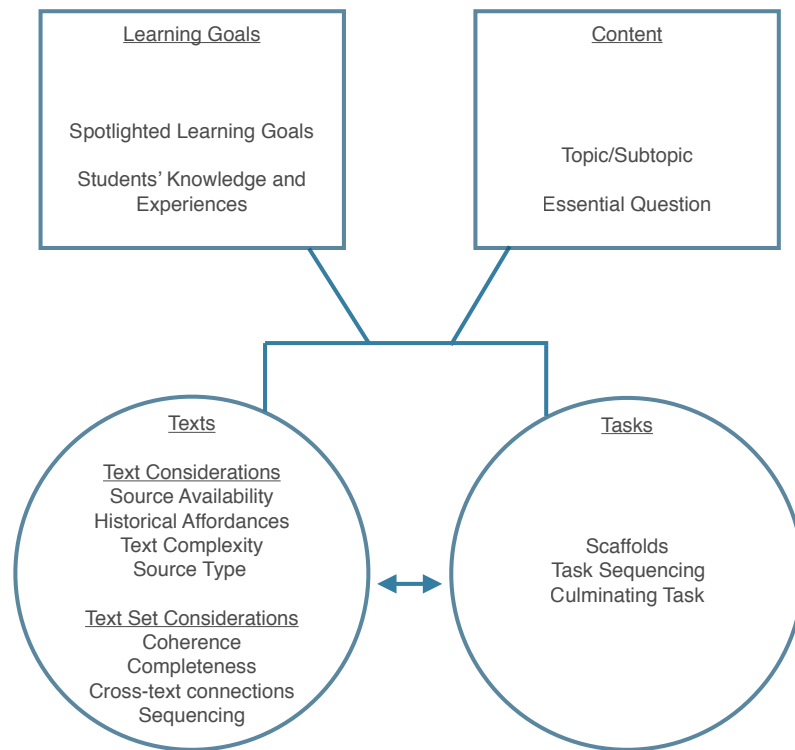
Developing meaningful text sets for instruction has become more imperative than ever, given the increased attention to teaching history as inquiry through the use of primary and secondary sources. The above reflections from the second author, Johanna, reflect one history teacher's experiences with becoming more systematic and purposive with her instructional decisions about texts to support students' inquiry. A large part of Johanna's learning process relates to her involvement with \*Project READI, a large multidisciplinary grant studying students' evidence-based argumentation using multiple texts in 6-12 grade science, history, and literature classrooms.

As part of this research project, the three authors of this piece serve together on a history design team, where we collaborate on the iterative design of history curriculum aligned with core principles of the project. An example of a core principle includes designing tasks that require students to closely read and reread texts, each task relating to an overarching inquiry. The process of selecting texts and determining how they will be used in inquiry units is intentional, thorough, and iterative. It involves weighing multiple intersecting factors, resulting in constant refinement and revision of the many parts in order to make well-informed decisions. By making parts of the process explicit, we hope to provide teachers with a resource to assist them in developing effective text sets in their own classroom.

As figure 1 illustrates, a clear understanding of what we want students to know and be able to do drives the selection of texts and the design of related tasks when constructing curriculum to support students' historical inquiry. Based on our experiences working with

teachers on this project, we have regularly heard how challenging it is to find functional texts beyond textbooks that align to learning goals and cohere to address a central inquiry focus. For that reason, this article tries to elucidate some of the complexities of the process of text selection and use in inquiry units. In this piece, we first briefly define historical inquiry as it relates to classroom instruction, followed by an overview of an exemplary text set for a mini inquiry unit Johanna designed about Spanish Exploration for her 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. We then expand on components of the process of selecting and using texts to support students' historical inquiry.

Figure 1



### Historical Inquiry

Historical inquiry entails reconstruction of the past through close analysis and interpretation of primary (documents from the past) and secondary (documents written about the past) sources (Monte-Seno, 2008; Wineburg 1991). In classrooms, historical inquiry involves students investigating multiple sources to make meaning and build arguments about specific events, historical characters, and time periods.

In recent years, researchers and educators have advocated teaching students specific historical inquiry practices such as sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization (Wineburg, 1991). Sourcing involves considering how details about the source information of a text (e.g. date, author's intended audience) shape our understanding of what the text is saying and doing. Corroboration is comparing and contrasting information presented within and across sources to make evidence-based judgments about what most likely happened in the past. Contextualization is using sources to make inferences about the historical context and recognizing how documents reflect a particular historical time and place (Reisman, 2011). In classrooms, students need explicit instruction about how to leverage such practices and to use the practices routinely and systematically to inform evidence-based, reasoned interpretations of historical sources.

Considering the central role of texts in engaging in historical inquiry, teachers' decisions about texts in the classroom are some of the most important decisions they have to make. Johanna assembled a text set as part of a mini inquiry unit in her classroom. We use this unit as an exemplar to explain the process of text selection and use to support historical inquiry.

### **Spanish Exploration Mini Unit**

As part of an introductory unit to the school year, Johanna developed a text set framed around the question "Was the Spanish Exploration of the New World one of conquest or contact?" The unit was designed to stir up students' preconceived notions about Columbus as a heroic figure and to pique students' curiosity about how and why such stories are told and retold as "known" history. A few powerful texts were designed to introduce convincing evidence that contradicts most students' existing narratives of Spanish Exploration. At the same time, the texts were designed to demonstrate how primary sources are the basis for how historians construct their stories about such events.

Thus, the unit centered on three main learning goals. Johanna aimed for students to: 1) begin developing an understanding of history as a constructed, evidence-based, incomplete approximation of the past; 2) familiarize themselves with the role historical texts play in interpretation; and 3) become familiar with two key historical inquiry practices, namely sourcing and corroboration. In consideration of these goals, Johanna integrated the following four texts into her inquiry unit.

- [Columbian Exchange Map](#): this map details the exchange of products from Europe, Africa and Asia to the Americas and vice versa. The map provides some evidence of both contact and conflict.
- *"Columbus, the Indians and Human Progress"* (Zinn, 1980, chapter 1, pp. 3-16): Howard Zinn argues that the Spanish colonization brought more harm than good to the indigenous people of North, Central and South America. Relying on evidence from the journals of a Dominican friar, Bartolome de Las Casas, Zinn reconstructs the Spanish colonization as a ruthless moment in world history.
- [History of the Indies](#) (de Las Casas, 1542): An excerpt from the journal of Bartolome de Las Casas is a primary source Zinn relied on in his interpretation of the nature of Spanish colonization. De Las Casas presents strong opposition to the Spanish encomienda system, describing in detail the horrific treatment of the natives at the hands of the Europeans.
- *The American Pageant* (Bailey, 14th Edition 2010, chapter 1, pp. 14-24): in this textbook chapter, Bailey provides information addressing both sides of the inquiry, "conquest" and "contact."

### **Selecting Texts and Designing Tasks for Inquiry Units**

The selection of texts and the designing of tasks for inquiry is a complex process that requires significant thought and considerable time. In this section, we approach this process by looking at each component of the planning process and consider some of the decisions necessary to successfully and intentionally plan an inquiry based history unit.

#### Learning Goals and Content

When designing a text set, using a central idea, problem, or essential question constrains the topic by ensuring the inquiry is clear and focused. Essentially, information conveyed by each text should bring students closer to arriving at a response to the question. Determining an essential question is of course an iterative process, and the question may change based on factors such as alignment with learning goals and the availability of sources.

Although the essential question and accompanying text sets usually lend themselves to addressing myriad learning goals, it is useful to determine a small set of goals that directly link

to the overarching inquiry in each unit. Even though other relevant historical concepts and inquiry practices surfaced throughout the Spanish Exploration unit, by “spotlighting” three specific learning goals, Johanna was able to concentrate her efforts on supporting and assessing student learning in these areas more systematically.

### Texts

Although learning goals and content drive the selection and use of texts, the process is certainly not as linear as it is conveyed in the figure above. Instead, it involves a necessary back and forth between analyzing sources, considering their utility in relation to the learning goals and the essential question, and making decisions about what, if anything, needs to be changed. Changes might include revisions to the topic and subtopic, learning goals, essential question, texts, tasks, etc. As part of this thorough process, it is imperative to consider multiple features of individual sources as well as to analyze how the sources work together to address the essential question and to support the learning goals.

#### *Considerations for individual texts*

Finding useful, engaging, and relevant sources can be contingent on the content and time period of historical study. Usually, the more distant the event in history, the more involved it can be to find accessible primary sources. This unfortunately limits the scope of the inquiry for many topics, such as ancient civilizations. In cases where it is challenging to find texts containing information relevant to the bigger question, decisions need to be made about a) finding other texts that do, and/or b) including the text in instruction and facilitating conversations with students about their relevancy, and/or c) reframing the essential question or refining the subtopic to align with the available sources.

When teachers do find potential sources to use in a lesson or unit, a key part of the process of examining each text is considering three interconnected features - the type of source, the complexity of the source, and what historical affordances are represented in the source. Considerations about *source type* include whether or not the source is primary or secondary, the genre of the source (e.g. memoir, newspaper, legal document), and the modality in which information is presented (such as written text, graphic, audio/visual). Because each type of source has different affordances and limitations, we read them differently when we're asking and answering questions about the past. Therefore, teachers' awareness of these differences is crucial in helping teachers determine what kind of supports students will need to make sense of each text they encounter.

A second feature to consider about texts for inquiry units is *text complexity*. In recent years, text complexity has become a “buzz” word because of the Common Core State Standards. The complexity of a text, however, is not a fixed thing. Whether or not a text is considered complex depends on who is reading it, when they are reading it, for what purpose, and in what sociocultural context. In making decisions about sources, avoiding difficult texts is not the answer. Instead, teachers need to analyze sources to “decide whether texts need to be scaffolded in terms of vocabulary, prior knowledge, and discourse” (Moje, 2010, p. 60) with the goal of moving toward students' independent reading and comprehension of texts.

A third consideration about the features of sources involves the types of *historical affordance* represented in texts. By historical affordances, we mean how the source represents specific subject matter or how it lends itself to engaging in historical inquiry practices. To support historical inquiry, teachers can analyze and purposefully select texts to represent a wide variety of historical affordances. For example, certain sources contain information or language that lend themselves to introducing certain historical inquiry practice. For example, the de Las Casas text represents a blatant perspective and therefore one cannot help but ask themselves questions while reading, such as “who was de Las Casas?” and “who was he writing to and for what purpose?” For an introductory unit, these were precisely the types of questions Johanna wanted her students to grapple with in order to understand the role that sourcing documents plays in the inquiry process.

### *Considerations across texts in sets*

In addition to making decisions about the characteristics of each individual source, it is imperative to consider how each text works in conjunction with other texts within lessons and across the unit. A well-integrated text set is one that is both *coherent* and *complete*. Ensuring a set of texts is coherent involves determining the relationship among sources, or how sources “speak” to each other around the essential question or central themes of the unit. Ensuring the completeness of a text set involves awareness of whose story is being told and whose perspectives are and are not included and why.

In the case of the Spanish Exploration text set, the sources provide only a limited range of perspectives on the topic, as the text set only includes one primary source – an excerpt from de Las Casas’ journals – and Zinn heavily relies on this one source in his secondary analysis. However, Johanna wanted her students to experience reading the same primary source that other historians used in their historical interpretations. Therefore she decided as an introductory unit, opening students’ eyes to the inherent biases and limits of historians’ inquiry processes trumped the notion of providing a comprehensive picture of the topic.

With a coherent and complete text set in place, final decisions involve how the *sequencing of texts* can help to build students’ conceptual knowledge of the subject matter and facilitate engagement in historical inquiry practices. In the Spanish Exploration unit, Johanna purposively first introduced Zinn’s argument in order for students to understand how historians use primary sources to build interpretations. Students then examined the primary source excerpt, de Las Casas, in order to engage in the interpretive process firsthand. After students had built a deeper understanding of Zinn’s argument based on reading De Las Casas’ primary account, Johanna then introduced an additional historian’s interpretation, Bailey, who approached the issue from a different lens than Zinn. This sequencing allowed students to think about how historians may disagree in their interpretations of the past, engaging students with the idea that history is interpretation and reinterpretation of the past, able to be contested and argued.

In addition to these considerations, one also needs to attend to the ways in which sources relate (and do not relate) to each other. This becomes especially important when teachers want to improve students’ ability to make cross-text connections and corroborate across primary and secondary sources. Attending to and knowing these connections among texts during planning aids in the sequencing of texts and can create opportunities to deepen students’ understanding of history.

### Tasks

The more cognizant teachers are of the information conveyed in texts in relation to the inquiry question and learning goals, the more they can anticipate how students will make meaning of the texts and provide scaffolds for areas where students might struggle to make connections. Thus, the process of constructing inquiry units necessarily involves designing tasks to support students’ historical inquiry with texts.

### **Conclusion**

Johanna designed a unit that served as an introduction into inquiry processes central to the discipline of history. This introduction served as a foundation for deepening historical inquiry skills such as sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration over the course of the school year. At the same time, the unit serves as an anchor, or a reference point for future discussions about the nature of history and what it is that historians do.

The process of developing rich texts set to support students’ historical inquiry can be empowering, as teachers can adapt text sets to facilitate their rigorous learning goals, while also maintaining a focus on the needs of divergent student populations. Furthermore, the process is iterative, and therefore teachers have the flexibility to make changes at any point throughout the process. Finally, the process encourages collaboration among networks of history teachers who

can speak to the affordances and limitations of particular texts and the coherency and completeness of text sets within the constraints of specific content.

Our explanation of this process is a work in progress, and we therefore welcome feedback from history teachers. We are interested in hearing from teachers on both ends of the continuum, from those who have little experience to teachers who have an abundance of experience supporting students' historical inquiry (and of course teachers anywhere in between as well).

*\*In addition to the three authors, members of the Project READI history design team include (in alphabetical order): Gayle Cribb, Julia Emig, MariAnne George, Susan R. Goldman, Cyndy Greenleaf, Jodi Hoard, Michael Mandarino, Diane Puklin, Josh Radinsky, Cyndie Shanahan*

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Visit our project website: <http://projectreadi.org/research.html>

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### **Excerpt from Bartolome de Las Casas, *The Destruction of the Indies*, 1542**

*A strong voice against the treatment of the natives under the encomienda system, the Dominican, Bartolome de Las Casas, wrote, spoke and was an advocate for basic human rights. In this selection, Las Casas juxtaposes the native culture with the Spanish invaders and describes in detail the horrific treatment of the natives at the hands of the Europeans.*

The Christians, with their horses and swords, began to slaughter and practice strange cruelty among them. They penetrated into the country and spared neither children nor the aged, nor pregnant women, nor those in child labour, all of whom they ran through the body and lacerated, as though they were assaulting so many lambs herded in their sheepfold. The Indians are our brothers, and Christ has given his life for them. Why, then, do we persecute them with such inhuman savagery when they do not deserve such treatment?

## **Links to interesting and useful news and resources**

### **A Choices Leadership Institute, July 7-11, 2014, Brown University, Providence, RI Application Deadline: Monday, March 17, 2014**

The Choices Leadership Institute is an opportunity to be immersed in the Choices Program's award-winning curriculum materials and approach, and plan strategies for introducing the Choices Program to participants' school districts and beyond. While using the Choices Program's forthcoming curriculum unit on modern Turkey as a content focus, participants will examine instructional strategies for engaging secondary students in the study of contested international issues, share best practices with other dedicated and innovative teachers, and explore methods for conducting effective professional development. More information and an application can be found at: [The Choices Program](#)

### **The Right Way to Teach History**

The Washington Post



<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/09/25/the-right-way-to-teach-history/>

### **Standing on Common Ground: Building Cultural and Academic Literacy**

Education Week archived webinar: Presenter: Sharroky Hollie, executive director, Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning; and assistant professor for teacher education, California State University

<https://vts.inxpo.com/scripts/Server.nxp?LASCmd=AI:4;F:QS!10100&ShowKey=16342&partnref=TOC&Referrer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.edweek.org%2Fews%2Fmarketplace%2Fwebinars%2Fwebinars.html>

### **The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History**

2014 Teacher Seminars

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/programs-exhibitions/2013-teacher-seminars-0>

2013 National History Teacher of the Year

*Jill Szymanski named 2013 National History Teacher of the Year by The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, HISTORY®, and Preserve America*

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/about/delaware-teacher-named-2013-national-history-teacher-year>

Digitization of Major American History Collection Announced

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/about/digitization-major-american-history-collection-announced>

Teaching Literacy through History Units and Lesson Plans. Common Core Units and Lessons in American History. Developed by master teachers. Aligned to Common Core State Standards.

[http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/literature-and-language-arts/resources/teaching-common-core?utm\\_source=Common+Core+Units+Announcement&utm\\_campaign=TLTH+Lesson+Plans+Launch&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/literature-and-language-arts/resources/teaching-common-core?utm_source=Common+Core+Units+Announcement&utm_campaign=TLTH+Lesson+Plans+Launch&utm_medium=email)

### **Reading in the History Classroom**

Teachinghistory.org

<http://teachinghistory.org/issues-and-research/research-brief/25421>

### **Rush Limbaugh Has No Business Teaching History to Our Kids**

The Daily Beast

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/09/10/rush-limbaugh-has-no-business-teaching-history-to-our-kids.html>

*As always, if any ILCHE members would like to provide comments or feedback on information in this newsletter, do not hesitate to contact members of the board (click on the "Contact" tab of our website: <http://ilche.net/contact.html>). Also, we welcome writing from members to include in upcoming newsletters. Let your voice be heard!*