

In this Issue: Literacy Integration

This issue provides ideas and strategies for using primary sources to support literacy instruction. Students build literacy through reading and writing across the curriculum, using a number of different media. Literacy can be defined as a purposeful activity in which "people read, write, talk, and think about real ideas and information in order to extend what they know, communicate with others, to present their points of view, and to understand and be understood" (Langer).

Literacy encompasses a range of critical thinking and meaning-making capabilities. It incorporates "broader understandings and competencies needed in our changing society" and "consists of critical thinking skills that underlie social competence and reading comprehension" (Ellsworth, et al.). An interdisciplinary approach to reading and writing helps students learn content concepts and processes while honing essential communication skills.

Literacy extends to "reading" primary sources—documents, images, maps, objects, audio, and video—generating ideas, and communicating in multiple formats. Research has shown that the study of historical artifacts engages students, facilitates higher level thinking skills, and encourages social interaction often associated with a broader definition of literacy (Fuhler, et al.).

Citations:

Ellsworth, Nancy J., Carolyn N. Hedley, and Anthony N. Baratta, eds. *Literacy: A Redefinition*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994.

Fuhler, C.J., P.J. Farris, and P.A. Nelson. "Building Literacy Skills across the Curriculum: Forging Connections with the Past through Artifacts." *The Reading Teacher* 59 (2006): 646-659.

Langer, Judith. *Language, literacy, and culture: Issues of society and schooling*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1987.

Contents

Feature Article	Page 2
Research & Current Thinking	Page 3
Learning Activity - Elementary Level	Page 4
Learning Activity - Secondary Level	Page 5
Teacher Spotlight	Page 6

Teaching with Primary Sources

The Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Program works with universities and other educational organizations to offer professional development that helps teachers use the Library's digitized primary sources to deliver effective instruction. The TPS Newsletter provides information and materials that support this goal.

For more information about Teaching with Primary Sources or to identify a TPS Consortium member in an area near you, please visit the web site at <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps>.

Primary Sources and Literacy

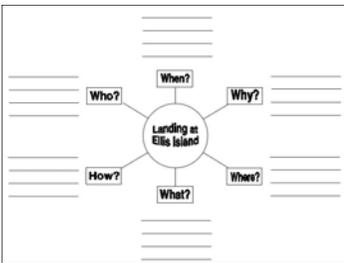
by Mark Newman and Rachel Warach

Are primary source-based activities, by their very nature, exercises in literacy?

Consider a middle-school teacher nearing the end of a unit on immigration. Her students have studied background information on immigrants coming into Ellis Island and have a people, place and time context. Today they are going to watch actual footage from the Library of Congress Web site showing people arriving on Ellis Island in 1904. In setting up the assignment, the teacher tells students that they are journalists, assigned to report on Ellis Island and the immigrants. Students are to write the article as if they were there.

Students have done this type of assignment before and know that, as journalists, they must ask themselves “who, what, when, where, how, and why” questions. With the teacher’s assistance, students develop a list of questions to use in reading the film: What do immigrants in the film look like? What are they doing? What are their surroundings like? Where does it appear they came from? How did they get to Ellis Island? Why do you think they came to the United States? How do you think they felt as they arrived at Ellis Island?

The questions facilitate the taking of notes while watching the film. Once the film ends, using their background knowledge and information gleaned from the film, students use a graphic organizer, a web matrix, to categorize their notes. Next, the student reporters write their on-the-scene accounts.



Example of graphic organizer.

It is obvious that the above assignment teaches students about immigrants. Obvious, too, is that it does so by using a primary source. But how does it help the students with literacy?

This teacher knows that literacy has three main aspects: reading, thinking, and communicating. Looking at her assignment step by step we see that this class read the film using a series of questions to identify important information. Next, they processed and thought about the information as they organized their information using the graphic organizer and possibly outlines in preparation for writing the stories. Here, too, the questions provided guidance. Lastly, they communicated their thoughts by writing a story from the perspective of “being there” as a newspaper journalist. And voila! Literacy taught by using a primary source.

Would this assignment have been successful had students not currently been studying immigration? If they did not have a people, place, and time context for reading the film? Would it have worked if they had never done an exercise placing them at the scene of their topic of study as reporters? No. The teacher made sure the primary source used was appropriate in instructional, situational, and ability-level context. Additionally, this teacher knew the importance of an inquiry model and didn’t simply assume that her students knew what to look for in the film. Instead she helped them develop a list of questions to identify important information, to focus their thinking, and to form conclusions.

By using a primary source, the teacher made the topic interesting. As students “became” journalists, they got a street-level view of immigration that they would not have gotten in a more traditional, text-book-oriented lesson. Without literacy instruction, however, the activity would not have succeeded. Students would not have known how to read the film, nor would they have been able to make sense of it or write their accounts. Literacy is the key to primary source-based instruction. Together, literacy and primary sources help teachers personalize learning, placing students among the people and events they are studying.

Mark Newman is associate professor of curriculum and instruction at National College of Education, National-Louis University. Rachel Warach is a graduate student in the M.A.T. program in Elementary Education at National College of Education, National-Louis University.



Emigrants [i.e. immigrants] landing at Ellis Island / Thomas A. Edison, Inc. 1903. Library of Congress. American Memory. Early Motion Pictures, 1897-1920

Research and Current Thinking

For each issue, TPS partners submit summaries of and links to online resources—articles, research reports, Web sites, and white papers—that provide research and current thinking relating to the theme. This issue's Research & Current Thinking focuses on literacy.

"Enhancing Social Studies through Literacy Strategies" (Judith Irvin, John Lunstrum, Carol Lynch-Brown, and Mary Friend Shepard; National Council for the Social Studies) presents approaches and strategies for integrating literacy acquisition into social studies content and processes, for deepening student understanding of the social sciences, and for motivating students to read and write in the social studies class.

The Knowledge Loom Web site (The Education Alliance at Brown University with funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education) provides a forum for educators worldwide to review research identifying promising practices and contributing knowledge about those practices. The site's "In the Spotlight" features adolescent literacy in the content areas with links to strategies, research, and real stories of application.



Immigrant children, Washington School. Location: Boston, Massachusetts. 1909. Hine, Lewis Wickes, 1874-1940, Photographer. Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division.



African American schoolgirls in classroom, learning to sew. 1899. Johnston, Frances Benjamin, 1864-1952, Photographer. Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division.

NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) offers a variety of resources specific to support adolescent literacy, including a link to the downloadable **"Adolescent Literacy: A Policy Research Brief."**

"Research Link / Family Literacy" (John H. Holloway, Educational Leadership) highlights the importance of home and family contributions to educational success and identifies common components of successful family literacy programming models.

"Rethinking Literacy," a chapter from Family Literacy Experiences (Jennifer Rowsell), expands the traditional definition of literacy and of text and shows teachers how to make the world outside the classroom an integral part of compelling instruction.

"What Does This Picture Say?' Reading the Intertextuality of Visual Images" (Walter Werner, International Journal of Social Education) explores how the interplay of texts, both written and visual, are "interpreted one in the light of another to produce new meanings," and the implications for educators.

"What Happens When Students Read Multiple Source Documents in History?" (Steven A. Stahl, Cynthia R. Hynd, Bruce K. Britton, Mary M. McNish, and Dennis Bosquet, National Reading Research Center) examines processes students use when presented with multiple source documents to study history. The authors explore which teaching strategies enhance students' historical thinking.



School children conducting simple experiments, Washington, D.C. 1899. Johnston, Frances Benjamin, 1864-1952, Photographer. Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division.

To access links to articles cited above please visit the Teaching with Primary Sources Newsletter online at <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/newsletter>.

Learning Activity - Elementary Level

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT SLAVERY: HISTORICAL PRINT ADVERTISEMENT ANALYSIS

Overview

This activity is intended to be used as part of a larger unit on the institution of slavery. Students take a close analytical look at an historical print advertisement for a slave market, and discover what it can tell them about slavery during this era. Students will perform a basic primary source analysis, interpret the story told by the advertisement's text and illustrations and write a reflective essay, poem or story on this topic.

Objectives

After completing the activity, students will be able to:

- Perform a basic primary source analysis of an historic document
- Interpret informational text using reading strategies
- Apply reading and writing skills in the content area

Time Required

One to two class periods

GradeLevel

5-6

Topic/s

African American History

Era/s

National Expansion and Reform, 1815-1860

Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877

Standards

McREL 4th Edition Standards & Benchmarks

United States History

Standard 13. Understands the causes of the Civil War

Historical Understanding

Standard 2. Understand the historical perspective.

Language Arts

Standard 1. Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Standard 7. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

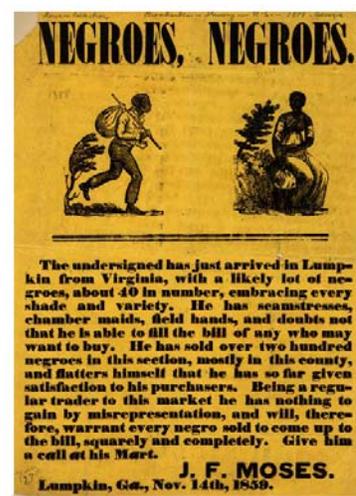
Standard 8. Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Credits

Activity adapted from "Lincoln and Slavery: Taking a Closer Look at Slave Advertisements," a lesson plan created by Cheryl Best, Bunker Hill Community Unit School District, Illinois.

View and Print the complete learning activity:

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/literacy_integration/pdf/elementary_activity.pdf



"Negroes, Negroes." Print advertisement for slave auction, 1859. Emergence of Advertising in America, 1850-1920 Collection – Database #B0430 John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library of Congress

Learning Activity - Secondary Level

JACKIE ROBINSON: "THIS I BELIEVE"

Overview

Students work in groups to analyze and assemble unidentified phrases from a speech by Jackie Robinson entitled "This I Believe" to make predictions and inferences about the complete text. In this speech, Robinson attributes his success and the prospect of limitless opportunity for all Americans to the United States' status as "a free society." Students write and compare predictions and inferences before reading and analyzing Robinson's entire speech. Through this activity, students will continue building their reading skills and develop a richer understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. As part of a Civil Rights Movement unit, this activity could begin the process of helping students understand the diversity of individuals, groups, and viewpoints surrounding the struggle for civil rights.

Objectives

After completing this learning activity, students will be able to:

- Apply the literacy skills of prediction and inference
- Analyze examples of effective writing
- Discuss the role of Jackie Robinson and his views in the context of the Civil Rights Movement

Time Required

One to two class periods

Grade level

9-12

Topic/s

African American History

Era/s

Postwar United States, 1945-1968

Standards

McREL 4th Edition Standards and Benchmarks

Language Arts

Standard 5. Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Standard 7. Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

United States History

Standard 29. Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties

Credits

Adapted from an activity by TPS-Loyola University based on the "tea party" pre-reading strategy presented in the following book: Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.

View and Print the complete learning activity:

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/literacy_integration/pdf/secondary_activity.pdf



Teacher Spotlight



**Emily
Frazier**

In each issue, we introduce a teacher who has participated in Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) professional development and successfully used primary sources from the Library of Congress to support effective instructional practices. The teacher spotlighted for this issue's literacy integration theme is Emily Frazier, a middle-school history teacher at Irving Middle School in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Emily recalls signing up "on a whim" for her first TPS workshop. As a first-year teacher, she wanted ideas for engaging seventh-grade students in history. "I had a really rough group of kids who were really hard to engage," Emily explains. "I was ready to try anything."

TPS-Northern Virginia Partnership (NVA)'s Level One workshop series introduced Emily to ideas and strategies for incorporating digitized primary sources into her classroom instruction. She has since participated in two additional courses. TPS-NVA Director Rhonda Clevenson spotlighted Emily for this literacy integration-themed issue of the *TPS Newsletter* because "she has used student writing about primary sources to both promote literacy skills and deepen content knowledge." Rhonda adds, "Often literacy skills are thought about in terms of reading, the ability to comprehend primary sources. Being able to communicate your ideas to others and support your viewpoints with evidence is also a critical part of literacy."

Using Primary Sources for the First Time

Emily remembers feeling "a little uneasy" the first time she brought primary sources into her classroom. She had created a "Life in a Box" activity on Eleanor Roosevelt using documents and photographs from the Library of Congress Web site. Local curriculum standards include Roosevelt and her role in women's rights, but Emily doubted students would connect with the topic. To her surprise, "My students were enthralled because [the activity] was something different. It was one of the first times in my class the whole year I felt like [students] were engaged in academic talk that wasn't forced."

Building Literacy with Primary Sources

Primary source-based activities improve students' overall literacy and critical thinking skills, according to Emily. She describes a class project in which students created a digital documentary about topics related to the Great Depression using Library of Congress images. "One thing that really struck me was that [students] were writing pages and pages and pages of material for this without prompting," Emily recalls. "And [students] made some really interesting connections . . . between Hoover's popularity and the actual Depression, and they were asking really important questions like 'Did FDR and his programs really pull us out of the Depression or did World War II pull us out of the Depression?'"

Emily says students of all abilities learn important literacy skills from primary sources, including identifying a main idea, recognizing multiple perspectives and drawing conclusions. "I can give [students] different types of primary sources—a newspaper article, a picture and a song and

they're much better at pulling it together [than from reading a textbook]," she says. "I think that's a really hard skill, especially for seventh graders, to be able to look at multiple perspectives and multiple media and to be able to pull those together into a main idea."

Emily adds, "I've found [primary sources] to be powerful in teaching the literacy strategy of recognizing bias. Part of our curriculum is to teach propaganda and biases that people have towards things."

Collaborating to Integrate Literacy and Primary Sources Across the Curriculum

In Emily's experience, primary sources are most effective in supporting literacy instruction when integrated across the curriculum. She describes coordinating lessons with a colleague so that while students read *Out of the Dust* in English class, they studied Dorothea Lange's 1930s photographs in Emily's history class. "It was really powerful for my students to be able to connect photographs like 'Migrant Mother' with the *Out of the Dust* book about the Dust Bowl," Emily says. "I think [students] got a more vivid picture in their mind and they could see 'Migrant Mother' being somebody in that book."

Now in her fourth year of teaching, Emily teaches with primary sources every day. Her colleagues share her enthusiasm for primary sources. "We have taken many of the Library's [digitized primary] sources and created previews for each unit because it's such a good way to draw kids into the lesson," says Emily.

Emily's advice for teachers still uncertain about teaching with primary sources is "just to try it" but suggests taking a TPS workshop if possible. She adds, "The Library's Web site is an invaluable resource."