Coordinating Collaboration: Bringing Local Primary Source Education to the Boston Public Schools Curricula
Hello!

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Outline

1. Share about Northeastern University Library’s collaboration with Boston Public School educators for their unit on school desegregation in Boston.
2. Discuss alternative versions of youth engagement using Archives and Special Collections.
3. Offer lessons learned and takeaways.
4. Invitation to reflect on your own possibilities for collaboration.
Boston Public School Desegregation History
Collaboration with Boston Public Schools

- **October 2016**: Initial conversations with BPS begin.
- **March 2018**: First meeting between BPS educators and NU Library
- **April 2018**: Molly begins her job as Reference and Outreach Archivist
- **May-June 2018**: Welcome 9 class sessions from four different BPS educators
- **July 2018**: Debrief with collaborators
- **August 2018**: Teach professional development session at BPS’ Teacher Summer Institute
- **December 2018**: Check-in with collaborators for upcoming unit.
- **May-June 2019**: Welcome 8 class sessions from BPS.
- **June 2019**: Present at Massachusetts History Association Conference.
- **August 2019**: Meet with collaborators to continue to modify and improve unit.
Our Timeline

Weeks 1-2 | Pages 3-6: Historical background (article, documentary, and historical docs from Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). By the end of the week, your group will compose a two-page historical context.

Week 3 | Pages 7-13: Begin exploring your historical activist. Research this extraordinary individual and begin working in the NU archives. Circle your activist’s name!
- Ruth Batson
- Ellen Sweepson Jackson
- Jean McGuire (METCO)
- Paul Parks
- Carmen Pola

By the end of the week, your group will compose a two-page biography of your activist.

Weeks 4-5 | Pages 14-23: EACH group member will locate, summarize, and write about ONE significant primary artifact found in the archives. You will turn your artifact into a story; your narrative will be at least two-pages in length.

Week 6 | Pages 24-39: As a group, integrate your narratives, create transitions, and compose a conclusion that imagines how this person’s work continues to impact the Boston Public Schools and/or education today. Edit and revise.

Week 7: Publish and celebrate!
Unit Structure and Assignments

Learn about school desegregation in Boston outside of traditional “textbook narratives.”

Explore primary sources related to activists Ruth Batson, Ellen Jackson, Jean McGuire, Paul Parks, and Carmen Pola.

Write a chapter telling the story of their activist by highlighting biographical info and by documenting the activist’s actions and contributions through a curation and close analysis of 5 specific artifacts.
## Chapter Contents

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<td>Introduction of Activist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explanation of actions this person engaged in throughout the movement. This section will include a two-page close analysis/readings of <strong>one</strong> specific artifact from <strong>each</strong> person in your group</td>
<td>6-10 Pages</td>
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<td>A conclusion that imagines how this person’s work continues to impact BPS or education today</td>
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<td>1-2 Pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Images, maps, questions</td>
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Our Learning Objectives and Goals

- Design an exploratory research experience (student-driven inquiry)
- Encourage student conversation and share out
- Ensure students are comfortable and empowered
Decoding an Artifact

Description of the Artifact
Who is the author? Creation date? Who is the audience? Summarize or describe the artifact.

Artifact’s Purpose
What was the document’s original purpose? Why is it in existence? Was it read? Responded to? How was it used?

What We Learn
How does this artifact connect to the individual’s story? How does it connect to the broader busing/desegregation story?

Continued Impact
What are the artifact’s implications today? How does this artifact continue to hold value? What connections can we make to 2018?
In Person Class Structure

1/4 of session was spent on introductions, teaching methods of archival use, and explaining the purpose of the session.

1/2 of session was spent on exploring primary sources while teaching staff circulated to engage and support.

The final 1/4 of session was spent on each student group sharing discoveries, questions, or surprises.
Tools for Boston Public Schools Collaboration

- Curated box of materials as well as uncurated box of records to explore
- Worksheets for writing notes during visit
- LibGuide for students to use to research digitized material after visit.
Welcome!

Welcome, researchers from the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers and the Jeremiah E. Burke High School!

This guide introduces resources to support your research on the desegregation of Boston public schools. Use the tabs on the left to explore primary sources related to the lives and work of 5 activists; Ruth Batson, Paul Parks, Jean McGuire, Ellen S. Jackson, and Carmen Pola.

What are Primary Sources?

Primary sources are first-hand sources created at the time of a particular event or period under study. They may be artifacts or observations or accounts of events or experiments. They include books, journal or newspaper articles, audio-visual materials, official documents, pamphlets, statistical data, and archival materials.

Read more about primary sources here.

Primary Sources about Busing and Desegregation in Boston

https://subjectguides.lib.neu.edu/BPS
After two years of collaboration:

~250 students served

17 class sessions
Youth Engagement in the Archives

- Create low stakes entry points for engaging with the archival material.
- Opportunity to use archives as a point of connection, rather than a transactional source for a project.
- Make space for youth to offer their expertise through reflecting on their own personal experiences.
- Balance one on one conversation with group reflection.
Welcome to Northeastern University’s Archives and Special Collections!

- Use only pencils to write down your reflections about the sources you are reading.

- We have organized these materials so that you can easily explore and discover. Help us keep them in order by only pulling one folder out at a time and keeping items in the folder.

- The best way to examine your document is laid flat on the table, that way you can look at it from all angles without having to move the material.

1. What would be something from your neighborhood you would want preserved in an archive?

2. Write down two questions you have about the documents you looked at.

3. Write down two examples of how this material could help you tell a story of a person, neighborhood, or organization.
Preserving connections: student contributions to Archives

Historias de Boston

Historias de Boston is a new youth employment program designed to engage youth in exploring the connections of the Latinx communities of Boston throughout the city’s history. During their 6-week employment program, youth researched and gathered stories of leadership within the three different sites of the National Parks of Boston and the Boston Latino Community. Their final project resulted in oral histories, some focused on their individual personal experiences and others working in groups, to dwell deeper on the similarities and differences between the park sites and the Boston Latino communities. These oral histories, as well as the still and video imagery they produce, will serve as a means to engage park staff and visitors in new and innovative ways. Interviews were conducted Summer of 2018.

Explore the projects below to engage with a youth-led documentation of Boston’s Latinx communities. The video and audio from the project is divided into two categories for viewing: the youth’s self-reflections on the project and their experience and then the group interviews with community leaders including: Albert Vasallo III, President of El Mundo Boston, Massachusetts of Representatives Jeffrey Sanchez, Mayra Negron-Rivera, Chief Operation Officer of Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, National Park Service Park Guides Veronica Carlo, Bruce Heeter, and Lauren Glaser, and National Parks Outreach Coordinator Kim Weglarz.

Click on the playlists below to watch the videos and listen to the audio. You can view the whole collection by visiting here.

Youth Self Reflections

Group Interviews with Latinx Community Leaders
Lessons Learned

- Your internal collaborator can come from anywhere, doesn’t have to be an archivist, just has to be interested

- Timing is important: when your collaboration occurs, when and how the session is framed in the unit.
  - Issues arose when the session had no framing ahead of time.
  - Connections were made when students were familiar with the topic.
Lessons Learned (continued)

- Be flexible: give space for exploration and for students to pursue their own interests.

- Be clear about what success looked like with our BPS collaborator, our supervisors, and ourselves.

- Have a plan for follow up and support outside of the visit: for students and your collaborators.
Actionable takeaways

- Audit your resources for potential outreach and collaboration opportunities.

- Consider your network: what youth groups/schools are local, what organizations would be able to easily visit you.

- Consider your space: can large groups visit, are there any formalities necessary in your system, how will the visitors be guided to you.
Actionable takeaways (continued)

- Identify where will your partnership grow: shared educational mission, exchange of resources, exchange of expertise.

- Speak with your colleagues and/or your supervisor about strategic directions for this partnership, reflect personally on how you could advocate for the collaboration.

- It’s never too early to start drafting sample sessions/pull lists now. They can always be used later.
Tools for Imagining Collaboration

Reflect on the following questions:

- What stories in your community can you connect to?
- What partners would be interested in those stories?
- What resources do you know well enough to build a collaboration around?
- What are easily accessible tools and programs you can use?
- How do you scope the collaboration?
Thank you!

Questions? Suggestions?
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