

Reviews

A Primer for Teaching World History: Ten Design Principles, by Antoinette Burton. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. 176 pages. \$21.95, paper.

With over 200,000 students taking the AP World History exam in 2012, sixty percent of states requiring a high school world history course for graduation, and post-secondary institutions across the country adding world history to their general education requirements, it is evident that it is no longer that we teach world history, but how we teach world history—or “what kind of world history we teach”—towards which world history educators must now turn our attention. In answer to this pressing need, Antoinette Burton’s slim volume invites teachers of world history to explicitly articulate the design principles that animate their courses. As importantly, Burton then models framing those design principles by suggesting features of the development of a world history syllabus alongside strategies for “realizing the pedagogical commitments” implied in a world history course’s design.

In doing so, Burton offers guidance for both the area specialist hired to teach a class for which they lack specific training, and the secondary teacher, who, even with an assigned textbook, must choose what shape their course will have. Her “primer,” however, should only not be read by teachers designing an introductory-level world history course for the first time. There is plenty here to engage the experienced classroom teacher. In addition, because the discipline of world history has developed so closely in tandem with its pedagogy, Burton’s modestly described “workbook” offers fascinating insights into the ways in which the teaching of world history both shapes the field and tests the limits of the discipline.

Rather than insist on a specific curricular framework (something which I imagine many teachers would welcome), Burton encourages world history teachers to reflect instead on the range of choices before them and to determine which design works best for them. The design principles she outlines—acknowledging that there may be others—provide an architecture for fashioning that course. The foundations include features that potentialize a global vista, yet which also permit testing the limits of that perspective. For example, Burton describes how one might establish a course’s temporal guideposts, the directional markers that signal the trajectories and themes of the course, but also afford teachable moments when alternative time frames might be considered. She also recognizes that, contrary to civilizational approaches that privilege claims made from the center, local histories, or “world history from below,” often correspond only weakly to such claims of authority. Considering these disjunctures illustrates alternatives to hierarchically ordered narratives while also encouraging students to recognize their own provisional position in processes of globalization. In addition, Burton argues for a more complete engagement

with gender, sexuality, and the body, as these categories “make hypervisible the circulation of structures of power.”

Critical to Burton’s design principles, and perhaps what distinguishes world history from other history courses, is her focus on connectivity. The metaphors Burton employs to describe connectivity—likening it to a GPS or internet search engine—are instructive. Of course, this is an acknowledgment, reprised in a later chapter, of the challenges of teaching “digital natives”—classrooms of students born after 1980. It is also recognition that GPS and search engines simultaneously situate the user logically and spatially in response to each query. Centralizing connectivity then, Burton argues, permits students to not only make the global visible, without privileging a “natural or necessary center,” but also to find themselves in the chains of interconnection which extend across space and time. Interestingly, however, the connectivity presumed in Burton’s course design reflects a teleology no less apparent than the self-justificatory logic of the Western Civilization course. For the latter, what required explanation was the historical position of Europe and its imitators. What requires explanation today, and sustains the urgent demand for more world history teaching and attendant pedagogical resources, like Burton’s book, is the current wave of globalization. Making connectivity the structural lynchpin of world history course design addresses this need, but may, like the search engine, say as much about our place and time—and ourselves—as it does about the past.

I suspect that teachers at every level will find most useful Burton’s description of the many strategies and teaching techniques which she has used successfully in her own courses. These include utilizing carefully chosen events as pivot points around which to shift students’ perspective of their world. Or exploring extended “genealogies,” by which Burton seems to mean the causal links of disparate events that, taken together, offer deep explanation of current conditions. Filled with practical intuitions and anecdotes from the classroom, including a frank discussion of testing strategies, Burton’s primer engages in a conversation that, I suspect, occurs more frequently among world historians than elsewhere in academe, and that is between secondary and post-secondary educators. High school teachers and college professors alike, though perhaps coming from different places of insecurity, admit more than a little anxiety at the enormity of world history. Burton’s guide to syllabus design, then, offers world history teachers a way of taking control over that enormity and a map with many roads along which a conscientious teacher can progress.

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Why the Middle Ages Matter: Medieval Light on Modern Injustice, edited by Celia Chazelle, Simon Doubleday, Felice Lifshitz, and Amy G. Remensnyder. New York: Routledge, 2011. 208 pages. \$31.95, paper.

Historians work tirelessly, it seems, to explain and justify how the past is relevant to the present. Very often, this justification takes some form of George Santayana’s well-known and often misquoted notion that “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” *Why the Middle Ages Matter* departs from this approach. This collection of essays from leading scholars, many of whom are medieval historians, attempts to apply medieval solutions to modern problems of social justice. At first glance, the above statement may strike many as being humorous; in fact, many of the authors in this collection, in addition to their scholarly activity, have dedicated themselves to contemporary social justice. They therefore know of what they speak.

The various essays in this collection address and explore topics such as crime and punishment, social deviancy, marriage, women, and race, to name a few (apologies to those authors whose topics are not mentioned above). Each essay traces some variation of a pattern: an investigation of the medieval dimensions of the issue in question, and an application of medieval solutions to modern problems. So, for instance, Amy G. Remensnyder's "Torture and Truth: Torquemada's Ghost" uses a discussion of the Spanish Inquisition's reliance on torture as a reference point for the necessity of employing torture on the part of presidents of the United States. Her conclusion: since the Spanish learned that torture produces tainted results, President Obama would be well served to remember this lesson whenever he might authorize its use. While it is fair to say that not every essay includes so emphatic a conclusion, they all offer a similar take on intersection between past and present.

Thus, the essays here all share a unity of purpose—to incorporate lessons from the past into a more practical program. It is this fact that distinguishes *Why the Middle Ages Matter* from other essay collections. Some authors here may propose a theoretical or ideological remedy, while others undertake to enunciate explicit applications of medieval methods. Either way, this volume is relevant for students and scholars alike. Secondary school students might come to appreciate how people in the past faced similar obstacles to what they face presently. Post-secondary students will appreciate the sense of purpose that the collection projects. Scholars will come to think of their own studies in a new, more practical light. For those who wish to pursue solutions to problems in the area of social justice, this collection of essays offers a guide so that, indeed, we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

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Arc of Empire: America's Wars in Asia from the Philippines to Vietnam, by Michael H. Hunt and Steven I. Levine. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 340 pages. \$35.00, cloth.

In the last 115 years, the United States has fought, by my count, nine wars in Asia. The four most important of these are examined by Michael Hunt and Steven Levine, highly regarded historians of East Asia and American-East Asian relations. *Arc of Empire* explores these wars in "eastern Asia," a term the authors use to encompass East and Southeast Asia—the American conquest of the Philippines, the war against Japan, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Hunt and Levine argue that they were "phases in a U.S. attempt to establish and maintain a dominant position in eastern Asia, sustained over some seven decades against considerable resistance." They maintain that these wars, along with smaller-scale conflicts involving the United States, constitute "a single historical drama in four acts" (p. 1).

The authors unabashedly treat the United States as an empire, which they define as "fundamentally a centrally directed political enterprise in which a state employs coercion (violence or at least the threat of violence) to subjugate an alien population within a territorially delimited area governed by another state or organized political force" (p. 3). American domination was shaped, Hunt and Levine write, by American nationalism, the context of colonialism and third-world nationalism, and the reliance on the massive destructive power of modern warfare. As in other empires, control depended on collaboration with indigenous elites.

Each chapter takes on a particular war, providing a coherent and authoritative account and examining its origins, how it was experienced by both civilians and combatants, and its consequences, including its relationship to other conflicts. The first chapter concerns

the Philippines War (often, but tendentiously and misleadingly, called the “Philippine Insurrection”). The authors link the conquest of the Philippines with American westward continental expansion: of the thirty generals who served in the Philippines War, twenty-six had fought against American Indians. American suppression of Filipino resistance exacted a horrific toll. Some 20,000 Filipino combatants were killed, but civilian deaths may have amounted to 775,000 out of a population of seven to eight million (p. 58). Americans secured their victory through military superiority, by separating civilians from Filipino guerrillas, and by cultivating collaborators among the Philippine elite.

With good reason, Americans think of World War II as a “good war,” a just war against aggressive and brutal enemies. Hunt and Levine remind us, however, that the war in the Pacific was also a war between two empires with incompatible ambitions. Chapter Two places the war against Japan in the context of regional rivalry and American relations with China. The war itself is vividly described, including the experience of civilians on the home fronts in Japan and America. The end of the World War II, they note, marked the beginning of America’s preeminence in eastern Asia.

The chapter on the Korean War places it in the context of the Cold War, the victory of the Chinese Communists, and American containment policy, and offers an excellent discussion of this relatively neglected war. Chapter Four, on Vietnam, deals, of course, with the greatest setback suffered by the American imperial enterprise. The chapter’s sixty-five pages offer one of the most thoughtful and concise treatments of the Vietnam War I have seen. Anyone noticing the parallels between the Vietnam War and the war in Afghanistan will be struck by what one American field officer told a journalist in 1965: “If there is a God, and he is very kind to us, and given a million men and five years and a miracle in making the South Vietnamese people like us, we stand an outside chance of a stalemate” (p. 216).

Indeed, the current conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East are a subtext, one made explicit in the conclusion. The authors once again address America’s strong sense of national mission, a sense of superiority over “natives,” the illusion of American military invincibility, a reliance on collaborators who lack legitimacy and credibility, and the imperial presidency. Hunt and Levine make a clear and forceful argument that may disturb some readers.

This book grew out of the authors’ jointly taught undergraduate course on the “Pacific Wars” at the University of North Carolina. It is well suited to college-level courses on American history and American foreign relations. Hunt and Levine append a very useful bibliographic essay.

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The Organization of American Historians and the Writing and Teaching of American History, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 373 pages. \$99.00, cloth. \$29.95, paper.

This book of forty-four short essays edited by Richard S. Kirkendall, a former executive secretary of the Organization of American Historians (OAH), emerged from the centennial celebration in 2007 of the founding of the organization, which until 1965 was called the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (MVHA). It is a celebratory volume and has the strengths and weaknesses of such works. It includes articles by many of the most-distinguished American historians of recent years, many of them past OAH presidents, such as William H. Chafee, Carl Degler, Eric Foner, Joan Hoff, Frederick E. Hoxie, Richard W.

Leopold, William E. Leuchtenberg, Leon F. Litwack, Gary B. Nash, James T. Patterson, Lewis C. Perry, Anne Firor Scott, and Richard White.

The book is organized into six parts: the history of the MVHA/OAH, the development of the fields of American history during the past century, the organization's journal, its relationships with teaching and with public history, and reminiscences of past presidents. As the authors look back over the history of the MVHA/OAH, most of them see as the major theme what Kirkendall calls a "century-long movement toward democracy" (p. 10). From mainly studying America's higher-class heterosexual white males, the MVHA/OAH branched out to embrace the history of the lower classes, women, and racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities; also, these groups became included in the organization's membership. The book's longest part on the development of historical fields similarly chronicles an expansion from a focus on political, economic, diplomatic, and military history to a gradual inclusion of new fields such as social, African American, women's, Native American, environmental, and sexual history. Unfortunately, the essays in this "state of the profession" section are often merely superficial catalogues of books and articles that offer condescending portrayals of the scholarship before the 1960s and self-congratulatory pats on the back to the products of the newly emerging fields.

The section on "The MVHA-OAH and the Teaching of History" (pp. 263-297) may be of most interest to the readers of *The History Teacher*. In one chapter, Ron Briley describes the MVHA's involvement with teaching. He goes back to the recommendation in 1893 by "the prestigious Committee of Ten" that American history be taught in grades 7 and 11 (pp. 267-268), a practice that was still followed when this reviewer attended school in the 1960s. Present-day history teachers may be surprised to learn that the same long-ago committee also advocated "critical thinking and the use of primary documents" (p. 268). Although American history has always had a place in school curricula, in the 1930s, the MVHA debated whether it should be superseded by the more "practical" "social studies." One member maintained that history courses "must have social significance to the learner"; another objected to education based on "ill-defined theories of functionalism" and championed students attaining a "fuller long-range view gained from a history course presented in orderly fashion" (p. 270). In another essay, Gary Nash briefly recounts the role of the OAH in developing the controversial National History Standards (1992-1994), an endeavor that he headed. These standards are widely used in school systems around the country today. Timothy N. Thurber writes about the OAH's recent commitment to teaching, shown most obviously by the twenty percent of members who are K-12 teachers. He describes the *OAH Magazine of History* (started 1985), which was at first for high school teachers and now promotes history teaching at all levels, and the federal Teaching American History grants, which since 2001 and until recently have been available to teachers. The OAH's *Journal of American History* helps teachers by reviewing not only scholarly books, but films, exhibits, websites, and textbooks. Thurber's article describes further OAH resources and aids for teachers.

A few of the other articles in the book provide information that would be of interest to teachers. Donald A. Ritchie's article on historians in the federal government provides information on federal government resources that would be very useful to history teachers. Leon Litwack takes a broad view of the United States' educational system in which he lauds the inclusion of under-represented groups in the history curriculum over the past forty years, but laments the emergence of a two-tier system that divides rich and poor, whites and minorities, and public and private schools. Overall, the book provides a number of scattered nuggets of information that teachers might find valuable.

“Why Won’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?”: Teaching Historical Thinking in Grades 7-12, by Bruce Lesh. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2011. 230 pages. \$22.00, paper.

Over the past two decades, secondary social studies teachers, college history professors, and others have actively researched and discussed the benefits of inquiry-based history learning. There is an emerging awareness that this type of learning can be a challenge for teachers and students alike because it requires that they move away from the familiar history lecture and coverage of historical materials toward student analysis and interpretation of historical sources. With the publication of *“Why Won’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?”*, Bruce Lesh makes an important contribution to that conversation by providing practical examples and advice, from his own classroom, about how to teach high school students to think historically by doing history. The book begins with examples of how he teaches students to ask questions, evaluate and apply evidence, and develop interpretations. These examples are followed by several thought-provoking chapters that explain how he uses a variety of types of historical sources to teach thinking skills recommended in the National History Standards, including “historical chronology and causality,” “multiple perspectives,” “continuity and change over time,” “historical significance,” and “historical empathy.”

The book is more than anecdotal examples from his classroom, it is also a review of best practices in investigative learning pertaining to history. For example, Lesh argues there is a need for a “common language” for classroom analysis of history sources (p. 55). In his classroom, words like “context,” “text,” and “subtext,” among others, have specific meanings when they are applied to the analysis of historical sources. Using the sciences as an analogy, he explains that students’ understanding and consistent use of this vocabulary is as important to history learning as the periodic table is to learning in chemistry. In fact, the teaching strategies he describes comprise a kind of laboratory experience in history where students practice historical thinking. In this kind of learning environment, the author argues, it is important that the assessment of student learning reflects the objectives of the class and measures historical thinking skills alongside content knowledge. In other words, the author does not suggest that teachers abandon traditional methods of teaching history—rather, the methods complement one another.

Lesh understands that strengthening secondary history education along the lines he proposes is not easy when state standards emphasize content knowledge rather than thinking skills. Yet, he contends that the benefits in student engagement, content retention, and critical thinking skills are well worth the time and effort. Intuitively, it would seem reasonable that students who practice historical thinking skills would be actively engaged in their own learning about history. As a result, they would be more likely to retain content information and exhibit a positive attitude toward history. But do we really know if these assumptions are accurate until we have studies that compare history learning in traditional lecture and laboratory-style classrooms? Other disciplines have demonstrated that this shift in pedagogy is at least as effective as lecture in learning content. If secondary (and college) history teaching is ever going to change, what we need next is more scholarship in the teaching and learning of history. Lesh cites tantalizing examples of this kind of research, and he is involved in a Teaching American History grant that, among other things, will measure content learning in an inquiry-based classroom. I hope he will continue to collect and share his findings. It is beyond the scope of this book to include more than he does about scholarship in history learning. What the book intends to do, and what it does well, is provide a “road map” for those who wish to teach historical thinking skills in the secondary classroom (p. 5). Lesh has written a valuable book for history teachers at the secondary level.

Heaven Cracks, Earth Shakes: The Tangshan Earthquake and the Death of Mao's China, by James Palmer. New York: Basic Books, 2012. 288 pages. \$26.99, cloth.

In this engagingly written book, Beijing-based journalist James Palmer provides an account of the most fatal quake to have struck the People's Republic of China. The "Great China Earthquake," measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale, destroyed the city of Tangshan at 3:42 A.M. on July 28, 1976. While the sheer force of nature was slightly less than the Wenchuan earthquake of May 12, 2008, the death toll was dramatically higher. The 2008 quake struck in fairly remote regions of Sichuan province, still killing over 69,000 people—among them thousands of children, who died in cheaply built schoolhouses. The epicenter of the 1976 earthquake was located immediately below the industrial city of Tangshan, which had a population of over one million at the time. At least a quarter of the city populace was killed, and the author subscribes to estimates of about 650,000 deaths across the North China Plain. However, it is not numbers that interest Palmer the most. It is rather individual life stories of endurance, bravery, and resilience in a political climate characterized by top-level purges and strife. It is also the chronicling of "chickenshit" (p. 61) of daily petty harassment and political blackmailing that characterized daily life in these years. There is way too little research on the experiences of common people, who did not have the opportunity to emigrate and retell their story. Palmer allows several of these voices to be heard, and this is probably the book's greatest merit.

Set against the context of the internecine party struggles surrounding the death of Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong, Palmer offers a vivid introduction to the late Maoist period based on recent scholarship and interviews with survivors. The local story of Tangshan is always interwoven with developments at the national level. The political circumstances after the death of Premier Zhou Enlai in January 1976 and the second purge of Deng Xiaoping in the spring of 1976, following unauthorized expressions of mourning for the deceased Zhou at Tian'anmen Square, form the background against which to understand the slow and bad coordination of state aid, even the decision to decline foreign help in order not to appear weak in the eyes of the foreign "class enemies." Thus, especially in the countryside, little or no state relief arrived at all. In the city of Tangshan, houses were gradually being rebuilt only after 1979, and even in 1983, two-thirds of the survivors still lacked permanent homes. That "Tangshan saved itself" (p. 144) is one of the main impressions the reader gets away with, after reading about people's militias shooting at survivors trying to obtain food from nearby state granaries. The lack of attention paid to the victims in contemporary news media is still breathtaking. Numbers of victims were only released three years after the quake.

While the book does not cover the earthquake itself in similar gripping detail as the classic work of Chinese journalist Qian Gang, it does a great job in acquainting a general Western audience with little or no prior knowledge with the gruesome facts of this tragedy within the context of one of the most important transition periods in modern Chinese history. The elegant style and the general accuracy of the narrative make it a highly useful book for introductory classes to modern Chinese history at university-level or possibly even high school history classes, if U.S. teaching curricula allow sufficient time for this historical period. Chapters four and five, especially, might be employed to teach the workings of the Maoist system through the lens of quake relief, highlighting changes and continuities with the present leadership by comparing it to the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake.

However, this is not a work of historical scholarship in the first place, but a piece of well-written reportage literature, based on historical sources, among others. The judgments are mostly balanced, yet occasionally, Palmer's narrative verges on caricature—for example, when characterizing two major radicals, Yao Wenyuan and Zhang Chunqiao, as

“power-hungry pseudo-intellectuals with little round glasses and blank sociopathic stares” (p. 34). There are a few factual errors, such as terming Chinese poet Qu Yuan “Quan Yu” (p. 18), and one might have wished a further discussion regarding the impact of Cultural Revolutionary “people’s science” within earthquake studies. As a close reading of one of the few academic journals to be published throughout the Cultural Revolution—the internal publication “Earthquake Frontline” (*dizhen zhanxian*)—reveals, beneath the layers of Maoist propaganda, there are a few rather sophisticated analyses of past quakes and useful debates about the effectiveness of several observation methods. These, however, are only minor criticisms of an otherwise highly commendable introduction to one of the most horrible events of the late Maoist era.

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Teaching World History in the Twenty-first Century: A Resource Book, edited by Heidi Roupp. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2010. 193 pages. \$29.95, paper.

Heidi Roupp has tapped the energy, wisdom, and skill-sets of a broad range of teacher/historians to compile resources on the teaching of world history. Especially useful to pre-service teachers and those new to the subject, the volume provides excellent advice on methodologies, best instructional practices, and curricular and conceptual mapping for the world history classroom. While many of the pieces focus on Advanced Placement World History, the book offers valuable information on the nuts and bolts of developing an effective classroom for all secondary levels of world history.

Teaching World History in the Twenty-first Century is exactly what it purports to be: a resource guide for teachers. Though not designed for use by students, teachers can peruse its many articles to build confidence, time lesson units appropriately, and reinforce skills as they teach world history, whether for the first or fifteenth time. Seven sections are dedicated to helping novice history teachers find their way, and to provide experienced teachers with important concepts and practices in the field of world history. Topics range from treatment of philosophies associated with teaching the course to essays that assess the periodization and historiography of world history, the utilization of technology and resources, and means for mapping and organizing the massive world history curriculum into a year-long course.

In the introduction, editor Heidi Roupp emphasizes the importance of systematic preparation of a conceptual framework for the course. She explains her reliance on expert teachers and their experiences in shaping and developing a new course and curriculum in world history. The university historians and secondary teachers who have contributed to the volume are experts in their fields and practice. Their articles provide practical advice for managing content and encouraging students to develop historical thinking skills within the world history course—emphasizing that *doing* history serves students better than the mere memorization of facts and narratives, the knowledge of which is lost over the long run. Examples include historian Peter Stearns’ essay that addresses the origins of the discipline of world history and the importance of studying history on a global level; Christóbal Saldaña’s analysis of the role of historiography in the high school classroom; and Michael Brown and Suzanne Litrel’s article that assesses the possibilities of having either an abundance of technology for teaching (as in Brown’s realm) or very little (as in Litrel’s experience), and how to engage and impact students at all ends of the

technology spectrum. Jack Betterly's piece on developing and implementing classroom discussion can help teachers improve their roles as facilitators of student interaction, and Sigrid Reynolds explores weaving student and teacher experiences into the world history course to better motivate secondary students. Other contributions offer ideas on exploring gender roles, teaching world religions, using graphic organizers for critical thinking, and examining art in world history. Even the most-seasoned world history teacher can appreciate and implement the ideas and practices found in the breadth and diversity of the book's selections.

While teachers of all experience levels will find the articles about methodology and historiography illuminating, the most valuable aspects of this book to pre-service and novice teachers is the fourth section devoted to planning. Mike Burns' "The First-Year World History Teacher's Survive-and-Thrive Guide" offers a clear and methodical step-by-step game plan to design and develop a new world history course. Monty Armstrong provides a useful "Nuts and Bolts" article to teaching world history, while Angela Wainright and Chris Peak address problems—and solutions!—most commonly found in developing assignments and assessments in the AP World History course. The book ends with an impressive annotated bibliography compiled by world history scholar Jerry Bentley and several other respected world historians in the field that covers a useful and practical range of titles that encompass the historiography, periodization, conceptualization, and teaching aids for instructors of world history.

Teaching World History in the Twenty-first Century presents the thoughts and work of some of the best minds in the teaching of the subject. Though too many to name individually in this review, the contributors represented demonstrate a wealth of vision and practical implementation that can aid aspiring novice teachers and veterans alike. Teachers of all experience levels can access this book for inspiration on basic strategies or reflection about historiography or methodology, but it is especially helpful to new teachers feeling overwhelmed by the scope and complexity of the subject. This book is a valuable resource for any personal classroom collection or campus curriculum library.

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Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms, by Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano. New York: Teachers College Press, 2011. 192 pages. \$27.95, paper.

In 2001, I stumbled across Sam Wineburg's *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*. Even the title told me this was the book I needed. For thousands of history teachers like me who have read Wineburg's 2001 book and want to apply his insights to pedagogy, the new *Reading Like a Historian* will be a welcome resource. It provides rich, detailed, carefully crafted lessons that enable students to do the unnatural work of thinking historically.

In a brief introduction, authors Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano make a persuasive case for the importance of reading primary sources to develop historical thinking skills. This section introduces historical thinking skills and provides an overview of the book's structure. It also explains how lesson authors have edited sources to be more accessible to students. This includes three tiers of increasing alteration: excerpting, modifying (shortening the excerpt through ellipses and providing definitions for difficult vocabulary), and, in some cases, adapting the wording of the text (modernizing spelling,

simplifying syntax, and changing some vocabulary). While some historians and history educators criticize the third practice, Wineburg and Martin ably defend it and conclude that the failure to adapt sources means that some students will simply never have the opportunity to read them, and therefore, “they not only miss out on the stirring (or disturbing) words that make up our past, but they are also shut out from learning to ask questions and think critically about prose. In short, they are barred from developing those skills of interpretation and inference that define a proficient reader.” The header of each primary source in *Reading Like a Historian* indicates whether it has been “modified” or “adapted.”

The main text consists of eight chapters. Each chapter provides a lesson plan that addresses a different topic in American history through some case study. Cumulatively, the lessons cover the span of American history from the colonial period through the Cold War: Pocahontas and John Smith, the Battle of Lexington, Lincoln and race, immigration, consumerism and electrical appliances in the early twentieth century, the Dust Bowl, Rosa Parks, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The chapters all follow a similar, though not uniform, structure. First, an introduction describes the historiographical debate that frames the lesson by providing the investigative question. This section also provides a summary of the content and significance of the documents in the lesson. Next, a short section argues for the significance of teaching the topic, in part in terms of the specific historical thinking skills the lesson addresses. Then, the authors provide several options for instruction based on the time available to teachers. The last section consists of the documents themselves and the tools designed to help students understand them.

A case study of the book offers the best way of illustrating what it has to offer teachers and students. Chapter 3: Lincoln in Context poses the question, “Was Lincoln a racist?” The lesson begins by explaining the 1960s background of the debate about the putative racism of the president. It then quickly analyzes what is at stake in the question itself, including the challenge of knowing another person’s beliefs and the problem of using the more contemporary term “racism,” which did not exist during Lincoln’s lifetime. The following section provides detailed and lengthy commentary on the context and content of each of the five documents—three from Lincoln, one from Stephen Douglas, and one from white racist John Bell Robinson. This section is invaluable in providing specific, detailed historical information and commentary to enable teachers to confidently teach with these sources. The remainder of the chapter provides reproducible pages with the primary source excerpts, as well as student handouts to guide inquiry. In this lesson, the handouts help students explore the question of Lincoln’s racism in the form of a “structured academic controversy.” After opposing groups debate each side using substantiating evidence, they come together to build consensus—again using supporting evidence. This step allows students to abandon an entrenched position where “winning” replaces a quest for accurate understanding. As a class, they construct a nuanced answer to the question. The final task is a writing prompt that directs students to use evidence to answer the question about Lincoln. In completing this lesson, students read carefully, make an argument—both verbally and in writing—based on evidence, and learn about the importance of historical context.

In *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, Wineburg observed an epistemological gap between the ways historians and students read texts. *Reading Like a Historian* provides an important tool for bridging that gap. Secondary history teachers who want to train their students to think historically—or just to read carefully—will find it an indispensable resource. Their only complaint will be that there are not more lessons within the volume. However, those who want more can make use of the Stanford History Education Group’s related website, also entitled “Reading Like a Historian,” which includes a total of seventy-five lessons.