The “Other Side” of the Story:
Designing Multiple Perspective Inquiries

NCSS Annual Conference 2018

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Our Inquiry:

Why are multiple perspectives important in our social studies instruction?

How do we integrate diverse voices into our curriculum?
Workshop Agenda

- Role Play
- Research and Rationale
- Case Study of Multiple Perspectives Unit in a 5th Grade Classroom
- Ways to Use Multiple Perspectives in Your Elementary Classroom
Playground Scenario

You’re on recess duty and a verbal altercation breaks out between two students playing soccer. The students are yelling insults and you arrive on just as the students are starting to push each other. You quickly defuse the situation. Now, you need to figure out what happened, but the students have conflicting stories.

How do you figure out the situation?

Adapted from “Lunchroom Fight” by Stanford History Education Group
Think About…

- Who is involved in the situation?
- Who do you talk to about the fight?
- What do you know about the participants/witnesses?
- What may affect a source’s credibility?
- How do you ensure a source’s credibility?
What factors can affect your decision?

- If the stories make sense
- The reputation of the students
- Where you and the witnesses were during the fight
- The relationship the kids in the fight have with each other
- The relationship they have with the witnesses
- Do you empathize with one of the participants? Or one of the witnesses?
- The stake that someone has in the conflict
- How emotional or hurt are the participants
To fully understand a situation, you need to:

Listen to multiple perspectives
Evaluate sources of information
“The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in interdependent world.”

–NCSS, 1994
Equitable Democracy is the Goal.

- Anti-biased and participatory democratic approach:
  - See ourselves as part of a greater whole
  - Listen to and learn from people who are different from ourselves
  - Develop critical thinking skills
  - Deliberate to find peaceful solutions to problems
  - Promote the freedom, rights, and well-being of all people

(Parker & Beck, 2017; Epstein, 2009; Banks, 2016; Wade, 2007)
Building Empathy in Social Studies

- Empathy is the ability to understand someone else’s thoughts, feelings, or experiences from their perspective.

- Requires students to:
  - Understand the contexts that create different points of view
  - Care about people and the injustices they experience
  - Care about improving society for the benefit of everyone

(Barton & Levstik, 2009)
One-Sided Stories

 Elementary social studies curriculum relies heavily on one source-the textbook.

- Chooses *what* and *whose* knowledge is most important
- Neglects certain voices, simplifies the complexity of situations, and omits how people influence society

 Dire consequences:

- Students do not have models for working together to solve issues plaguing our society.
- Students of marginalized groups don’t see themselves in US history.

(Loewen, 2018; Epstein, 2009; Agarwal-Rangnath, 2013; Wade, 2007)
“The stories that history textbooks tell are predictable; every problem has already been solved or is about to be solved. Textbooks exclude conflict or real suspense...They portray the past as a simple morality play.”

–James Loewen, 2007
Preparing to Teach with Multiple Perspectives

Learning Standard

Connection to the Present

Who was involved?

Group A
Context
Beliefs
Actions
Dissension

Group B
Context
Beliefs
Actions
Dissension

Taking Action
Learn the History of the “Other Side”
Case Study: Taíno People and the Columbus

Goals:

1. To include neglected perspectives
2. To teach students that historical events have multiple perspectives
3. To teach students to critically evaluate sources
Learning Standard: "Students trace the routes of early explorers and describe the early explorations of the Americas".

Connection to the Present

Who was involved?

Group A
Context
Beliefs
Actions
Dissension

Group B
Context
Beliefs
Actions
Dissension

Taking Action
Inquiry Design Model

- Compelling question
- Scaffolded tasks
- Sources
- Construction of an evidence-based argument
- Take action
Framing the Inquiry

What is the connection between the standard and our current events?

Should San Francisco rename Columbus Day Indigenous Peoples Day?
What Questions Do You Have?

- Evaluative compelling questions
- If appropriate, invite the students to craft compelling questions.
- Used Visible Thinking Strategy, “Think, Puzzle, Explore”

(Making Thinking Visible by Ron Ritchhart, et al.)
Should Columbus be Honored as a Hero?

1. How does our identity shape our perspectives of events?

2. How can a source affected by the author’s identity?

3. What was the perspective of the Native Americans?

4. What was the perspective of the Europeans?
Gathering Sources

- Several sources from multiple perspectives
- Primary and secondary sources
Supporting Question #1: How Does Our Identity Shape Our Perspective of Events?

- Define “Identity”
- Create Identity Webs
- Lunchroom Food Fight Scenario
Defining Identity

Our Identities

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Class/Socioeconomic Status
- Religion
- Nationality
- Ability
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Family Make-Up
- Learning Styles
- Interests
- Passions
- Language
- Allergies/Medical Issues
- Character Traits
- Food
- Celebrations
- Hobbies
- Opinions
- Memories

Student Name
Lunch Food Fight Scenario

"Your identity can make you biased. If there is somebody who bullies you, you could exaggerate just to get even with them. Or it could be the other way around and you could protect somebody you are friends with and you don’t want him to get in trouble. This might make your story different."

– Jamal, 5th grader

Adapted from “Lunchroom Fight” by Stanford History Education Group
Supporting Question #2: How is a Source Affected by the Author’s Identity?

Teach Students to Evaluate Sources!

• Read Encounter by Jane Yolen, Follow the Dream: The Story of Christopher Columbus by Peter Sis, and History Alive! textbook

• Reflection:
  1. What kind of source is this book?
  2. Who is this story about?
  3. Whose point of view is represented? What is your evidence?
  4. Whose point of view is not included? What is your evidence?
  5. How does the author feel about Columbus? Native Americans? What is your evidence?
  6. Who is the author? What do we know about him/her?

(VanSledright, 2015; Loewen, 2018; Sleeter, 2017)
## Sourcing Documents: The Columbus and Taíno Encounter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name (What kind of source?)</th>
<th>Who Wrote It? What Do We Know About His/Her Identity?</th>
<th>When and Where Was the Document Created?</th>
<th>Whose Story Is Told? Whose Is Left Out?</th>
<th>Infer the Author's Feelings about the Native Americans</th>
<th>Infer the Author's Feelings about the European Explorers</th>
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“The textbook only has 6 sentences out of 58 that even mention the Native Americans. It does have one sentence about how Columbus enslaved them and how many died. But most of it tells how Columbus wanted to go explore and finally got a king and queen to help him and he succeeded. The authors want us to focus on that instead of all the bad things. It’s biased.”

–Brittney, 5th grader
Supporting Question #3: What is the Perspective of the Native Americans?

- Understand the historical context of Taíno people

- Use secondary sources to understand the impact of the encounter:
  - Taíno Museum
  - *Encounter* by Jane Yolen
  - “Columbus and the Indians” from *A Young People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn
  - “Taíno Resistance: Enrique’s Uprising” in *Rethinking Columbus*

- Reflection: Connect the impacts on the Taíno people with your learning about their values, beliefs, and experiences.
### See, Think, Wonder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See</th>
<th>Think</th>
<th>Wonder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source 1:</td>
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<td>Source 2:</td>
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<td>Source 3:</td>
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<td>Source 4:</td>
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### The Taíno Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>What Happened When the Europeans Arrived from the Taíno Perspective?</th>
</tr>
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</table>
“What? I knew they [Native Americans] died but I had no idea it was this bad! They almost all died! They made them slaves to find gold but it was an impossible task. Then they [Europeans] chopped off their hands if they couldn’t. This is horrible.”

–Sacha, 5th grader
Supporting Question #4: What is the Perspective of the Europeans?

- Understand the historical context of Columbus
- Use primary sources to understand motivations for exploration
  - Excerpt from Pope Alexander VI’s *Doctrine of Discovery, 1493*
  - Excerpt from Columbus’ journal
  - Adapted excerpt from Bartolomé de Las Casas’s “Hispaniola”
- Compare to secondary sources’ coverage of the motivations
- Reflection: Connect the motivations to your learning of the general beliefs, values, and experiences of Western Europeans
**What We Learned about the Renaissance in Europe and the People's Values**

- Discovering new ideas - in science, art, literature.
- Secularism - going away from the Church.
- Humanism - focusing on people rather than God/Heaven.
- Individualism - focuses on accomplishment of individuals.
- More resources = more wealth "motivated to get gold".
- Very powerful kings and queens - they had $ to help Columbus.

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**What Motivated the Explorers (Columbus)?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Info about the Source</th>
<th>Their Perspective on the Reasons for Exploration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbus' Journal</td>
<td>1492, 1493 - primary source (transl.)</td>
<td>Native Americans → Slaves</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>white, European man</td>
<td>wanted gold, spices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>explorer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pope Alexander VI (1493)</td>
<td>1493 - primary source (transl.)</td>
<td>Spread Christianity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pope, during Columbus' expedition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>head of Catholic church</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>white, European, upper class</td>
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<tr>
<td>History Alibi - textbook</td>
<td>Lobdell &amp; Bower - men</td>
<td>Claim land</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>historians</td>
<td>get gold/silver</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001, USA - secondary source</td>
<td>Convert to Christianity</td>
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<tr>
<td>The World Made New</td>
<td>Marc Aronson / John W. Glenn</td>
<td>More knowledge about World and navigation</td>
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<td>National Geographic</td>
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<td>Children's book authors - men</td>
<td>Find a new sea route to Asia - cheaper and faster</td>
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<td>2007, USA - secondary</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Gold/silver, spices</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>More resources = more wealth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Converting to Christianity</td>
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<td>Glory</td>
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</table>

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From the private journals of Christopher Columbus, 1492:

"I was very attentive to them, and strove to learn if they had any gold. Seeing some of them with little bits of metal hanging at their noses, I gathered from them by signs that by going southward or steering round the island in that direction, there would be found a king who possessed great cups full of gold..."

"Should your Majesties command it, all the inhabitants could be taken away to Castile [Spain], or made slaves on the island. With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want."

From the private journals of Christopher Columbus, April 1493:

"...Finally, to compress into few words the entire summary of my voyage and speedy return, and of the advantages derivable therefrom, I promise, that ... I will procure them as much gold as they need, as great a quantity of spices, of cotton, and of musk (which is only found in Chios), and as many men for the service of the navy as their Majesties may require."

From Pope Alexander VI, in his writing, The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493:

"...you have purposed with the favor of divine clemency, to bring under your sway the said mainlands and islands with their residents and inhabitants and to bring them to the Catholic faith. Hence, heartily commending in the Lord this your holy and praiseworthy purpose, and desirous that it be duly accomplished, and that the name of our Savior be carried into those regions..."
Circle of Viewpoints

Making Thinking Visible by Ron Ritchhart, et al.
Concluding Supporting Question #2: How Can a Source be Affected by the Author’s Identity?

- Reflect on the sourcing task
- What conclusions can you draw about the connection between the author’s identity and their perspective on the text?
- Are all sources biased?
- What can we do to ensure credibility of a source?
“Your identity might make you have a bias when you talk about an event. Peter [Sis] was an immigrant and was inspired by Columbus so his story is about Columbus being a hero. Jane Yolen is a woman and she maybe can connect to the Native Americans because women were hurt in history too. So in her story, she wants to tell the Native American side of the story since it’s missing. She also didn’t think Columbus was a hero and made him like evil serpent in the story.”

—Chloe, 5th grader

“People have identities. Their identities make them take a side. You have to read lots of different stories from Native Americans and Europeans to make sure you see both sides. You have to read primary sources too. That way you can see exactly what they think.”

—Nicolas, 5th grader
Summative Argument Task:
Should Columbus Be Honored as a Hero?

- Take a position and support with evidence
- 5 paragraph essay using Document-Based Question structure
- Debate/Socratic Seminar
Taking Action: Should Columbus Be Honored as a Hero?

Work with a partner to plan and implement an action project that supports your position.

Projects:

- Slideshow presentations for 3rd graders
- Letter to principal
- Letter to the Governor
- Presentation to the town council
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Ways to Use Multiple Perspectives in Your Elementary Classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✤ Portable archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Double-entry journals</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Timelines with multiple perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Guest speakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Field trips</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Round-table negotiations</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Book reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Literature circles with books from various perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Role-play / simulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Readers Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Diary entries</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Dialogue poems</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“Of course, we have to learn both sides of the story. A teacher has to hear both sides during a fight on the playground... Then we have to learn about both sides of stories in history too.”

—Adnan, 5th grader
THANK YOU

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Resources


