

Student Teachers Thinking Historically

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Abstract

Prescriptions for the reform of history education routinely advocate increased use of primary historical sources in the classroom, as being fundamental to the teaching of historical thinking. Yet there have been no studies of student-teachers' learning how to teach using primary sources. This exploratory study defines the task faced by student-teachers early in their program. It uses recent discussions among historians and philosophers to generate three general characteristics of the task. It then uses these characteristics as a framework for an empirical investigation of the difficulties student-teachers encounter as they begin to design exercises for teaching students how to read primary sources critically and constructively.

Prescriptions for reform of history and social studies teaching routinely advocate increased use of primary sources in the classroom (e.g. Brown, 1970; Gagnon and the Bradley Commission, 1989; National Center for History in the Schools, 1995).¹ As Peter Lee (1991, pp.48-49) argues, it is

absurd...to say that schoolchildren know any history if they have no understanding of how historical knowledge is attained, its relationship to evidence, and the way in which historians arbitrate between competing or contradictory claims. The ability to recall accounts without any understanding of the problems involved in constructing them or the criteria involved in evaluating them has nothing historical about it. Without an understanding of what makes an account historical, there is nothing to distinguish such an ability from the ability to recite sagas, legends, myths or poems.

Peter Stearns (1993) calls the reading of sources "the one analytical capacity humanities programs most commonly acknowledge already."² No less than in science or mathematics, understanding the grounds of knowledge claims in history should be a basic goal of the teaching the subject. If his-

tory education is to be any more than rote memorization, then social studies teachers' ability to teach students the uses of primary sources should lie squarely in the center of their pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Yet secondary social studies teachers themselves may have had limited experience working with primary sources (Ravitch, 1997). Even the completion of a number of post-secondary history courses is no guarantee of deep experience in working with historical sources, much less of ability to shape exercises which will help their students do so (Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987).

There is a growing literature on students' and teachers' historical thinking (e.g., Barton and Levstik, 1996; Epstein, 1994; Rouet, Britt, Mason & Perfetti, 1996; Seixas, 1996; Wilson and Wineburg, 1993; Wineburg, 1996; Young and Leinhardt, 1998). McDiarmid (1994) and Yeager & Davis (1995) have examined the historical thinking of post-secondary students, including student teachers. But to date, there has been no examination of student-teachers learning to construct exercises for their own students, i.e., of student-teachers engaged in historical thinking tasks which are at the same time specifically pedagogical. Indeed, recent surveys of research on social studies teacher education do not even identify learning to teach using historical sources as an issue (Adler, 1991; Armento, 1996; Banks & Parker, 1990). This constitutes a major gap in the research literature, in social studies teacher education, or both.

This study uses recent discussions among historians and philosophers to define some dimensions of the task faced by student-teachers in using primary sources. It then investigates empirically the difficulties student-teachers encounter as they begin to choose appropriate primary sources, and to design exercises for teaching students how to read them critically and constructively. The study focuses entirely on the early stages of a student-teacher's learning to teach: almost all of the data collection occurred within the first term, the university-based component, of a teacher education program. Thus, its conclusions address only the (heretofore undefined) problems that student-teachers and teacher educators face, and not their resolution.

Text and Context

Historians—intellectual historians in particular—and philosophers of history have recently problematized the relationship between text and context, or between historical traces (or sources) and accounts of the past. Because the debates have implications for the construction of historical knowledge, so too do they have implications for historical pedagogy, and nowhere more visibly than in attempts to construct exercises where students build historical knowledge through the use of primary sources.

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"Normal" historical explanation rests on locating specific documents, events, characters or institutions in contexts, i.e., in moments related to broader narratives of historical development (Berkhofer, 1995). "Contextualism," Berkhofer (1995, p.31) summarizes, "is the primary mode of historical understanding." Texts are analyzed by placing them in their historical context. Anachronism—"the greatest historiographical sin"—(in normal historical practice) is the failure to place something in the context of its times (Berkhofer, 1995, p.32). Philosophers of history have attempted to explain this process (e.g., Walsh, 1960; White, 1973). It is not simple.

Discussing text and context, intellectual historian Dominick LaCapra (1983) distinguishes between the "documentary" and "worklike" aspects of the text. This distinction will be central to the analysis of student-teachers' assignments below. The "documentary" aspects of the text involve "reference to empirical reality" and convey information. The "worklike" aspects of the text "supplement empirical reality by adding to and subtracting from it." (LaCapra, 1983, p. 30). In other words, the "worklike" text is *part* of the action that is under investigation, not an *account* of the action. A declaration of war or a journal entry expressing love or hatred is rich in its "worklike" aspects. That is, it is not *about* an event: it *is* the event. We do not ask of a declaration of war, "is this a biased account?" because it is not an account. Rather, we might ask, "Who was responsible for this decision?" "What were the author's assumptions?" or "What were the consequences of this declaration?"³ To make sense of the "worklike" aspects of a text, one reads subtext, and makes inferences in relation to a context: the text is only one piece, one player, in a more complex set of thoughts, intentions, and actions. On the other hand the historian does not analyze the text simply against a fixed contextual backdrop: the "worklike" text adds to, enriches and reconstitutes the context. "For the historian, the very reconstruction of a 'context' or a 'reality' takes place on the basis of 'textualized' remainders of the past." (LaCapra, 1983, p. 27).⁴ Thus, the process of building knowledge about the past involves an analysis of the "remainders of the past" (or texts), which proceeds in part through understanding them in the light of what we already know about the past (i.e., contextualization).

Wineburg (1991, p. 500) writes of this "worklike" interaction between text and context:

Texts come not to convey information, to tell stories, or even to set the record straight...Texts emerge as "speech acts," social interactions set down on paper that can be understood only by trying to reconstruct the social context in which they occurred. The comprehension of text reaches beyond words and phrases

to embrace intention, motive, purpose, and plan—the same set of concepts we use to decipher human action.

Contexts do not exist prior to the texts, but are themselves constructed through our work with texts.

In a debate with David Hollinger (1989) David Harlan (1989, 1997), takes LaCapra's argument one step further, arraying "contextualism" (the process of understanding and explaining texts through their historical contexts) against "presentism" (the position that we can never understand texts except through our own [present] frames of reference). Harlan argues that historians can never escape the present, that the structures of their knowledge are products of the present, and thus that the method of "contextualism," placing texts in "context," can not be defended epistemologically. If there is no prior historical "context" within which to understand a text, then the process of historicizing texts is simply understanding them in relation to other texts, all of which we read through our own (present) frames of reference. Harlan's position appears to undermine, fundamentally, the basis for constructing historical knowledge. Hollinger (1989) and Joyce Appleby (1989) offer rebuttals to Harlan, based largely on historians' practice:

Of course, we live and think in the here and now; the question is whether we can re-create any part of the past to keep us company. If the poststructuralists are correct that we cannot fathom the original meaning of the texts offering us a window on other human experience, we will remain imprisoned in the present. Small wonder that historians draw upon their practice of reconstructing the past in order to resist this verdict. (Appleby, 1989, p.1332; cf. Hollinger, 1989; Appleby, et al., 1995; Ankersmit & Kellner, 1995; Bevir, 1997).

Historians' responses did not, however, lay the postmodernist challenges to rest. Berkhofer (1995) returns to the problematic relationship between text and context. From where, he asks, do the "Great Stories" which provide the ultimate contexts for our textual analyses come? To what extent do our accounts of the past rest on the structures of emplotment, into which we contextualize the documentary evidence (cf. White, 1973)? The act of constructing historical context, and thus the related acts of selection and interpretation of historical texts, are infused with present, contemporary concerns. As LaCapra (1983, p.18) puts it:

...historians are involved in the effort to understand both what something meant in its own time and what it may mean for us today. The most engaging, if at times perplexing, dimensions

of interpretation exist on the margin, where these two meanings are not simply disjointed from one another, for it is at this liminal point that the dialogue with the past becomes internal to the historian.

Current themes or issues that make history potentially significant to us today, help to shape historical accounts which, in turn, shape the analysis of new historical sources. Thus, doing history involves a dynamic interplay among current issues, historical contexts, and historical texts. Though the bulk of this discussion been carried on in relation to the meanings of words in texts, a parallel set of concerns informs recent debates over the historiography of photography (e.g., Tagg, 1988; Kozloff, 1994).

Without attempting to resolve these debates three major points emerge from the discussion: 1. Text and context exist in dynamic tension in the construction of historical knowledge. 2. We never have access to the historical context in direct or unmediated form: the construction of context is shaped not only through work with historical sources (texts), but also through present concerns and issues. 3. Two aspects of text ("documentary" and "worklike") are operative in the process of building historical knowledge, but one, the "worklike" aspect of text, constructs the most potent interactions with context.

If students are to be active learners, i.e. if they are to do something more than memorizing the products of others' knowledge-building activities, then all of these observations about the construction of historical knowledge have implications for teaching and learning history. An exercise where the text merely *illustrates* an already defined context fails to capture the critical historiographic act.⁵ A text as "illustration" does not help to build the context: it tacitly assumes that the context is complete and fixed prior to the analysis of the text. But equally deficient is the anachronistic exercise which fails to understand the text *in relation to* its historical context. Students need opportunities to read historical texts in dynamic tension with their historical contexts. Of course, students do not have the prior knowledge, language skills or training of the historian. The responsibility thus lies on the teacher to arrange suitable encounters with historical sources and accounts, with rigorous attention to the student's potential paths in constructing new knowledge (cf. Seixas, 1993).

The Empirical Study

The central data for this study are assignments completed by pre-service student-teachers. As will be explained further below, student-teachers were required to design a sequence of questions for analyzing one or more primary historical sources (i.e., texts). The questions they wrote let us see simultaneously into their thinking about the source, and into their

thinking about their own students' thinking about the source. In effect, the assignments comprise representations of the process of reading a historical source for the particular purpose of teaching it. The assignments thus provide insight into student-teachers' initial thinking about the construction of historical knowledge.

In the 1996-97 academic year, in the first term of a one-year post-graduate teacher education program at a western Canadian university, there were three sections of Secondary Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction course (hereafter, "social studies methods"), two of which I taught. The data for this study were drawn from the third section, taught by one of my doctoral students. Her class included 37 student-teachers. She was in the second year of a PhD. program in Curriculum and Instruction. She had been a student the previous year in my seminar, entitled "Problems in Historical Understanding." Prior to entering the program, she had completed six years of teaching, primarily social studies in grades 7 to 10, and had received two Excellence in Teaching Awards from the provincial jurisdiction where she taught.

Social studies methods, a thirteen-week course (meeting six hours a week), included an introduction to the goals of social studies and the prescribed curriculum, assessment, the writing of lesson plans and unit plans. It introduced issues in the teaching of history, geography, and contemporary media, as well as the use of fictional, archeological, and sociological sources in the classroom, within a broad, integrative framework. Two weeks of the course focused specifically on the problems of teaching and learning history.⁶ The instructor introduced the history component of the course with a broad, open-ended discussion of historical knowledge, framed by four questions: 1. What is history? 2. How do we know about the past? 3. What is the difference between history and fiction? and 4. What is the difference between a primary and secondary source? In subsequent lessons, she provided students with guidelines for selecting and using primary sources, and provided opportunities for students to analyze and construct lessons around a number of primary sources. She also led discussions of question sequences which students from previous classes had constructed, based on primary source documents. Students read and discussed articles by Tom Holt (1990), Samuel Wineburg (1991), and Peter Seixas (1997), and critiqued historical films ("Ballad of Crowfoot" and "Heritage Minutes") which might be used in the classroom. In the third of the six sessions on teaching history, the instructor gave the assignment which would constitute the core of the data for this study. Students submitted them one week, (plus two weekends) later. Their instructions were to choose one or more primary sources suitable for teaching in high school, construct a sequence of questions which would help students to read and analyze the source(s), define objectives for the lesson, and provide a de-

scription of the teaching context for this lesson (i.e., at what grade level and where in the study of the topic this lesson would occur).

Students also filled out two questionnaires, one about their academic backgrounds, and the other about the process of completing the assignment. I selected four student-teachers' assignments for detailed analysis. After the conclusion of the course, at the beginning of the school-based practicum, the authors of each of these participated in an in-depth, tape-recorded interview, subsequently transcribed. My interviews with the four student-teachers revolved around leading them through a reexamination of the assignments they had constructed. First, I asked about the larger historical significance of the incident or documents from their assignment. Secondly, I asked them to tell me how a good student, who was following the lesson well, would answer the questions they had posed. Finally, (if they had not already volunteered it), after going through the entire sequence of questions, I provided an opportunity for them to say if and how they might revise the assignment before using it with students. (Appendix)

Thus, the study involved three moments of textual analysis: first, of the primary sources chosen by the student-teachers, second, of their readings of the primary sources (through their source-based assignments for students), and third, of their retrospective reflections on their own questions (through the interview transcripts).⁷ The analysis was based on questions informed by the three points summarizing the section, above, entitled "Text and Context." 1. Did the student-teachers' exercises help to build a dynamic tension between text and context? 2. Was the exercise shaped by a sense of the dynamic tension between contemporary issues and historical accounts? 3. How rich was the source (chosen by the student-teacher) in its "worklike" aspects (i.e., would it lend itself to an analysis of its own purposes, construction, and consequences)? In addition, a fourth point addressed the specifically pedagogical question: was the choice of document plausibly appropriate for secondary school students, and could the sequence of questions help to lead students from what they might already know, through an active interpretation of the source, to new historical knowledge? It should be noted here, that answers to these questions demand explicitly normative judgments of students' assignments. These judgments rest on a) the outline of historical epistemology explicated above and b) a notion of teaching for historical understanding which helps students not only to memorize the products of historians' work, but also to be able to work out evidence-based historical interpretations themselves. The study is limited in that it focuses on student-teachers' learning in a methods course and does not extend longitudinally to observations of their use of their exercises in real classrooms.

Of the 37 student-teachers in the class, 36 returned questionnaire #1, and 31 gave permission for their assignments to be analyzed. Of those

who returned the questionnaire, one entered the program with a graduate degree. Twenty listed history as a major, six listed geography; the remainder had other majors. Six had taken a course in historiography as undergraduates. Twenty-nine had written an undergraduate paper using primary sources. Six claimed to have been exposed to the use of primary sources in a high school history class. None, of course, had any prior experience teaching history to high school students. Their ideas about students' prior historical knowledge, interests, and abilities to read texts literally were based neither on recent experience nor on any study as part of their education program.

Of the 31 assignments submitted, 26 were based on a single primary source, five on two sources, and only one on more than two sources. Sixteen used solely textual (i.e. non-pictorial) sources, eight used photographs, five used pictures other than photographs, and two used a combination of types. For the four student-teachers' assignments to be used for a detailed analysis, I sought two that were relatively strong (on the basis of the four questions above), and two that were weak. I wanted to include both text- and photograph-based sources (without, however, analyzing the distinct problems of each medium.) Though I will introduce the student-teachers' academic backgrounds below, the assignments were chosen on the basis of their own strengths and weaknesses, and not on the basis of their authors' academic backgrounds.⁸

Four Student-Teachers' Lessons

Diane Arkwright had a double major in history and English, and many senior level courses in history. As an undergraduate, she had written a paper based on a critical reading of a mid-nineteenth century book. For this assignment, she chose an 1881 speech to the Canadian House of Commons by then Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, supporting the development of the Canadian Pacific Railroad.⁹ Her lesson was one of the stronger ones. The document is captioned, "John A Macdonald's speech in the House of Commons regarding the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (January 17, 1881)." The entire passage reads:

I can trust to the intelligence of this House, and the patriotism of this country, I can trust not only to the patriotism but to the common sense of this country to carry out an arrangement which will give us all we want, which will satisfy all the loyal legitimate aspirations which will give us a great, an united, a rich, an improving, a developing Canada, instead of making us tributary to American laws, to American railways, to American bondage, to American tolls, to American freights, to all the little tricks and big tricks that American railways are addicted

to for the purpose of destroying our road. (quoted in Neidhardt, 1974)

This text locates the speaker's position definitively at the center of potent interpretive themes in Canadian history: Canada's ambivalent relationship to the United States, a trajectory of "progress," the struggle for national unity in the face of diverse and conflicting interests, and the role of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (and the federal state) in relation to all of these. The major issues are both distant from our own concerns (the construction of a railroad), and yet directly connected to contemporary issues through the ongoing problems of Canadian/American relations, public/private relations, the constitution of the nation, the role of political leadership, and the notion of "progress." Moreover, as Arkwright noted with some understatement, "it wouldn't bog you down with words exactly....You want people to pick up a lot from just little" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1997).

The elevated rhetoric of the passage conveys the notion that the speaker's position rests not only on a calculation of various private interests, but of the public good, of right vs. wrong, of "intelligence" and "patriotism" vs. "little tricks...big tricks," addiction, and destruction. The language of these claims is heated, and thus helps us to locate the values and the perspectives of the author very quickly. This document is rich in its "worklike" aspects. It does not *tell* part of the story; it *is* part of the story. The speech was one piece of Macdonald's effort to provide support for a vision of nationhood. Similar to other essentially "worklike" documents, the questions of "bias" and "reliability" are not the main interest here, as they might be for a textbook or a historian's account of the period. That is, whether Macdonald's view of the U.S. railroads was fair or not, or whether his assessment of Canadian patriotism was accurate, is secondary to the fact that he said these things at all. The position and perspectives of the speaker, himself, constitute the core of our interest and thus our investigation of the source.

Did Diane Arkwright understand the beauty of her choice, and would she be able to help her students to mine this document for historical understanding? We turn now to her questions and what she had to say about them. She articulated her objectives as wanting students to "be able to distinguish between a primary and a secondary source," to "interpret meaning" from a primary source, and to see "a historical event or issue ...from many different perspectives." She noted that her students "would have to read between the lines to understand that behind Macdonald's speech were his fears, visions, and beliefs." In her description of the process of developing her lesson, she said she "decided what parts connected [the source] with the curriculum, and what key points I wanted to raise

through my questions..." In the interview, she explained, "this was written over 100 years ago and I think so much is still relevant to today...How we're so influenced by American ways." But the document was not, in her view, going to provide either a transparent window on the past, or easy lessons for the present. Reading it would involve her students in a process of interpretation: "It's just to show the rhetoric, a politician's rhetoric...how it was used to sway opinions in the House of Commons" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1997).

Arkwright proposed to have a "brief discussion of the differences between primary and secondary sources," followed by a discussion of nine questions. The first three were as follows:

1. What do you think is shaping Macdonald's perspective? What insight does his perspective give you into the subject? How?
2. What part did the railway play in Macdonald's vision of Canada? What kind of benefits did he think the railway would bring? How?
3. What images do you think Macdonald was trying to present and what feelings was he trying to evoke with his speech? What strategies does he use?

Collectively, these three questions relate text to context, and help students to construct an interpretive stance towards the source. Question #1, calls for a synthetic judgement of the whole passage, all of its language, its rhetorical strategies, its factual assertions, its definitions of right and wrong, good and bad. It does so before drawing students' attention to any of the pieces. Questions #2 and #3, again, though somewhat more limited, ask questions of the entire passage. If students are able to read and decode the pieces of the source independently, then these three questions may be helpful. For students who are unable to do so, however, these three questions, placed at the outset of the question sequence, are unlikely to provide much assistance. The next three questions do investigate the passage's specific rhetorical strategies:

4. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "tributary" as "flowing into a larger stream." Given this meaning, what potential relationship with the United States do you think Macdonald saw for Canada?
5. What is the central comparison that Macdonald makes in his speech? Given the implication of this comparison, what assumptions are revealed?

6. What types of "little tricks and big tricks" do you think Macdonald refers to?

Question #4 highlights a key term in the passage, offers a definition, and asks how it constructs the relationship between Canada and the US. This question provides the close guidance (for students who need it) which is missing in #1, #2, and #3. Like #4, question #6, placed prior to the broad interpretive questions, could assist students in constructing their other answers. In Question #5 it is unclear (both to me, and to Arkwright, herself, in her subsequent interview) what "central comparison" is meant.

The final three questions return to broader issues of contextualization:

7. If you were present while Macdonald was giving his speech, how would you have felt a) as a Canadian citizen and b) as an American citizen?
8. For what purpose(s) do you think Macdonald gave this speech?
9. Could this speech have been written today?

Question #7 suggests a sharp divide between Canadian and American responses. It is potentially misleading, in that it does not allow for the sharply contrasting reactions that Canadians actually had. Macdonald, of course, *wanted* his audience to believe that all "loyal" Canadians would fall into line. But Arkwright's question conflates Macdonald's intention with his audience's response. Macdonald had a job to do, to unite Canadians behind generous state support for a private railroad scheme. If all Canadians had been easily receptive to this speech, then Macdonald would not have needed to deliver it. In fact, the Liberal Canadian opposition attacked the scheme vehemently. Macdonald's hyperbolic terms were aimed, not at Americans at all, but at Canadian resistance to his plan. In her subsequent interview, Arkwright demonstrated her knowledge of the variation in Canadian opinion:

I think you'd get a pretty good range of opinion [among Canadians], probably more so on the supporting it, that they would feel as he felt, especially given the context and the time. That would have been a good debate. (Interview, Jan. 22, 1997)

So here the problem was rooted, not in her own historical interpretation, but in moving from that interpretation to a well-formulated question for her students.

Perhaps Arkwright's students would recover the interpretive thread with Question 8 about Macdonald's purposes. Working with this ques-

tion would give them an opportunity to see Macdonald and this speech as major players in the conflicts of the historical period. At the same time, it would enhance their understanding of the ways in which those struggles were engaged: the text builds context. In Question 9, Arkwright takes on LaCapra's (1984, p.18) challenge: what is the relation between meanings in the past and those in the present? She understood that the students might use the speech to approach this issue:

I think they can get a lot out of a speech that was written so long ago and realize that it hasn't changed that much, that there are still a lot of similar affairs and the way that politicians can inflate or exaggerate situations...[But on the other hand, they will understand] how things have changed, how the railways were so important then and then you look now, what's important now? (Interview, Jan. 22, 1997)

How students will respond, given the wording of her question, remains unknown. Will students achieve the comparison she wanted? Will the question stimulate a nuanced and multivalent response? What aspects of the past are being extracted from the speech for comparative purposes? If she was thinking about the dangers of the American threat, the answers should be quite different than if she was asking about funding for the transcontinental railroad. The role of Canadian elites in fostering anti-Americanism for their own benefit entails a rich set of issues, whose configuration has changed, moreover, in the current era of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Arkwright thus chose a source which could call up the particular historical context of railroad- and nation-building in the late nineteenth-century, revise students' (contextual) understanding of Canadian politics in that era, and extend to potent contemporary issues which both enrich the contextual narrative and enable a cogent interpretation of the text. By the time we discussed the assignment on tape, Arkwright, having spent two weeks in schools, was already eager to revise it in the light of her thinking about students' thinking:

I know like this is way too hard for Grade 8, way beyond their abilities. Grade 10 it probably still is a little bit too hard, even the whole idea of perspective [from question #1]. I mean that's like a concept that they may not be too sure of .. and that first question about "what insight does his perspective give you?" They'd be like, "What?" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1997)

Both for contrast, and to explore further the challenges facing student-teachers in this introductory exercise, we now turn to a weaker student assignment.

Alan Sims was a history major, with several courses in Canadian history. He stated his goals for his lesson on the Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada, based on a letter to the electorate from its republican leader, William Lyon Mackenzie, a decade earlier (Crawford, 1967):

[Students] will be able to select and state the explicit and implicit political statements in the letter. Using their analysis of the letter they will be able to comprehend the political mood of this man and his supporters within the county of York in 1827.

He was thus looking for students' ability to contextualize the source, as well as their use of the text in building their representations of the specific historical milieu. He did not, however, extend the contextualization of the letter to questions about Mackenzie's significance in the larger frame of Canadian history, nor to questions about how his populist opposition to colonial elites might be important for students today.

The text begins with three paragraphs of general introduction: a pledge to "uphold the general good," with "firmness, moderation, and perseverance..." The next two paragraphs explain what Mackenzie opposes:

I have ever been opposed to ecclesiastical domination; it is at enmity with the free spirit of christianity: and nations which have bowed to its yoke, are become the dark abodes of ignorance and superstition-oppression and misery.

That corrupt, powerful, and long endured influence which has hitherto interfered with your rights and liberties, can only be overthrown by your unanimity and zeal. An independent House of Assembly, to Upper Canada, would be inestimable.

The longest paragraph of the piece follows. Here Mackenzie distinguishes between elected representatives who "fall from their integrity and betray their sacred trust," and those who "maintain and uphold the interest of their country." In closing, he pledges to be one of the latter.

Sims' document is four times the length of Arkwright's abbreviated extract. While it is difficult to assess the choice of a particular source, outside of the context of the interpretive strategy within which student-teachers aim to embed it, nevertheless, Sims' choice poses some *prima facie* difficulties, including its length, vocabulary, and allusions to contextual information which would have to be provided to students.

Sims' question sequence offers no help for the difficult vocabulary ("ecclesiastical domination...at enmity with the free spirit of christianity..."). Nor is there any line-by-line assistance for students in their analysis of the text. Sims does not ask, for instance, "What does Mackenzie mean by 'an independent house of Assembly,'" (independent of whom?) or to whom

he is referring as the "corrupt, powerful, and long endured influence." These are keys to linking the text to the context. Rather, the sequence begins, "Why is this man running for office?" Is Sims after the literal meaning of the text, here, i.e. "to uphold the general good?" If so, the question should have read "What reasons does Mackenzie give for running for office?" On the other hand, if Sims is after a reading of subtext, this document alone does not provide a way to see Mackenzie's unstated motivations for running for office: there is no way to read a subtextual answer to this question. Question #1 thus obfuscates exactly the reading that it should clarify.

Question #4 ("What does this letter tell us about the role of the church in the politics of Upper Canada? How does the author feel about it?") and possibly #5 ("What are this man's political opinions?") are the only ones which refer to directly to the two key paragraphs explaining what Mackenzie opposes, but again, pedagogically, they offer little help to students in sorting through the difficult concepts and language. One (#8) does potentially confront the letter as a worklike document: "Does the letter make reference to events in other countries? If so why would he [sic] do so at this time?" But the lack of follow-up questions, the lack of guidance to students, and an apparent absence of consideration of what students can and cannot read independently permeate the sequence. Notwithstanding his stated goal, Sims' question sequence only tenuously makes any interpretive links between this text and a broader contextual significance of William Lyon Mackenzie and the Rebellions of 1837 in Canadian history. Was this a problem, like Arkwright's, of "translation" from understandings he would have been able to articulate for audiences other than high school students? In this case, I do not believe so. Nowhere, either in his written work, or in the interview (where he was asked directly) did he articulate the larger significance of the document or of Mackenzie, himself, for Canadian history.

The lesson ends with a twist in the text/context relationship. At the very end of the exercise, after students have completed ten questions, Sims suggests, "The lesson will conclude with a general question as to whether [the students] knew who this person [i.e., Mackenzie] was..." We would not have an interest in this letter if we did not know who wrote it: Mackenzie's subsequent role is largely what makes the letter historically significant for a unit on the Rebellions. The potentially creative interaction between text and context would be extremely difficult to achieve without knowledge of the role that the author of this letter played in the events of the time. Moreover, if students were not given—prior to reading the letter—information on "who Mackenzie was," it is impossible to imagine how they would be able to ascertain it from the letter. Discussing the lesson in the interview, Sims confirmed his intentions:

...the idea why I picked this particular document to a certain extent was because I didn't think they would understand who this person was, what was going on at the time, and where this would lead to over the next 30 or 40 years. (Interview, Jan. 28, 1997).

Puzzlingly, a student-teacher with a relatively strong background in Canadian history appeared to have major difficulty in selecting a source and developing questions which would help students analyze the text, place it in context, and enrich their contextual understandings in a historical field in which he had had some experience. By the time of the interview, after spending two weeks with students in a school, Sims did have some insight into the difficulty that his exercise would pose for students:

...from what I saw of their Humanities, they have no idea what a primary or secondary document is in Grade 8. They barely know how to write a paragraph which I found out when I asked them to do a research paper. It was an interesting experience. (Interview, Jan. 28, 1997)

He suggested that in conducting the lesson, he would have to go over difficult vocabulary before tackling the passage. Further, following a suggestion from the instructor, he would number the paragraphs of the document, and direct students to particular passages in his questions. While we might reasonably hope that the level of difficulty of this lesson would be adjusted through experience with students in his classroom, there is little reason to believe that school experience will stimulate new insights about the relationships between historical text and historical context. These understandings presumably come from deep and sustained work with historical sources and their interpretation. At best, we can hope that Sims will encounter focused history instruction as a part of his professional development program.

Perhaps because several of the examples used in the social studies methods class were based on photographic sources, ten of the students used photographic documents for their assignments. Like Alan Sims, Darryl Macintosh was a history major. He had taken at least three courses in western Canadian history, and one on "Racism and Anti-Semitism in Canadian History." He reported having done archival research as a part of his undergraduate degree. He based his exercise on a photograph stemming from the Komagata Maru incident in British Columbia in 1914, when would-be Sikh immigrants were refused entry into the port of Vancouver by local immigration officials, despite their being British subjects.¹⁰ The incident receives mention in most recent Canadian high school history



Figure 1. National Archives of Canada/C-038613.

textbooks (cf. Morton, 1988). It is often used to discuss Canadian—and particularly British Columbian—racism. Macintosh's photograph shows a group of turbaned men (and one child) posing for the photographer on the deck of the ship (Figure 1).

Macintosh outlined objectives for the use of the photograph with tenth grade students. Almost all were directly concerned with anti-racist education. Summing up his aims, he wrote, "Thus, by studying the primary document and the cases of discrimination the students would become more respectful towards other cultures, which is an important characteristic of our Canadian heritage..." Thus, his explicit goals were of a different type from either Arkwright's (on reading primary and secondary sources) or Sims' (on historical interpretation): he sought primarily neither to teach them to use historical sources, nor to have them grapple with interpretive questions in Canadian history, but rather to shape their attitudes in the present.

Macintosh considered the contextual knowledge of his students, and specifically outlined what they would and would not have been exposed to at the time of their examination of the photograph. They would have studied the restrictive immigration policies of 1908 and the general climate of racism. Yet it would only be after the students attempted to answer the questions that he would inform them that this photograph showed "part of the 376 South Asians who attempted to enter Canada ...and their resultant return to the Orient following the decision from the Supreme Court of Canada." In other words, they would not know the story of the incident as context for the photograph analysis. This withholding of key information about the provenance of the photograph is very similar to Sims' withholding of the identity of the author of his source (with similar problems for the exercise as a whole.)

His first four questions were the following:

1. Where are these people?
2. Why are there no women in this picture?
3. Why is there a child in the group, why is he in the front?
4. Why is there an elderly man in the group, and why is he in the front?

The four questions share some of the same problems.¹¹ It is entirely unclear how students will arrive at answers, using either contextual information that they might have been exposed to, or evidence from the source itself. Moreover, it is unclear why they are significant interpretively. They

move the reader towards neither an understanding of the historical incident nor the potential significance of the photograph in determining such an understanding. Macintosh did not have a clear sense of their problematic nature at the time of the interview. Discussing his thinking about #3, he offered the following:

D.M.: It's more one to create discussion, I guess I would have thrown out hints and then obviously they would be wondering why is that child there. It's almost like questions I guess to begin a lecture and then you start giving them the information and that's what it seems to me at this point, like why is the child in the group and then you can start lecturing about that, as opposed to continuing on on maybe the questions themselves and really using it as primary document

I: I wasn't sure that I could answer that question, "Why is there a child in the group?" So it's sort of a puzzle that you don't really expect them to be able to...

D.M.: But it's to get them to think about it because possibly there can be and again when you're looking at photographs you really do have to question why is that kid in there, like maybe it is a question you should ask yourself. Is he there to get maybe sympathy, create sympathy when they did take that picture. Like again you've got the perspective of the photographer. And when you look at the photographer obviously, well, you get the older man, the younger child in front and maybe you're going to get some sympathy. (Interview, Jan. 30, 1997)

He did not recognize the assumptions he had made about the purpose of the photograph, and the relationship between the photographer and the group. Not recognizing those assumptions, he could not articulate them as questions for students to examine.

The next questions exhibit some of the same difficulties, and some new ones:

5. Do these people look as if they would make valuable citizens in Canada? Why?
6. Why would you take this picture?

In his written explanation of the lesson, Macintosh highlighted #5, and imagined students' responses to the picture and the question:

By examining the picture of the South Asians, the students are able to determine for themselves if these people seem suitable to enter Canada. Thus they are likely to form a negative opinion towards reasoning for restricting South Asian immigration... Such criticism would be a desired goal of the prescribed learning outcomes.

Macintosh is apparently confident that students would answer "yes" to Question #5. He has gone through the process of imagining students confronting the questions, but imagines an answer which may well not be the case. Moreover, a negative response to this question is likely to subvert the goals he has defined for the lesson. The subversion will be particularly devastating, moreover, because the wording of the question suggests that the visual evidence is sufficient to determine whether the people portrayed "would make valuable citizens in Canada." #5 is apparently an open-ended question, which asks students to reframe material from the text (images of "these people") into a larger interpretive field. But because the students have entertained no discussion of what a "valuable citizen" is, the apparently open-ended question becomes an invitation to the expression of racial stereotypes. Perhaps more importantly, there is no historical context for the question: students have not been asked to consider the values and aspirations either of the subjects of the photograph or of their (hypothetical, at this point) British Columbian opponents. Thus, Macintosh does not mobilize the historical text in the service of further understanding of the context of racism in BC in the early 20th century.

This elision of historical difference is compounded by the ambiguously ahistorical wording of the next question: "Why would you take this picture?" (emphasis added). The photographer's purpose is a significant question, whose answer will provide insight into the photograph as a "worklike" document: was the photographer supporting the Sikhs by attempting to show their respectability and decency? Or was s/he documenting their foreignness and strangeness for an audience of threatened white British Columbians? Students encountering the pronoun "you" will not be led towards this issue. In the follow-up interview, as he discussed a possible revision of #6, Macintosh improved the wording:

D.M. : Change #6 to may be not, "Why would you take this picture?" but again, "What was the reason for the photographer to take this picture?" and then may be that would flow a little bit better with #5.

I: Okay, change it from "Why would *you* take this picture?" to "Why did the photographer take this picture?" Is that the change you're making?

D.M. : Ya, ya, more so that the kids would, you know, they wouldn't think to put themselves into the shoes of the photographer with that one question and I think that's an important aspect if they have to look at it and go well, "Why is he taking that photograph?" (Interview, Jan. 30, 1997)

Still, it remains clear that Macintosh assumed that the photographer was sympathetic to the Sikhs and that students who looked carefully at the document would see this. After considerable discussion, he realized how this assumption had skewed some of his questioning. "Who *did* take the photograph?" he finally asked. (Interview, Jan. 30, 1997)

Question #7, "What was the attitude of British Columbians towards people from Asian countries?" relies entirely on contextual knowledge: one cannot read it from the photograph. Nor does it follow from any of the questions earlier in the sequence. Thus, it constructs a separation between text and context. The photograph becomes merely an illustration of the accepted contextual information, and thus the occasion for a context quiz, not the stimulus for analysis, nor a piece of the historical action. Question #7 would work as a reminder of the context, if it served as an introduction to further analytical questions about the text. It did not do so, in this sequence.

Macintosh's final question attempts to bridge the past and the present:

8. Are there groups of people today which Canada would not wish into the country?

But without the historical events insufficiently established, the problem of relating present events and attitudes to the past is lost in a kind of free-float.

In sum, Macintosh allowed important contemporary moral issues to dominate the historical context in a way that rendered the historical incident less potent in shedding light on the very issue he wanted to use it for. Secondly, he allowed his own assumptions about the historical context to dominate his interpretation of the text, so that he did not examine the text carefully enough to uncover some of its ambiguities. The historical understanding that emerges from this exercise is so truncated, that it is of little use in helping students to orient themselves morally in contemporary society, the avowed aim of this student-teacher.

The fourth student-teacher's exercise raises related moral issues, but with more skillful questioning. Sarah Mehlen, a sociology major, had considerably less undergraduate experience with history than Arkwright, Sims or Macintosh. She had taken only two history courses—an introduction to Canadian history and history of technology, though her broad liberal arts degree had included courses in French, women and literature, film history and social theory. (Interview, Feb. 5, 1997)

Mehlen chose a photograph from around 1900, which, in her own words, was "extremely powerful and informative." It portrays a native father posed, despondent and wooden in traditional clothing, next to his three children from a native residential school, dressed in Western clothing (Figure 2).¹² The father is physically separated from the children, who hold each other, but the psychological and cultural gap is far more dramatic. These are two worlds; the inhabitants of each are cut off from the other; and yet in their facial expressions we can read the wound of their separation. The utility of the photograph as a "worklike" text results from the stance of the early 20th century photographer being apparently so at odds with our own, on issues which remain significant to us.

Mehlen offers a sequence of deceptively simple questions. She acknowledged in the interview, "It was really hard getting the right word down, you know the right question." (Interview, Feb. 7, 1997) She starts with a broad and open-ended question, thinking that the students may be able to do some of the observation and analysis themselves, #1 "What do you see in this picture?" But she continues with more specific questions in order to elicit responses to those aspects of the picture which will contribute to its interpretation as a "worklike" document.

The subjects' dress, physical arrangement, and facial expressions are the key elements of the photographic text. Moreover, each of them potentially leads outward to issues of broad interpretive significance. Mehlen draws attention first to their dress and its meaning in four questions.

2. What can you tell us about how these people are dressed?
3. Why are they dressed differently?
4. Where were these children taught about Western culture?
5. What kinds of things did these children learn in their school?

These questions draw the students from the pictorial evidence (differences in dress) to questions about the origins of the difference in dress. She may have been asking students to conclude the "kinds of things" these children learned, based on the document, or from their contextual knowl-



FATHER AND CHILDREN ATTENDING QU'APPELLE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Figure 2. National Archives of Canada/C-037113

edge. In either case, she is directing students to the larger historical phenomenon which the photograph documents. From there she moves to two questions about the subjects' physical arrangement:

6. How has the photographer arranged the people in the portrait?
7. What does this arrangement tell us about their family dynamics?

Mehlen's wording is significant, here, because it starts to draw the photographer into the student's analytical frame: the photographer as arranger of the portrait. The stance of the photographer becomes the explicit subject of questions 10 and 11:

10. Who do you think took this photograph?
11. For what purpose was this photograph taken?

In the interview, Mehlen explained a range of valid interpretations that she thought might be elicited by these questions:

...the purpose of the photographer...with this photograph, is to show the differences between a family ...They were able to assimilate them, to be able to bring them towards the European culture. It's more like a "Look what we can do!" photograph, propaganda kind of. And then on the other hand, I think, too, that this photograph might be showing the dynamics between the family because of what these people are trying to do to them. So it shows you know, the kids clustering together and "Who is this person?" But whether they're [i.e., the children are] doing that because they're told to or whether they're doing that because that's what they've learned, we don't really know. (Interview, Feb. 7, 1997)

The final two questions are broadly interpretive while being firmly rooted in the photographic evidence.

12. What effect did government policies have on Aboriginal traditions?
13. What does this photograph tell us about how First Nations people were treated during this time?

This sequence takes the reader smoothly and skillfully from the details of textual analysis to their larger contextual significance, helping simultaneously to construct the context through the text and vice versa. The photograph documents powerfully the forced cultural shift in First Nations life over the course of one generation. But in documenting what the pose attempts to convey as "progress" over generations, the photographer was an active participant in the historical phenomenon he documented. He is implicated by the stance of his camera, and the photograph, consequently, can be analysed as a worklike document.¹³

In her written statement of objectives, Mehlen stayed entirely on the plane of substantive interpretation, (e.g., "Students will demonstrate an understanding of the Federal policies in the late 1800's and early 1900's pertaining to Aboriginal education."). She did not (like Arkwright) explicitly state goals about students' abilities to read sources (though they would have been well-served by this question sequence.) Like Macintosh, she did want students to develop a moral stance. Unlike him, she wanted their stance to emerge from their positioning themselves in relation to the historical incident: "Students will demonstrate an understanding of the loss of native culture, beliefs, and values...Students will demonstrate an understanding that these government policies dominated and discriminated against the native people." In the interview, in one brief statement, she wrapped together historical text, historical context, and an allusion to contemporary moral judgement about the historical phenomenon:

Based on what I know about residential schools and what was happening at that time, I can actually see it with my own eyes in this picture that it just shows the separation and what's happened with that family. It's just obvious. It's sad I think. (Interview, Feb. 5, 1997)

When I asked her to imagine how a good student would respond to each one of her questions, she started by saying, "This is what I did anyways when I tried to do these questions I thought okay, what do I see when I look at this." (Interview, Feb. 7, 1997) In other words, she had very consciously followed the same process in testing her own questions, that I had constructed in order to learn about her thinking.

Discussion and Conclusion

We are now in a position to discuss collectively, the work of the student-teachers in this early exercise in their social studies teacher education program: How well did they do in choosing texts rich in their "worklike" aspects? Did their choices lend themselves to the construction of a dynamic tension between the text and the historical context? And

were they able to use text and context to build exercises which would be appropriate for students at the middle or high school level?

The "worklike" text in history bears the traces of the authors' purposes and assumptions, allowing an analysis of its own historicity. Moreover, it bears the signs of thinking substantially different from that of our own times. This kind of text lends itself to students' understanding of the source's construction, and of the position of the author as one different from our own. All four students did meet the first challenge, finding texts which had strong "worklike" aspects. Arkwright's John A. Macdonald and Mehlen's photograph of the native family were particularly accessible in this way. Macintosh's Komagata Maru was somewhat more problematic. While it was clear enough in its documentary aspects, it was ambiguous as to the position of the photographer, when used as a single source, with little contextual information. With additional sources and more contextual information it could have constituted a plausible component of an exercise for students. While each of the four exercises could have been enriched by the juxtaposition of more historical sources (after all, historical scholarship is judged in part by the comprehensiveness of the search for appropriate historical sources), Macintosh's Komagata Maru had a more difficult time standing on its own.

The students' choice of documents is one challenge. The construction of a dynamic relationship between text and context, such as Arkwright's nation-building or Sims' 1837 Rebellions, is the second hurdle. Using the text as a "clue" to figure out the context upsets the constructive tension between text and context. Both Sims (asking students to guess who Mackenzie was), and Macintosh (asking students to guess what the Komagata Maru incident was) construed the historian as detective finding answers to a puzzle whose answers are fixed, rather than historian as a builder of interpretations within limits set by text and context.

Also at play, are the themes or issues that make the historical narrative potentially significant to students today, linking past to present. As discussed in the introductory sections of this article, meaningful historical narratives are shaped, in part, by historians' explicit or implicit attention to these contemporary themes or issues. Thus Mehlen set up a three-way interaction among her text, the historical context of late-nineteenth century Canada, and our own contemporary understanding of racism. The text deepens students' understanding of racism, and their understanding of the concept of racism enables students to interpret the text. It is worth reiterating here that the contemporary issues raised by Mehlen's photograph do not present themselves because the photograph "speaks to us," but precisely the opposite, because the photographer was acting on the basis of a moral language different from our own. The gap between the photographer's frame (established through systematic questioning of

the text) and our own provides the opening for enriching students' present understanding of racism in Canada. Mehlen's questions successfully established this relationship between the text and both historical context and contemporary issues. Arkwright, too, maintained a constructive tension, in her exercise, among the text of Macdonald's speech, the historical context of nation-building in 19th century Canada, and the contemporary issues of national identity, U.S.-Canada relations, political posturing and the question of progress itself.

Macintosh's Komagata Maru exercise attempted to address a contemporary issue, specifically that of racism, but he did not use the historical source historically. The use of a historical source to try to promote certain attitudes in the present, directly and without due attention to historicizing the source, risks presentist misreadings which, in the end, subvert the moral purposes of doing history. If Macintosh constructed too immediate a line between the historical text and our contemporary concerns, Sims' work had the opposite problem (among others). He did not, either in his question sequence for students or in his reflective interview, draw out the significance of William Lyon Mackenzie or the Rebellion of 1837 for the present. He thus left unarticulated, the answer to the question, "so what?" Of what meaningful version of Canadian history is the Rebellion one significant episode?

These are problems of historical interpretation: in Macintosh's case, the problem of presentism, in Sims' case, the problem of historical significance. It would be nice to think that history students come away from their undergraduate studies familiar enough with the problems of historical knowledge and interpretation, to construct this type of exercise. If they do not, it is an open question whether they will have an extended opportunity as teachers to gain the requisite understandings.

The final challenge facing students was that of making their exercises pedagogically appropriate for their own students. At this point in their education, they had the least preparation for this challenge. At the time of the exercise their own students existed only as figments of their imaginations. So the struggle to find just the "right words" for their questions (in Mehlen's terms), and the right level of difficulty for the texts, was not easy. Furthermore, good historical texts pose particular problems, since the selection of "worklike" texts draws us toward conventions, language and perspectives foreign to our own. The more foreign they are, the more guidance students need in wading through vocabulary and references (in written text) and conventions (in pictorial texts) which may be obscure or unknown to them. The construction of a good exercise demands attention to specific key passages, difficult phrases, and archaic conventions. It also demands careful attention to the framing of questions, so that the sequence leads students smoothly through an analysis of the text towards new learning.

It would be unfair to judge these student-teachers on their abilities to frame exercises for students they had never met, for a classroom whose dynamics they had never experienced. Yet it is worth asking which aspects of the problem of constructing exercises for interpreting historical texts they would have a chance to revisit. Although they had received two weeks of instruction in history teaching, they would not encounter any more formal instruction in the use of primary sources. It would be a matter of chance whether the teachers or faculty supervisors with whom they would work in the subsequent practicum had any interest or expertise in teaching using primary sources: many would not. They would not have any further work on the nature of historical knowledge or interpretation, the subtle and difficult negotiations between past and present. Student-teachers who had not encountered these issues as undergraduates would have to rely on whatever they picked up from elsewhere.

What they all *would* face was the real classroom, students' responses to their exercises, and opportunities to reflect on those responses. The reflective interviews conducted in the first weeks of their teaching practicum provide evidence that revisiting these early exercises, in the light of even very limited classroom experience, could lead to revision, substantial in some cases. It is thus not too much to hope that those student-teachers who would continue to design exercises with primary sources would soon peg them at the pedagogically appropriate level of difficulty. Being generally optimistic, moreover, I believe that school experience would help some to develop general questioning skills, as they observe and reflect upon engaging and thoughtful classrooms. But there is no reason to believe that the classroom encounter would help them sort through the issues of text and context, past and present, historical knowledge and historical interpretation, if the groundwork was not already well-laid.

Through the analysis of student-teachers' assignments, I have attempted to clarify the manner in which they think historically, the nature of the task in which they were engaged, and the kinds of difficulties they had in the initial stages of the teacher-education program. The study suggests further research in several directions. A broader sample of student teachers and their work on this exercise would provide insight into the kinds of knowledge, experiences, abilities, and dispositions, prior to the teacher-education course, which facilitate the design of history exercises for teaching. The study also cries out for a longitudinal examination following students through the teacher-education year, and into the first years of teaching. A longitudinal examination could also extend backward into the undergraduate education of history majors who intended to become history teachers: how and where do they first confront history as a problem of knowledge? Such research could provide a more extended picture of the process of learning to teach history. This study also suggests the

examination of course materials, particularly textbooks. How do they construct the relationships between text and context, between source and account, between past and present? Are their documentary excerpts, photographs, and artwork merely illustrations to supplement a completed historical narrative? Or do they offer invitations for interpretation which might help to develop the narrative?

As we begin increasingly to teach (and to advocate teaching) with primary historical sources, teacher educators must think far more about what it will take to prepare new teachers for that task. What kinds of experiences will lead Arkwright, Sims, Macintosh, and Mehlen to be able to work with their own students around the interplay of historical text, historical context, and contemporary significance. What kinds of history courses, what kinds of teacher education activities, what kinds of activities in the classroom will best enable them to meet the challenges and overcome the problems exposed in this study? Whatever the answers, it is unlikely that either historians (who bear primary responsibility for teaching future history teachers what it means to do history) or teacher educators (who bear primary responsibility for teaching them to understand the problems of historical thinking in the classroom) or social studies teachers (who bear primary responsibility for modeling good teaching practices for them) can accomplish the task successfully without working more closely with each other than ever before.

Appendix

Questionnaires & Interview Questions

Questionnaire 1

1. What was your undergraduate major?
2. What colleges or universities have you attended?
3. Do you have any graduate degrees? If so, in what area?
4. Approximately how many post-secondary history courses have you taken?
5. List up to five post-secondary history courses you have taken.
6. Have you taken any course in historiography, historical methodology, or philosophy of history? If so, describe it briefly:
7. In any of your post-secondary courses, did you write one or more history papers based on primary documents? If so, briefly describe the project(s):
8. Did you do any work with primary historical documents in secondary school? If so, describe it briefly:
9. Do you have any other experience which you would consider to be background relevant to teaching students how to use primary historical sources?

Questionnaire 2

1. Check one or more of the following: Before choosing the source(s), I
 - ☐ a) had never studied the general historical topic to which it applies
 - ☐ b) had studied the general topic in a post-secondary course
 - ☐ c) knew of the existence of the specific source
 - ☐ d) knew where I could find a copy of the specific source
 - ☐ e) already had a copy of the specific source

Other comments:

2. Rank the following factors in their contribution to your choice of the primary source(s) for your assignment (MOST important=10; LEAST important=1; NOT APPLICABLE=N/A)

___a) ease of obtaining the source

___b) appropriateness for the topics in the social studies curriculum

___c) appropriateness of language (reading level) for secondary school students

___d) interest level for secondary school students

___e) appropriateness for issues which I think should be included in the curriculum

___f) other _____

Other comments:

3. What goals or objectives did you have in mind for students in completing the exercise you designed?

4. Did you think that your exercise would help students to achieve those goals? If so, how?

5. Once you had a copy of the source, describe the process that you went through in order to design the exercise:

6. What was the greatest difficulty in completing the primary source assignment?

7. What was of the greatest assistance in completing the primary source assignment?

Interview Questions

1. Background: Various questions further probing statements about background from questionnaire #1.

2. Interpreting the source: What do you think is the significance of this [quotation/picture]?

3. Selecting the source: Explain how you actually got to this particular source.

4. Look at the questions you have written. Let's go through them, and you tell me what you think that students might say in response to each one.

5. Any more thoughts on this exercise? The choice of documents OR the question sequence?

Notes

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² In the summer of 1996, the Organization of American Historians and the National Center for History in the Schools announced a major initiative calling for proposals for the development of teaching units based on primary documents in US history.

³ Of course, "accounts" can be part of the action too: that is, accounts which are expressed or published in the midst of the historical period under study also have consequences. Thus LaCapra's wording is more precise than my own, when he refers to the worklike aspects of a text.

⁴ On "the inevitable textualization of context," also see Toews, 1987, p.886.

⁵ A recent call for reform of history teaching with primary sources apparently advocated exactly this relationship between text and context, calling for workshops for history teachers based on a series of "basic packets for each era of no more than 25 pages which provide an overview of major trends and a collection of about six edited documents that illustrate the key points of the narrative." (my emphasis) (Saunders, 1996, p.7).

⁶ A research assistant observed these two weeks of classes, and recorded activities and student responses in field notes.

⁷ The use of students' assignments from a teacher education methods class as data to interpret their pedagogical/historical thinking must be approached carefully. The retrospective interviews provided some perspective on the ways that students understood the assignment itself. In his interview, one student-teacher continually referred to the expectations of the instructor: he said he completed the exercise according to his understanding of the instructor's criteria, as opposed to considering how he really would have organized a lesson for a school class. Such retrospective testimony, itself, of course, must be approached critically. The demands, opportunities and constraints of a teacher-education class assignment intervened in other ways for the three other student-teachers. It is important not to misunderstand these products as anything other than what they were: exercises for a class. And yet, as such, they provide a window on student-teachers' thinking about some of the central challenges of teaching history.

⁸ By chance, two of the students chosen were male (the weak ones) and two were female (the strong ones). However, this study provides no grounds for claims about gender and history teaching.

⁹ All students' names are pseudonyms.

¹⁰ The photograph is reproduced in Burnet, 1988, facing p.56.

¹¹ Problems emerge here with the use of a class assignment as research data. In the subsequent interview, Macintosh reported that he had written the assignment the night before it was due. He had discarded his earlier work when, that evening, he saw that it would only fit in the Grade 12 curriculum, whose guide he did not have at home. "To be honest, as far as writing down the questions, I just wrote down a list and I didn't look at it a second time because as far as those questions go, it was just.. At the time it felt well these seem okay but I read them again when I was handing it in and going "oh, boy, like I hope this works out." Interview, January 30, 1997. Nevertheless, the interview itself gave him an opportunity to revisit and revise the questions.

¹² The photograph is reproduced in Finkel and Conrad, 1993, p.121.

¹³ Kozioloff (1994) discusses a related phenomenon in his chapter, "Photographs: The images that give you more than you expected to see and less than you need to know."

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