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Introduction to Curriculum
Stanford University
Winter 2001
Was there a shooter on the grassy knoll?
What happened to the settlers at Roanoke?
Where the Rosenberg’s guilty?
The current levels of student achievement in history are unacceptably low for our country’s needs and aspirations and for the personal goals of its citizens.

- Fewer than 15% of eighth grade students perform at or above proficient level
- In general, students are unable to critically examine the historical record
- National assessments show that students score progressively lower on history performance tests
- 50% of twelfth graders graduate with knowledge below a basic level of understanding of American History
True historical understanding requires students to:

- Engage in historical thinking
- Raise questions and marshal evidence in support of their answers
- Go beyond the facts presented in their textbooks
- Examine the historical record for themselves
- Use imagination in the process
Guiding Questions

• How is history constructed?
  – Multiple perspectives
  – Multiple sources of information
• What does it mean to be a historian?
  – They interpret and analyze evidence to form conclusions
• What are the processes of historical research and inquiry?
  – Investigation of evidence through sourcing, corroboration and contextualization
Curricular Goals

Students will understand that:

• Historical inquiry follows rules and methods of investigation and students use these methods in their everyday lives
• Historical artifacts have important stories to tell
• Trained historians are investigators
• Expert analysis includes sourcing, corroboration and contextualization
• Every piece of the historical record is biased in some way
• History is derived from multiple perspectives
Curriculum Competencies

• Analyze historical record
• Conduct a critical analysis of historical documents using the Bias Rule
• Compare historical accounts
• Source, corroborate and contextualize evidence
• Discuss the different stories an object can tell
Expert Historical Research Skills

History is made up of multiple perspectives

All historical content is biased in some way

Sourcing & contextualization

Understanding corroboration

Evaluate credibility of evidence & sources using the time & place rule

Research & evaluate artifacts

Rules, methods, & formulating the question

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Introductory Activity

The Mystery of Tiger’s Missing Woods
  – Students identify types of evidence to solve a mystery

Real – life scenarios
  – This shows students that investigation is part of their everyday lives
  – Introduces the rules and methods of investigation
Lesson 7

Expanding the View
– Introduces concept of contextualization

Analyzing a visual document
– Three step process of investigation
  – Gather evidence
  – Interpret
  – Evaluate
Introducing Contextualization
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Birmingham, 1963

As demonstrators lie on the sidewalk to protect themselves, firemen hose them down with high-pressure jets of water at the order of Police Commissioner Bull Connor. One disgusted fireman said later, "We're supposed to fight fires, not people."
Analyzing a Visual Document

• Gather evidence
• Interpret (make guesses)
  – Who
  – What
  – Where
  – When
  – Why

• Evaluate
  – What more does the image have to say?
Assessment for Lesson 7

- Students individually practice the process of analysis in their investigator’s journal
- Students work in groups to analyze a visual artifact recording their interpretations
- Groups compare interpretations and discuss similarities and differences
- Students give an oral presentation of their conclusions
Summative Activity

Role-Playing From History

• Analyze historical record to research their character
• Conduct a critical analysis of historical documents to understand their character’s bias
• Through the role-playing activity, students compare historical accounts
• During the simulation, students source, corroborate and contextualize accounts
• Discuss the multiple perspectives of a historic event
Pre and Post Assessment

• Do students have a better understanding of historical research?
• As a summative assessment, students use concept mapping
• Assess product, not student
Design

- Site: JLS Middle School; Connections program
- Historian: University Professor
- Literature review and research
- Flexible curriculum
What’s Next

Watson: the web-based tool for historical research

• Scaffolds students in doing research
• Reduces the cognitive load
• Based on an expert model of doing research
• Includes multimedia data collection and analysis