

The Curriculum Development of Experienced Teachers who are Inexperienced with History-Based Pedagogy

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Abstract

Contemporary American education initiatives mandate half of all English language arts content is non-fiction. History topics, therefore, will increase within all elementary and English language arts middle level classrooms. The education initiatives have rigorous expectations for students' close readings of, and written argumentation about, numerous texts representing multiple perspectives about the same historical event, era, or figure. Practicing English language arts teachers must adjust pedagogy accordingly. They cannot utilize a single, whole-class novel with comprehension questions as an assessment. With teaching experience but not formal training in history-based pedagogy, they are *adaptive experts*. This qualitative study explores how English language arts teachers adapt. Six upper elementary and middle level (5th-8th) teachers who recently received graduate-level history education training were given grant money to develop and implement history-based curricula. This inquiry examined their curricular selections and how they integrated history literacy and historical thinking within text-based writing, or historical argumentation. It also evaluates the efficacy of their assessments.

Keywords: *history literacy; historical thinking; historical argumentation.*

Introduction

Education is often subject to change and teachers must adapt accordingly. Educators largely rely on understandings developed as preservice candidates, personal beliefs, and in the extended, disconnected professional development offered by school districts (Cimbricz, 2002; Kenna & Russell, 2015; Vogler, 2008). This study explores how six English language arts teachers responded to new education mandates that require adjustments in reading and writing with history-based content. The new education mandates are intended to bolster students' critical thinking.

Critical thinking manifests through interpretation, evaluation, and creative demonstrations of newly generated understandings (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Even young students can evaluate and create when given age-appropriate scaffolding (Barton, 2002; Fehn & Heckart, 2013; Sunal & Coleman, 2013; Sunal, Kelley, & Sunal, 2012). Critical thinking is

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foundational for powerful, purposeful social studies and appears in history literacy, historical thinking, and historical argumentation (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2009, 2013). History literacy is the scrutiny of primary documents for source, perspective, credibility, and context, among other things (Gaston, Martinez, & Martin, 2016; Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2001). Reliant on history literacy, historical thinking appears as consideration of historical perspectives, of ethical dimensions of actions, and of tensions that emerge when continuity confronts change (Seixas & Morton, 2012). Requiring history literacy and historical thinking, historical argumentation is text-based articulations of newly constructed historical understandings (Monte-Sano, 2012; Monte-Sano, De La Paz, & Felton, 2014). History literacy is a close analysis, historical thinking is a broader evaluation, and historical argumentation communicates conclusions derived from history literacy and historical thinking. All three are developed and not “uploaded at maturity and synced with their prior knowledge” (Bickford, 2013b, p. 61). Students’ success at sourcing, contextualizing, or communicating understandings is determined more by experience than age (Gaston, Martinez, & Martin, 2016; VanSledright, 2002; Wineburg, Smith, & Breakstone, 2012). Effective scaffolding can enable young students to flourish where inexperienced, older students flounder (Brophy & Alleman, 2002; Fallace, Biscoe, & Perry, 2007; Holloway & Chiodo, 2009). History instruction, though, has not always been central within elementary schools (Lintner, 2006; McMurrer, 2008; Yendol-Hoppey & Tilford, 2004). History instruction in the middle grades has traditionally been implemented by trained social studies teachers. This changed with new education mandates.

American education initiatives compel students’ criticality across curricula (NCSS, 2013; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010; Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC], 2012). Three significant changes—and their implications for teachers’ selection of content, curricular resources, and assessments—are noteworthy. First, half of all English, language arts, and reading content must be non-fiction, which increases history curricula in elementary and middle grades (McMurrer, 2008). Second, students are to scrutinize multiple texts of the same event, era, or figure to determine authorial bias or perspective (RI6, RI9), which requires English language arts teachers to do more than assign a whole-class novel. Third, students must demonstrate newly generated understandings in text-based writing, like persuasive essays (W1) and evidentiary arguments (W2). No curricular resources are provided

so teachers must adjust—or develop—curricula. It is important to examine *how* teachers build curricula, especially English language arts teachers who are inexperienced with history literacy, historical thinking, and historical argumentation.

The support systems for classroom methods and assessments are not necessarily equal. Numerous methodological guides directed towards various grades can facilitate close reading (e.g. Austin & Thompson, 2015; Loewen, 2010; Wineburg, Martin, & Monte-Sano, 2011). Scholarship targeting cognition patterns can assist teachers in disciplinary literacy (e.g., Bickford, 2013b; Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2001; Wineburg et al., 2012). A myriad of journals (e.g., *The History Teacher*, *Social Studies Research and Practice*, *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, and *Social Education*) and websites (e.g., *Historical Thinking Matters*, *The Historical Thinking Project*, and *Teaching with Primary Sources*) provide guidance, yet most center on methods and few on assessments.² This is a concern because assessments play a pivotal role in students' learning (Black & William, 1998; Shavelson et al., 2008; Wineburg et al., 2012) and, as noted above, the education initiatives significantly change expectations for students' historical argumentation. The websites and journals largely target content for secondary students, not elementary and middle level.³ It would be meaningful to explore how elementary and middle level English language arts teachers select and implement history-based assessments. They have various options.

Types of Assessments

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a criterion-referenced English language arts and mathematics assessment that aligns with most state standards and is positively correlated to norm-referenced tests. History teachers do not have similar assessments, yet can employ formative assessments and authentic assessments. Formative and authentic assessments have similar intents, different approaches, and important distinctions. Both compel students to employ evidence extracted from close readings. They differ in how students *use* newly constructed understandings, whether it is responding to text-dependent questions, writing to the sources, or narrative writing. The subsequent subsections are an illustrative, not exhaustive, list.

² *Beyond the Bubble* is an anomalous resource that centers on assessments, yet it targets teachers of secondary students.

³ *Bringing History Home* and *Social Studies and the Young Learner* are two anomalous resources that target elementary students, but still provide far more methods than assessments.

Formative Assessment. Robust test items are easy to grade and can potentially evoke criticality, yet are difficult to create (Shavelson et al., 2008; Stobaugh, Tassell, Day, & Blankenship, 2011). To move beyond the single answer paradigm and accommodate nuance, weighted multiple-choice (WMCs) items offer many correct answers; each answer receives differing levels of points depending on degree of correctness and completeness (VanSledright, 2014). WMCs and traditional test items target—yet arguably struggle to evoke—history literacy and historical thinking. Ready-made answers make it difficult to achieve history literacy and historical thinking. They do not position students to engage in historical argumentation, or text-based articulations of newly constructed historical understandings.

Document-based questions (DBQs) and single account interpretative essays (SAIEs) elicit history literacy, historical thinking, and historical argumentation (e.g. Monte-Sano, 2012; Monte-Sano et al., 2014; Wineburg et al., 2011; Wineburg et al., 2012; VanSledright, 2014). They do so with primary source material and a clear writing prompt. DBQs are a collection of rich, related primary documents that converge and diverge in curious ways (Monte-Sano, 2012; Monte-Sano et al., 2014; Wineburg et al., 2011). SAIEs are a close scrutiny of a single document (Wineburg et al., 2012; VanSledright, 2014). Both are guided queries whereby students scrutinize the source (history literacy), juxtapose analyses with prior knowledge (historical thinking), and communicate understandings (historical argumentation). DBQs channel students' considerations towards the documents' interconnections; they can overwhelm students who struggle with numerous sources, especially if it is timed (Monte-Sano, 2012; Monte-Sano et al., 2014; Wineburg et al., 2011). SAIEs, with a single document and numerous questions, are smaller in scope yet similarly robust (Wineburg et al., 2012; VanSledright, 2014). Research suggests students' success depends more on teachers' scaffolding and students' experience than students' age (Wineburg et al., 2011; Wineburg et al., 2012). The formative assessments DBQs and SAIEs are examples of historical argumentation and rely on both historical thinking and history literacy.

Test items, DBQs, and SAIEs appear on Advanced Placement exams and various state exams; WMCs remain a tantalizing yet unemployed option. Students view these formative assessments as a test. The association is not adverse, yet may have negative connotations for young learners who can find such tasks daunting or dull (Hinchman, Alvermann, Boyd, Brozo, &

Vacca, 2003/2004; McCarthy & Moje, 2002). Authentic assessments can potentially interest, rather than intimidate, students (Alvermann, 2002; Smith & Wilhelm, 2006).

Authentic Assessment. Authentic assessments position students to creatively demonstrate newly generated understandings, the highest level of criticality (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Fehn & Heckart, 2013). A young learner may view authentic assessments as a project, not a test, because of the novelty, choice, and opportunity for creative expression (Bickford, 2010a, 2010b; Fehn & Heckart, 2013). Authentic assessments can take myriad forms, like historical fiction newspapers, movies, political cartoons, and diverse visual constructions like timelines, concept maps, and Venn diagrams.

Creating a historical fiction newspaper position students to engage in diverse writing styles. Editorials, current events, letters to the editor, headline news, and germane advertisements or announcements each require different prose and syntax. In doing so, students consider the source, the source's perspective, context of publication, and audience, which are history literacy elements (Bickford & Wilton, 2012; Gaston, Martinez, & Martin, 2016; Gregg & Greene, 2010; Schwartz, 2009). Movie creation involves elements of historical argumentation much like a historical essay; both very young and struggling secondary students have demonstrated historical understandings through movie-making (Fehn & Heckart, 2013; Fehn & Schul, 2014). Students can encode messages and meaning through symbolism and text within original political cartoons (OPC) in ways comparable to a persuasive essay (Bickford, 2012; Sallis, Rule, & Jennings, 2009). Professional political cartoons are used for interpretation, yet OPCs are both an authentic assessment of the creator's learning and a teaching tool for classroom interpretative dialogue (Bickford, 2010a, 2010b). Graphic organizers positively impact students' cognition as they visually represent complex understandings (Bickford, 2011; Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002; DiCecco & Gleason, 2002; Mutlu, 2009); timelines, concept maps, and Venn diagrams each have elements of historical thinking and history literacy. The sequencing inherent in timelines positions students to consider cause and effect and to contextualize abrupt historical changes; concept maps position students to establish historical significance as they diagram interconnections between historical figures, events, and concepts; Venn diagrams facilitate juxtaposition and enable students to distinguish historical perspective.

Elements of history literacy and historical thinking emerge within each of these authentic assessments, yet they all have problematic areas. Movie-making and historical fiction

newspapers lend themselves to group work; it is difficult, but not impossible, for a teacher to disentangle individual students' contributions during a group project. Most schools have the needed technology and Internet access for movie-making and OPCs, yet access is may be difficult. Students may be less excited to make timelines, concept maps, and Venn diagrams as they are quite common. These concerns represent some foreseeable, problematic aspects. Teachers must weigh many variables when selecting an assessment.

Previous research has explored the impact of social studies teachers' attitudes on pedagogy (Kilinç et al., 2016; Mishra, 2014), particularly how it shapes curricular adjustment for state and national education initiatives (Kenna & Russell, 2015). This inquiry examines how English language teachers adjust curricula to incorporate history-based topics. The participants can be termed *adaptive experts* because they are experienced teachers inexperienced with this particular pedagogy (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986; Patel & Groen, 1991; Wineburg, 1998, 2001). This study centers on teachers' curriculum construction and the assessments' effectiveness. These elements will be examined through the frameworks of socio-cultural theory and cognitive constructivism (John-Steiner & Mann, 1996; Mishra, 2014; Nokes, 2011; Spivey, 1997; Vygotsky, 1986; Wineburg, 2001). The inquiry will consider barriers to refined historical understanding that are common in young learners, specifically overburdened cognition, a dearth of prior knowledge, and unsophisticated view of history as simply events that happened (Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2001). The subsequent section details the employed methods.

Methods

To see how experienced teachers develop and implement new curricula, I needed funds to support curriculum development and willing research participants. A grant funded the purchase of classroom materials for teachers interested in implementing history-based units. A second grant subsidized a research assistant to expedite the process of primary source location and modification. I intentionally sought practicing upper elementary and middle level teachers because of the changed expectations and dearth of curricular support for these ages. I sought experienced teachers motivated to implement, if not experienced with, history education pedagogy. I targeted practicing teachers who had previously completed my graduate level history education pedagogy course, could articulate interconnections between C3 Framework and Common Core, and wanted to develop or refine a history-based curriculum unit. All

communication about research took place more than one semester after students completed the course.

Participants

All potential teachers received a summer invitation via email to receive self-selected curricular materials in exchange for dialogue about development and implementation of a history topic. The study was approved and monitored by the Institutional Review Board. Except for two teachers who were colleagues, teachers all worked in different school districts and had no contact with each other.

To ensure each teacher received between \$500 and \$1000 for curricular support, the convenience sample could not exceed six to eight teachers. The grant supplied teachers around one hundred trade books, which represented three whole-class novels, multiple sets of literacy circle novels, or some combination thereof. The state's disinvestment in public schools and local districts' tenuous financial situation perhaps enticed participation. No teacher, however, appeared motivated entirely by the tangible monetary incentive. The participants' backgrounds are detailed in *Teachers' Position and Experience* (Table One).

Table 1.

Teachers' Position and Experience

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Experience</u>
Debra	5 th grade self-contained	12 years
Joyce	5 th grade self-contained	34 years
Linda	6 th grade reading, writing, and word study	4 years
Becca	6 th grade reading and language arts	8 years
Terra	7 th grade English	6 years
Elsie	8 th grade English	16 years

Note. All names are pseudonyms.

District-based classifications for job titles were used. Debra and Joyce—colleagues for almost a decade—each taught a single class all subject areas. Terra and Elsie taught a single subject to multiple classes. In distinct block formats, Linda taught two classes three subject

areas and Becca taught three classes two subject areas. Only Debra and Joyce had history or social studies within their job description. When asked their primary curricular responsibility, all participants noted English, reading, or language arts. None of the participants identified as a history or social studies teacher or had a degree, concentration, endorsement, or area of emphasis in history or social studies. Their expertise, interest, and experience were in English language arts, not history; they all had extensive experience developing and implementing age-appropriate curricula, but not history curricula. They can be characterized as *adaptive experts*, as their classroom expertise enables an effective, efficient acclimatization to novel curricula (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986; Patel & Groen, 1991; Wineburg, 1998, 2001). They were capable, if not experienced, history teachers. Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, or the ability to intertwine discipline-specific techniques with age-appropriate content, perhaps matters more than historical knowledge (Barton & Levstik, 2003; McDiarmid, 1994; VanSledright, 1996; Wineburg et al., 2012).

Curricular Materials

I offered an array of potential topics with accompanying curricular materials for teachers to select and consider. The classroom materials consisted of trade books and primary sources. Previous research about trade books' historical representation informed suggestions (Bickford, 2013a, 2015; Bickford, Dilley, & Hunt, 2015; Bickford & Hunt, 2014; Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b; Bickford, Schuette, & Rich, 2015; Schwebel, 2011; Williams, 2009). Teachers, though, selected the trade books. I offered a myriad of primary sources to enrich and complicate trade books' narratives. With assistance from a graduate student, the length, prose, and syntax of text-based primary sources were modified to make decades- or centuries-old primary sources accessible for young learners (Wineburg & Martin, 2009). Teachers received a copy of the original, the abridged version, and a narrative detailing intricacies about each specific primary source and how it related to content included within or omitted from the trade books. Appendix A is an illustrative example.

Upon receipt of books and sources, teachers provided a tentative, projected outline. I encouraged teachers to adjust the outline and offered to locate more or different primary sources. After implementation, I received three items from each teacher: a retrospective outline of the unit's tasks including targeted elements of history literacy or historical thinking; an assessment from all students that indicates their involvement; and permission to use all correspondence. As

such, this research has three data sources: teachers' curricular outlines, students' assessments of learning, and all communication, which was almost entirely via email.

Data Analysis

I scrutinized teachers' outlines to determine elements of history literacy (Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2001) and historical thinking (Seixas & Morton, 2012). Attention was paid to the presence of distinct perspectives, and the interconnections between primary and secondary sources. I examined students' assessments, or historical argumentation, for integration of diverse sources and evidence of historical thinking and history literacy. Each assessment was analyzed to determine its efficacy.

I employed content analysis—specifically open coding and axial coding—during analysis of all email correspondence and notes derived from verbal conversations (Krippendorff, 2013; Wineburg, 1998, 2001). I first read all correspondence and noted both patterns and anomalies to the patterns. This initial scrutiny, or open coding, enabled a better understanding what was stated, not stated, and implied. After the initial observation, I synthesized notes into tentative, testable codes. I used axial coding as I reevaluated the presence (or absence) of content to determine the codes' frequency and credibility. There is potential for error in misreading the correspondence. To ensure accuracy, I posed clarification questions to teachers via email.

Findings

Distinct and meaningful patterns emerged when viewing teachers' curricular outlines, students' assessments of learning, and all communication. Teachers' motivation to develop or refine curriculum, assessment selections, and the selected assessments' effectiveness are the focus. As adaptive experts, teachers were aware of their inexperience and motivated to learn; their appreciation changed throughout the course of the study (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986; Patel & Groen, 1991; Wineburg, 1998, 2001). With varying degrees of success, their selected assessments positioned students to engage in historical argumentation. These are viewed through the optics of socio-cultural theory and cognitive constructivism with specific focus on the barriers of historical argumentation (John-Steiner & Mann, 1996; Nokes, 2011; Spivey, 1997; Vygotsky, 1986; Wineburg, 2001).

Teachers' Motivation

Teachers' participation was voluntary and extra work. Classroom materials were a tangible reward. Why, then, did teachers choose to participate? What did they verbalize as their initial motivation(s)? What did they most value upon completion? Their answers are viewed from their position as adaptive experts (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986; Patel & Groen, 1991; Wineburg, 1998, 2001).

According to teachers' comments, three elements induced initial participation: to align curricula to new education initiatives, receive free trade books, and obtain digital copies of complementary primary sources modified to their grade level. All teachers noted the first two and four mentioned all three. Debra's explanation is a representative example, "With all the changes from Common Core, I [know I] need to teach more history and *from more angles* so I need lots of trade books about one topic. Plus, your [primary source] material will have *unique perspectives*" (emphasis added). Educational initiatives were fundamental to teachers' initial motivation. As adaptive experts, teachers recognized the new requirements ("from more angles"; "unique perspectives"), their own inexperience ("I need to teach more..."), and the need for expert support ("your [primary source] material"). The type of support they most valued, though, would change.

During and after curricular implementation, however, teachers appreciated the primary sources. They recognized students' interest in and concentration on the adapted, competing primary sources. Terra noted, "Those documents really hooked the kids! Especially the opposites, like the slave owner's diary and the escaped slave's story [oral history]!!! [*sic*] That was wonderful how many you gave me. I could never find those. I don't have time to do it." Other teachers, like Terra, valued how students responded to the novel, juxtaposed primary sources. As Becca noted, the historical documents intrigued students in ways other curricular resources did not.

They [primary sources] made my kids look at it like a crime scene and think like detectives. They love good literature, but they don't interrogate books like they do PDs from opposite sides. The sources intrigued me. The arrest record [of Rosa Parks] says one thing, the diagram [of the bus used in court by the prosecution] and her oral history each say another thing, plus the [Montgomery City Bus] code was in violation of the Supreme Court. They had to piece together not just what happened first but why the stories were different.

Becca valued the sources not simply as material or as classroom content, but as catalysts for students' history literacy and historical thinking. The teachers all appreciated the novelty and evocative nature of the sources and, specifically, how they elicited students' interest. They also recognized the effort needed to locate and modify the sources. Joyce verbalized these sentiments. She also candidly noted something others might have felt but did not share.

I love the books but I love the history docs [*sic*] more because I could have bought the book myself but I couldn't have done that [locating and modifying] with the docs [*sic*]. Too much time. I wish I could have these for all my non-fiction topics. You showed me a start and there's a lot I can do, but there's just so much to do. Find the book that will hook most kids, engage the kids with it, and move on to the next topic is kind of how I was taught. I was taught to cover a lot of topics because there are a lot of topics to cover. I know one textbook won't [suffice]. I know one whole class novel won't either. I understand where Common Core is going and I understand why. I know my kids loved the docs [*sic*] they read! They were so excited and had so many questions. There's now just a lot of work [to do] for every topic. It's just so different.

Joyce's comments were reflective, candid, and intense. Joyce appreciated students' responses to the primary sources, yet she felt she did not have the time, expertise, and perhaps motivation to independently locate and modify the sources. As an adaptive expert, Joyce recognized the effort and time it would take to independently develop such curricula. The intensity of Joyce's sentiment could possibly be explained by her proximity to her impending retirement, her job as a self-contained classroom teacher, which requires daily preparation for various disciplines, a combination of both, or perhaps other undetected variables. Other teachers did not express Joyce's unease, yet they all valued students' responses.

Content Development

Participating classroom teachers experienced graduate coursework in history education pedagogy. Their course centered on the C3 Framework and disciplinary literacy connections with Common Core. While they were not required to incorporate any single element, this research examined teachers' history-based content development. When funded for classroom materials, what topic(s) did they select? Why these topics? How did they select and position content to facilitate students' historical inquiry?

All the teachers selected some element of African Americans’ experiences during the 19th and 20th centuries. When queried, all teachers used one of two (or both) justifications: it is too complex to be done simplistically and it is too meaningful to be done superficially. Debra’s explanation illustrated the former, how African Americans’ experiences is too complex to be done simplistically.

I’ve tried the Civil War in the past with a textbook in social studies and slavery in a historical fiction book in English. Interdisciplinary units are usually great but my kids were always always always [*sic*] bored. The textbook was dry but I expected that. I’ve used lots of [trade] books ... I am always disappointed at how they [the trade books] are simple, so straight forward. Every [trade] book starts during slavery and ends with freedom, and it’s so simple. The textbook mentions the end of slavery and kind of drops off. ... I know it [Reconstruction] was bad after [slavery]. There are just so many sides to the story. I have never done it justice because it is so complicated.

Debra revealed unease at her unfamiliarity with the topic’s intricacies, which negatively impacted students’ grasp of its historical significance. Elsie’s comment represented the latter, how African Americans’ experiences is too meaningful to be done superficially. She said, “If the Holocaust was the worst thing that happened during the 20th century, then slavery was for the 19th. It is just so important.” Every teacher characterized the topic as complex, consequential, or both.

Table 2.

Teachers’ Content Selections

<u>Name</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Debra	Slavery and the Civil War
Joyce	Slavery and the Civil War
Linda	Claudette Colvin, Malcolm X, and other civil rights contributors
Becca	Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott
Terra	Slavery
Elsie	Slavery and Segregation

Teachers also had pragmatic reasons. Debra and Joyce are colleagues that share a grade level; they selected interrelated themes to amass more material. Linda, aware of earlier grade teachers' civil rights units targeting Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, wanted students to appreciate misunderstood or forgotten contributors. Becca, weary of simplistic representations of Rosa Parks, sought to contextualize Parks's arrest within a complex timeline of meaningful yet largely disregarded antecedents and subsequent events. Terra hoped to capture the interest from the Hollywood movie, *Twelve Years a Slave*, and channel it within her classroom. Elsie—in response to male students' apathy towards reading and interest in sports—planned a unit on Jackie Robinson, segregation, and segregation's origins in slavery. Stockpiling curricula, re-teaching content in better ways, and harnessing Hollywood and sports were pragmatic aspects of teachers' curricular considerations.

I probed teachers' interest in a single or multiple class novels, literacy circles differentiated by topic, interest, or reading level, or some amalgamation. Teachers' topics, classroom format, the targeted perspective or niche, and books are reported in the subsequent table.

Table 3.

Teachers' Selected Trade Books

Debra and Joyce – 5th Grade

Topic: Slavery and Civil War

Format: Literacy circles (six total; three for each historical era)

Trade Books' Perspective/Niche:

Slavery

Lester, J. (2007). *Day of tears: A novel in dialogue*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

Sterling, D. (1987). *Freedom train*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Wyeth, S. (2002). *Freedom's wings: Corey's Underground Railroad diary, Book One, 1857*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Civil War

Denenberg, B. (1996). *When will this cruel war be over? The Diary of Emma Simpson, Gordonsville, VA, 1864*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Hansen, J. (1992). *Which way freedom?* New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Paulsen, G. (2000). *Soldier's heart*. New York, NY: Random House.

Linda – 6th Grade

Topic: Claudette Colvin, Malcolm X, and other civil rights contributors

Format: Whole class novels

Trade Books' Perspective/Niche:

Comprehensive History

Levine, E. (1990). *If you lived at the time of Martin Luther King*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Focused History

Adoff, A. (2000). *Malcolm X*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Hoose, P. (2009). *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*. New York, NY: Farrar Straus Giroux.

Becca – 6th Grade

Topic: Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Format: Mixed (one whole class novel; six trade books for literacy circles)

Trade Books' Perspective/Niche:

Historically Representative (whole class novel)

Giovanni, N. (2005). *Rosa*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.

Differing Degrees of Historical Representation (literacy circles)

Edwards, P. (2005). *The bus ride that changed history: The story of Rosa Parks*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Kittinger, J. (2010). *Rosa's bus: The ride to civil rights*. Honesdale, PA: Calkins Creek Press.

Parks, R. & Haskins, J. (1997). *I am Rosa Parks*. London, England: Penguin Books.

Pingry, P. (2007). *The story of Rosa Parks*. Nashville, TN: CandyCane.

Reynolds, A. (2010). *Back of the bus*. New York, NY: Philomel Books.

Ringgold, F. (1999). *If a bus could talk: The story of Rosa Parks*. New York, NY: Aladdin Books.

Terra – 7th Grade

Topic: Slavery

Format: Mixed (one whole class novel; six trade books for literacy circles)

Trade Books' Perspective/Niche:

Historically Representative (whole class novel)

Fradin, J. & Fradin, D. (2014). *Stolen into slavery: The true story of Solomon Northup, free black man*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Differing Degrees of Historical Representation (literacy circles)

Anderson, L. (2008). *Chains*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Berry, J. (1991). *Ajeemah and his son*. New York, NY: Harper Trophy.

Denenberg, B. (1996). *When will this cruel war be over? The Civil War diary of Emma Simpson*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

O'Dell, S. (1989). *My name is not Angelica*. New York, NY: Random House.

Lester, J. (1968/1998). *To be a slave*. New York, NY.

Schwartz, V. (2000). *Send one angel down*. Ontario, CA: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Elsie – 8th Grade

Topic: Slavery and Segregation

Format: Whole class novels

Trade Books' Perspective/Niche:

Slavery

Lester, J. (2007). *Day of tears: A novel in dialogue*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

Segregation

Robinson, S. (2002). *Jackie's Nine: Jackie Robinson's Values to Live By*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

No teacher selected a single whole class novel format. Multiple book formats provided space for differentiation and choice, which could potentially increase student engagement. Each teacher requested and received no less than 20 primary sources; Becca, Linda, and Terra sought and received close to 100. The selected primary sources converged with and curiously diverged from trade book narratives. The juxtaposition of primary sources and trade books facilitated corroboration, sparked curiosity, elicited questions, and ensured close readings of trade books and re-readings of primary sources. The teachers all targeted various reading standards like determining central idea, drawing inferences, making intertextual connections, and considering the author's perspective, claims, and logic (NGA & CCSSO, 2010), which align with history literacy elements. Space prevents detailed accounts of these weeks-long units, yet teachers' historical thinking intentions deserves explanation.

Debra and Joyce collaboratively planned interdisciplinary units for their self-contained classrooms. Students engaged in four literacy circles, which enabled differentiation and student choice, for a four week unit on slavery and the Civil War. Slavery trade books included an historical fiction account in dramatic prose of the largest slave sale in American history (Lester, 2007), a biography of Harriet Tubman, leader of escaped slaves (Sterling, 1987), and a fictional diary written by a boy leading his family on the Underground Railroad (Wyeth, 2002). The first was deemed historically representative in all elements, the second was largely representative albeit sans violence, and the third was entirely misrepresentative (Bickford & Rich, 2014b; Williams, 2009). Civil War trade books incorporated perspectives of a white Union soldier whose excitement for war turns to horror (Paulsen, 2000), a white daughter of a slave-owning Confederate family (Denenberg, 1996), and a family of freed slaves seeking safety in the Postbellum South (Hansen, 1992). One aptly represents slavery and Reconstruction's terror (Hansen, 1992); one historically represents war's brutality (Paulsen, 2000); one historically misrepresents slavery, war, and Reconstruction (Denenberg, 1996). Integrating one new primary

source for every book chapter, students answered questions about each source's main point, its historical importance, and how it differed from or was similar to trade book. As students read sources and considered how they corroborated or disputed elements within the trade book, they engaged in various history literacy elements and historical thinking concepts, like establishing historical significance, using primary sources, and taking historical perspectives (Nokes, 2011; Seixas & Morton, 2012; Wineburg, 2001). Other teachers were similarly intentional.

As an introductory activity, Becca and Terra each selected a historically representative, age-appropriate trade book as a whole class novel (Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b; Williams, 2009). Students then scrutinized primary sources for convergences with and divergences from the trade books. Four historians' heuristics appear in Becca's posed questions about each source's perspective, intent, context, and credibility (Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2001); Becca's students detailed each source's involvement in the Montgomery Bus Boycott as they sequentially organized events that initiated and maintained the yearlong demonstration. As Becca's students used primary sources to explore the origins of laws and implications of resistance to laws, they considered tensions between continuity and change (Seixas & Morton, 2012). Terra, to ensure students grasped the nuances of diverse perspectives, posed a single question about each source: How is this similar to or different from everything you have learned so far? Terra's students employed primary sources to establish slavery's historical significance (Seixas & Morton, 2012). Terra and Becca each tasked students with close readings of multiple trade books for historicity. Students utilized their foundational historical understandings to scrutinize multiple books, consider the variance in historicity between books, and deliberate the ethical dimensions of narratives that omit, minimize, or vaguely reference undesirable elements of history (Seixas & Morton, 2012).

Linda and Elsie each selected historically representative, age-appropriate trade books centered on interrelated eras or people. Targeting historical significance, both teachers intended for students to chart connections and distinctions between seemingly disparate people and eras through primary source analysis and close readings of a secondary source. Elsie guided her students to explore the different forms of racism inherent within a fictionalized representation of slavery's biggest slave auction (Lester, 2007) and a non-fiction account of the segregation Jackie Robinson confronted (Robinson, 2002). Linda's students considered the historical significance and popular memory of Dr. King, Malcolm X, and Claudette Colvin using an expository text

centered on Dr. King (Levine, 1990) and focused biographies on the other two (Adoff, 2000; Hoose, 2009). Linda and Elsie both positioned students to determine the historical significance of people and eras while considering ethical dimensions of how their history contributions were reported (Seixas & Morton, 2012).

All teachers relied strongly on reading standards and history literacy elements, which are inextricably intertwined. They all positioned students to engage in historical thinking by using primary sources to establish historical significance and consider historical perspective. Becca situated students to examine tensions between continuity and change. Becca and Elsie each guided students to analyze the causes and consequences of their eras and events. Elsie's students considered the ethical dimensions of laws and social norms. Linda positioned students explore subjective dimensions of history and historical memory. Becca's curricular plan indicated the most historical thinking concepts (Seixas & Morton, 2012). The assessments, though, largely determine if and how historical thinking is measured.

Selected Assessments and their Efficacy

As graduate students, the teachers explored various assessments, or forms of historical argumentation. They were not guided towards, or required to use, any single assessment. They were offered examples and potential rubrics. Teachers selected an assessment aligned to their intent and students' age.

Table 4.

Teachers' Selected Assessments

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Debra	Formative	Book Review
Joyce	Formative	Book Review
Linda	Authentic	Venn Diagram
Becca	Authentic	Timeline
Terra	Authentic	Historical Fiction Newspaper
Elsie	Formative	Single Account Interpretative Essay

The selected assessments were individually scrutinized to gauge their efficacy as measure of historical argumentation. Students' integration and appropriate use of diverse sources were targeted. Teachers' intent, students' age, and nuances of each assessment were considered. Positive and negative characteristics of a specific assessment emerged.

Book Review. Joyce and Debra shared curricula and devoted about two weeks each to slavery and the Civil War. For each era, students read two trade books in literacy circles during language arts class and explored rich, modified, and supplementary primary source material in social studies class. The primary source material provided a more comprehensive view of each era and evoked scrutiny of historically misrepresentative content within the trade books' narratives.

As an assessment for each era, students wrote book reviews in which they compared and contrasted the two books with the historical sources they explored as a class. Samuel's (a pseudonym) book review below exemplifies a typical student's work from either class. (Samuel's mistakes in prose, syntax, spelling, and grammar may distract the reader but remain unchanged for illustrative purposes.)

Resently [*sic*] I read the novel *Freedom Train* By: Dorothy Sterling and the novel *Freedom Wings* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth. *Freedom Wings* was a historical fiction text, whereas *Freedom Train* was a nonfiction text. The texts are similar to each other in many ways. One way I can explain their similarities is by pointing out how the primary [source] evidence is seen in the text that supports my claim. They are both about slavery and the Underground Railroad. In the story *Freedom Train*, Harriet Tubman was trying to find her way to the North to be free. So, she found the Underground Railroad. In the story *Freedom Wings*, the boy named Corey and his father Roland went North. A little after that, Corey and his mom went North to see if they could find Roland and to be free. All kinds of primary [source] stuff like want ads and escape stories that was [*sic*] the same as this.

Another point of similarity is in the story *Freedom Wings* it say "Masseur Hart say he gon' sell Daddy. Gon' sell to one of his cousins. Masser Hart say he will need a high price for a blacksmith good as Daddy. His cousin say he is willing to pay very high for that kind of worker. Takes my breath away to hear those things. They don't know I hurd [*sic*] them. I ran to tell Mama, then back quick to the big house. Mama say she will go find Daddy at his forge. Now Daddy is nowhere." And in the story *Freedom Train* it says "Harriet Tubman says I am going to run away. I am not going to tell my parents they will be tortured. I will follow the North Star." The author in the text *Freedom Wings* states that Roland had run away, which is similar to when the author in *Freedom Train* states that Harriet Tubman ran to the North following the North Star. Thats [*sic*] why these are the same.

Although the two [books] show examples of similarities they also have many differences. The major difference between the two texts is in *Freedom Train* Harriet went to the North by herself. A clear opposite example of this can be seen in *Freedom Wings* when the text says Corey went to the North with his mom and a little after that they got help. My

primary [sources] stuff showed want ads [indicating escaped slaves] of both alone and groups of people so both could be right but more ads showed alone people than groups of people so Freedom Train is probably more right.

The second difference I noticed between the texts is in Freedom Train Harriet went by herself and she dressed up as other people so they didn't know she was a runaway slave. This was like when the woman slave [presumably Ellen Craft] dressed as a man to escape. But Freedom's Wings didn't [sic] have that but in Freedom Train had Harriet [Tubman] went [sic] by herself so it would be easier to hide and that proves my point of another difference.

In conclusion I thought that both of the novels were great. And they both told me a lot of what had happened before me and that was [sic] also in the primary [sources] things. I think that whites should not have done that to blacks. And those two novels showed me that.

Figure 1. Samuel's book review (final draft).

The positive components and problematic elements endemic within book reviews emerge in Samuel's work. Book reviews enable students' juxtaposed mapping of the convergences and divergences of diverse texts. In this case, Samuel's work juxtaposed one historical fiction secondary text, one nonfiction secondary text, and multiple primary source documents. He explicitly charted similarities and differences between the two trade books and noted historical elements that the primary sources corroborated. As historical argumentation, students share understandings generated from analysis and synthesis of relevant primary and secondary material (Monte-Sano et al., 2014; Wineburg et al., 2011). The cognitive tasks required to complete a book review cohere with many writing elements of state and national initiatives (W2a-f, W4, W5, W7, W8, W9a-b, W10). To write with such complexity, students must first achieve many or most of reading anchor standards, which align closely with history literacy elements.

Debra and Joyce also intended for this assessment to help students refine and improve their informative and explanatory writing. Multiple revisions to enhance students' writing and peer review are key aspects of state and national initiatives (W2a-f, W5). Students' writing improved through planning, revising, editing, and rewriting. Samuel's final draft (Figure One, above) is imperfect, yet is improved when contrasted with his initial draft (Figure Two, below).

Resently [sic] I read the novel *Freedom Train* By: Dorothy Sterling and the novel *My America Freedom Wings* By: Sharon Dennis Wyeth. Freedom's wings was a fiction text, whereas historical fiction *Freedom Train* was a non fiction text. The texts are similar to each other in many ways. One way I can explain their similarities is by pointing out the evidence from the text that supports my claim. They are both about slavery and the underground railroad. In the story *Freedom Train*, Harriet Tubman was trying to find her way to the North to be free. So, she found the underground railroad. In the story *Freedom's Wings*, the boy

named Corey and his father Roland went North. A little after that, Corey and his mom went north to see if they could find Roland and to be free.

Another point of similarity is in the story *Freedoms Wings* it say "Masseur Hart say he gon' sell Daddy. Gon' sell to one of his cousins. Masser Hart say he will need a high price for a blacksmith good as Daddy. His cousin say he is willing to pay very high for that kind of worker. Takes my breath away to hear those things. They don't know I hurd [sic] them. I ran to tell Mama, then back quick to the big house. Mama say she will go find Daddy at his forge. Now Daddy is nowhere." And in the story *Freedom Train* it says " Harriet Tubman says I am going to run away. I am not going to tell my parents they will be tortured. I will fallow the North Star.

The author in the text, *Freedoms Wings* states that Roland had run away, which is similar to when the author in *Freedom Train* states that Harriet Tubman ran to the North following the North Star.

Although the two texts show examples of similarities they also have many differences. The major difference between the two texts is in *Freedom Train* Harriet went to the North by herself.

A clear example of this can be seen in *Freedoms Wings* when the text says Corey went to the North with his mom and a little after that they got help.

The second difference I noticed between the texts is in *Freedom Train* Harriet went by herself and she dressed up as other people so they didn't know she was a runaway slave. The sentence says "Masseur Hart say he gon' [sic] sell Daddy. Gon' [sic] sell to one of his cousins. Masser [sic] Hart say he will need a high price for a blacksmith good as Daddy. His cousin say he is willing to pay very high for that kind of worker. Takes my breath away to hear those things. They don't know I hurd [sic] the. I ran to tell Mama, then back quick to the big house. Mama say she will go find Daddy at his forge. Now Daddy is nowhere. From *Freedoms Wings*. And the sentence in *Freedom Train* it says," Harriet Tubman went by herself so it would be easier to hide proves my point of difference.

In conclusion I thought that both of the novels were great. And they both told me a lot of what had happened before me. I think that whites should not have done that to blacks. And those two novels showed me that.

Figure 2. Samuel's book review (rough draft).

A cursory reading of both drafts clearly indicates Samuel's final product (Figure One) had far fewer errors in prose, syntax, spelling, spacing, capitalization, and grammar. Samuel referenced primary source material only in the final draft. In it, he also corroborated emergent patterns ("All kinds of primary [source] stuff like want ads and escape stories that was [sic] the same as this") and settled conflicting narratives ("My primary [sources] stuff showed want ads [indicating escaped slaves] of both alone and groups of people so both could be right but more ads showed alone people than groups of people so *Freedom Train* is probably more right"). Samuel's initial draft was bereft of such content. In his final draft, Samuel ably integrated content and articulately expressed his historical understandings. Given a closer reading, his

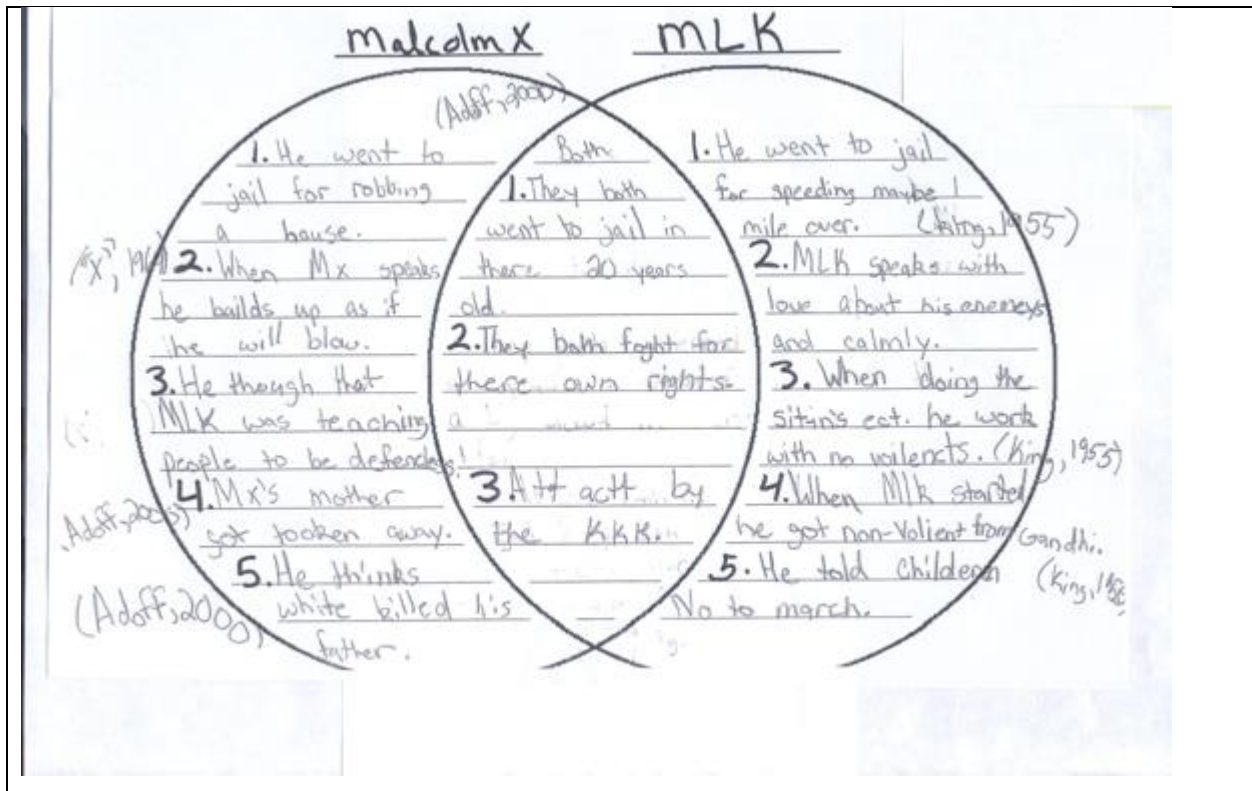
initial draft appears more summative of the narratives than evaluative of the historicity of the narratives. Samuel's final draft has a stronger focus and a more logical structure than his initial draft. These positive elements manifest within multiple drafts of the same writing assessment.

Samuel's book review was not the best written, the most detailed, or the most evocative; it was illustrative of typical students' writing. Like other students, Samuel struggled at times in various areas. His writing seemed prescriptive and his understandings appeared simplistic. Unlike a multiple-choice question whereby a student's responds to a direct query, a book review is a production of writing that depends on students' demonstration of thinking. Students can stray from a focused narrative and lose sight of the audience. Samuel's writing indicated little awareness of audience as some sentences were awkward, others were unnecessarily complex, and still others were overly simplistic. A review of all students' writing indicated a dearth of thesis statements, topic sentences, and transition sentences. The topic sentences were clear in Samuel's book review, yet he had few transition sentences and no clear thesis. These problematic elements appeared in most papers.

The critiques are not intended to suggest students did poorly. Debra and Joyce noted how primary sources elicited students' close readings of trade books, especially when book's content appeared misrepresentative or more fiction than history. Joyce and Debra noted students' engagement, yet felt students' writing could improve. They asked pointed questions about ways to do so. Specifically, Debra was curious about when students should be expected to independently utilize thesis, topic, and transition sentences; Joyce asked if students should be expected to write more than an initial and final draft and how often students should be tasked with multi-draft writing. Both teachers noted students' competency at scrutinizing for source and corroboration—two history literacy heuristics manifest within education initiatives—and multiple historical thinking concepts. The comments and questions from Debra and Joyce demonstrate their position as adaptive experts (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986; Patel & Groen, 1991; Wineburg, 1998, 2001); they are cognizant of their own skills and shortcomings, experience and inexperience. In the Discussion section, I point out ways for teachers to possibly bolster students' text-based writing while incorporating the aforementioned queries.

Venn Diagram. To teach about Dr. Martin Luther King, Linda supplemented a whole class novel, *If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King* (Levine, 1990), with speeches, photographs, and other primary sources about the Civil Rights Movement. Students interpreted

the sources individually and in small groups, which complemented class discussions about the novel. After approximately two weeks, students read trade books and examined primary sources about Malcolm X's and Claudette Colvin's distinct contributions. These two historical figures were selected, out of many deserving options, because the former is frequently misunderstood and the latter is largely unknown. After completing whole class novel about Dr. King and Malcolm X, students individually juxtaposed King and X in a two-circle Venn. After completion of the Colvin novel, students individually created a three-circle Venn diagram about Colvin, King, and X. Linda intended to guide students' reconsideration as they refined understandings of King and X in contrast with Colvin; she felt the three-circle Venn would enable students' juxtaposition of three disparate historical figures. Emma's (a pseudonym) two- and three-circle Venn diagrams represent a typical student's work.



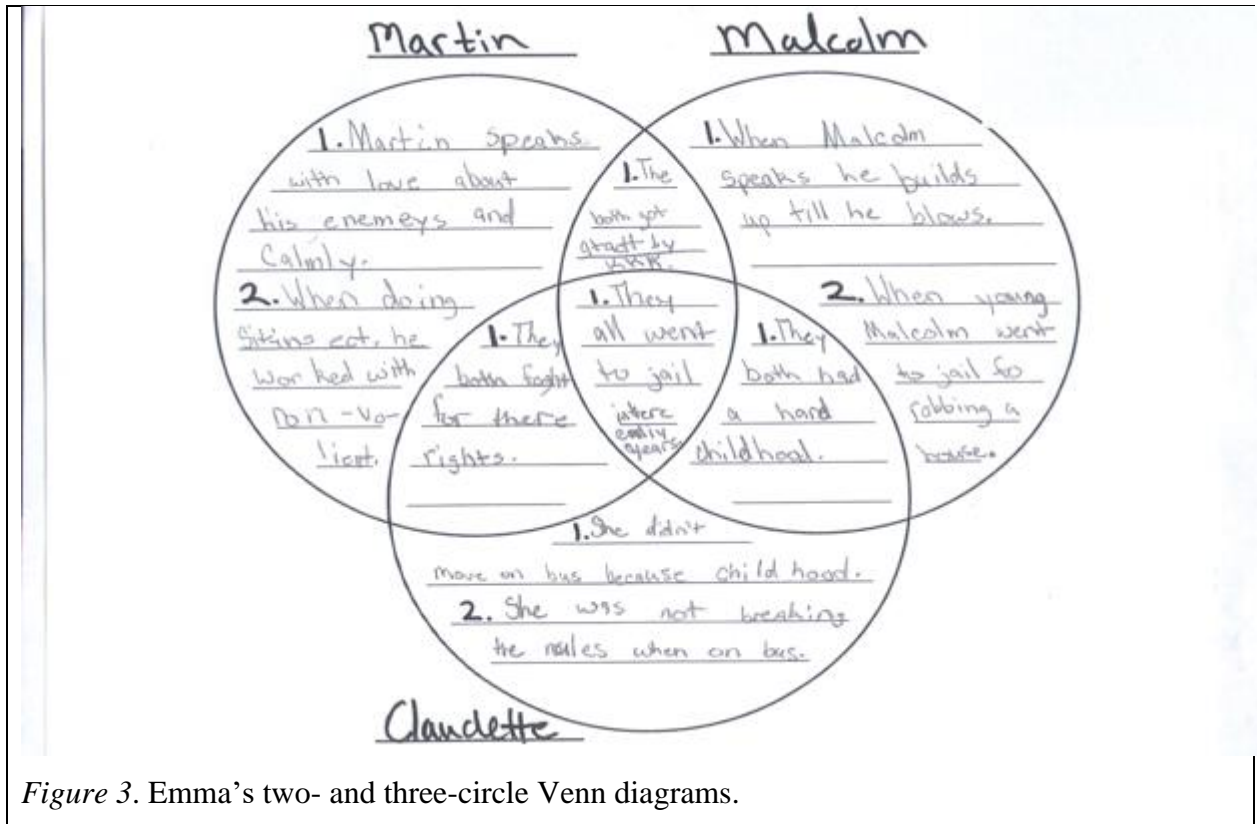


Figure 3. Emma's two- and three-circle Venn diagrams.

A review of all students' Venn diagrams indicated important patterns, each of which appear in Figure Three. Viewed positively, Venn diagrams enabled students to visually organize understandings derived from scrutiny of multiple texts. They synthesized complex content into condensed versions. They distinguished areas of convergence and divergence. Aware of these positive attributes, Linda was curious if and how students' constructed understandings of Malcolm X and Dr. King, two legendary leaders, changed after reading about Claudette Colvin, an oft-overlooked contributor. Linda intended for students' historical argumentation to improve after refinement and reconsiderations, which she sought to gauge through a comparison of the two- and three-circle Venn.

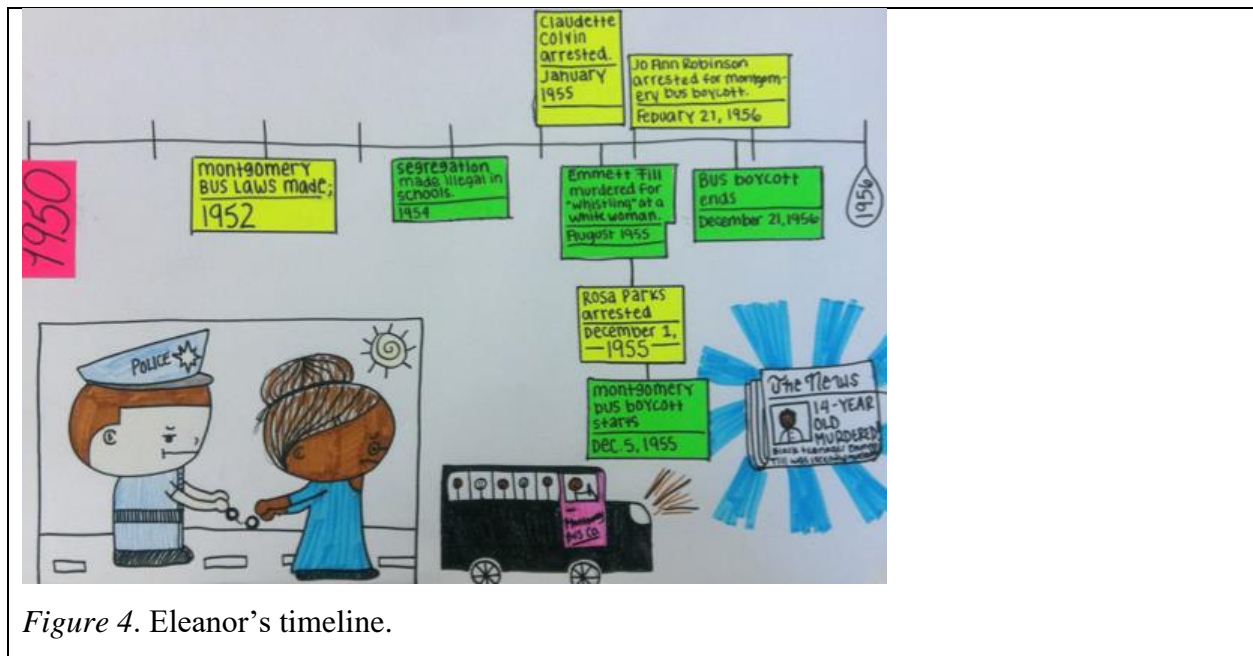
Limited space within each Venn unnecessarily constricted students. Space constraints allowed only students' abridged understandings. Similarly, it appears students largely filled the lined plots with shallow statements on both Venn diagrams. A thorough review of all students' Venn diagrams revealed no evidence of students' refined understandings. Three-circle Venn comments were actually more simplistic, fewer in number, and frequently a restatement of two-circle Venn comments.

Linda intended for students to integrate primary and secondary historical sources, which she assessed through review of students' citations. On Emma's two-circle Venn, "X, 1964" referenced Malcolm X's (in)famous *The Ballot or the Bullet* speech and "Adoff, 2000" was the trade book; Emma's three-circle Venn had no such citations. Emma's work represented that of her peers, who inconsistently completed this task on the first Venn and largely ignored it on the second. When completed, students generally cited the trade book and, at times, a single primary source. While explicitly required, students essentially ignored or superficially cited the origin of their understandings.

The aforementioned critiques are not intended to suggest students did not engage deeply with the material. Linda noted students' use of primary sources to consider each figure's historical significance and place (or lack thereof) within collective memory. When queried on student involvement, Linda reported focused individual work, robust small groups, and healthy whole class discussions. This was not apparent, however, on students' assessments. Linda noted her own displeasure with the assessment or, more specifically, with her students' involvement on the assessment. She felt the assessments concealed more adroit historical understandings, which originated from multiple and diverse primary and secondary sources. As an adaptive expert (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986; Patel & Groen, 1991; Wineburg, 1998, 2001), Linda is quite aware of her students' abilities and limitations, specifically their experience with reading and writing and inexperience with historical argumentation. A video- or audiotaped classroom observation might have confirmed Linda's claim. Venn diagrams, as presented above, are not a quality assessment of historical thinking. In the Discussion section, I articulate ways for teachers to maximize effectiveness by employing a slightly nuanced Venn, an approach that Linda has subsequently adopted.

Timeline. Becca developed a unit on Rosa Parks, the most famous yet least understood American woman (Theoharis, 2008). Most Americans are aware of Parks's arrest, yet the context her arrest and implications of her arrest are more complex and elusive than are traditionally contained within social studies textbooks, history-based trade books, and America's collective consciousness (Bickford & Rich, 2014a; Loewen, 1995; Wineburg, 2008; Wineburg & Monte-Sano, 2008). Becca intended for students to examine diverse representations of and perspectives about the same set of events—Rosa Parks's arrest and the Montgomery Bus Boycott—in order to grasp the malleability of history and importance of primary source material.

Students first individually scrutinized multiple trade books using a modified version of a previously developed content analysis tool (Bickford & Rich, 2014a, p. 21-22; see Appendix B). The trade books had disparate degrees of historicity, as some were simplistic and others were rather inaccurate (Bickford & Rich, 2014a). Becca selected multiple narratives to ensure students see incongruence representations (Edwards, 2005; Kittinger, 2010; Parks & Haskins, 1997; Pingry, 2007; Reynolds, 2010; Ringgold, 1999). As students reported findings, the class discussed conspicuous differences between, and clear gaps within some, narratives. Students, in Becca's words, "were really, really [*sic*] concerned that they'd been lied to!" With interest piqued, Becca guided students' analyses of rich historical documents. Becca noted, "These [primary sources] helped the kids fill the gaps." Students then used the same content analysis tool to scrutinize a historically representative trade book (Giovanni, 2005). The children demonstrated newly generated historical understandings through construction of the precursors to, and the impact of, Parks's act of civil disobedience. Eleanor's (a pseudonym) timeline illustrates the positive and problematic elements of timelines as an assessment.



An evaluation of all students' timelines revealed constructive elements and problematic patterns. Viewed positively, timelines enabled students to visually arrange important understandings produced from analysis of multiple, diverse primary sources. Students linearly sequenced and contextualized key events of, and individuals' contributions to, the Montgomery

Bus Boycott. Becca also intended for students to refine the traditional storyline—contained within the historically misrepresentative trade books and America’s collective consciousness—of a humble, tired seamstress refusing to give up her seat to a white man. Becca positioned students to see history as an exhibition of various storytellers hoping their voices are heard and also as a series of tensions that emerge when agents of change within the Civil Rights Movement confront regulators of continuity from the establishment. With these intents, Becca viewed a timeline as the most appropriate form of historical argumentation. Based on classroom discussions and observations of students’ on-task behaviors during class, she believed this goal to be largely met. It was not evident, however, within students’ timelines. Timelines, as an assessment of historical argumentation, did not reveal such mindsets or complex understandings. This is not intended to imply that the mindsets and understandings were not present during class but only that they were not palpable to a reviewer of the timelines. Eleanor, for instance, may view history as a constructed story dependent on her own interpretation of numerous sources and subject to newly discovered primary evidence or secondary articulations. Eleanor’s timeline, however, did not indicate this.

Becca envisioned timelines to be a clear, concise way to measure students’ analyses of various primary sources and synthesis into a meaningful sequence. She intended students to rely on numerous primary accounts from diverse, sometimes competing, perspectives as they situated the chain of events. This was partially accomplished. Eleanor’s timeline, for instance, indicated her recognition of pivotal events, yet it did not reveal her grasp of their historical significance. A review of the timeline indicated Eleanor aptly sequenced the events but a reviewer cannot distinguish if Eleanor could historically contextualize them. Eleanor might have been able to expertly historicize the events, but it was not apparent within her timeline. The timeline did not indicate Eleanor’s awareness of history’s malleability and foundation within diverse sources. As an assessment, timelines have space constraints similar to those of Venn diagrams.

Becca hoped timelines would elicit students’ creativity and ownership of the material. She anticipated students would creatively add to their timeline through personalized images or sketches to draw viewers’ attention to specific, pivotal points. This goal was largely achieved, yet Becca was disappointed that students’ creativity detracted from their work. This occurred when students frequently devoted large spaces to illustrative yet non-essential elements and were unnecessarily concise with the historical content. Eleanor’s historical understandings, for

instance, were not as apparent as her imaginative renderings. Other, less artistic students felt uncomfortably judged, which is common in authentic assessments reliant on artistic ability (Bickford, 2010b). The space for creativity distracted some students, intimidated other learners, and prevented most children from thoroughly articulating their historical understandings.

Becca struggled to assess students' history literacy and historical thinking using the timeline, yet the critiques should *not* suggest students did not meaningfully engage with the material. Students might have, but it was not apparent from an analysis of their timeline. As they are typically used, timelines are not a quality assessment of students' historical thinking. In other words, as most commonly implemented, timelines are not an effective means for historical argumentation. I articulate in the Discussion section ways to improve their usefulness at evoking students' historical thinking, which Becca intends to utilize.

Historical Fiction Newspaper. Terra selected *Stolen into Slavery* (Fradin & Fradin, 2014) for a whole class novel in part to capitalize on the Hollywood success of *Seven Years a Slave*; the story of Solomon Northup—a free African American in the mid-19th century—being kidnapped, sold into slavery, and eventually regaining freedom is commanding and serendipitous. *Stolen into Slavery* included the violence, inhumanity, and brutality endemic to slavery, which are often minimized or disregarded in most slavery-based trade books (Bickford & Rich, 2014b; Schwebel, 2011; Williams, 2009). Terra purposefully selected six slavery-based trade books with historically misrepresentative elements (Anderson, 2008; Berry, 1991; Denenberg, 1996; O'Dell, 1989; Lester, 1968/1998; Schwartz, 2000). In literacy circles, students scrutinized this selected trade book and juxtaposed discrepancies with primary sources and *Stolen into Slavery*. Terra wanted students to demonstrate their newly constructed historical understandings through diverse writing tasks. With various teacher- and peer-review support steps, students created an article for a historical fiction newspaper as if they were mid-19th century journalists commenting on emergent slavery and abolitionist issues. They contributed an evidentiary argument (W.7.1), an informative or explanatory essay (W.7.2), or a narrative story (W.7.3).

Students' evidentiary writing (W.7.1) relied on primary sources as students considered conflicting or competing claims within two different trade books. Anne (a pseudonym) read two books (Denenberg, 1996; Fradin & Fradin, 2014) where slaves' food supply and working and

living conditions diverged dramatically. She distinguished trade books' discrepancies and used evidence from credible sources to support her claim.

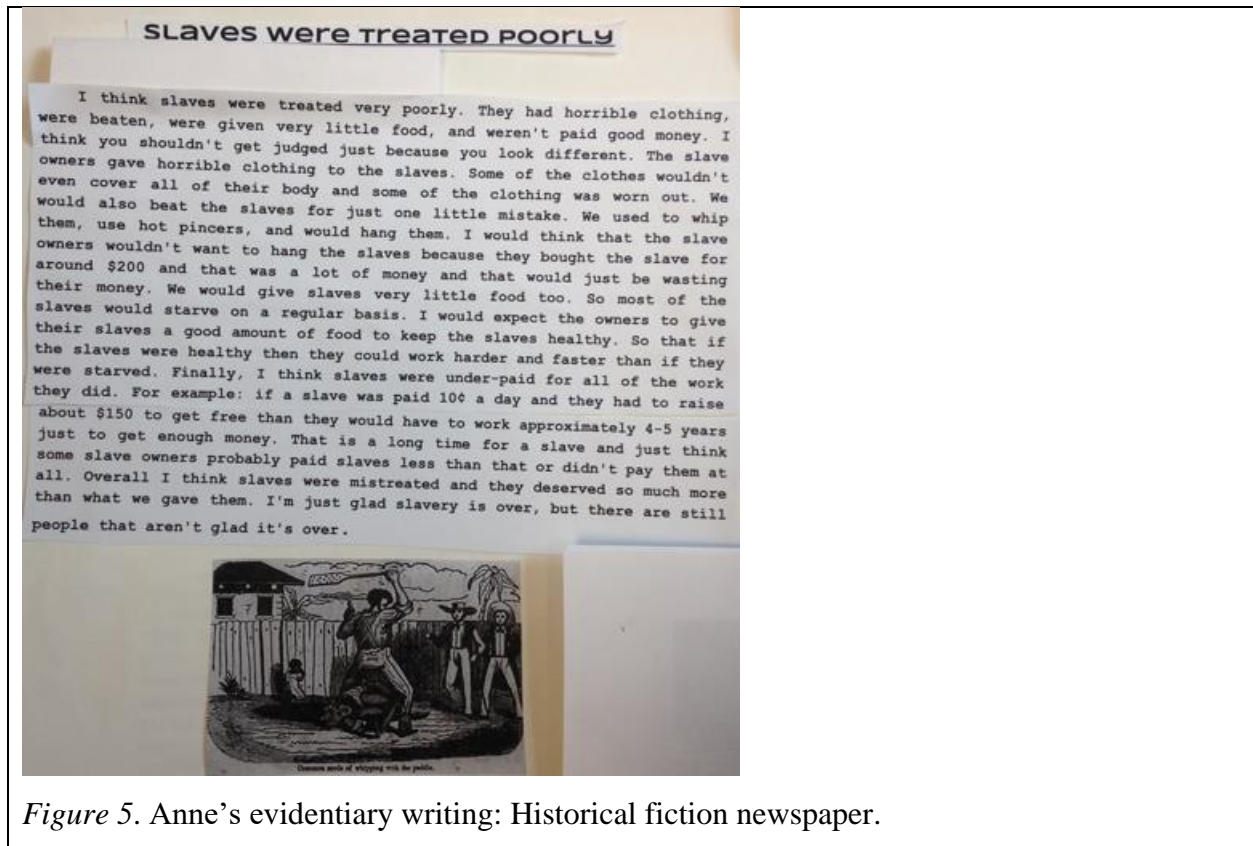


Figure 5. Anne's evidentiary writing: Historical fiction newspaper.

Students wrote informative or explanatory essays (W.7.2) about specific people, events, or eras referenced in—but not the focal point of—a trade book. Each book referenced dozens of people, events, or eras. Students could select one, analyze primary sources germane to this person, and organize understandings to demonstrate its historical significance. Jane wrote an informative or explanatory essay about two consequential events, the Dred Scott court case and Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

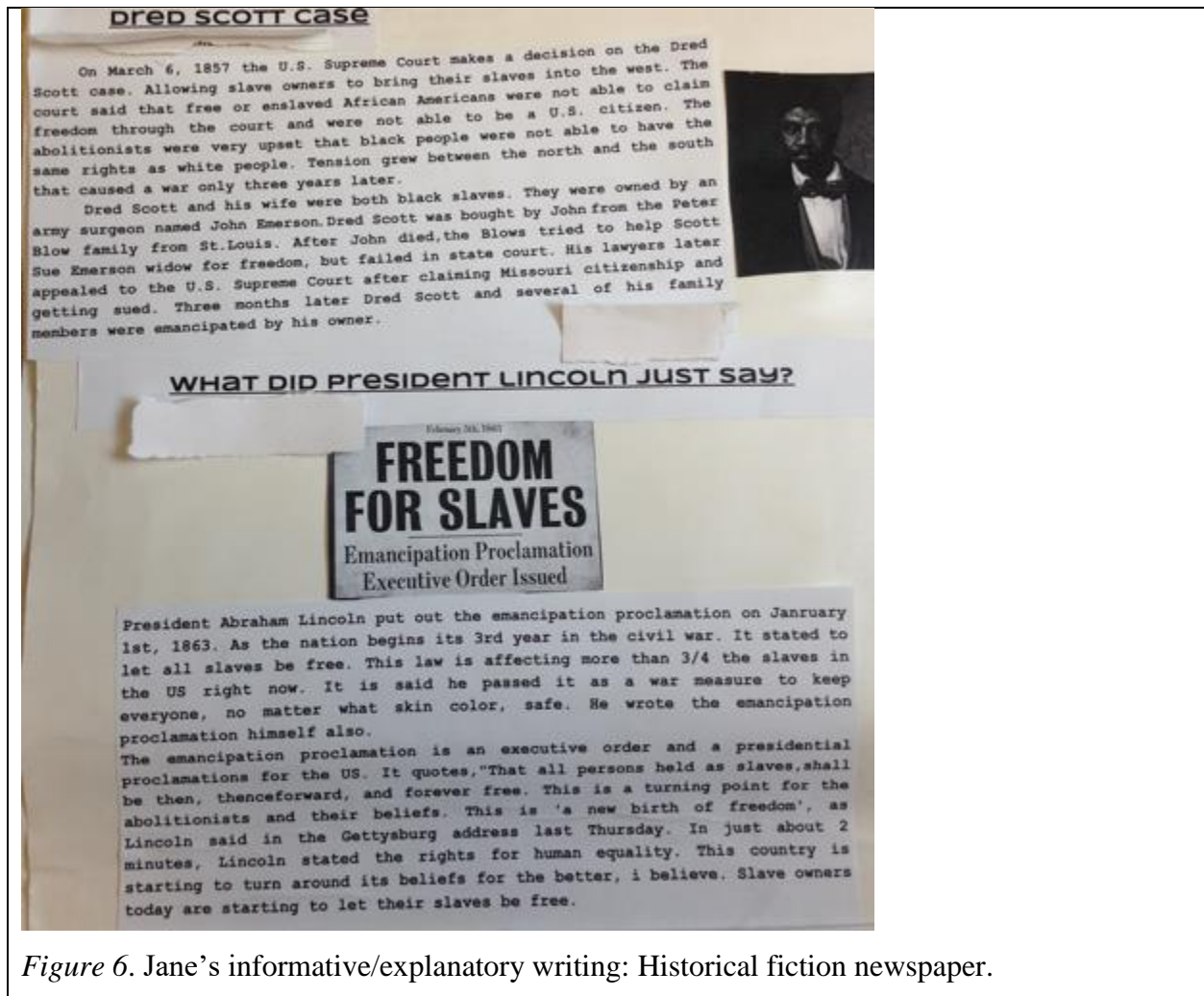


Figure 6. Jane's informative/explanatory writing: Historical fiction newspaper.

Students wrote various narrative stories (W.7.3). Writers selected specific people—real or imagined—from their trade book and engaged the reader through a variety of narrative techniques. Henry's narrative, *Isabel The Incredible*, centers on material from his literacy circle trade book, *Chains* (Anderson, 2008), and is represented within Figure Seven.

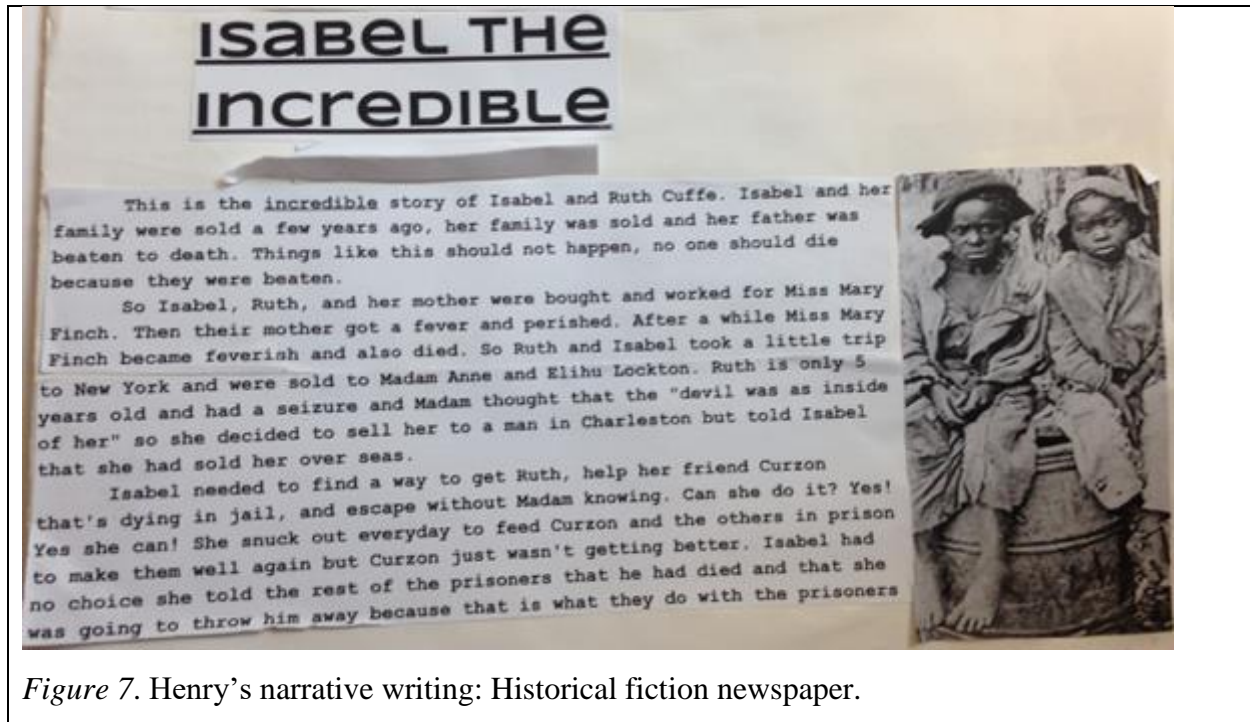


Figure 7. Henry's narrative writing: Historical fiction newspaper.

The illustrative examples each reveal distinct and positive elements. A review of students' narratives (Figure Seven), informative or explanatory essays (Figure Six), and evidentiary arguments (Figure Five) indicated many positive general features associated with historical fiction newspapers, an assessment of historical thinking. First, students selected their contributions to a historical fiction newspaper; the assignment was flexible enough to let students demonstrate their understandings the best way they knew how. Second, individual choice and flexibility hinged on accountability to the group; students appreciated the opportunity to collaborate and largely did so effectively. To distinguish if the former or the latter had a larger impact is indeterminable, yet Terra noted students' motivation and seeming success. Third, the cognitive tasks associated with various writing formats were diverse and meaningful. In evidentiary arguments, students critically evaluated ambiguous situations using diverse sources to support a thesis. In informative or explanatory essays, students selected an event, era, or person that was not their book's focal point to engage in independent inquiry. In narrative writing, students selected a real or imagined character from the book to further develop. Finally, the writing tasks aligned to expectations of education initiatives. These are positive aspects of historical fiction newspapers as historical argumentation.

There were, however, negative aspects to the assessment. First, students' evidentiary arguments (Figure Five) and informative or explanatory texts (Figure Six) alluded to, but did not explicitly cite, primary source material. In this way, the origins of their understandings were vague or implied and not unequivocally text-based. Requiring citations, though, would be an easy solution. Second, the various types of writing could mask students' understandings of a particular historical element as not everything would be included. This, however, is arguably endemic to any writing prompt that allows student choice. Third, and perhaps most significant, each writing task is not equally rigorous. Evidentiary arguments (Figure Five) require students identify a discrepancy, analyze primary source material, and persuasively defend a thesis; informative or explanatory texts (Figure Six) compel students' inquiry into—and analyses of primary sources associated with—a less-than-thoroughly developed element a trade book. In narrative writing (Figure Seven), students develop a tangential story extending from the trade book. Narrative writing is as not reliant on close readings of primary sources and text-based writing as evidentiary arguments and informative or explanatory texts. Discrepancies in rigor appear stark. I addressed ways to refine these problematic in the Discussion section.

Single Account Interpretative Essay. Elsie positioned students to consider the interconnections between slavery and segregation. Frustratingly, Elsie's previous students struggled to contextualize President Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King as separated by a century and failed to see slavery's resultant implications within segregation. In Elsie's words, "Students think Lincoln freed the slaves and got [*sic*] shot then King had a dream and got [*sic*] shot and one [assassination] was right after the other but everything got better quickly." To intentionally address this, Elsie selected one historically representative trade book from each era—*Day of Tears* (Lester, 2007) and *Jackie's Nine* (Robinson, 2002)—for whole class novels and added diverse historical documents to both. Elsie spent a few weeks on each era and varied her classroom focus between primary sources and trade books.

Elsie used single account interpretative essays (SAIEs) as an ongoing evaluation (Wineburg et al., 2012; VanSledright, 2014), which was unlike other teachers' end-of-unit assessments. On an almost-daily basis, Elsie provided students a single primary source with multiple history literacy prompts to guide students to consider its connections with the trade book. Elsie's SAIE writing prompts are reported in Table Five.

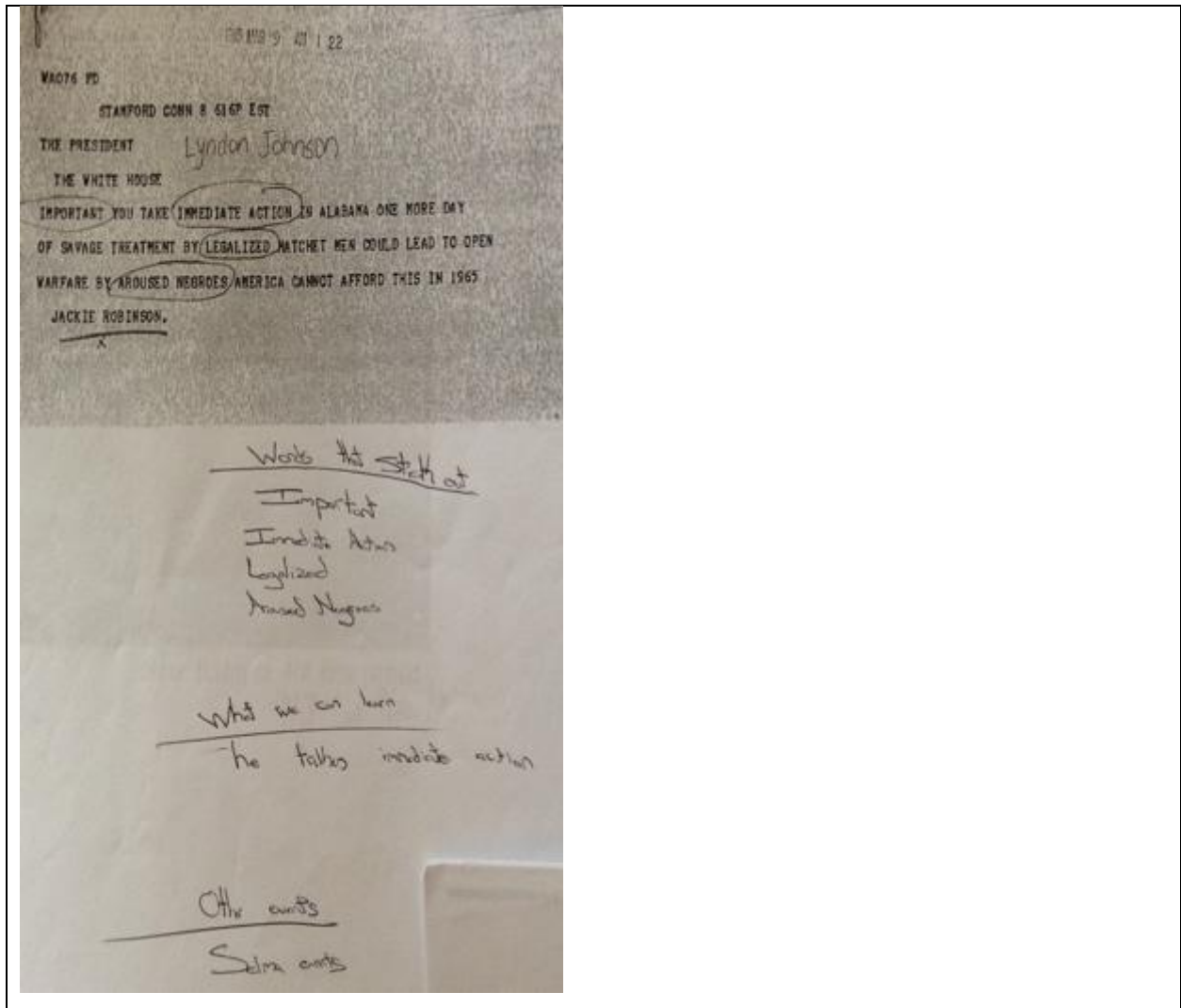
Table 5.

Elsie's Generic Single Account Interpretative Essay (SAIE)

1. What words stick out?
2. Is this about slavery or segregation? What can we learn about slavery/segregation from this that is different from what you already know?
3. When was this document made? What other events happened in or around this time period?

SAIE's structure had many positive components. In the first question, Elsie targeted academic vocabulary that either confused students or elicited prior knowledge about the era. The second question guided students to integrate nuances from this specific document into their schemas and, in doing so, consider how certain people and events are enshrined in historical memory while others are not. The third question compelled students to contextualize the historical document. Unlike previous assessments, students were prompted to directly answer specific questions. SAIEs did not provide the flexibility or choice that allowed distracted or indirect answers, a critique of other assessments; teachers could therefore determine students' grasp of particular content. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, SAIEs compelled students' close readings and use of corroboration and contextualization, two history literacy skills (Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2011).

SAIEs had some negative elements as Elsie implemented them. A careful review of all students' SAIEs indicated three common patterns: brevity, plagiarism, and reiteration. Many students' answers, if technically correct, were unnecessarily brief; unreasonably succinct SAIE answers do not convince the teacher that the student engaged in historical thinking or utilized history literacy skills. Large numbers of students' answers matched exactly, which indicated plagiarism. Individual students frequently had the same answer repeated numerous times; this reiteration suggests students learned to recycle acceptable answers and did not engage deeply with the material. Figure Eight illustrates two students' SAIEs.



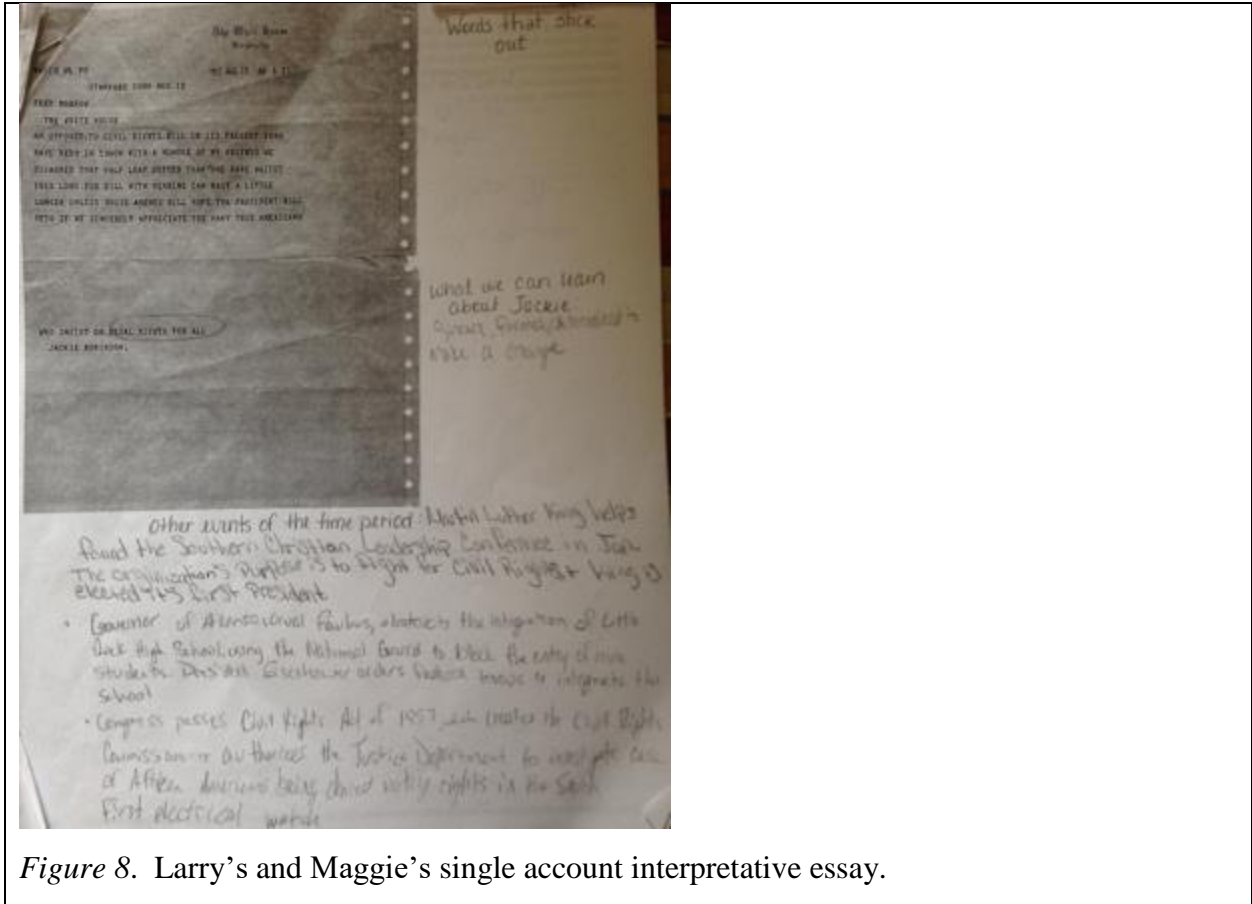


Figure 8. Larry’s and Maggie’s single account interpretative essay.

Larry may have understood—and been able to verbalize—connections to events surrounding the Selma march. His answer could not have assured his teacher, though. It was entirely too brief. Negative exhibitions, however, should not preclude SAIE classroom use. Maggie’s answer, for instance, is clear and detailed. SAIEs can be refined to more effectively capture students’ historical thinking.

Discussion

Teachers appreciated their newly generated curricula. When asked to reflect on what they most appreciated, teachers noted the students’ curiosity at the interconnections between the books and primary sources. These curricular resources appeared as catalysts that sparked and maintained students’ interest. Every teacher noted students’ astonishment when primary sources indicated an important historical element that multiple books disregarded. Every single teacher appreciated students’ reactions when discovering the intriguing interconnections between books and primary sources. They each, also, noted the time, cost, and expertise needed to develop such curricula. Teachers need time to consider the right trade book(s) for their intent, the financial

support to build their library, and time to locate and modify sources. As adaptive experts, they each recognized their own inexperience with developing history-based curricula. The expertise can be developed and the time and financial support can be provided, but they are all necessary.

This research also explored teachers' integration of history literacy and historical thinking within curricula and the efficacy of the selected historical argumentation. History literacy appeared from its place within educational initiatives and, most especially, teachers' background in English language arts. The English language arts reading standards—close readings (RI.1; RI.2), contextualizing (RI.3), reading the silences (RI.4; RI.5), a source's perspective or bias (RI.6), a source's use of evidence or logic (RI.8), and corroboration (RI.7; RI.9)—are intentionally aligned with historians' heuristics. History literacy manifested in all units.

Students also engaged in historical thinking, which is similar to but distinct from history literacy. To establish historical significance, teachers purposefully positioned trade books to guide students' exploration. The trade books enabled students to contrast distinct yet related eras, juxtapose diverse perspectives within a single era, and scrutinize historically representative with misrepresentative narratives. Such tasks complicated students' understandings as they considered historical significance. Students analyzed primary sources to refine their developing historical understanding or to determine the historicity of palpable patterns within different trade books. Primary sources were the catalysts for considering distinct historical perspectives, the tensions that emerged when efforts for radical change collided with reactionary forces trying to maintain continuity. Historical documents enabled students to discover the causes and consequences of confrontation. Students recognized ethical dilemmas in history and the subjectivity of historical memory. Students' historical thinking originated from the history literacies required during close readings of juxtaposed trade books and ancillary primary sources. Students' historical thinking manifested within their historical argumentation.

There was merit within each assessment, yet each assessment had negative components. Teachers can refine assessments to mitigate negative elements. Students' book reviews appeared prescriptive and unaware of the audience; they lacked thesis statements, topic sentences, transition sentences, and evidentiary support. Students' final papers originated from revisions guided by teacher-suggestions and peer review. More required revisions could improve the final product, yet apathy or animosity might be result. I encourage more purposeful revisions.

Perhaps students might better grasp topic sentences, for instances, if a section of one class one day were devoted only to topic sentences. Another day could focus on developing a clear thesis sentence and referencing it throughout the paper. In this way, students review and receive peer feedback on fewer elements of writing but the feedback, both given and received, is more focused. Teachers could consider requiring proper citation, which could yield both immediate and enduring gains. In the short-term, students' citations cues teachers to note content included and omitted. Such recognition would compel students to integrate every primary source, consider its bias or perspective, and corroborate claims to determine a source's credibility. Debra and Joyce included numerous sources, yet students explicitly referenced few. In the long term, students' writing would increase in complexity as they purposefully considered the origin of their understandings. The author of every source has a perspective and all are differently biased. A slave's oral history should be read and considered differently than a slave owner's diary. Understanding the origin of their understanding enables students to more explicitly and consciously consider perspective. Teachers could deliberately position students to integrate history literacy within their writing.

Linda used two- and three-circle Venn diagrams to determine students' initial and then refined understandings. The Venn diagrams, however, unnecessarily constricted students. Children did not have the space needed to detail understandings, much less integrate and cite diverse primary and secondary historical sources. Venn diagrams could be improved if students were asked first to detail their understandings on paper and then number each understanding. This expansive, numbered list could be cultivated through peer review; proper citations could ensure students integrate all meaningful, previously-covered documents. Students, then, could place the proper *number*—*not* a short, non-sentence—in the appropriate section of the Venn. In this way, the size or structure of the pencil-and-paper Venn would not unnecessarily confine students' articulations. Technology could also help. Students could perhaps benefit from the adjustability of font sizes or the malleability of space within digital Venn. Students could digitally footnote their understandings, also. Digital Venn diagrams and modifications for paper-and-pencil Venn diagrams can more effectively and efficiently evoke deeper understandings.

Becca hoped timelines would enable students to revise the oft-told, yet incomplete narrative of Rosa Parks's arrest. Through timelines, she intended students to integrate and sequence understandings obtained from numerous primary sources and trade books. She hoped

students would better grasp both history's malleability and the incompleteness of any historical retelling. Students aptly sequenced, but did not historicize, the era's events on timelines. As with the Venn, the structural constraints of timelines limited students' contextualization and historical reconstruction of significant events. The timeline's negative elements can be mitigated. I encourage a multipage, multi-sided timeline. Students could fill the front page of the timeline with properly sequenced dates and perhaps creative illustrations or appropriate photographs; students should explain each event's historical significance on the backside. The expansive backside would provide students space to articulate and cite the historical incidents. Becca, then, could evaluate the timeline's front-side for proper sequencing and its backside for integration and proper historical contextualization of the events represented in diverse sources.

Terra's historical fiction newspapers and Elsie's single account interpretative essay (SAIEs) had more constructive and fewer negative elements. Students' historical fiction newspaper writing did not explicitly reference primary source material writing, which concealed students' understandings of particular content. The various writing options were, as noted above, not similarly rigorous. These negative elements can be reduced. Require both citations and detailed end notes. Such changes would reduce plagiarism, ensure all sources are appropriately integrated, and compel consideration of perspective or bias. Assign students more than one writing sample; this balances expectations and bolsters students' experience with different types of writing. Students' answers on SAIEs were, at times, unnecessarily brief or perhaps plagiarized. Requiring students' elucidation ensures the reader can gauge an individual student's historical understandings. Appropriate citation better positions students to engage in text-based writing and reduces, but does not eliminate, plagiarism. Historical fiction newspapers and SAIEs had fewer negative elements in part because they provided students space for articulation.

Various practical suggestions can improve assessments' effectiveness. When refined, the assessments align with the cognitive tasks associated with historical argumentation and appear age appropriate for elementary and middle level students. This is important when considering the underdeveloped nature of assessment of students' historical thinking and the dearth of options for historical argumentation within the elementary and middle grades.

Teachers expressed interest in further integrating—and developing more effective assessments of—historical thinking and history literacy. Each teacher appreciated feedback about refining their specific assessment, received examples of colleagues' curricular units, and

read a draft of this manuscript. Debra, Joyce, Terra, and Elsie inquired about further materials. Linda has extended her unit to include both social and political history like the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling, Rosa Parks's arrest, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and voting initiatives of the early 1960s. Becca's Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott unit is now the fifth segment in a yearlong Human Rights curricula that intertwines historical fiction, fiction, and non-fiction primary and secondary sources.

Conclusion

This study explored how experienced teachers responded to mandates for change in a curriculum that is not their area of expertise. The teachers all identified as primarily interested in English, language arts, and reading, yet were compelled to increase non-fiction topics with text-based writing expectations. The inquiry started after teachers were trained in pedagogy but before first implementation. A grant provided curricular resources to ensure teachers were not limited by schools' financial support. When viewed in its totality, the teachers effectively positioned students to engage in history literacy and historical thinking. Complications arose during historical argumentation, which were due largely to problematic elements of the selected assessment.

Considering these findings, it would be valuable to see how these teachers respond in the future. A longitudinal study could explore demonstrable patterns over time. Future researchers might explore teachers from an ethnographic framework to see how preservice and graduate coursework impacts lived experience in the classroom. Studies are needed to determine what is an effective, yet cost-efficient amount of money teachers need for curricular development.

As with any study, this inquiry had limitations. In numerous ways, the data pool was limited. There were only six teachers. While the teachers were quite different in age and experience, they were all from similar education backgrounds taught in similar schools. A stronger ethnographic focus or quantitative analysis might have yielded different results. Findings can be questioned because instruction was not monitored, students' work was not authenticated, a different context might have produced different results, and a double-blind analysis was not done on curricular materials.

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Appendix A – Example of Pedagogical Support Provided

Terra,

Your main book (*Stolen into slavery*) has sections where the slaves are singing. Of the lit circle books [sic], three include it briefly or indirectly (*Chains; When will this cruel war be over?; My name is not Angelica*) and three include actual songs and note how slaves used them to surreptitiously pass information on to other slaves. The kids who read these last three (*Ajeemah and his son; To be a slave; Send one angel down*) will know that they weren't just to pass the time or to praise God. It's like I have access to Dora's backpack, but check out this wonderful song resource with audio:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/education/feature.html>

And, I like this list because it's SO comprehensive and the lyrics are so easy to copy/paste, there's no audio: <http://www.negrospirituals.com/news-song/>

When working with the slave songs, it might be fun to do (A) sentence scramble with one song where you separate the song's paragraphs into like 6-10 sentences of separate lines on a word doc [sic]. Then, number (or letter) them, cut them out individually, put them in a folder or envelop, and have kids reconstruct the paragraph. It's a wonderful way to make kids read, reread, and re-re-read the paragraph (but it takes a long time to make the envelopes). Or, (B) do a "partial scramble" where you take 20 songs, cut them in half, separate into folders (like sentence scramble) and have them match top 1/2 to bottom 1/2. Oooooooooo [sic], (C) maybe - and this is simplest but could be great - tell the kids you're giving them ALL different songs, when in reality you take 10 songs and cut them into 1/3s (so top 1/3, middle 1/3, bottom 1/3), NUMBER THESE [sic], have the kids read them (not knowing it's connected to another student's) and then have them "finish or start the song", basically tell the kids, "Ok, kids, I shared with you part of a song, knowing what you know about what's written, try to extend the song with the ending...or begin the song. What came first or what came after?" Then, they'll work on writing (this connects great to writing standards and also the reading standards), then open it up and say, "Kids, I lied. You have 2 [sic] other people in the room who have your same song. Share what you have and find your friend...compare the originals...see how close your guesses were!" I think - during the group work - you could have a graphic organizer where you're having them list observations & inferences (so they observe the song is about "fly fast, fly fast" and they infer that fly means to run away).

As for your closure activity, I'd consider a think/pair/share activity where you ask them, "What did you learn about slavery and slave life from this? *And, what were the five important things I wanted you to learn?*" (This is great because if a kid says they didn't learn anything, your response is, "Ok, that's fine, start listing what you think i [sic] was trying to trick you into learning!" It works. Trust me. And, even if you don't have a set list of 5 things, you still got them thinking, pairing, and sharing). It doesn't have to be rock start stuff every day. And, since you were talking about the slave quilts. I started thinking about getting some diaries FROM [sic] slave owners and underground RR [sic] workers. Please see attached 6 [sic] docs (half originals & half are modified). 2 [sic] are from slave owners. 1 [sic] is from an underground railroad worker. Rich, rich, rich stuff! Let me know if you're interested in using them or if you want more. This could be a great step to do (with a similar think/pair/share activity or a KWL or some type of close reading) between the slave quilts and extensions about slave life.

Appendix B – Becca’s Content Analysis Tool

1. Genre:
 - a. Historical fiction
 - b. Non-Fiction
2. Did the book mention anything Rosa did to help African Americans before she was arrested (December 1, 1955)?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. **No**
3. Did the book mention how segregation *started*?
 - a. **Yes** (as something white Americans started and kept going)
 - b. **No** (it was something that “just was”)
4. When describing segregation, did the book mention that it had various elements:
 - a. Separate schools, separate drinking fountains, or separate restaurants (this is called *social segregation*) **Yes** or **No**
 - b. How African Americans could not vote in many places (this is called *political segregation*) **Yes** or **No**
 - c. How African Americans could not go to the best schools to get the best jobs or were not even allowed to have certain jobs (this is called *economic segregation*) **Yes** or **No**
5. Did the book mention anything that came **BEFORE** Rosa was arrested? Something like:
 - a. The Supreme Court’s decision called “Brown v. Board of Education”, **Yes** or **No**
 - b. Emmett Till and how he was attacked, **Yes** or **No**
 - c. Claudette Colvin and how she was arrested for doing something like Rosa did, **Yes** or **No**
 - d. Jo Ann Robinson and all she did to help, **Yes** or **No**
6. Did the book mention anything that came **AFTER** Rosa was arrested? Something like:
 - a. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, **Yes** or **No**
 - b. How Rosa was threatened and forced to move north because she was scared, **Yes** or **No**
 - c. The Civil Rights Movement got bigger and bigger for the next few years as more people got angry at how African Americans were mistreated **Yes** or **No**

Note. Modified from Bickford & Rich, 2014a, p. 21-22.