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Integrating Creative, Critical, and Historical Thinking through Close Reading, Document-Based Writing, and Original Political Cartooning

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Historical thinking, an unnatural and developed skill,¹ is foundational for both civic involvement and social studies education.² To facilitate students' historical thinking, teachers can draw from a myriad of discipline-specific close reading strategies.³ History literacy stratagems can be adjusted for learners both young⁴ and old⁵; teachers can target a specific heuristic⁶ or address a distinct barrier to understanding.⁷ Whether termed content area literacy strategies, close readings, processes, and simply methods,⁸ state and national education require students to scrutinize complex, diverse, and, at times, competing texts.⁹ The education initiatives assess students—in both history/social studies and English/language arts non-fiction curricula—on their ability to extract, employ, and cite newly generated understandings within discipline-specific writing tasks.¹⁰

To foster students' criticality and historical argumentation, teachers can employ specific history-based assessments.¹¹ These assessments tend to fit into one of four categories, each of

¹ Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001); Sam Wineburg, "Unnatural and Essential: The Nature of Historical Thinking," *Teaching History* 129 (2007): 6-11.

² National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2013).

³ Hilary Mac Austin and Kathleen Thompson, *Examining the Evidence: Seven Strategies for Teaching with Primary Sources* (North Mankato, MN: Maupin House, 2015); Linda Levstik and Keith Barton, *Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middle Schools* (4th edition) (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011); James Loewen, *Teaching what Really Happened: How to Avoid the Tyranny of Textbooks and get Students Excited about Doing History* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2010); Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano, *Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2011).

⁴ John H. Bickford III, "Initiating Historical Thinking in Elementary Schools," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 8, no. 3 (2013): 60-77; Levstik & Barton, *Doing History*.

⁵ Jeffrey D. Nokes, "Recognizing and Addressing the Barriers to Adolescents' "Reading like Historians," *The History Teacher* 44, no. 3 (2011): 379-404; Wineburg, Martin, and Monte-Sano, 2011.

⁶ Mark Baidon and Rindi Baidon, "Evaluating Online Sources: Helping Students Determine Trustworthiness, Readability, and Usefulness," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 24, no. 4 (2012): 11-14; John H. Bickford III and Cynthia W. Rich, "Historical Thinking and Common Core: Facilitating Adolescents' Scrutiny of the Credibility of Slave Narratives," *The Councilor: A Journal of the Social Studies* 74, no. 1 (2014): 1-14.

⁷ Nokes, 2011.

⁸ National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* (Silver Spring, MD: Library of Congress Publications, 2010).

⁹ NCSS, 2013; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010).

¹⁰ Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, *PARCC Model Content Frameworks: English Language Arts/Literacy, Grades 3–11, Version 2.0* (Washington, D.C.: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2012).

¹¹ Chauncey Monte-Sano, Susan De La Paz, and Mark Felton, *Reading, Thinking, and Writing about History: Teaching Argument Writing to Diverse Learners in the Age of the Common Core, 6-12*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2014);



which has positive and problematic elements. Traditional test items evoke students' criticality and are efficient to grade, yet promote a single answer paradigm that does not necessarily accommodate the discipline's nuance.¹² To address this quandary, Bruce VanSledright proffered weighted multiple-choice items (WMCs) where increasing degrees of correctness are rewarded with more points.¹³ Traditional test items and WMCs evoke criticality, yet do not elicit historical argumentation. Document-based questions (DBQs) and single account interpretative essays (SAIEs) both compel historical argumentation in distinctly different ways. In a DBQ, students broadly evaluate and connect an assortment of interrelated primary sources.¹⁴ SAIEs, sometimes termed historical assessment of thinking (HAT), require students closely inspect a single historical document.¹⁵ Whether analyzing a single source or many, DBQs and SAIEs (sometimes termed HATs) compel students to explore fresh documents, juxtapose newly developed understandings with prior knowledge, and engage in historical argumentation. DBQs guide students' critical and historical evaluations of the divergences and convergences within multiple documents, yet DBQs can perhaps overwhelm students who are given a large, overarching question with a collection of sources. SAIEs and HATs, it has been argued, guide a closer reading and evoke a more refined answer, yet perhaps cover less (figurative) ground.¹⁶ Each history-based assessment, thus, has distinct positive and problematic elements.

These history-based assessments, however, all share two problematic and unmentioned characteristics. They do not position students to *creatively* demonstrate newly generated understandings, the highest level of criticality.¹⁷ They also do not incorporate media and technology, which has strong potential to hook¹⁸ elementary¹⁹ and high school²⁰ students. Here, I

Bruce VanSledright, *Assessing Historical Thinking and Understanding*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014); Sam Wineburg, Mark Smith, and Joel Breakstone, "New Directions in Assessment: Using Library of Congress Sources to Assess Historical Understanding," *Social Education* 76, no. 6 (2012): 290-293.

¹² R. J. Shavelson et al., "On the Impact of Curriculum-Embedded Formative Assessment on Learning: A Collaboration Between Curriculum and Assessment Developers," *Applied Measurement in Education* 21, no. 4 (2008): 295-314; R. Stobaugh et al., "Enhancing the Cognitive Complexity in Social Studies Assessments," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 23, no. 3 (2011): 4-8.

¹³ Bruce VanSledright, *Assessing Historical Thinking and Understanding: Innovative Designs for New Standards* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014).

¹⁴ Chauncey Monte-Sano, "What Makes a Good History Essay? Assessing Historical Aspects of Argumentative Writing," *Social Education* 76, no. 6 (2012): 294-298; Monte-Sano et al., 2014; Wineburg et al., 2011.

¹⁵ Wineburg et al., 2011; Wineburg et al., 2012; VanSledright, 2014.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl (Eds.), *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York: Longman: 2001). Alison Cook-Sather, "Authorizing Students' Perspectives: Toward Trust, Dialogue, and Change in Education," *Educational Researcher* 31, no. 4 (2002): 3-14; Robert J. Tierney, "Literacy assessment Reform: Shifting Beliefs, Principled Possibilities, and Emerging Practices," *The Reading Teacher* 51, no. 5 (1998): 374-390.

¹⁸ Tarry Lindquist, *Seeing the Whole Through Social Studies* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002); Kathleen Owings Swan, Mark Hofer, and Linda S. Levstik, "Camera! Action! Collaborate with digital Moviemaking," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 19, no. 4 (March-April 2007): 17-20.

¹⁹ Bruce Fehn and Kimberly Heckart, "Producing a Documentary in the Third Grade: Reaching All Students through Movie Making," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 25, no. 3 (2013), pp. 18-22.

²⁰ Bruce Fehn and James E. Schul, "Selective Appropriation and Historical Documentary Making in a Special Education Classroom," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 9, no. 2 (2014): 1-14.



propose a three step approach to integrate history-based reading with written historical argumentation and technology-based creative expression in order to evoke students' creativity, criticality, and historical thinking. The first step is to incorporate evocative, accessible, and complementary texts.

The Texts

One cannot overstate the importance of selecting engaging texts that curiously contrast. The twin text approach juxtaposes no less than two distinct, interrelated texts and, in doing so, positions students to engage in close readings—or intentional scrutiny of all elements—of each text. Scholars encourage pairing non-fiction with historical fiction,²¹ narrative with expository,²² textbook with primary source,²³ or trade book with primary source.²⁴ The teacher can select competing or divergent texts.²⁵ Competing texts have “distinct disputes...[and] quarrel when read in concert”²⁶; divergent texts are two non-intersecting narratives that share the same historical backdrop.²⁷ Whether competing or divergent, teachers should consider the historicity and accessibility of their selected, complementary texts.

Textbooks are common and comprehensive in coverage, yet costly, shallow, frequently written at or above grade level, sanitized of controversy, and bereft of competing historical interpretations.²⁸ Content analyses of textbooks have identified stark omissions and historical misrepresentations.²⁹ Primary sources—essential for historians—are subjective, incomplete, and

²¹ David Camp, “It Takes Two: Teaching with Twin Texts of Fact and Fiction,” *The Reading Teacher* 53, no. 5 (2000): 400-408; Elizabeth M. Frye, Woodrow Trathen, and Kelley Wilson, “Pirates in historical fiction and non-fiction: A twin-text unit of study,” *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 21, no. 3 (2009), 15-16.

²² Leena Furtado and Lisa Johnson, “Enhancing summarization skills using twin texts: Instruction in narrative and expository text structures,” *The Reading Matrix*, 10, no. 2 (2010): 271-281.

²³ Jason Fitzgerald, “Textbooks and primary source analysis,” *Social Studies Research and Practice*, 4, no. 3 (2009): 37-43.

²⁴ Ann T. Ackerman, Patricia H. Howson, and Betty C. Mulrey, “Getting the Story Right: Developing Critical Analysis Skills through Children’s Literature,” *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 26, no. 1 (2013): 22–28; Kristy A. Brugar, “Children as Civic Agents during the Civil Rights Movement,” *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 27, no. 4 (2015): 5–10.

²⁵ John H. Bickford III and Cynthia W. Rich, “Scrutinizing and Supplementing Children’s Trade Books about Child Labor,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 10, no. 1 (2015): 21-40.

²⁶ Bickford and Rich, “Scrutinizing and Supplementing Children’s Trade Books about Child Labor,” 31.

²⁷ Bickford and Rich, “Scrutinizing and Supplementing Children’s Trade Books about Child Labor,” 30.

²⁸ James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1995); Scott L. Roberts, “A review of social studies textbook content analyses since 2002,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 9, no. 3 (2014): 51-65.

²⁹ For a summative review of patterns of historical misrepresentations, see Scott Roberts, “A Review of Social Studies Textbook Content Analyses Since 2002,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 9, no. 3 (2015): 51-65. For distinct misrepresentations, see Jason Fitzgerald, “Textbooks and Primary Source Analysis,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 4, no. 3 (2009): 37-43; David Lindquist, “The Coverage of the Holocaust in High School History Textbooks,” *Social Education* 73, no. 6 (2009): 298–304; James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); Joe C. Miller, “Never a Fight of Woman Against Man: What Textbooks Don’t Say about Women’s Suffrage,” *The History Teacher* 48, no. 3 (2015): 437-482; Brent Ruswick, “What Does it Mean to be an American?: Training History Students and Prospective Teachers to See the Assumptions in their Textbooks,” *The History Teacher* 48, no. 4 (2015): 667-692. For research on gender-based disparities, see Kay Chick, “Gender Balance in K-12 American History Textbooks,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 1, no. 3 (2006): 284-



muddled, especially when removed from their historical context; students can be taught to consider context and degree of corroboration as they scrutinize for authorial intent, credibility, and bias.³⁰ Primary sources were typically written by and intended for adults, sometimes in cursive, and often with esoteric language; teachers, therefore, should modify the length and language to age-appropriate levels.³¹ Primary sources are free and widely available in various digital repositories like *The Library of Congress*. Trade books are relatively cheap, digestible, and readily available as dozens, if not hundreds, of titles cover a single topic. Researchers, though, have identified various historical misrepresentations, both conspicuous and obscured.³²

While no textbook, primary source, or trade book is without an imperfection, the twin text approach positions students to discover and question their similarities and differences. The twin text approach fascinates, focuses, and forces students to carefully consider what is included, *how* it

290; Roger Clark, Jeffery Allard, and Timothy Mahoney, "How Much of the Sky? Women in American High School History Textbooks from the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s." *Social Education* 68, no. 1 (2004): 57-62. For discussion on the unnecessary deference given to textbooks, see Chapter 3 of Samuel Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001). For research on textbooks' self-censorship, see Melissa N. Matusevich, "Strange Bedfellows: Censorship and History Textbooks," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 1, no. 3 (2006): 359-373.

³⁰ Bickford, 2013; Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2001.

³¹ Frederick D. Drake and Sarah D. Brown, "A Systematic Approach to Improve Students' Historical Thinking," *The History Teacher* 36, no. 4 (2003): 465-489; Samuel Wineburg and Daisy Martin, "Tampering with History: Adapting Primary Sources for Struggling Readers," *Social Education* 73, no. 5 (2009): 212-216.

³² For research on the genre of historical fiction, see Chandra L. Powers, "Challenging the Pluralism of our Past: Presentism and the selective Tradition in Historical Fiction Written for Young People," *Research in the Teaching of English* 37, no. 4 (2003): 425-466; Sara L. Schwebel, *Child-Sized History: Fictions of the Past in U.S. Classrooms* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), T. Lee Williams, "A Closer Look: The Representation of Slavery in the *Dear America* Series," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 21, no. 3 (2009): 26-29. For research on the genre of biography, see Gale Eaton, *Well-Dressed Role Models: The Portrayal of Women in Biographies for Children* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2006). There is research on specific historical topics, but it is scattered. For Christopher Columbus, see John H. Bickford III, "Examining Historical (Mis)Representations of Christopher Columbus within Children's Literature," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 8, no. 2 (2013): 1-24; for Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosa Parks, and Helen Keller, see John H. Bickford III and Cynthia W. Rich, "Trade books' Historical Representation of Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosa Parks, and Helen Keller." *Social Studies Research and Practice* 9, no. 1 (2014): 18-65; for slavery, see John H. Bickford III and Cynthia W. Rich, "Examining the Representations of Slavery within Children's Literature," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 9, no. 1 (2014): 66-94; for Native Americans, John H. Bickford III and Lauren Hunt, "Common Core, Informational Texts, and the Historical (Mis)Representations of Native Americans within Trade Books," *The Councilor: A Journal of the Social Studies* 75, no. 2 (2014): 1-16; for Abraham Lincoln and Amelia Earhart, see John H. Bickford III, Dylan Dille, and Valerie Metz, "Historical Writing, Speaking, and Listening Using Informational Texts in Elementary Curricula." *The Councilor: A Journal of the Social Studies*, 76(1), 1-16; for child labor, see John H. Bickford III and Cynthia W. Rich, "Scrutinizing and Supplementing Children's Literature about Child Labor," *Social Studies Research and Practice* 10, no. 1 (2015), 21-40; for Thanksgiving, see John H. Bickford III and Cynthia W. Rich, "Examining the Historical Representation of Thanksgiving within Primary and Intermediate Children's Literature," *Journal of Children's Literature* 40, no. 1 (2015): 5-21; for the Holocaust, see John H. Bickford III, Lieren N. Schuette, and Cynthia W. Rich, "Examining the Historical Representation of the Holocaust within Trade Books," *Journal of International Social Studies* 5, no. 1 (2015): 4-50; for the Civil Rights Movement, see John H. Bickford III, "Assessing and Addressing the Historical (Mis)Representations of the Civil Rights Movement within Children's Literature," *The History Teacher* 48, no. 4 (2015): 693-736.



is included, and what is omitted. Selecting evocative, engaging, and complementary content,³³ positions students to engage in the close readings prescribed within English/language arts and history literacy branches of Common Core along with the disciplinary literacy element of the C3 Framework.³⁴ While teachers have an array of discipline-specific close reading strategies,³⁵ typical history-based assessments largely do not evoke creation, the highest level of criticality,³⁶ nor do they incorporate media and technology.³⁷ In the subsequent section, I detail an integrated approach that combines students' historical argumentation with creativity, criticality, and historical thinking.

The Tasks

After close readings of complementary texts, teachers should position students to engage in critical, historical, and creative thinking. To do so, assign multiple, interrelated activities in which students articulate, support, and refine their understandings. Just as close readings of twin texts enable students to distinguish nuances, integrated assessments—like document-based writing and original political cartooning—enable students to first formulate and then creatively express their newly generated understandings.

Document-Based Writing

To elicit and integrate critical thinking and historical argumentation, teachers should guide students to historicize a primary document or historically scrutinize a secondary source. In the former, students historicize a primary document by identifying its source, the source's credibility and biases, the context in which it was produced, and if it has been corroborated by other, similar sources. In the latter, students evaluate the historicity—or historical accuracy and representation—of one of the previously-scrutinized, age-appropriate trade books or textbook.

The assigned tasks align with the work of historians and compel both critical thinking and historical argumentation through writing. In each document-based writing task, students critically evaluate one history-based text in relation to another (or others) using diverse historical thinking skills. In both, students support specific claims with germane evidence derived from diverse readings. These could be produced in a traditional five-paragraph essay, or in a question similar to those posed within a DBQ, SAIE, or HAT. The key is for students to formulate, and cite the origins of, their newly generated understandings. The document-based writing that emerges becomes a foundation for creative expression. The student-created products, or original political cartoons, are then both assessments of individual students' learning and teaching tools for whole class discussions.

³³ E.D. Hirsch, "Creating a Curriculum for the American People: Our Democracy Depends on Shared Knowledge," *American Educator* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2009-2010): 6-13.

³⁴ NCSS, 2013; NGA & CCSSO, 2010.

³⁵ Austin and Thompson, *Examining the Evidence*, 2015; Camp, "It Takes Two," 2000; Frye et al., "Pirates in historical fiction and non-fiction," 2009; Levstik and Barton, *Doing History*, 2011; Loewen, *Teaching what Really Happened*, 2010; Wineburg et al., *Reading Like a Historian*, 2011.

³⁶ Anderson and Krathwohl, *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing*, 2001.

³⁷ Fehn and Heckart, "Producing a Documentary in the Third Grade," 2013; Fehn and Schul, "Selective Appropriation and Historical Documentary Making in a Special Education Classroom," 2014.



Original Political Cartooning

Original political cartooning (OPC) enables students to creatively demonstrate novel ideas constructed from critical and historical thinking.³⁸ Professionally-developed political cartoons provide an interpretation-only framework that limits students' criticality³⁹ in ways similar to the single-answer framework manifest within WMCs and traditional test questions. Through OPCs, students achieve the highest levels of criticality.⁴⁰ Furthermore, educators can redeploy individual students' OPCs as teaching tools for large class discussions, which facilitates the interpretative dialogue.⁴¹

Students should first rely on an evaluative statement—derived from their document-based writing—about the historical topic. The evaluative statement is akin to a thesis sentence; originating within the aforementioned document-based writing, this evaluative statement has already been grounded in understandings derived from close readings of the texts. Students then create a concept map with the evaluative statement at the center and evidence-based supporting statements positioned appropriately. At times, students are faced with a nonfigurative or abstract concept they difficult to articulate concisely or through visual representations. A substitution list—derived from cooperative brainstorming—enables students to replace complex, abstract concepts with concrete imagery.⁴² Adolescent students are adept at locating and modifying germane web-based imagery, in part, because it involves “uncomplicated technologies and erstwhile aids”.⁴³ (Teachers should accommodate accordingly for younger or inexperienced students.) Figure One, *Original Political Cartoon*, is an illustrative example; this is also a representative sample taken from an 8th grade classroom.

³⁸ For a review of the critical and historical thinking involved with OPC, see John H. Bickford III, “Complicating students’ historical thinking through primary source reinvention,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 5, no. 2 (2010a): 47-60; for a juxtaposition of hand-drawn with technology-enhanced OPCs, see John H. Bickford III, “Uncomplicated technologies and erstwhile aids: How PowerPoint, the Internet, and political cartoons can elicit engagement and challenge thinking in new ways,” *The History Teacher* 44, no. 1 (2010b): 51-66; for research on the impact of OPCs on classroom dialogue, see John H. Bickford III, “Students’ original political cartoons as teaching and learning tools,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 6, no. 2 (2011a): 47-59; for a study on the instructional procedures that enhance the complexity and clarity of OPCs, see John H. Bickford III, “Examining original political cartoon methodology: Concept maps and substitution lists,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 6, no. 3 (2011b):65-80; for detailed suggestions on how to best implement OPCs, see John H. Bickford III, “Original political cartoon methodology and adaptations,” *Social Studies Research and Practice* 7, no. 2 (2012): 91-101; for multiple studies on the impact OPCs had on students’ academic achievement in homogeneously- and heterogeneously-grouped classrooms, see John H. Bickford III, *Original Political Cartoons: Authentic Instruction and Assessment* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013).

³⁹ Bickford, “Uncomplicated technologies and erstwhile aids,” 2010b.

⁴⁰ Bickford, “Complicating students’ historical thinking through primary source reinvention,” 2010a.

⁴¹ Bickford, “Students’ original political cartoons as teaching and learning tools,” 2011a.

⁴² Bickford, “Examining original political cartoon methodology,” 2011b; Bickford, “Original political cartoon methodology and adaptations,” 2012

⁴³ Bickford, “Uncomplicated technologies and erstwhile aids,” 2010b, p. 51.



Figure 1. *Original Political Cartoon.*

Students' OPCs represent creative expressions of newly generative understandings. To distinguish students' intent and effort, teachers can require students to detail in writing the messages encoded through symbolism and integration of text and visual imagery. It would perhaps be problematic to grade students' creativity, the complexity of their creative expression, or the novelty of their creativity; contemporary education initiatives, however, prescribe text-based writing. Teachers should instead assess students' critical and historical thinking through the historical argumentation emergent within document-based writing. Figure Two, *Document-Based Writing*, is an illustrative example of one 8th grade student's historical argumentation; it corresponds directly with Figure One, *Original Political Cartoon*.

My evaluative statement is that women, especially in the south, made big contributions to the war effort. They were more than just housewives and were just as patriotic as the men (1). I wanted to show what the women did, because southern women actually did a lot for the war and it wasn't just the men who fought (2). To show this, I used primary historical sources. First, I chose stereotype image of a southern woman with her husband (3). I then crossed that out because this was a stereotype but wasn't true for all southern women. I also took an item that symbolized women and being rich, which was the pearl necklace (4). I then crossed that out too because this wasn't for all southern women. To show how real women acted against the stereotype, I choose Belle Boyd. She was female spy for the Confederacy (5). To show she was patriotic, I made her image blurred so you could see the flag through her like how it was in her blood (6). And, I used some sarcasm with my sentence to show that many people believed that the southern women did nothing when they actually did a lot. But, I also wanted to show what they were fighting for, and that was to keep their traditions and slavery was a big part of that. I



used an image of a slave family (7). This wasn't crossed out because this was real and not a stereotype. And, I wanted to show who she was supporting, and that's the Confederate troops (8). It is to show some of the things the women did in the Civil War like nursing, which is shown in the ambulance wagon (9).

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- 1) Middle Tennessee University. "Women and The Civil War." http://library.mtsu.edu/tps/Women_and_the_Civil_War.pdf Web. 29 October 2015.
- 2) U.S. History: The Southern Homefront. <http://www.ushistory.org/us/34d.asp> 28 October 2015.
- 3) The young housekeepers, the day after marriage / lith. & pub. by N. Currier. Man and woman seen through window, half-length, standing. N. Currier (Firm). New York : Published by N. Currier, c1848. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Library of Congress Catalog Number: 00652066 <https://www.loc.gov/item/00652066/>
- 4) Mary Todd Lincoln's seed-pearl necklace and matching bracelets. Tiffany (Artist) Created/Published n. d. Repository: Rare Book And Special Collections Division Digital Id <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/lprbscsm.scsm1298>
- 5) Belle Boyd, Confederate spy: [ca. 1860-1865] LC-BH824- 4864 <P&P> [P&P] Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cwpbh.03501/?co=brhc> Web. 2 November 2015.
- 6) Confederate flag made out of flowers at the Confederate Statue in Jasper, Alabama Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/highsm.08335/>
- 7) Bayou Bourbeau plantation, a FSA cooperative, Natchitoches, La. A Negro family (?) seated on the porch of a house LC-USF35-110 <P&P> [P&P] Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1992000127/PP/>
- 8) Genl. Wadsworth's Division in Action in the Wilderness, near the Spot Where the General Was Killed, [May 5-7, 1864]. Alfred R. Waud (1828-1891). Published in *Harper's Weekly*, June 4, 1864. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress (142.00.00) [Digital ID# LC-DIG-ppmsca-20999] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.20999/>
- 9) Ambulance drill at Headquarters Army of Potomac, near Brandy Station, Va., March, 1864. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3g07974/>

Figure 2. Document-Based Writing.

This student's historical argumentation has many positive attributes. First, the student clearly articulated a thesis sentence, which was grounded in understandings derived from close readings of secondary sources. Second, the student supported the thesis with primary sources. That the student engaged in close readings of diverse texts was apparent. Third, the employed sources—both primary and secondary—were reputable and appropriately cited. Viewed cumulatively, this student ably formulated an understanding derived from analyses of diverse sources. The student's critical and historical thinking were both conspicuous and aligned with



disciplinary literacy expectations. Finally, the historical argumentation was not a conclusion of thinking but a springboard for creative expression, which manifested within the complementary OPC.

Conclusions and Considerations

State and national education initiatives prescribe diverse thinking using age-appropriate content area literacy tasks for all grade levels. Reading informational texts for Common Core English/language arts non-fiction align with the history literacy elements of the C3 Framework for all grade levels. History education researchers encourage teachers to intentionally integrate content, methods, and assessment in discipline-specific ways. I proposed here a fusion between scrutiny of juxtaposed texts, evidentiary writing, and creative expression of newly generated understandings. This model elicits students' history literacy through close reading and text-based writing; it evokes students' criticality through both historical thinking and creative expression.

I targeted specifically middle level and secondary students, though this three-step approach could be abridged for younger students. Age-appropriate texts, additional writing scaffolding spread over more days, and explicit technology instruction are a logical starting point to nurture younger students. The ubiquity of technology along with the increased importance for younger students' non-fiction reading and text-based writing add luster to this approach for teachers of elementary students. Similarly complicated and technology-based approaches for historical argumentation have drawn favorable reviews from young students.⁴⁴ Teachers, though, should remember that Bruce Fehn's and Kimberly Heckart's digital documentary-making with third graders relied on constructing and logically sequencing an argument; the visually encoded messages within OPCs rely on creative integration of textual clues and symbolism. Young students might find symbolism, especially, to be quite cumbersome; the reading, writing, and technology will likely prove less complicated.

⁴⁴ Fehn and Heckart, "Producing a Documentary in the Third Grade," 2013.