



NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL WORLD HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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Teaching Resources: A Column for High School Teachers

by David Burzillo

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1. Why and when was the World History Resource Center created?

The World History Resource Center was originally funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education in June of 1998. The Center works to develop and diffuse world history and curriculum materials to educators at the secondary and university level. Of special interest to ninth and tenth grade world history teachers, the Center provides lessons and resources to implement the world history strands of the Massachusetts framework.

2. What types of materials does the World History Resource Center possess?

The Resource Center includes a wide range of teaching resources, including lesson plans, transparencies, videos, slides, monographs, primary sources, and many fiction titles suitable for high school and college classrooms. Currently, the Center contains over 600 world history titles many of which are geared to the teaching of the state framework.

3. Who can use the World History Resource Center? How does a teacher get borrowing privileges?

The Resource Center is open for use by all Massachusetts educators. There are no rental fees charged for borrowing materials. However, borrowing materials require a school purchase order deposit or credit card deposit. In the case of non-return of materials, the deposit will be debited toward the replacement cost. Please contact us for a Borrowing Agreement form to be sent to you.

The Resource Center is located at 071 Lake Hall in Northeastern University. Telephone (617) 573 - 4855. We are open for the following walk in hours or by appointment:

Monday-Friday 9:00AM - 5:00PM.

You can also find us on the web at:
[http://www.whc.neu.edu/center/!](http://www.whc.neu.edu/center/)

Announcing:

**Ninth International Conference
of the
World History Association,
22-25 June 2000
Northeastern University
www.whc.neu.edu/wha2000**

Plenary Speakers:

Thursday June 22 7:00-9:00PM
Faneuil Hall, Boston

"Eurasian Interactions:
Their Implications for World History"
Victor Mair,
University of Pennsylvania

"Cycles of Silver:
Global Economic Unity through
the mid-18th Century"
Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez,
University of the Pacific

4. What are your goals for the Center? How do you envision the Center helping to support local world history teachers?

The World History Resource Center continues to support local world history teachers through our efforts to develop and provide curriculum materials to teachers. We focus on outreach to teachers through various methods, including school visitations. We bring resources and materials to area high schools and support to teachers who are in need of materials, ideas, background readings, and lessons on the various aspects of human history. In 2000 the World History Center will oversee the production of numerous new lesson units on world history created by Massachusetts high school teachers to correspond directly to the state frameworks. The Center is dedicated to the teaching of world history and hopes to serve as a base for teachers in their review and teaching of the Massachusetts framework.

College and Pre-College Teacher

Collaboration

By David Burzillo

During the nineties most states adopted learning standards in the core academic disciplines in an effort to improve the quality of public school education. Concurrent with this trend, most states also adopted plans to assess student attainment of these standards. Recently the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) reported that forty-seven states, the district of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have or will have an assessment system aligned with their standards. As a result of all these changes, teachers in all disciplines are faced with the challenge of adjusting their curricula to address these state standards and assessments. For some history teachers these changes mean teaching world history for the first time, a subject many have not previously been asked to teach, and a subject many have not formally studied. Thus, although the new standards and assessments pose challenges for teachers in all disciplines, many history teachers are faced with the additional challenge of learning world history. Teachers looking for world history training to meet these challenges have a number of options. Three recent, and in two cases ongoing, collaborations between college and pre-college world history teachers are exemplary models for improving world history teaching and should be considered as models. The Philadelphia High School Collaborative, the Northeastern Summer World History Institutes, and the California History-Social Science Project.

What unites each of these collaborations as vehicles for improving world history teaching is the key characteristics that they share in common. First, each involved collaboration and collegiality between college and high school teachers around important issues in world history.

Second, each involved the sharing of primary sources, lesson plans, bibliographies, and other materials. Third, each involved getting pre-college participants involved in research and/or the creation of lessons or units with feedback from college level teachers. And finally, each exposed college level teachers to the teaching styles of pre-college teachers and the challenges they face.

The Philadelphia High School-College Collaborative, which lasted from 1992-1994, brought together twenty teachers from ten Philadelphia high schools, and twenty teachers from twelve area colleges. Howard Spodek, who directed the collaborative,

explained that the idea stemmed from the desire "to establish a community of scholar-teachers concerned with world history who could easily keep in touch with one other." All group members met for bi-monthly meetings over a two year period and discussed topics such as: textbooks, sequencing, values in world history, perspectives, interdisciplinary history, and comparative history. These larger group meetings alternated with bi-monthly meetings of 7-10 participants, which focused on one of five areas: historiography, gender and family, cultural and economic change, urbanization and empire building, and technological and political revolution. The smaller groups created annotated bibliographies for the larger group and also presented a lesson to them. Spodek feels that the small group meetings fostered the success of the larger groups, as the "small study groups generated collegiality, the sense of a common task, and, at all levels, the courage to experiment and take risks."

High school teachers benefited enormously from their interaction with scholars from the college level and the content knowledge that they shared. College-level teachers benefited from the exposure to the teaching styles of secondary school teachers, which came through class visitations by many participants. Initially some college teachers were skeptical about the methods used by high school teachers to convey content, and lively discussions about the relationship between methods and content followed. According to Sue Rosenthal of the High School for Creative Performing Arts, "We teachers thought the dialogue motivated some of the professors to think more, or differently, about student learning and their responsibility for the process. They now recognized that being concerned only about the content of a course is not sufficient." Some college teachers changed their teaching methods as a result of participation in the collaborative. Spodek noted, "most college teachers began to attempt somewhat more interactive modes of teaching. Some gave up the lecture format, but most seemed eager to introduce additional hands-on methods, group learning, more creative assignments, more active classrooms, more student writing." Spodek's own teaching style underwent a change. Today, he says, "My teaching is almost certainly more interactive with students, and more encouraging of students' interaction among themselves, than previously."

The summer world history institutes sponsored by the World History Center at Northeastern University in the summers of 1998 and 1999 differed in format from the Philadelphia Collaborative but not in its goals or results. Both Northeastern institutes drew participants from across the state. The 1998 institute focused on world history from 500-1815, with a six day summer institute and one day follow-up sessions in October and February. The goal of the institute was to help prepare teachers to implement the recently adopted state frameworks for world history for grade nine. Each day focused on a specific period of history, with a college or university expert invited to lecture in the morning on that topic. Lectures were followed up with presentations by master teachers, who presented specific materials related to the topic or presented model lessons which participants could use. Between the summer and October meetings, all participants created one week units on topics related to the institute, which they could use and would later be made available to other teachers through the World History Center. These lessons were critiqued by the directors of the institute and staff at the World History Center.

Participants in the Northeastern Institutes received a wealth of materials, including textbooks, primary source collections, readings, handouts, and lesson plans. The variety and number of

the materials was actually overwhelming to some, with one participant remarking that "it would take an entire summer just to go through all the reading material!" Daily activities provided a basis for making sense of those materials and guidance as to how they might be used to address specific content issues and prepare lessons. For those participants new to world history, the institute materials formed a solid basis for a personal world history curriculum library. Institute activities and the curricular materials conveyed both the nature of world history, controversies in the field, and covered the content from specific episodes from world history. This was particularly important because while some of the institute participants had experience teaching world history, others were about to teach it for the first time or had just begun teaching it. Many had previously taught Civics, a common ninth grade offering in Massachusetts. According to institute co-director Deborah Smith Johnston, "In both cases the institutes were successful in giving people the confidence that resources exist and that teaching World History is not impossible."

Material sharing was also an important component of the 1999 summer institute. In this second institute the focus shifted to the period 1815 to present, and varied slightly in format from the 1998 institute, running for a two-week period and requiring participants to create single lessons during the course of the institute. This fine-tuning allowed participants the opportunity to see each other present the lessons they had prepared. According to Smith Johnston, "The lesson presentations were wonderful because teachers so rarely have the chance to see each other in the classroom. The opportunity for lesson sharing and feedback with colleagues is professionally enriching."

The California History-Social Science Project (CH-SSP) is different in its focus from both the Philadelphia and Northeastern projects in that its goal is not focused solely on the improvement of world history education, but the improvement of history in general. In addition, the state of California has made a significant financial investment in the project since its inception in

1991. Despite these differences, many CH-SSP's institutes focus on issues in world history or skills important to the world history teachers or students, and it shares many of the qualities that are evident in the Philadelphia and Northeastern projects. CH-SSP emphasizes collaboration between pre-college and college-level teachers both in the administration of its programs and in its activities. At each of the ten project centers currently funded by the state of California there are typically 1-4 site directors, who are generally, but not exclusively, professors from that college or university and a leadership team of 5-10 teachers, drawn primarily from K-12 teachers, but with some college representation. The CH-SSP's web page states, "The professors do not simply appear periodically to do lectures; instead they engage with teachers in research, lead discussions around issues of historical analysis, and help teachers gain access to the resources they need." The goals of the CH-SSP's are organized around three themes: content/skills, collaboration, and leadership. Collaboration is clearly expressed as a commitment "to school-university collaboration and to the effort to improve teaching at all levels, kindergarten through university," and the idea that "teachers teaching teachers" must be understood to include all teachers, K through 16, all of whom can learn much from one another.

One vehicle for collaboration is the project's summer institutes. The number of summer institutes has steadily increased since the project's inception. The CH-SSP held its first five summer institutes in 1991; in 1996 590 teachers participated

in 29 programs. The 1998 summer institutes appealed to a broad range of teacher interests, and many appealed to teachers of world history, with topics such as California's place in world history and women and gender in US and world history. Summer institutes consist of faculty seminars, in which university historians lecture on current research and theory in their fields, teacher research, and teacher workshops, in which teachers present the results of their research.

But the summer institutes are not the only vehicle for the collaboration and collegiality that CH-SSP seeks. Participants share phone numbers and e-mail and are encouraged to stay in contact. According to Kirby Medina, the history and cultures project Director at UC Davis, "College teachers and K-12 teachers get together throughout the academic year at a variety of events we sponsor, e.g. book chats and ongoing book groups." The UCLA project site sponsors a monthly "Scholar-Teacher Symposium," in which scholars make a content presentation and a K-12 teacher presents a lesson that addresses that content.

According to L. Ben Sanders, who did graduate research on one CH-SSP summer institute and its participants in 1997, "It was evident that site directors shared a concern over the nature of collegial interactions between teachers and university historians." This concern was manifest in the opportunities provided for pre-college teachers to present lessons, which allowed them to show what they could do. Sanders lauded that directors sought ways to allow K-12 teachers to demonstrate their pedagogical expertise. "And in fact, although Faculty Seminars are primarily concerned with teacher learning, the HCF maintains that historians stand to gain a good deal themselves from these interactions with teachers, and in many cases, to learn about different (often highly innovative) ways K-12 teachers go about presenting history curriculum to their students." As in the Philadelphia collaborative, ideas about the methods and content flowed freely between the college and pre-college teachers in California. According to Joan Lettow, Outreach Coordinator for the CH-SSP, "Our teachers are appreciative of the knowledge and support from the university professors. And the professors have expressed their appreciation for the more innovative teaching strategies modeled by the teachers as they present their lessons during the last week of the institute."

Materials also flow freely from the programs of the CH-SSP. The resource sharing, so important in the Northeastern institutes, is also a critical component of the CH-SSP workshops. According to Jean Muddell, a retired middle school teacher who now works for CH-SSP, "A tremendous amount of resource and information-sharing happens: scholars, facilitators, and teachers bring books, pamphlets, etc. from their personal libraries to share with others." Some of the curriculum units are available through the project's website.

College and pre-college world history teachers deal with very different audiences, but they share the common goals of teaching world history well, giving their students a solid understanding of the material, and getting their students excited about world history. The three collaborations discussed in this article all involved attempts at meeting these goals through collaborative efforts between teachers at both levels. The positive feedback from both college and pre-college teachers about each of these collaborations suggests that those interested in improving the teaching of world history should incorporate the key components of these collaborations in their programs: ongoing collaboration, teacher research, the sharing of materials, and the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching lessons.

Note to Members

If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining NER-WHA (Membership is free), please let us know and we can send them a newsletter. Also if you have any questions, comments, or ideas for future articles for the newsletter, please feel free to get in touch. You can reach us at (617) 373-4060.

With the development of NER-WHA, we have decided to build a list of e-mail addresses of our members so that we can communicate with each other more efficiently. It will also allow us to hold on-line conferences of NER-WHA.

Please send addresses to:
worldhistory@neu.edu

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