

Culminating Assessment: Standards-Based Curriculum Unit
ED 651: Curriculum Theory and Development
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WHAT'S MY STORY?

— A history unit for multiage, 5th/6th grade class —

INTRODUCTION

Goals and Aims

Humans are uniquely creatures of history. Our brains allow us to interpret our world, to make sense of where we are in relation to the past and suggest where we might be in the future. Our world is full of stories that are created, told, and retold as pieces of history. One of my goals as a teacher is to help young people realize that they have important stories to tell, to see connections with the stories around them, and to develop an understanding of how they fit in the mix. Time does not stand still; neither does our history. It is important to help students realize that their beliefs determine how they see the world and that they have the ability to interact on many levels with the past and present as they make choices about their future.

Rationale

Looking at one's own story is a way to start making sense of the larger community. Observing, asking questions, interpreting information from a variety of sources, and communicating clearly are skills needed by every storyteller, and through which we can develop historical thinking. The purpose of this unit is to develop a sense of personal history, to discover new interpretations of self by examining significant people and events in one's past, and to better understand one's relationship to society. As an opener for the school year, this unit is designed to help build a community of historical thinkers.

Because of its focus on narrative history, this unit will provide many opportunities in the area of Language Arts.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The overarching goal of this unit is to help students uncover their historical self and to start developing as historical thinkers in the context of a larger world.

This unit is aligned with selected state and national content standards for history, as well as Alaska State Performance Standards for reading and writing.

National History Standards in Historical Thinking

1. Chronological Thinking
 - A. Distinguish between past, present, and future time.
 - B. I identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative.
 - C. Establish temporal order in constructing their own historical narratives.
 - E. Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines by designating appropriate equidistant intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order they occurred.
2. Historical Comprehension
 - A. I identify the author or source of a historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.
 - B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
3. Historical Analysis and Interpretation
 - C. Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretation.
 - D. Consider multiple perspectives.
4. Historical Analysis and Interpretation
 - A. Formulate historical questions
 - B. Obtain historical data.
 - C. I identify gaps in the available records.

Alaska State Content Standards in History

- A. A student should understand that history is a record of human experiences that links the past to the present and future.
 1. understand chronological framework for organizing historical thought and place significant ideas, institutions, people and events with time sequences.
 2. understand that the interpretation of history may change as new evidence is discovered
 3. understand that history relies on interpretation of evidence
 5. understand that history is a narrative told in many voices and expresses various perspectives of historical events
 6. cultural elements reflect the ideas and attitudes of a specific time
 7. and influence human interactions.

8. understand that history is dynamic and composed of key turning points
 9. history is a bridge to understanding groups of people and an individual's relationship to society.
 10. understand that history is a fundamental connection that unifies all fields of human understanding and endeavor.
- B. Students should understand historical themes through factual knowledge of time, places, ideas, institutions, cultures, people and events.
4. recognize that historical understanding is relevant and valuable in the student's life and for participating in community.
- C. A student should develop the skills and processes of historical inquiry.
1. use appropriate technology
 2. use historical data from variety of primary sources
 3. apply thinking skills
- D. A student should be able to integrate historical knowledge with historical skills to effectively participate as a citizen and lifelong learner.
1. understand the student is important in history
 3. define a personal position on issues while understand the historical aspects of positions and roles assumed by others.

Alaska State Performance Standards (for 5th & 6th graders)

Reading

R2.2 Infer meaning from text.

R2.9a Differentiate between fact and opinion.

R2.9b Express opinions about a text and support these opinions with textural evidence.

R3.9b Analyze an author's purpose and offer a critical opinion of the effectiveness of the text in meeting that purpose.

R3.11 Compare and contrast how texts reflect historical and cultural influences.

Writing

W3.1 Write a coherent composition that includes a thesis statement, supporting evidence, and a conclusion.

W2.3a Use a variety of simple and complex sentence structures in written work.

W2.3b Proofread and correct grammar, sentence structure, paragraph structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage in finished written work.

W3.4a Revise writing to improve organization, word choice, paragraph development, and voice appropriate to the purpose.

W2.5 Give credit to others' ideas, images, and information by citing sources including title and author.

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Enduring Understandings

All people have stories.

We create our history through stories.

Each person is important to history.

History is a narrative told in many voices.

History relies on the interpretation of information and evidence.

Our beliefs determine how we see the world and interpret events.

Essential Questions

What is history?

How does my perception influence my beliefs?

Do I create my story or does my story create me?

How does understanding myself help me participate in my community?

How does history rely on interpretation of evidence?

Guiding questions

What do you wonder about yourself?

What makes an event significant?

What is my story and how does it change as I learn more?

Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Define history in their own words.
2. Create a timeline of selected events in temporal order, and explain the significance of each event.
3. Identify significant events of another person's life from a narrative.
4. Interpret evidence from artifacts.
5. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
6. Read and examine primary sources to identify the literal meaning.

7. Write a narrative based on interpretation of evidence from multiple sources.
8. I identify ways thinking changes with additional information.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

CORE CONCEPTS

- ◆ Chronology versus narrative
- ◆ Cultural elements (language, literature, arts, customs, beliefs)
- ◆ Significant event

CONTENT

Vocabulary:

- ◆ dynamic
- ◆ turning point
- ◆ primary/secondary sources

Graphic Data

- ◆ timeline
- ◆ illustrations
- ◆ history notebook organization

SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS

Questioning – forming open-ended and follow-up questions

Data-gathering– locate, organize, compile and interpret

Intellectual– classify or group items into categories;

compare items based on similarities or differences;

interpret evidence and draw conclusions

Interpersonal – work cooperatively with others;

listen and respond appropriately

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

- ◆ History journal of daily notes and responses will be monitored on an ongoing basis for participation, explanation, and perspective.
- ◆ Students self-assess through reflective writing, conferences with teacher, completing evaluation rubrics.
- ◆ Personal museum will show student's ability to interpret artifacts and articulate significance.

- ◆ Narrative writing demonstrates student's ability to construct meaning from evidence and sources.

Additional performance assessments or alternatives:

- ◆ Designing a visual representation of personal history and presenting it to classmates to show another interpretation of evidence (may use in place of narrative).
- ◆ Constructing a group "totem" that depicts each person's contribution to the class identity and history.
- ◆ Apply personal history to relationships in society, by creating a scrapbook about a fictional character. Student constructs the character's history with evidence of significant people and events, as well relationships and interactions with others in the larger community of fictional characters gathered from interviews. This character may also respond to an issue in the community, which is based on an actual historical event supplied by the teacher. (This may be moved to the next unit, to tie into astronomy.)

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

This unit was designed to introduce the disposition and skills of historical thinking in an effort to establish history workshop this year for later units. Where are we going? I will explain that we will be looking at history through stories, starting with their own and that they will become history detectives, gathering and analyzing evidence. They're going to scout out significant things about their past and uncover new ways to think about themselves. They will have opportunities to share items that are special to them, interview people who are special to them and can give them information, and write a story about what they've found out. I'll explain that we'll also be creating a class totem to show our collective history.

I plan to hook students by opening with a personal history museum; students love to show and tell about things that are special to them. This will give them practice with the concept of significance and articulating their interpretations.

Timeline of Instructional Activities

First day of school - Students compose short descriptive narrative about their first day of school. Objective: To look at primary source material showing different perceptions and interpretations of an historic event, Procedure: As a writing activity near the end of the first day of school,

students compose a short narrative description of their first day, particularly what they saw, felt, and thought during the first few minutes coming in the door. How did that change and why. The teacher can have the class brainstorm and record their ideas on a class web OR just have partners do a short chat with each other before writing. (Also can used as a writing sample for skills assessment.) Collect and read first drafts. This may or may not warrant returning for a final draft at this time, but should be saved for student's end of quarter portfolio.

Day 2: Introduce history journal. Students set up and start decorating covers. Preassessment question: What does the word *history* mean to you? What do you think when you hear the word *history*? Students decorate journal covers to show their understanding of history. This may take a couple of class sessions. Lots of old magazines and newspapers and glue sticks are needed. Wide, clear packing tape will be used wrap the completed journal covers.

Homework - Students write a letter to their teachers, introducing themselves. This is a traditional beginning of the year activity, but also will serve as a pre-writing activity for autobiography.

Note: Survey student writing as source for individual/class spelling/word study words.

Day 3: If history journals are finished, have students set them up with title page and table of contents pages. The first entry should be a written response to the question "What is History?"

This can also be done on loose leaf paper to collect and copy for preassessment of their understanding. They can later tape it into their journals. This response should be written before starting any other history unit activity.

Introduce Personal Museum (see lesson). Teacher presents. The reason for doing this first is to give students experience and practice looking at artifacts and interpreting meanings orally, before the later assignment of writing their narrative.

Days 4&5: Students gather their museum materials; homework assignments. Teacher conferences to trouble-shoot and answer questions.

Teaching time will be used these days to read different versions of the same event (using The Three Little Pigs & A Wolf, the True Story; student writings of their first day) and discussing perspectives. Do differing perspectives mean something isn't true? Also do vocabulary lessons on the words *perspective* and *turning point*. Also may want to introduce the idea of *significant*; what made an activity important enough to include in the first day writing.

Day 6: Students present museum to each other. You can do this as a traveling museum, where 5-6 students present to small groups traveling around the room. However, another way is to have each student present to the entire group. As the presenting student is setting up the artifacts in his/her museum, have the other students write down in their journals what they see (evidence) and what they think the evidence tells them about the museum presenter/why would those artifacts be significant to the presenter. Then after the student finishes presenting his/her museum, the audience does a quick written response: what new was learned about the person? How did the initial hypothesis of the evidence's meaning change with new information. Take some time with the first few presenters to process some of these entries. This is the teaching time to reinforce some of those essential understandings, such as interpretations changes with new information, etc.,

Day 7-14 Personal Autobiography: Gathering evidence, conducting interviews, constructing timeline, and writing narrative of significant events with reasons for significance and sources. Lessons during this time includes: What is "significant"?; What makes a good question? (setting the stage for interviews of parents for autobio); difference between primary and secondary sources; What is a timeline?

Teacher needs to be talking with students and having them share what they are discovering, and probably lots of questioning...how is that significant? Also, about day 9, generate rubric with students to guide their work and use as assessment.

Final project was intended to be a piece of narrative autobiographical writing of 5 significant events in student's life, based on memory and

interviews and how student derives interpretation of events from multiple sources. Some students may choose to present their narrative on a "memory dodecahedron" (idea borrowed from Wendy's group).

Ongoing assessment: At the end of this project would be a good time to return to history journals and have students write a new definition of "what is history?" Consider having them include some of the vocabulary words in the discussion.

Bibliography

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Scieszka, J. & Smith, L. (1989). The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs, by A. Wolf. Kestrel Press.

History Unit: What's My Story?

PERSONAL MUSEUM**LESSON PLAN**

Introduction and Objectives: The Personal Museum will be the opening activity to the unit What's My Story? Students will have opportunities to practice skills of historical thinking, which include gathering information or evidence, interpreting, and telling an oral history.

Learning Outcome: Students will share 5 items of significance from their life, explain why they are important, and how they chose them.

Procedure:

Open with questions "What do you know about museums? How many of you have visited a museum? What did you see? (Students record in history journals, which have already been set up.)

Show an overhead of an inside view of a museum or museum collection and use spiraling questions to help students explore the questions.

Bring out the teacher's "personal museum" and let students look at the items silently for a few minutes. Ask them to turn to a partner and take turns identifying what they see. Have them diagram the collection in their journal and pick one item to describe in terms of appearance and possible function. Post the question: Why do you think this item would be significant to your teacher? Why has it been included? What clues do you have? Allow time for discussion.

Introduce vocabulary: *significant, artifacts interpretation and evidence*
These items, or artifacts provide evidence of who I am. They are significant, or important to me in some way.

You are using your observation and reasoning skills, and for some of you, prior knowledge about me, to come up with ideas about why these items are significant to me. You are interpreting the evidence...like detectives do to solve a mystery.

(Record vocabulary words in journal on the page with the diagram)

Are any of you absolutely sure of your interpretation?

What else can you do to get more information, more evidence? (ask questions?)

Does anyone want to revise, or rethink, their interpretation in light of this new information?

Teacher then models the presentation of the museum. Students label items in diagram.

How has your understanding of me changed? How completely do you think you know me from this evidence? How would you characterize me now, using what you know about these pieces of my history? Next to your diagram of this museum, please record your thoughts.

Now I want you to think about some items of yours that are significant to you, that tell something about who you are, that are part of your story. Jot down some of these things in your journal (bottom of left-hand page). Your assignment tonight is to narrow the list to only five items that you can bring to school and share to help us know something about you, your story, your history, better. Bring them in a box with a lid, that you can open and display. If an item you chose to include is breakable or fragile, you might want to bring a picture of it instead. You will have about 3 minutes to present your museum, so you need to practice what you plan to say about each item. Remember these artifacts should represent something important or significant to who you are today, and you need to explain that. (provide some examples)

(Set share date)

Hand out guide sheet with essential questions to help students select meaningful artifacts. Also include time limits and simple presentation rubric.