

Historical Thinking Mentorship Project

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Section 1. Historical Thinking Concept

Chosen concept: Use of Primary Source Evidence

Student Explanation for Learners:

Primary source evidence is essential to understanding the past. Primary source evidence can be found in many different forms such as photographs, videos, letters, newspaper articles, reports, oral history, and many more. When examining primary sources, you should be able to identify who created the primary source, where and what time period the source is from. Primary sources are an important part of history education as it allows you to engage with material firsthand from the past.

Section 2. Curricular Alignment

Grade Level: 10 Academic CHC2D

Ontario curriculum Overall Expectation: **E1. Social, Economic, and Political Context: describe some key social, economic, and political events, trends, and developments in Canada from 1982 to the present, and assess their significance for different groups and communities in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.**

Teacher facing curricular note:

Use of primary source evidence is critical to meet the grade ten Ontario curriculum overall expectation of E1 “Social, Economic and Political Context from 1982 to Present”, as it allows students to engage with materials from historical events within that time period. The ability to interpret, evaluate and examine primary sources within the context of social, economic and political events is critical.

Evidence and the ability to interpret evidence is an essential component to understanding the past; as the ability to examine primary resources that reflect the lived experiences, and firsthand accounts of people helps to break down what was occurring during that time. Primary source evidence actually allows the students to interact with original material of the historical events. This increases further historical inquiry and skills that allow for students to identify their knowledge gaps and adjust strategies to successfully interpret primary sources as well as other historical thinking concepts. Ultimately, the use of primary source evidence not only helps support the overall curriculum expectations, but is essential to understanding history.

Section 3. Primary Source and Worked Example

Primary source selection:

We have selected a number of photographs from the events of September 11th, 2001 from the International Center of Photography, the CNN Archive, various government archives including the FEMA 9/11 Archive, and the Getty Images Archive. The images we selected include famous photos such as “Raising the Flag at Ground Zero,” by Thomas E. Franklin, “Andy Card Whispering to Bush,” by Paul J. Richards and “September 11” by Suzanne Plunkett depicting New Yorkers running as the towers collapse.







Context for learners:

The events of September 11th, 2001 are ones that people around the world are familiar with. We're going to look at a series of real photographs taken during and right after the events of the September 11 attacks, often called 9/11. On this fateful day terrorists hijacked two American Airlines and two United Airlines flights - two planes were flown through the two World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon, the last flight was originally headed for Washington D.C., either to the U.S. Capital Building or the White House but was taken back by the passengers on board and crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. These attacks killed thousands of American citizens and ultimately led to the invasion of Iraq and manhunt for the people responsible for the 9/11 attacks. These images we are looking into are called primary sources. A Primary Source is something created at the time of an event, by the people who experienced it. They give us a direct window into the past—but they don't tell the whole story on their own.

Modelled historical thinking:

Learning to analyze primary sources is incredibly important for history students. Primary source photos might seem like they offer no detail beyond what the photo portrays, but those who can analyze a primary source photo understand that a tremendous amount of background information and context can be gathered as well. To analyze a primary source photo historians don't just look at a photo, they question it to uncover the context. To properly analyze these

primary images, students will consider its purpose; for example if it was likely created to inform a specific audience, this affects how the information is presented. This suggests that the source reflects the viewpoint of a group, meaning it may be biased or limited. Students will consider a number of other aspects of each photo to build a contextual picture of the event.

Teacher note:

This graphic organizer and list of primary source photos can be used as an in class activity. Primary photos can be posted online and around the classroom for students to analyze. The teacher can emphasize student respect and the importance of these photos as historical artifacts; these photos are of a real event where thousands of people passed away. This example of an in-class activity supports conceptual learning because it allows students to interact with materials and draw their own conclusions, understandings, and make in-text and real-world connections rather than simply memorizing facts about the events of September 11th, 2001.

Section 4. Visual Accompaniment to the Primary Source

Graphic Organizer for Analyzing Primary Photos

Analyzing Primary Sources	
Use the acronym SOAPS to analyze the primary source, each response should be bulleted, including at least 3 bulleted statements for each section.	
S - Speaker Who is the author or authors of this source? Do you think the author shows bias through this source? What is the author's perspective on this event?	
O - Occasion Think about the time this source was created. What event/events led up to the	

creation of this source? What is going on globally that contributed to the events in this source?	
A - Audience Who is the intended audience of this source? What was the author trying to convey with this source? Was this source meant to be seen locally or globally?	
P - Purpose What is the reason behind this source? What message is the author attempting to make the viewer understand with this source?	
S - Subject What is this source about? Give specific details about what you understand about the event from looking only at this source.	

Description of the tool:

The organizer tool above is a resource to help students break down and analyze primary sources. Students are asked to fill out this chart in relation to the primary resource photos taken on September 11th, 2001. The chart is split up into five separate sections with guiding questions to help students examine the primary source from multiple different perspectives. This resource allows students to practice critical thinking, in turn, encouraging them to make complex historical observations, ask questions and interpret the meaning of the primary sources they are analyzing.

Pedagogical purpose:

This graphic organizer supports historical thinking as it allows students to exercise their ability to make historical observations and interpret the primary sources. The organization of ideas and prompts allow students to make their own observations and dig deeper into the images. These prompts allow students to go beyond superficial learning of what they notice in the photo; it allows students to fully discover the context and background information of the event in its entirety. The chart is good practice for history students to get in the habit of analyzing primary sources as that is a key piece of historical learning.

Section 5. Scholarly Rationale for Pedagogical Design

Students learn through a wide variety of styles, this learning experience - which allows students to write, see, and do - best meets the needs of these differentiated learning styles. The above designed activity supports the development of historical thinking by allowing students to use their previous knowledge, analyse point of views and perspectives, and build upon personal experience (i.e. hearing others talk about their experiences and reactions to the event). The topic of discussion is based on numerous primary sources where students will analyse using the SOAPS organizer. This analysis allows for students to obtain a large scope of information and perspectives.

This classroom resource is adaptable and open-ended, this allows for teachers to adjust the lesson and activity; so, this topic can be discussed in history classes regardless of course level, student ability, and year ensuring it can reach a broader level of learners to emphasize the importance of the event. There is a lot of discretion provided to the educator as they can decide what format for the activity would best suit their students. Examples of this being, students analyse multiple photos and rotate, or analyse one photo and share their findings with classmates; which primary source photos the teacher gives to students for analysis, and room for adjustments based on class ability and maturity.

The discussion provided with this topic is very important as it ‘admits’ that the Western hemisphere is vulnerable to attacks, a notion that people often disregard and fear to say. Nonetheless, it is of great importance as there are many significant events that follow, which impact the entire world including; the invoking of NATO for the first time, Canadian involvement in aid, the changes in national security, and the grand effect on the world economy. With all of these impacts, it is easy to see the strands of connection between 9/11 and multiple of *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts* by Seixas (2013) including historical significance, ethical dimensions, and continuity and change. However, for this project we focus on the concept of primary sources. Another reason for this choice comes from our argument that 9/11 was one of the first modern, widely publicized, media phenomena; meaning there is an extensive selection of primary sources that can be analysed through many historical lenses.

Researching *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts* has inspired our instructional decisions in many ways, we will be using these concepts throughout teaching practices. Seixas' guidepoints for each of the historical thinking concepts guide our instructional decisions and practices while allowing room for adaptation where appropriately needed. Our research has informed our instructional decision to allow for students to use interpretations and questions to determine purpose and concepts that allow students to corroborate knowledge through analysing primary source evidence. The concepts understood and written by Seixas are fundamental in teaching history because they produce discussions and historical inquiry among students that is essential in their learning and classroom development.

Citations:

Seixas, P., Morton, T., Colyer, J., & Fornazzari, S. (2013). *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts*. Nelson Education.

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