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HISTORICAL THINKING AND UNDERSTANDING, THE USE OF PRIMARY  
SOURCES IN HISTORY TEACHING AND LEARNING

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

The Analysis of primary sources is universally accepted as fundamental to discipline of history and to the pedagogy of historical thinking (Seixas 2015). The IB Diploma Programme History Syllabus highlights that teaching historical skills, sourcing, contextualization and corroboration aim to enrich student's understanding of the subject and encourage the student to link sources with the original past. Students' abilities to evaluate historical sources should be developed throughout by implementing the methods of historians (IBO publishing 2016). Stimulating students critical thinking has been and is a valued target throughout the history education at school (Bain 2000). In recent years, history curricula and standard revisers in many countries have emphasized the role of historical thinking and called for changes in assessment. History teaching has been and is considered as a subject of regular debate all over the world (Körber & Meyer-Hamme 2015; Seixas 2015).

This research aims to investigate a sample of Advanced Placement US history teachers', International Baccalaureate Diploma Program history teachers' and regular US history teachers' methods and the use of primary sources in their history lessons. How do they value the meaning of the use of sources and practices? The topic is relevant and highly appreciated at this moment, which makes this inquiry of a great worth. The broader context of the work is related to inquiry-based learning and the methodology dealing with that. The use of primary sources is one of the methods used by the teachers to engage students in inquiry-oriented working and to construct a complex understanding of the past life (Barton 2005).

Finland's new curriculum both for Basic and Upper Secondary School Education emphasizes the role of critical thinking and especially from a history-specific approach aims to increase students' abilities to understand and become aware of historical thinking and consciousness. The elements of the study can be incorporated into a broader scale; how to define good history teaching and learning and bring learner-centered methods more into history teaching classrooms? The Use of

primary sources in history teaching and learning are valued very high throughout the IB Diploma history, also the assessment is based on the students understanding of the primary sources and learners approach to historical thinking and understanding.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is a secondary education programme for students aged between 16 and 19. Apart from the native language and foreign languages, teaching takes place in English. In the IB schools the IB Diploma Programme consists of three academic years: preparatory year and two actual International Baccalaureate years. The programme is administered by The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) which is a non-profit educational foundation based in Switzerland, Geneva. It is a private, non-governmental organization recognized by the Council of Europe and has consultative status with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The IB Diploma Curriculum values critical thinking, inquire-based learning and academic study skills. The Diploma Programme core aims to broaden students' educational experience and challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills. In each IB school, there is an IB faculty, which consists of an IB Coordinator and IB teachers for fulfilling the requirements of the IB Programme ([www.IBO.org](http://www.IBO.org); [www.jao.fi](http://www.jao.fi).)

The Advanced Placement programme (AP) was developed in the 1950's in the U.S for the purpose to offer "able boys and girls" an opportunity to challenge themselves with advanced coursework. An important part of the summative exam for the AP history students is the Document-Based Question-paper, which aims to assess students' abilities to assess and synthesize multiple primary sources. Therefore, the use of primary sources could be expected to be a common practice during the AP history lessons (Reisman 2015 ; Charap 2015 ). The AP enables students to pursue college level studies while still in High School. US history AP course curriculum aims to target historical skills; historical thinking and the use of primary sources very clearly. Historical thinking skills are grouped into four categories like: Analyzing Sources and Evidence, Making Historical Connections, Chronological Reasoning and Creating and Supporting a Historical argument (College Board 2016).

The inquiry focuses especially on the use of primary sources in Advanced Placement (AP) and IB history teaching & learning and how the key terms of history; change, continuity, consequences,

causes, significance, perspectives are used and understood in the use of primary sources. This leads to the concept of multi literacy and “historical literacy” and discipline literacy, which all contribute to development of abilities like deep understanding of historical events and processes through active engagement with historical texts. I have been highly motivated to complete this study, I have worked as an IB history teacher at the Jyväskylän Lyseon lukio, Finland for 14 years and used primary sources in my teaching throughout these years. Fulbright Scholarship offered me the opportunity to study at the University of Indiana, US, this semester and to begin this highly relevant inquiry.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To understand the relationship between concepts of historical thinking, historical consciousness and historical understanding, definitions need to be introduced. In this work, historical thinking is to be understood as an ability to interpret the past by using a historical perspective and a historical method. Seixas’s definition on historical thinking brings up five elements under the term historical perspective: these are historical significance, continuity and change, causes and consequences, historical empathy. Historical method on the other hand is to be defined as the abilities to question the past, introduce hypothesis, find available sources, analyze and evaluate the sources by their reliability and finally respond to the question (Seixas 2015).

Based on Duquette’s definition on historical consciousness, “Historical consciousness can be defined as individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors which shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future. As Catherine Duquette continues: “it is an understanding an individual has of temporality” (Duquette 2015, 53).

Finally: historical understanding is a result of all above. Historical thinking can lead to historical understanding and historical consciousness may become a form of historical thinking. For that the individual needs to become aware of his own subjectivity concerning the past. Reflective approach of the individual requires historical thinking process and interpretations based on that (Duquette 2015; Seixas 2015).

The Analysis of primary sources in the history lessons has been considered essential for the historical thinking. Students should be able to read the sources in the view of the authors` context in which the sources were written. This would contribute to deeper historical understanding and

reflective historical consciousness (Seixas 2015). Analysis and evaluation of historical sources require historical skills which can be identified as follows:

- recognizing the subjective nature of the historical evidence
- examining sources for information and interpretations, and for cases where they corroborate, complement or contradict each other.
- recognizing the value and uses of sources, and reasons to use them cautiously
- recognizing and appreciating why and how opinions and interpretations differ.

Historical thinking and understanding and especially the assessment of historical thinking has been an interest of several researches especially in the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Just to mention some: Works by Peter Seixas (1996,2004,2010,2013,2015) Sam Wineburg (1991,2001,2004,2006,2009) Bruce VanSledright (2010,2011,2014), S.G. Grant (2003, 2010), Robert B. Bain (2000, 2015) and Peter Lee (2005, 2009) all introduce new approaches on these questions and bring up aspects on using primary sources in history lessons.

### **3. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

Learning and understanding the discipline of history is much more than memorizing facts. History teachers must go deeper than just knowing their subject, they need to help students to move from surface understanding to deeper approach (Bain 2000, 332). A notable aspect to this is the fact that U.S history teachers are social studies teachers, which means that there is a possibility that they don't necessarily have neither a major nor a minor nor a graduate degree in history. If you are not confident with the historical knowledge, it could become a challenge to engage students in deeper understanding and in levels of historical thinking (Ravitch 2000). History as a subject provides a very rich primary source environment for the instruction. It is up to the teacher whether these interpretative activities by using primary sources are encouraged in the classrooms. U.S history textbooks offer very little opportunity to those skills, so with guided instruction of the document literacy skills such as sourcing, corroboration and argumentation can be taught to students (Britt, Perfetti, Van Dyke and Gabrys, 437, 450).

U.S National history standards aim to stimulate students critical thinking. Objectives have been set up and teachers should design activities that engage students in using historical thinking. The New Common Core Standards have been adopted by 43 states call for students' engagement in historical thinking (Smith& Breakstone 2015, 234). The Research literature by Seixas, Wineburg, VanSledright and by many others emphasize the validity of the use of history-subject specific practices such as argumentation, interpretation of historical evidence and the use of authentic primary and secondary sources for increasing historical thinking among the history students (Charap 2015, 164). However, The United States is in the midst of a testing gold rush, which means that history teachers are cannot be expected to effectively monitor students' progress in historical thinking and understanding. Multiple choice questions and DBQs/document based questions don't leave so much for teachers' assessment on historical thinking (Smith & Breakstone 2015, 233-234).

U.S history Teachers often face challenges like too much content too little time and too many tests. These situations make them to become knowledge givers instead of being knowledge facilitators, who encourage students to introduce different interpretations and to think critically. Skillful history teachers use various kind of activities to bring up the cognitive challenge in the classrooms. The research suggests that students see themselves to be more engaged when they have had opportunities to explore original historical questions by using primary sources (Grant 2003). Instruction and the teachers' role could be valued very high for making decisions about the pedagogy and the use of materials. In the following a sample of U.S history teachers' approaches and their use of primary sources will be examined by observations on the lessons and by analyzing interviews of the teachers from three different U.S high Schools.

#### **4. RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **4.1. Research questions**

The research is based on history teachers' interviews and observations in the history classrooms. Together with those, recent research on the historical thinking, understanding and the use of primary sources in the history lessons will be taken in account. The research questions focus on the following approaches:

- What kind of primary sources if any are the U.S teachers using and how are the sources used?
- What is the purpose of using primary sources in the U.S history lessons?
- What are obstacles to using primary sources U.S., and how do teachers address these?

In IB history students are expected to prepare all the time for deeper understanding of the primary source material by setting formative assessment tasks that require them to identify and locate historical sources themselves. Embed analysis of the value and limitations of sources into all history lessons and activities involving source material is one of the IB learning and teaching priorities. The Five IB core components of historical thinking are:

- Multiple Accounts & Perspectives
- Analysis of Primary Documents
- Sourcing
- Understanding Historical Context
- Claim-Evidence Connection

Later in Finland the research will focus on questions like: What are the main differences between an American and a Finnish student when evaluating the sources and what methods do teachers in both countries use when making students familiar with historical thinking, understanding and the use of primary sources. Has the reading historical texts, particularly snatches of primary sources, become a mandate for historical thinking and how well are those primary sources actually understood and evaluated by their origin, purpose, value and limitations? The use of primary sources in Advanced Placement (AP) and in the IB Diploma Program will be compared and the approach of how the key terms of history; change, continuity, consequences, causes, significance, perspectives are used and understood in the use of primary sources. The AP and the IB Diploma history curricular objectives are quite similar: to increase students' critical thinking skills, both programs aim to challenge learners throughout the learning process. However, IB diploma Programme is an independent secondary level educational programme and AP is organized and offered by regular American High schools throughout the US.

Both AP and IB lessons have been observed and the use of primary sources in those lessons taken in account. For the further research the IB approach will contribute even more; the research will continue in Finland and focus on the Finnish IB history teachers` methods in using primary sources in their lessons.

#### **4.2. Research methods**

The study will be qualitative and take advantage of a number of qualitative research tradition methods, in particular, ethnography, content analysis and comparative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002; Lappalainen & al 2007). The seven high school history teachers were interviewed and five history teachers` lessons were observed between August and November in 2016 in the states of Indiana and California. The principal question driving the research was “How are primary sources used in history teaching and learning”. The Data concerning the interviews has been recorded and a qualitative and comparative method was being used for analysis. In Addition to previous content analysis will be practiced as a methodology for the study. In Finland a sample of Finnish IB Diploma Program history teachers will be interviewed and their lessons will be observed. Data concerning the Finnish teachers will be collected during the school year 2017-18. The results will be compared to the results from the US. This research is a part of the inquiry-based learning context and contribute to the larger investigation of the methods used by learner-centered teaching and learning.

Participation in this research is voluntary and based on informed consent and all interviewed teachers & students has been treated anonymously. The study respects and follows the rules and regulations concerning personal integrity ( <http://www.tenk.fi/en/ethical-review-human-sciences/ethical-principles>).

#### **5) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS**

The Seven high school history teachers were interviewed and five of those teachers` lessons were observed between August and November in 2016 in the states of Indiana and California. All the

observed teachers were not able to give interviews and not all the interviewed teachers' did have suitable lessons on the day of my visit to the school, as seen in Table 1. below.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Observed and (or) Interviewed teachers**

Teacher/ School	Teacher Experience	School Subject	Topic	Observed	Interviewed
Bloomington North High School (BNHS)	less than 5	US history, AP US history, regular US history	American Revolution; causes, course of events, impacts	yes	yes
BNHS	more than 20	US history, AP US history, regular US history	American Revolution; causes, course of events, impacts	yes	yes
North Central High School Indianapolis (NCHS)	more than 10	IB history, AP US history	IB European history; Enlightenment	yes	yes
NSCH	more than 10	IB history, AP US history		no	yes
NSCH	more than 10	AP US history	US history, Industrialization	yes	no
NSCH	8 years	AP US history		no	yes
El Dorado High School Placerville (EDHS)	less than 5 years	AP US history	US history industrialization	yes	yes
EDHS	more than 10 years	regular US history	US history industrialization	yes	yes

As shown in the Table 1. above, the teachers had varying levels of experience and they were teaching courses with a state-mandated exam or either an IBO-mandated exam.

In terms of classroom experience, one of Bloomington North teachers had less than five years of experience and the other one had more than 20 years of experience. Bloomington North High School is a public high school consisting 1600 students between the level 9-12. Both regular history lessons and Advanced Placement history lessons were observed.

North Central High School is a public high school in Indianapolis with 3900 students offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. Two teachers' lessons were observed and three teachers were interviewed concerning their use of primary sources in history teaching. Only one teacher from the North Central in Indianapolis had less than 10 years of teaching experience. Observed history lessons were: AP US history and IB European history.

El Dorado High School in Placerville California is a public high school with 1200 students. Both AP and regular US History lessons were observed and the teachers were also interviewed for the inquiry. The one teacher had less than 5 years of teaching experience and the other one more than 10 years of experience in teaching. Both AP US history and regular US history lessons observed. The other history teacher from El Dorado had created her own curriculum and she was teaching thematically instead of following the chronological pattern. El Dorado high school in California does not take standardized tests in social studies.

The Topics which were discussed were quite similar: US history lessons were mostly dealing with the American revolution or industrialization of the US, however IB section brought up the European 18<sup>th</sup> century history themes. Each of these was a good topic for the use of primary sources, and in general, teachers have a lot of choice in terms of original sources from those historical eras.

## **6. THE USE OF PRIMARY SOURCES IN HISTORY INSTRUCTION**

### **6.1. HOW DO US HISTORY TEACHERS USE PRIMARY SOURCES AND WHAT METHODS DO THEY USE WHEN USING PRIMARY SOURCES IN THEIR HISTORY INSTRUCTION?**

The research was conducted by interviewing the teachers and observing history lessons. In the following Table 2. I have introduced the interview questions and summarized the responses concerning the first two questions. For understanding the differences between AP, regular history and IB history teachers' approaches, these programs are classified separately.

**Table 2. Teachers’ responses to the Research question 1. “How do you use primary sources in your history lessons and what methods do you use when using primary sources”?**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>How do you use primary sources in your history lessons?</b>	<b>What methods do you use when using primary sources?</b>
<b>Bloomington North High School (BNHS), Indiana less than five years’ experience</b>	<b>AP</b>	<p>“It is something extra”</p> <p>“I’ll ask the students what do they see in the document”? Questions and answers.</p> <p>“What assumptions can they make according to the documents”?”</p> <p>Biased or not”?</p>	<p>individual work</p> <p>pair work</p> <p>group work (like stations)</p> <p>students are asked to answer questions.</p>
<b>BNHS more than 20 years’ experience</b>	<b>AP</b>	<p>“I use primary sources like “quotes of contemporaries”, “Declaration of Independence”. Especially on the “Skills Day” I try to use primary sources and teach the students how to analyze a source”</p> <p>“I try to use primary sources every week”</p>	<p>e.g. I give students two different writings by contemporaries and they need to compare and contrast”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- individual work</li> <li>-pair work</li> <li>- group work</li> </ul> <p>“I try to be selective when choosing a source to address the curriculum”</p>
<b>North Central High School (NCHS) Indianapolis, Indiana 8 years’</b>	<b>AP</b>	<p>“I use sources weekly, once a week students will be analyzing the documents”</p> <p>“it is something extra”</p> <p>“I model the source how it is used”</p>	<p>“I’ll make the students to look at the document individually first, then as pairs” HIP- method (historical context, intended audience, purpose)</p>

experience			
NCHS more than 10 years' experience	AP, IB	<p>"I use sources very frequently, at least one lesson/ week is dedicated to primary sources"</p> <p>I use art, music, photographs, cartoons, novels as a part of my teaching all the time</p> <p>-prior knowledge studied first, the context, then they analyze the source</p> <p>"IB has forced me to focus on the source material"</p>	<p>"I introduce the material, place it. Then we discuss the evaluation of the source (bias, what is omitted, how time affects the primary source, value).</p> <p>individual work, as pairs, as groups.</p> <p>"hot seat"-method (a student leads the conversation on the source)</p>
NCHS more than 10 years' experience	IB, AP	<p>"I use primary sources quite a lot" the IB format</p> <p>"I give the students copies of primary sources, or authentic primary sources and a series of questions"</p> <p>historical context is important to introduce</p> <p>at first it is more like for fun, students are detectives</p>	<p>OPVL- method (origin, purpose, value, limitations to be evaluated)</p> <p>"How could this source be used by historians"?</p> <p>Paper 1 practices (IB)</p> <p>IB guides the teacher and the students how to use the skills when analyzing sources</p>
El Dorado High School, (EDHS) Placerville, California  more than 10 years' experience	US regular history	<p>"I use one to two primary sources per unit (3-4 weeks period)".</p> <p>to give students the context</p> <p>no time for evaluation</p> <p>political cartoons are evaluated,</p> <p>no comparative method</p> <p>diaries, extract, art work, image studies introduced first by the</p>	<p>sources will be introduced first by the teachers, then students will answer some questions, then they will come up with their own fictional narratives.</p> <p>individual work, pair works, group works</p>

		<b>teachers.</b>	
<b>EDHS -less than 5 years' experience</b>	<b>AP, regular US history</b>	<b>"I use 10 primary sources a week in my AP lessons" extracts, amendments, diaries, photographs giving them primary sources and they'll answer some questions no time for evaluation, maybe once a week we evaluate one of the sources together. for deeper understanding and for background information, for context sources are important</b>	<b>sources introduced by the teacher, then answering questions, online material students read a lot of sources at home, one source per week discussed together teacher's website used a lot, independent work a lot</b>

As shown in Table 2. Bloomington North teachers said they use primary sources regularly, however one teacher considered the use of sources as "something extra" and the other pointed out that he would like to use sources more. Answering questions individually, as pairs or in groups were mentioned as methods, however also comparison was brought up. Based on the observations both teachers used quotes of contemporaries as primary sources, but the source was not evaluated by its origin, purpose, value and limitations at the time of the use.

In two of the observed lessons quotes of Benjamin Franklin were used as primary sources and students were asked to 1) read the quote first individually and think about what it means to the student himself 2) think about the time period and the meaning of the quote 3) then to apply the quote something in today's life. For most of the students it was difficult to understand the quote's message for the contemporaries, however they could apply the quote something in today. Quotes were not evaluated by origin, purpose, value and limitations.

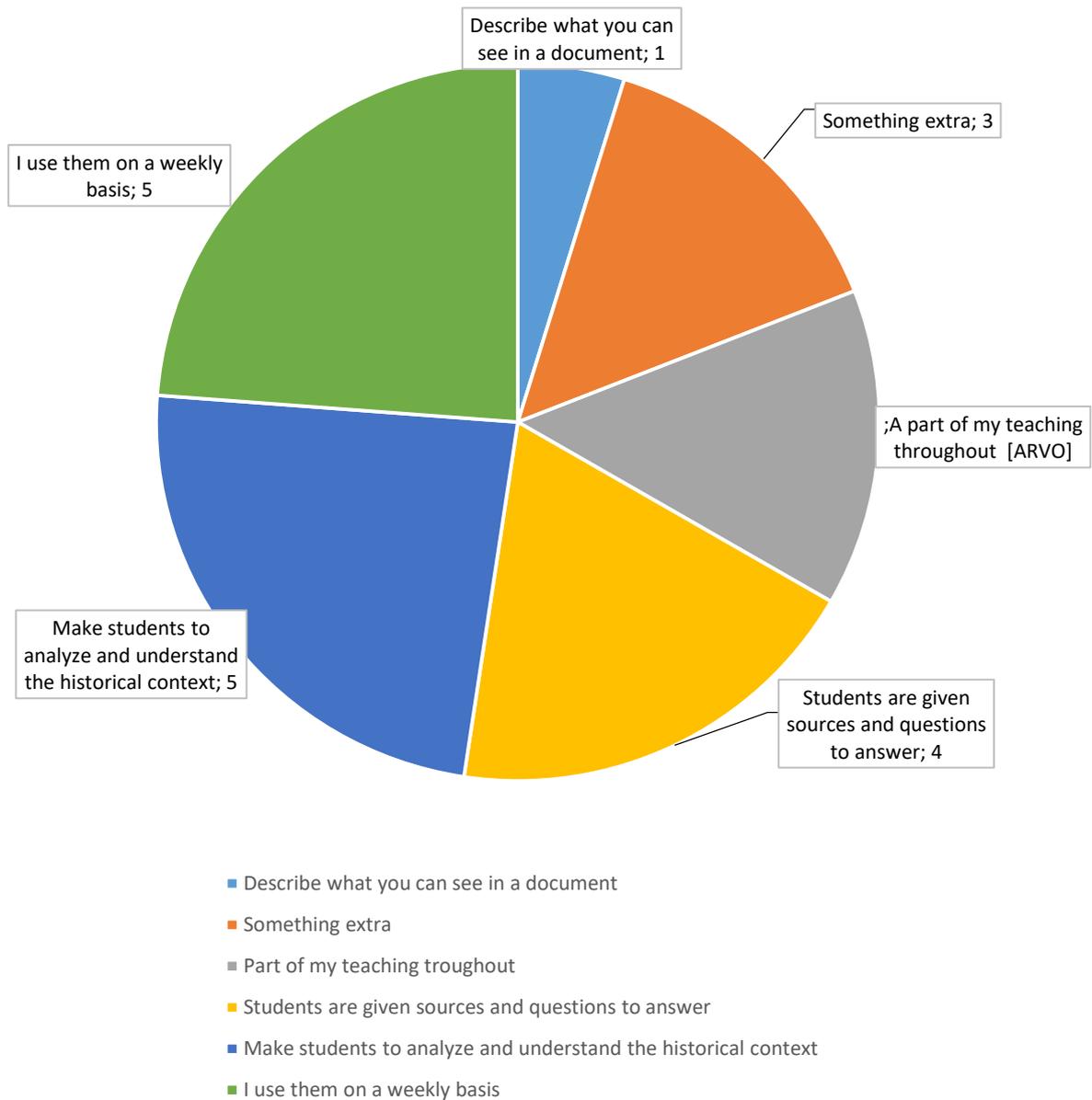
North Central High School teachers introduced either the HIP(PO) or IB format as a method to using primary sources. They made the point that they use primary sources frequently, at least once a week, however one of the AP teachers considered the use of primary sources "something

extra". The IB/AP teacher said he uses various kind of primary sources throughout his teaching and they even read novels of contemporaries for deeper understanding of a particular historical period. Analysis of the sources was mentioned in the interviews and from the lessons observation that was in use during the IB lesson. All three teachers from NCHS emphasized that the use of primary sources in a common way to teach history at their school.

The El Dorado AP teacher's view was that she uses primary sources a lot: could be 10 sources per week, but there was not always time for source evaluation. Individual work was used a lot; students had to get familiar with the source at home or in the class and maybe answer questions dealing with that. Class observations also supported this, online sources were available on her own website and questionnaires were in use. The other teacher from El Dorado taught regular US history and from his point of view, primary source work was not so regular. He said to be using primary sources once or twice in 3 or 4 weeks' period, however, except for political cartoons, there was not so much time for source evaluation in his lessons. Students were asked to answer questions individually or as groups and sometimes they ended up with writing their own fictional narratives based on the primary source working.

In the following Diagram 1. (Table 3.) Teacher's responses categorized and summarized.

Table 3. Teachers' responses categorized: Research question 1.  
How do you use primary sources



All the interviewed teachers said that they use primary sources in their history teaching and five of the teachers mentioned they use primary sources on a weekly basis. Three teachers also pointed out that the use of primary sources is “something extra”, however two NCHS IB/ AP teachers and the EDHS AP teacher pointed out that they use primary sources throughout their teaching. Analysis & historical contextualization was mentioned in the “how”-section as well as in purpose-part later in the interview. Most teachers said that they introduce the source and then give

questions for the students to be answered individually, as pairs or in groups. “Describe what you can see in the document” was mentioned only once, however, it could be counted into “answer the questions”-section. These responses reflect the way how the teachers themselves view their use of primary sources. Based on the interviews, teachers valued the analysis and they “wanted to make the students to analyze and understand the context”, however sources were not always evaluated together with the class.

To find out more about the way teachers used primary sources I asked them to point out what social learning format do they use. In the Table 4. below the responses are categorized.

**Table 4. Research question 2. What social learning formats do you use when using primary sources?**

<b>Social learning format</b>	<b>Individual work</b>	<b>Pair/ Group work</b>	<b>Conversation as a whole class</b>
<b>The number of teachers who pointed this out</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>

Based on the interviews, Individual work, working as pairs or as a group were mentioned for 6 times and conversation as a social learning format was mentioned for 2 times. For breaking down the sources and bringing up the evaluation process, it would be important to teach the students to analyze the sources. Given students the sources and questions to answer, the evaluation process could be limited. Based on my own experiences as a teacher of history for 19 years, conversation together with the class is a good way, after working in groups, pairs or individually, to overview the issues shared by the students. Giving the students a package of primary sources and asking them to answer the questions at home, would not necessarily make them good historical thinkers.

Teachers were also asked to identify the methods they use when using primary sources. In some cases, teachers were introducing same responses in “How”-section and in “Method”-section. Contextualization was mentioned first like “I want to make the students to analyze the sources and understand the context” and then as a method of “contextualization”. For the further research in is valuable to notice this difficulty to make a difference between the “How” and the “Method”- identification and modify the research questions more clearly.

**Table 5. Methods used by the teachers when using primary sources**

<b>Methods</b>	<b>Comparison and Contrast</b>	<b>HIP/ OPVL</b>	<b>Contextualization</b>
<b>The number of teachers who pointed this out</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

As seen in the Table 5 above: both HIP (introducing the historical context, intended audience, purpose) and OPVL (analyzing the origin, purpose, value, limitations of the source) methods were mentioned by the AP/ IB teachers for four times, contextualization (6 times) and comparison & contrast (4 times).

An AP/ IB teacher introduced “A hot seat”-method, which is a student-led conversation to make students ready to argue and challenge each other’s views with reasoned arguments. Students had to read some source material at home for the next history lesson and they did not know in beforehand who will be leading the conversation on that day (the hot seat-placement). Teacher’s role was to sit in the back of the class and observe, maybe take part in if needed.

Descriptive method was mentioned only once in the “How”- section, however four teachers brought out the method of “students are given questions and they then answer the ones”.

The Data concerning the first two questions suggests that most of the interviewed teachers do value the use of primary sources, but the way they use primary sources varies to some extent. Five of the seven teachers used primary sources on a weekly basis and most of the teachers also mentioned that they use primary sources in a way that students analyze the sources and

contextualize the historical event/ period. The most common way to use the sources seemed to be that the students answer some questions as individuals, pairs or in groups. Notable is the lack of source evaluation. Usually the evaluation of the sources was not mentioned until it was brought up by the interviewer. Many AP teachers pointed out the importance of source evaluation, but it was left out because of the lack of time (Recorded interviews= RI). Teachers who were teaching both AP and IB seemed to have more time for source evaluation and valued it very high (Table 1, p 10). Two AP teachers mentioned the HIPPO or HIP-method for introducing the historical context, intended audience, purpose, point of view, organization of argument (<http://www.lafayetteapush.com/uploads/4/6/5/8/46587327/hippo.pdf>), which is closely linked with the source evaluation.

Throughout the semester 31 social studies/ history lessons were observed and these perceptions confirm the assumptions based on the interviews. The typical AP (or regular) history lesson was started with a multiple-choice quiz, then going through the evidence together with the teacher, individually or as groups (power points, potential source work: answering questions, flash cards for memorizing as groups, video clips and answering questions based on that). Having included some primary source work, the sources were not evaluated by their origin, purpose, value and limitations. Observed teachers were far more knowledge givers than knowledge facilitators and the use of primary sources was merely demonstrated by providing the students historical facts.

In the interviews teachers valued contextualization, analysis and comparison& contrast as methods, but those methods were rarely practiced in the observed history lessons. Sources were studied individually first and then sometimes as a group or as pairs, but very often there was no analysis on the sources together with the whole class. As one of the teachers brought up: “Maybe one source out of ten is discussed together and to some extent also evaluated” (RI). Individual learning activities (taking the quizzes, copying notes, reading, answering questions) seemed to take a lot of time in observed history lessons and memorizing appeared to be an integral part of history learning throughout the instruction. Primary source material used in the history instruction included speeches, quotes, cartoons, official documents like government proclamations and independence reclamation and amendments. All of those were used for knowledge sharing and students were filled with historical facts without evaluation of the sources in question.

Documents do not teach themselves, as Grant introduces (Grant 2011, 47), however students rarely got the opportunity to share and discuss the sources by creating arguments on the ones.

These observations are to some extent like those of Ravitch and Finn from the late 1980's "*the typical history classroom in the US is the one in which students listen to the teacher explain the day's lesson, use the textbook, and take tests. Occasionally they would watch a movie. Sometimes they memorize information or read stories about events and people. They seldom work with other students, use original documents, write term papers, or discuss the significance what they are studying*" (Ravitch & Finn 1987, 194).

However, The US National Curriculum Standards in Social Studies from 1994 emphasizes the role of time, change and continuity (<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/introduction>), which are closely related to the historical thinking, understanding and the use of primary sources in history teaching. According to Grant the stereotypical history teacher and history lesson still exist, but the teachers do exercise considerable autonomy over methods used in the history classrooms and history teachers as knowledge facilitators are becoming more common (Grant 2003).

Nevertheless, like the research e.g. by Van Sledright highlights, teachers who provide their students with source material which they need to understand as evidence, assess their perspective, value and limitations are still very rare (VanSledright 2011).

The IB programme teachers were emphasizing the role of primary sources in their history teaching in the interviews. As one of the IB teachers introduced: "I introduce the material, place it. Then we discuss the evaluation of the source (bias, what is omitted, how time affects the primary source, value)" and "IB has forced me to focus on the source material". The other IB history teacher on the other hand brought up "the value of IB format for using the primary sources". Both IB teachers emphasized the value of the IB format for analyzing the sources. Furthermore, they mentioned that after getting familiar with the IB format they are using more primary sources and evaluating the sources more deeply also in their AP and regular history classes.

The IB history curriculum emphasizes the use of primary sources. The IB history final examination consists of 2-3 exams (For Higher Level = 240 hours history it is 3 exams and for Standard Level= 150 hours history it is 2 exams). Paper 1 exam is compulsory for all the history students and it is a document-based paper consisting of 4 questions, of which 3 questions ask for students deeper

understanding of the sources and the historical context. Sources also need to be evaluated by their origin, purpose, value and limitations by the students. There are no multiple-choice questions at all, which may force the instructors to be more engaged with teaching practices related to historical thinking and understanding. Like NCHS IB & AP history teacher revealed “IB guides the teacher and the students how to use the skills when analyzing sources”.

Only one IB history teacher’s lessons were observed for this inquiry, so it is not justified to make far-reaching conclusions based on that. However, three IB history teachers were interviewed and their approach to the use of primary sources was very similar, valuing the OPVL (origin, purpose, value, limitations) format and the methods used by historians when teaching and learning history. It is a fact that final examinations guide the IB history teachers into the use and evaluation of primary sources, otherwise it is impossible to succeed in the Final examination.

## **6.2. THE PURPOSE OF USING PRIMARY SOURCES IN HISTORY TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The interviews continued with the questions dealing with the purpose of using primary sources. All the teachers introduced the comparison between the past and the present, the importance of giving other perspectives and source work as a purpose in bringing up more in-depth knowledge and the context. As seen in the Table 6. below there were some purposes which were only mentioned by couple of teachers.

**Table 6. What is the purpose of using primary sources in your history lessons?**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>To create empathy for the people of that time</b>	<b>To develop reading literacy skills and/ or introduce vocabulary</b>	<b>To compare the past and the present. To give other perspectives.</b>	<b>To bring up more in-depth info and the context</b>	<b>To make students to think</b>
<b>Number of</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>teachers who brought this up</b>					
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An IB history teacher viewed that one of his main purposes on using primary sources is to make students to think and draw their own conclusions. He emphasized the role of reading primary documents in full, not just extracts or quotes, bits and pieces from here and there. During this fall his students had been reading Machiavelli’s Prince” and Voltaire’s “Candide” was going to be their next challenge. The teacher used conversation and a hot-seat method to break down the sources and to make the students to produce their own arguments on the source material. This Creating empathy and developing reading literacy skills and/ or introducing new vocabulary as a purpose was mentioned only twice, both times by El Dorado High School teachers in California. The purpose of increasing vocabulary and reading skills is interesting and could be related to that fact, that sometimes US history as a subject is taught in conjunction with the teaching of English language. When visiting several high schools in Indiana, this practice was in use in a number of schools (e.g. Columbus PBL high school, NCHS, Indianapolis, regular US history).

As Van Sledright introduces, history domain knowledge can be divided into two different main types: Substantive knowledge and procedural knowledge. Of these substantive can be further divided into foreground and background types and of these foreground knowledges can be defined as first order narrative ideas. The foreground type is what people typically think about history as a subject: chronological themes, key concepts, stories of history.

On the other hand, Knowledge of the background type requires a sense of relationships between causes, change and continuity and these terms will help the investigator to organize the facts and put them into an order. These can be defined as second-order conceptual ideas, which also include historical context, significance, evidence (source reliability, evaluation). Contextualization, perspectives and empathy are all valued for this. The last, procedural knowledge type, can be referred to as strategic: how to research and interpret the past. This includes evaluation of the status of sources, asking rich historical questions, constructing arguments and writing an account (Van Sledright 2011, 49-52).

Based on the interviews and observations, it is notable, how AP US history teachers usually did value foreground, background knowledge, but it was challenging for them to reach the procedural knowledge level in practice. For the IB teachers this was easier as they brought up in the interviews; The IB format and the nature of the exams require the teachers to focus on that.

Reading historical texts is not the same as understanding them. As it has been documented, historical thinking depends on, but extends beyond historical reading (Lee 2005) and as Wineburg has introduced: there are three domain based characteristics that should be applied when reading historical texts: sourcing, contextualization and corroboration (Wineburg 1991). The findings from Indiana and California provide a glimpse of the whole picture of purposes of using primary sources and it is clearly seen that the teachers do have an idea of the purpose, however, the implementation is far more challenging.

### 6.3. OBSTACLES WHEN USING PRIMARY SOURCES AND THE WAYS TO ADDRESS THEM

In the Table 7. below the main obstacles to using primary sources and the ways teachers address them in history teaching.

Table 7. What are the main obstacles to using primary sources? How do you address them?

<b>Main Obstacles</b>	<b>Linguistic issues (translation, vocabulary, writing styles)</b>	<b>Difficult to make students to think and understand/ students 'reactions</b>	<b>Lack of time</b>	<b>Lack of prior knowledge</b>
<b>The number of teachers who pointed this out (max 7)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How do you</b>	<b>Try to give</b>	<b>More practice</b>	<b>Difficult to</b>	<b>Try to give</b>

<b>address these obstacles?</b>	<b>them vocabulary, explain</b>		<b>address. Less tests (EDHS).</b>	<b>them the wider context or make the students to do the background research properly</b>
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Based on the interviews, as seen in the Table 7., the linguistic questions, lack of time and prior knowledge and the fact that students may be reluctant in engaging themselves with the primary source work, (because of its historical skills' challenging nature) can be identified as main obstacles faced by the teachers when they plan to use primary sources in their history teaching. AP teachers brought up that AP history students do understand that they need to have practice and their approach is more favorable than regular history students. As the teacher from BNHS introduced, "AP students do understand that they are required to use primary sources".

IB history teachers emphasized the IB format again: teachers are obliged to overcome the obstacles by practicing the primary source work throughout. AP and IB teachers did not consider students' reactions in general as a huge obstacle, once the students get familiar with primary source work, also excitement and enthusiasm will follow. As one NCSH AP/ IB teacher said that after reading Machiavelli's "Prince" "we cannot have a political discussion without the "Prince" and "that is what makes kids excited". He also continued: "Primary sources make students to think and that is why this obstacle, if it exists, should be overcome."

An interesting research result is the linguistic approach: many teachers brought up the difficulty either with the translation or with the unknown vocabulary. Reading historical texts was compared to the reading of English novels e.g. from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and that is why it was regarded as an obstacle. In IBO source evaluation guidelines, translation issues are noticed, but if the translation is done by the Western translators, it should usually be reliable. Mark schemes for IB history Paper 1 (source-based-paper) emphasize the evaluation by its origin, purpose, value and

limitations and we should be searching for more deeper analysis than just mentioning the translation or the linguistic approach. In Finnish IB schools subjects are taught in English, so for the majority of students, primary sources used are not written in the native language. Vocabulary is not considered an obstacle to using primary sources. Moreover, final examination scores of source-based Paper 1, have been really high, despite the fact that the students are required to study the materials using another language than their mother tongue.

Interviewed teachers seemed to address the obstacles by giving them more practice on the use of primary sources, preparing the students to do the background work properly, or introducing the background or the challenging vocabulary by themselves. The question on the lack of time seemed to be quite challenging to address. In EDHS, California the teacher had created a curriculum of her own and she taught history thematically. Instead of taking standardized tests in social sciences, she concentrated on the themes she had picked up for addressing those themes more deeply. This approach was possible, because California as a state does not force school to take part in standardized tests in social sciences. She said that “now she has more time to concentrate and focus on primary source work”, however she “did not have enough time to break up the sources as well as she would prefer” (RI). For regular US history teachers, the lack of time was reality and the main obstacle in using primary sources, however also many AP teachers saw the lack of time challenging for the deeper evaluation of the sources. Primary sources were used, but it was difficult to include in-depth analysis of the source.

Van Boxtel and Van Brie (2012) investigated the question. “What allows students to successfully contextualize historical images and documents: historical knowledge or strategy used”? The outcome emphasized the approach that the most important issue is “to provide students with key historical concepts and to help them to construct an associative network around those concepts” So the strategy how you use primary sources is valuable for historical thinking and understanding. As Seixas introduced “the failure in using primary documents is the way to read them as presenting information, as one would read a phonebook of a textbook” (Seixas 2015, 105).

Historical thinking and understanding is so much more than multiple-choice questions. It is a necessary that history teaching and learning include deeper approaches on the use of primary sources. These obstacles in using primary sources could be overcome, but that demands a lot of

work and planning. Teachers should be ready to challenge their own thinking as well and the collaboration with the research field would be vital for this.

## **7. DISCUSSION AND AN EXAMPLE OF A LESSON HOW TO INCORPORATE A DEEPER APPROACH ON SOURCES IN HISTORY TEACHING AND LEARNING**

From the behaviorist approach, also the history educational thinking has experienced a cognitive revolution. It is not any more considered so straightforward how to assess history learning process. Valuable cognitive apprenticeship requires that thinking is made explicit in history classrooms. For the internalization of the historical perspective and other skills we need to bring historians' disciplinary thinking into history teaching and learning (Bain 2015).

The IB programme incorporates "Theory of Knowledge (TOK)" courses into the study of history, which allow students to study how historical knowledge and understanding the knowledge is constructed and what does it mean to think historically (<http://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/theory-of-knowledge/what-is-tok/>). In my own school Jyväskylän Lyseon lukio, TOK teacher and the subject teacher, collaborate in teaching "historical knowledge and historical thinking". As a history teacher I myself have been working together with TOK teacher and we have arranged A "Skills' Day", when all the IB students have been working with themes like "critical thinking in history", "Understanding historical knowledge" and "historical skills".

Either AP or regular US history teaching does not incorporate anything similar into history teaching. Historical skills should be taught, but at the same time, AP and regular US teachers struggle with the time management. However, after redesigning the AP US history curriculum in 2014 the hope has been that the changes will help AP teachers to embed the development of historical thinking skills and deeper understanding in their instruction (Charap 2015).

This inquiry has also challenged me as a history teacher to question myself: How do I use primary sources and incorporate historical thinking and understanding into that? My main method is to follow the IB format and take advantage the TOK connection with history teaching and learning. In the following I will introduce an example of a history lesson plan (for a 90 min lesson this would

take almost three lessons) and explain how each of the sections and methods will promote a deeper approach on history thinking skills.

### **7.1. A HISTORY LESSON PLAN (THE TOPIC COULD BE ALMOST WHATEVER HISTORY TOPIC)**

#### **THE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE STUDENTS: FINDING OUT WHAT THE STUDENTS ALREADY KNOW ON THE TOPIC (total 20 min)**

- a) The theme introduced on the white-board, black-board or either on a smart board: students spread their ideas about the topic (brainstorming). Students can write their ideas on the board whenever they come up with an idea (7-10 min)
- b) Looking at the ideas together as a group; each student introduces and explains what he/ she put on the board. (10 min)

#### **CHOOSING/ CREATING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE SYLLABUS (total 30-35 min)**

- c) Choosing the ideas related to the syllabus: critical approach: which ideas match with the syllabus and why/ how? (10 min)
- d) Creating research questions as small groups of 3-4 students: What do we need to know and why dealing with this approach/ idea? (15 min)
- e) The best “To what extent”, “Justify the claim”- type of questions chosen as research questions. Each group will have questions of its own (2-3 main questions, sub questions also possible to create) (5-10 min)

#### **INCORPORATING HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS and THE USE OF PRIMARY SOURCES INTO THE GROUP WORK (total 35 min)**

- f) each group will get a primary source related to their research questions: going through the source analysis together as a whole class (15-20 min).
- evaluation of the source by their *origin* ( what is it, when was it written/ made, primary or secondary, an official document, a speech or...?)*purpose* ( why was it written and by whom

, for what purposes), *value* ( value for historians studying this topic: even if it would be biased, it could be really valuable for historians in understanding the perspectives of the contemporary etc.) and *limitations* ( is the source focusing on what is asked by the question, is it objective or subjective, translation or not, when was it written/ published, how does this impact the reliability? )

- g) historical thinking skills revisited: historical significance, continuity, change, cause and consequences, perspectives and empathy explained by the teacher and discussed as a whole class (15 min)

**THE RESEARCH PROCESS AS GROUPS: USING THEIR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, FINDING NEW EVIDENCE AND USING THE PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL TO ANSWER THEIR RESEARCH QUESTIONS. (total 60 min)**

- h) students need to use terms dealing with historical thinking skills when they answer their questions (they may create new questions if needed and leave some questions out, if agreed by the group)
- i) the group produces a presentation on their research question, in which they will need to address historical thinking skills and use primary sources

**THE ORAL PRESENTATIONS BY THE GROUPS (total 60 min): either power points, prezi or mind map presentations.**

- j) after each presentation peer feedback (the next group to give the presentation always in charge of the feedback), how did the group address their research questions and how did they manage to use historical thinking skills
- k) teacher's feedback and assessment

## **THE FINAL CONVERSATION; WHAT DID WE LEARN AND HOW? (5-10 min)**

This method follows the inquiry-based learning and focuses on the learner-centered pedagogy. To create the motivation for the learning process, students need to get the feeling that they are in charge. The teacher is a facilitator, who provides the wider context and guides the students into the right direction, especially concerning the historical thinking skills. By creating their own research questions, students are learning what is based on their own interest, but in the context of the syllabus. They may also revise their approach, having concentrated on irrelevant issues or approaches. Socio-cultural learning takes place, combining that with cognitive and especially metacognitive learning.

### **8.) CONCLUSIONS**

After visiting nine different high schools, interviewing seven history teachers and observing five history teachers' lessons (31 lessons total) it is possible to picture a view on history teaching and the use of primary sources in those investigated classrooms. Limitations of this inquiry should be taken in account: some of the interviewed teachers' did not have lessons on the day of the interview, so evidence was based only on the interview in some cases (NCHS). In the future research, it is worth considering this matter and to ensure that the interviewed teachers will be willing to be followed and their lessons to be observed for the study.

Observations suggest that the use of primary sources does not always involve a deeper evaluation of the sources in the AP or regular US history lessons, however in the interviews the teachers valued the source evaluation. Most AP and regular History teachers used primary source as a knowledge givers and students were often guided to answer questions without in-depth analysis. Based on the interviews, the IB Format made the IB history teachers emphasize the role of the source evaluation. IB history teachers were also teaching the AP, so this study remarks the fact that AP benefits a lot, if the teacher is familiar the IB source evaluation format. Historical skills were mentioned in the interviews by most of the teachers and there seemed to be an understanding the of key terms of historical thinking: causation, continuity, change, consequences, significance and perspectives. However, the lack of source evaluation was so evident that it is difficult to say, how these concepts were implemented into the history teaching.

All the teachers remarked the importance of using primary sources for historical thinking and noticed that they should use more primary sources and evaluate the ones. Lack of time or students' prior knowledge, difficult vocabulary was introduced as obstacles, however the obstacles were not considered invincible. History teachers really seemed to understand the value of historical thinking skills, even so on the other hand observations in the history lessons did not always support this approach. Formative tests, quizzes, independent work or surface level questions took a lot of class time and these do not always contribute to students deeper understanding and historical thinking.

Most AP history teachers used primary sources, but they did not break the sources down with their students. However, the break-down process and the explanations how to find different perspectives, are valued by the recent research on this topic. As pointed up before: sources do not teach by themselves.

For making the connections between historical thinking & understanding and history teaching in the classrooms, it would be valuable for the teachers to get familiar with the theory and history-domain specific research (Van Sledright 2011). Encouraging the teachers to read more research literature on history education, take part in workshops, establishing teacher pedagogy-groups could open an educator's eyes for wider thinking on the use of primary sources. As based on this study, many teachers understand the value of the use of primary sources, but more in-depth analysis is not a common way to use them. Adding a dialogue between historical research and history teaching is essential to bring more in-depth historical thinking and understanding into history classrooms.

### **The Later Implementation of the research**

I am going to continue to work part-time as a history teacher at Jyväskylän Lyseon lukio/ IB and partly focus on this research. My publication plan will be as follows: 1) The research on US teachers: Historical thinking and understanding and the use primary sources in history teaching and learning? 2) Finnish IB history teachers: Historical thinking and understanding: How they use primary sources in history teaching and learning? 3) Comparison between these two. 4) Assessment on the use of primary sources and the level of learners historical thinking and

understanding? How do we assess students approach on key concepts like historical consciousness, historical thinking and understanding in IB Diploma Programme history in Finland? One could assume that potential journals for my articles would be: *International Journal of Educational Research, Teaching History, The History Teacher, Written Communication, American Historical Review, American Educational Research Journal, International Review of History Education.*

The future research will also be highly relevant and valuable in context with recent research. The research will introduce a new approach, Finnish IB history teaching perspective to the question and at the same time contribute to the discourse on history teaching in the US and Finland. The Finnish new history curriculum emphasizes these same goals of history thinking and understanding. In the IB Diploma Program historical thinking skills have been appreciated for a long time. However, the methods used by IB history teachers and their contribution to increase students' historical thinking and understanding have never been investigated before. The US/AP context will also bring a comparative aspect to this study, which will expand the study's international relevancy.

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