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Secondary Social Studies Newsletter

Vocabulary Instruction

One of the strongest findings about vocabulary instruction is that multiple encounters are required before a word is really to affect student's comprehension and become a useful and permanent part of the student's vocabulary repertoire.

Relationships Among Words

Pair words so that students need to consider how meanings interact in order to respond to the questions. This can be done as a discussion, or students can respond in writing; however, if students write responses, a discussion of the responses should follow.

Examples

Would you pay homage to something tolerable?

Would you have compassion for someone imperious?

Would you suppress a profound thought?

Most are yes or no answers. Either is acceptable if it can be justified.

Examples and Nonexamples

Students can be asked to distinguish between an example of a word and a non-example. Both items should be designed to present situations that have similar features so that students focus on the meaning of the target word.

Example

Proclaim

- 1. A woman refuses to talk to reporters about the election.*
- 2. A woman tells reporters which candidate won the election.*

Students can create such examples.

Example

Describe how someone acts that shows being diligent

Tell about a time you were perplexed.

Note that both of these activities work as excellent bell ringers.

From Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown and Linda Kucan, "Bringing Words to Life"

Enduring Understandings

What do you want students to leave your class knowing for the rest of their lives? These insights that students need to retain after they have forgotten smaller details are enduring understandings. Enduring understandings are statements summarizing important ideas that are central to your class and have lasting value beyond the classroom. These should be pieces that students will understand by the conclusion of your course, not things that students will know or be able to do. Consider what you want students to refer back to throughout their lives in regard to your class.

Some Examples

Government

- People develop systems to manage conflict and create order
- Democratic responsibilities must balance the rights and responsibilities of individuals with the common good

Economics

- Decisions concerning the allocation and use of economic resources impact individuals and groups

History

- History involves interpretation; historians can and do disagree
- Culture is both a unifying and divisive force in human relations
- Progress is defined by cultural interpretation
- The past affects humans, humans affect the future.
- The movement of people, goods and ideas transforms society and culture
- Cultural values and beliefs affect relations among individuals, groups, institutions and political states
- Conflict and cooperation shape and transform culture, society, political states and geopolitics
- Humans are social beings who live and interact with one another
- Humans have basic needs
- Technological innovation transforms economies, societies, political and military systems, sometimes in unintended ways
- Individuals can affect history for both good and bad

Essential Questions

Maya/Aztec/Inca

- What does it mean to be 'civilized'?

Enlightenment

- When are differing beliefs beneficial?

Civil War/Pre-War

- How do people adjust to a lack of personal freedom?
- What inspires some to fight for the freedom of others?
- What is worth fighting for?

Jackson/Reform

- When freedom is expanded for one is it contracted for another?
- What is progress? What are the costs of progress?
- Is progress always good?

United States in WWI

- Why do countries get involved with conflict?
- What conditions are necessary for peace?
- What defines one's national identity?
- When do national have the right to involve other nations in their conflicts?

Medieval Period/Renaissance/Reformation

- Can the arts change society's views?
- What factors lead to social and cultural change?
- How do 'old' and 'new' social and cultural ideas conflict with each other?
- Is culture more of a reflection of society or more of an influence on society?
- What does it mean to be religious?
- How does religion impact society?
- Why does religious intolerance happen?
- To what extent, if any, does religion impact government?

Personal Finance and Citizenship

- What rights should everyone have?
- Why are individual right and freedoms essential for citizens?
- How have rights changed over time?
- Should there be limits on personal freedoms?
- What does it mean to be an American?
- What is the purpose of government?
- How democratic is America?

Resources

Content Information

[The History Cat](#)

Information for students to read on [World History](#) and on [US History](#). Good source of history content information for students.

[Context U](#)

A wikipedia style of crowd sourced history information. The power of the site lies in placing historical events in context in terms of time, people and space. [An example can be seen for the Civil War's context in time.](#)

Primary Sources

[Avalon Project](#)

The Avalon Project, from Yale Law School, provides digital documents relevant to the fields of Law, History, Economics, Politics, Diplomacy and Government. Documents include links to supporting documents expressly referred to in the body of the text.

Secondary Sources

[Disunion](#)

Disunion revisits and reconsiders America's most perilous period, using contemporary accounts, diaries, images and historical assessments to follow the Civil War as it unfolded.

Games

[Trading Around the World](#)

From the International Monetary Fund, experience the challenges and excitement of international trade. See if you can get the best price for the goods you sell and the biggest bargains for the goods you buy dependent on how healthy the global economy is

Maps

[History Animated](#)

Animations of key battles of the American Civil War, Revolutionary War, World War I and World War II.

[Visualizing Emancipation](#)

Organizes documentary evidence about when, where, and how slavery fell apart during the American Civil War. This interactive map shows how emancipation occurred unevenly across the South, beginning before the first major battles and ending after the end of the Confederacy. The site also includes a lesson plan for how to use the map with students to hone critical analysis and interpretation skills.

Historical Thinking Skills

Evaluating Evidence

“The historical investigation model is designed to generate student interest in studying the past, engender competence with a set of thinking skills that will benefit them beyond the school walls and promote an understanding of the major events, people and ideas that populate the past.”

Students need to be “encouraged to inquire, to investigate, to develop their own points-of-view using skills of critical thinking and analysis.” Historical investigation provides this opportunity for students.

The key vocabulary words that need to be the lingua franca of any history class are text, subtext and context as these concepts should be used almost daily as students investigate historical sources, both primary and secondary.

Remember when selecting sources that they are not all created equal in readability, accessibility, interest level or linkage to background information. Choosing sources that are too challenging for students turns you into a whack-a-mole game, running from kid to kid interpreting and explaining information.

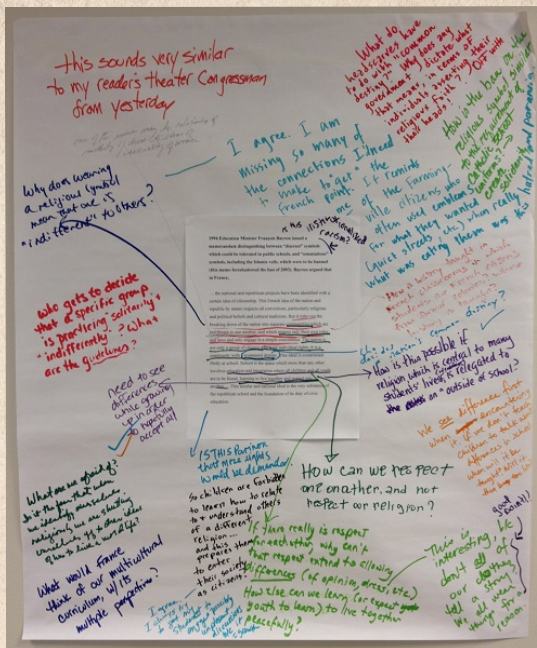
To facilitate investigation, students are provided one of several historical sources and asked to consider the information provided by the text, place the sources in its historical context and consider any information the subtext provides. Student work is also facilitated by short guiding questions to focus their examination of the provided documents.

From Bruce Lesh, “Why Won’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?”

Source Selection

- Do not use more than four to six sources
- Read the sources ahead of time
- Balance your offerings so there are visual as well as text and ephedra
- Aid students by defining difficult vocabulary and editing sources for length, providing typed copies for hand written documents
- Ensure that sources are comparable in length

Literacy Activity



Written Conversations

We often use “class discussion” as a key after-reading activity. But when you think about it, what is a class

discussion? It is usually one person talking and 29 others sitting, pretending to listen, and hoping that their turn never comes. With Written Conversation, you can have a “discussion” where everyone is actively talking at once, silently and in writing.

Take a copy of a piece of text, affix it to a larger piece of paper and provide different colored markers or pens for students. Students work in small groups to write around the text and engage with their annotations and the responses of their classmates as they compose. Each student uses a different colored pen so it is easy to distinguish each student’s written responses.

In social studies this strategy can be used with primary or secondary sources.

Read more about the steps for using this strategy on [Facing History](#).

Professional Development

Globalizing the US History Survey

Recent trends have called for the “globalizing” of American education which involves an “opening” of students’ conceptions of the past through expanded content, broader methodology, and units of analysis that go beyond the nation. [This self-paced, free online course](#) addresses gaps in thought leadership and the scarcity of professional development programs dedicated to globalizing the U.S. history survey.

K-12 Social Studies Beginning Teacher Webinar Series

On Wednesday, October 25th from 3:45-4:45 PM, NCDPI K-12 Social Studies will have the third webinar of the series for beginning teachers. The focus of this particular webinar is providing a better understanding of how to teach North Carolina Essential Standards’ clarifying objectives written using Disciplinary Literacy. [Register for the webinar](#) or [view previous webinars in this series](#).

Integrating Technology

Note Card Confessions

[Look at the example Note Card Confession video.](#)

Note card confessions are a social media trend to bring attention to a story that needs to be told. They tend to be very powerful and emotional. This student activity/project lends itself to content where students look at primary sources and consider the first person perspective of the period or event. Some ideas with upcoming content include the experience of indigenous populations when European explorers arrived, individuals living in various situations during wartime such as families in the Civil War or individuals living through the turmoil and warfare that resulted from the Protestant Reformation.

Activity/project requirements might include:

- Required number of cards, minimum and maximum
- Three to five note card introduction of who you and where you are
- No more than 8 words per card
- Words written clearly with one dark colored marker. Do not switch colors.
- The audience must clearly understand the life of the person's story
- Do not distract the reader with sarcasm or something silly
- This is to be emotional and powerful.
- Edit your video to make it black and white.
- Add music that will fit the theme of your video. There should be no words in the song and the artist and title of song will be credited at the end of the video. The right music helps set the tone for the video. I had many students not really realize the true emotional value of this assignment until seeing the finished product with the music.

From Jill Weber, A View of the Web

Tools for Making Videos

Recording Video

Quicktime

PhotoBooth

Editing Video

iMovie

