

Inquiry and Teaching with Primary Sources

Bayard Rustin: Shifting a Civil Rights Leader from the Shadows to the Spotlight

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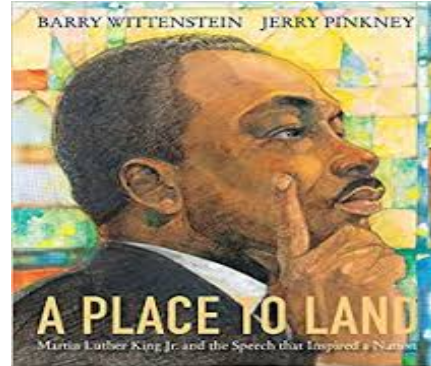


Bayard Rustin: Shifting a civil rights leader from the shadows to the spotlight. In Waring, S. (Ed.), *Inquiry and teaching with primary sources to prepare students for college, career, and civic life (elementary edition)*. Library of Congress & National Council for the Social Studies.



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Pedagogy of Possibility
(Crocco, 2002)



A Place to Land: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Speech that Changed a Nation

--Barry Wittenstein and Jerry Pinkney (illustrator)



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Highsmith, C. M., photographer. (2011) *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.* Washington D.C. United States, 2011. September. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012630216/>

- The Long Civil Rights Movement (Hall, 2005)
- We should expand the geography (where), chronology (when), and demography (who) of the Civil Rights Movement (Hawkman and Castro, 2017)



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Curricular Aims

1. **Disrupt the dominant narrative** of the Civil Rights Movement by introducing a counter narrative that presents a more comprehensive and inclusive account of the past.
 - Counter narratives help us understand the complexities of the past (Salinas, Blevins, & Sullivan, 2012) and are essential in helping students whose histories have been silenced make connections to the curriculum (An, 2020).
2. **Disrupt the heteronormative narrative** of the Civil Rights Movement by providing students the opportunity to “integrate valuable perspectives, voices, and stories that are often silenced in the telling of history” (Navarro & Howard, 2017, p. 219)—particularly LGBTQ+ history (Mayo Jr., 2016; Ryan, 2016)



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Curricular Aims

3. **Provide an accurate reading** of the world in which students live their lives today (Maguth & Taylor, 2014)
4. **Advance the elementary social studies curriculum** towards a more complete and contextualized curriculum that more fully represents the diverse stories from our past
 - NCSS Position Statement: Contextualizing LGBT+ History within the Social Studies Curriculum), I aimed to more fully represent the diverse stories from our past
 - <https://www.socialstudies.org/position-statements/contextualizing-lgbt-history-within-social-studies-curriculum>



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Pedagogical Approaches

1. Queer Critical Pedagogy

- Focuses on questioning and problematizing the status quo as related to gender and sexual orientation.
- Asks teachers to interrupt and re-narrate the limiting binaries of gender and sexuality (Sumara & Davis, 1999)

2. Historical Thinking

- historical comprehension skills (observing, inferring and questioning)
- historical literacy skills (corroborating, sourcing, and close reading)
- disposition of truthfulness (Malin et al., 2014) to help students build a sense of “telling the truth” with regards to the past in ways that will shape their civic mindedness and engagement (Nokes, 2019).



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Inquiry Design: Inductive Approach

- I approached the Library of Congress website as a **teacher-researcher** and immersed myself in learning about Bayard Rustin
 1. “The Bayard Rustin Papers” Lecture (Library of Congress, 2013)
 2. Blog Posts from the manuscript and prints/photographs division
 3. Civil Rights History Project
- I collected 25 sources and “listened” for a story to develop



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Inquiry Design: Supporting Questions

I discovered a set of sources that would help students learn the following content:

4 sources that would describe his role in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

1. **What was Bayard's role in the March?**

5 sources that would achievements in the Civil Rights Movement

2. **How was Bayard's role and work in the Civil Rights Movement described by civil rights activist of the time?**

3 sources that would explore the intersection between Bayard's work and his sexual orientation

3. **How did Bayard's identity as a gay man affect his role and legacy as a civil rights activist?**



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Inquiry Design: Compelling Question

Does your *labor* or *label* matter more?

- Note that my supporting questions sequence the content of the inquiry and are more empirical questions, whereas my compelling question is broader and a normative question that asks students to reflect on ways historical knowledge is produced. This question allowed me to capture the duality of our young learners: (a) students and (b) citizens (Salinas et al., 2012)



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension One

- I chose to provide students the inquiry questions here versus supporting them in developing ones in order to use a more structured approach to inquiry (Maxim, 2014).
- The indicator I did utilize was “explaining why compelling questions are important to others”



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension One

[Zoom In Activity](#)



Martin Luther King Jr. at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom / Bob Adelman (born 1930) / Gelatin silver print, 1963 / National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



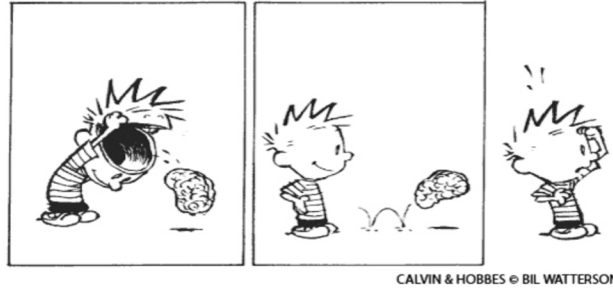
Photo screen grab of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking to reporters in LA on Aug. 17, 1965 with openly gay senior advisor Bayard Rustin looking on.



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension One

Famous Figures Brain Dump



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Two

- I chose concepts and skills across history and civics and used a variety of tools in conjunction with the sources to support students in applying these disciplinary concepts and tools: (a) Observe-Reflect-Question Protocol, (b) Interview Close Read Protocol, and (c) Sourcing and Comprehending and Corroborating, Oh My! Protocol
- Students will progress through the supporting questions, which act like “stepping stones” towards answering the compelling question.

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Supporting Question One (D2)

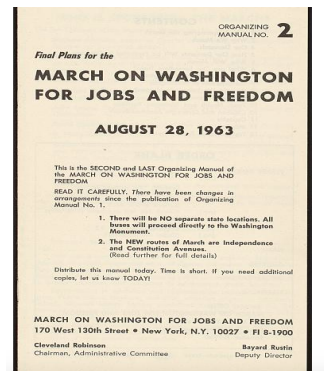
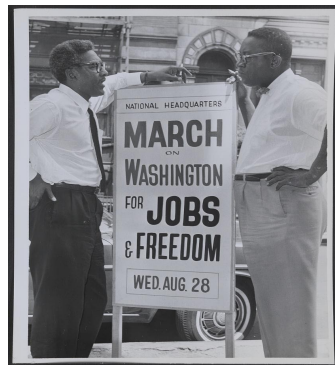
I conducted Rounds of Inquiry using variations of the **Observe-Reflect-Protocol**

1. Students viewed 2 photographs ([images](#))
2. Students viewed a March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom Manual ([document](#))
3. Students listened to an oral history interview ([oral history](#))



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Supporting Question One (D2)



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Supporting Question Two (D2)

- Using the [Civil Rights History Project](#), I located 4 oral history interviews for students to use the PDF transcripts in order to conduct a Close Read.
 - How was Bayard’s role and work in the Civil Rights Movement described by civil rights activist of the time?
- Close Read Protocol
 - Think Aloud
 - Provide PDF transcript of oral history interview with passages highlighted for students to read through them
 - Students source the material first
 - Students read each passage sequentially looking for clues to answer the supporting question



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Supporting Question Two (D2)

SOURCING		How was Bayard’s role and work in the movement <u>described</u> by civil rights activist of the time?
Figure 7	Who is being interviewed?	Textual Evidence from 1 st passage:
	When are they being interviewed?	Textual Evidence from 2 nd passage: Textual Evidence from 3 rd passage:



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Supporting Question Three (D2)

Students will answer the 3rd supporting question (i.e, How did Bayard's identity as a gay man affect his role and legacy as a civil rights activist?) using the following 3 sources:

- [Interview with Bayard Rustin](#)
- [Blog Post](#)
- [Presidential Medal of Freedom Ceremony](#)



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Supporting Question Three (D2)

SOURCING:

Who is the author of this source?
How might they be biased?
How reliable is this source?

**Sourcing, Comprehending,
Corroborating, Oh My!
Protocol**

COMPREHENDING:

What did you learn about Bayard from this source?
What information from this source will help you answer the supporting question?

CORROBORATING:

How does information from this source support information from 1 or 2 other sources?
What connections can you make between the sources?

Further Thinking:

What other information would you like to see to better affirm your interpretation on how Bayard's identity affected his role?



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Three

- Students will build an argument using evidence across the source work conducted across all three supporting questions during the work of dimension two.



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Three

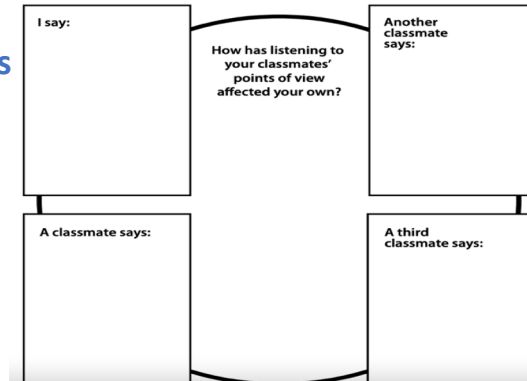
- You can evaluate students' arguments based on the following:
 1. the quantity and quality of the content knowledge presented on Bayard Rustin
 2. the ability to gather appropriate evidence from multiple sources to support their thinking
 3. the reasoning provided as to whether his *labor* or *label* mattered more in his work and legacy

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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Four

Communicate Results

Reflective Discussion Circles
(McGriff & Clemons, 2019)



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Four

1. Have students try and locate Bayard Rustin in their classroom history curriculum (textbook, district materials, school library). Help illuminate the “holes” in the history curriculum.
2. Pose questions such as “Who wrote our history textbook?” or “Who writes our district curriculum?”
3. Spark curiosity about what else might be missing and use this curiosity to inspire students to **Take Informed Action**.
 - a. Have students research lesser-known individuals from the Civil Rights Movement (and remember the work for this movement can start in the 1800s)

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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Four

[Teaching The Civil Rights Movement from the Bottom-Up
50 Years After the Voting Rights Act \(Library of Congress
Lecture\)](#)

[Library of Congress Blog Post: James Baldwin](#)

[Women in the Civil Rights Movement \(Library of Congress Essay\)](#)



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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Four

Taking Informed Action

1. Have students create “Did You Know?” video/audio clips to share over the school announcements
2. Have students create district curriculum handouts for other classrooms to learn about the individuals they discovered.
3. Have students write textbook publishers advocating for inclusion of particular individuals.



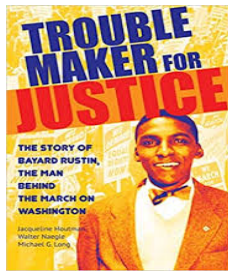
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C3 Inquiry Arc: Dimension Four

By the end of the inquiry students are taking a critical stance towards the production of historical knowledge and working to create counter narratives to share with others and make public--blending their roles as students and citizens here (Salinas, Blevins, and Sullivan., 2012).

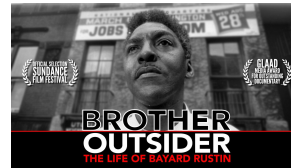
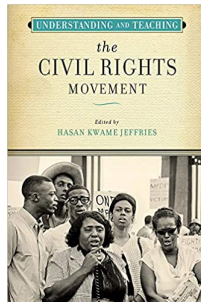


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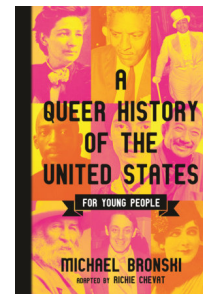
Trouble Maker for Justice (Houtman, Naegle, and Long, 2019)

Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement (Edited by Hasan Kwame Jeffries, 2019)



Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin (2003)

A Queer History of the U.S. For Young People (Michael Bronski, 2019)



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Teaching LGTB+ History

- Controversial topics are those “elements of the curriculum that could be seen as inappropriate or objectionable by parents, administrators, or the larger public” (McAvoy & Ho, 2020, p. 28). It is the question of whether or not to teach that is controversial.
- I view teaching about Bayard Rustin and other LGTB+ histories as not controversial but when viewed through the lens of public opinion (i.e., questions around inclusion) then it could be labeled that way.
- Viewing this work as controversial positions LGTB+ individuals and their lives as outside the “norm” and maintains the heteronormative status quo of the elementary curriculum.
- What can you do?
 - Create a beloved community (Rodríguez and Swalwell, forthcoming, Norton Press)
 - Frame LGTB+ history as part of an inclusive teaching strategy to shift emphasis towards a larger goal of teaching inclusivity versus simply teaching LGTB+ history (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019)

