Overview

This unit is designed to be taught during a Graduation Project seminar at the School of the Future, a public comprehensive high school in West Philadelphia. The seminar will be offered to 4th year or 12th grade students. During the course of this year-long Graduation Project, students will plan and implement independent service-learning projects, which must be research-based. As Graduation Project coordinator and a classroom educator, I have designed the project to include different research strategies as students develop their personal projects.

In terms of essential understandings, this unit is focused on exposing and exploring bias in research. It is critical that students understand that bias can affect both the collection of data and the interpretation of findings. Over the course of a two-week unit we will study specific instances of interview and survey research. Specifically, we will read and interpret WPA interviews with Ex-Slaves and we will look at the so-called Bradley Effect in election polls. We will examine the potential flaws in the data that was collected in these cases, and discuss the challenges of drawing conclusions from flawed data.

With regard to skill development, this unit will focus on mastering specific interview and survey strategies. To this end students will be exposed to various research methodologies. Throughout the unit, students will develop interview and survey protocols, while learning to recognize the fallibility of these research tools. In turn, these questions of the reliability of human sources of information will raise deeper questions about ways of knowing.
It is my hope that this unit will work on multiple levels – skill-building and philosophical – to guide students to better understanding of their research topics and research itself.

Rationale

Our students are growing up in a world where information is presented by a reactive and sensationalist media. Even seemingly neutral academic material is dangerously oversimplified. Much of what passes for “fact” in the media, and even in the classroom, is unsubstantiated. Moreover, people of all ages are receiving information and drawing conclusions from it without adequate training in interpreting and understanding the material they encounter. We are developing a “media illiterate” population that gives undue credence to flawed first-hand accounts, skewed national polls, and opinion-as-fact pundits.

More immediately, I find that students are very quick to accept something they “heard” or “read” as the truth. My students feel that anecdotal evidence is somehow truer than solid facts or measured data. For example, my students (the majority of whom are African-American) once claimed that there were more African-Americans than women in the United States. This was part of their retroactive explanation for why Barack Obama won the Democratic Primary rather than Hillary Clinton. When I presented evidence to the contrary – actual numerical evidence – they listened patiently, but regarded my facts as merely another possible interpretation. It was my “word” against theirs.

The jarringly loose relationship to facts becomes even more problematic when my students embark on independent research in areas where they have no expertise. With no personal, anecdotal, or experiential “evidence” to rely on, they take to the internet (this is facilitated by the one-to-one laptop environment at my school). When confronted with the multitudes of information on the internet, I find that my students do little to investigate a source’s perspective. I fear that, even if they wanted to, my students lack the skills and training to be able to tease out, or reason through, potential biases in a text or statement.

This issue of accuracy takes on new urgency when the student becomes the interviewer or survey-writer. If students are unaware of the ways that surveys or interviews can be skewed, they are not going to be attuned to the biases inherent in their own research. This can create problems in the future when students attempt to draw conclusions, or plan a course of action based on their findings.

Therefore, it is important for this unit to address the problems with relying on anecdotal evidence. while also instructing students to identify and interpret bias
responsibly. The teaching of research skills is secondary to, and in service of, the broader goal of increasing survey-savvy and media literacy among my students.

It is my experience that no amount of my explanation of the fallacy of anecdotal evidence or unreliable sources will make an impression on my students. I could debunk myths with them every minute of every class and they would still cling to the things they believe to be “true.” It is for this reason that I have decided to use models of false conclusions drawn from flawed data to make this point for me. I hope that students will get the most out of thinking through this material with my guidance.

The WPA interviews were introduced to me by a pair of colleagues. The first sent an email to the faculty encouraging all Social Studies educators to teach the interviews in conjunction with a Black History Month presentation about slavery in America. This interview prompted a second educator to present an emailed counterpoint, critiquing the WPA interviews and encouraging us to view the materials to teach students about the dangers of flawed research methodology. I found this digital dialogue intriguing; the WPA interviews themselves were new to me and I respected the perspectives of both educators, so I did some digging.

One of the many programs launched under the Work Projects Administration was the Federal Writers’ Project, which included a project devoted entirely to conducting interviews. Included in the 1,200 plus studies conducted as part of the program, were the Slave Narratives – “2,300 first-person accounts of slavery and 500 black-and-white photographs of former slaves” which were collected between 1936-1938. The Narratives were then assembled in a 17-volume series in 1941 (Yetman). The interviews are historically significant on a number of levels; first the Works Progress Administration and the Federal Writers’ Project is a topic worthy of study that is rarely covered in an American History course. Furthermore the files from the interviews and the photos are rich primary source documents, primed for analysis. Moreover, the interviews and some of the things that have most often been quoted from them are a clear demonstration of some of the pitfalls of interview research methodology.

A series of introductory articles accompany the narratives in their current and most widely accessible context (the website of the Library of Congress’s Manuscript Division). Many of these articles detail the historical context of the photos and interviews. Other essays deal directly with some of the most frequently misrepresented findings from the project. One piece explains that the language in the printed narratives is at times a caricature of the dialect the interviewees actually spoke, informed by the preconceptions and judgments of the interviewer. The scholar introducing the project, Norman R. Yetman also points out that the race of the interviewers had a direct affect on the kind of accounts the ex-slaves related. Yetman mentions a study of all of the collected interviews which found that:
72 percent of the ex-slaves interviewed by whites rated the quality of their food as good, while only 46 percent of those interviewed by blacks did. Similarly, 26 percent of those responding to white interviewers expressed unfavorable attitudes toward their former masters compared to 39 percent of those who responded to black interviewers.

These kinds of discrepancies run throughout the accounts and point to a problematic lack of reliability in the data. These flawed findings were shamelessly exploited in the years that followed the publication of the Federal Writers’ Project when the Slave Narratives were construed to show that slavery “wasn’t so bad” or that sharecroppers had it “worse” than slaves.

The accounts collected in the Slave Narratives are fascinating as historical artifact, as much for their flaws as for their finer qualities. The subsequent writing about the Slave Narratives can also be studied as clear historical examples of both unwitting and willful manipulation of data. By studying the WPA interview, students will learn some American History from the documents, but more importantly they will also learn the how the interview paradigm can directly affect the findings generated by the interview.

The other example I will present to students as a model of the pitfalls of relying on collected data is the Bradley Effect. The Bradley Effect is how the media have chosen to describe their own failure to accurately report on or predict the outcomes of the 1982 gubernatorial election in California. In that race, Tom Bradley, the African-American mayor of Los Angeles was a projected winner based on early polling. On Election Day, however, voters chose the white candidate, Republican George Deukmejian. Upon further investigation, some concluded that the poll numbers falsely predicted a Bradley win because white voters were afraid to own up to their racism in front of pollsters. The theory suggests that when polled, white voters claimed they would vote for Bradley, but in the privacy of the voting booth they “gave in” to their bigotry and went with the white candidate. Although this explanation is not universally accepted (Deukmejian’s own pollster, for one, vehemently disputes it and blames the false projections of faulty polling), the Bradley effect was often referenced in the lead up to the 2008 Presidential Election. Even though its predicted effects did not play out, its very existence is worthy of examination, since it raises deep questions about polling and bias.

I have also considered using the Kinsey Survey and possibly a few (school-appropriate) scenes from the film *Kinsey* as an example of survey methodology. Due to the highly controversial nature of Kinsey’s sex research, I am not entirely sure whether it is worth pursuing. Still, sex has a high interest appeal to students, and with proper preparation and sufficient restraint, some aspects of Kinsey’s project may make for an engaging lesson. In my annotated bibliography, I include some resources for teachers brave enough to explore this option, but I will not develop them greatly in this unit plan.
Objectives

The objectives for this unit of study are not content-driven but relate instead to the development of students’ critical thinking skills. These goals will be achieved on two different levels – in students’ own research and in their analysis of the research of others. As students will develop the language and strategies to collect and analyze data, they will also develop their own ability to recognize and critique media use of data.

Throughout the unit students will reflect on, and evaluate, their own preconceptions about interviews, testimonies and surveys. They will analyze historical examples of biased interviews, surveys and polls. Their exploration of these examples will raise epistemological questions behind the reliability of human subjects. Students will apply their understanding of these historical examples as they interact with contemporary presentations of data and thereby demonstrate improved media literacy.

As for developing their own research strategies, students will design interview protocols and survey questions to avoid or compensate for subjects’ lack of reliability. Throughout the Graduation Project course, and this unit in particular, students will conduct their own research and collect and analyze their findings. Finally, students will make informed decisions based on their research.

Background

This unit is designed to be taught during a Graduation (or Senior) Project Seminar at the School of the Future. The School of the Future is a public, comprehensive high school in West Philadelphia. The school opened in September 2006 as a partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and the Microsoft Corporation. Our students come primarily from the school’s immediate neighborhood, but a quarter of them come from other parts of the city. All students are admitted to our school by lottery, so it is not a “magnet” that serves a selective student population.

There are a number of aspects of our school that are “futuristic” or innovative. First and foremost, we approach instruction and learning differently. We teach in teams and through project-based learning and use more student-centered teaching strategies. We also are a “1:1” laptop school, with a great deal of technology integrated into our instruction. Each student is issued a laptop with the full Microsoft Office suite, and our classrooms have wireless internet, LCD projectors, and interactive whiteboards.

The lessons in this unit are designed with an awareness that most educators do not have the same resources available to them. Wherever possible I indicate that while in my classroom I use the software program, OneNote, a traditional notebook or journal would suffice. Similarly, my students are all able to access the online materials for this lesson.
directly. However, other teachers may need to collect and print these materials or arrange for computer access to implement some aspects of these lessons.

The Class of 2010 will be the first to graduate from the School of the Future, so this is our first time tackling the state required Senior Project. This unit will be part of the program I am developing for our first graduating class. The pilot Graduation Project Seminar is likely to take place during our school’s “Project” time. At the School of the Future instruction is divided into core subject areas and projects. Projects are interdisciplinary and often taught in teams; they usually allow for more student-driven learning than core-content classes. Projects typically meet 2 or 3 days a week for 90-minute periods.

The work of the Graduation Seminar is two-fold. First, students are building essential “learning-to-learn” skills that they will need for life after high school. The course will be designed to encourage students to develop organizational and time-management strategies, as well as networking and interpersonal skills. Secondly, students must plan, execute, and reflect on their independent projects. The course must necessarily give them the skills and guidance to create meaningful projects.

This unit can be applied in numerous classroom contexts. As a Social Studies and English educator I can think of many instances that students need to interrogate statistics or interpret bias. The lessons included in this unit are designed to improve understanding of bias and heighten awareness of the fallibility of data. The research lessons included here could be incorporated in Humanities classes or even adapted to fit a research lesson in Science of Math. I would encourage educators to adapt these lessons to fit the specific needs of their courses and curriculum.

Standards

This unit addresses PA Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening in a number of ways. As we explore the historical examples and model surveys, interviews, etc. students will “analyze the structure of informational materials” (1.1.11. B.) and “identify, describe, evaluate and synthesize the essential ideas in text” (1.1.11.D.). Throughout our evaluative and creative work, students will “use and understand a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material produced” (1.2.11.B.) As they conduct their own research – and in particular their own interviews – students will “listen to others, ask clarifying questions, synthesize information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy” and they will certainly “take notes” (1.6.11.A). As we process their texts and their findings in class students will “participate in small and large group discussions and presentations” (1.6.11. E.).
Students will also be developing research skills and applying them to historical models in alignment with the PA State Standards for History, specifically Historical Analysis and Skills Development (8.1.12).

Furthermore as a component of the Graduation Project, this unit addresses the High school graduation requirements laid out in the PA State Code § 4.24. Specifically, students will develop the skills to complete a culminating project which demonstrates that “students are able to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding.”

**Strategies**

This unit will use historical and contemporary examples of interviews and surveys to illustrate the points about reliability and bias. Students will read and analyze primary source materials (like the WPA interviews or polls from the 2008 Presidential Election). It is likely that some of the conclusions I wish for students to draw from these texts will not be readily apparent to the students themselves. The “before, during and after” reading activities I design will intentionally guide students through the primary source texts. I will supplement these texts with articles that explore and explain the problems with the research methodology in the primary sources.

As a constructivist educator, I also believe that students must build understanding on their own. To this end, I will design lessons and activities that are interactive and performance-based. Students will conduct mock interviews and play roles to put their understanding of interview strategies to the test.

Additionally, the Graduation Project seminar requires a community-focused classroom structure. Students will do a lot of “thinking out loud” and planning with their peers. As students develop their projects they will need the support and constructive criticism that only their fellow students can provide. Some of my activities will be designed to build this classroom community and others may leverage these classroom bonds into productive reflections and discussions.

Another on-going component of the Graduation (Senior) Project course is the Reflection Journal. In my class, students will keep this journal in a program called Microsoft OneNote. We will use OneNote because it is available to my students and offers them unique abilities to collect and organize their thoughts. OneNote operates like a physical binder, with sections and tabs, but it also integrates with most other programs. I will specifically be using the feature of OneNote 2007 that allows students to “print” anything from another program or website to OneNote. My students can “print” and then annotate websites, a strategy we will use when reading interviews and other articles. Reflection journals can be just as effective in a pen and paper classroom. Students can cut out articles and tape, staple, or paste them into their journals to help them stay...
organized. Then students can annotate, reflect, and respond to the readings in the same physical place.

**Classroom Activities**

**Lesson 1: Introduction to Interviews (1 day lesson)**

**Description:** Students will explore the idea of missing or incomplete information in an interview. This is not a lesson in interpreting bias, which would certainly lead to a more nuanced manipulation of information. Instead, this activity is designed to engage students in a playful exaggeration of what it means for both the interviewer and the interviewee to have their own agendas. In the examples here, both “hidden agendas” are exaggerated so that students can more easily act them out and also so that they can more readily identify the challenges inherent in encountering competing agendas.

**Learning Goals:** Students will practice conducting interviews. Students will consider the implications of hidden agendas or unseen dynamics in interviews. Students will recognize the danger of drawing conclusions from subjective interview-based research.

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:
1. Ask pointed questions.
2. Answer selectively.
3. Work with a partner.
4. Draw inferences from evidence.
5. Revise and improve inferences based on new information.
6. Reflect in writing.

**Materials for Classroom Educators:**

- Reflection Journals (on paper, or in a digital notebook like OneNote) Do Now & Debriefing Question
- Interview “Directions” = specifically modified for interviewers or interviewees. (included in Appendix B. Classroom educators may provide the instructions digitally or on paper)

**Learning Plan:**

**Opening Activity:** Students will complete the “Do Now” in their Reflection Journals: Reflect on a time when you did not want to reveal specific information. You do not need to tell me what the information was! What did you say or do so that you kept the information secret? Be sure to identify specific strategies you used!

**Partner Activity – Mock Interview:**
1. Students will be assigned partners. Each partner will receive 2 cards, one for when they are the “interviewer,” one for when they are the “interviewee.” (See Appendix A for Sample Interview Pairs).
2. Students will have 5 minutes to review their assigned role and brainstorm possible questions or possible answers with their specific instructions in mind.
3. Students will have 10 minutes to conduct an extemporaneous interview. Educator will circulate to observe and assess interview approaches.
4. If there are enough interview pairs and enough time students will switch places and the interviewer will become the interviewee.
5. After the mock interview, students will reflect independently on whether they achieved their goal of getting or protecting the information as assigned.

Closing Activity: Students will answer the Debriefing Questions in their Reflection Journals: What surprised you about other students’ strategies? Would you have known that the person was hiding something?

Homework: In a short essay, consider what would have happened if you based a conclusion or decision on what you found out in your interview?

Extension Activity: Students will develop, edit and conduct interviews as needed in the research component of their Graduation Project.

Lesson 2: Reading WPA Interviews (2 day lesson)

Description: In this lesson students will read the WPA interviews both as historical artifacts and as the products of a flawed interview protocol. Students will interpret the Slave Narratives themselves and discuss the problems presented by reading the narratives out of context.

Learning Goals: Students will study (read, summarize, and analyze) primary source documents. Students will make inferences based upon tone and voice in the firsthand accounts. Students will understand the pitfalls of interview and research protocol that are not aware of possible social, racial, political or gender dynamics.

Objectives:
Students will be able to:
- Read for understanding.
- Consider historical context when evaluating primary documents.
- Summarize key points from reading.
- Critically analyze texts.
- Identify affects of audience in writing and storytelling.
- Recognize indicators of authorial intent.
• Reflect in writing.

Materials
• Reflection Journals (on paper, or in a digital notebook like OneNote) for the Do Now & Debriefing Questions
• Preview Questions & Analytical Questions
• Web-based or printed examples of WPA Narratives (many of 2,300 are at an appropriate reading level – a list of 5 Narratives that I have chosen for this lesson are included in Appendix C. Different educators may choose different texts depending on their needs.)

Learning Plan:
Opening Activity: (Day 1)
Students will complete the “Do Now” in their Reflection Journals: Think about the last time you told a story to more than one person (gossip counts!). Does the story (what you say or how you say it) change depending on your audience?

Independent Reading:
1. Students will be directed to the website (or a printed packet of these materials) for the WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection.
2. Students will answer Website Preview Questions to familiarize them with the website or printed introductory materials (questions included in Appendix C).
3. Students should be encouraged to browse the essays and explanations on this site to truly understand all aspects of the interviews and the Narratives written based on the interviews.
4. Students will be directed to assigned texts from the collection.
5. Students will have time in class (or at home) to read the assigned text and complete a short summary activity.

Group Activity: (Depending on the length of the class period, this may be a Day 2 activity, although it can be set up on Day 1)
1. Students will work in “jigsaw” groups based on their assigned readings from Day 1. The groups should be structured so that no two group members read the same texts. For example, if there were 5 texts assigned, students should be split into groups of 5 in which each text is represented once.
2. Students will share their summaries with their groups.
3. Students will complete the set of Text Analysis Questions which are designed to point to aspects of the text which may reveal bias on the part of the Federal Writers’ Project interviewer/reporter or the interviewed Ex-Slave.

Closing Activity:
1. The teacher will present two quotes to the class.
2. The teacher, or a designated class discussion leader, will use guiding questions to
help the class consider the quotes. What conclusions might someone draw from
these quotes (individually or taken together)? How could these quotes be
misinterpreted?
3. Students will answer the following Debriefing Questions based on their readings,
analysis and the subsequent class discussion: Does it matter if these quotes are
taken out of context? What do you know now that would help you understand
these quotes?

*Homework:* In a brief letter to me, tell me how what you learned about bias affects your
opinion or understanding of History. Be sure to consider at least 2 specific historical
examples in your letter.

*Extension Activity:* Students could compare the firsthand accounts of the Slave
Narratives to writings based on the Slave Narratives. There are essays and even books
that ignore the larger context of the Federal Writers Project or the dynamics of race in
these interviews and narratives. Students could write essays or develop other projects
about the flaws of this particular research paradigm.

**Lesson 3: Polls & the “Bradley Effect”**

**Description:** This inquiry-based lesson begins by putting students in the position of
pundits. Students will be presented with data from polls and will be asked to draw
conclusions based on the data. They will also speculate about possible explanations for
conditions present in the data. Finally they will read and analyze the conclusions and
explanations made by the news media regarding the Bradley election and its relationship
to the 2008 Presidential Election.

**Learning Goals:** Students will understand and interpret poll data. Students will make
predictions based on poll data. Students will develop media literacy skills by reading and
analyzing new articles. Students will learn to analyze the ways in which polls are
presented and interpreted in the media.

**Objectives:**
Students will be able to:
- Read and interpret data.
- Make informed predictions.
- Read for understanding.
- Critique presentations and interpretations of data in the media.
- Reflect in writing.
Materials:
- Reflection Journals (on paper, or in a digital notebook like OneNote) for the Do Now & Debriefing Questions
- Poll Data
- News Articles for Jigsaw

Learning Plan:

Opening Activity: In their Do Now journals learners will respond to the Do Now preview questions: What are polls? What kind(s) of information do you get from polls? When and where do you see poll data in your life?

Class Activity:
1. The teacher will present some facts about election polls, including but not limited to the following: who conducts polls, how polls are administered, sample size, the usage of polls in campaigns, the usage of polls in the media.
2. Students will then be presented with poll data from the 1982 California Gubernatorial Election.
3. As a class, students will investigate the data and make predictions guided by questions from the teacher. Based on the poll data, who do you think is going to win this election – Candidate A or Candidate B? Does the race of either Candidate matter? What if Candidate B was African-American but Candidate A was White? Does it matter what race the people who were polled are? Does the race of the pollsters matters?
4. After class discussion and predictions, the Teacher will explain what happened in 1982 California Gubernatorial Election. Candidate A - George Deukemejian (49.3%) beat Candidate B - Tom Bradley (48.1%).
5. Students will consider: What might explain the fact that the polling appeared to predict Bradley’s victory and not Deukemejian’s?

Jigsaw Activity:
1. Students will be split into groups to read 4 articles (listed in Appendix D) about the 1982 Gubernatorial Election in California.
2. After students read articles with their groups they will be reorganized into groups for the “Jigsaw” Debriefing activity. Each new group of 4 will include a student who read each of the 4 articles.
3. In their new groups, students will answer and discuss the debriefing questions (included in Appendix D).

Homework: Students will review the 20 Questions Journalists Should Ask About Poll Results (from the National Council on Public Polls) [http://www.ncpp.org/?q=node/4](http://www.ncpp.org/?q=node/4). For homework students will choose the two questions they think are most important and
write a short paragraph about how these questions help journalists and readers use polls effectively.

*Extension Activity:* Students will develop, edit and administer polls as needed in the research component of their Graduation Project.

**Annotated Bibliography**

*These resources are organized by topic and are recommended for either teacher preparatory usage or for use in class by students.*

**For information on the WPA Interviews & the Federal Writers’ Project**

*This collection of interviews from Indiana may be too specific for some classroom uses. On the other hand, the focused selections and detailed analysis may provide teachers and students alike with a strong example of how the interviews can be used to draw conclusions about the Civil War and its aftermath.*

*Great article and well developed lesson plan on a use of the Slave Narratives in a Middle School classroom. The lesson plan could be adapted for older or younger students as well. The article before the lesson plan touches on some of the value in using primary source documents and connects the activities to learning standards from the National Center for History in the Schools.*

Conkin, Paul K. *"Work Projects Administration."
*This encyclopedia entry does provide a thorough overview of the WPA programs and makes brief mention of the Federal Writers’ Project. This article offers a solid and reliable presentation of facts about the context of the WPA as well as links to primary source materials and web-based resources. The accessible reading level and clear organization of information may make it a good alternative or supplement to an incomplete or inadequate textbook explanation of the topic.*

Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection. 
[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html) 
*This website is an incomparably valuable resource. It includes a complete catalog of the WPA narratives which can be searched by keyword, narrator or volume. There are also a*
series of essays by the scholar Norman R. Yetman who has studied and written widely on the topic of the Slave Narratives. Many of Yetman’s essays explore the nuances of the WPA interview project.


In the midst of encyclopedic information about American prose writers and movements, this Encarta entry has a brief explanation of the Federal Writers’ Project. These few sentences may be enough to introduce the program to students or to refer back to as an educator.


This is a great lesson plan, coordinated by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It encourages use of the WPA Interviews as primary source documents. The lesson and extension activities may be a useful complement to the lessons in this unit.


The introductory materials by Norman Yetman include overview material as well as short essays on some of the controversial elements of the Slave Narratives and the Federal Writers’ Project. He provides valuable historical information and great references, both of which may be useful as background or supplementary reading.

For information on the Bradley Effect & Polls


This article is a thorough examination of the Bradley Effect. The author traces the history of the phenomenon and explains its emergence in the 2008 Presidential Election. This article is a helpful starting place for educators and may be of use in the lesson itself.


This is an academic study on the patterns of voting among White voters in instances where African-American candidates were running for Congressional office. Therefore
this article is indirectly relevant, but offers an interesting and substantive presentation of data relating to race in elections.


This 1989 article cites the Bradley Effect as a potential factor in the Virginia Gubernatorial and New York Mayoral Elections of that year. The Bradley Effect is sometimes referred to as the Wilder Effect after the Virginia Gubernatorial Candidate who was an African-American who lost to his white opponent. This article shows the pervasiveness of the perception of race as a factor in misleading poll data. It also indicates the Bradley Effect was discussed in the news media 19 years before its prominent role in the 2008 Presidential Election.


“PBS Vote 2008: Secondary Lesson Plans.” Public Broadcasting System. Last revised 2008. http://www.pbs.org/teachers/vote2008/secondary.html. Retrieved May 20, 2009. The PBS Election site is full of resources for teachers, many of which were developed to supplement PBS programs. This page of the site also includes lesson plans stand on their own, specifically a few about the history and current use of polls. Some resources in this site may seem too specific to the 2008 Presidential Election, but most plans can be adapted to your immediate classroom needs.

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The Pew Charitable Trusts. Washington, DC : 2009. http://people-press.org/. Accessed May 2009. This is a terrific resource for any lesson on media, politics or public policy. This division of the Pew Center focuses on surveying and analyzing public perception of political and social issues. The website includes data collected by Pew through surveys and polls as well as analytical papers and resources that draw from this data. There is a lot of information to comb through and some of the denser material will need to be pared down for classroom use.

Effect is a myth. Like the V. Lance Tarrance Jr. article also listed here, it presents evidence critiquing the 2008 media presentation of the 1982 election.


This article (by V. Lance Tarrance Jr. who was the pollster for candidate George Deukemejian) is referenced in the Dan Walters interview and emphatically disputes the existence of the Bradley Effect. Like the Walters interview this article offers valuable counterpoint to the collection of articles included in Lesson 3 which discuss the Bradley Effect as a fact. Educators may choose to include the Walters interview instead of or in addition to the Tarrance article in their lessons.

For information on Media Literacy


This article defines media literacy and offers an overview of current strategies for teaching and measuring media literacy. The article may be useful background on the topic and may help an educator shape his or her own personal understanding of the media literacy skills his or her students need to develop.

Kovach, B. & Rosenstiel, T. The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect, Completely Updated and Revised. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press, 2007. This is a great book for any teacher looking to find out more about journalism or journalistic approaches to information. The authors are very aware of the changing nature of journalism and the media and are deeply concerned with the public perception that the media is untrustworthy. The book’s introductions would be interesting essays for classes to look at because their discussion about the future of journalism is especially current. The chapters that follow are an excellent resource for teaching student journalists how to be journalists and for teaching all people how to access and understand the news.
APPENDIX A – Pennsylvania Academic Standards

PA State Standard: 1.1.11: Learning to Read Independently
PA State Standard: 1.2.11: Reading Critically in All Content Areas
PA State Standard: 1.6.11: Speaking and Listening
PA State Standard: 8.1.12: Historical Analysis and Skills Development

§ 4.24. High school graduation requirements.

(a) Each school district, including a charter school, shall specify requirements for graduation in the strategic plan under § 4.13 (relating to strategic plans). Requirements must include course completion and grades, completion of a culminating project and results of local assessments aligned with the academic standards. Students shall demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics on either the State assessments administered in grade 11 or 12 or local assessment aligned with academic standards and State assessments under § 4.52 (relating to local assessment system) at the proficient level or better to graduate. The purpose of the culminating project is to assure that students are able to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding.

APPENDIX B – Directions & Sample Interview Pairs:

Directions for Interviewer: You will write and then ask 5-8 questions of the “interviewee.” Make sure your questions help you to achieve the Interviewer’s Goal listed below. You will need to turn in your questions and your reflection for assessment.

You are: _______________________
You will be interviewing: _________________________
Your Goal is: __________________________________________________________

Directions for Interviewee: You need to write a short statement (5-8 sentences) about exactly what it is that you do not want to tell your interviewer. Remember your interviewer may try to get this information out of you! How are you going to make sure you protect your “secret”? You will need to turn in your statement and your reflection for assessment.

You are: _______________________
You will be interviewed by: _________________________
The information you want to hide is: ______________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Interviewer’s Goal</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Information the Interviewee wants to hide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>To Assess Student’s understanding of the assigned book.</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student did not read the assigned book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>To find out what happened to the car</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Drove last night after curfew and had a small car accident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporter for E! Entertainment Television</td>
<td>Wants a juicy story for Valentine’s Day Special</td>
<td>Movie Star</td>
<td>Is about to leave famous partner for someone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Journalist</td>
<td>Needs a big story</td>
<td>Team Owner</td>
<td>Just made a multi-million dollar deal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note to Teachers: These sample pairs are intentionally exaggerated. The point of the activity is to encourage students to think about the dynamics of pursuing and withholding information. Clearly, real world examples would be more subtle. You may find that different pairings would better serve the purposes of your lesson, but hopefully you will find the structure useful!
APPENDIX C: Selected Slave Narratives, Website Preview Questions, and Text Analysis Questions

As the website indicates, there are “2,300 first-person accounts” collected by the Federal Writers Project and available through the Library of Congress. I recommend the following because they are rich with opportunities for interpretation and instructive misinterpretation. The archive can be searched by Keyword, Narrator or Volume.

Texts
1. “My master was a mean man.” William Colbert. Interviewer: John Morgan Smith (Alabama Narratives, Volume 1)
5. “Slaves happy to be free.” Rhody Holsell. (Missouri Narratives, Volume X)

Website Preview Questions
These questions are designed to familiarize students with the website (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html) and set the context for the Slave Narratives themselves. In order to answer these questions, students will need to explore the Home Page and the links under the headline “About the Collection.”

1. How many “first-person” accounts are there?
2. When were the narratives collected?
3. Why do you think they are called narratives? Who is the “narrator” in these stories? Who wrote them up?
4. In your opinion, does it matter if the story is being told by the interviewer and not the interviewee him/herself?
5. What makes some of the records easier to read(visually) than others?
6. Are the narratives written the way the interviewees talked?
7. Why might some people be offended by the language in the narratives?

Text Analysis Questions
Students will answer these questions based on the text they were assigned. Students should be encouraged to use specific examples from the text to support their answers.

1. What is the tone of the narrator in your text? (List at least 3 words or phrases that communicate this tone to you.)
2. Do you think the narrator’s tone is different from the tone of the interviewee? Why or why not?
3. Based on what you read do you think you tell anything about the race of the interviewer? Why or why not?
4. Do you think the interviewer liked the interviewee? Do you think the interviewee like the interviewer?
5. Do you think the interviewee was honest in this interview?
APPENDIX D: Poll Data and News Articles for Jigsaw
1982 California Gubernatorial Election – Poll Data
October 7: Candidate A (Deukmejian) = 37 %, Candidate B (Bradley) = 49%
October 14: Candidate A (Deukmejian) = 41 %, Candidate B (Bradley) = 45%
October 21: Candidate A (Deukmejian) = 41 %, Candidate B (Bradley) = 46%
October 28: Candidate A (Deukmejian) = 42 %, Candidate B (Bradley) = 45%

Note: This data is from the Tarrance article, so it may be suspect. I assume that this is not the data that most people are referring to when they discuss the Bradley Effect. I have not had luck finding more neutral data.

Articles for Jigsaw
Note to teachers: A quick web search will turn up dozens if not hundreds of articles about the real or imagined influence legacy of the Bradley Effect, these four are just a starting place.


Langer, Gary. “Why polls were wrong: The respondents lied” Philadelphia Tribune (1912-2001); Nov 14, 1989; pg. 9A (available on ProQuest)