“It is like if the DBQ and an exit ticket had a baby!”: Using Quick Writes to Assess Historical Thinking

Bruce A. Lesh
Assessment Disconnect

Instruction

Assessment

≠
Elements of a History Lab

- A **central question** that does not have one answer.
- **Source work**—Historical sources are evaluated and the information gained is applied to the development of an answer to the lab’s central question.
- The employment of **literacy skills** to evaluate historical sources.
- The development, refinement, and defense of an **evidence-based answer** to the guiding historical question.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Impact of Subtext or Context on the Information provided by the source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source A: E.B. Reynolds, Special United States Indian Agent—Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source B: From the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1891</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source C: Telegrams from D.F. Royer, Indian Agent, Pine Ridge Reservation—South Dakota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source D: Telegram sent by General Nelson A. Miles, Commander of the Pine Ridge Reservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source E: Reports forwarded by Brigadier-General Ruger, Commander of the Department of the Dakotas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source F: V.T. McGillicuddy, Former Indian Agent at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“All Indians must dance, everywhere, keep on dancing. Pretty soon in next spring Great Spirit come. He bring back all game of every kind. The game be thick everywhere. All dead Indians come back and live again. They all be strong just like young men be young again. Old blind Indian see again and get young and have fine time. When Great Spirit come this way, then all the Indians go to the mountains, high up away from whites. Whites can’t hurt Indians then. Then while Indians go way high up, big flood comes like water and all white people die, get drowned…”

Wovoka, The Paiute Messiah
CHIEF SITTING BULL KILLED

Chief Who Lead Sioux In Battle of the Little Big Horn Is Shot By Indian Police When His Warriors Try to Stop His Arrest At His Village On Grand River

Chief Sitting Bull was shot to death today after his warriors tried to prevent his arrest by Indian Police. Eight Indians, including Sitting Bull's son, Crowfoot, were also killed, as were six of the police. After the Sioux not to sell their lands.

Since Sitting Bull's return to the U. S. the strange religious craze of the Ghost Dance has spread among the Indians, who believe that a Messiah is coming to free them from the oppression of the white man.

Chief Sitting Bull

© T.C.G. PTD. IN U.S.A.

See Scoop No. 96—GERONIMO SURRENDERS TO GEN. MILES
The corpse of Chief Spotted Elk at Wounded Knee (1890)
Were the events at Wounded Knee in 1890 a:

Necessary Battle

Or

Avoidable Massacre
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Impact of Subtext or Context on the Information provided by the source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source A: E.B. Reynolds, Special United States Indian Agent—Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source B: From the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1891</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source C: Telegrams from D.F. Royer, Indian Agent, Pine Ridge Reservation—South Dakota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source D: Telegram sent by General Nelson A. Miles, Commander of the Pine Ridge Reservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source E: Reports forwarded by Brigadier-General Ruger, Commander of the Department of the Dakotas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source F: V.T. McGillicuddy, Former Indian Agent at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Traditional History Assessments

A popular new cult among the Native American Plains tribes by the late 1880s was:

A. The Ghost Dance.
B. The Sun Dance
C. Human sacrifice.
D. Catholicism.
E. The Great White Father.

What happened at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1890?

a. The Dawes Act was signed by representatives of the Sioux.
b. At least 150 Sioux men, women, and children were slaughtered.
c. Geronimo was captured after eluding the army for two years.
d. Red Cloud addressed his tribe for the final time.
Assessment Disconnect

Instruction

Assessment
• Recall of factual information via multiple-choice, true-false, fill in the blank, and matching questions

• Explanation of factual information via short answers, identifications, essays

• Use of information from documents via document based questions
Historical Sources

Text

Author--Subtext

Purpose-Subtext

Audience-Subtext

Time Period--Context

Central Question
Non-Traditional History Assessments

• Measuring the thinking behind student’s analysis of evidence via short answers about documents and other stimulus.

• Aggregating factual information to make an evidence-based argument via argumentative essays

• Assessing specific historical think concepts such as interpretation, causation, comparison, etc.
Non-Traditional History Assessments

“assessment measures need to be rooted in a specific task...pupils learned the most from using task-specific” assessments.

“To support learning, assessments must evolve from being isolated occasional events attached to the end of teaching to becoming an ongoing series of interrelated events that reveal changes in student learning over time.”

Quick Writes to Assess Historical Thinking

“A Quick Write is a literacy strategy which can be used in any content area to develop writing fluency, to build the habit of reflection into a learning experience, and to informally assess student thinking. The strategy asks learners to respond in 2–10 minutes to an open-ended question or prompt posed by the teacher.”

West Virginia State Department of Education website
Quick Writes to Assess Historical Thinking

- Quick and easy to grade
- Isolates a specific literacy skill
- Are not an essay
- Embedded within the content being studied
- Allows students to wrestle with the application of skills within the investigation in which they had just vested instructional time
- Can be scaffolded to empower students to write about something in which they are confident.
- Can be used to track student growth over time.
Pick 1, and answer in 5-7 sentences. Be specific and use examples from our discussion and the evidence we used.

• The context of ______________ source impacted the information gained from that source because...
• The subtext of ______________ source impacted the information gained from that source because...
• The two most important pieces of evidence were...because...
• The two least important pieces of evidence were...because...
• The two pieces of evidence that contradicted the most were...because...
• The two pieces of evidence that most complimented one another were...because...
• The two most important pieces of evidence were...because...
• The two pieces of evidence that presented the most difficulty were...because....
• The evidence whose subtext challenged the information provided in the text was...because....
• The least useful/reliable piece of evidence was...because...
• ____________ provided the following challenges because...
• A useful piece of evidence to have would have been...because...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Sourcing (Subtext)</th>
<th>Corroboration (Contradictions and Compliments)</th>
<th>Contextualizing (Context)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4        | **Identification:** Fully understands the meaning and content of sources.  
**Attribution:** Cites all authors and all original dates of primary and secondary sources.  
**Perspective:** Evaluates the reliability of sources based on the author's perspective and when and why they were produced. | Constructs an interpretation of events using information and perspectives in the required number of sources. Identifies consistencies and inconsistencies among various accounts. | Connects the historical setting of sources to the author’s argument. Uses that setting to interpret the sources within the historical context as opposed to a present-day mindset. |
| 3        | **Identification:** Mostly understands the meaning and content of sources.  
**Attribution:** Cites most authors and most original dates of primary and secondary sources.  
**Perspective:** Examines the reliability of sources based on the author’s perspective and when and why they were produced. | Explains similarities and differences by comparing information and perspectives in the required number of sources. | Connects the historical setting of sources to the author’s argument. Uses that setting to interpret the sources within the historical context as opposed to a present-day mindset. May attempt an interpretation of some sources with a present-day mindset or with a limited application to the historical context. |
| 2        | **Identification:** Understands the meaning and content of sources with appropriate scaffolding and support.  
**Attribution:** Cites some authors and some original dates of primary and secondary sources.  
**Perspective:** Attempts to evaluate the reliability of sources. | Identifies similarities and differences in information in the required number of sources. | Attempts to determine the historical setting of sources without fully understanding the historical context. |
| 1        | **Identification:** Attempts to understand the meaning and content of sources with the appropriate scaffolding and support.  
**Attribution:** Cites few authors and few original dates of primary and secondary sources.  
**Perspective:** Does not adequately examine reliability. | Demonstrates little to no attempt to examine sources for corroborating or conflicting evidence. | Demonstrates no attempt to understand the historical setting of sources. |

Were the events at Wounded Knee in 1890 a:

Necessary Battle

Or

Avoidable Massacre
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Impact of Subtext or Context on the Information provided by the source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source A:</strong> E.B. Reynolds, Special United States Indian Agent—Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source B:</strong> From the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1891</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source C:</strong> Telegrams from D.F. Royer, Indian Agent, Pine Ridge Reservation—South Dakota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source D:</strong> Telegram sent by General Nelson A. Miles, Commander of the Pine Ridge Reservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source E:</strong> Reports forwarded by Brigadier-General Ruger, Commander of the Department of the Dakotas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source F:</strong> V.T. McGillicuddy, Former Indian Agent at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“They kept up dancing until fully 100 persons were lying unconscious.”

*Wounded Knee*

Read the following and:
1. Circle information that helps you to understand the context (time period the source was created).
2. Underline information that helps you to understand the subtext (information about the author/author’s purpose for creating the source).
3. Take notes (to the left of the source) on what the source indicates why if the participants in the Chinese Cultural Revolution willing participants or blind followers?

**Source A: E.B. Reynolds, Special United States Indian Agent—Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota**

Background Information: Reynolds was appointed to his position on the reservation as a reward for his support of Republican President Benjamin Harrison. Called a patronage position, Reynolds had no qualifications for the job other than his party affiliation. Prior to taking the position, Reynolds had never been on an Indian Reservation. Reynolds was bewildered by the complex realities of the reservations; He viewed the Ghost Dance as an affront not only to civilization, but also to his own personal authority to control the reservations.

> “I deem it my duty to call the attention of the Department to the extremely disaffected and troublesome state of a portion of the Indians on their and other Sioux reservations.

> The coming new order of things as preached to these people during the past seven months is to return to earth their forbears, the buffalo, the elk, and all the other game; the complete restoration of their ancient habits, customs, and power, and the annihilation of the white man. This movement [Ghost Dance Movement]...is continually gaining new adherents, and they are daily becoming more threatening and defiant of the authorities.

> This...may be in measure be attributed to the scant supply of rations, to which my attention has been called to daily by the Indians, and especially the reduction in the quantity of beef...

> ...The religious excitement aggravated by almost starvation is bearing fruit in this state of insubordination: Indians say they had better die fighting than to die a slow death of starvation, and as the new religion promises their return to earth...they have no fear of death...

> ...The indications are unmistakable; these Indians have within the past three weeks traded horses and everything else they could trade for arms and ammunition...”
The subject of Source F by E.B. Reynolds impacted the information gained from the source because Reynolds had no qualifications or prior experiences on a Reservation before he became an Indian Agent at a Reservation in South Dakota. Also, Reynolds was only put in the position as a reward for his alliance to the Republican Party. This made Reynolds more judgemental of the Indians because he had never seen them before. Also, he was a bad leader so he tried to blame everything on the Indians by saying that he felt threatened by the
The two pieces of evidence that most
complemented one another were sauce D's
Neolithic miles and sauce F's V.T. Multillion.

According to both sources, the battle was
avoidable because in source D, Multillion was
a former Indian Agent who knew the Indians
best and knew that the Ghost Dance meant
no harm towards the US and that the Indians
didn't have to get killed. In source D, Nelson
Miles said it was in government's fault because
Indians had no food and were being starved
and if they would give them food they would
never occur. Both sources explain how
the breakout couldn't have avoided


1) Multiple-choice questions teach kids:
   
   A. they can be right for the wrong reasons.
   B. to skip hard problems after 10 seconds.
   C. if in doubt, choose C.
   D. all of the above.

History Assessments of Thinking

Assessments

Interactive Rubrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Proficient | Student recognizes the relationship between when produced and its usefulness as a resource for history.

- Example: succinct
- Example: crucial date

Student Responses

I am not sure if Wampanoag is the be- it would be pretty ridiculous ged historians to try and study.
II. Document Question: Read one of the following two sources and answer the question that corresponds to that source. Be sure to consider the information provided by the text, context, and subtext of the source.

**Document A:** The following is an excerpt from sworn testimony given before the U.S. Senate by Corporal Richard O’Brien in 1902. O’Brien was called to testify in a Senate investigation of alleged war crimes committed by American soldiers in the Philippine-American War.

“The first thing we saw was a boy ... and the first sergeant shot at the boy. Everybody fired at him. That brought the people in the houses out ... [and] the town was fired on ... Two old men came out, hand in hand ... they had a white flag, they were shot down. At the other end of the town we heard screams, and there was a woman there; she was burned up, and in her arms was a baby, and on the floor was another child ... The fighting was continued until everybody had fled or everybody was killed ... There was not a shot fired on the part of the Filipinos.”

**Question:** How does Document A provide evidence that many Americans opposed the war? (2-3 Sentences)
What is the ARCH?

Existing assessments of historical knowledge used in K-12 classrooms across the nation consist primarily of traditional standardized tools, which assess students’ retention of content. While content knowledge is certainly important, new instructional methods and standards shift the focus to building deep historical understanding through the analysis and interpretation of complex primary and secondary source documents. With the emphasis on critical reading and writing skills in the Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, these instructional developments necessitate a new form of assessment for the classroom.

The ARCH project, developed through a Teaching American History grant partnership between the Howard County Public School System (Maryland) and the Center for History Education at the University of Maryland...
# Tools to Help History Students Write, Read, Talk and Reason like Historians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation for Using Evidence</th>
<th>Phrases to Promote the Use of Evidence in this Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Introducing and Using Evidence | • For example...  
• In fact...  
• For instance...  
• As evidence...  
• In support of this...  
• This is supported by...  
• First...Second...  
• As evidence by... |
| Adding New Evidence to Support Other Evidence | • In addition...  
• Also...  
• And...  
• Moreover...  
• • In fact...  
• Besides...  
• Equally important...  
• Furthermore... |
| Justifying and Explaining your position along a common line of reasoning | • Furthermore...  
• Obviously...  
• It is clear that...  
• [Source/author] suggests/promoted/argues...  
• For this reason...  
• In addition...  
• Also...  
• Last...  
• Again...  
• Alternatively...  
• Additionally...  
• Moreover...  
• In the same way...  
• Pursuing this further...  
• In light of the...  
• Besides...  
• Next...  
• Further...  
• Similarly... |
| Showing Cause and Effect | • Consequently  
• Clearly, then...As a result of...  
• Because of...  
• [Term/name/idea, etc.] was responsible for...  
• [Term/name/idea, etc.] made possible...  
• [evidence] leads to...  
• For this reason...  
• Therefore...  
• • Since...  
• ... was caused by...  
• In effect...  
• [event] was brought about by...  
• As might be expected...  
• [event/idea/person] gave rise to...  
• Accordingly...  
• As a result of... |
| Comparing and Contrasting Evidence | • Likewise...  
• In a similar way...  
• Also...  
• Similarly...  
• Equally...  
• As well...  
• In the same manner...  
• In contrast...  
• Whereas...  
• • Even though...  
• Nevertheless...  
• Yet...  
• Unlike...  
• However...  
• On the other hand...  
• Despite...  
• Conversely...  
• In comparison... |
| Providing Alternative Points of View/Changing | • On the other hand...  
• However...  
• Conversely...  
• • Even though... |
Historical thinking breaks down the wall between assessment and instruction. Doing history becomes the practical use of the skills of history.
Assessment Disconnect

Instruction

≠

Assessment
The Bermuda Triangle of History

Boring

Taught the same way  Generating the same results
When I die, I hope it is at a faculty meeting or teacher inservice because the transition from life to death would be so subtle.
bclesh@comcast.net
The two pieces of evidence that contradicted the most were Source C: D.F. Royer and Source E: General Ruger. In Source C, Royer has never seen an Indian, let alone a Ghost dance so when he traveled west and saw the dance, he was scared out of his mind. He depicted the Indians as insane. He said they had guns on them and once the Americans got there and asked the Indians to stop, they took out their guns and were ready to fight. In Source E, General Ruger has been fighting the Indians for years and says that the Indians were harmless. Just preaching for better life. And that the Indians wouldn't have to do that if the US would haven't crossed the Great Plains.
The Soviet or Source C impressed the information gained from these Sources. Because Roger has never set foot on a reservation nor seen a Native American before, Roger was given this position as a means to help get a reputation into office. Roger had no understanding of what was going on when he got there. He was selected by what the Native Americans were doing. The ghost to bin was seen as a threat by the Native Americans, losing control and all moral values. These Native Americans were ripped off.
The two pieces of evidence that contradicted the most were sources C & D because one source had extensive knowledge of Indians & the other had never seen one before, one was trying to save his job & the other trying to prove himself & one was a soldier, the other a loyal Republican. Royer had no experience with anything west of probably Ohio, so being sent as an Indian agent was a big deal. He had no idea what was going on or how to deal with Native culture or how bad the situation was. Miles had fought in the civil war & the Indians for decades. He knew how bad things were & that it was the government's fault for lying & breaking trust. The sources contradicted each other in viewpoint, subtext & overall information far more than any other two.