

DEVELOPING A CRAFT APPROACH IN HISTORY TEACHING: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY'S NATIONAL TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

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“There is no question that the cost of production is lowered by separating the work of planning and the brain work as much as possible from the manual labor.”¹

Frederick Winslow Taylor, *Shop Management* (1911)

“Skills that teachers used to need, that are deemed essential to the craft of working with children—such as curriculum deliberation and planning, designing teaching and curricular strategies for specific groups are no longer as necessary. With the large-scale influx of prepackaged material, planning is separated from execution. The planning is done at the level of production of both the rules for use of the material and the material itself. The execution is carried out by the teacher.”²

Michael W. Apple, *Culture and Economic Reproduction in Education* (1982)

The Nature of the Problem

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's “History Teachers of the Year” (HTOYs) program supports and rewards teachers who actively pursue their careers as a craft. HTOY recipients share an approach to the teaching of history that provides insightful solutions to some of the most pressing problems facing history education. Examining how these teachers implement their craft draws attention to various conceptions of the role of the teacher, provides suggestions related to teacher preparation and development and offers insights into the vexing problem of evaluating what good history teaching looks like. The HTOY program highlights teachers who hone discipline-specific skills and approach their work as teacher scholars. Nurturing

¹Frederick Winslow Taylor, *Shop Management* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911), 121.

²Michael W. Apple, “Curricular Form and the Logic of Technical Control: Building a Possessive Individual,” in Apple, ed., *Culture and Economic Reproduction in Education: Essays on Class, Ideology, and the State* (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul Books, 1982), 255.

the craft of history teaching is vital to the future practice of teaching and learning for students. My purpose in this essay is to draw attention to curricular constraints imposed on teachers, to examine the work of teachers who have resisted these constraints successfully, and to place their work in the larger context of the purposes of education.

With school districts around the country scrambling to increase test scores to escape the punitive measures mandated by No Child Left Behind, a kind of “educational Taylorism” has replaced the craft of teaching, to the detriment of our students and society. At the turn of the twentieth-century, Frederick W. Taylor developed techniques that reduced skilled applications in manufacturing to their simplest form, creating efficiency models (deskilling), which allowed workers to perform one simple task repetitively more quickly throughout the day. This lowered costs, raised profits, and led to the pursuit of the “‘one best way,’ to do a job.”³ The current trend to test, test, and test some more runs contrary to the findings of Jonathan Rees, S.G. Grant, and others who have documented not only the negative impact of testing on pedagogical practices of teachers in the classroom, but also, in the case of Grant, the absence of any evidence that reform, based on testing, has ever been successful. Rees rightly asserted that “Scientific management in the classroom does not respect the idea that teachers know what to teach their students or how best to teach.”⁴

To be fair, this emphasis on process over craft in the realm of education has been evolving for decades, since the advent of “Best Practices” studies that sought to identify skills and techniques that teachers could use to elevate learning across content areas and the concurrent push for charter schools.⁵ Examples of Best Practices include cooperative learning, the use of varied instructional techniques, multiple intelligences, and so on.⁶ When used by teachers pursuing their disciplinary craft, these methods can be fruitful. However, the trend has been to divorce the craft of teaching from the classroom in favor of curricular process.

This is evinced by the increasing number of canned curriculums or classes on a computer that reduce teaching to a process, effectively removing the teacher from the

³Jonathan Rees, “Frederick Taylor in the Classroom: Standardized Testing and Scientific Management,” *Radical Pedagogy*, 3:2 (Fall 2001), located at <http://radicalpedagogy.icap.org/content/issue3.2>.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Andrew J. Wayne and Peter Youngs, “Teacher Characteristics and Student Achievement Gains: A Review,” *Review of Educational Research*, 73:1 (Spring 2003), 89-122.

⁶William A. Owings and Leslie S. Kaplan, eds., *Best Practices, Best Thinking, and Emerging Issues in School Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003), 72.

equation.⁷ Instead, teachers become the delivery mechanisms, with success measured in a series of nauseating quizzes, tests, and district assessments, both formal and informal, throughout the week. The term often used for these types of curriculum packages is “teacher-proofed.” They are effectively a management system put in place to remove teachers from the equation (as much as possible) to raise test scores.⁸ In states like Michigan, there is a push toward online courses that mimic the old Skinnerian model, which moves students from one unit to the next, or the use of a “Blended Curriculum,” as in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, which follows a three-day rotation. On day one the teacher reads a script to students, on day two students complete a five-panel PowerPoint, answering a question related to the script topic, and on day three students answer a new question or complete the question from the day before. Students then return to day one, the teacher is handed a script, and the process begins again. This is what passes for “world class” instruction in one of the largest school districts in Michigan.⁹

The very reason we hire outstanding teachers to work in our schools is to “empower” their creative cultivation of the art of teaching history, not to force them to march mundanely through a bland process that strangles relevant historical thinking. Unfortunately, curricular and pedagogical decisions are being taken out of the hands of teachers, impeding the effective use of constant pedagogy in the classroom.¹⁰ Teachers have effectively been separated from “the work of planning and the brainwork” in many districts. Yet, the Gilder Lehrman National History Teachers of the Year demonstrate that professionals allowed to practice the craft of teaching history enrich our students’ lives through continued education, a deep passion for history and history education, and successful creation of imaginative and historically authentic lessons.

⁷*Bring Learning Alive: The TCI Approach for Middle and High School Social Studies* (Palo Alto: Californian Teachers’ Curriculum Institute, 2004). For increased computer usage see the International Association for Online Learning where the organization points out that there are 40 states with some type of online opportunity and 30 states with fulltime online schools that were used to instruct some 1,816,400 students in 2009-2010. *International Association for Online Learning*, “Key K-12 Online Learning Stats,” <http://www.inacol.org>. Last modified 02/01/2012. Accessed July 11, 2012.

⁸Linda Darling-Hammond, “Teacher Learning that Supports Student Learning,” in Barbara Z. Presseisen, ed., *Teaching for Intelligence*, second edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003), 91-93.

⁹Gordon Andrews, Field Notes: Union High School, Grand Rapids Public Schools (unpublished), 17 February 2011.

¹⁰Avner Segall, “What is the Connection between Curriculum and Instruction,” in *Social Studies Today: Research & Practice*, Walter C. Parker, ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 227.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History's History Teachers of the Year nurture their careers as a craft. What does it mean to cultivate the craft? It means many things, including reading widely, seeking out others in the field, creating organizational affiliations, experimenting, risking failure, and certainly pursuing excellence in the best tradition of the scholar-teacher. To that end, it also assumes the continuous pursuit of knowledge, both formally and informally, in the discipline of history. The Gilder Lehrman Institute was established in 1994 to promote "the study and love of American History" and today accomplishes its mission with an impressive array of interactions among historians, teachers, and the public. By sponsoring national book awards, summer institutes for teachers, professional development, as well as granting access to primary documents from its private holdings, fellowships, and lectures by distinguished historians in the field of American history, the institute has established itself as the preeminent U.S. history organization in the country. Importantly for teachers, it has established a truly national history teacher of the year award that reaches into every state and U.S. territory.¹¹

Recognized teachers are alternately selected from the ranks of elementary and secondary educators on an annual basis, after nomination by colleagues, students, administrators, or the parents of students. These teachers provide curriculum vitae, their philosophy of teaching, letters of recommendation from those who have witnessed their teaching, evidence of student success, and a sample lesson accompanied by a video explanation. They are verified as to eligibility, and then their work is sent to the state coordinators who vet the nominees and select a representative from their particular state or territory. It is a rewarding responsibility to take part in this process, as every year teachers who embody the very best in their field are nominated for the prestigious award. What makes the Gilder Lehrman History Teachers of the Year so powerfully effective is their professional and passionate pursuit of the craft, and it is to their careers that we now turn.

The National Winners

There have been any number of studies that examine successful teacher traits, or, more recently, models of wisdom studies that scrutinize what teachers do in the classroom.¹² Most teachers are never assessed by experts in their field. Instead, most

¹¹Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's Mission Statement, <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/institute/>.

¹²Teacher traits have been examined over the years notably with the works of Martin Haberman's, *Star Teachers of Children in Poverty* (1995), Sam Wineburg's *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (2001), and for a more recent discussion examine *The Social Studies Today: Research and Practice*, Walter C. Parker, ed. (2010), which provides insights into (continued...)

will be visited by a principal whose chief concern, according to recent data, is not with the teacher's content knowledge, but rather classroom management and techniques to help struggling students.¹³ In either case, principals are the curricular leaders who evaluate the professional effectiveness of teachers. More recently many states, like New York, are nudging the bar lower with the establishment of "leadership academies," where professionals with degrees (many of whom have never taught) will be turned into principals in a short time and allowed to lead schools.¹⁴ The antithesis to that trend, the Gilder Lehrman Institute provides a model for assessment that is evidenced in the National History Teachers of the Year.¹⁵ (See my description of the selection process above.)

So, how do these teachers pursue the teaching of history as a craft rather than a process? While some state licensing agencies have sought to deskill the profession by reducing and decimating license renewal requirements, the Gilder Lehrman winners typify the craft approach as they not only meet the minimum requirements of their craft (education, internship, licensing, and tenure) but also move toward becoming masters within the field of history teaching.¹⁶ Each of the winners understand that continuing formal education necessarily includes attaining an advanced degree in a content area.

Like many nominees, Rosanne Lichatin, the 2005 teacher of the year, has pursued an advanced degree in her content area at great personal expense and sacrifice, so as to teach her students better. She has earned a B.A. in history from Kean University, a master's in history from East Stroudsburg in Pennsylvania, and beyond that another 45 credits in graduate-level history courses. When asked why, she thoughtfully responded

¹²(...continued)

the current framing of what teachers need to know as well as successful traits.

¹³Jean Johnson, "The Principal's Priority 1," *Educational Leadership*, 66 (September 2008), 72-76.

¹⁴Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 72.

¹⁵For a closer examination of the selection criteria see <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/programs-exhibitions/eligibility> for eligibility standards, the selection process, and teacher requirements.

¹⁶Michigan Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation Services: Facts on Educator Certification, 2013, 7. http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Facts_About_Teacher_Certification_In_Michigan_230612_7.pdf. In Michigan, for example, the standards for license renewal have been reduced. Prior to 2013, teachers needed to complete eighteen hours in a formal degree program during their first five years of teaching in order to renew their licenses and then six hours every five years after that. Presently, however, they need only complete six hours in a degree program during their first three years and another six hours in the subsequent three years to renew their license a second time. None of the hours need be in their content area and the requirements can be alternately met through state offered credits. Efforts on the part of state licensing agencies, like Michigan, to deskill the profession only serve to erode the craft.

that the more you learn “the more you are aware of what you don’t know.” It is that self awareness and passion for the discipline that drives her to continue her own learning and that passion is certainly transferred to her students.¹⁷ David Mitchell, the 2008 winner from Massachusetts, possesses two master’s degrees in the content area, and 2010 winner Nathan (Nate) McAlister, who teaches in Kansas, obtained a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT). He felt compelled to pursue his MAT after he started teaching to cultivate a greater understanding of history in a purposeful effort to compensate for what he thought was weak preparation (“three or four classes in history”) and to be the best teacher possible to his students.¹⁸

In stark contrast, Arne Duncan, while Secretary of Education, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute on November 17, 2010, encouraged his audience to use fiscally difficult times “as an opportunity to make dramatic improvements.” One of the “opportunities” he outlined is an end to increased salaries for teachers who obtain a master’s degree. Duncan argued that “there is little evidence teachers with masters degrees improve student achievement more than other teachers—with the possible exception of teachers who earn masters in math and science.” Over the past twenty years a consistent body of evidence has confirmed findings that well prepared teachers outperform less well prepared teachers in content areas, grudgingly alluded to by Duncan.¹⁹ Some, like Duncan, argue that economic constraints should be used to deskill the profession of teaching by discounting master’s degrees, but the evidence belies these assertions as nothing but a strawman erected to diminish the craft. As Linda Darling-Hammond has succinctly stated, teachers need to know “subject matter deeply and flexibly.”²⁰ So, contrary to the beliefs of many “reformers,” what history teachers need is continued support to pursue the discipline of history and the necessary pedagogical content knowledge, in collaboration with other scholars and teachers.

What drives the Gilder Lehrman’s national winners to continue striving within the craft? Rosanne Lichatin, now an Education Coordinator for two of the Gilder Lehrman summer seminars, as well as a classroom teacher in her 36th year of teaching,

¹⁷Rosanne Lichatin, Interview with Gordon Andrews, written responses in his possession, September 7, 2011.

¹⁸Nathan McAlister, Interview with Gordon Andrews, August 23, 2010, digital tape in Andrews’ possession.

¹⁹Darling-Hammond, 93, and for an excellent paper framing the issues of teacher knowledge, preparation, and its impact see, *Touch the Future, Transforming the Way Teachers Are Taught: An Action Agenda for College and University Presidents* (Washington, DC: American Council for Education, 1999); and John Dewey, *The School and Society* (New York: McClure Phillips & Company, 1900).

²⁰Darling-Hammond, 92.

pointed to an inspiring meeting with other winners, brought together by Dr. James Basker, President of the Gilder Lehrman Institute. During the meeting, winners discussed significant aspects of their teaching, and what the award meant to them personally and professionally. One observation that Lichatin shared was the profound respect they had for their profession, commenting that “each cares deeply about their teaching and each cares deeply about their kids.” That deep respect and concern is evidenced in the way these teachers approach not only their own professional education within the discipline of history, but also the way they approach their lessons.

The teachers selected by the Gilder Lehrman, to a person, present their students with personally crafted lessons that purposefully involve students in the disciplinary aspects of history, commonly referred to as historical thinking. Nate McAlister stated that he wanted his students to be able to think critically about the issues that have confronted the American people throughout our history. In her acceptance speech, Maureen Festi, the 2005 elementary winner, expressed her philosophy to the audience eloquently, relating

I have discovered that fifth grade journeys into the past need to be more than the memorization of facts from textbooks. Students need to touch and be touched by history. They touch history when they take on the roles of historians and interact with primary historical information. As they experience it, think about it, question it, challenge it, and make meaningful connections to their everyday lives, they begin to develop an American identity. They need to grab onto history, grapple with it, and make it their own.²¹

So, what does that look like in the classroom? How do master teachers craft lessons that challenge their students to think historically?

Implementing Strategies in the Classroom

By way of example, HTOYs offer a craft approach that stands in stark opposition to canned curriculums. They consistently develop engaging lessons and learning opportunities that require students to think deeply about history and demonstrate what they have learned in a way that is disciplinarily relevant.²² To enable students to

²¹Maureen Festi, Acceptance Speech at the 2007 Gilder Lehrman History Teacher of the Year Award, New York City. http://www.gilderlehrman.org/pressroom/news.php?headline_id=1230.

²²Examine the following lesson plans by Maureen Festi (5th grade), <http://www.eastconn.org/tah/CrossingTheDelaware.pdf>, Nathan McAlister (middle school), <http://centuryofprogress.org/sites/centuryofprogress.org/files/Civil%20War%20Medicine%20Lesson%20Plan%20Summer%202012.pdf>,

(continued...)

understand the complexities of history, master teachers spend many hours planning. They understand that historically literate citizens are better able to understand their own lives within the grand scheme of human and societal development. To that end, they take great pride and suffer a considerable amount of angst over how best to make the sometimes intricate and nuanced complexities of American history intellectually palatable, yet challenging for each class. Interestingly, because of their disciplinary expertise, these teachers are able to perform distinct tasks with students utilizing sources that many teachers fail to consider or understand.

In his research on the connection between curriculum and instruction, Avner Segall has drawn a subtle but important distinction when it comes to considering the pedagogical quality of texts. Segall suggests that when it comes to content knowledge, we have “not addressed the need for teachers to examine the inherently instructional aspects of content and what that examination might entail for their practice as classroom teachers.”²³ Versed in the disciplinary distinctions of sources, however, HTOYs are able to glean from texts their silences vis-à-vis issues of race, gender, and ethnicity, evaluating those sources as to their instructional quality as Segall has suggested. Because of their commitment to professional development that is discipline-oriented, they have become attuned to textual and intertextual continuities and discontinuities that allow them to routinely make use of the pedagogical opportunities presented by sources. And, as a result, they are able to consistently create an engaged learning environment.

Responding to a question on how she approaches the preparation of a lesson, Rosanne Lichatin was clear, direct, and insightful:

Each individual history lesson is part of a larger unit of study. At the beginning of a unit I identify an essential question that will guide each of my lessons, and typically, that question becomes the essay question students will respond to the end of the unit. An essential question is generally a broad one that is open ended. Each individual lesson builds on the foundation of the essential question. For each unit, I identify the *core documents* that my students should be exposed to, and I search for those that give particular insight into the lives of ordinary Americans as well. These documents become the basis of our class discussion.

²²(...continued)

and Rosanne Lichatin (high school), <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/reconstruction/resources/lincoln%E2%80%99s-reconstruction-plan>.

²³Segall, 227.

I ask students to read documents “closely.” That is, in addition to answering teacher-designed questions which typically ask for historical context, time, author, audience, purpose, validity, and tone, I ask that they focus their attention on the language and details of the document. Unfamiliar words should be defined, and the document should be underlined in key places and show lots of analysis in the margins. Of course, primary sources may also include paintings, posters, maps, broadsides, artifacts, etc. I employ a number of tools to analyze various forms of primary sources. The questions guide the lesson. The primary sources are the “meat” of the lesson. And, the discussion that is generated from the primary sources allows students the opportunity to master the art of analysis and argument.²⁴

These exemplary teachers consistently demonstrate imagination, as well as thorough historical and pedagogical knowledge of their subject. Nate McAlister fully utilized his graduate degree and his continued participation in Teaching American History grants, as well as the Gilder Lehrman’s Summer Institutes, in a unit on the Civil War. He had students reenact battles on the school grounds, nurturing a sense of historical empathy that no textbook could emulate. One of Maureen Festi’s lessons for her fifth-grade students involved hands-on investigation of a colonial ironworks, a far cry from typical upper-elementary experiences. While technology clearly has a role in her classroom, aiding her students’ research, it does not end there. The lesson required these ten and eleven-year-olds to use primary sources, compasses, maps, and local sites, to unearth the existence of the mill and analyze its impact, “leaving,” she said, “far more questions than answers.”²⁵ David Mitchell of Whitman-Hanson Regional High School in Massachusetts utilizes debates, fishbowls, and primary sources, including documents, photos, cartoons, and letters, to encourage students to think more deeply about history. He said this helps his students feel “the pulse of history.”²⁶ This is what master teachers bring to students on a daily basis, enriching their lives in both measurable and immeasurable ways, and cultivating a mature understanding of history that will inform their adult lives.

²⁴Lichatin, interview.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Meaghan Glassett, “A Master Teacher,” *The Express*, December 3, 2008. http://southshoreexpress.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2012%3Aa-master-teacher&Itemid=80.

What Can We Learn?

The current trend in educational Taylorism is anathema to good teaching, and is eschewed by the History Teachers of the Year. We learn from national award winners the importance of preparation and development, teacher assessment, and the possibilities that might be realized when a professional is permitted to labor in the craft. With regard to teacher preparation and professional development, content matters, contrary to the assertions of some “experts.” A good deal has been written about the Finnish success story of late: Pasi Sahlberg in *Finnish Lessons* points out that all of Finland’s teachers possess a master’s degree before entering the classroom.²⁷ The old axiom that “you can’t teach what you don’t know” is taken seriously by the world’s leading educational system. In turn, this lesson should aid American universities in understanding the vital importance of creating graduate degree options for teachers in the field. For example, most teachers do not plan on entering doctoral programs, and are discouraged from degree programs that have language, thesis, and oral defense requirements. In contrast, a Master of Arts in Teaching offers the same rigorous graduate content as the M.A., including classes on pedagogy, that are essential in effective K-12 teaching. HTOYs are clear examples of the varied needs of history teachers in the field, and universities must address those needs by offering degrees within their graduate history departments.

Regarding professional development, the American Historical Association has long advocated meaningful and substantive professional development for K-12 teachers and HTOYs clearly seek out content-specific professional development.²⁸ The nominees demonstrate their preference for relevant content through their experiences in Teaching American History grants, National Endowment for the Humanities programs, and participation in Gilder Lehrman’s Summer Institutes. Not only do professional development opportunities offer welcome and appreciated content knowledge but also substantial occasions for discussing pedagogy. The summer institutes, for example, culminate in lessons created by teachers in a collaborative fashion that they can take back to their districts and implement in their own classrooms. These experiences could, and need to be, replicated in school districts. The cost is nominal when one considers the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent by districts on canned curriculums. Instead districts could unlock the synergistic intellectual capital of their teachers and produce rich historically relevant educational experiences for students at a fraction of the cost.

²⁷Pasi Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons: What Can the World Learn From Educational Reform in Finland?* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010), 79-80.

²⁸Peter Stearns, ed., *Benchmarks for Professional Development in Teaching of History as a Discipline*, July 7, 2008, <http://www.historians.org/teaching/policy/benchmarks.htm>.

Professional development of the type advocated here influenced McAlister, who noted that his approach to teaching had changed quite a bit over time. As he progressed toward his master's degree, McAlister contemplated "how to get students involved, and that evolved into, how do I get the students to think like historians?"²⁹ This reflection moved him quickly away from a "chapter, worksheet" format (mimicking his student teaching experience), as he realized that was not the way he wanted to teach. Lichatin too recounted, "My approach has definitely changed over the years as a result of the Teaching American History grants and the seminars [Gilder Lehrman] I have attended. When I first started teaching I had a sense of the value of primary sources, but I did not know how to access them in ways that would work in the classroom."³⁰ History Teachers of the Year continually work to improve their teaching, seeking out content-rich professional development.

Assessing what master history teachers do in the classroom is also an area in which the Gilder Lehrman's HTOY process can help inform the broader K-12 community. There is a collaborative effort (almost never emulated in the K-12 world) among an historian, the previous year's winner, and a representative from the National Council for History Education. Teachers participating in the process spoke of the tremendous respect they gained for the excellent teaching that occurs across the nation at all levels. They were also impressed with the way reviewers were able to hone in on common understandings of which prospective teachers emerged as finalists. After reviewing candidates individually, they confer as a group, routinely identifying the same teachers as finalists, then through extensive collaboration agreeing on the winner.³¹ Teachers are rarely, if ever, evaluated by anyone in their content area, and if an administrator does have the content, the odds that they taught long enough or well enough to be considered a master teacher are smaller yet. However, a collegial environment within which master teachers and historians discuss what good teaching looks like in order to improve pedagogy need not be a utopian dream. It would take a greater degree of trust than now exists in the country for teachers, broadly speaking, and the encouragement of universities toward their faculty to engage in service with public schools. Conversations surrounding pedagogy commonly take place in the GLI summer seminars, where teachers and historians are able to discuss conversationally the discipline and delivery of history content. This is a model worth pursuing.³²

²⁹McAlister interview.

³⁰Lichatin interview.

³¹McAlister interview.

³²*Ibid.*, and Hammond, "Teacher Learning That Supports Student Learning," 91-99.

We also learn from the National History Teachers of the Year on a profound level that to teach history as a craft is to labor in a particular fashion that needs to be encouraged. Laboring within the discipline is common among the winners, providing them with a wisdom that comes from a lifetime's examination of what it means to teach history. In turn, that wisdom allows them countless opportunities to impart their own love and appreciation of history to students. Equally important to the notion of a craft is the freedom to toil daily in an effort to create the best lessons possible for students. Great teachers create; they are not handed a script, and they do not use a canned curriculum. Instead, they endeavor to enhance the craft, and thus the lives of their students. They would no more read a script than an artist would use a paint-by-numbers kit.

In the late 1980s, amid a tumultuous debate over history in the schools, Paul Gagnon and the Bradley Commission argued for the place of history in American schools by publishing *Historical Literacy: The Case for History in American Education*. In it, various historians argued forcefully and artfully over pedagogy and content. But perhaps most importantly, they elegantly detailed the myriad ways the study of history expands our understanding of the world and our place in it. In one passage historian Gordon Craig pointed to eighteenth-century writer Friedrich Schiller: "History, in so far as it accustoms human beings to comprehend the whole of the past and to hasten forward with its conclusions into the far future, conceals the boundaries of birth and death, which enclose the life of the human being so narrowly and oppressively, and with a kind of optical illusion, expands his short existence into endless space, leading the individual imperceptibly over into humanity."³³

By providing lessons that require students to think historically, the Teachers of the Year bring students closer to a substantial understanding of history. It is difficult to imagine the condition movingly described by Schiller accomplished by teachers consigned to a facile process.

Note: This essay will appear as part of the forthcoming book *Collaboration and the Future of Education: Preserving the Right to Teach and Think Historically* (2015) published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

³³Gordon A. Craig, "History As A Humanistic Discipline," in Paul Gagnon, ed., and the Bradley Commission on History in The Schools," *Historical Literacy: The Case for History in American Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 137.