

Notes from Daisy Martin's Presentation and Discussion - November 17, 2005

Key ideas, questions, and instructional responses generated from student writing and follow-up discussion.

Ideas:

1. Historical significance of any individual, event, or idea is not fixed.
2. Judgment of significance depends on criteria used and parameters (*time period, place, individuals, events etc.*) set by question.

Questions:

1. What does strong student thinking about historical significance look like?
2. What makes a strong piece of student writing about significance?
3. What do we want to see?
 - Use of appropriate criteria for evaluating significance - thesis
 - Evidence, details, to support

Instructional Responses: What kinds of lessons and feedback might help students improve?

I. Ideas from small group discussions and "post-its" on, "How might you integrate a focus on historical significance into the exploration unit?"

- *What questions might you ask?*
- *What individuals, events, and ideas might be the focus of the lessons?*

- Define "significance" – evaluate
- Develop examples by focusing on tangible examples for kids experiences
- Who and what determines why it's important? (debate)
- Providing a timeline is important
- Could it have been anyone, or that particular person?

- Sentence frames: S/He was a symbol of _____ because
 - _____...
 - Like many others, he/she _____.
 - Graphic organizer
- | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| what I heard | what I think about what I heard | Why it's significant |
| | | |

What questions might you ask?
 How did technology impact their explorations?
 What was the purpose for exploration?
 How did exploration affect cultural changes – to the people/countries that were "explored," and the explorer's culture?

 Who is the most significant explorer?
 What was the impact on the native culture?

What changed because of Columbus' exploration?
 What made this significant?
 Timelines – What events caused future events (cause and effect)

 Parameters:
 How is it significant to you?
 How is it significant to us?
 How is it significant to your family?
 How is it significant to America?
 How is it significant to our ancestors?

II. Helping students establish criteria for historical significance? Questions to ask and lessons to teach:

1. What changed as a result? (cause and effect)
2. What events caused future events? (timelines)
3. How is this significant to you, your ancestors? (parameters)
8. Why is it in the history books?
9. Model the writing.
10. Provide a repertoire of ways to respond - a language.